

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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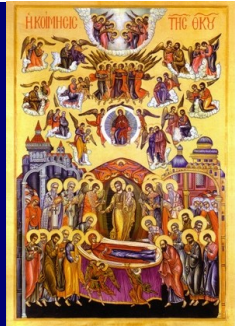
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Wonder Worker

FALL 2025

THE SANCTITY OF LIFE: A SACRED TRUST IN A CONFUSED AGE

In every generation, the Church of Christ has borne witness to the sacredness of human life. In our time, however, this truth is under assault from many directions. From the tragedy of abortion to the horrors of war and violence, from the neglect of the poor to the dehumanizing tendencies of modern culture, we are witnessing a widespread forgetfulness of God's image in our neighbor. Orthodox Christians must recover the fullness of the Church's teaching: that every human life, at every stage and in every condition, is a divine gift to be revered, protected, and loved.

Life as a Divine Gift

The foundation of our Christian understanding of life begins in Genesis: "Then *God said, 'Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.'*" (Genesis 1:26) Human life is not a human invention; it is bestowed by God Himself. Each person is created in His image and called into communion with Him. This reality gives every life inherent worth before birth and after, in sickness and in health, in strength and in weakness.

The early Church Fathers spoke with striking clarity about the sacredness of life. Saint Basil the Great wrote: "*The one who destroys the fetus deliberately is guilty of murder. And any fine distinction between a formed and unformed child is not admissible among us.*" (Letter 188, Saint Basil the Great) Likewise, the Didache, one of the earliest Christian documents, commands: "*You shall not murder a child by abortion nor kill that which is born.*" (Didache 2:2)

In an age when infanticide and abortion were commonplace in the Greco-Roman world, Christians stood apart. They recognized that to harm life at its earliest stages was to reject the image of God Himself.

The Sanctity of Life in All Its Dimensions

Yet the Church's vision extends far beyond the question of abortion. The same divine image that exists in the unborn child is also present in the refugee fleeing war, the elderly person alone in a nursing home, the homeless man on the street, and the stranger we pass each day. To ignore or harm any of these is to disregard Christ Himself, who tells us: "*Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.*" (Matthew 25:40)

Violence and War

From her earliest centuries, the Church has grieved over the bloodshed of war and interpersonal violence. Saint Basil, in his canonical letters, called soldiers returning from

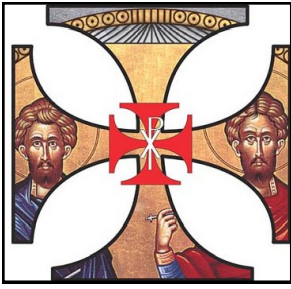
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October 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Strict Fast Day 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	2	3 Strict Fast Day	4 Philoptochos Baking Day Ethiopian Mission
5 2nd Sunday of Luke Church Musicians Sunday 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Greek School	6 Fr. Christodoulos at National Clergy Retreat	7 8:30 p.m. Philoptochos Meeting via Zoom	8 Strict Fast Day 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	9	10 Strict Fast Day	11 Russian Mission 5:00 p.m. Parish Outing to FC Madison Soccer Game
12 Sunday of the 7th Ecumenical Council 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. Adult Religious Education 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	16	17 Strict Fast Day	18 Saint Luke the Evangelist 8:00 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy Ethiopian Mission
19 3rd Sunday of Luke 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Greek School 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Parish youth Outing to Enchanted Valley Acres Farm	20 Fr. Christodoulos at Leadership Cohort	21 7:00 p.m. Parish Council Meeting	22 Strict Fast Day 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	23	24 Strict Fast Day	25 Philoptochos Baking Day Spanakopita Russian Mission
26 6th Sunday of Matthew Great Martyr Demetrios the Myrrhbearing 8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Greek School	27	28 Holy Protection Oxi Day 7:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	29 Strict Fast Day 11:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	30	31	1 Philoptochos Baking Day Ethiopian Mission

