



# SAINT NICHOLAS

## GREEK ORTHODOX SHRINE CHURCH

REV. ECONOMOS ARISTIDIS GARINIS, PASTOR

REV. PRESBYTER ALEXANDROS DOUVRES

Dec-Jan-Feb 2025-26 Volume 1, Issue 4

[stnicholasflushing.org](http://stnicholasflushing.org)



CHRIST IS BORN!

LET US GLORIFY HIM!

# ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX SHRINE CHURCH

## ORGANIZATIONS AND MINISTRIES

SEPT/OCT/NOV 2025

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*Rev. Presbyter Fr. Alexandros Douvres*

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## Anna Rigogiannis- Sacraments

## Evangelos Vekios – Bookkeeper

## *Church Office Hours*

*Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm*

Phone 718-357-4200

Email: [info@stnicholasflushing.org](mailto:info@stnicholasflushing.org)

196-10 Northern Blvd

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## PARISH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BOARD

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## Assistant Treasurer – Victoria Tsadilas

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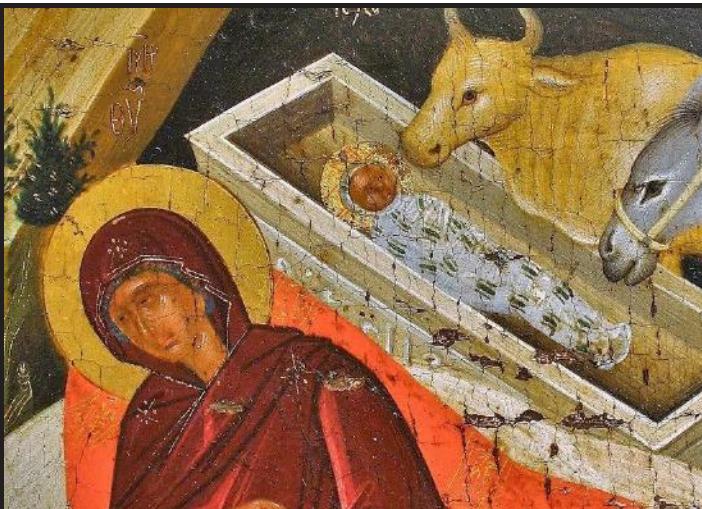
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### GOYA Volleyball

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My beloved St. Nicholas Parishioners,

The season of Christ's Nativity is suddenly upon us. The birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the most important event in all of human history. It is the moment when God enters history and reveals His great love for mankind. The Son of God is sent into this world in humility, born a child of the Most Holy Theotokos in Bethlehem.

There are many ways God could have entered this world. His choice to be born in humility and to live His life in poverty communicates a compassionate message to each of us. The Holy Fathers of our Church tell us that the Lord comes into the world and identifies with us in every way except for sin. In the Gospel of John, the Lord tells us, "God did not send His Son into the world to condemn it, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17).

Jesus Christ saves our fallen humanity by uniting with it, overcoming sin in His flesh, suffering, and willingly conquering death

through His death on the Cross. Ours is a compassionate God who, though as God He is passionless and omnipotent, chooses to embrace us in our weakness and brokenness. We not only see this in the manner of His birth but also in His preaching and miracles. Through His divine words and miracles, we, like the disciples who witnessed Him in the world, are called to salvation through faith in Him. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not die but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

All of us are in need of Christ's presence in our lives. We are in need of His healing and His gift of eternal life, which He gives to us freely.

This is the meaning of Christmas.

**"We approach Christmas then with a sense of spiritual preparation through fasting and prayer—struggling against our sins and passions so that we might prepare our hearts and the mangers of our souls to receive the Savior of the world."**

Each year during this season, however, we are confronted with a different message during this Christmas season. Our senses are overwhelmed with festive distractions

that have managed to create a celebration of Christmas without Christ. The birth of our Lord and Savior has been reduced to a season of slogans, materialism, and indulgence. It's not the act of celebration itself that troubles us but the absence of Christ's presence.

As Orthodox Christians, it is not our job to judge the world and its customs. It is, however, our responsibility to shine light and truth into the communities in which we live, emulating our Lord and Savior. How then do we celebrate Christmas as Christians? Christ's birth was an act of great humility

## FR. ARISTIDIS GARINIS

and love for us. These virtues are at the heart of our Christian faith, though they are not easily acquired. This is why the Church, understanding our human condition, as a good doctor prescribes a seasonal fast before each of the great feasts. We approach Christmas then with a sense of spiritual preparation through fasting and prayer—struggling against our sins and passions so that we might prepare our hearts and the mangers of our souls to receive the Savior of the world.

How else do we acquire humility and love if not by cutting off our will and ego? The Lord calls us to exemplify Him when He says, “Be meek as I am meek” (Matthew 11:29). The humility of our Lord shines brightest in His willingness to give up His life sacrificially, for the sake of the world. “There is no greater love than this, when a man lays down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Therefore, our spiritual preparation of fasting, prayers, and increased church services has as its main purpose to acquire the spirit and the mind of Christ in our way life. When we receive Him in the Holy Mysteries and also imitate His works, we experience true communion with God and salvation.

Christ is born, my beloved brothers and sisters! He is born for our sakes, and He willingly shares His eternal life with us through His Holy Church. Let us all fast together that we might also feast together and celebrate the true joy of our Lord’s Nativity as one community of faith. The worldly festivities will always be there but should not be our main focus. During this season, let’s reorient our gaze onto the humble manger of Christ, contemplating the true meaning of Christmas and the purpose of our lives in light of this greatest of gifts.

I pray that we indulge on this gift of Christ’s coming into the world and, like the Magi, journey towards the Lord in Bethlehem, kneeling before

Him with the gifts of our faith and humility of love. On behalf of Fr. Alexandros, our parish council members, and our St. Nicholas ministries, I would like to wish you all a most blessed Christmas season. Christ is born! Glorify Him!

With love in Christ,



Economos, Fr. Aristidis Garinis,  
Proistamenos  
*St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Shrine Church*  
Flushing, NY





*The Greek Orthodox Nativity icon is a profound visual expression of the Incarnation, acting as a window into its spiritual reality.*

*In the center, the Virgin Mary (Theotokos) rests serenely, contemplating the mystery, while the Christ Child is laid in a manger set inside a dark cave. This cave symbolizes the fallen world and the darkness of Sheol which Christ enters to conquer. His swaddling clothes often resemble burial shrouds, and the manger, a sarcophagus, foreshadowing His saving death and resurrection. A brilliant Star of Bethlehem shines a ray of light directly onto the Child, proclaiming Him as the Light who illuminates the darkness.*

*The icon's teaching centers on humility, cosmic harmony, and Theophany. The juxtaposition of the dark cave and the radiant light signifies Christ's coming transforms sin and death into life. It depicts a cosmic event: angels adore Him, shepherds receive the good news, and the Magi approach in worship. Even the struggle of St. Joseph, often shown with a tempting figure, is included, symbolizing the spiritual struggle of belief. This gathering of diverse figures—heavenly and earthly—teaches that the Incarnation is God's universal entry point into the world, calling all creation to worship and salvation.*

# ON THE COVER



# ΕΟΡΤΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ

## DECEMBER 2025

\*\*Please note that during the 40 days before Christmas there is Liturgy everyday beginning with Orthros at 8:15 except on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m.

