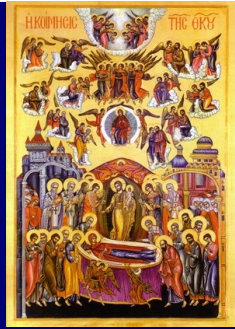


CHURCH STAFF

- 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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

November Calendar	3
Focus on Philoptochos	4
Youth Corner	6
Community News	7
November Fliers	8-14
Parish Christmas Card Form	15



Wonder Worker

NOVEMBER 2024

THE PARADOX OF LOVE & POWER

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF GOD

The Orthodox Christian faith rests upon the fundamental belief in a God who is both infinitely loving and all-powerful. This understanding, however, is not without its complexities. How can a God who is all-loving allow suffering and evil to exist in the world? How can a God who is all-powerful respect human free will? These are questions that have occupied theologians and philosophers for centuries, and the Orthodox tradition offers a nuanced and profound perspective on this apparent paradox.

The Trinity: Love as the Essence of God

At the heart of the Orthodox understanding of God is the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. God is one in essence, yet exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This Trinity is not simply a mathematical formula, but a dynamic relationship of love. The Father eternally begets the Son, and the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father, binding them together in an unending communion of love. This love is not something that God has, it is what God is.

This Trinitarian understanding has profound implications for how we understand God's love for humanity. The creation of the world itself is an act of divine love, an overflowing of the divine life into the realm of being. Moreover, the incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is the ultimate expression of God's love, demonstrating His willingness to enter into the depths of human experience and suffer alongside His creation. As St. John the Evangelist writes, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Omnipotence: Power Understood Through Kenosis

The Orthodox Church affirms the omnipotence of God, His unlimited power and authority over all creation. However, this power is not understood as arbitrary or coercive. Rather, it is intimately connected to God's love and expressed through the concept of kenosis, or self-emptying.

In Philippians 2:5-8, St. Paul describes Christ's kenosis, His voluntary emptying of Himself, taking on the form of a servant and humbling Himself to the point of death on the cross. This act of self-sacrificial love reveals the true nature of divine power. God's power is not about domination or control, but about service and sacrifice. It is the power to create, to heal, to forgive, and to raise from the dead.

This understanding of divine power has implications for how we understand human free will. God, in His love, grants humanity the freedom to choose, even if that choice leads to sin and suffering. He does not force His will upon us, but patiently waits for our return to Him. As St. Isaac the Syrian writes, "He has not willed that we should be con-

Continued on next page

strained by force; but He has opened before us a way that is without constraint, the way of love, that we may choose life."

The Mystery of Suffering: Love in the Crucible of Pain

One of the most challenging aspects of understanding God's nature is reconciling His love and omnipotence with the existence of suffering and evil in the world. If God is all-loving, why does He allow pain and tragedy? If He is all-powerful, why doesn't He prevent it?

The Orthodox tradition offers no easy answers to these questions, recognizing the mystery of suffering as a profound theological and existential challenge. However, it offers several key insights that can guide our understanding:

The Fall and its Consequences: The Orthodox Church teaches that suffering and death entered the world through the disobedience of Adam and Eve, the first humans. This "fall" from grace disrupted the harmony of creation and introduced sin, corruption, and mortality into the world. Suffering, therefore, is not part of God's original plan, but a consequence of human free will.

Suffering as a Means of Growth: While God does not cause suffering, He can use it to bring about spiritual growth and transformation. Through suffering, we can learn humility, compassion, and reliance on God. As St. Paul writes, "we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3-4).

The Cross and the Resurrection: The ultimate example of God's love in the face of suffering is the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ, the incarnate Son of God, willingly embraced suffering and death on the cross, conquering sin and death and opening the way to salvation for all humanity. The cross, therefore, is not a symbol of defeat, but of victory, a testament to the transformative power of divine love.

Trusting in God's Providence

The Orthodox Church teaches that God is not only loving and all-powerful, but also providential. This means that He is actively involved in the world, guiding and sustaining all creation according to His loving purpose. Even in the midst of suffering and uncertainty, we can trust that God is working for our ultimate good.

This trust in God's providence is not passive resignation, but an active engagement with life, rooted in faith and hope. It involves recognizing our limitations, surrendering our will to God, and seeking His guidance in all things. As the Psalmist writes, "Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5).

The nature of God as both loving and all-powerful is a profound mystery that transcends human comprehension. Yet, the Orthodox Christian tradition offers a rich and nuanced understanding of this paradox, rooted in the doctrine of the Trinity, the concept of kenosis, and the reality of God's providence.

