New Beginnings. September is the start of a new Ecclesiastical Year. September is the start of a new school year. September is when the summer comes to a close, and we get back into our normal routine with activities at the Church.

September is also when we have our annual GREEK FESTIVAL. This is a wonderful time of Christian fellowship. I love seeing all the volunteers come out for two days, working together with a great spirit, and growing closer to one another. It’s also a fantastic time for our Church family to offer a beautiful Christ-centered witness to the larger Webster, Central MA, Northeast CT community. We are known for our delicious Greek food and pastries, but I also hear comments every year about the loving, warm, welcoming feeling everyone experiences when they attend our festival.

Our Festival is a great time to overwhelm our visitors with Christ-centered love, and who knows, maybe some of the hundreds of people who attend will think of joining us for a Sunday Liturgy as well!

On Sunday, September 23rd we have two other special occasions. First, our SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM begins, so please bring all your children to attend. We will have five classes with a potential of 52 students! Our teachers are getting ready for a great school year. Please bring your children from the beginning of the Divine Liturgy so that they can hear the children’s sermon each week, and the go to Sunday School after receiving Holy Communion.
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

**Father Luke A. Veronis**
*Telephone: (508) 949-7623 (h) (774) 230-6985 (cell)*  
*email: frlukeveronis@gmail.com*

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### 2017 PARISH COUNCIL

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**Cantor:** Demetrios Milios  
**Choir Directors:** Tony and Nike Beaudry  
**Greek Dance Group:** Nike Beaudry  
**Sunday School Teachers:** Anesti Jordanoglou, Evis Jordanoglou, Pauline Mueller, Stephanie Quill, Rayne Purcell, Pres. Faith Veronis  
**Seminarians and Teachers:** Constantine Alexandrides, Alex Limberatos, Anthony Linderman, Rayne Seraphim Purcell, Charlie Chito  
**Ecclesiarchs:** Rayne Seraphim Purcell, Charlie Chito  
**Bookstore:** Lorna McWilliams  
**Sexton:** Mike Kokoszka  
**Grounds:** Nick Popiak  

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### PHILOPTOCHOS

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**Church Secretary:** Mary Seferi  
**Festival Chair:** Lisa Healy and Marie McNally
NEW BEGINNINGS

Also on Sunday, September 23rd we will have the great joy of WELCOMING EIGHT NEW MEMBERS INTO OUR CHURCH. We will have a Chrismation Service in the middle of the Liturgy to anoint these new members with Holy Chrism, where they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and then will make a profession of faith to become full members of our Church. We will welcome George and Annalisa Dunning and their children Helen, Ephraim, Lucy and Francis, along with Mike Kokoszka and Lynn Purcell. Please come and join us in welcoming them into the fullness of our Church Family.

An exciting new ministry that our Church Family will begin on Saturday, October 7th is “THE LIVING BREAD” SOUP KITCHEN. Once a month we will open up the doors of our church and invite whoever is in need in Webster and the surrounding area to a delicious free, hot meal! Right now in the Webster/Dudley area there are two churches that offer a free meal every other Tuesday and every other Wednesday. So that means once every week, a person in need in this area can find a homecooked, warm meal. We want to join these churches in serving our community. Our organizational committee has decided that the first Saturday of every month from 12:30-1:30 we will serve a meal.

We will need many volunteers to help cook the meals and offer a welcoming and loving presence to our guests. Of course, this is pretty easy for our Church Family to do since we are such a loving, warm and hospitable community! Please let me know if you are interested in joining our planning committee, or if you want to volunteer to cook, to serve, to clean up, or to help in any way we need.

We will also be looking for people to offer donations to help offset the cost of each meal. I already have two donors who said they will cover the cost of two meals. We are looking for someone to donate $300 to cover the costs of the meal. Maybe you can do this in memory of a loved one, in honor of someone, or simply in thanksgiving for how blessed each one of us are. I don’t think we will have any problem getting donors to cover all the expenses of this exciting new ministry! Thomai Gatsogiannis already told me she will make a pita for each meal we have! If others want to make something to add to our meals, let me know!

Having talked with those who run the soup kitchens at the other churches, I’ve heard over and over again what an incredible blessing this is not only for the people who come to eat, but also to the community that offers this meal. We will experience the words of our Lord Jesus Christ when He said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

I’ve also heard how this is a ministry not only about giving a warm, delicious meal to people in need, but it is a wonderful opportunity to just sit with others, talk with them, get to know them, and share God’s love in a concrete way. Some people who will come will be looking for a good meal. Others will come simply because they want loving fellowship. Whatever the reason, we will be there to see Christ in the face of each person. As Jesus said, “I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me to drink. [I was lonely and you spent time with me.] Whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do to me.”

Looking back at the summer, thank God we had some beautiful experiences as a church family. I want to thank all those who participated on and who supported our Project Mexico team. You can read the reflections of team members and see pictures on pages 6-9. It was truly a blessed experience, and this has been a special part of our church family for the past 12 years. In October, we will have our annual Pantry Drive where we want to collect 40 boxes of supplies for St Innocent Orphanage. Please help us out once again!

