

DECEMBER 2017

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM - SUNDAY DECEMBER 17TH



Saint Andrew Family News

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF SAINT ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF MORRIS COUNTY

ICON: THE NATIVITY

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 You a Virgin mother. — from *Vespers of the Eve of the Feast of the Nativity*



Greek Orthodox
Metropolis of
New Jersey

Saint Andrew Family News

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF SAINT ANDREW GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF MORRIS COUNTY

On Sundays we celebrate

Orthros @ 8:45 AM & Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

For other services please check our website or call the office

OFFICE HOURS

Mon – Fri 10am-4pm

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NJ Metropolis Web: www.njgoarch.org G.O. Archdioceses Web: www.goarch.org

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The Saint Andrew Family News is published monthly except in July and August and is distributed free of charge to all members. Submissions for the magazine are accepted **only as electronic files, (via e-mail attachment)**. Pending availability of space and permission from Editor-in-chief, your submission will be in the next month's issue.

Please submit your articles and information on time to

Vasiliki (Bessie) Petrakos info@standrewgonj.org

Deadline for the JANUARY 2018 ISSUE is December 11th

DIVINE SERVICES

DECEMBER

Sunday	3	14th Sunday of Luke
Monday	4	+ST. BARBARA THE GREAT MARTYR *
Wednesday	6	+ST. NICHOLAS ARCHBISHOP OF MYRA
Saturday	9	THE CONCEPTION OF +ST. ANNA
Sunday	10	10th Sunday of Luke
Tuesday	12	+ST. SPYRIDON THE WONDERWORKER OF TRYMITHOUS
Friday	15	+ST. ELEUTHERIOS THE HOLY MARTYR
Sunday	17	11th Sunday of Luke
Friday	22	+ST. ANASTASIA THE GREAT MARTYR
Sunday	24	+ST. EUGENIA
Sunday	24	The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ @6pm
Wednesday	27	+ST. STEPHEN, ARCHDEACON & FIRST MARTYR
Sunday	31	SUNDAY BEFORE EPIPHANY
Sunday	31	CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD & COMMEMORATION ST. BASIL @3:30pm

JANUARY 2018

Monday	1	CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD & COMMEMORATION OF ST. BASIL
Friday	5	Orthros, Great Hours, Great Vespers, & Divine Liturgy Of St. Basil The Great, Great Agiasmos (<i>Fasting Day</i>)
Saturday	6	HOLY THEOPHANY, Baptism Of Our Lord And Saviour Jesus Christ - Orthros, Divine Liturgy & The Great Agiasmos
Sunday	7	THE SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY PROPHET +ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
Sunday	14	Sunday after Epiphany
Wednesday	17	+ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT
Thursday	18	+ST. ATHANASIOS THE GREAT & CYRIL, PATRIARCHS OF ALEXANDRIA
Saturday	20	+ST. EUTHYMIOS THE GREAT
Sunday	21	15th Sunday of Luke
Sunday	28	Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee: Triodion Begins Today
Tuesday	30	SYNAXIS OF THE THREE HIERARCHS: +BASIL THE GREAT, +GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, & +JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Sundays: Orthros begins @ 8:45AM & Divine Liturgy @ 10AM

Weekdays: Orthros begins @ 8AM & Divine Liturgy @ 9:15AM

*(We have this saint's Relics at our Saint Andrew Reliquary)**

Ι Ε Ρ Ε Σ Α Κ Ο Λ Ο Υ Θ Ι Ε Σ

Δ Ε Κ Ε Μ Β Ρ Ι Ο Σ

Κυριακή	3	ΙΔ΄ Λουκά
Δευτέρα	4	+ΒΑΡΒΑΡΑΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ
Τετάρτη	6	+ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΜΥΡΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΛΥΚΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΑΥΜΑΤΟΥΡΓΟΥ
Σαββάτο	9	Η ΣΥΛΛΗΨΗΣ ΤΗΣ +ΑΓΙΑΣ ΘΕΟΠΡΟΜΗΤΟΡΟΣ ΆΝΝΗΣ
Κυριακή	10	Ι΄ Λουκά
Τρίτη	12	+ΣΠΥΡΙΔΩΝΟΣ ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΤΡΙΜΥΘΟΥΝΤΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΑΥΜΑΤΟΥΡΓΟΥ
Παρασκευή	15	+ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ
Κυριακή	17	ΙΑ΄ Λουκά
Παρασκευή	22	+ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΑΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΦΑΡΜΑΚΕΥΤΡΙΑΣ
Κυριακή	24	Κυριακή πρό τῆς Χριστοῦ Γεννήσεως Ἰόρθρος, Θεία Λειτουργία Χρυσσοστόμου +ΑΓΙΑΣ ΕΥΓΕΝΙΑΣ
Κυριακή	24	Μέγας Εσπερινός, Ἰόρθρος, Θεία Λειτουργία Αγίου Βασιλείου <u>ώρα 6μμ</u>
Τετάρτη	27	+ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΥ ΠΡΩΤΟΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΡΧΙΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΥ
Κυριακή	31	Κυριακή προ των Φώτων
Κυριακή	31	Η κατά σάρκα περιτομή του Χριστού, Βασιλείου αρχιεπισκόπου Καισαρείας <u>ώρα 3:30μμ</u>

ΙΑΝΟΥΑΡΙΟΣ 2018

Δευτέρα	1	Η ΚΑΤΑ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΠΕΡΙΤΟΜΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ
Παρασκευή	5	Προεόρτια τῶν Φώτων - ΘΕΟΠΕΜΠΤΟΥ & ΘΕΩΝΑ ΤΩΝ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΩΝ (Νηστεία) – Ἰόρθρος, Μέγα Εσπερινό, Θεία Λειτουργία του Αγίου Βασιλείου & Ακολουθία του Αγιασμού
Σαββάτο	6	ΤΑ ΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ GEORGE ΚΟΚΚΙΝΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΗΜΩΝ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ & ΜΕΓΑΣ ΑΓΙΑΣΜΟΣ
Κυριακή	7	Η ΣΥΝΑΞΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΔΡΟΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΒΑΠΤΙΣΤΟΥ
Κυριακή	14	Απόδοσις τῶν Αγίων Θεοφανείων
Τετάρτη	17	+ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ
Πέμπτη	18	+ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΛΛΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΩΝ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑΣ
Σαββάτο	20	+ΕΥΘΥΜΙΟΥ ΟΣΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ
Κυριακή	21	ΙΕ΄ Του Λουκά
Κυριακή	28	ΙΣΤ΄ Λουκά (Τελώνου καί Φαρισαίου)
Τρίτη	30	ΤΩΝ ΤΡΙΩΝ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΩΝ – +Μέγα Βασίλειος, +Γρηγόριος ο Θεολόγος & +Αγιος Ιωάννης Χρυσόστομος

Την Κυριακή – Ἰόρθρος - ώρα 8.45πμ & Θεία Λειτουργία - ώρα 10πμ
Τις καθημερινές – Ἰόρθρος - ώρα 8πμ & Θεία Λειτουργία - ώρα 9.15πμ
(*Έχουμε τα Λείψανα του Αγίου στην Λειψανοθήκη της εκκλησία μας*)*

GIVING GIFTS AT CHRISTMAS

Each year as we approach the feast of our Lord's birth we begin to think about all the gifts we will give to our relatives and friends. This custom brings to mind the three wise men or magi who brought gifts to our Lord after His birth. *"1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,... and they followed the star which went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. 11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh"* (Matthew 2).

They knew that this child was special, but we can only imagine what they must have been feeling as they presented their gifts to Him.

We too will approach Jesus this year as we enter into the Christmas season. We will encounter Him in so many ways. We will see Him in the frustrated faces of the bustling shoppers and frustrated cashiers as we make our way through the malls trying to obtain gifts for our loved ones. We will encounter Him as we walk through city streets and we see the poor



and homeless. We will also see him in the faces of those who are lonely because they don't have friends or relatives. We will encounter Him in the faces of children and the elderly who sing beautiful Christmas carols. We will encounter Him in the gospel readings which describe our Lord's loving decent to earth for our salvation. Finally, we will

encounter Him personally as we receive His precious body and blood during Christmas Liturgy.

What will our attitude be as we experience these encounters with Christ. Will we approach Him with impatience as we approach our fellow shoppers at the mall? Will we ignore Him as we ignore the homeless and the lonely while we attend to our busy schedules? I hope not. I hope our attitude will be one of joy, peace and love of neighbor as we take care of all our responsibilities during the Christmas season.

As we admire those who sing Christmas carols and we are brought joy as we hear their voices, we should pray that the Lord will soften our hearts, which have been hardened by the frantic pace of life we are experiencing. Our lives become so busy that we have difficulty making time to say prayers, read the Bible or engage in charitable works. It seems

down deep we remember that there is something very special about this time of year, but we are having trouble appreciating it. We might even blame society for continually secularizing and commercializing the Christmas season, but we cannot blame anyone else. We must realize that all of the so called, obligations (expensive presents, holiday parties, extravagant decorations, etc), are self imposed. Certainly, they are a part of this season, but they are not really so important. We carry on as though they are important. In fact, many of these things seem to be more of a distraction than anything else. Its not that any of these things are bad, but our over emphasis on them at the expense of the spiritual experience of this holy season is the problem.