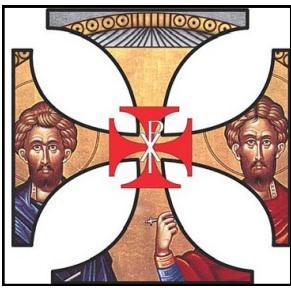
While we may never fully grasp the depths of God's love and power, we can approach Him with humility, faith, and trust. Through prayer, participation in the sacraments, and the study of Scripture, we can deepen our relationship with Him and experience the transformative power of His love in our lives. Even in the face of suffering and uncertainty, we can find comfort and hope in the knowledge that God is with us, guiding us towards His eternal Kingdom.

+Very Rev. Archimandrite Christodoulos Margellos



November 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Strict Fast Day Philoptochos Baking Day Prep	2 Philoptochos Baking Day Ethiopian Mission
3 5th Sunday of Luke Philoptochos Sunday 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy with Antiochian and Memorial Service Sunday School/Creek School	4	5	6 Strict Fast Day 11:00 a.m. Adult Religious Ed Class 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	7 8:30 p.m. Virtual Adult Religious Education Class	8 Strict Fast Day Synaxis of the Archangel Michael, Gabriel & the other Bodiless Powers 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Philoptochos Baking Prep Day	9 Russian Mission Philoptochos Baking Day
10 8th Sunday of Luke 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School/Creek School 4th Annual Parish Chili Cook Off	11	12	13 Strict Fast Day Saint John Chrysostom 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy Following Liturgy Adult Religious Education Class 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	14 8:30 p.m. Virtual Adult Religious Education Class	15 Beginning of the Christmas Fast Strict Fast Day 5:30 p.m. Kolyva Family Night	16 Fast Day +Sacrament Ethiopian Mission
17 9th Sunday of Luke Fast Day 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School/Creek School Parish Fall General Assembly	18 Fast Day	19 Fast Day	20 Strict Fast Day 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	21 Fast Day Entrance of the The- otokos to the Temple 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	22 Strict Fast Day	23 Fast Day
24 13th Sunday of Luke Fast Day 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School/Creek School	25 Fast Day Saint Katherine the Great Martyr 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	26 Fast Day	27 Strict Fast Day 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	28 THANKSGIVING	29 Strict Fast Day	30 Fast Day Saint Andrew the First Called Apostle 8:00 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy



FOCUS ON PHILOPTOCHOS HELP US TO HELP OTHERS

Agape Forward, November News

Over the last few years, the Greek Orthodox Church created a Youth Protection Training course. The goals, as should be apparent from the name, are to ensure that all our members, including our most vulnerable, are protected. Sadly, the largest portion of abuse happens from trusted individuals.

Abusers often present themselves as positive role-models, making "spotting them" very difficult. The church has set safeguards in place. We all need to be responsible for our children and ourselves. The following summary highlights key points for our awareness:

1. **Training.** If we are to work with people under the age of 18 *in any capacity*, we need to be trained. This includes if we are doing a Philoptochos activity with our youth. Please, reach out to me if you need more information about this topic.
2. **Safety.** We must never be in a situation where we are putting ourselves at risk – adult and youth interactions **MUST** have two adults present. If we find that our Church classes have a ratio of 1:1 we must move to a location with more people present!
3. **Listening.** If a youth comes to a trusted adult with information that is disquieting, **TRUST** them. Data confirms that over 95% of all disclosures are true. Err on the side of the young person.
4. **Responsibility.** One of the ways that abuse happens is by inappropriate grooming. Ways that **PEOPLE of POWER** may set up this type of situation include:
 - a. singling out a person to receive excessive praise, gifts, attention.
 - b. Offering to be a "special friend" to a youth to allow the parents time to attend to other needs.
 - c. Excessive touching, often starting as simple gestures and progressing...
 - d. Sharing inappropriate content, off-color jokes, crude comments about others.
 - e. Treating the youth as an adult and asking them to "KEEP" adult secrets.

Reflecting on this training, I realized, these same points should govern all our daily interactions. As the Army of Agape, we can be models of our Christian Faith and leaders in our community. Thank you to everyone for your support of our Baklava Plus sale. Our camaraderie and joy throughout the workdays make the time flow! Our November days include:

11/1 and 11/2 Spanakopita Prep and Assembly, both days starting at 9:30.

11/8 and 11/9 Spanakopita Prep and Assembly, time to be announced soon.