With love and gratitude in Christ Jesus our Lord,

+Luke
ADDICTIONS, DEMONS, REDEMPTION
Fr. Luke Veronis

Demon possession. We heard about it in the recent Gospel story when Jesus cast out demons controlling two men. In the other Gospels, we read about legions of demons possessing a single man. Too often, when we contemporary people hear about demon-possession, we simply roll our eyes. There’s no such thing as demons. Sometimes, past generations understood certain illness as demon possession. We simply want to dismiss this talk about demons. Well, I could write specifically about demons, and the devil, and the reality of evil in the world. Surely there is plenty of horrific evil every day in the news to believe in such reality. Yet, I want to write about something else today. I want to look at certain “demons” that control our behavior and that destroy countless lives. My theme in this article is about the “demons” of addiction.

In past generations, as well as today, when many hear about people struggling with addictions, they often think of morally bankrupt individuals. Alcoholics, drug addicts, gamblers out of control, and sex addicts, one of the fastest growing addictions being fed by the billion dollar internet pornography industry. The problem of addictions and its impact on society and in the lives of countless individuals is reaching epidemic proportions in our country.

The Office of the Surgeon General of the United States came out with a seminal report in 2016 entitled “Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General’s Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health.” The then Surgeon General, Dr Vivek H. Murthy, hoped that this report would bring much needed attention to what he considered one of the greatest public crises of our time. Pay attention to these statistics. In 2015, 21 million Americans, or 8% of our country’s population, struggle with addiction to substance abuse; 48 million (18% of our population) used an illicit drug or misused a prescription medication, 67 million binge drink monthly, and 28 million self-reported driving under the influence (DUI). There are more deaths and disabilities each year in the U.S. from substance abuse than from any other cause. These statistics don’t include the damage and destruction to lives affected not only by addiction to substances, but to addictive behaviors like gambling or internet pornography. The consequences of all these addictions severely affect the individual suffering from this disease, but also greatly impact the families, friends, and our society as a whole. The economic impact alone of substance addictions exceeds $442 billion each year in health costs, lost productivity, and criminal justice costs.

For much of human history, such addictive behavior was seen mainly as a moral weakness. Those struggling with addiction faced harsh judgment and severe discrimination from society. The Church also, too often, viewed people struggling with addiction as terrible, weak sinners. Such negative and judgmental attitudes towards those struggling with addiction didn’t help addicts find a path toward recovery. Of course, people wrestling with addiction have choices to make, and when they make poor choices they face serious consequences. Yet, we’ve learned that it’s not only one’s bad choices which lead to addiction, but a combination of developmental, environmental, social, and genetic factors that play a role.

Over the past decades the medical world has helped us understand addictions as an illness or disease that must be treated, rather than a moral failure that must be judged. Just as one wouldn’t condemn a person with diabetes, or cancer, or some other physical illness, the medical field has studied and researched substance use disorder, concluding that addictions affect and even change the brain chemistry and body make-up of an individual, and thus, need to be understood and treated in a holistic way. This implies holistic treatment that includes participation from the medical field, social service organizations, educational systems, community based organizations, government health agencies, religious institutions, law enforcement, and other public, private, and voluntary entities.

From the Church’s perspective, we need to offer God’s love and compassion, mercy and grace, healing and restoration, a never-ending hope for a
new life, with not only our words but also our presence, patiently walking with those struggling with addictions and hopefully guiding them on a path of healing and restoration.

Of course, there is a temptation to get frustrated with people struggling with addiction, because they have become master manipulators, who often are dishonest with themselves as well as with their loved ones. They struggle with a terrible sense of guilt, shame, and self-hatred. They are not proud of the pain and hurt they have caused in too many broken relationships. They have disappointed others countless times, and they continually disappoint themselves. Such low self-esteem does little to help them on their path of recovery. They are tempted with despair, feeling there is no way out and little real hope for change. And even if others sincerely love them and want to help, they often feel they are not worthy of such love and help. Poor boundaries, codependency, and chaos often rule their lives.

We must always remember, though, that the Church is a hospital. And hospitals never turn away the sick, but welcome them into our healing community. The Great Physician, Jesus Christ Himself, offers His loving and healing presence through His community of faith, and through His Mysteries/Sacraments. The Church doesn’t judge and reject anyone due to whatever illness they may have, but welcomes all to find healing from whatever destructive addictions and illnesses – physical, spiritual, mental - with which they struggle.

As Christians we are called to journey and intimately walk with those who are sick and suffering. There may not be any quick medicine for healing, but the healing will come through a long process of simply walking with others, feeling their pain, empathizing with them in their moments of despair, and loving them no matter how often they fall and seem to fail. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to offer a loving, understanding, comforting, non-judgmental, non-threatening presence to each and every individual who is suffering, as well as to their family that is co-suffering with them. Specifically, with people struggling with addictions, we need to treat the addict as a special child of God who is facing a life-threatening illness. Take care to never allow the addiction and its consequences to distort the beautiful image of God in the person themselves.

Jesus always saw and called out the hidden beauty from each person he encountered, helping them rediscover the image and likeness of God within and the unlimited potential they possess. Approaching an addict from this perspective creates an atmosphere which hopefully helps the person feel valued and loved, regardless of their behavior or perceived failure. We have to help the addicted person believe that he/she is a child of God, created in His image.