I turn your attention once again to the three wise magi. Who not only brought gifts of frankincense, gold and myrrh as

an offering to our Lord, but they offered their lives, hearts and souls to Him. Their example of love is a wonderful example for us to follow as we contend with secular challenges that confront us this holy season. When we encounter the homeless, the lonely, the sick, other frustrated shoppers, and carolers, will we love them as the three magi loved and honored the baby Jesus? Or will we let our stress and frustration get the best of us. I pray that when we encounter Christ this holiday season we will come with bended hearts and knees and offer Him our lives our hearts and our souls. Then maybe it will be a "holy day season".

Friends, remember that this holy season is about the birth of our Lord, and the best way to experience the spirit of Christmas is to participate in the services of the church and be patient kind and loving to all those we encounter this holiday season.

Christ is Born!

Glorify Him! Christ has descended from Heaven!

Greet Him!

Christ has appeared on earth!

Praise Him!

May our Lord's blessings be upon you this Holy Season!

St Andrew Financial Summary 2017

	Jan - Oct	Budget	\$ over Budget
INCOME			
CONTRIBUTION INCOME	375,581.76	388,996.00	(13,414.24)
EDUCATION/DANCE NET INCOME (includes dance/not salary)	31,502.66	24,900.00	6,602.66
SUMMER CAMP NET INCOME	340.20	-	340.20
FUNDRAISING EVENTS NET INCOME	186,486.74	204,500.00	(18,013.26)
OTHER INCOME	27,423.06	18,334.00	9,089.06
TOTAL INCOME	621,334.42	636,730.00	(15,395.58)
EXPENSE			
STAFF EXPENSE	259,478.31	262,485.00	(3,006.69)
CAR EXPENSE	4,101.87	3,000.00	1,101.87
INSURANCE EXPENSE	40,538.44	41,298.00	(759.56)
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	3,749.70	3,050.00	699.70
EQUIPMENT	2,741.19	4,292.00	(1,550.81)
BANK CHARGES	1,790.95	1,968.00	(177.05)
MORTGAGE PAYMENT (Princ & Int)	112,155.00	112,500.00	(345.00)
TELEPHONES/INTERNET EXPENSE	3,958.50	5,914.00	(1,955.50)
ADVERTISING	-	-	-
PERMITS	200.00	50.00	150.00
LITURGICAL	360.50	1,668.00	(1,307.50)
UTILITIES	41,616.52	40,241.00	1,375.52
SUPPLIES & PRINTING EXPENSE	20,889.93	22,292.00	(1,402.07)
BLDG & GROUNDS EXP.	25,625.87	30,612.00	(4,986.13)
POSTAGE & HANDLING	4,021.40	2,664.00	1,357.40
MINISTRY EXPENSE	60,518.41	60,252.00	266.41
EVANGELISM/OUTREACH	3,242.46	1,800.00	1,442.46
CONVENTIONS & SEMINARS	3,905.45	4,500.00	(594.55)
TRANSPORTATION	-	-	-
MISC.	-	-	-
TOTAL EXPENSE	588,894.50	598,586.00	(9,691.50)
NET CASH RECD (SHORT)	\$ 32,439.92	\$ 38,144.00	\$ (5,704.08)
From Operations			
Unrestricted Cash 12/31/16	152,375.79	<i>If you have any questions about this Financial Summary, please contact any Parish Council Member</i>	
Cash generated (used) this year	32,439.92		
Cash Balance 10/31/17	\$ 184,815.71		

«Κάθε τι το οποίον πράττετε να το εργάζεσθε πρόθυμα με όλην σας την ψυχήν, σαν αυτό να αναφέρεται στον Κύριον και όχι στους ανθρώπους.» Προς Κολοσσαείς 3:23

ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΑΣ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΩΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΩΝ

Αγαπητέ Ενορίτη του Αγίου Ανδρέα,

Ενα παραδοσιακό Αμερικάνικο ρητό λέει ότι, «Ο Θεός ζητά από τα παιδιά Του το εξής: Κάντε ό,τι καλύτερο μπορείτε, όπου και να είστε, με ό,τι έχετε, τώρα.» Η ιστορία με τον Ιησού που παρέχει τροφή σε 5.000 ανθρώπους απεικονίζει αυτό ακριβώς, μέσα από την προσφορά του αγοριού – πέντε φρατζόλες και δύο ψάρια, που ήταν όλα όσα είχε. Αυτό το αγόρι έκανε ό,τι καλύτερο μπορούσε με ό,τι διέθετε, και ο Ιησούς με αυτά έκανε ένα υπέροχο θαύμα. Ακριβώς όπως το αγόρι που πρόσφερε το ψωμί και τα ψάρια, αν και εμείς προσφέρουμε αυτό που έχουμε – όσο μικρή ή μεγάλη και αν είναι η προσφορά μας – ο Θεός θα λάβει τα δώρα μας και θα τα πολλαπλασιάσει για να δώσει τροφή στους ανθρώπους Του.

Αυτή τη χρονιά που διανύουμε, ο Θεός έχει πολλαπλασιάσει τις προσφορές των μελών μας, και με τη βοήθειά Του συνεχίσαμε την ανάπτυξη των προγραμμάτων της ενορίας μας. Οι πολλές λειτουργίες και συνελεύσεις που τελούνται στον Άγιο Ανδρέα είναι μόνο η κορυφή του παγόβουνου του τί συμβαίνει εδώ. Διεξάγαμε έναν πολύ επιτυχημένο έρανο για τη Διεθνή Χριστιανική Ορθόδοξη Φιλανθρωπία, έχουμε το συνεχιζόμενο έργο της ομάδας «Μαξιλάρι και Κουβέρτα», με εβδομαδιαίες συναντήσεις στην εκκλησία μας. Τα νεανικά μας προγράμματα είναι από τα πιο ισχυρά των Ελληνικών Ορθόδοξων ενοριών του Βόρειου New Jersey, ανάμεσά τους είναι η JOY, GOYA, το Κατηχητικό Σχολείο και το OCF. Συνεχίζοντας την προσπάθειά μας, σύντομα θα λάβουμε το δικό μας 501c3 από το IRS. Αυτό θα μας διευκολύνει να παίρνουμε χορηγίες και θα έχουμε τη δυνατότητα να μαζεύουμε χρήματα χωρίς να επιβαρύνουμε με

επιπλέον φόρους τους ενορίτες μας. Με χαρά σας ανακοινώνουμε ότι το Ελληνικό Απογευματινό Σχολείο έχει περισσότερους μαθητές φέτος και το ΡΤΑ έχει διοργανώσει πολλές δραστηριότητες που δίνουν χαρά αλλά και ωφελούν τα παιδιά. Πρέπει επίσης να αναφέρουμε ότι το φιλανθρωπικό έργο της Φιλοπτώχου αναπτύσσεται συνεχώς και αγγίζει πολλές ζωές που έχουν ανάγκες. Είμαστε ενθουσιασμένοι με όλη την καλή δουλειά και ωραία πρόοδο που γίνεται στην ενορία μας και υπάρχουν ακόμη τόσα πολλά που μπορούν να γίνουν, αλλά μόνο με τη δική σας βοήθεια. Είναι πολλή σημαντική η υποστήριξή σας στις διάφορες πομπητικές δραστηριότητες τού Αγίου Ανδρέα για να συνεχιστεί η καλή δουλειά που γίνεται εδώ.

Σας ενθαρρύνουμε να επισκεφθείτε, να συναντήσετε τους υπεύθυνους των ομάδων της ενορίας μας να μάθετε περισσότερα για το τωρινό όραμα της κοινότητάς μας και να δείτε πώς και εσείς μπορείτε να συμμετάσχετε στην πραγματοποίηση αυτού του οράματος. Ο Απόστολος Πέτρος λέει, πρέπει να δίνουμε, «.....όπως ο Θεός έχει ευεργετήσει εμάς» (1 Κορ.16:2). Μας διδάσκει ξεκάθαρα, « Αυτός που σπέρνει απλόχερα, θα θερίσει πολύν καρπόν», δηλαδή ο καθένας θα αμειφθεί από τον Θεό ανάλογα με όσα δίνει, κατά την δύναμή του πάντοτε. Θα ήθελα ειλικρινά να προσφέρω την ευχαριστία μου στον Θεό για την Αγάπη Του και την καλοσύνη Του γιατί έχει ευλογήσει την εκκλησία μας, και σε εσάς για την αφοσίωσή σας στην ενορία του Αγίου Ανδρέα και τη συμμετοχή σας στο έργο του Χριστού, της σωτηρίας.

