“What shall we offer you, O Christ, who for our sake appeared on earth as a human? Every creature made by you offers you thanksgiving. The angels offer you a hymn. The heavens, a star. The magi, gifts. The shepherds, their wonder. The earth, its cave. The wilderness, a manger. And we offer to you a Virgin Mother.”

This beautiful hymn we sing during the Vespers of Christmas reminds us of an essential part of Christmas - gift-giving. Yes, gift-giving is essential, but not in the sense that most of us think about it. From childhood, we dream of Christmas because of all the gifts we will receive. Even as we grow older, we take delight in offering our own children many gifts.

Well, the essence of Christmas is about gifts, but first and foremost about the greatest gift that God offered to the world—the gift of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

How the world has changed because of this unfathomable gift! Of course, we still have wars and violence, corruption and greed, illness and death; on one hand, it seems like nothing has changed. And yet, the most radical event in the history of the world has occurred! God has entered the world, tasted every aspect of human life except sin, including all the evil, hatred, jealousy, anger, bitterness and death itself, and after experiencing all that life had to offer, opened up a new path for humanity to follow.

Through this gift of Jesus Christ, we now have a concrete example of a perfect and holy life in the midst of a corrupt world. Our Lord did
The mission of Sts. Constantine and Helen Church is to proclaim the Good News of Salvation through the Orthodox Christian Faith for the glory of our Triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are a community of believers who journey towards our Lord Jesus Christ and one another through our **WORSHIP, FELLOWSHIP, SPIRITUAL GROWTH, WITNESS, and SERVICE**. We invite all people to join us on this journey in the Kingdom of Heaven.

*We are under the jurisdiction of*

His Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios of America
His Eminence, Metropolitan Methodios of Boston

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**Father Luke A. Veronis**

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**2013 PARISH COUNCIL**

**President:** Lisa Healy

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**Greek Dance Group:**

Nike Beaudry

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**YOUTH:** Pres Faith Veronis

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**Bookstore:** Lorna McWilliams

**Sexton:** Katya Sidorchuk, Drew Kladas
THE GREATEST GIFT!

Continued from Front Cover

not just teach about love, but incarnated
divine and unconditional love both to-
wards his neighbor, and even towards his
enemies. Jesus showed us that the greatest
virtue in life is to humbly serve and sacri-
fice for the other. We now know very
clearly the life we are called to live.

And the gift of Jesus not only set a perfect
example for us, but even more impor-
tantly, He delivered us from our greatest
fear and enemy - death itself. Christmas
Day is the beginning of our salvation, be-
cause Christ came on earth for one central
purpose, to destroy the power of death by
His own death!

As we make our way towards Christmas
Day, shopping and buying presents for
one another, let us all pause to reflect
upon the priceless gift that our Heavenly
Father has given to us, and let us find
ways to express our sincere and whole-
hearted gratitude back to Him.

The best way we can express our grati-
tude for His priceless gift is by imitating
His generous gift-giving! And in order to
imitate God, we must offer our best back
to Him. We are called to offer our very
lives in humble service to our fellow be-
ings and to God Almighty.

Here lies the secret to a meaningful and
blessed life. True living comes through
giving - of ourselves, of our time, of our
material possessions, of everything we
have. Jesus said, “It is more blessed
to give than to receive.” This sum-
marizes the authentic spirit of Christ-
mas, which we are called to carry
with us throughout the year!

May we all grow in our ability to
give, and thus, to become one with
our Lord Jesus.

A most blessed and joyous Christmas
to you!!

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

With deep love in our newborn King,

+Luke

Behold a mystery, a strange and
wonderful mystery. The cave has
become heaven. The Virgin a
throne of the Cherubim.
And the manger a noble place
where Christ lay. Wherefore, let us
praise and exalt Him forever.

Christmas Katavasias

Christ is Born, Glorify Him!
Christ comes from heaven go out
to meet Him. Christ is on earth,
be exalted. Sing unto the Lord all
you nations, clap your hands with
gladness for He is glorified.

Christmas Katavasias
Christmas celebrates the dawn of the Light of the World. The powers of darkness are overcome by his coming to share our life. The long reign of sin is ended and grace has been poured out upon the earth. The Sun of Justice has arisen, and evil is vanquished.

Perhaps the hardest thing to remember about Christmas is this. "It celebrates the incarnation, not just the nativity. The incarnation is an on-going process of salvation, while the nativity is the once-for-all-historical event of Bethlehem. We do not really celebrate Christ’s ‘birthday,’ remembering something that happened long ago. We celebrate the stupendous fact of the incarnation, God entering our world so thoroughly that nothing has been the same since. And God continues to take flesh in our midst, in the men and women and children who form his body today. And the birth we celebrate is not just the past historical event but Christ’s continuing birth in his members, accomplished by the power of the Spirit through the waters of baptism.

What we celebrate is our redemption in Christ and the transformation of all creation by the presence of the divine in our midst.