December 3 WED	<b>Evening Liturgy &amp; Discovering Orthodoxy Class 6:00 p.m.</b>	December 20 SAT	<b>St. Ignatius the God-bearer</b> Αγ. Ιγνάτιου του Θεοφόρου 8:15 a.m. Orthros / 9:15 a.m. Liturgy
December 5 FRI	<b>Great Vespers of St. Nicholas</b> Μέγας Εσπερινός Αγ. Νικολάου 7:00 p.m.	December 21 SUN	<b>Sunday Before Nativity</b> Κυριακή Προ Χριστουγέννων 7:30 a.m. Orthros / 8:45 a.m. Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL LITURGY
December 6 SAT	<b>Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker</b> Αγ. Νικολάου Θαυματουργού 8:15 a.m. Orthros / 9:15 a.m. Liturgy	December 24 WED	<b>Christmas Eve</b> <b>Παραμονή Χριστουγέννων</b> Orthros & Hours 7:30 a.m. Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil Ορθός και Ωρα 7:30 π.μ. Εσπερινή Θεία Λειτουργία Αγ. Βασιλείου
December 7 SUN	<b>10th Sunday of Luke</b> <b>10 Κυριακή του Λουκά</b> 7:30 a.m. Orthros / 8:45 a.m. Liturgy (One Liturgy)		<b>Christmas Eve Liturgy St. John Chrysostom</b> <b>Θεία Λειτουργία Αγ. Ιωάννου Χρυσοστόμου</b> <b>6:30 Orthros / Ορθός</b> <b>7:15 p.m. Liturgy / Λειτουργία</b> <i>Christmas pageant to follow</i>
December 9 TUE	<b>Conception of St. Anna</b> <b>Σύλληψη της Αγ. Άννης</b> 8:15 a.m. Orthros / 9:15 a.m. Liturgy	December 25 THU	<b>The Feast of Christmas</b> <b>ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΓΕΝΝΑ</b> 8:15 a.m. Orthros / 9:15 a.m. Liturgy
December 10 WED	<b>Evening Liturgy &amp; Discovering Orthodoxy Class 6:00 p.m.</b>	December 26 FRI	<b>Synaxis of the Theotokos</b> Σύναξη της Θεοτόκου 8:15 a.m. Orthros / 9:15 a.m. Liturgy
December 12 FRI	<b>St. Spyridon the Wonderworker</b> Αγ. Σπυρίδωνος Θαυματουργού 8:15 a.m. Orthros / 9:15 a.m. Liturgy	December 27 SAT	<b>St. Stephanos Protomartyr</b> Αγ. Στεφάνου Πρωτομάρτυρος 8:15 a.m. Orthros / 9:15 a.m. Liturgy
December 14 SUN	<b>11th Sunday of Luke</b> <b>ΙΑ' Κυριακή του Λουκά</b> 7:30 a.m. Orthros / 8:45 a.m. Liturgy	December 28 SUN	<b>Sunday After Christmas</b> Κυριακή μετά τα Χριστούγεννα 7:30 a.m. Orthros / 8:45 a.m. Liturgy (One Liturgy)
December 15 MON	<b>St. Eleftherios Hieromartyr</b> Αγ. Ιερομάρτυρος Ελευθερίου 8:15 a.m. Orthros / 9:15 a.m. Liturgy		
December 17 WED	<b>Evening Liturgy &amp; Discovering Orthodoxy Class 6:00 p.m.</b> <i>St. Dionysios of Zakynthos</i> Αγ. Διονυσίου Ζακύνθου		

My beloved St. Nicholas Parishioners,

I write this appeal to your good conscience with boldness, sincerity of heart, and in a spirit of gratitude. We are a blessed parish, and as our Lord reminds us, “To whom much is given, much is required” (Luke 12:48). In light of our sincere dedication to our St. Nicholas parish, together with our beloved schools, ministries, and various programs, I ask once again for each of your help. Actually, it’s not I who ask but the future of our parish that calls us to action.

By the grace of God and the support of so many of you, we have been able to achieve the first two phases of our renovation for the future program. Today, as communicated in my last appeal, we were able to replace our broken air conditioning units in our sanctuary area and also complete our parish lobby at the entrance of our schools. On behalf of our parish council and renovation committee, I thank you for your thoughtful and generous contributions.

Now, the third and largest phase of our renovation program remains to be completed, and we humbly ask for your help. This phase will finally address the important matter of our roof and domes. After much deliberation, research, and careful consideration, it is time for us to address this matter. Specifically, as communicated in the past, we will be changing the inner membranes of both domes, replacing the roof tiles, and addressing issues with the flat roofs. Once this work is complete, we would also like to beautify the panels at the base of the domes as they appear in the above rendering.

It is important to remember that changes should not only be made when a problem has occurred but also to have the vision to preemptively address issues before they start. Unfortunately, we have already had signs of wear and tear on our roofs as certain areas have leaked and new problem areas have appeared. We would like to start this work towards the end of May should we raise the funds needed for the magnitude of this project. A number of you have already contributed towards our \$1.5 million goal but we still have more to raise.

In order to help raise awareness for this funding we have initiated a “Tree of Life” fundraising campaign. We will include information for this attached with this letter. We humbly ask that you consider strongly supporting your parish’s effort to renovate for its future and help us reach our goals. This season is a season of giving. Please consider your parish as a recipient of one of your gifts and become part of its important mission in the years to come. I write to you with love and gratitude.

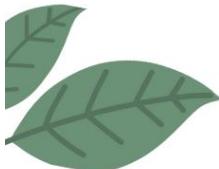
Wishing you all a most blessed Christmas season,

With love in Christ,



Economos, Fr. Aristidis Garinis  
Proistamenos





<b>BRONZE DEDICATION LEAF</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>
<b>SILVER DEDICATION LEAF</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>
<b>GOLD DEDICATION LEAF</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>BENEFACITOR DOVE</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>GREAT BENEFACITOR STONE</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>

**Please consider supporting our Renovation For Our Future project to continue passing the torch of Orthodox faith and Hellenism to our future generations.**

 BRONZE LEAF \$2,000

 SILVER LEAF \$5,000

 GOLD LEAF \$10,000

 DOVE \$25,000

 STONE \$50,000

LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT INSCRIPTION CLEARLY. 3 LINES (33 CHARACTERS MAX)

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"SO LET EACH ONE GIVE AS HE PURPOSES IN HIS HEART; NOT GRUDGINGLY OR OUT OF NECESSITY; FOR GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER"

# MESSAGE FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

• •

My dear St. Nicholas Family,

It is with deep joy and humility that I address you in this issue of our ARK Newsletter. I am deeply happy following the recent Consecration of our Holy Anargyroi Cosmas and Damianos Chapel on November 14 and 15. It is a blessing for all of us to witness such an event in our lifetimes, and twice the blessing for me to have worked alongside our clergy and Consecration Committee for this historical day in our St. Nicholas parish.

I want to thank our Proistamenos Father Aristidis, Father Paul, and Father Alex for the guidance to have this wonderful occasion for our community to witness. May God bless them!

Our chapel is a testament to the deep faith of our donors and predecessors, who envisioned the building of our St. Nicholas Community on this site. It is a testament to the love and hard work of generations of St. Nicholas members who helped enhance the chapel, contributing to more than just its walls. They ensured the beautiful iconography that adorns its interior, the welcoming furniture that greets visitors, and every detail was tended to by those working to glorify God through their efforts. Our chapel is a testament to the Faith of our St. Nicholas family through time. Like the 5 Neo-Martyrs of Samothrace whose relics are now in our chapel, we were reminded to be modern-day martyrs of Orthodoxy, not followers of modern-day fads, but followers of the saints and martyrs who have shown us how to live and die like Christians. We were reminded to spread the light of our faith through our own example, through our schools, and through our ministries. This has been and continues to be the core mission of our parish and the North Star for our actions, choices, and investment of time and resources.

We are deeply grateful to His Eminence Archbishop Elpidohoros, His Grace Bishop Nektarios, Father Villis, and all the clergy

who joined us to celebrate the Consecration, including the newly ordained and pride of our community, Father Gatanas.