Στην υπηρεσία του Κυρίου μας,

Αιδ. Πατέρας Ιωάννης Θεοδοσίου

Συχνές Απορίες

Πώς μπορώ να γίνω μέλος της ενορίας;

Η ιδιότητα μέλους στην Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία ξεκινά με τη βάπτιση (ή για κάποιους με το χρίσμα) και συνεχίζεται για όλη τη ζωή μας. Είμαστε ενωμένοι με τον Χριστό μέσα από τα ιερά μυστήρια της Εκκλησίας και μέσα από την πιστή προσφορά ολόκληρου του εαυτού μας στον Ιησού Χριστό. Η Αρχιεπισκοπή απαιτεί από την κάθε ενορία να ξεχωρίζουν τους πιστούς σε αυτούς που ψηφίζουν και τα μέλη που δεν ψηφίζουν. Τα μέλη της ενορίας αποκτούν το δικαίωμα ψήφου όταν κλείσουν τα 18 τους χρόνια και παραδώσουν υπογεγραμμένη την κάρτα οικονομίας, όπου δεσμεύονται να διαθέσουν ένα μέρος του χρόνου τους, του ταλέντου τους και των οικονομικών τους στην Εκκλησία. Η Αρχιεπισκοπή επίσης ζητά από το μέλος που ψηφίζει να παραμείνει ενεργό στις δεσμεύσεις του κατά τη διάρκεια του έτους. Να έχετε κατά νου ότι η αληθινή ιδιότητα μέλους στο Σώμα Χριστού είναι και το να ζεις σύμφωνα με τον λόγο Του και μέσα στην Εκκλησία Του.

Γιατί πρέπει να δεσμευτώ ότι θα δώσω ένα συγκεκριμένο ποσό;

Παρακαλούμε να βασίζεστε στην εχεμύθειά μας όσον αφορά την χρηματική οικονομία σας. Παρ' όλα αυτά υπολογίζουμε κατά προσέγγιση τα αναμενόμενα ποσά για τον καλύτερο σχεδιασμό του προϋπολογισμού μας.

Αν δεν τα καταφέρω να εκπληρώσω την οικονομική μου δέσμευση;

Κατά την πορεία του χρόνου, οι περιστάσεις στη ζωή μας μπορεί να αλλάξουν. Η προσφορά σας εκτιμάται επειδή προέρχεται από την αγάπη σας στον Χριστό και την Εκκλησία Του. Παρακαλούμε να μην σας απασχολεί εάν δεν μπορέσετε να εκπληρώσετε την οικονομική σας δέσμευση, εμείς χαιρόμαστε που είστε μέλος της ενορίας μας.

Η Χριστιανική Οικονομία είναι.....

.....να μαθαίνεις πώς να είσαι υπεύθυνος επιστάτης που ενδιαφέρεται για την Εκκλησία του Χριστού· είναι να μαθαίνεις πώς να απολαμβάνεις την Εκκλησιαστική ζωή και να βρίσκετε χαρά στην εργασία της Εκκλησίας, αφού σε Αυτήν κατοικεί η ολοκλήρωση του Πνεύματος του Θεού.

.....η ενεργή δέσμευσή μας να χρησιμοποιήσουμε όλο μας το χρόνο, το ταλέντο και την οικονομία μας για την ωφέλεια του ανθρώπου, αναγνωρίζοντας με ευγνωμοσύνη τη λυτρωτική αγάπη του Χριστού.

.....το ενδιαφέρον για τις ανάγκες των άλλων.

.....να προσφέρεις τον εαυτό σου στον Θεό όπως και Εκείνος πρόσφερε τον Εαυτό Του σε εμάς.

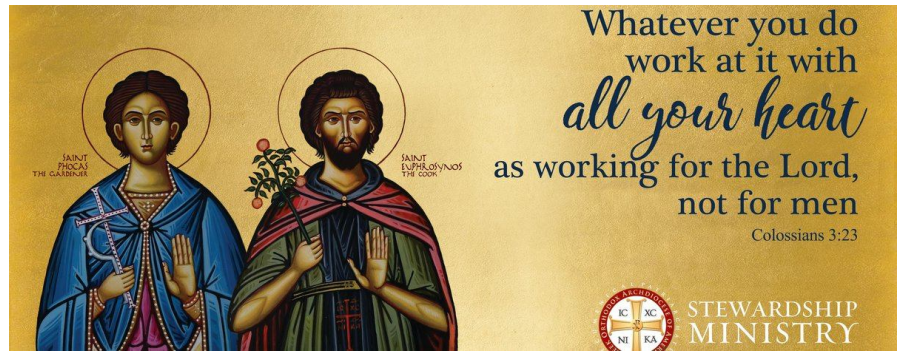
.....τί κάνει ο καθένας αφού έχει πει το «Πιστεύω», ως απόδειξη της πίστης του.

.....η αφοσίωση και η υπηρεσία στον Θεό και την Εκκλησία Του ως άτομα, ως οικογένεια, ως ενορία, ως διακονία, μητρόπολη, ως Εκκλησία του έθνους και ως οικουμενική Εκκλησία.

Η ΔΗΛΩΣΗ ΤΟΥ ΟΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΑΝΔΡΕΑ

Η Ελληνική Ορθόδοξη Κοινότητα του Morris County είναι ένας δεκτικός τόπος όπου η οικογένεια του Αγίου Ανδρέα είναι αφοσιωμένη στον Θεό: •ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΗ ΛΑΤΡΕΙΑ •ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ •ΦΙΛΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΑ και •ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΣ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΣ για όφελος αυτών που τις ζωές τους αγγίζουμε.

Saint Andrew Family News – December 2017



Orthodoxy



Education



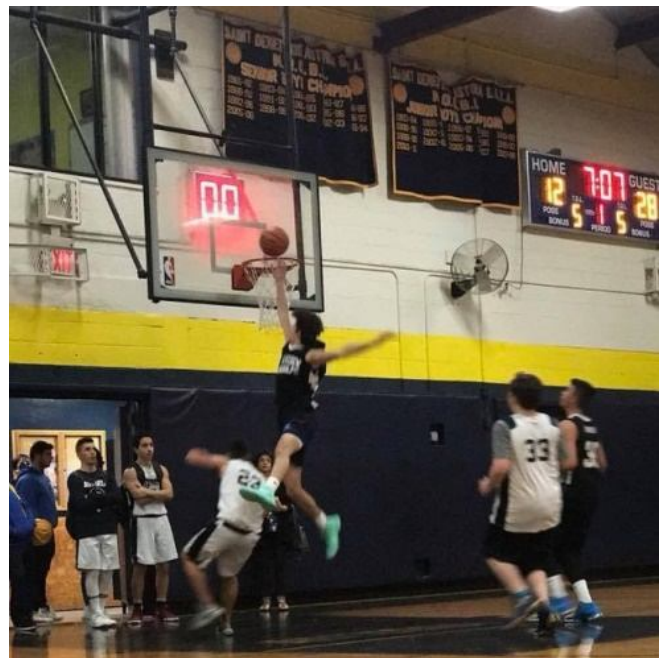
Philanthropy



Hellenism



On Friday October 27th, the Senior Boys Basketball team traveled to Astoria to play St Demetrios of Astoria on their home court. It was the first time in many years that any team from New Jersey had gone into New York City to play one of their GOYA's in basketball. We had tremendous support from our St Andrew family, as many made the journey to Astoria for the event. Before the start of the game, Rev. Fr. Anastasios spoke about the importance of our faith in today's society and what an important role that the Church and GOYA play in our lives. St Andrew GOYA presented to St Demetrios a donation of \$100 for their new Iconography. The St Demetrios Basketball Team is very competitive, but our Senior Boys won 78-55! It was a very intense and exciting game and a lot of fun. After the game St Demetrios hosted a Souvlaki Social for us in their Church Hall. Overall, it was a great event and opportunity to meet new GOYAn's and make new friendships. We look forward to hosting St Demetrios in Randolph!





At their October monthly meeting, the GOYA collected supplies, assembled and shipped 100 health kits to assist the IOCC, International Orthodox Christian Charities in their efforts to aid the hurricane victims and those in need worldwide.

The annual GOYA Bowling Tournament was held on November 4th and hosted by Ascension in Fairview. Medals were won by Michael Aaron who came in 1st place with the highest bowling score in the Junior Boys division. Michael Aaron and Evangelos Clapsis were on a team that came in 1st place for the highest overall score. Antoni Bulko was on a team that came in 3rd place overall in the Junior Boys division. All the GOYAnS who attended enjoyed the dinner and dance that followed the tournament.



Hellenic Afternoon School

Merry Christmas! The children of the Hellenic Afternoon School, along with our Sunday school, are preparing a lovely Christmas Pageant this month. We hope you can attend church on **December 17th** to see the children present this traditional program.

Report cards will also be sent home on December 21st. before we take a short break the following week. Parents are encouraged to communicate with their children's teachers if they have any concerns about academic progress as we move into January.

On behalf of all the Greek school teachers, dance instructors, and myself, have a

Joyful Christmas and Blessed New Year!

Χαρούμενα Χριστούγεννα και Ευλογημένο το Νέο Έτος!

Salomi Massaras

ΚΑΛΑΝΤΑ ΠΡΩΤΟΧΡΟΝΙΑΣ

Αρχιμηνιά κι Αρχιχρονιά
ψηλή μου δεντρολίβανιά
κι αρχή κι αρχή καλός μας χρόνος
εκκλησιά εκκλησιά μετ' άγιος θρόνος

Αρκεί που βγήκε ο Χριστός
Άγιος και Πνευματικός
στη γη στη γη να περπατήσει
και να και να μας καλοκαρδίσει

Άγιος Βασίλης έρχεται
και όλους μας καταδέχεται
από από την Καισαρεία
συ σα συ σα Αρχόντισσα Κυρία.

ΚΑΛΑΝΤΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΩΝ

Καλήν ημέρα άρχοντες,
αν είναι ορισμός σας,
Χριστού την Θείαν Γέννησιν
να μπω στ' αρχοντικό σας.

Χριστός γεννάται σήμερα
εν Βηθλεέμ τη πόλει,
οι Ουρανοί αγάλλονται,
χαίρει η κτίσις όλη.

Εν τω σπηλαίω τίκτεται,
εν φάτνη των αλόγων,
ο Βασιλεύς των Ουρανών
και ποιητής των όλων.
Χρόνια Πολλά



ACCEPTS ONLY NEW UNWRAPPED TOYS

We are collecting for "TOYS FOR TOTS" at St. Andrew Church up until December 17th 2017

JOY NEWS

As JOY heads into the Christmas Season, we wanted to impart some lessons about gratitude and thankfulness and giving. We spoke about being grateful every day, even for one small thing, at our November JOY Meeting. We discussed how Jesus gave his life for us and we should thank him every day through prayer. We also tasked the older children with being aware of how many times they complain vs. how many times they are grateful and say "thank you" throughout each day.

The Sr. JOY Group went on a trip to Monster Mini Golf. What a great time!!! Hectic and dark, but the kids enjoyed working their way through the fun maze that was mini golf. They ended their fellowship evening in the arcade where they raced around from game to game, laughing and having fun.

We are also making a Christmas themed craft in November. Last year, we made a nativity ornament, and this year we are painting a beautiful Christmas message on canvas. Look out for photos in the next bulletin.

As we enter December and the Birth of our Lord, we will be visiting Merry Heart Senior Center again to bring them some Christmas Cheer. We sing songs to the elderly and our

JOY members prepare small gifts for the seniors as one of their service components of our group. If you are free on December 9th at 3pm and would like to join us and spread some Christmas love, we welcome you!

DO YOU HAVE A CHILD IN GRADES K-6? Yes? Then consider joining JOY. JOY (Junior Orthodox Youth) is a fellowship group for these ages. We have one meeting per month and one activity per month. The group is split into 2 - the junior JOY is grades K-2, and the senior JOY is grades 3-6. Junior JOY is run by Lynn Axiotes and Senior JOY is run by Harriet Karkanias. Meetings are held on Sundays after Sunday School and Liturgy (12:15pm-1pm) - child only, no parents. Activities are typically held on Saturdays once a month from 4pm-6pm (unless otherwise noted). Our calendar of activities is posted in the Social Hall on our JOY Bulletin Board. Take a peek when you are at coffee hour!

For more information on JOY or any of our upcoming events/activities, please contact Harriet Karkanias (harriet.karkanias@gmail.com) or Lynn Axiotes (laxiotes@yahoo.com).



WHAT DO I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS?

By Fr. Vasile Tudora



As we approach the holy night of Nativity, comes a time when we ask ourselves the timeless question: what do I want for Christmas? If one looks around, generally electronics are popular with men, jewelry with women, gaming consoles with teens, and so on; as we could expect, mostly material things. I have yet to hear one answering, *“I want the gift of prayer,”* or of spiritual discernment, or unwavering faith. Most of us, caught up in the mercantile *“spirit”* of the season, get carried away in wanting more and more things, never enough. I read in the news recently of a man who in desperation committed suicide after his wife, who refused to finish a 5-hour Christmas shopping marathon, accused him of *“being a skinflint and spoiling Christmas.”*

Who can we blame at this point? After all, the false gospel of prosperity, spoken loudly throughout the land, even from some pulpits, comes to say that we should count our

blessings in the material kind. The more money I have, the more goods I have, the more recognition I have, the more blessed I am. I see, however, many famous people who, according to secular standards, have received all one can imagine from life, but yet many of them live miserable and unfulfilled lives. Many of these *“fortunate”* ones actually fall into alcohol abuse, drug addiction, some even suicide.

As an old proverb says, money, or material things in our case, do not bring happiness. In fact, I have seen people who had nothing, and yet, they were enjoying life more than one with access to everything. Happiness, the universal pursuit of every person, is not a function of how much you could have, but how content you could be with what you already have. Most of the saints barely had any possessions and yet, every minute of their lives was spent in

thanksgiving, praising the Lord for all things (1 Thes 5:18).

So is there a perfect gift we can ask for at Christmas? We find a clue in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom where we hear, *“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming from You, the Father of lights”* (Prayer in front of the Ambo). This might come as a bit of a surprise for the contemporary person, immersed in the commercial holiday season, but the perfect gift does not come from an overweight and trivialized Santa character, but actually from our Father Who is in heaven. He is *“the source of holiness, the giver of all good things”* (Prayers after Communion).

But what are these *“good things”*? Can we discern properly what we actually need from what we in fact lust after? The Apostle warns us, *“All things are lawful for me, but not all things edify”* (1 Cor 10:23-24). The things we want many times are not beneficial for us. Most material things are going to enslave us in their net. The more we have, the more we want, and it is never enough. Even things like health and long life can sometimes be detrimental if we use them for sin and not unto salvation. But God is not an automatic wish giver, and, in His great mercy, He fulfills only the prayers that are *“unto salvation.”*

Good or naughty, in the Holy Night of Nativity, we all receive from the Father *“the perfect gift from above”* coming in the form of a Holy Child, Who comes to be born in a humble manger, ready to carry on His little shoulders the entire weight of the sin of the world.

He comes renouncing His godly glory so we can be glorified in Him.

He comes to give up His life so we can be raised from the dead.

He comes on the earth so we can follow Him in heaven.

He comes to give me, the first among sinners, the gift of redemption, making me again a citizen of paradise.

The true Spirit of Christmas is the Holy Spirit that makes possible the presence of Christ in the middle of the Church at the Nativity Liturgy.

The Christmas tree is the tree of the genealogy of Christ leading through its branches to the fruit of the ages, the newborn Jesus.

The true ornaments are the lives of His Saints who shine in the eyes of God as luminaries, guiding us all to Him.

The real gifts of Christmas are the Holy Gifts offered and transformed for the life of the world, giving us eternal joy and the true happiness we actually forgot that we long for.

*Bethlehem has opened Eden. **Come, let us see.** We have found the hidden delight. **Come, let us receive the things of Paradise inside the Cave.** There, we shall see an unwatered root that blossomed forgiveness. There, we shall find an undug well, from which David of old desired to drink. There, the Virgin quenched the thirst of both Adam and David, when she gave birth to her baby. So let us go there now, where He was born a newborn Child, the pre-eternal God. (Oikos of the Feast of Nativity)*

A blessed Nativity to all!

<http://myocn.net/want-christmas/>
By Fr. Vasile Tudora in The Sounding Blog | Dec 27, 2013 · Comment(s) · Tags: holidays, salvation

SAVE THE DATE:

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 6PM

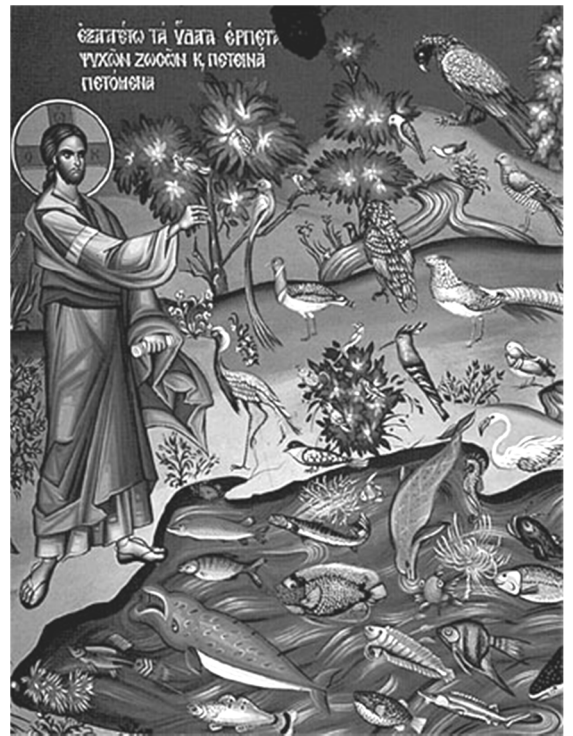
Greek Night

to benefit the St. Andrew Community Center • Portion of proceeds will go to IOCC
at St. Andrew Hall

A BROADER PERSPECTIVE: *Stewardship as Creation Care*

(Fr. John Chryssavgis)

If we turn to the Church Fathers, we see that they attribute the highest importance to *oikonomia* (stewardship or economy), which in their eyes implied a broader and more inclusive concept of revelation and salvation, identified with God's vision and desire to save the whole world. For our great theological teachers and spiritual masters, economy in fact refers to our very salvation by the all-embracing love of God for all humankind and to the universal compassion of the Creator for all creation. Somewhere along the line, we unfortunately shrunk the theme of "stewardship" to purely monetary terms that primarily include making contributions to philanthropic organizations – probably as a result of a narrow interpretation of scripture, and possibly as a result of the rigid focus of modern society.