(From Liturgy Training Publications)

Advent (Christmas Lent) is the perfect time to clear and prepare the Way. Advent is a winter training camp for those who desire peace. By reflection and prayer, by reading and meditation, we can make our hearts a place where a blessing of peace would desire to abide and where the birth of the Prince of Peace might take place.

Daily we can make an Advent examination. Are there any feelings of discrimination toward race, sex, or religion? Is there a lingering resentment, an unforgiven injury living in our hearts? Do we look down upon others of lesser social standing or educational achievement? Are we generous with the gifts that have been given to us, seeing ourselves as their stewards and not their owners? Are we reverent of others, their ideas and needs, and of creation? These and other questions become Advent lights by which we may search the deep, dark corners of our hearts.

(by Edward Hays)
THE CHRISTMAS GIFT
From “Dear Abby”

So many of you asked us (since Yuletide’s drawing near)
"What do you want for Christmas? What can we give this year?"
If we say, "We want nothing!" you buy something anyway,
So here’s a list of what we’d like; believe now what we say:

Pajamas for a needy little child, food to feed the poor.
Blankets for a shelter, and we ask but little more—
Perform good deeds and let us know,
Or volunteer your time.
These last are worth a fortune,
And they needn’t cost a dime.

We have too many things now, vases, candles, tapes and clocks.
We have our fill of garments, ties, underwear and socks.
Candy is too fattening, crossword books we’ve more than 20.
We don’t need trays or plates or cups,
And knickknacks we have plenty.
We’ve no walls to hang more pictures;
We have books we’ve not yet read;
So please take what you’d spend on us
And help the poor instead!

Just send a Christmas card to us and tell us what you’ve done;
We’ll open them on Christmas Eve, and read them one by one.
It won’t cost as much for postage as a package sent would do,
You’ll need no wrapping paper, ribbons, ink or glue.
And we’ll thank God you listened to what we had to say,
So we could be the instruments to help someone this way.

I BELIEVE that Christmas is
more than a time for parties and
ornaments; it is a time for
remembering Christ and the
Incarnation of God’s love
in human flesh.

I BELIEVE there are gifts more
important than the ones under
the Christmas tree -
the things we teach our children,
the way we share ourselves with
others, and the industry with
which we set about reshaping the
world in our time.

I BELIEVE that the finest
carols are often sung by
the poorest voices;
from hearts made warm by the
wonder of the season.

I BELIEVE in the angel’s
message that we should not be
afraid— that the Child of
Bethlehem is able to overcome
all anxieties and insecurities.

I BELIEVE in prayer and
stillness as a way of living out
Christmas - that if I wait
in silence I will
experience the presence
of the One born in the
manger, for He lives today
as surely as He lived then.

I BELIEVE in going away from
Christmas as the wise men went:
"another way." I want to be
different when these days are
past - more reflective, more
caring, more filled with joy -
transformed with wonder by the
miracle of Bethlehem.

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

May the forgiving spirit of Him to whom we
dedicate this season prevail again on earth.

May hunger disappear
and evil cease their senseless acts.

May people live in freedom, worshiping as they
see fit, loving others.

May the sanctity of the home be ever preserved.

May peace, everlasting peace, reign supreme.
WHAT WE NEED FOR CHRISTMAS
By John Killinger

It is a commentary on our situation in life that the biggest problem most of us have with our Christmas shopping, aside from finding time to do it, is that most of the people we shop for already have everything they need. This year I’m fresh out of ideas.

We can imagine the scene in a fairly average household on Christmas morning. When all the expensively wrapped gifts have been opened and the room looks like an explosion in a paper-goods factory… It is rather obvious that a typical American family has everything. We have helped keep the economy on an upward spiral, gratifying both the local merchants and the administration in Washington, and we have cluttered our household with many more things that are destined for the school auction or the garage sale when we move or find that our home is simply too over-laden for living. Are we people who have everything or people who need everything?

What do we really need this Christmas?

WE NEED SIMPLICITY, time for sorting out our lives, time for being together, time for getting to know one another, and time for sharing ourselves at the deepest levels of human communication.

WE NEED HOLY TIME, a sense of life’s deeper dimensions, of eternal mysteries breaking in upon finite existence, of the God of righteousness whose being conveys meaning to all of life’s actions and relationships, and the blessing of a world that wants to bless us if we’ll only let it.

WE NEED TO SEE LIFE AS IT IS, for seeing the millions of people in the world who are starving to death and the millions who are dying of simple diseases, for realizing how shallow life is when it is lived merely for the pleasure of the moment without any regard to the future or its consequences, for standing back and looking at their own lives, so that, like Scrooge when the ghosts of Christmas Past and Christmas Present and Christmas Future whisked him away, we will have a chance to mend our ways, to become wholesome, to become worthy, and to become children of God.