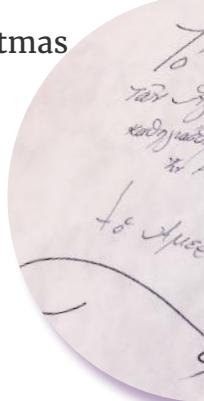
I would also like to thank our Consecration Committee: Vicky Tsadilas, Christina Siroky, Eleni Stathopoulos, Eleni Papageorgiou, Niki Sakarellos, Larry Hotzoglou, Irene Hotzoglou, Father Alex, Chris Pantazis, Chris Palamara, Andy Tsilas, Nick Karacostas, Demetrios Athanasopoulos, Nektarios Giannios, and Peter Valasiades for their endless hard work and dedication to our Community. Thank you to our Philoptochos and all the volunteers. Thank you to Athena and the Amazing Mythos Wait Staff for preparing and serving the wonderful food. And thank you to those I am not naming individually, including our Church office team, our Parish Council, and others, near and far, who gave their time and/or financial support.

As I wind down the last days of my presidency, I am honored that you entrusted me to work with you all in this capacity over the past 2 years. I was reminded every day of the strength of our people and what we can accomplish when we work together. I relied on each of you to share your feedback, ideas, and insights on how we can continue to improve our parish. Thank you to Olga Dakis for the amazing work in getting the ARK started!

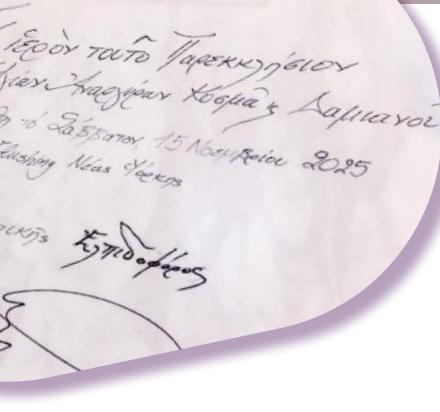
Thank you for all your support.

I pray that God continues to bless you all and our St. Nicholas Community, so that we may grow and strengthen our Church and schools for the generations to come.

Wishing you a happy and healthy Christmas and Lenten season,  
Michael Haralambous  
Parish Council President



# HOLY ANARGYROI CONSECRATION 2025



# RENOVATION FOR OUR FUTURE UPDATE

• •

## **RENOVATING FOR OUR FUTURE**

Thanks to the many generous parishioners who continue to donate towards our “Renovating for our Future” campaign, we are thrilled to announce that both Phase 1 and 2 are now complete. The recently installed “Tree of Life” in the parish lobby, will continue to display the names of the donators to our campaign. When you get a chance, please take a moment to visit our beautifully renovated parish lobby.

The Phase 1 work which included the repairs and replacement of our aging and non-functioning church and school air conditioning and heating units, was completed at the start of the summer. This essential upgrade, at a cost of \$320,000, will ensure comfortable and efficient environments throughout our complex, regardless of the season.

Thanks to Anna Litsakis, President, and the William Spyropoulos PTA, the extremely generous seed monies was donated to the parish, enabling us to start the next phase of our campaign. The Phase 2 work included the renovation and facelift to our parish lobby. This work took place during the summer and we can now proudly welcome visitors to our parish. We installed new terrazzo flooring, ceilings, enhanced lighting, school storefronts, stairway wood doors, above ceiling sprinkler lines, and a reception desk with a security system which monitors all spaces throughout our church and school facility. This refreshed entrance will truly reflect the vibrancy of our community.

The next Phase 3 of our “Renovating for our Future” project, will consist of the much-needed repairs and replacements of our dome and flat roofs throughout our facility. Evan Petkanas, President of Stone Engineering, and his committee, have been working diligently for months, looking to see how to best approach this work. All the roofs are being carefully inspected, and the work moving forward, will

be prioritized based on the condition of each roof and availability of funds. This phase will be the most expensive one (in excess of \$1 million), so fundraising will be crucial. We’re hoping to start some of this work in the springtime, once the winter weather is behind us. This phase is paramount to safeguarding the spiritual and physical integrity of our parish.

Lastly, the Phase 4 “Beatification of our Parish” work will be ongoing throughout the next few years. You may have already noticed the ceiling iconography in the baptistry and reliquary areas, the beautiful woodwork encasing the icon of St. Nicholas, the new gymnasium equipment for our youth, etc. More beautiful amenities are coming down the road. Phase 4 will bring comprehensive beautification and essential upgrades across our entire complex, including stunning new mosaics, meticulous brick repointing, modernized windows, renovated bathrooms, and numerous enhancements for our church, school, youth, and organization areas. We estimate this work will cost approximately \$700,000. These improvements will not only uplift our surroundings but also enhance the functionality and aesthetics of every space we share.

For all this work to become a reality, we need your help. We must actively maintain and preserve the integrity of our cherished facilities. Our beautiful church, thriving school, and welcoming spaces for youth and organizations — have served us faithfully. We cannot allow our spiritual home to deteriorate; it is the very heart of our community. Please consider making your donation to the “Renovating for our Future” campaign. God bless all of you and your families.

Manny Kratsios



You can still permanently honor a loved one by donating a specially inscribed leaf, dove, or stone for our Tree of Life display.

QR code/ Flyer on page 9.



# PHILOPTOCHOS

## *Our Ladies Philoptochos Society: A Season of Service and Sisterhood*

Our Philoptochos has had a busy fall with several events and fellowships. At our welcome back October

general meeting, we were honored to host Father Peter Spiro who spoke to us about human trafficking and the impact it has on so many young adults. It was an informative evening that was

well attended by our community. We also hosted our Opa Size expert Kelly for an evening of fun and fitness.

On Philoptochos Sunday, November 2nd, we had the Oath of Office of our new board together with an Artoclasia service

at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. As a “thank you” to our community for their love and support, we hosted a Harvest Breakfast on Sunday, November 9th, following the Divine Liturgy. It was a beautiful fellowship among our parishioners at this special time of the year.

Finally, we were an integral part of our chapel’s consecration as we prepared the Φυλαχτά for our community from the sacred cloth used on the altar. What a blessing!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

We are now gearing up for our Christmas party to be held on Thursday, December 11th, which has become an annual tradition for our community.

Our Vasilopita breakfast will be held on Sunday, January 18th after the Divine Liturgy. This tradition helps to support Saint Basil’s Academy with their many needs for the children.

Finally, please “save the date” for the annual fundraiser,

*continued on page 16*

The St. Nicholas Ladies Philoptochos Society  
Proudly presents its

## WINTER LUNCHEON DESIGNER RAFFLE

Purchase your raffle tickets for a chance to win a beautiful designer prize.  
Drawing to be held January 24, 2026. Winners need not be present.

1 Raffle for \$30 or 4 Raffles for \$100

1<sup>st</sup> Prize - Gucci Softbit Max Bag - valued at \$3,650

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize - Vintage Alhambra Pendant - valued at \$3,100

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize - Gucci Ophidia Clutch - valued at \$1,090

4<sup>th</sup> Prize - Gucci Wool Scarf - valued at \$500



TO PURCHASE RAFFLES ONLINE, SCAN HERE



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:  
VASILIKI VLANTIS: 516-851-5887



Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

# Christmas Party

hosted by

ST. NICHOLAS LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2025 | 7:00 PM

SARANTAKOS HALL

196-10 NORTHERN BOULEVARD

FLUSHING, NY 11358

ENJOY BUFFET DINNER, WINE AND SIGNATURE COCKTAILS

\*MUSIC BY DJ DEAN KOUTSOUMBIS

DONATION \$70.00 PER PERSON

RSVP BY DECEMBER 2ND

KAREN KALKANIS

917-584-2322

PENELOPE KALIONTZAKIS

646-852-0969

FOR CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS,  
SCAN THE QR CODE



our luncheon on Saturday, January 24 at the Lannin, in Eisenhower Park. The proceeds will enhance our treasury and be used for our many Philanthropic endeavors we support throughout the year.