All of this invariably affects not just our understanding of the moral obligation that we have toward one another as human beings, but also inevitably distorts the worldview that shapes our moral responsibility toward creation. By limiting our attention to divine commandments for human compassion, we have invariably excised from scripture the clear mandate to creation care. Yet, these two dimensions of Christian life are integrally interrelated; one cannot envisage human progress without ecological preservation. The way we treat God's creation in nature essentially reflects the way we respect human beings created "in the image and likeness of God." The reality is that we should respond to nature with the same tenderness that we are called to respond to people. All of our spiritual activities are ultimately measured by their impact on the natural creation; just as all of our ecological choices are finally evaluated by their effect on the poor.

An excellent brochure titled *Stewardship as Creation Care* by Fr. John Chryssavgis is available through orthodoxmarketplace.com.

Seed and Soil

Father Theodore Stylianopoulos

"And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold" (Luke 8:8)

A seed contains a miracle. When you look at it from the outside, or touch it, it appears hard, dry, perhaps even dead and incapable of producing anything. But place it in the ground, give it water and warmth, and life begins to stir. The outer shell dies but the inner kernel comes alive by the mysterious forces of growth. The inner powers of the kernel are released when the seed is in proper soil and receives adequate moisture. The kernel germinates and new life begins. As long as nourishment is provided, growth continues. From the seed comes a flower, a plant, or a tree, each of which was present only potentially in the seed.

Is the miracle of growth manifest in human beings, too? Yes, by all means. Not only our physical being but also our spiritual being has the potential of miraculous growth. Physical growth is practically spontaneous and automatic. Yet physical growth, too, requires adequate nourishment and suitable environment. Spiritual growth is neither spontaneous nor automatic. Spiritual growth requires the exercise of personal freedom through intellectual, moral and spiritual decisions, commitments and actions. But spiritual growth, too, surely needs a proper environment and constant nourishment to flourish.

In the Parable of the Sower (Lk 8:5-15), Jesus teaches that both seed and soil are necessary for growth. Both seed and soil need proper interaction to produce satisfying crop. The seed is likened to the word of God. The soil is the life and heart of each

human being. The parable tells us that much seed is lost when falling into unreceptive soil. However, when seed and soil connect and interact properly, astonishing growth occurs. "And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold."

What do we mean by the seed of the word of God? What is God's "word?" Any human word, spoken or written, conveys meaning. Many words together express a message, various forms of communication from one person to another. Words and messages reflect the mind and character of the one from whom they come.

In a similar way, God's word is God's utterance, God's speech, God's message. God's words convey precious knowledge that God wants human beings to know and live by. "I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other gods before me" (Ex 20:2-3). "Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Mt 6:33). "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34). "Who ever would be great among you must be your servant; for the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life for many" (Mt 20:26-28).

All those divine words are not merely abstract principles, arbitrarily established, just to test human obedience and keep people in their place. Rather, they make up essential instruction that is intrinsic to human nature. They are food and drink natural to our humanity as personal and moral beings created in the image and likeness of God. When those divine words are wholeheartedly embraced and



faithfully practiced, they become “life-bearing” and “life-giving.” They generate light and life because they guide to right and harmonious relationships between God and people, between people and people, as well as between people and creation. They are like seeds which, when falling into good soil, grow and yield a hundredfold.

Do you recall some biblical verses about the importance of God’s word? When Jesus was hungry, He was tempted to turn stones into bread. But He rejected the temptation and said: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4). Upon finishing the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared: “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock” (Mt 7:24-25). At a time of crisis, Jesus asked His disciples: “Do you also wish to go away?” Simon Peter replied: “Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (Jn 6:67-68)!

Moreover, God’s word is not only instruction and guidance. God’s word discloses God’s character and power. God’s word both announces and enacts who God is, what He has done, and what He is doing even now. God cannot be separated from His word. God’s word is always the vehicle of God’s holy presence and creative power. In Genesis we read that God said: “Let there be light! And there was light.” The prophets in the Old Testament likened God’s word to a powerful hammer that strikes and breaks rock, that is, the hardness of human hearts and the hardness of human communities, in judgment and for healing. The Book of Hebrews declares: “The word of God is living and active, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing to soul and spirit, ... and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb 4:12).

Even more astonishing is that Christ himself, according to the New Testament, is the Word of God—Logos Theou—the supreme self-revelation of God—who God is, what He has done, and what He continues to do today. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... In Him was light and the light was the life of all people. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (Jn 1:1-5).

Of course those words point to the core message of the Christian faith, the good news of the gospel. The good news is that God in Christ has broken humanity’s bondage to the powers of sin, evil, and death. God in Christ actualizes His love and forgiveness for sinners. God in Christ offers to every man and woman a new start, a new order of life, a life of grace and truth. Because of the divine nature and blessings of the gospel, St. Paul variously calls the gospel itself the word of God, the word of Christ, the word of grace, the word of reconciliation, the word of truth. When the gospel of Christ is wholeheartedly announced, the announcement does not merely inform but also mediates Christ and His blessings. Christ in His holiness and power is present in His word. When the good news is heard and embraced, human hearts are stirred and human lives change. The gospel “is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes” (Rom 1:16). When falling into good soil, the gospel takes root and grows, and yields a hundredfold.

Nevertheless, if the soil is not conducive to growth, the seed of the word of God remains inactive and powerless. Seeds cannot take root on the hard path. Seeds cannot last in rocky ground lacking adequate moisture. Seeds cannot flourish among weeds. Jesus tells us (Lk 8:11-15) that the hard path is a faithless heart, a heart that hears but pays no true heed to God’s word. The rocky ground is a heart that initially receives God’s word but later loses endurance when trials and temptation come.

The soil with weeds is a heart filled with worldly cares and distractions that seem to swallow up God's word. Lack of faith, lack of endurance, and lack of spiritual focus—those indeed are the negative elements of the infertile soil that cancel out the miracle of the seed. We know all about those elements because we face them every day. We need to be humbly mindful that all of us at various times have exemplified the hard path, the rocky ground, or the soil with weeds.

What we need much more is to concentrate on building up good soil. Christ the Sower is forever faithful, enduring, and active through his mighty and life-giving word. What men and women need to do is respond in kind; to offer to Him the soil of

“an honest and good heart” (Lk 8:15). The parable clearly identifies the negative elements of the unproductive soil—lack of faith, lack of endurance, lack of spiritual focus. But the parable also powerfully suggests the opposite elements, the contrasting positive qualities of the honest and good heart. Those are lively faith, patient endurance, and the focus of an active Christian worldview. The Lord warned: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Lk 8:8). But the Lord also gives assurance that, when falling on good soil, the seed of God's word takes deep root, grows bountifully and yields blessings beyond imagination. Praise, thanksgiving, and glory be to Christ the eternal Sower. Amen.

Fr. Theodore Stylianopoulos is the Archbishop Iakovos Professor of Orthodox Theology and New Testament at Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, where he has been a faculty member since 1967. He graduated from Holy Cross in 1962, received his S.T.M. from Boston University School of Theology in 1964, and his Th.D. from Harvard Divinity School in 1974.

WOMEN'S NATIVITY FAST LENTEN STUDY

“Blessed are the....”

A Study of The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-12

December 8 & 15 - Fridays at 10:30 a.m.

The Beatitudes are a “short summary of the teaching of Jesus Christ: the whole gospel in a grain of salt.” Most of us have heard of them, some of us have memorized them, and perhaps even some have studied them. But, do we really understand what they mean?

There are eight beatitudes, eight facets of discipleship and at the same time there is only one beatitude, as all are aspects of the life in communion with God. Each beatitude describes aspects of being in the Kingdom of God.

Please join us as we study these important facets of discipleship and learn to live a life which is in communion with God.

We will enjoy a Lenten Luncheon together following the study. Please bring something to share as you are able.

Everyone is welcome! Bring a friend!!



Merry Christmas

**PHILOTOCHOS & DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE
CHRISTMAS DINNER**

DECEMBER 11, 2017 @ 6:30 PM



J-TOWNE TAVERN

**5 Bowling Green Parkway
Lake Hopatcong, NJ
(973) 810-2810**

Dinner includes:

Appetizer, Soup, Salad

Choice of one entrée:

Chicken, Fish or Pasta

**Beverages: Soft Drinks,
Coffee/Tea & Dessert**

CASH BAR | \$35.00 per person

Please make payment to **ST. ANDREW PHILOTOCHOS**

For more information and reservations, please contact:

Maro Schuster 973 570-4924 & Betty Kelly

RSVP by December 3, 2017

Enjoy the Christmas spirit with your St. Andrew family and friends!!!

*Please consider bringing a New unwrapped TOY for the
St. Andrew "TOYS FOR TOTS" Collection.*



NAVAGATING THROUGH YOUR TEEN YEARS: DRUGS AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

Q: People tell me marijuana is natural and not addictive. Is that true?