11/20, Baklava Baking, starting at 9:30.

11/21, Packaging, starting at 4 pm.

11/22, Packaging and set-up, starting at 9:30.

11/23, Pick-up, please plan to arrive by 8:15 – doors open at 9:00.

Our November meeting will be on Tuesday, 11/12, at 7 pm via ZOOM.

As always, feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns (email is best: philomadison@gmail.com).



SHOP OUR BAKLAVA+ SALE

OUR BIGGEST FUNDRAISER!

Proceeds from this sale go to many local food pantries and charitable organizations, plus for helping people locally to around the world with disaster relief, and more!

Step 1. Order online today or by the Nov. 3 deadline

Step 2. Pick up your order

Where? Here. Assumption Greek Orthodox Church
When? Saturday, Nov. 25

We'll send you a reminder email.



Follow us on Instagram!



@PHILOPTOCHOS.MADISON



Ευχαριστώ
Thank You!

www.philomadison.com

YOUTH CORNER

November



Happy November Sunday school families!

As we enter the month of thanksgiving the Sunday school teachers would like to say thank you to our wonderful parents and teachers for all your support. We appreciate all you do to continue teaching your children the word of God. We encourage parents to please continue bringing your children to Sunday school, so they can learn more about the faith, the sacraments of the church, Holy Saints, and why we are part of Christ's family.

This month we have lots of fun events happening, please mark your calendars:

1. **Sunday November 10th:** after church, during coffee hour, we will have our church annual chili cook off! Families please bring your favorite chili recipes to share, once we all eat the delicious chili, the parish will vote on their favorite one. The winner will then be rewarded with the golden koutala- spatula. There will be a \$5 dollar entrance fee, the money will go towards Sunday school and Greek school.
2. **Friday November 15th:** in the church hall we will have a Kolyva Family Night at 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm. During this event students will learn how to make kolyva for a memorial service that Father will use on Sunday. There will be pizza, fall desserts, and fun fall games for children and families to play!
3. **Sunday December 1st:** there will be no Sunday school for Thanksgiving break, classes will resume on December 8th. We hope you all have a wonderful Thanksgiving break with your family and friends.

Quick note about the Children's library corner, please continue to encourage your children to check out books from the church. I am happy to see how excited the children are to use the library corner. Students are allowed to check out 2 books at a time. Please make sure to write your name, the name of the book, and the date you check out along with the date when you return the book/s.

In Christ,
Susu Akkawi
Director of Sunday school

COMMUNITY NEWS

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: Will be held on Tuesday, November 19th at 7:00 p.m.

PHILOPTOCHOS MEETING: The Next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 12th at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

THIRD ANNUAL PARISH CHILI COOK OFF: Will be on Sunday, November 10th after church, during coffee hour we will have the church chili cook off! Families can bring their favorite chili recipe to share, families will then vote on their favorite chili. The winner will then be rewarded with the golden koutala- spatula! There will be a \$7 dollar entrance fee but Children 5 and under along with Veterans will eat for Free. All Proceeds will go towards Sunday school.

YOUTH FAMILY NIGHT: On Friday November 15th: in the church hall we will have a Kolyva Family Night at 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm. During this event students will learn how to make kolyva for a memorial service that Father will use on Sunday. There will be pizza, fall desserts, and fun fall games for children and families to play! See Flier for more details.

SOCIAL MEDIA PARISH PHOTOGRAPHER: We are looking for a parishioner to volunteer to take charge of running our parishes social media presence as well as take Pictures during services and events. If you are interested please see Fr. Christodoulos.

CHURCH OFFICE VOLUNTEER NEEDED: We are looking for someone who is available to come in once a week to take care of some office Administrative work. If interested please see Fr. Christodoulos or Christy Chappell-Belkin for more information.

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS NEEDED: Parish Council Elections will be in December and we are always looking for new parishioners to join the ranks of our Parish Council. Please take some prayerful consideration and see Fr. Christodoulos or any Parish council member for more information.

2024 GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT: Fanari Camp's newest retreat for High School Girls will be held November 22-24th. Registration opens Monday, October 14th at noon. The goal of the retreat is to connect to Christ and one another as we navigate our lives. We will do this through:

- Building relationships with friends and mentors
- Learning how the faith can help us navigate stressors

The retreat will be held at the Saint Iakovos Retreat Center. Cost is \$250. www.fanari.camp/girlsretreat

PARISH ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES: A.R.E. classes have begun. We will be continuing the Gospel of John. 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.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING: Sunday, November 17th immediately after the Divine Liturgy. Many important issues will be discussed.