WE NEED THE CHRIST OF CHRISTMAS AND RENEWAL OF OUR INNER SPIRITS. That is what it all comes down to, isn’t it? We need to hear and receive the message of Christmas, that God has entered the human arena to dwell with us, that His presence is consequently here and available to us now, that we are not alone, spinning out our destinies…, and that all our days are spent before the Holy One of Israel who poured all that He was and is and will be through the funnel of a miracle into the child born in the cave of Bethlehem. We need to surrender our lives to Christ, who is the real Gift of Christmas, and in the end He so overshadows all others as to be the only one.

That is the way it ought to be for us at Christmas. Most of us have been lost in the busyness of our existence, trying to cope from day to day, and have quite forgotten who we are or whose we are….And then we, who thought we had everything, realize we have nothing, and, realizing we have nothing, stand ready to receive everything. For He is our joy and peace.

In all the frenzy and noise of the season, O God, help us to find our way home; and, having found it, let us never lose it. Through Christ, who was born to show us the way. Amen.
Why Did God Become Man?

by Fr. Anthony Coniaris

Why did God choose to come to us in person? What were the reasons that compelled Him to visit us? They must have been awfully important reasons to make God empty Himself and take the form of a servant. Couldn’t He have sent someone else? Couldn’t He have ordered an angel or an archangel to come? Why did the Lord of the Universe Himself have to come?

We see an indication of why God would ultimately come to earth in the Old Testament, when we hear God say, “I have seen the affliction of my people and heard their cry… for I know their sorrows and sufferings and trials. And I have come down to deliver them” (Ex 3:7-8).

God came because He cared. He came in order to deliver us from the slavery of sin and death. He came because He loved us! We can summarize this best by quoting the Evangelist John “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.”

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We do not believe in an absent God, an invisible, intangible, eternally elusive God. We believe in a God who, when humanity fell into the ocean of sin and was drowning, did not just stay in heaven and shout directions on lifesaving, but who jumped into the ocean to save us. We believe in a God who intervenes in our lives.

We believe in a God who came to seek and save the lost; who came not to be served but to serve; who came to give us the abundant life; who came as light that whoever believes in Him may not remain in darkness, who came not to judge the world but to save it!

Jesus Christ came at Christmas. He comes again this Christmas. He comes each day, waiting to enter into our lives!
SAINT NICHOLAS
WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THE TRUE “SANTA CLAUS”

Sinter Klaas, the Dutch name that we Americans transliterated into Santa Claus, obviously refers to Saint Nicholas, one of the most beloved of all saints throughout the world, and whose memory we celebrate on December 6. Travel across Europe and you can literally find thousands of churches named in honor of St. Nicholas. Greece and Russia look upon St. Nicholas as the patron of their country. In fact, in almost every port throughout Greece you will find a St. Nicholas Chapel, signifying him as the patron of sailors. And not only sailors, but orphans and children also turn to St. Nicholas as their patron and protector.

Although our American secular society has tried to turn this greatest of saints into a jolly, fat man who wears a funny red outfit and brings a good spirit and lots of gifts to children on Christmas day, we Orthodox Christians never want to lose sight of Nicholas the saint, the 4th century Bishop of Myra, whose real life has inspired so many people throughout the world that they have created countless legends and stories lauding his Christ-like spirit.

Since childhood, many of us have heard stories of Nicholas’ generosity, like when the saint helped the poor man with three daughters by tossing bags of gold into his house. Although certain stories or legends may seem far fetched, we must take care not to lose their underlying meaning, which lift up one of the many Christ-like virtues which St. Nicholas so beautifully exemplified in his life, and which we also are called to cultivate in our own lives.

What were some of these characteristics? First of all, St. Nicholas, like all saints, stood up for the truth of God. Nicholas lived through the persecutions of Diocletian, one of the last Roman emperors who persecuted Christians in the 4th century. Under the threat of imprisonment and even possible death, Nicholas continued to preach the love of God and proclaim His truth. And he suffered for it. The Romans imprisoned him and threatened his life, yet he wouldn’t deny the truth, nor waver in his strict stance for the standards of the Gospel. This same zeal for the truth came out during the First Ecumenical Council, when Nicholas the bishop defended the fullness of our faith – that Jesus was fully God and one with the Father - against various false teachings that were very popular during his day.

His courage and boldness to live out a Christ-like life, and incarnate the truth, even when the surrounding society ridiculed and even threatened such a lifestyle, is something with which we contemporary Christians must learn. Christianity, as an authentic way of life, is not for the fainthearted. Christianity was never meant to be a ‘status-quo,’ comfortable, easy religion of the masses. Christ called his followers to a life of divine love, which automatically implies a life of sacrifice and humble service to others. This is why Jesus reminded us that few people will have the courage and commitment to walk that narrow path!
And here lies a second quality that stands out from the life of St. Nicholas. **Not only as a bishop and a good shepherd of the Church, but simply as a Christian, Nicholas needed to fight against the temptation of self-centeredness** – an illness of our fallen nature that plagues each of us – and he did this by constantly looking for ways to reach out to others, especially helping the oppressed, defenseless and marginalized people of society. Bishop Nicholas was not a leader who reveled in power and authority, but he understood himself as a disciple of the One who washed His disciples’ feet and who constantly cared for the poor. Being a Christian is all about serving others, thus Christian leadership must be servant leadership - always placing the needs of others before ourselves!