A: Research confirms that you can become hooked on pot. It is also important to note that drugs can dominate your lifestyle, control how you spend time, and influence the people you hang out with. Research also proves that short-term effects of using marijuana are sleepiness, impaired or reduced short-term memory, increased heart rate, paranoia, and hallucinations. Long-term effects of using marijuana are elevated cancer risks and decreased testosterone levels for men.

Q: If Jesus and his Disciples drank wine in the Bible, why can't I drink alcohol?

A: While alcohol in and of itself is not bad, we need to be careful with the excessive use of any substance—it can easily deaden our defenses and negate our free will. When someone has a few drinks, they become more “relaxed” with other things in life—and this is where we need to be extra cautious. Additionally, as Orthodox Christians, we abide by the laws of our local government (Matthew 22). Since the minimum drinking age is 21 in the United States, we should refrain from alcohol until then.

GET THE FACTS

Addiction can happen even after one use. Regular drug abuse or sustained exposure to a drug, even for a short period of time, can cause physiological dependence.



Drug & alcohol abuse causes brain damage.

Drug abuse affects the way the brain functions and alters its responses to the world.

Drugs are more dangerous today. Over the years, drugs have been modified either biologically or chemically to create higher concentrations of the active ingredient—the thing that produces the “high.”

Substance abuse increases the risk of injury.

Car crashes, falls, burns, drowning and suicide are all more common when people are under the influence.

KNOW THE SIGNS

How can you know if a friend or loved one has a problem with drugs or alcohol? Sometimes it's hard to tell. Most people won't just walk up to you and ask for help. If your friend or loved one has one or more of the following signs, he or she may have a problem:

- Giving up activities or things they used to enjoy such as sports or hanging out with friends who don't use drugs or drink.
- Pressuring others to do drugs or drink.
- Getting in trouble with the law.
- Taking risks, including sexual risks and driving under the influence.
- Feeling run down, depressed or suicidal.
- Suspension from school/after school activities.
- Missing work or school, failing grades.

THE CHURCH SPEAKS

As a teenager, you face pressures every day. Whether it's casual drinking, binge drinking or experimenting with drugs, your friends' influence may cause you to do things you wouldn't normally do. Although it may be tough, you are called to be examples in the Faith, to resist these pressures, and be a Christian example to others.

Your free will is lost.

The Church teaches that God created each of us with free will, and in His own "image and likeness" (Genesis 1:26). We are all given the chance to either turn towards or away from God, but alcohol and drugs take away this opportunity by deadening our reason and intellect. When we become dependent on substances rather than God, we lose our ability to worship and glorify Him.

Christ isn't your #1 priority anymore.

When a person is addicted to drugs and/or alcohol, those substances often become more important to that person than God. As Christians, however, our loyalty is first to God. Any kind of addiction puts the object/idol in His place.

Your body is a temple.

The Church views the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). Over time, drug use, leads to the deterioration ("indirect suicide") of the body. It means that we are ignoring our responsibility to keep our temple pure, holy, and healthy.

A false sense of reality.

While it may be easy to use drugs or alcohol in order to escape your worries and problems, Christ promises to never give us more than we can handle (1 Cor. 10:13), asking us to deal with things in a real and honest way.

God is always with us.

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk writes, "God is present in every place, and He is with us wherever we may be. And anything we may do, we do before Him and His holy eyes."

INFO

FB: www.facebook.com/GOYAministry

If you need help for yourself or a friend, please do not wait any longer. Talk to your parents or contact your parish priest for assistance. For more info, contact the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug information at 800-729-6686.

Online Resources:

- Treatment Facilities:
<http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov>
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse websites for teens:
www.checkyourself.com
www.teens.drugabuse.gov

Books:

- Breaking the Chains of Addiction: How to Use Ancient Eastern Orthodox Spirituality to Free Our Minds and Bodies From All Addictions* by Victor Mihailoff. Regina Press, 2005
- Steps of Transformation: An Orthodox Priest Explores the Twelve Steps* by Fr. Meletios Webber. Conciliar Press, 2003

THE INCARNATION

Christmas has become so cluttered with the consumer mentality of gift-giving that many have lost sight of the Incarnation. We might view the traditional “Christmas pageant” and never be stirred by the incredible nature of what is being depicted. And so, let us pause in our “Christmas” busy-ness and take a deeper look into the Incarnation.

Try to talk about the Incarnation. What will you say? If you are at all honest with yourself, you might realize that there’s very little that you can really say about the Incarnation. That’s a good thing, because it is, first of all, a profound mystery. It wouldn’t be a mystery if we could all simply talk about it. And if you want to begin talking about the Incarnation, you need to be able to talk about God. How do you, an Orthodox Christian, understand God? Again, many of us will struggle to provide an answer that makes any sense. Sadly, most of us “believe” in God but seldom understand what that means. That’s really a good thing! God, too, is an incredibly profound mystery. If you think you’ve got God, then you probably haven’t. And that probably applies to how you comprehend the Incarnation. But you aren’t supposed to know it in your ways! Keep reading.

There is a way of seeing God as the Creator who set everything in motion - a First Cause. Once things were in place, a self-sustaining universe was allowed to experiment itself into life. Such a God is convenient because such a God doesn’t challenge our ability to believe that God could be present to us as a baby born into the world we are born into. We may smile at the familiar baby Jesus lying in a manger, but the thought that this baby is God, fully immersing Himself into our existence, just remains



incomprehensible. This young creature having a human brain and limbs and a heart and soul is a human being and also God! God doesn’t “inhabit” an infant’s body, borrowing it for a while. This child Jesus is God in essence and in being! The profundity of this mystery terrifies us. And so we inwardly protest. Outwardly we may assent to this from within the structure of our religious community, but inwardly, individually, we protest! How can this be? God shrunk into an infant in

a manger in the most unavailable earthly spot! This just can’t be! It’s a good thing when you are provoked! Don’t settle for convenience! Get a work-out!

The danger of this inner protest is that, unattended, it becomes toxic. Slowly the literal, raw reality of this momentous event, gets diminished into allegory, so that this inner doubt re-shapes our faith and our discernment of the God who has acted in this way. And once this occurs, we withdraw from the event itself. Suddenly, other, more attractive, more convenient elements draw our attention away from this mystery. Yes, of course, the wise men and their gifts! Christmas is suddenly born as a holiday of “joy” and “merriment”, of giving gifts. The gift we are distracted from by our urgent need to give gifts, is the mystery we continually seek to tame. How easily we become the consummate consumers! Is it any wonder that Pascha arrives without the remembrance of the Incarnation? And your failure to see the connection testifies to this!

If each of us decides this year to approach the literal truth of the Incarnation, that God-becomes-man is an actually occurring event, and we stay

patient and calm with its apparent impossibility, then, through an unceasing prayer for clarity, one day it will be revealed to us. This is the only way we receive light into this mystery's darkness. As Orthodox Christians we submit to revelation given to us by God. Our prayer life matters for through it grace is poured into us. Attending Church and its Sacraments with a participatory presence, a prayerful presence, is essential for receiving the grace that reveals.

We are called individually by God to find the Incarnation in our very existence. Its impossibility ought to provoke us, for who would ever make such a claim about God? And yet, here it is. How will you choose to respond to it? Once you understand it, how will you not want to see where it leads? Who is this Incarnation named Jesus? What does it mean for me? The Incarnation begins in wonder and amazement and slowly travels to the painful death on the Cross. But it doesn't end there. No, a human death now becomes a divine event - the Resurrection!

Why are any of us "Christian" if not intimately united into Jesus? Unless we begin to enter the Incarnation with a Christian maturity, we will remain in the manger as babes, while Jesus will have moved onward. Like the apostles, we too are invited to travel with Jesus. This Christmas, return to the Incarnation. Let the impossibility of it stir you, provoke you, even excite you. Examine the ways you've "dumbed" it down in order to make it a non-event, and cast these aside. Enter His cave and in that dim light, gaze upon God as you look at the baby Jesus. You just might feel something born in your heart.

This Christmas stand before the Incarnation, look over your shoulder at Pascha, and with prayer, receive this "gift" of life that truly shines into the midnight darkness. And your gift? You, of course; all God ever wants is YOU!

It will be the "gift that keeps on giving"!

In Christ,
Herb Schuster

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and Paxos Families
Welcome You!**



Blessed Christmas, dearly beloved - with a heart full of joy and, collectively, with gratitude for God's endlessly abundant love and grace. How can we ever thank Him enough for His priceless gifts to us? Yes, and in ways unspeakable as considering how He knows what's best for each of us personally, often offering special gifts of the Holy Spirit as a way to meet unique needs of our church family whether to appreciate as much or not. They're for us to discover through challenges, trials and tribulations. All tests make us stronger when they provide a means by which to trust and pray more fervently.



Being like Him, as His children borne of earth and the Holy Spirit, and then reborn through His only begotten Son, *Emmanuel* – meaning *Christ with us*, personal Savior by His Grace, we like to be thanked just as much as He does - whether to admit as much or not. By recognizing and consciously accepting Him as total Master of our life, we manage to thank Him at least once. What makes us truly blessed is when we do our work joyfully, motivated solely by the belief that we are doing His will whether personally thanked or not! The term is “*self-motivated*” through Christ who strengthens us (Phil 4:13). Actually, God was self-motivated as well when He brought us into the world. In fact, without His enduring love and ever present Holy Spirit, we would be unable to physically inspire (inhale), remaining flat as a rock. That's right: our bodies are literally composed of all the same elements as everything else on earth – *and* the universe - but *we are gifted* with His presence in such a way we can live in awe of the many ways we have been blessed! Powers of the living Word make everything thinkable possible to understand! Powers of God's infinite love, brought to light for life, is a gift so priceless we have no other choice

than to dedicate ourselves to fulfilling His messages of love on a daily moment by moment basis.