November 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>2</p> <p>5th Sunday of Luke Philoptochos Sunday</p> <p>8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy</p> <p>Sunday School Greek School</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Strict Fast Day</p> <p>Metropolis of Chicago Clergy Laity Conference Chicago IL</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Choir Practice</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Strict Fast Day</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Synaxis of the Arch- angel Michael & Gabriel & the Bodi- less Powers</p> <p>8:00 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy</p>
<p>9</p> <p>7th Sunday of Luke Saint Nektarios</p> <p>8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy</p> <p>Sunday School Greek School</p> <p>Chili Cook Off</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Strict Fast Day</p> <p>11:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Choir Practice</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Strict Fast Day</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Christmas Fast Begins</p> <p>Russian Mission</p> <p>Ethiopian Mission</p>
<p>16</p> <p>Fast Day Oil & Wine Permitted</p> <p>Saint Matthew the Apo- stle & Evangelist</p> <p>8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy</p> <p>Fall General Assembly Sunday School Greek School</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Fast Day Philoptochos Bakla- va Baking Day</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Fast Day</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Parish Council Meeting</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Strict Fast Day Baklava Baking Day</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Choir Practice</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Fast Day</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Strict Fast Day Entrance of the Theotokos to the Temple</p> <p>7:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Fast Day Oil & Wine Permitted</p> <p>Philoptochos Baklava Sale</p>
<p>23</p> <p>Fast Day Oil & Wine Permitted</p> <p>8th Sunday of Luke</p> <p>8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy</p> <p>Sunday School Greek School</p> <p>Philoptochos Meeting following Liturgy</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Fast Day</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Fast Day Saint Katherine the Great Martyr</p> <p>7:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Strict Fast Day</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Choir Practice</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Happy Thanksgiving</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Strict Fast Day</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Fast Day Oil & Wine Permitted</p> <p>Russian Mission</p> <p>Ethiopian Mission</p>
<p>30</p> <p>Fast Day Oil & Wine Permitted</p> <p>Saint Andrew the First Called Apostle</p> <p>8:30 a.m. Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy</p>						



FOCUS ON PHILOPTOCHOS HELP US TO HELP OTHERS

Agape Forward, Philoptochos News, September, 2025

Maria Molzahn, President

**“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another,
as good stewards of God’s varied grace”**

1Peter 4:10

When living in challenging times we are called to move even closer to our faith and the love that Jesus’ teachings demand of us. Philoptochos provides a great example of this type of ministry. Our diversity truly makes us stronger. If you haven’t already, please consider joining us.

August is here and with it the preparations for both our churches and Philoptochos’ main fundraisers: Greek Fest Plus, and Baklava Plus. While most of our baking for Greek Fest is behind us we still have to make our baklava, package our delicacies, and set up for the fest.

Baklava assembly will be on Thursday, September 4. Please contact Elene at alikis-age@gmail.com or Patti at pcameron10@gmail.com if you can make it.

Packaging and set-up for the festival will be on Friday, September 5. While we have a great crew already committed to come, we never turn away help. If you can make it, please fill out the volunteer form: <https://forms.gle/oasFY8PGukKDhqdf8> or contact me at philomadison@gmail.com.

The big day, of course, is Saturday, September 6. Again, we have a phenomenal crew for the morning set-up and first shift, but we can use more people for the rest of the day. We do understand that some of us cannot make it, but we can’t run a successful festival without the majority of us pulling up our hands and doing the work. If you can make it, please fill out the volunteer form: <https://forms.gle/oasFY8PGukKDhqdf8> or contact me at philomadison@gmail.com.

During the week of Greek Fest, Philoptochos was invited to give a presentation on Greek Food for the CHEW Wisconsin organization. Voula Kodoyianni offered to spearhead this talk. It will be very exciting, and promises to bring more people into both the festival and our November Baklava Plus sale.

Lastly, while we haven’t set the monthly meetings yet, we do have our baking days set. Please mark your calendars for the following events:

Keftedes prep: September 12

Keftedes assembly and baking: September 13

Koulourakia and Paximadia assembly and baking: September 20

Kourambiethes assembly and prep: October 4

Session 1 Spanakopita prep: October 24

Session 1 Spanakopita assembly: October 25

Session 2 Spanakopita prep: October 31

Session 2 Spanakopita assembly: November 1

Baklava assembly and baking: November 20

Baklava Plus set up: November 21

Baklava Plus Pick-Up: November 22

2026 Dates:

Vasilopita Meal, January 11 with a snow date of January 18

Greek Independence Meal: March 29

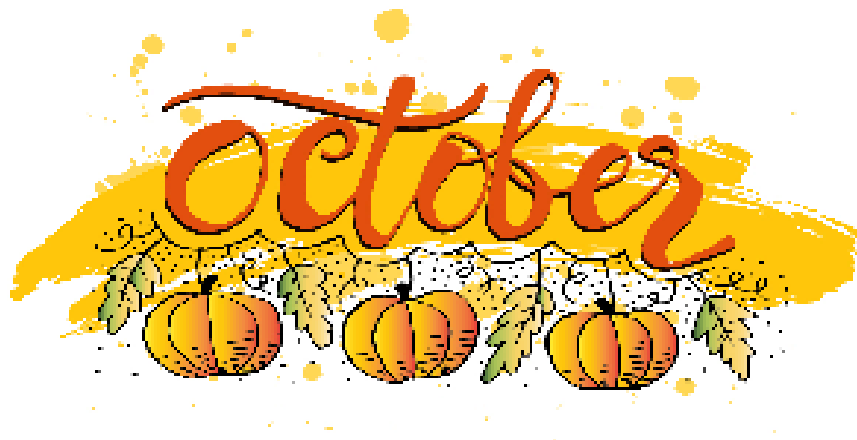
Thank you to our leaders for these important events. We will be sending out more information and sign-up details soon!

As a reminder, all proceeds raised from our bake sale fund our ministry. As in the past, along with our national and metropolis commitments, we provide critical support to local agencies such as the River Food Pantry, the Salvation Army, Porch Light, the Ronald McDonald house, and many more.

Thank you for all your help and support. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at philomadison@gmail.com or text me at 608-835-0184.



YOUTH CORNER



Happy October Sunday school families!

Fall has arrived with its beautiful changing colors around us. To get into the fall season, please mark your calendars for an exciting family event. On **Sunday October 19th**, after church there will be a family outing to **Enchanted Valley Acres Farm in Cross Plains** from 2-5pm. Please join us for some fun fall activities.

- Admission tickets to enter are \$16, children under 2 years are free.
- The tickets include many fun fall activities such as: a corn maze, giant slides, a giant pumpkin jump pad, wagon rides, obstacle courses, farm animals, and so much more!
- Pumpkins are for purchase and start at \$1.50 each.
- There is also food and sweets to purchase!

You can buy your tickets online to ensure your spot or you can buy the tickets in person. Hope you all can make it for some family fun!

If you have not registered your children for Sunday school, it is not too late please see Father or myself for any questions to register. Sunday school takes place for 30 minutes after Holy Communion. We are also looking for anyone to help teach or sub in classes, if you are interested please let myself or Father know.

A quick side note, it has come to my attention that children are playing around by the stairwell and doors during coffee hour. Please make sure you are keeping an eye on your children for their safety and the church's safety.

In Christ,
Susu Akkawi
Director of Sunday school

COMMUNITY NEWS

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: Will be held on Tuesday, October 21st & November 18th at 7:00 p.m.

GREEK SCHOOL BEGINS OCTOBER 5th: Classes will begin Sunday, October 5th and will take place after Sunday's church liturgy from around 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Tuition for this year will be \$450 for those who are NOT parish members. If you have more than one child, we provide a discount of 50% off for any other sibling. Payment can be submitted to Nico or Scott, either in one installment by November 15th, or in two installments of \$225 each, with the second installment due by January 31st.

If you already ARE a parish member, a donation to the Greek school is highly appreciated as we have to cover some expenses for materials and hourly compensation for some of our teachers.

Something NEW this year: Private lessons are also offered this year via zoom in case kids need some extra help with their Greek. Rates are \$40.00 per hour. All proceeds from private lessons will be DONATED to our church. If you are interested in some private lessons please contact me via email or call me at (608) 358-2060. Spaces and time may be limited, so please let me know if you are interested in private lessons as soon as possible.

NATIONAL CHURCH MUSIC DAY: Will be celebrated on Sunday, October 5th. This day has been set aside to honor church musicians (choirs, directors & Chanters) across the country. We, here at Assumption, are truly thankful for our church musicians; for all they offer to make our worship so uplifting.

2025 PARISH OUTING TO FORWARD MADISON FC: On Saturday, October 11th, 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 30 tickets available for the game and they will include entrance to the game and one meal per ticket. The cost is \$20. To purchase tickets please contact Fr. Christodoulos through email frchristos@gmail.com or contact the church office.

Initially we have 30 tickets. Information for buying tickets will be available soon! Join us for what is sure to be a great night of fun & fellowship.

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.

FOURTH ANNUAL PARISH CHILI COOK OFF: Will be on Sunday, November 9th 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! 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. If you would like to enter see the attached flier later in the Newsletter for details.

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.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES: A.R.E. classes are beginning. We will be continuing the book from last spring "With Pain & Love for contemporary Man" Classes are on Wednesday's at 11:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome to join us.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING: Sunday, November 16th 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 2026, Committee Reports, Election of Three Member Audit Committee, Old Business, New Business, Closing Prayer.