We have many stories of Nicholas reaching out in compassion and kindness to the orphaned, to the estranged, to the prisoners, and especially to the defenseless. As I try to repeat in many of my sermons, sincere Christianity points to “the other,” to those outside of ourselves. Love of God means love of our neighbor, and love of the other. We as Christians, and the Church as the Body of Christ, must always have our central attention on charity, outreach and mission – bringing God’s love to others!

The world outside can be an isolated, lonely, often harsh, and even mean place to live. How bright our light will shine if we radiate Christ’s unconditional compassion, kindness, love and charity, as St. Nicholas did throughout his lifetime.

**A third virtue we must live up from St. Nicholas’ life is his generosity.** Bishop Nicholas suffered the life of an orphan, having lost both his parents in his teenage years. Yet from the moment that Nicholas received a rich inheritance, he understood good Christian Stewardship, and generously distributed his wealth to those in need. He did not seek to use his wealth for his own well-being and comfort, but realized that his wealth represented a test and temptation, and thus used it to enrich others!

When Christ’s Spirit fills the heart of a disciple, we joyously want to imitate our Lord’s example by giving all that we have to help others. True joy comes through giving. True meaning in life comes from helping and serving others. And the generosity of our giving reflects the maturity of our faith! This summarizes the spirit of St. Nicholas!”

“A final aspect that St. Nicholas so beautifully exemplified in his giving was the spirit of anonymity. He gave generously, but never for fame or for praise. He simply gave because he understood how generous God was to him first. Everything he had was God’s, and he didn’t want to take credit for anything he gave away. How much can we all learn from that, in this day and age – to give in a secret manner, all for the glory of God!

A courageous and bold defender of the truth, a compassionate and loving helper of the defenseless and needy, and a generous and humble steward of God’s gifts – these represent some of the many virtues of the true Santa Claus, St. Nicholas.

Throughout this season of Christmas Lent, when we see and hear many references to a fat, jolly old man in the red suit, and even as we read books or tell stories to our children and grandchildren about Santa Claus, let us never lose sight of the true Santa Claus – St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra. And let us try to live out and then teach our children and grandchildren about the Christ-like virtues that made Nicholas one of the world’s most beloved patrons and saints!
WHAT MY FAITH AND THIS CHURCH MEANS TO ME

Nike Beaudry

When Father Luke asked me to speak about “What My Faith and This Church Mean to Me,” my first reaction was, “Oh sure!” Once I absorbed this a little, I understood that I would have to talk about myself somewhat, and realized I am much more comfortable being busy with things in the church than talking about what I do. But if this can encourage anyone toward putting their own gifts and talents forward, then I am happy to speak a little.

My, and our, worship of God, in many ways is based on the given that we attend church weekly. I grew up in the large Kimisis tis Theotokou Greek community in Poughkeepsie, NY, and our family had an established routine of going to church every Sunday. We often stayed there long hours after the Liturgy as my parents, grandmother and Thea Maria were very involved with church activities.

From a child’s point of view, I was expected to wait patiently, but I found myself very influenced by the sights and sounds within the Church which created such a beautiful mystery. Our Saturday evening Orthodox Easter/Resurrection Service was, and is one such occasion, with the smell of many candles, incense, hushed silence at midnight, the voice of our priest breaking that silence in the joy of song, and the taste of communion and bread. All of these things as we know and follow in our liturgy of course play an important role in our ongoing worship of God within the house of His church.

The fellowship that exists here, at Sts. Constantine and Helen, is without a doubt something truly wonderful. When we first came seven years ago, there were people that greeted my family with such a warm welcome we couldn’t help but come back! And this led us to come back regularly. I remember how my father visited this church and Kosta Koulax greeted him with such a warm welcome, even inviting him to come and share in a chicken dinner in the church hall, even though he had never met my father before. This memory, by itself, is a constant reminder to me, and an example of how to be with each other all the time.

Our church family feels a lot like any family—there is much laughter and joy, grief and arguments, dysfunctions, comfort, encouragement and sorrow experienced together. The warmth and joy of getting to know one another more intimately, and our ability to share our love and concern outwardly in the community is irreplaceable to me. Our church is filled with people whose friendships extend far beyond simply seeing one another at church on Sunday.

Four years ago, I started a Greek dance group, begun with about eight children. I love working with children so this was easy to begin. We now have four different groups, numbering about 30 children. We also have added several beautiful costume sets that are handmade and purchased from Greece, which many of you contributed towards. Add to that many pairs of shoes, music lists, music on CDs and iTunes, spoons, belts, jewelry, handkerchiefs, other accessories, books on Greek dance, and more than 20 dances learned from regions all over Greece.