AGENDA, Opening Prayer, Election of Assembly Presiding Officer, Minutes of Previous Regular General Assembly, Pastor's Report, Proposed Budget for 2025, Committee Reports, Election of Three Member Audit Committee, Old Business, New Business, Closing Prayer.

CHRISTMAS CARD: Each year, our Church prepares a Christmas card that is mailed to our entire community. Your participation through our Church Christmas Card will not only convey your warmest and personal regards, but also frees you from mailing personal cards to many families. This is savings to you and a benefit for our parish. To include your name on this year's Christmas card please complete the flyer that has been emailed to you and included in the bulletin, or you can pick one up at the candle stand in the Church. Please return completed forms and payment to the church no later than December 9th.

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.



METROPOLIS
OF CHICAGO

Fundraiser

CHICAGO METROPOLIS
SEMINARIANS ATTENDING
HELLENIC COLLEGE/
HOLY CROSS SCHOOL
OF THEOLOGY

**Join us to help raise funds for
Chicago Metropolis Seminarians
attending Hellenic College/Holy
Cross School of Theology**

Holy Cross is a graduate school of theology that educates and forms Orthodox Christian men and women for service to the Church and society. Whether preparing for the holy priesthood or for lay vocations in which they can put their faith into action, HCHC students make up a vibrant community engaged in pursuing the eternal truths of Christ's message of salvation for all the world.

Proceeds for this event will directly benefit the current and future seminarians attending Holy Cross and will be the future leaders of our Orthodox faith.

TICKETS \$125 (PERSON) | \$1,250 (TABLE)



RSVP BY NOV 7

SCAN QR CODE

OR CALL 630.851.6106

NOV 14

EMPRESS BANQUET HALL

ADDISON, IL

6:30 PM COCKTAILS

7:30 PM DINNER

**KEYNOTE
SPEAKER**



**DR.
DEMETRIOS
KATOS**

President, Hellenic
College Holy Cross
Greek Orthodox
School of Theology

The poster has a light brown, textured background. It is decorated with several autumn leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and brown, some with detailed vein patterns. Small clusters of berries in purple, red, and orange are scattered throughout. The text is centered and uses a mix of bold, sans-serif fonts in dark brown, white, and orange.

ASSUMPTION SUNDAY SCHOOL

KOLYVA

FAMILY NIGHT

FOOD - FUN- SCAVENGER HUNT

FRIDAY NOV 15TH | 5:30PM-8:00PM

**MAKE KOLYVA FOR A MEMORIAL
SERVICE AND FIND CLUES AROUND
THE CHURCH FOR A SCAVENGER HUNT**

FANARI CAMP PRESENTS

HIGH SCHOOL *Girls Retreat*

**CONNECT TO CHRIST AND ONE ANOTHER
AS WE NAVIGATE OUR LIVES**

**NOVEMBER 22-24
ST. IAKOVOS RETREAT CENTER**





FANARI CAMPING MINISTRY EVENTS 2024-2025

OCT 4-6, 2024

Fall Camp

NOV 22-24, 2024

High School Girls Retreat

DEC 30, 2024

Reunion Dance
at Ascension of Our Lord

JAN 17-20, 2025

Winter Camp

MAR 22, 2025

Lenten Retreat
Locations TBD

JUN 15-21, 2025

Summer Camp:
Session 1

JUN 21-28, 2025

Lighthouse

JUN 22-28, 2025

Summer Camp:
Session 2

JUN 29-JUL 5, 2025

Summer Camp:
Session 3

JUL 6-12, 2025

Summer Camp:
Session 4

JUL 13-19, 2025

Summer Camp:
Session 5



WWW.FANARI.CAMP



@fanari.camp.official

Greek Orthodox
Metropolis of Chicago
St. Iakovos Retreat Center
Kansasville, Wisconsin

JOIN US FOR THE 4th ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF, VETERANS RECOGNITION & FOOTBALL WATCH PARTY

On Sunday, November 10th, 2024 the Sunday School will host a chili cook-off in the Social Hall immediately following Divine Liturgy

Join us for a Variety of Chili, fixin's, sides, drinks & desserts - and chicken nuggets for the non-chili eaters! Help us raise money for the Sunday School!

- Interested in putting your chili to the test and winning the coveted Chili Champ Golden Koutala! See Fr. Christodoulos if you are interested. We can accept up to 10 entries.
- Want to come taste and vote? The cost is \$7.00 for adults and Veterans and kids 3 and under are free.