We look forward to seeing you at our events and thank you for your steadfast support and love.





# THE MEN'S LEAGUE

## St. Nicholas Men's League: Fellowship and Future Plans

The Men's League is gearing up for a busy year! Below is a look at their upcoming meetings and community events. Join us for the annual Christmas Party and save the date for the Superbowl party next year. Here are some photos from our first annual Oktoberfest!

December 9: Monthly Meeting

December 13: Annual Christmas Party

January 13, 2026: Monthly Meeting

February 8: 2nd Annual Super Bowl Party

February 10: Monthly Meeting

February 22: Cheesefare- Selling our famous cheese pies!

March 10: Monthly Meeting

April 14: Monthly Meeting

May 12: Monthly Meeting

June 9: Monthly Meeting

Email: GKakivelis@gmail.com  
to join or for more information.





# BYZANTINE MUSIC SCHOOL

## Η ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΗ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΙΚΗ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗ ΤΗΣ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗΣ ΜΟΥΣΙΚΗΣ

Η ιστορία της Βυζαντινής Μουσικής είναι στενά συνυφασμένη με το Βυζάντιο. Δημιουργήθηκε για λειτουργικούς λόγους και στηρίχθηκε στην ψαλτική τέχνη και υμνογραφία. Διαφέρει από την ευρωπαϊκή μεσαιωνική μουσική, επειδή εξυπηρετεί τις ανάγκες επένδυσης του λόγου με μουσική, ενώ στην ευρωπαϊκή παράδοση κυριαρχεί η μουσική που επενδύεται με λόγο. Χαρακτηριστικά της Βυζαντινής μουσικής, είναι η μονοφωνική εκτέλεση και η απουσία μουσικών οργάνων.

Βγαλμένη μέσα από την εκκλησιαστική ποίηση, βασίζεται στο σύστημα των ήχων. Οι ήχοι βασίζονται στους αρχαίους ελληνικούς τρόπους. Ο Πυθαγόρας ήταν ο πρώτος που συνέδεσε τη μουσική με τα μαθηματικά και καινοτόμησε δημιουργώντας τους μουσικούς "ήχους" και τις κλίμακες, που είναι η βάση της οκτωήχου, του κέντρου δηλαδή της βυζαντινής μουσικής θεωρίας.

Οι Βυζαντινοί μελωδοί θεολογούν μουσικά και ψάλλουν θεολογικά. Πιστεύουν στην αγγελική μετάδοση της έμπνευσης. Οι αρχές που διέπουν τη γλώσσα και την ρυθμοποία της υμνογραφίας, η εφευρετικότητα της στιχοποίας, τα ποικίλα σχήματα λόγου, οι πλούσιοι συμβολισμοί του βυζαντινού μέλους καταδεικνύουν το βάθος όχι μόνο της πίστης, αλλά και του λυρισμού και της εκφραστικότητας των δημιουργών της. Το Βυζαντινό Μέλος αναδεικνύει με τον μελωδικότερο τρόπο τον πνευματικό και μυσταγωγικό χαρακτήρα των ύμνων.

Οι πρώτοι επώνυμοι υμνογράφοι και μελωδοί προήλθαν από τις μοναστικές κοινότητες - ο Ρωμανός ο Μελωδός, ο επονομαζόμενος Πίνδαρος της ρυθμικής ποίησης έγραψε 1.000 τροπάρια (κοντάκια), ο Θεόδωρος Στουδίτης, ο Ανδρέας Κρήτης, που ήταν ο πρώτος εισηγητής του ποιητικού είδος του Κανόνα.

Τον 8ον αιώνα ο Ιωάννης ο Δαμασκηνός διαμορφώνει το σύστημα της Αγκιστροειδούς Παρασημαντικής, μιας σχεδόν ιερογλυφικής γραφής, για την διευκόλυνση της απόδοσης και εκμάθησης της μουσικής. Οι τροποποιήσεις στο σύστημα του Δαμασκηνού συνεχίστηκαν τον 17ον αιώνα με τον Ιωάννη τον Τραπεζούντιο, Πρωτοψάλτη Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου, τον Πέτρο Λαμπαδάριο τον Πελοποννήσιο, ο οποίος υπήρξε ένας από τους κορυφαίους

εκπροσώπους της μεταβυζαντινής παράδοσης, τον μαθητή του Γεώργιο Κρήτα, διάσημο μουσικό και υμνογράφο αρχή του 19ου αιώνα, ο οποίος δίδασκε στη Κωνσταντινούπολη, την Χίο και την Κυδωνία και τον Μανουήλ Βυζάντιο, μαθητή του Ιακώβου του Πρωτοψάλτη και του Γεωργίου του Κρητός, ο οποίος διακρίθηκε για το σοβαρό εκκλησιαστικό του ύφος.

**«Οι Βυζαντινοί μελωδοί θεολογούν μουσικά και ψάλλουν θεολογικά. Πιστεύουν στην αγγελική μετάδοση της έμπνευσης. [...] Το Βυζαντινό Μέλος αναδεικνύει με τον μελωδικότερο τρόπο τον πνευματικό και μυσταγωγικό χαρακτήρα των ύμνων.»**

Ο Χρύσανθος εκ Μαδύτου, ο Γρηγόριος Λευτής και ο Χουρμούζιος ο Χαρτοφύλαξ ήταν αυτοί που προχώρησαν στην απαραίτητη

μεταρρύθμιση της σημειογραφίας της ελληνικής εκκλησιαστικής μουσικής το 1814. Σκοπός τους ήταν η απλούστευση των βυζαντινών μουσικών συμβόλων, τα οποία, από τις αρχές του 19ου αιώνα, είχαν γίνει υπερβολικά σύνθετα και τεχνικά. Ταυτόχρονα συγκροτείται η Θεωρία της ψαλτικής τέχνης και καταγράφονται οι κανόνες σύνταξης και ορθογραφίας που βοηθούν στην εκμάθηση της Εκκλησιαστικής Βυζαντινής Μουσικής.

Το βυζαντινό μέλος, η «μουσική των αγγέλων» όπως έλεγε ο Αλέξανδρος Παπαδιαμάντης, ενσωματώνει στοιχεία της αρχαίας ελληνικής μουσικής και τα μεταλαμπαδεύει στη δημοτική και λαϊκή μουσική.

«Πάνω σ' αυτούς τους ρυθμούς χτίζεται το ρεμπέτικο τραγούδι, του οποίου παρατηρώντας τη μελωδική γραμμή διακρίνομε καθαρά την επίδραση ή καλύτερα την προέχταση του βυζαντινού μέλους. Όλα φανερώνουν την πηγή, που δεν είναι άλλη από την αυστηρή και απέρριτη εκκλησιαστική υμνωδία.» Μάνος Χατζιδάκις

Η Βυζαντινή Μουσική ενσωματώθηκε πρόσφατα στον Αντιπροσωπευτικό Κατάλογο της Άυλης Πολιτιστικής Κληρονομιάς της Ανθρωπότητας της UNESCO ως μια ζωντανή τέχνη με πάνω από δέκα αιώνες παρουσίας.

Ελευθέριος Ελευθεριάδης  
Καθηγητής Βυζαντινής μουσικής  
Πρωτοψάλτης Ι.Ν. Αγίου Νικολάου Φλάσινγκ NY

## THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF BYZANTINE MUSIC

The history of Byzantine music is intrinsically linked to the history and spiritual life of the Byzantine Empire. Conceived primarily for liturgical purposes, it was founded upon the art of psalitic chanting and hymnography. Unlike the medieval European musical tradition—where music predominates and the text is adapted to it—Byzantine music serves primarily to clothe the sacred word with melody, thus enhancing the theological and spiritual dimension of the text itself. Its principal characteristics include monophonic performance and the absence of instrumental accompaniment, underscoring its contemplative and devotional nature.