This Christian story of hope, healing and new life can be told in different ways to someone struggling with addiction. No matter how broken someone is, regardless of their checkered history, no matter how sick and damaged their life, in Christ “all things can become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Whether it was someone with physical ailments, like a woman sick for 12 years with hemorrhaging blood (Mark 5:25-34), a man born blind from birth (John 9), a paralyzed person (Mark 4), or a leper (Luke 17), Christ offered physical healing. Yet he never limited his healing to physical health alone. He also met a broken, despised woman married five times and treated her with love and respect (John 4). He saw her beauty within, helped her see her own beauty, called out that beauty and led her into a new life of authentic beauty. In fact, the Church remembers this hopeless Samaritan woman as the beloved Saint Fotini. The same could be said about her, as it was about the prodigal son – “he was lost and is found, was dead and is alive” (Luke 15:32). And there are plenty of other stories about despised, broken, sick individuals like Matthew and Zacchaeus the tax-collectors, with whom Jesus saw such great potential and goodness that he invited one to become an intimate disciple, and the other he visited his house and declared that salvation had come to him.

Sharing stories of how Jesus respectfully treated and healed physically ill people, morally bankrupt persons, or broken and hopeless individuals offers a concrete message of optimism that change can happen. Illness comes in all forms of mind, body and soul. A person struggling with addiction understands this well, and may think there is no hope for themselves. Yet, history is full of individuals whose lives have been changed and transformed, including many addicts. There is always hope.
Let me conclude with a story I just recently read by Meg Hunter-Kilmer about a Chinese Orthodox saint, Mark Ji Tianxiang.

Ji was an opium addict who couldn’t stay sober. He struggled with his opium addiction for 30 years! In the early part of his life, Ji was a respectable Christian, raised in an Orthodox Christian family in 19th-century China. In fact, he was a leader in the Chinese Orthodox Christian community, a well-off doctor who served the poor for free. One day, however, he became ill with a violent stomach ailment and treated himself with opium. It was a perfectly reasonable thing to do in that day and age, yet Ji became addicted to the drug, an addiction that was considered shameful and gravely scandalous.

As his circumstances deteriorated, Ji continued to fight his addiction. He went frequently to confession, refusing to embrace this affliction that had taken control of him. Unfortunately, the priest to whom he confessed (along with nearly everybody in the 19th century) didn’t understand addiction as a disease. Since Ji kept confessing the same sin, the priest thought that was evidence that he had no firm desire to change or truly repent from his sin.

Without resolve to repent and sin no more, the priest thought his confession was invalid. So after a few years, Ji’s confessor told him to stop coming back to confession if he was not resolved to stop using opium. For some, this might have been an invitation to leave the Church in anger or shame, yet for all his brokenness, Ji knew himself to be loved by the Father and by the Church. He knew that the Lord wanted his heart, even if he couldn’t manage to give over his addicted life. Ji couldn’t stay sober, but he could keep showing up.

And show up he did, for 30 years. For 30 years, he was unable to receive the sacraments. And for 30 years he prayed that he would die a martyr. It seemed to Ji that the only way he could be saved was through a martyr’s crown.

In 1900, when the Boxer Rebels began to turn against foreigners and Christians throughout China, Ji got his chance. He was rounded up with dozens of other Christians, including his son, six grandchildren, and two daughters-in-law. Many of those imprisoned with him were likely disgusted by his presence there among them, this man who couldn’t go a day without a hit. Surely he would be the first to deny the Lord.

Yet while Ji was never able to beat his addiction, he was, in the end, flooded with the grace of final perseverance. No threat could shake him, no torture make him waver. He was determined to follow the Lord who had never abandoned him.

As Ji and his family were dragged to prison to await their execution, his grandson looked fearfully at him. “Grandpa, where are we going?” he asked. “We’re going home,” came the answer.

Ji begged his captors to kill him last so that none of his family would have to die alone. He stood beside all nine of them as they were beheaded. In the end, he went to his death singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And though he had been away from the sacraments for decades, he is a canonized saint.

St. Mark Ji Tianxiang is a beautiful witness to the grace of God constantly at work in the most hidden ways, to God’s ability to make great saints of the most unlikely among us, and to the grace poured out on those who remain faithful when it seems even the Church herself is driving them away.

In our Church calendar, we honor the memory of St. Mark Ji Tianxiang on July 9th. Let’s ask his intercession for all those struggling with addictions, and for all those who are unable to receive the sacraments, that they may have the courage to be faithful to the Church and that they may always grow in their love for, and trust in the Lord. St. Mark Ji Tianxiang, pray for us!
A MESSAGE TO TERRORISTS:
“YOU ARE LOVED!”

Once again we find ourselves experiencing pain before which words seems insufficient. I have previously addressed victims of terrorist acts. I have addressed their families. I have even addressed those who may have had an opportunity to advocate for or support those most vulnerable. This time, however, I feel a need to address those who perpetrate these crimes.

You are loved! The violent and deadly crimes you perpetrate are abhorrent and detestable, but you are loved!

You are loved by God, your Creator, for He created you in His image and according to His likeness, and placed you on this earth for much greater things, according to His plan for all humankind. You are loved by me and millions like me, not because of what you do, but what you are capable of as that wonderful creation of God, who had created us with a shared humanity. You are loved by me and millions like me because we believe in transformation.