The work that has gone into this Greek Dance Group is constant and demands no small amount of time. There are many times late at night I would ask my husband for help with my sewing machine, would be up researching and reviewing dances and music and scheduling for upcoming rehearsals or performances. I was by no means perfect and I’m sure my family will remember a testy mom and wife the next day. A few times, at around 2am, I was very ready to stop, give up on what I was doing, and not push myself any further, especially when my entire family was asleep. But, instead, I said a prayer and asked God for strength and perseverance to continue. I sat and thought of my love
of Greek dance, seeing the joy on dancers’ faces, being with them and teaching, the encouragement of many who appreciated having their children learn, and the beautiful result of seeing a group come together.

I was, however, never alone. I have always had the constant support of Father Luke and Presbytera Faith, and there are many other parents and people who have continued to give their help over and over again. In many ways I am offering a big thank you to everyone here. The people of this church have worked together and offered encouragement for this to happen successfully.

Little did I think this perseverance would extend toward pushing me to come to Bible Study every week. A year ago, I joined the Wednesday morning Bible Study group. Again I forced myself to get in the car, leave behind my work, and come to study, bit by bit, the words of the Gospel. I am quite grateful my work schedule allows me to do this during a weekday morning! Within this Bible Study exists worship, fellowship with a group of lovely ladies, and education toward spiritual growth. I can easily say this has stretched and increased my understanding of God and my relationship with Him in prayer like never before. I thank Vassey, Leah, Despina, Eleni, Carolyn and Lorna for teaching me in many ways, in addition to the teaching of Father Luke.

Obviously, as a musician, I love to sing. I love to use this gift from God and sing with our choir, especially helping our young people to learn as well. Our Orthodox tradition is rich with many hymns, and the opportunity to learn and practice these is a favorite part of attending Divine Liturgy for me. Another special part of this is seeing my husband learn and enjoy singing our Orthodox Liturgy, especially as challenging as it may be since he was raised in the Catholic faith. It is a wonderful thing to come and sing, and have the fellowship of many who join together in doing so.

When we bring our dance group to a nursing home, sing Christmas carols at people’s homes, and visit those ill or in nursing homes, it is such a beautiful act of giving, each time I come away reminding myself I want to do more. Last year, when we sang for Arthur and Edna Vogel, and David Davis, we experienced such a special blessing of grace and beauty that I cannot sufficiently put it into words.

Even fundraising for dance costumes, and seeing how everyone offered their help was fantastic. It was also a gracious gift to have the Philoptochos women donate flowers for our dance group to sell.

Throughout all this, I have learned that WORSHIP is not, and should not, be a given, but is a grace, a freedom in this country and a blessing bestowed upon us. I have learned that FELLOWSHIP is not a given, but that we should love one another as we love the Lord. I have learned that EDUCATION and SPIRITUAL GROWTH is not a given, but something I must pursue. I, by my works, will show my faith, and we show our faith by our works together.

I have learned that to give is far, far better than to receive. I do not know the gifts each person has, but I do know without a doubt that each of us have special gifts, and the more we share them within our Church family, and with others, the more we will be blessed.
THANK YOU

to everyone who helped us offer
25 Thanksgiving Baskets & Turkeys to Families in Need.

A Special Thanks to Charlie and Helen Pappas who offered 15 turkeys, and an anonymous donor who offered an additional 10 turkeys.

3rd Annual Philoptochos Spaghetti Dinner

THANK YOU to all who helped make this so successful!
HOLY CHRISMATION

Please welcome our catechumens, TONY BEAUDRY and RAYNE PURCELL, as full members of our Church Family when they receive the Mystery of Holy Chrismation on Sunday, December 15th.

NEW YEAR’S EVE POT-LUCK SOCIAL

If you are interested to help organize, please see Nicoleta Cojocaru and Nike Beaudry.

SERVING ON THE PARISH COUNCIL

One special way to act as a good steward of your time and talents is by serving on the Parish Council. This two year commitment is a way you can serve in the leadership of our Church Family, working together with Fr. Luke in fulfilling the mission of our Church.

Every candidate must:

- Live his/her life in accordance with the Faith and canons of the Church
- Attend a PARISH COUNCIL SEMINAR on Dec 9 at 7:30pm
- Be an UP TO DATE FINANCIAL STEWARD of the parish

If elected, a Parish Council member should:

- Attend Divine Liturgy regularly
- Participate in the sacramental life of the Church
- Work together with Fr. Luke in fulfillment of the Church’s ministries

Deadline to submit name: December 8th
Mandatory Seminar: December 9th
Elections: December 15th

A CHRISTMAS RETREAT
WITH FR. IAKOVOS OF SIMONOPETRA
9:30am—12:30
Saturday, December 14th

“THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTMAS”

“GOING BEYOND THE COMMERCIALISM OF CHRISTMAS”

Fr. Iakovos of Simonopetra has been a monk on Mt. Athos for the past 28 years, following his graduation from Hellenic College and Holy Cross. With the blessing of Metropolitan Methodios, he is now preparing to begin the first monastery in the Metropolis of Boston. He was one of the monks interviewed for the “60 Minutes” special on Mt. Athos.
**Christmas Poinsettia**

If you would like to donate a Christmas Poinsettia in memory or in honor of a loved one, or for the Glory of God, please send in $50 to the Church Office. We will purchase the poinsettia and list the names of those honored or commemorated in our Monthly Bulletin.