2025 Parish outing to the Forward Madison FC



On Saturday. October 11th, we will have a Parish Outing to the Forward Madison FC Soccer Game vs Chattanooga Red Wolves SC with a 5:00 p.m. Kick-Off.

**We have 30 tickets available for the game and they will include entrance to the game and one free meal per ticket. .
The cost is \$20**

To purchase tickets please contact Fr. Christodoulos through email frchristos@gmail.com or contact the church office.

Initially we have 30 tickets.

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

ASSUMPTION SUNDAY SCHOOL

Family Fall Outing

ENCHANTED VALLEY ACERS FARM
IN CROSS PLAINS

Sunday 10.19.25

2:00 - 5:00 PM

PUMPKIN PATCH, CORN MAZE, APPLE
CIDER DONUTS AND DRINKS, AND
FUN FALL ACTIVITIES!



Baklava+ Sale!



Baklava+ Sale

Assumption Greek
Orthodox Church
Philoptochos

Online Store is open!

Go to Philomadison.org
to see our delicious
offerings!

Online orders accepted until
November 2, 2025.

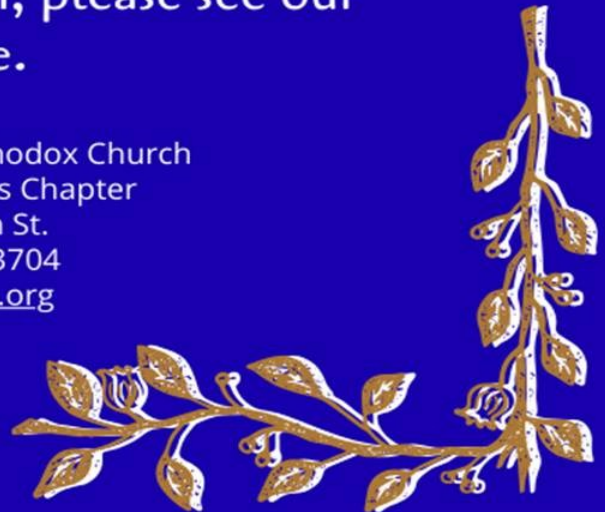
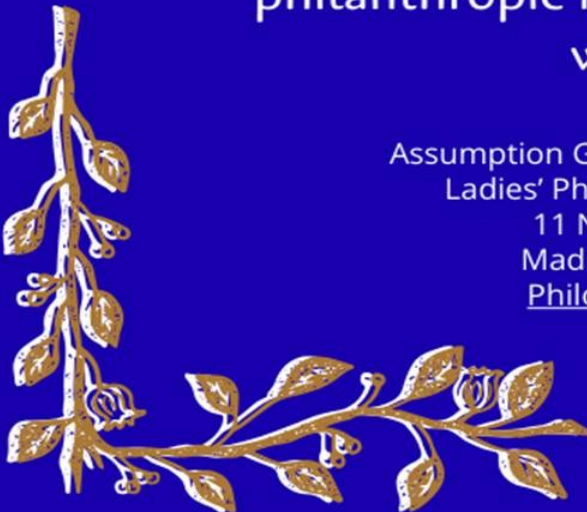
Pick up your order on
November 22
between 9am & 1pm.

Assumption Greek Orthodox Church
11 N. Seventh St
Madison WI 53704

Online store:
Philomadison.org

Thank you for your support!
If you'd like to know more about our
philanthropic mission, please see our
website.

Assumption Greek Orthodox Church
Ladies' Philoptochos Chapter
11 N. Seventh St.
Madison WI 53704
Philomadison.org





PROSPHORA NIGHT

Food / Dessert/ Fun games

Friday November 14th 5:30-8:00pm



battle to undergo penance, not because defending one's neighbor is evil, but because taking life, even in war, wounds the soul and contradicts our ultimate vocation to peace. Saint John Chrysostom exhorted Christians to reject hatred and violence: ***"Nothing is more foreign to a Christian than to seek revenge... He who loves his enemies is like unto God."*** (Homily on Matthew 18)

The Orthodox Church honors those who defend others with courage, but she never glorifies war itself. Violence whether in the womb, on the streets, or between nations, reveals humanity's tragic estrangement from God.