Transformation is core to the Christian message, for throughout history we have seen many transformed from being those who persecuted Christ himself and Christians to those who went on to live with grace. We believe in transformation because, on a daily basis, we are personally transformed from a life of human weakness and sinfulness to a life of power and righteousness. We believe in transformation because the entire message of the cross and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is to take humanity from the bonds of sin and death to a liberation in goodness and everlasting life. Our world is certainly suffering from the brokenness of our humanity, but it is our responsibility to encourage and inspire ourselves and all those whom we meet along our path to a life of virtue and holiness and love and forgiveness for all.

This, of course, is far from the reaction that many have expected, but the Christian message is just that - to look at our world through the eyes of God, who loves all and who desires that all be liberated through him.

I grieve certainly for those who have lost their lives, for those who mourn and for those who will continue to be adversely affected by these tragic events. But I also grieve for a young man who sees it not only justifiable, but glorious, to take the lives of other people and deprive their families of enjoying them as they grow and mature.

No family should lose a son in this way, even if they are partially or wholly responsible for his flawed ideology. This loss might be to that ideology, to incarceration as a result of his actions and choices, or in the worst case in taking his own life, along with others, regardless of the great cost to those left behind. In the same way, no family deserves to lose children who merely go about their day to enjoy their God-given right to exist.

I also grieve for those who considered it a victory to board a bus filled with pilgrims and execute children, women and men purely for refusing to denounce their faith, as we saw happen to Coptic Christians in Menia on May 26th.

What is increasingly obvious is that many of these attacks come about due to a loss of the meaning of the sanctify of life, our own or that of others. So join me in praying for the brokenness of our world that causes parents to lose their children, children to lose their parents, and humankind to lose its humanity for which it was created.

What is important is not that this message be read but that it be communicated; not that it be accepted but that it be understood as another perspective. Not that it should be fully embraced but that it may create at least a shadow of a doubt in the minds of those intent on inflicting harm.

Written by Bishop Angaelos, the Bishop General of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Great Britain
BUILDING HOPE IN MEXICO

“Dirt everywhere, eating lots of beans, using outdoor showers, sleeping in tents and sleeping bags. Each year when I tell people about our living conditions for a week when we go to Mexico, they question why I love it so much. My answer is always the same: I feel most myself when I am there. The simplicity of the environment makes it easier to feel God’s presence and appreciate all the blessings He gives to us. The appreciation and affection of the family for whom we are building a home make me feel selfish in a way, because I feel like I am gaining just as much as they are. The look on their faces when we hand them the keys to their new house makes me completely forget how dirty I am, or how sore my hands are. My mind and heart expand when I am in the presence of these people who have so little material items, but who have more love and gratitude than I could imagine.” (Theodora Veronis)

These words came from one of the 28 participants from our Church who traveled to Tijuana, Mexico from July 21-28 to build a home for a family in need. This is the 7th time in the past 13 years that our Church has built homes under Project Mexico. Our group stays in tents on the ranch of St. Innocent Orphanage, a home for orphan boys from ages 5 to 18 years old. Each day the team works on building a 20 x 15 foot home. The home is pretty basic, but it has a concrete foundation, sturdy walls, windows and doors, and will keep a family safe and warm especially during the rainy seasons. Throughout the summer, more than 600 mostly high school and college-age kids travel through Project Mexico to build 30 homes.

Fr. Luke noted, “This trip is always a highlight of the year for our Church Family. It is a beautiful way that we can go out into the world and offer a concrete witness of God’s love. Sometimes people question why we have to go so far to do such good deeds. Well, we believe in helping others locally and globally. Our Church helps build homes with Habitat for Humanity in Worcester. We are hoping to start a soup kitchen this year in our church! There is something different, however, when a group goes for a week, leaves the comforts of the United States and experiences what life is like for the majority of the world. We were only 30 minutes across the border, and yet it felt like we are in another world. Getting our youth, young adults, and parents to break away from their typical American life, and experience not only poverty, but the beauty and love of the Mexican people – this is something that changes lives. It changes not only the lives of those we try to help, but our own lives as well! And our Church has now had 70 different people go on these trips.”

Here are parts of the reflections from some team members:

“My past two experiences at Project Mexico have been nothing short of amazing, and I truly didn’t think it could get any better. However, it did. Something happens when you step into Saint Inno-
cent orphanage; God’s love fills your spirit. We built a home for a beautiful family and helped them in a huge way. It felt, however, as though they helped us and opened our eyes. The trip is nothing short of amazing.” (Olivia Neslusan)

“When you cross the border between countries, it’s like going into or out of church - you enter into what seems like another world. I did not expect that the people who have close to nothing could be so filled with joy... When we asked one of the orphan boys what his favorite season was, he started to say winter, but then hesitated and replied with, "No, summer, because I get to see all of you. One highlight of my week was a day when we were in the middle of building the house. There was a day where one of the family's boys had a birthday. My friends bought small gifts and balloons to bring to him. He couldn't speak English but he gave each and every one of the workers there a huge hug, and the mother thanked all of us. I had the opportunity of being a part of building not only a house but a home for a family who could afford close to nothing and I am very grateful for all the people I met on the way.” (Maia Beaudry)