Rooted in ecclesiastical poetry, Byzantine music is based on the system of the eight modes (Oktoechos), which in turn derives from the ancient Greek modal system. Pythagoras was the first to establish a connection between music and mathematics, formulating tonal relationships and scale systems that later became the theoretical foundation of the Oktoechos — the structural core of Byzantine musical theory.

Byzantine composers and hymnographers sought to express theology through music, perceiving their art as a form of “musical theology” inspired by divine, even angelic, revelation. The linguistic and rhythmic principles governing hymnography, the ingenuity of versification, the rhetorical variety, and the profound symbolism embedded in the Byzantine melodic tradition collectively reveal not only the depth of faith but also the lyrical and expressive sensibility of its creators. The Byzantine chant (melos) thus elevates the hymns’ spiritual and mystical character through its melodic subtlety and contemplative tone.

The earliest known hymnographers and composers emerged from monastic communities. Among them, Romanos the Melodist, often called the Pindar of rhythmic poetry, composed nearly a thousand hymns (kontakia). Other significant figures include Theodore the Studite and Andrew of

Crete, the latter credited with introducing the poetic genre of the Canon.

In the 8th century, John of Damascus developed the Agistroeidēs Notation System, a quasi-hieroglyphic form of musical writing designed to facilitate the accurate rendering and teaching of chants. Subsequent refinements were made in the 17th century by figures such as John of Trebizond, Petros Peloponnesios—one of the foremost exponents of the post-Byzantine tradition—his student George of Crete, and Manuel Byzantios, a disciple of Iakovos the Protopsaltis and George of Crete, who was renowned for his dignified and austere ecclesiastical style.

A major reform of Byzantine musical notation was undertaken in 1814 by Chrysanthos of Madytos, Gregory the Levitēs, and Chourmouzios the

Archivist. Their primary objective was to simplify the increasingly complex and technically demanding system of notation that had evolved by the early 19th century. This reform also led to the systematic codification of the Theory of Psaltic Art, establishing formalized rules of composition, notation, and orthography that facilitated the study and transmission of ecclesiastical chant.

Described by Alexandros Papadiamantis as the “music of angels,” Byzantine chant preserves elements of ancient Greek musical thought while transmitting them into the broader continuum of Greek folk and popular music. As Manos Hadjidakis observed, “Upon these rhythms the rebetiko song is built; observing its melodic line, one clearly perceives the influence—or rather the continuation—of Byzantine chant. Everything reveals its source: the austere and ascetic ecclesiastical hymnody.”

Today, Byzantine music is recognized by UNESCO on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, acknowledged as a living art form with an unbroken history of more than ten centuries.

Eleftherios Eleftheriadis  
Professor of Byzantine Music  
Master Chanter (Protopsaltis)  
of the Holy Shrine Saint Nicolas Flushing New York



## PHILOKALIA BOOKSTORE

*“It is good to give thanks to the LORD, and to sing praises to your Name, O Most High.” (Psalm 92:1)*

Per Father Aristidis's recommendation, the Philokalia Bookstore has now been reorganized and reshelfed according to category (i.e. Marriage and Family, Divine Liturgy, etc.). Clear, temporary signage is now also in place to promote easier accessibility while browsing.

With the start of Advent, the bookstore has also been expanding its recent stock, ordering new icons, prayer ropes, car medallions, lapel pins, and even rolls of charcoal and incense for the home.

In addition, we have specifically ordered books for the upcoming autumn catechism class, which will be taught by our own Rev. Economos Fr. Aristidis Garinis, Proistamenos. Copies of the following titles are now available in our bookstore for your convenient perusal/purchase:

1. *Introducing the Orthodox Church* by Father Anthony Coniaris
2. *The Orthodox Way* by Bishop Kallistos Ware
3. *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* by Nicholas Cabasilas.

Books have also been obtained for Father Alexandros Douvres's popular Monday evening book discussions. His most current selection, *Pain and Love for Contemporary Man*, Volume 1 of Saint Paisios's Spiritual Counsels series, although slightly delayed in its delivery, has now arrived and is ready for purchase at our bookstore. We are open on Sundays after liturgy, but feel free to visit the church office any day of the week, and Anna or Eleni will be able to accept payment for your purchases, via cash or QR code.

The Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be the next focus of our decorations/display. Please keep an eye

out for our special religious Christmas gifts, including icon ornaments and Nativity-themed books for children.

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, we also offer our heartfelt appreciation to the parishioners who have patronized the Philokalia Bookstore so faithfully, particularly over the past few months. As a result, our sales have increased by a sizable margin—and our beautiful

### **ATTENTION**

*We are still looking for 2-3 St. Nicholas parishioners who would be available to volunteer at the bookstore after the second divine liturgy, for just a half hour to 40 minutes after the service has finished. Thank you so much in advance, we would greatly appreciate the extra assistance! Please contact Tina Holinski at (718) 831-0371 for more information.*

church reaps all the benefits, as it is fitting it should. We also humbly ask you to please save the date for our New Year's breakfast, scheduled for Sunday, January 18th, 2026, in loving memory of Antonios I. Crassides, our dear father/Pethero, for whom this bookstore is named. Eternal be his memory!

From the bottom of our hearts, and from our family to yours, John and I wish you a blessed Advent season and fast.

We leave you with the wise words of the golden-tongued Saint John Chrysostom: “For what good is it if we abstain from food, but bite and devour our brothers and sisters...Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet and the hands and all the members of your bodies.”

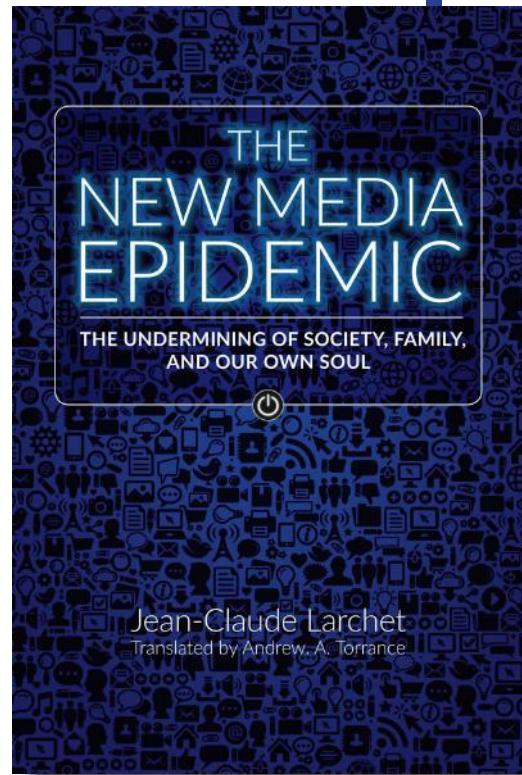
Kali Dynami to all!

With love and prayers in Christ,  
The St. Nicholas Bookstore Staff





Visit the  
bookstore every Sunday  
after the Divine Liturgy.





## Stephen & Areti Cherpelis Hellenic Orthodox Life Academy

The Hellenic Orthodox Life Academy is an innovative after-school enrichment program designed to engage students in fun, educational activities while immersing them in Greek language and culture. We meet daily to provide a structured yet lively environment for learning and growth.