You can also donate the outdoor Christmas Wreaths for $75 each.

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**THE GIVING TREE**

We are collecting gifts for 35 children for families in need. Please see Lea or Bob Mirandola to receive a slips on the “Giving Tree.” Return the suggested gifts (less than $25) to the Church by December 8th.

We also welcome anyone else who may want to donate $25 or $50 gift cards. We have numerous families that ask for help during this season!

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**CHRISTMAS YOUTH EVENTS**

Dec 8 - ST. NICHOLAS CELEBRATION in Church, followed by activities, pancake luncheon, and Christmas Caroling in the nursing homes and among the elderly.

Dec 7, 21, Christmas Pageant Practices at 3:00-5:00

Dec 15 - Christmas Pageant Practice following Liturgy

Dec 22 - CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

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**PLEASE VISIT THE ELDERLY DURING THE HOLIDAYS**

IN ELDERLY HOMES

John Nicholopoulos - Webster Manor
Helen Theodores –Webster Manor
Lorraine Vesho - Webster Manor
Dina Teguis - Westview, CT

**HOMEBOUND**

Charlie Christos
Bertha Constantine
Norman Desrosiers
Jennie Manthos
Eva Pappas
Stavro Pappas
Sophie Talbot
Konstandina Ziakas
PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Our 3rd Annual Spaghetti Dinner was a great success. THANKS TO ALL who contributed with their time, talents and through monetary donations. Our youth were our waitresses and waiters and did a fabulous job. Our hall was nicely decorated with floral decorations that were crafted at our previous meeting. This event raised $3000 and will assist us in our philanthropic efforts. Thank you for your support!

We wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

PHILOPTOCHOS MEMBERSHIP

Please remember to pay your ANNUAL $20 DUES FOR 2013.
Please see Sandi Kunkel.

BAKELESS BAKE SALE

A bit of news we have today
A Bakeless Bake Sale is on its way.
In these busy times, now who could bake
A pita, baklava, or walnut cake?
You’d be surprised if you counted the cost
of materials, heat and the time you lost.
Baking for sales is lots of work
yet nobody really wants to shirk.
So we’ve thought of a plan that’s really grand,
and feel quite sure you’ll understand.
In an envelope, please include the price
Of a pita, baklava or anything nice
Without fuss or bother, you’ve done your part
We hope you’ll give with a willing heart.
Wishing success for our bakeless bake sale
This is the end of our little tale.

Please make the checks out to the Philoptochos and send the checks into the Church office or give them to Leah Didonato or Thomai Gatsogianis.

2013 Annual Church Family Christmas Card

If you would like your name to appear in the annual CHURCH FAMILY CHRISTMAS CARD, which goes to the homes of all our parishioners wishing them blessings during the upcoming holiday season, please give a minimum donation of $15 per family and the names to Donna Cooney or Debby Raymond by Dec. 8th, or mail them to the Church Office, noting Church Family Christmas Card. All donations will support the various philanthropic ministries of the Philoptochos.

PHILOPTOCHOS CHRISTMAS PARTY

Sunday
December 15, 2013,
at J. Anthony’s in Oxford

We will depart together following the Coffee Fellowship

Please see Olga Pappas to buy tickets.
Cost is $20.
LEARN TO GREEK DANCE

For Any Adults Who Want to Learn How to Greek Dance!

Sunday, December 1
Following Coffee Fellowship

WEEKDAY CHURCH SERVICES

GREAT VESPERS
5:30pm, Every Saturday (Except Dec 27)

WEEKDAY DIVINE LITURGIES
9:30 am
Dec 6 - St. Nicholas
Dec 12 - St. Spyridon

CHRISTMAS SERVICES
Royal Hours of Christmas - Dec 24 - 9:00am
Christmas Eve Matins 4:30 pm
Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy - 5:30
Christmas Morning Liturgy 10:00am

CHRISTMAS PRAYER CHAIN

Please contact Fr. Luke if you would like to participate in the 24-Hour a day Prayer Chain from Dec 1-7.

EARLY RISERS BIBLE STUDY

6:30 am - 7:30 am
Every Saturday

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

10:30-11:45
Every Wednesday
All Are Welcome!
“I bring you good tidings of great joy. A Savior has been born!”