“Sometimes we get so comfortable with the life we have, and we take for granted God’s gifts we have been granted. I was reminded that we are the exception. Most people in the world live in the conditions we experienced in Mexico, and far worse. It was a humbling experience that I will never forget.” (Stephen Foisy)

“We were able to provide a family with a safe and secure environment, and they truly showed how happy they were when we were done. Besides building the home, however, it was also incredible how close you feel to God during this trip. It helps
one understand that we need to be all for God, and to love others with all of our hearts, no matter what.” (Smaranda Cojocaru)

“Project Mexico has taught me more and more how grateful we have to be for everything we have. My favorite part was handing the keys of the new house to the owners and seeing the tears streaming down Piedad’s face. I was so touched and an instant smile came across my face that was expressed with tears of my own… Project Mexico is my home away from home.” (Panayiota Veronis)

“I never thought I would be taking this trip to Mexico and pushing myself out of my comfort zone as much as I did. Going into this trip I was scared, skeptical, and worried. I never thought I would have the experience of a lifetime! It was not only building a house for people in need but it was giving them hope. I normally do not get emotional but during the blessing of the house I really felt the presence of Jesus. I remember looking around at everyone’s faces and then looking at the cross on the table. I realized how lucky I am and how I shouldn’t take anything for granted.” (Concetta Archimbault)

My favorite part of the week was after the house blessing when we said our final goodbyes to the family and the other locals who came. Many of the little boys who I was talking to a few days before seemed very emotional that we were leaving which was really awesome to see because even though we weren’t building a house for them, we had an impact in their lives. (John Nesluslan)

From the moment we arrived at the ranch, until the moment we left, I felt strangely at home in a place I had never been in my entire life. The energy that everybody brought with them helped me through the week. It was a challenging week, but the challenge did not outweigh the fun and spiritual growth that took place this week. My favorite time of day was the ‘quiet time’ that we got every morning after our prayers. That time to reflect helped me to center myself, and to prepare for the coming day of work. I learned the importance of praying, and how our prayers positively transform those around us. I learned the importance of the mission, and how much good we were actually doing for our Mexican families living in poverty. I felt that I was a part of something much bigger than I was, and it brought me true joy.” (Nick Makiej)
Project Mexico is a very fun and great way to give back to the people who need some help. You don't even realize how bad some people have it until you are there in person seeing they're everyday lives. Giving that family a new home really opened my eyes and made me appreciate my life and beautiful family. I hope to go back to Tijuana again. (Kara Bilis)

I really enjoyed my first trip to Mexico! It was a very good learning experience. I really appreciated how happy all the boys from the orphanage, and the family for whom we built were even though they did not have much. It really made me realize how lucky we all are, and I would love to do it again! (Louisa Foisy)

In conclusion, Pres. Faith highlighted, “This past week was an incredible witness of how young people can break away from their comfort zones and cross borders to build not only a simple home for a Mexican family in need, but build up gratitude, friendships, and life-changing experiences and memories! As a parent and educator, I could not have been more proud of how all of our participants broke down cultural barriers and cultivated their faith and love for all people!”
Involve your Neighbors and Friends

**OPA!!!**
**GREEK FESTIVAL**
September 9th & 10th

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**BUY A FESTIVAL BANNER**

Buy a $100 Banner that will be hung up inside the Festival Tent.
You can buy a banner to greet the community from your family, or put it in memory of a loved one.

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**SEND IN YOUR GIFT RAFFLE TICKETS**
($5 each or Book of 5 for $20)

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**PASTRY DROP-OFF**
Friday, Sept 8 BEFORE 2pm

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**CENTER TABLE**
Please bring in items for the Center Table. A basket will be placed in the Church Hall.
Contact Dhimitra Adamopoulos or Celia Milios with questions.

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**GIFT SHOP & BOOK STORE**
Traditional Greek Items, Jewelry, Religious Books, and more!!!

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**WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!**
Please volunteer for as many hours as you can on the weekend of the Festival! We also need people to help in the preparations and the clean up afterwards. Don’t wait to be asked, but contact co-chairs.

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**THEMATIC BASKETS**
Contact Dhimitra Adamopoulos or Celia Milios about making a thematic basket, or donating anything towards a basket.
WATCH OUR GREEK DANCERS
Our youth Greek Dance Troupe will perform traditional dances on Saturday, 1:30 and 5:00 and Sunday at 1:00

LIVE GREEK MUSIC with “ARION”
Saturday 2:00 – 9:00pm
Sunday 12:00-5:00pm

DONATIONS APPRECIATED
IF YOU ARE DONATING THE FOLLOWING, WE WILL NEED TO KNOW BY 8/30/2017
30 CASES OF WATER
50 CASES OF SODA (15 COKE, 10 DIET COKE, 8 GINGER ALE, 9 ROOT BEER, 8 ORANGE)
20 LARGE ONIONS (FOR GYROS)
3000 NAPKINS
600 SMALL 6 in PAPER PLATES
100 SLICES OF AMERICAN CHEESE
140 HOT DOGS AND HOT BUNS
140 HAMBURGERS AND BUNS
500 DINNER ROLLS
3 CASES SERNO (6 HOUR)

CAN’T WAIT FOR MOUTH-WATERING LOUKOUMADES AND PASTRIES!!!