### What We Offer

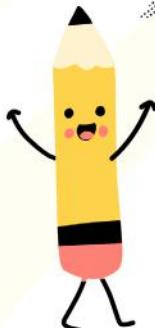
- Academic Support: Dedicated time for both Greek and English homework, along with supplemental language help.
- Creative Expression: Engaging arts and crafts sessions to foster creativity.
- Spiritual Development: Christian Orthodox Life Sessions to explore faith and traditions.
- Community & Celebration: A vibrant community that celebrates special milestones like name days and birthdays.

### Enroll Your Child in the Hellenic Orthodox Life Academy Today!

Give your child the gift of language and culture. Our after-school enrichment program meets daily, providing a supportive environment where students can complete their homework and engage in fun, educational activities.

Don't miss this opportunity to help your child thrive. Enroll them now and watch them grow!

Enroll Your Child in  
the Hellenic  
Orthodox Life  
Academy Today!



SCAN ME

### Ready to Enroll?

You have three easy ways to register your child for the Hellenic Orthodox Life Academy:

- Scan the QR code.
- <https://tinyurl.com/HOLA25-26>
- Contact the church office at (718) 357-4200.

### Important Details

- Monthly payments are available.
- A 10% sibling discount is offered.
- Please note that there are no refunds for absences.





# ASK THE ARK...Q & A

**Q. Why is the Nativity icon of Christ depicted inside a dark cave rather than a stable or a building?**

A: The cave symbolizes the dark, fallen world that Christ enters to bring light. It also subtly foreshadows His tomb, meaning the Nativity is understood only in light of the Passion and Resurrection. This emphasizes the Incarnation's purpose: conquering death and darkness.

**Q. What is the meaning of the "Great Sanctification of the Waters" (Agiasmos) celebrated on Theophany (Epiphany), and why do we drink the holy water?**

A: The Agiasmos commemorates Christ's Baptism in the Jordan, which sanctified not just the river but all of creation—all water and all matter. By blessing the waters, the Church proclaims that Christ redeemed the material world.

We drink the water (and use it to bless homes) as a blessing for the healing of soul and body and for protection.

**Q. How is the Orthodox understanding of Fasting (like the Nativity Fast) different from simply "giving something up," and how can a young adult apply the spiritual discipline of fasting when their life is already so busy and demanding?**

A: The Orthodox tradition views fasting as much more than a personal sacrifice or a dietary restriction. It is a comprehensive spiritual discipline known as Ascesis (spiritual training), meant to reorient our entire being toward God.

**More Than Just Diet**  
The primary goal of fasting is not just to abstain from certain foods, but to:

**Re-establish Hierarchy:** Fasting helps us put our spiritual needs ahead of our physical

desires. It's about training our will to control our passions, rather than being controlled by them.

**Deepen Prayer:** The physical lightness and focus gained from simplifying the diet are meant to be channeled into deeper prayer, more frequent reading of Scripture, and participation in the Church's services.

**Practice Charity:** The money and time saved from not preparing or consuming rich foods should ideally be redirected towards almsgiving and serving those in need.

**DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT THE ORTHODOX FAITH?**

Perhaps you've been pondering a question about the Divine Liturgy, the lives of the saints, or how to apply your faith to the challenges of modern life. We invite you to submit your inquiries. This is a chance for our community to engage more deeply with the teachings of our Church and to seek guidance in our daily walk of faith.

See QR code below for anonymous submission or submit your questions to [stnicholasark@gmail.com](mailto:stnicholasark@gmail.com)

**ASK THE ARK**  
YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Please send your questions to [stnicholasark+questions@gmail.com](mailto:stnicholasark+questions@gmail.com) or scan the QR code

You may choose to remain anonymous, and we will not publish your name unless you give us explicit permission. We look forward to hearing from you!

St. Nicholas Ark

Over the last few months, the St. Stephanos Group has gathered for a mix of fellowship and volunteer based events such as our annual apple picking trip, the St. Basil Academy Walk-a-thon, and Prosphoro making. We look forward to a fulfilling year ahead!

Our biggest event of the year is approaching! Join us at our annual Christmas Soirée: December 26th 2025

We are hoping to open the new year with a Vasilopita cutting and a volunteer opportunity at St. Mary's Children's Hospital. Details TBA!

Keep an eye on our Instagram to stay up to date on our upcoming events!

## ST. STEPHANOS YOUNG ADULTS



Instagram: @ststephanosyoungadults

# ST. LUKE'S SCHOOL OF ICONOGRAPHY



This fall, we began our new ministry: St. Luke's School of Byzantine Iconography. In these monthly classes, students are learning the beautiful and sacred art of iconography. Our third session will be held on December 18. Registration will close at the end of December, so be sure to register before then if you are interested!

We pray that God continues to guide our hearts and hands as we continue on our journey!







<b>BRONZE DEDICATION LEAF</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>
<b>SILVER DEDICATION LEAF</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>
<b>GOLD DEDICATION LEAF</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>BENEFACITOR DOVE</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>GREAT BENEFACITOR STONE</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>

**Please consider supporting our Renovation For Our Future project to continue passing the torch of Orthodox faith and Hellenism to our future generations.**

 BRONZE LEAF \$2,000

 SILVER LEAF \$5,000

 GOLD LEAF \$10,000

 DOVE \$25,000

 STONE \$50,000

LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT INSCRIPTION CLEARLY. 3 LINES (33 CHARACTERS MAX)

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"SO LET EACH ONE GIVE AS HE PURPOSES IN HIS HEART; NOT GRUDGINGLY OR OUT OF NECESSITY; FOR GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER"



SAINT NICHOLAS Greek Orthodox Shrine Church



OUR  
Schools



# CHURCH SCHOOL



## SAINT NICHOLAS SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

The Saint Nicholas Sunday Church School is delighted to begin another blessed ecclesiastical school year. Our Sunday School program is now underway, and we are pleased to announce the addition of monthly Chapel Services for our students. We encourage all families to have their children attend so they may grow in faith and fellowship.

We are also joyful to welcome our basketball players

on their designated Sundays, a wonderful reminder that our parish community stands united in Christ both on and off the court.

This year, we have reinstated our donation collection to support the Church School and parish ministries. All donations gathered throughout the year will be offered to the Church at year's end. We are also especially grateful for the enthusiastic participation of our young adults who have stepped forward to volunteer in the Sunday School program.



Looking ahead, we are preparing for our annual Christmas Pageant, which will take place immediately following the Divine Liturgy on Christmas Eve. Children ages 7 and older who wish to participate may contact [christinapashos@gmail.com](mailto:christinapashos@gmail.com). Participation forms will be distributed to families in the coming weeks. We are also hosting our Godparents/Grandparents Sunday on February

1, 2026. (see invite on page 26) Please join us to celebrate Divine Liturgy together, followed by Fellowship in Sarantakos Hall.

We thank all parents, volunteers, and parishioners for their continued support. May this school year be filled with learning, joy, and spiritual growth for all our children.

The Sunday Church School Executive Council





### 2025-2026 Church School and Youth Calendar

Sunday Church School – Main Church - will continue to be offered after Communion during the First Liturgy. Approximate start time of classes is from 10:00am until 10:45am.