**COFFEE FELLOWSHIP:**
Dec 1 – Donna Cooney, Athena Cooney, Leah DiDonato, Bill Anthopoulos
Dec 8 – Kathy Bilis, Charlotte Neslusan, Marie Monroe, Carolyn Niemeck, Deb Raymond
Dec 15 – Thomai Gatsogiannis, Jaime Ross, Betty Tonna, Eleni Xanthopoulos, Kiku Andersen
Dec 22 – Marie McNally, Christa Benoit, Sandi Kunkel
Dec 1 – Donna Cooney, Athena Cooney, Leah DiDonato, Bill Anthopoulos

**YOUTH EPISTLE READERS**
Dec 1 - Hanna Kunkel
(Ephesians 2:4-10 - page 102)
Dec 8 - Theodora Veronis
(Ephesians 2:14-22 - page 104)
Dec 15 - Maria Mironidis
(2 Timothy 1:8-18)
Dec 22 - Olivia Neslusan
(Hebrews 11:9-40 - page 118)
Dec 24 (Eve) - Smaranda Cojocaru
(Galatians 4:4-7 - page 121)
Dec 25 (Christmas) - Maia Beaudry
(Galatians 4:4-7 - page 121)
Dec 29 - Panayiota Veronis
(Galatians 1:11-19 - page 123)
Jan 5 - Paris McWilliam
(2 Timothy 4:5-8 - page 125)
Jan 12 - Katerina McWilliam
(Ephesians 4:7-13 - page 127)

**USHERS & GREETERS SCHEDULE**

**December 1**
Chris Constantine, Barbara Gianaris, Dan Healy, Dan Rivelli, Ron Sanderson

**December 8**
Arthur Bilis & Del Monroe, Chris Geotis, Thomai Gatzogianis, Trish Laurea,

**December 15**
Marie McNally, Eric Beland, Matt Benoit, Zach Gianaris, Lisa Healy, Gus Koulax

**December 22**
Neal Neslusan, Betty Vriga, Leah Didonato, Bob and Lea Mirandola

**December 24 - Christmas Eve**
Chris Constantine, Barbara Gianaris, Dan Healy, Dan Rivelli, Ron Sanderson

**December 25 - Christmas Morning**
Arthur Bilis & Del Monroe, Chris Geotis, Thomai Gatzogianis, Trish Laurea,

**December 29**
Marie McNally, Eric Beland, Matt Benoit, Zach Gianaris, Lisa Healy, Gus Koulax
### Remembering Our Church Family

**Important Dates in DECEMBER:**

*Try to make a visit, give a call, or express your congratulations to members of our Church family who celebrate special days this month.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BIRTHDAYS:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Dec 6</strong></td>
<td><strong>St Nicholas</strong></td>
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<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>Nicholas Angelo</td>
<td>Dec 7</td>
<td>Evis Jordanoglou</td>
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<td>Dec 8</td>
<td>Maria Mironidis</td>
<td>Dec 12</td>
<td>Helen Tsigaridas</td>
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<td>Dec 12</td>
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<td>Dec 22</td>
<td>Vasil Condos</td>
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<td>Dec 22</td>
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<td>Dec 23</td>
<td>Kenneth Peterson</td>
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<td>Dec 24</td>
<td>Sophie Talbot</td>
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<td>Dec 25</td>
<td>Christie Geotis</td>
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<td>Paul Geotis</td>
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<td>Mary Asante-Nichols</td>
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<td>Dec 29</td>
<td>Anestis Jordanoglou</td>
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<td>Dec 30</td>
<td>Eric Beland</td>
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<td>Dec 31</td>
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<td>Dec 31</td>
<td>Emmanuel Pappas</td>
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**WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 11</td>
<td>Arthur &amp; Sara Darligiannis</td>
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<td>Dec 14</td>
<td>Charles &amp; Helen Pappas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 26</td>
<td>Vasil &amp; Despina Condos</td>
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<td>Dec 31</td>
<td>Chuck &amp; Misty Pappas</td>
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**NAMEDAYS:**

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 4</td>
<td><strong>St. Barbara</strong></td>
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<td>Barbara Constantine</td>
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<td>Barbara Desrosiers</td>
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<td>Barbara Gianaris</td>
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<td>Dec 25</td>
<td><strong>St Joseph the Betrothed</strong></td>
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<td>Joseph Gliniecki</td>
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<td>Dec 26</td>
<td><strong>St. Stephen</strong></td>
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<td>Stephen Angelo</td>
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CHRISTMAS AND STEWARDSHIP

The Feast of Christmas is all about God’s extreme generosity in offering His only begotten Son to His Creation. God gave the most precious possible gift to the world, so that the world could be saved through Him. As Saint Athanasios said it, “God became man, so that humans might become divine.”

God holds nothing back from His infinite treasury of love to all His beloved children. Yet as generous and loving as our heavenly Father is, He hopes that His children will adopt His spirit and imitate His kindness and love by acting in similar manner. God gives to us all that we have, and then watches to see what we will do with His blessings.

Will we keep them for ourselves and our own self-centered pursuits? Will we actually think that all we have is our own? Or will we gratefully acknowledge that all we have is but a gift and loan from God, and then use our gifts to show our love for God - by generously sharing with others, and glorifying His name through His Church!

Remember the great gift of Christmas as you think about and fill out your 2014 Stewardship Commitment Card to the Church.

Please Send in Your 2013 Stewardship Donations.