LOOKING FOR A $300 DONATION FOR CHILDREN’S BOUNCY HOUSE

TENT SET-UP
Come Sat, Sept 2 and Tue, Wed, Thur, or Fri Before the Festival to Help!!! Talk with Chris Geotis

CLEAN UP
Help on Monday AFTER the Festival! Talk with Chris Geotis.

CHILDREN’s BOOTH
Also looking for other monetary, prize and game donations to help out the children’s booth. They also want 1-liter soda for their ring toss

GREEK “KAFENEIO” COFFEE SHOP
Try our “Baklava Sundays”, Greek Coffee, Frappes, and other specialties!

Try Our Delicious Souvlaki, Gyros and Greek Food!
During the first three centuries following the crucifixion of Christ, Christianity underwent many periods of cruel persecution. Many of those who followed the new faith became martyrs. Nevertheless, Christianity spread to all areas of the world and those who became followers of the teachings of Christ included the weak and the powerful, the poor and the rich.

When Constantine the Great became the ruler of the Roman Empire in AD 307, his right to the throne was challenged by another Roman ruler named Maxentius. They met in battle in 312 near Milvian Bridge on the Tiber River after Constantine had made a surprise crossing of the Alps. On the eye of this crucial battle, with Maxentius possessing forces superior in number, Constantine was greatly worried.

Just before sunset, a miracle appeared in the sky. Beneath the sun there appeared a cross formed of bright, vivid stars with the inscription in Greek blazoned on it which said, “By this Conquer!” The sight was amazing to behold but Constantine was unable to understand its significance.

While he was asleep that night, the Lord appeared to Constantine in a vision. He was commanded to make a banner with the sign of the Cross inscribed on it similar to the vision he had seen in the sunset skies. Overcome with elation, Constantine immediately ordered the banner to be designed and the sign of the Cross was inscribed on it.

In the battle which followed, Maxentius’ forces were defeated. Constantine entered Rome in triumph and was proclaimed Emperor of the entire Roman Empire. With this great military victory, persecution of the Christians came to an end through the Edict of Milan issued in AD 313. The First Ecumenical Council was convened during his time and Constantine was baptized as a Christian on his deathbed.

After he became the supreme ruler of the Roman Empire, Constantine had a burning desire to discover the whereabouts of the Precious Cross. He dispatched his mother, St. Helen, to Jerusalem to institute a search for the Cross upon which Christ had been crucified. She arrived in the Holy City, inquired, and found that the Cross had been buried in a certain hillock with a pagan temple erected over it.

St. Helen ordered the destruction of the pagan temple and directed that the ground under it be dug up. This was done and the Cross of Christ was found, but with it were the other two crosses. Neither St. Helen nor any of the others present knew which of the three crosses was the one which had been used to crucify the Savior. Thus, she had an ailing woman brought to the place. The sick woman was told to kiss each of the three crosses. The sick woman kissed the first and second cross with no result, but when she kissed the third Cross she was immediately made well.

St. Helen and the clergy accompanying her then acknowledged this Cross to be the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of the Savior and they fell to the ground and reverenced it. There were so many persons present at this momentous occasion that many of them could not come to the Cross and many of them could not even see it. The Patriarch of Jerusalem, Macarius, who was with St. Helen, ascended a high knoll and began to raise the Cross aloft so that all of those present could see it. In unison, the people cried out, “Kyrie eleison!” meaning, “Lord have mercy!”

This important feast of the Eastern Orthodox Church, is the only one of the twelve which does not commemorate some occasion in the life of Christ or the Virgin Mary. It is observed each year on September 14th and is a strict fast day.

+ + +

“Your Cross do we venerate, O Master, and Your Holy Resurrection do we glorify.”

“Save Your people O Lord, and bless Your inheritance. Grant to the faithful victory against the enemy and protect your people by your Cross.”
THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS
Archimandrite Seraphim Aleksiev

The one who forgives always wins. Whatever the occasion may be, if you forgive, you immediately cleanse your soul and become fit for paradise.

If you have forgiven those who plotted to murder you, you have become equal to the martyrs. If you have forgiven an insult, you have gained peace and won the Kingdom of Heaven. If you have generously overlooked the rumors and slanders against you, you have dulled the sting of your foe. If you have returned good for evil, you have shamed your enemy.

If you have swallowed a sarcastic insult to your honor, you have become worthy of heavenly honors. If you have asked the pardon of a lesser man, you have not only NOT disgraced yourself, but you have furthered your spiritual maturity.

If you are not to blame but ask the offender to forgive you, you have thus helped his soul to be delivered from the hell of hatred and have covered many of your own sins too.

If you have abased your pride, you have exalted your humility.

THE ONION THAT COULD SAVE
Fyodor Dostoyevski

‘Once upon a time there was a peasant woman and a very wicked woman she was. And she died and did not leave a single good deed behind. The devils caught her and plunged her into the lake of fire. So her Guardian Angel stood and wondered what good deed of hers he could remember to tell to God so that he could help her.