Chapel Services will start at 9:30am and will end approximately 10:45am. Chapel services will be followed by an activity. **Sunday Church School Chapel Services are highlighted in yellow.**

#### December 2025

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 7 Sunday         | Classes, 10th Sunday of Luke [Basketball JOY B1 and G1]  |
| 14 Sunday        | Classes, 11th Sunday of Luke [Basketball JOY B2 and G2]  |
| <b>21 Sunday</b> | <b>Chapel Service – 9:30am, Sunday before The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ</b>      |
| 24 Wednesday     | Eve of the Nativity of Christ, Christmas pageant   |
| 28 Sunday        | No Classes – Christmas Recess- <i>Sunday after The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ</i> |

#### January 2026

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 4 Sunday         | Classes, <i>Sunday before Epiphany</i><br>[Agiasmos service – classes to return to church] [Basketball JOY B3 and G3] |
| 11 Sunday        | Classes, <i>Sunday after Epiphany</i> [Basketball GOYA JB and JG],  |
| 18 Sunday        | Classes, 12th Sunday of Luke [Basketball GOYA SB and SG],   |
| <b>25 Sunday</b> | <b>Chapel Service – 9:30am, 15th Sunday of Luke</b>   |

#### February 2026

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 1 Sunday         | No Classes, <i>Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee: Triodion Begins Today</i><br>[Godparents Sunday/Family Worship and Coffee Hour Sponsorship] |
| <b>8 Sunday</b>  | <b>Chapel Service – 9:30am, Sunday of the Prodigal Son</b> [EOCS Scout Awards & Lenten Breakfast]   |
| 15 Sunday        | No Classes [Winter Recess] <i>Judgment Sunday (Meatfare Sunday)</i>   |
| 22 Sunday        | No Classes [Winter Recess] <i>Forgiveness Sunday</i>  |
| 15 Sunday        | Classes, <i>Sunday of the Holy Cross</i> [Basketball JOY B2 and G2]   |
| <b>22 Sunday</b> | <b>Chapel Service – 9:30am, Sunday of St. John Climacus</b>   |
| 29 Sunday        | Classes, <i>Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt</i> [Basketball JOY B3 and G3]  |





## Invitation to Godparents and Grandparents Sunday

**February 1, 2026**



The Sunday School students of St. Nicholas Church invite their Godparent(s) to celebrate Godparent Sunday with them. Please join the students in worship and sit together to participate in the first Divine Liturgy and receive Holy Communion as a family.

The service is on **Sunday, February 1, 2026, at 8:45 a.m.**

The Sunday School is sponsoring a bagel breakfast during the coffee hour immediately following the first liturgy.

If a Godparent cannot attend, Yiayiades and Papoudes are warmly invited to join us.



# DOULAVERIS PRESCHOOL

## Preschool News: A Season of Discovery and Joy

We're off to a wonderful start this school year—celebrating milestones, growing together, and filling our classrooms with laughter and learning!

### **A BLESSED BEGINNING**

We began the year with an Agiasmo service led by Father Alex. The children gathered in the church as Father Alex spoke about the icons and the meaning behind the prayers. He then blessed our students, teachers, and classrooms. The children proudly shared their artwork with him—beautiful creations now displayed throughout the school.

### **FALL ADVENTURES AT WHITE POST FARM**

October brought crisp air and lots of excitement as our preschoolers enjoyed a trip to White Post Farm. They met farm animals, fed a giraffe, and even marveled at the new dinosaur exhibit! The hayride was a highlight—filled with smiles, laughter, and the magic of the season. It was a wonderful day for children, parents, and teachers to connect outside the classroom.

### **HONORING OXI DAY**

On October 28, our school held an in-house assembly to commemorate Oxi Day, one of Greece's most significant national holidays. Under the guidance of our Greek teacher, Kyria Artemis, the children celebrated with songs, poetry, and heartfelt pride. Dressed in blue and white, they sang the Greek national anthem and learned about the bravery of the Greek people. The Sarantakos Hall was beautifully decorated with Greek flags and portraits of heroes. Proud parents watched via Google Classroom as their children shared in this moment of history.

### **FALL SPIRIT WEEK FUN**

Spirit Week was a time for creativity and laughter! Our preschoolers dressed in their favorite fall colors, wore fun socks, and even brought stuffed animals to school. The week was all about joy, imagination, and celebrating the beauty of autumn.

### **Firefighter Visit**

On October 30, we welcomed Firefighter Lynch, who taught the children about fire safety in a fun, interactive way. Through hands-on learning, the children discovered how firefighters keep us safe and practiced stop, drop, and roll. By the end, they recognized firefighters as friendly helpers—not strangers—and proudly went home wearing their own firefighter hats!

### **November Highlights**

#### **ELECTION DAY LESSONS**

We kicked off November with our very own Election Day! The children voted on their favorite animals and learned about fairness, teamwork, and decision-making. It was a fun and meaningful introduction to civic values.

#### **THEMES OF GRATITUDE AND KINDNESS**

This month, our preschoolers will explore the themes of autumn, gratitude, and kindness. We'll enjoy nature walks, create leaf art, and learn about the changing seasons. Most importantly, the children will talk about appreciation—for nature, for each other, and for the joy of learning together.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

We're excited to attend Liturgy for the Entrance of the Theotokos, where our spiritual fathers will share a special message for the children. Soon, we'll begin rehearsals for our Christmas Show—learning songs, practicing lines, and decorating our classrooms with festive cheer.

Stay tuned for more heartwarming moments in the next Ark Edition! As we reflect on 25 years of beautiful children, we continue to thank God for every family that has come through our doors. You are all forever in our hearts!



Follow us on Instagram  
@doulaveris\_preschool





# WILLIAM SPYROPOULOS



## *The William Spyropoulos Greek - American Day School Of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church*

43-15 196 St., Flushing N.Y.11358  
Tel. (718) 357-5583/ Fax (718) 428-3051  
[www.wmspyropoulosschool.org](http://www.wmspyropoulosschool.org)

*Mary Tzallas  
Principal*

*Georgia Kakivelis  
Assistant Principal*

Dear Parishioners,

As we reach the heart of the fall season, I am delighted to share that our school year has been moving forward with purpose, joy, and a wonderful spirit of unity. Life at William Spyropoulos is full of energy—our hallways are alive with excitement, our classrooms are filled with learning and curiosity, and our students continue to grow academically, socially, and spiritually each day.

We recently held a beautiful celebration of OXI Day, a tradition that remains deeply meaningful to our school community. Our second graders led the assembly by narrating the historical events of that important day—events that shaped not only Greek history, but world history as well. Their confidence and poise filled us with pride. Students in every grade joined in singing patriotic songs, and our school was a sea of blue and white, radiating Greek pride, respect, and gratitude for the sacrifices of the past. It was a touching reminder of the strength of heritage and the power of community.

We are now preparing for our Thanksgiving Assembly, a beloved annual tradition. This time, our Kindergarten students will take center stage. They will share messages of love and gratitude with their parents, teachers, and the entire school community in both Greek and English—a simple and meaningful reminder of what Thanksgiving is truly about.

While our younger students celebrate and perform, our eighth graders are focused on their high school entrance exams and application processes. This is an exciting milestone for them, and we are proud of their dedication and the hard work they are investing in their future goals.

The upcoming season will bring even more memorable events, including our 8th Grade Ring Ceremony and our Christmas assemblies, which always fill the school with joy, music, and the warmth of the holidays.

As we continue this journey, we remain committed to making the school year productive, meaningful, and filled with positive experiences for every student. Teaching, learning, celebrating milestones, and growing together—that is the heart of the William Spyropoulos School.

On behalf of our entire faculty and staff, I wish you and your families a beautiful Christmas season.

Happy Thanksgiving! May it be filled with health, happiness, and moments of gratitude.

Respectfully,

*Mary Tzallas*

Mary Tzallas  
Principal

*An outstanding environment,  
where children learn and grow happily and successfully*





# WILLIAM SPYROPOULOS PTA

## A MESSAGE FROM THE WILLIAM SPYROPOULOS PTA

The PTA at William Spyropoulos has been off to a meaningful and productive start this year. In October, we hosted our annual Walkathon to help raise funds for much-needed new cafeteria tables. Currently, we are diligently working on creating our beautiful Christmas decorations and organizing Christmas celebrations for all our students.

Looking ahead, we are excited for our upcoming events:

Ladies' Night on January 30, 2026

Father-Daughter Dance on February 6, 2026

We invite you to join us in creating memorable experiences for our children and in continuing to strengthen our school community.