Rules for Cooks

1. Have a 6-quart Crock pot (minimum) with your chili ready to eat by 11:15 a.m. on November 10th.
2. On the front of you 5x8 index card, indicate what type you are entering and give it a heat rating (mild, medium, hot). DO NOT include your name.
3. On the back of the card list the ingredients (measurements not needed)
4. The Sunday School and Greek School will provide fixin's, (cheese, onions, jalapenos, sour cream, crackers, chips and hot Sauce), and tasting cups, spoons and bowls.
5. Winner will be determined by popular vote only—no judges—this is just for fun and fellowship!



2025 Parish outing to the Madison Capitol's Hockey Team

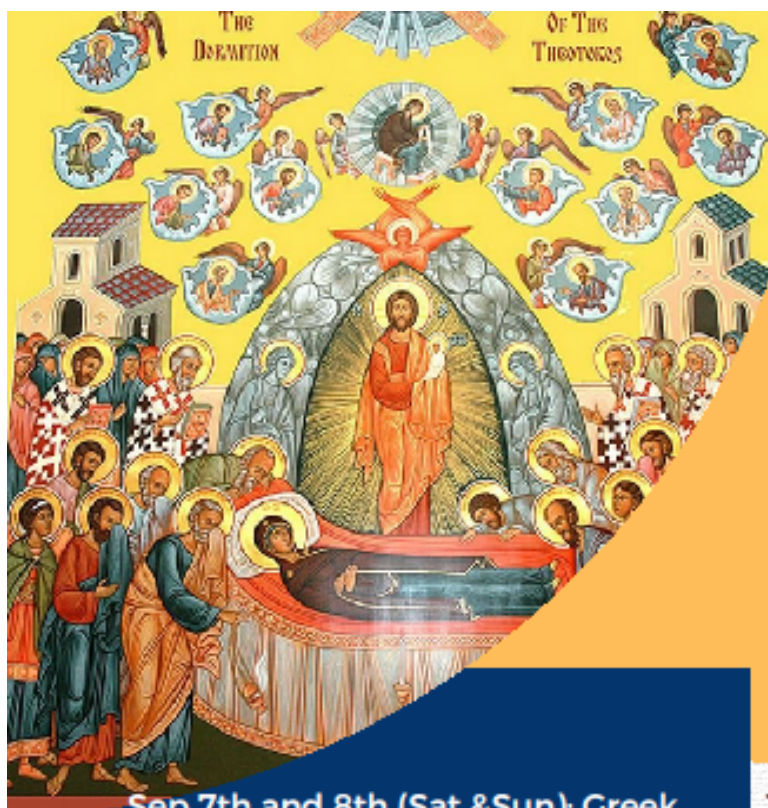


**On Saturday, February 22nd 2025 we will have a Parish
Outing to the Madison Capitol's Hockey Game vs the
Youngstown Phantoms**

**This year we have one of the Suites reserved for the
church. This means we will only have 30 tickets available.
The cost is still pending.**

RSVP with Fr. Christodoulos

**Join us for what is sure to be a great night of fun &
fellowship.**



SAVE THE DATES

Assumption

Sunday School 2024-2025 Events

Mark your calendars for the different Sunday school events for the new school year!

Sep 7th and 8th (Sat & Sun): Greek Fest +

Sep 15th (Sun) : First day of Sunday school

Oct 20th (Sun): Pumpkin patch and corn maze family outing

Nov 10th (Sun): Chili cook off fundraiser

Nov 15th (Fri): Kolyva Night

Dec 1st (Sun): No Classes Thanksgiving break

Dec 13th (Fri): Ginger bread night

Dec 15th (Sun): Christmas Pageant

Dec 22nd & Dec 29th: No Classes Christmas Break

Jan 12th (Sun): Ice Skating at Edgewater

Feb 2nd (Sun): God Parents Day Breakfast fundraiser

Feb 17th (Mon): Family bowling night

Mar 3rd (Mon): Lent Starts

Mar 30th (Sun): No Classes Spring Break

Apr 12th (Sat): Lazarus Retreat

Apr 13th (Sun): No Classes Palm Sunday

Apr 20th (Sun): No Classes Pascha

May 4th (Sun): Family picnic outing

May 18th (Sun): Last day of Sunday school

Jun 1st (Sun): Graduate Sunday Celebration



2024 Annual Community Christmas Card

**We are now accepting names to be submitted for the
2024 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 9th, 2024

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.