I stand with humility in awe every time I consider how our Father loved us so much He was willing to sacrifice His Son as the only way to prove that He could physically as well as spiritually redeem us. In doing so, He proved to us (as well as Himself) that we could overcome death and live with Him eternally – just as His Son did as overcoming death by physically challenging death – and winning. First He had to get Him here through a form of translation facilitated by the Holy Spirit: by way of a virgin womb. Blessed sweet virgin Mary willingly risked her life and degradation – even stoning – to perform her part of the plan. All of this was high risk work by those involved – one that necessarily leaves us speechless except to sing His praise with gratitude eternally.

Last month Agape sponsored an outing to Amish country in Lancaster, PA. We toured the countryside as a guide described their way of life, and then enjoyed smorgasbord lunch followed by **Sight and Sound production of the Christmas Story**. Wrap-around settings were like those of a

super-rated Broadway show although in a countryside “barn”/ theatre; a lamb lies down close to a lion at the entrance. Their emphasis was on the wonder of Jesus’ lowly birth, born into poverty yet destined for reign as Lord and Master, Noble Ruler, King and Savior of the world. We saw the cruelty imposed by the current ruler, and became familiar with rigid customs of the day. We saw live animals - horses, camels, sheep and goats - as part of the cast, bringing the reality of daily life to light. We saw the kindness of the exhausted innkeeper’s wife as having mercy on Mary who was about to deliver, preparing a place for birthing in the stable, which was the only possible place left for her since the inn was completely crowded already. We saw shepherds tending sheep instantly pull up and follow the brilliantly bright star pointing toward

where Jesus the newborn laid in a cradle of hay. We saw and heard a host of magnificent misty-winged angels hovering overhead, singing hymns of praise from the highest. We saw the wise men who came to worship baby Jesus – *Emmanuel* - as the Presence of God dwelling within. They came together – three as one - with words of praise and gifts worthy of the newborn King, angels still singing praise with words of heavenly glory. The music was uplifting, inspiring – unforgettable, leaving no question that God works His wonders through even the most unlikely otherwise impossible ways victoriously. Thank you, Betty and Jack Kelly, for organizing our inspiring and altogether edifying moment of glory!



We are also sponsoring the Toys for Tots event this year. The children of Service men and women really look forward to their special treat come Christmas. Many of them haven't seen a parent for many months, making their joy all the greater as realizing strangers - now family - thoughtfully care about them. Some of them perhaps even recently lost a parent to war as defending our liberties. A special gift is bound to cheer them up, saying thank you for their sacrifice.

We simply must offer a truly sincere thank you to Faye and Rita at Budd Lake Diner for willingly and

generously providing available soups and vegetables for our regular luncheons. Also, Jimmy at Alfa Bagels for providing Sunday freebee bagels. This isn't something they *have to do* but rather a beautiful token of their love for our greater church family. May they be greatly blessed!

Our Christmas luncheon is Tuesday, December 19, 11:30 am, at the Red Hut Diner on Rte 46, Rockaway

Maryann Brinkley (973-442-3011) and Betty Kelly (973-704-0377) co-chairs

Religious Awards For Scouting



PrayPub.org has religious awards that any Girl Scout or Cub Scout/Boy Scout can earn. For Girl Scouts, this award is optional. In Cub/Boy Scouting, scouts must do a "Duty To God" requirement each year in order to advance to the next rank. Earning the religious medal satisfies that requirement, and is a special way to deepen understanding and practice of our faith.

The Chi Rho award can be earned by Webelo Cub Scouts or Junior Girl Scouts in fourth or fifth grade. During his fourth grade year, Damian Gizas worked on earning this award. He has this to say: "I learned a lot about our faith and Greek Orthodox community. I can't believe how symbolic our Church is! I finished my work with a service project. My friends and I put the candles in the cups for Easter! This year I am in fifth grade and I will be learning even more about our Greek Orthodox traditions as I complete my Duty To God In Action requirement."



Damian Gizas, of Pack 136, has earned both the St. George Medal and the Chi Rh

AHEPA MORRIS COUNTY CHAPTER #300 News

On November 12, 2017 Thomas J. Borzeka, President of the Morris County Order of AHEPA Chapter #300 presented a check for \$11,000 to Father John for the repair of the sidewalks at St. Andrew Greek Orthodox Church.

AHEPA Chapter #300 was instrumental in the founding of St. Andrew Church. We continue this long tradition of support both financially and through our Brothers' volunteer efforts.

Looking to the future, Chapter # 300 is working to bring in new members, so we can continue our educational and philanthropic endeavors.

If you are interested in finding out more about the AHEPA or would like to join our chapter feel free to speak to any of our Brothers at church and you can always email Tom Borzeka directly at tjborzeka@yahoo.com.



Thanking our knitting group for their love and hard work

Dear Knitting & Crochet Group members, 10/5/17
We were delighted to receive the 100 baby hats. This is certainly the largest donation we have ever received.

You can rest assured that they will be put to good use and will be a big help in our child abuse prevention project.

Thank you so much,

The Woman's Club of Union

“DEALING WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN CHRISTMAS TIME 2017”

I hope everyone had a Blessed Thanksgiving and now I am sure you are preparing for Christmas and the New Year, 2018! Preparations are overwhelming for special needs children as all they see are preparations for gift buying, decorating, Christmas lights, Christmas trees, Christmas show, Santa Claus, songs, excitement, etc. Yes, we forget to focus on the spiritual side of Christmas and that is important to discuss and stress that CHRISTmas is about CHRIST and we celebrate because of Him. Well, that is important, but all the “hullabaloo” and excitement is what special needs children focus on and let’s pay attention to that part for this article. They will be home for a week and then all will be gone and they will be back to school. How do you deal with that mommy and daddy?

It is difficult enough to get children to a normal schedule once schools open again; the toys are put away, and there is no more sleeping late. If you are dealing with a special needs child, the difficulty is tripled. Autistic children, children with ADHD, or for that matter, any children with special needs have difficulty when their schedules are changed. When they look forward to the holidays, as parents we “bribe” them with promises of gifts and trips and fun things to do. (Of course we should always instill the true meaning of Christmas to all children). During that time we “let go” a little and instead of keeping them on a regular schedule, we “give in” to avoid meltdowns.

Christmas time means changes in children’s routines. Careful taking some special needs children to light shows, especially the very young



ones as exposing them for the first time to blinking lights and too much excitement may give them headaches and you may not realize it. What about all the sweets and foods that may affect their diet? They may actually be over-excited and they may get over tired. Uh-oh! After New Year’s and celebrating 2018, schools open!

Your special needs child has just been out of school for a whole week, slept a little later, maybe ate too many sweets, and now you are asking him or her to get up early, eat healthy, and do homework. Well, if your child was not following a “normal routine” during his/her time off, expect some meltdowns. If you had a lot of visitors during the holidays, (and most special needs children don’t like guests), let them know that these visitors appreciated the time spent with your children and then the next time they will be more comfortable. Talk about the visits, and maybe even ask your children to send a little card thanking them for coming. If your children were the guests in other homes, encourage them to either make a phone call thanking them for their hospitality, or a hand-made card saying thank you. “Normal” parents do not often understand the behaviors of special needs children and if they receive some type of acknowledgement, it will open their sensitivity a bit.

Your special needs child probably loved the time off and the extra time he or she spend with you, but they are also looking forward to the stability of a routine as they have in school. Schedule visits from guests ahead of time instead of having them just drop by. Have your child bring a little

something to their home when they visit. Schedule visits at an early time early following a school routine instead of later.

By doing some extra planning when dealing with your special needs children you are reducing stress on yourselves as well. Parents, celebrate Christmas and all the “hullabaloo” with your special needs children, but be aware that although you have all

the patience in the world, others who do not understand may not be so understanding and patient, although loving.

Enjoy the winter season, pray a lot, play a lot, love a lot, and laugh a lot!! With my husband Michael, and son Nicholas, we wish you a Blessed and Merry Christmas and Happy & Healthy New Year for 2018!

My current prayer is from **Table Prayer Guide** for **Christmas...**

Today is born of a Virgin, He who holds creation in the hollow of His hand. As a mortal He is wrapped in swaddling rags, He who in His being cannot be handled. God lies in a manger, who of old established the heavens in the beginning. He is nourished with milk from the breast, He who rained Manna on the People in the desert. He summons Magi, the Bridegroom of the Church. He accepts their gifts, the Son of the Virgin. We worship your birth, O Christ. Show us also your divine Epiphany.

Christmas Royal Hours, 9th hour

Today the Virgin gives birth to Him who is above all being, and the earth offers the cave to Him whom no one can approach; Angels with Shepherds give glory, while Magi journey with a star, for to us there has been born a little Child, God before the ages.