‘She once pulled up an onion in her garden,’ said the Angel, ‘and gave it to a woman begging for help.’ Thus God answered, ‘Take that onion then, give it to her in the lake of fire, and let her take hold and be pulled out. And if you can pull her out of the lake, let her come to Paradise, but if the onion breaks, then the woman must stay where she is.’

The angel flew to the woman and held out the onion to her. ‘Come,’ said he, ‘Take hold and I’ll pull you out.’ And he began cautiously pulling her out of her misery. He had just pulled her right out, when the other sinners in the lake, seeing how she was being drawn out, began holding onto her leg so as to be pulled out with her. But when she saw the others benefiting from her good fortune, she began kicking at them, saying, ‘This is MY onion! I’m to be pulled out, not you! It’s MY onion, not yours! Get away from me!’

As soon as she said these words, the onion broke. And the woman fell back into the lake and she is burning there to this day.

So the angel wept and went away.
Come and Welcome
His Eminence
Metropolitan Methodios
Sunday, September 17
For His Pastoral Visit
to our Church Family
Special Reception and
Program after Church!!!

“THE LIVING BREAD”
Soup Kitchen

A NEW Ministry of our Saints Constantine and Helen
Church Family

Once a month offering:

A Delicious Meal
Loving Christian Fellowship
The Presence of God

To our Webster and Central MA community in need!

12:30-1:30 Saturday, October 7th
(and every FIRST Saturday of the month)

If you are interested in getting involved and volunteering,
please contact Fr. Luke.
EARLY RISERS
SATURDAY MORNING
BIBLE STUDY

7:00am-8:00am
Saturday, Sept. 23, 30

EVERYONE WELCOME!

“How sweet are Your words
to my taste, sweeter than honey
to my mouth!
Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.”

Psalm 119:103,105

WEDNESDAY
MORNING
BIBLE STUDY

10:00am-11:15am
Wednesday, Sept. 20, 27

EVERYONE WELCOME!

Come and enjoy delightful fel-lowship, while learning your
faith and growing
in your relationship
with God!!!

If you’ve never attended
a Bible Study, come and
try it out!!!

GOYA Dinner Dialogue
5:00pm Sunday, Sept 24

+ Election of Officers
+ Discussion on Calendar
of Events for the Year

Come with new ideas and
get ready for a year of fun
and faith!

Farewell to our beloved
Sophia Koulax and her sister
Koula. Our Church Family
will miss them and their
faithful witness!
PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Our festival is upon us. On Tuesday Sept 5th we are mixing for petas. On Wednesday we are baking petas in the morning and baklava in the afternoon. On Thursday Eleni and her crew are making the breads. On Friday packaging. Any time you can give us would be appreciated. Any donations towards the ingredients will be greatly appreciated. Anyone making pastry at home please bring in by Friday night.

Celia and Dhimitra are doing the center table and thematic and food baskets. Any gifts, gift cards, baskets will be greatly appreciated. Please bring in donations by Friday night. If anyone wants to help sell tickets at these tables please see them.

Again this year Dhimitra Adamopoulos has generously donated a wheel barrel for our wheel barrel of cheer. Now we have to fill it! Any kind of liquor, beer, wine glasses, peanuts, coke, tonic water etc... would be great. Last year we made over $700.00. This year our goal is $1000.00! Last year Bill Thompson did a great job selling tickets for it. So I asked him if he would be in charge of it this year. Please if any one wants to help him please see me.

We will skip our September meeting. Our next meeting will be on October 2nd at 6:00. It will be a pizza party. Come and enjoy!

SAVE THE DATE! Craft fair and Bake sale on October 28th. We will have crafters, a center table raffle, a bake sale with petas, baklava, pastchio, mousaka, and gyros.

With love and appreciation,

Evelyn Pappas
Philoptochos President

We Need Help for Coffee Fellowship Hour.

Please let the Church Office know if you can help ONCE every EIGHT weeks to bring pastries, donuts, fruit or veggies for our coffee fellowship, or if you want to join a group to serve once a month.

Make a $75 Donation for Coffee Fellowship In Honor of Some Special Event/Person or In Memory of a Loved One.

With love and appreciation,

Evelyn Pappas
Philoptochos President
### USHERS & GREETERS SCHEDULE

**Sept 3** Neal Neslusan, Jimmy Karapanos, Bill Thompson, Tasi Vriga, Tatyana Zhuk

**Sept 10** Nicoleta Cojocaru, Arthur Darligiannis, Zach Gianaris, Jared Quill, George Kerbici

**Sept 17** Arthur Bilis, Del Monroe, Chris Geotis, Thomai Gatsogianis, Trish Lareau

**Sept 24** Marie McNally, Matt Benoit, Lisa Healy, Nick Seferi, Mary Papageorge

### YOUTH EPISTLE READERS

**Sept 3** - Kiera MacKenzie

**Sept 10** - Lily Mueller

**Sept 17** - Olivia Neslusan

**Sept 24** - Panayiota Veronis

**Oct 1** - Theodora Veronis

**Oct 8** - Maia Beaudry

**Oct 15** - Zach Beaudry

### WEEKDAY SERVICES

**Sept 8** - 9:30am Divine Liturgy for Birth of the Theotokos

**Sept 14** - 9:30am Divine Liturgy for Holy Cross

**Sept 20** - Paraclesis Service

**Sept 25** - 6:00pm Vesperal Liturgy for St John

**Sept 27** - Thanksgiving Service

### Coffee Fellowship Supply Pastries/Donuts Groups

*These groups will bake or bring in pastries/donuts and/or fruit and veggies for our coffee fellowship. We are looking for more volunteers to help!!!*