140 Stewards have given thus far this year. We are waiting for another 40 stewards to offer their 2013 gift.

Look for our convenient Online Giving
in the bottom left corner of our Church webpage www.schwebster.org

Please send in your 2014 Stewardship Pledge Cards
HOLY SCRIPTURE ON CHRISTMAS

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and you shall call His name Emmanuel, which means “God is with us.”

Matthew 1:23

“I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born for you. He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you; you will a baby wrapped in clothes and lying in a manger. Suddenly a great crowd of the heavenly host appeared with the angel and said, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to all.”

Luke 2:13-14

For a Child is born to us, a Son is given us; upon His shoulder dominion rests. They shall name Him messenger of great counsel, wonderful counselor, mighty one, sovereign Master, Prince of Peace, Father of the age to come. His dominion is vast and of His peace there shall be no end.

Isaiah 9:6-7

DAILY BIBLE READINGS
DECEMBER

Dec 1 Ephesians 2:4-10 Luke 18:35-43
Dec 4 Galatians 3:23-4:5 Mark 5:24-34
Dec 5 Galatians 5:22-6:2 Matthew 11:27-30
Dec 8 Ephesians 2:14-22 Luke 13:10-17
Dec 10 2 Thessalonians 1:10-2:2 Mark 8:22-26
Dec 11 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 Mark 8:30-34
Dec 12 Ephesians 5:8-19 John 10:9-16
Dec 13 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18 mark 9:33-41
Dec 14 Galatians 1:3-10 Luke 14:1-11
Dec 16 1 Timothy 1:1-7 Mark 9:42-10:1
Dec 18 1 Timothy 1:18-2:15 Mark 10:11-16
Dec 19 1 Timothy 3:1-13 Mark 10:17-27
Dec 20 Hebrews 10:32-38 Mark 9:33-41
Dec 22 Hebrews 11:9-4 Matthew 1:1-25
Dec 23 1 Timothy 5:1-10 Mark 10:46-52
**Dec 25 Galatians 4:4-7 Matthew 2:1-12
Dec 26 Hebrews 2:11-18 Matthew 2:13-23
Dec 27 Acts 6:8-40 Matthew 21:33-42
Dec 28 1 Timothy 6:11-16 Matthew 12:15-21
Dec 29 Galatians 1:11-19 Matthew 2:13-23
Dec 30 2 Timothy 2:20-26 Mark 12:13-17
Dec 31 2 Timothy 3:16-4:4 Mark 12:18-217
Thank You to those who sponsor our monthly bulletin!

If you would like to place an ad and support our monthly bulletin, please contact Fr. Luke or the Church Office.

$200/year or $20/month.

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Funeral Director Fax (508) 943-3163
Email: miller.funerals@verizon.net  www.rjmillerfunerals.net

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Email: miller.funerals@verizon.net  www.rjmillerfunerals.net
## DECEMBER 2013

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<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
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<td>8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy Greek Dancing for Adults After Coffee Fellowship</td>
<td>6:00 Philoptochos Meeting</td>
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<td>10:30 Bible Study</td>
<td>8 St Nicholas 8:45 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td>6:30 Bible Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy * St. Nicholas Celebration * Christmas Caroling in Homes</td>
<td>6:30 Parish Council Meeting 7:30 Seminar for Parish Council Candidates</td>
<td>10:30 Bible Study Vespers at St. Spyridon Cathedral in Worcester</td>
<td>12 St. Spyridon 8:45 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td>5:30 Vespers</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy with Chrismations * PC Elections * Philoptochos Christmas Luncheon</td>
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<td>10:30 Bible Study</td>
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<td>6:30 am Bible Study 3:00 Christmas Pageant Practice 5:30 Vespers</td>
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<td>8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy with Christmas Pageant</td>
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<td>Strict Fast 9:00 Royal Hours for Christmas 4:30 pm Christmas Matins 5:30 Liturgy</td>
<td>MERRY CHRISTMAS CHRIST IS BORN!!! 10:00 Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td>Jan 1 St Basil A Blessed &amp; Happy New Year 9:15 Matins 10:00 Divine Liturgy</td>
<td>Jan 2</td>
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<td>8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy 11:30 Fall General Assembly</td>
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<td>6:00 Vespers 9:00 New Year’s Eve Social</td>
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<td>6:30 am Bible Study</td>
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<td>5:30 Vespers</td>
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A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, you have come so many times to us and found no resting place. Forgive us for our overcrowded lives, our vain haste and our preoccupation with self.

Come again, O Lord, And though our hearts are a jumble of voices, and our minds overlaid with many fears, find a place however humble, where You can begin to work Your wonder as you create peace and joy within us.

If in some hidden corner, in some out-of-the-way spot, we can clear away the clutter, and shut out the noise and darkness, come be born again in us, and we shall kneel in perfect peace with the wisest and humblest of people.

Help us enter into this Christmas celebration with humility, with joy, and most of all with a desire to discover You anew! Yes Lord, give us a Christmas from within, that we may share it from without, on all sides, all around us, wherever there is a need.

God help us, every one, to share the blessings of Jesus Christ with others, in whose name we keep Christmas holy.