Saint Romanos the Melodos

Feel free to e-mail me with your comments and suggestions for our “Parents’ Corner” at: alexproto@optonline.net

Have a great month! | **Alexandra Protopapas Med** | **Certified Teacher of the Handicapped & Social Sciences**
Teacher at Educational Services Commission of Morris County, Parsippany Schools, St. Elizabeth’s Academy in Convent Station, & Abundant Life Schools. |(Information, Teaching, Tutoring, Counseling, Homebound Instruction.)

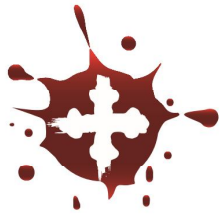
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Consequences and Solutions



St. Paul said,

“If one member suffers, all suffer together.”

1 CORINTHIANS 12:26

Today, our Christian brothers and sisters are suffering some of the worst religious persecution in history with the death of more than 90,000 Christians around the world. Millions of Christians face interrogation, arrest, torture, and/or death because of their religious convictions and cultural or ethnic identification. As the one body of Christ, we suffer with them.

The time is now to end the persecution and senseless murdering of our fellow-Christians.

On December 4-6, the Order of St. Andrew, the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, with the leadership of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America, will gather together top government officials and senior religious leaders from around the world in Washington D.C. to help bring an end to the persecution of Christians.

WHAT CAN YOU DO? JOIN US ON OUR SOCIAL CHANNELS:

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Let us stand together to #EndChristianPersecution



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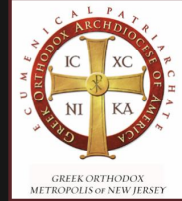
TUITION IS \$300 IS DUE AT REGISTRATION

This course focuses on the beginning fundamentals of communicating in Modern Greek. Alphabet, pronunciation and elemental vocabulary are taught while students develop basic skills in listening, speaking reading and writing.

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or the church office (973)584-0388 or e-mail info@standrewgonj.org



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On November 12th 2017, **Oxmani E. Corona** of Dover, NJ wed **Katerina N. Rotsides** of Morristown, NJ. Sponsor was Eleni Peterson, witness was Ulises Corona.

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Athena Mantgas

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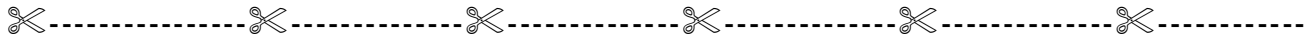
John & Ellen Manetas

+Dimitrios Stavropoulos

Athena Mantgas

May your memory be eternal dear brother for you are worthy of blessedness and everlasting memory.

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ST. ANDREW CALENDAR

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION **Sundays**

PILLOW MINISTRY TBA ON A **Monday** @11am

BAKING GROUP **Tuesdays** @9am

CHOIR PRACTICE **1st & 3rd Tuesday** @6:30pm

KNITTING GROUP **Wednesdays** @10am -2pm

Hellenic Afternoon School **Thursdays** @4:30pm

JR Greek Dancing **Thursdays** @6:30pm

GOYA Greek Dancing **Thursdays** @7pm

GOYA Games **Sundays @2:30pm** *see updates in weekly bulletin*

UPCOMING EVENTS

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS DECEMBER: 12/3 PC, 12/10 PTA, 12/17 GOYA, 12/24 BAKALIKO, 12/31 DOP

12/2 GOYA Christmas Caroling

12/2 • Scheduled outside EVENT IN GYM

12/3 @12-2pm Elections for Parish Council

12/3 @12:15pm JOY Meeting

12/7 @5:45pm PTA Monthly Meeting

12/7 @6:30pm GOYA Monthly Meeting

12/9 • JOY TIMETBD Christmas Caroling at Merry Heart Succasunna, NJ

12/9 & 12/10 GOYA Volleyball & Basketball Tournament

12/9 @1pm Wedding Barletta & Andreopoulos

12/10 @2pm Wedding Apostolopoulos & Haloulos

12/11 PHILOPTOCHOS & DOP CHRISTMAS DINNER AT J.TOWNE TAVERN, JEFFERSON NJ

12/16 • St Basil Christmas Pageant in Garrison NY

Reservations for: St. Andrew Community Center Gym, Social Hall or Classrooms must be made with Church Office.

12/17 Christmas program with Sunday school at Church (all grades participate) SNOW DATE- 12/24

12/18 Parish Council meeting

12/19 Agape Christmas Luncheon at RED HUT DINER @11:30am

12/23 FAITH KITCHEN-PHILOPTOCHOS

12/28 GOYA Christmas Dance in Roseland NJ

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS JANUARY 2018 : 1/7 PHILOPTOCHOS, 1/14 GOYA, 1/21 DOP, 1/28-PTA

1/7 Cutting of Community Vasilopita

DATE IN JANUARY TBA Leader's Meeting

1/20 GREEK NIGHT AT ST. ANDREW part of proceeds to benefit IOCC

1/27 @11am Baptism

1/22@7:30pm Parish Council Meeting 4th Monday

1/23 @7pm Philoptochos Meeting 4th Tuesday

1/25 @7pm GOYA Meeting 4th Thursday

1/26 @6:30pm PTA KIDS NITE OUT

1/28 HAS Three Hierarchs Program | **TRIODION** begins

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS FEBRUARY: 2/4 PHILOPTOCHOS 2/11 BAKALIKO, 2/18 GOYA, 2/25 PTA

2/1 @6:30pm HAS Teachers meet

2/10 **SATURDAY OF SOULS** also on 2/17 & 2/24

2/10 MARDI GRAS/Hosted by PTA

2/16 Roxbury's 3rd Annual Global Hi-5 Multicultural Expo

2/17 @3pm Baptism

2/18 GODPARENTS' SUNDAY

2/19 KATHARI DEFTERA

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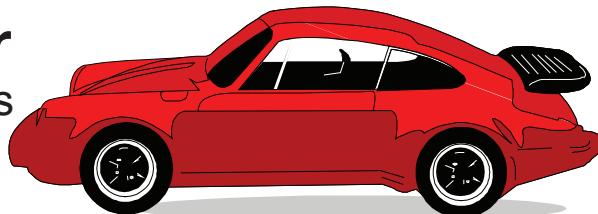
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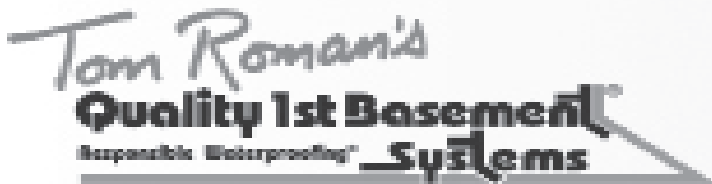
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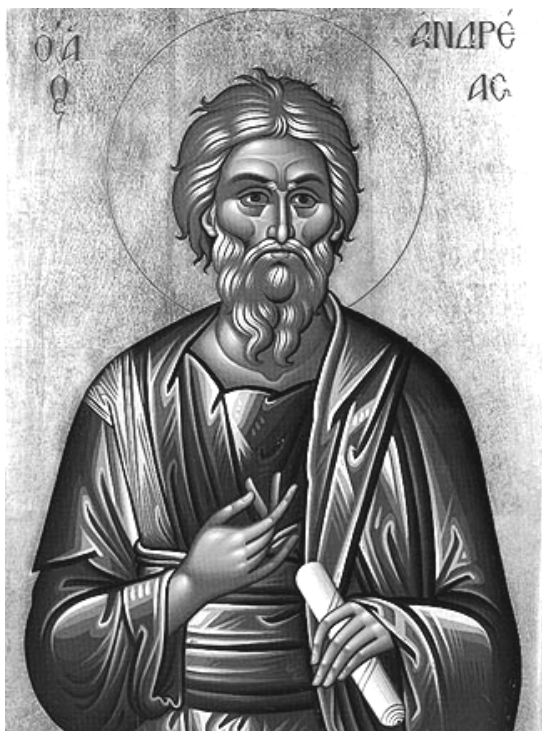
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Of the

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

JESUS CHRIST

The Nativity, O Christ our God, shineth forth the light of reason the light of Reason over the earth for, in it, they who served the stars, were, by a star taught to adore Thee, the Sun of Truth, and to see Thee from the heights of the East; O Lord, glory to Thee

HYMN OF THE APOSTLE ST. ANDREW

As first of the Apostles to receive the call,
and very brother of the prince of them,
intercede O Andrew,
with the Master of all of us,
peace to all the world to grant,
and to our souls His great mercy.

ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟ ΤΟΥ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΥ ΑΝΔΡΕΟΥ

Ως των Αποστόλων πρωτόκλητος,
και του κορυφαίου αυτάδελφος,
τον Δεσπότην των όλων Ανδρέα ικέτευε,
ειρήνην τη οικουμένη δωρήσασθαι,
και ταις ψυχαίς ημών το μέγα έλεο

The Saint Andrew Vision Statement

Our Greek Orthodox Community of Morris County is a welcoming place where the family of Saint Andrew is committed to God, Orthodox worship, Christian education, philanthropy, and Hellenic culture, for the benefit of those whose lives we touch.