The Poor and the Marginalized

The Fathers were equally uncompromising when it came to neglecting the poor. Saint John Chrysostom famously preached: ***"Not to share our wealth with the poor is to steal from them and to take away their livelihood; it is not our own goods that we hold, but theirs."*** (Homily on Lazarus and the Rich Man) Saint Basil the Great, preaching during a famine, rebuked the rich for hoarding: ***"The bread you do not use is the bread of the hungry; the garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of the naked; the money you keep locked away is the money of the poor."*** (Homily on Luke 12:18)

For the Fathers, to ignore the suffering of the poor and homeless is not merely a failure of charity. It is a violation of the sanctity of life itself. To treat human beings as disposable or invisible is to deny the image of God.

A Unified Orthodox Vision

Abortion, violence, war, and neglect of the vulnerable may seem like separate moral issues, but in Orthodox teaching they share a single root: the failure to see every human being as an icon of Christ. Saint Gregory of Nyssa wrote: ***"The image of God is not found in one part of human nature, but in the entire human being."*** (On the Making of Man) This vision shapes our entire moral life. It calls us to reverence life in the womb, to work for peace in a violent world, to care for the poor, to comfort the elderly, and to welcome the stranger. It demands that our faith not remain a private sentiment, but be lived out through concrete acts of mercy and justice.

A Call to Faithful Witness

As Orthodox Christians, we are not called to conform to the shifting ideologies of the age. We are called to be the Church: a community that reveals Christ to the world through love, truth, and sacrificial service. This means forming our consciences according to Scripture and the Fathers, not political parties or cultural trends. It means standing for life in all its forms: protecting the unborn, opposing violence and hatred, caring for the poor, comforting the sick, and praying for peace. It means seeing Christ in every human face.

Saint Justin Martyr, writing to the Roman authorities in the second century, testified boldly: ***"We have been taught that it is wicked to expose newly-born children, for we would then be murderers."*** (First Apology, Chapter 27) If the early Christians could stand firm against the culture of death surrounding them, so can we—through grace, faith, and love.

Conclusion: The Sacred Trust

The sanctity of life is not merely a moral issue; it is a theological confession. Every person is created by God, redeemed by Christ, and destined for eternal communion with Him. To reverence life is to reverence God. As we enter this new season, let us recommit ourselves to this sacred trust: To protect life where it is threatened, To defend the vulnerable where they are forgotten, To bring the light of Christ into a world that has

grown dark. *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.”* (Jeremiah 1:5)

May we be a beacon of this truth, a place where every person, from the smallest child to the most forgotten soul, encounters the love of God through us.

+*Very Rev. Archimandrite Christodoulos Margellos*

JOIN US FOR THE 5th ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF, VETERANS RECOGNITION & FOOTBALL WATCH PARTY

**On Sunday, November 9th, 2025 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 your 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!





SAVE THE DATES

ASSUMPTION SUNDAY SCHOOL EVENTS 25-26

SEPTEMBER

- Sat 6th - Greek Fest
- Sun 14th - First day of Sunday School & Elevation of Cross

OCTOBER

- Sat Oct 11th - Forward Madison Game
- Sun Oct 19th - Pumpkin Patch Outing

NOVEMBER

- Sun Nov 9th - Chili Cook Off
- Fri Nov 14th - Prospora Night
- Sun Nov 30th - Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER

- Sun Dec 7th - St. Nicholas Day
- Fri Dec 19th - Gingerbread Night
- Sun Dec 21st - Christmas Pageant
- Sun Dec 28th - Winter Break

JANUARY

- Sun Jan 4th - Winter Break
- Sun Jan 11th - Blessing of the Lake
- Sun Jan 25th - Winter Youth Outing

FEBRUARY

- Sun Feb 1st - God Parents Day
- Sun Feb 15th - Family Bowling Night

MARCH

- Sun Mar 1st - Sunday of Orthodoxy
- Fri Mar 13th - Urban Air Outing
- Sun Mar 8th & 22nd - Confession Days
- TBD - Second Harvest Volunteer
- TBD - Lenten Fanari Retreat

APRIL

- Sat Apr 4th - Lazarus Retreat
- Sun Apr 5th - Palm Sunday
- Sun Apr 12th - Pascha & Egg Hunt
- Fri Apr 25th - Escape Room outing

MAY

- Sun May 17th - Last Day of Sunday School & Family Picnic at the Park
- Sun May 31st - Pentecost

JUNE

- Sun Jun 7th - Graduate Sunday
- TBD - Family Mini Golfing

EXTRA NOTE

- TBD - To be determined dates
- There might be date changes for different events depending on the weather