**Sept 3** – Leah Didonato, Mary Seferi, Olga Poulakhine, Titi Chito, Vasiliki Zahariadis

**Sept 17** – Sara Darligiannis, Sissy Darligiannis, Therese Totolos

**Sept 23** – Lisa Healy, Marie McNally, Despina Condos

**Sept 30** – Neal/Charlotte Neslusan & Evis Jordanoglou, Dolly Sosnowski

**Oct 1** – Lynn Purcell, Rayne Purcell and Sophia Foisy

**Oct 8** – Rina Sgouritsas, Lorna McWilliam, Pres. Faith Veronis

**Oct 15** – Sandi Kunkel and Evelyn Pappas, Gulapka Kostovski, Betty Tonna

**Oct 22** – Kathy Bilis, Marie Monroe, Eleni Sgouritsas

### COFFEE FELLOWSHIP SERVING GROUPS

**Sept 3** - Thomai Gatsogiannis, Trish Lareau, Irini Costomiris Deb Raymond, Evangeline Wilson

**Sept 17**– Donna Cooney, Leah Didonato, Rena Klebart, Betty Tonna, Therese Totolos

**Sept 24**– Marie McNally, Christa Benoit, Sandi Kunkel, Mary Seferi, Carolyn Niemeck,

**Oct 1** - Kathy Bilis, Sara Darligiannis, Marie Monroe, Charlotte Neslusan, Stephanie Quill
NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY

We want EVERYONE’S picture in the new directory. IF you did NOT get your picture taken back in May and June, please email or bring in a picture of your family to include in our new church directory by Sept 10th!

MEMORIAL PICTURES

If you would like to include a picture of a loved one who has fallen asleep in our “IN LOVING MEMORY” section, please email or bring a picture to the church office along with $25. If it was in the last directory, we can use that picture.

ADVERTISING PAGE

To put a full page ad or greeting, cost is $125. For half page $75.

Final Deadline for ALL pictures and ads is September 10th!

Look for our safe and convenient

at bottom left of Church webpage at www.schwebster.org

START PLANNING AND
SAVE THE DATE

HOLY PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND
FEBRUARY 2019

ESTIMATED COST $3500

START SAVING UP FOR THIS ONCE IN A LIFETIME TRIP!!!

Learn more about your Orthodox Faith. Listen to Orthodox podcasts, music and interesting teachings:

www.myocn.net
www.AncientFaith.com
Remembering Our Church Family

_Important Dates in SEPTEMBER:_

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

**BIRTHDAYS:**

- Sept 6  
  Gus Zahariadis
- Sept 7  
  Maria Zhuk
- Sept 8  
  Scott McWilliam
- Sept 9  
  Irene Mountzouris
- Sept 10  
  Helen Pappas
- Sept 10  
  Nick Popiak
- Sept 10  
  Kristina Mironidis
- Sept 11  
  Zachery Beaudry
- Sept 12  
  Evelyn Pappas
- Sept 12  
  Barbara Pappas
- Sept 15  
  John Neslusan
- Sept 16  
  Madison McWilliam
- Sept 16  
  Chuck Pappas
- Sept 18  
  Bob Mirandola
- Sept 22  
  Kathy Kunkel
- Sept 24  
  Niko Totolos
- Sept 24  
  Jared Quill
- Sept 25  
  Marie McNally
- Sept 26  
  Olga Pappas
- Sept 26  
  Christos Atsales
- Sept 27  
  Diane Atsales
- Sept 28  
  Titi Chito
- Sept 28  
  James George
- Sept 29  
  Paul Veronis

**ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE**

- Sept. 17  
  Fr. Luke Veronis

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:**

- Sept. 3  
  Lorna and Scott McWilliam
- Sept 3  
  Gary and Tina Colello
- Sept 6  
  Jared and Stephanie Quill
- Sept 9  
  Del and Marie Monroe
- Sept 12  
  Norman & Barbara Desrosiers
- Sept 15  
  Nick and Mary Seferi

**NAMEDAYS:**

- Sept. 1  
  St. Antigone
  Ann Chito

- Sept 5  
  Prophet Zacharias
  Zachery Beaudry
  Zach Giannaris
  Zach Giannaris

- Sept 7  
  St Kassiane
  Lorna Kassiane McWilliam

- Sept 14  
  Feast of the Cross
  Laurie Stavroula Manthos
  Stavros Pappas
  Stephen Stavros Pappas

- Sept 17  
  St Sophia
  Sophie Apostal
  Sophia Foisy
  Sophia Koulax
  Sophia Mackenzie
  Sophia Quill
  Sophia Stephanidis

Thank you to Susan Emerson Hill for offering coffee fellowship for one week for her dear friend Edna Vogel and in loving memory of Arthur Vogel
Thank You to those who sponsor our monthly bulletin!
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Watch your thoughts; they become words.
Watch your words; they become actions.
Watch your actions; they become habits.
Watch your habits; they become character.
Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.