# WILLIAM SPYROPOULOS ALUMNI

The  
Alumni have  
been busy!

From our Glendi event in November to volunteering at the GOYA Food Drive, we've been working together to give back to our community.

Thank you to everyone who showed up, got involved, and made a real impact!

Did you attend Wm. Spyropoulos School? Join our Alumni Association today! (Information Below) Join us in January for our Vasilopita get-together!

IG @WMSPYROPOULOS\_ALUMNI

scan QR code  
to sign up for  
our email list



## SAINT NICHOLAS STEPHEN AND ARETI CHERPELIS HELLENIC SCHOOL

Our OXI Day show was a great success, thanks to the dedication of our wonderful students and teachers, whose hard work and enthusiasm truly shone on stage.

We are excited to welcome two new students to our community: Giorgos in Kindergarten and Panagiota in 1st Grade.

We are also pleased to introduce our new PTA, led by our dynamic president, Panagiota Michou. We thank them for their commitment and continuous support of our school and its students.

We are already looking forward to our annual Christmas Show on December 20th, a highlight of the year for our students and families.

As we look ahead to 2026, we are planning our annual Picture Day in

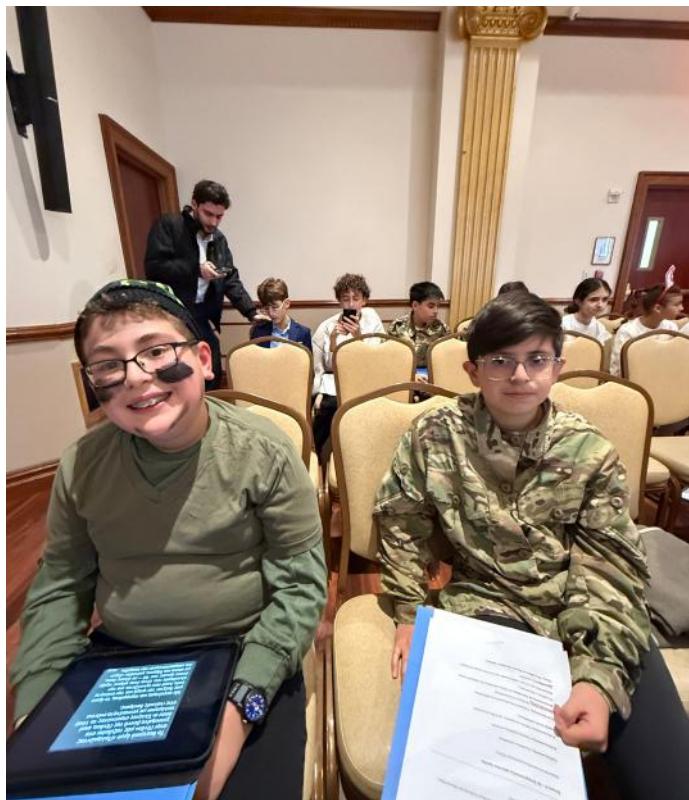
January (details to follow soon). Our students will also participate in the Three Hierarchs Liturgy, presenting a special piece in honor of the feast.

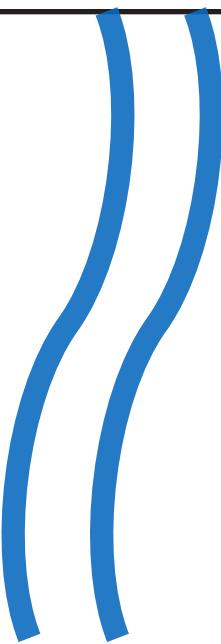
On February 9th, we will honor International Greek Language Day. As part of the celebration, we are planning a Greek Spelling Bee Contest on February 7th. Stay tuned for more details!

We welcome all of you to our events to admire our students and meet our faculty. We are proud of our Hellenic school and look forward to sharing many more events with our wonderful St. Nicholas family.

Website: <http://stnicholashellenicschool.org>  
Email: [info@stnicholashellenicschool.org](mailto:info@stnicholashellenicschool.org)







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- Deepen Community Ties: Your sustained presence is a powerful statement of commitment to the St. Nicholas Parish, building trust and loyalty.

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Contact [StNicholasArk@gmail.com](mailto:StNicholasArk@gmail.com) with any questions.



St. Nicholas Girl Scout  
Troop 4212

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More information: [www.blythedale.org/donate-wishlist](http://www.blythedale.org/donate-wishlist)  
Email for questions: [stnicksgsttroop04212@gmail.com](mailto:stnicksgsttroop04212@gmail.com)



SAINT NICHOLAS Greek Orthodox Shrine Church

SHAPING TOMORROWS  
**STEWARDS**  
OF FAITH



**YOUTH  
MINISTRIES**

## JOY

## JOY PROGRAM UPDATE

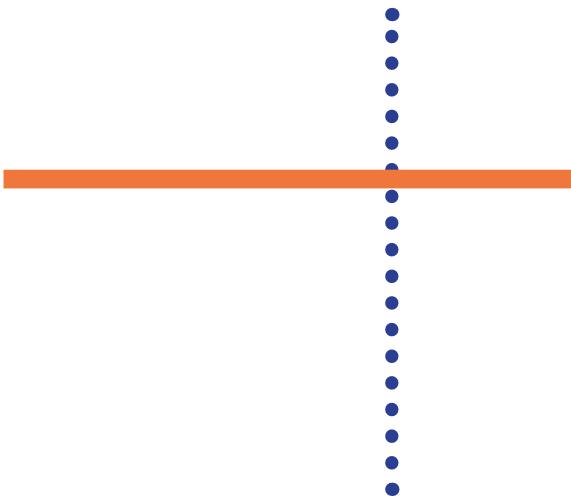
Our JOY ministry has had such a joyful and faith-filled start to the year! Each month, our children come together to learn, create, and celebrate God's love through fellowship and fun.

In October, we kicked off the season with a fall painting workshop led by an instructor — the kids created beautiful artwork while enjoying time together. In November, we gathered for a Thanksgiving Potluck. The children made a banner filled with words of gratitude and enjoyed a friendly game of bingo, while Father Douvres shared a special lesson on the importance of being thankful.

Looking ahead, December 21st will be full of Christmas cheer as we celebrate the birth of our Savior! The children will come dressed in their favorite Christmas sweaters and take part in a variety of festive crafts.

On January 4th, we will be baking traditional koulourakia together, and in February, we're excited for a fun roller-skating outing!

We thank our JOY families, leaders, and volunteers for supporting this ministry and helping our children grow in faith, friendship, and the joy of the Lord. We look forward to all that God has in store for our group in the months ahead!





## JR. GOYA

Junior GOYA kicked off the year with a fun Movie Night in October!

The Jr. Goyans watched the original Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, discussed the importance of the film's themes with Father Alex, and enjoyed plenty of popcorn, pizza, and desserts.



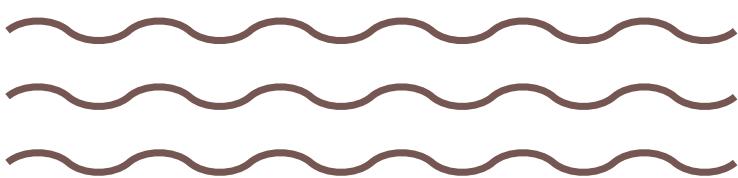


# GOYA





# thanksgiving day drive- day one...



# GOYA



...day two!



# ST. NICHOLAS BASKETBALL NEWS

## Basketball Season Is Here!

Our basketball season has officially tipped off and will run through March! Our student-athletes are excited and ready for a great season ahead.

We will be hosting over 135 home games at our gym. Come by and see our talented athletes of St Nicholas and also support the basketball program by purchasing snacks and drinks at our Periptero during the games...

We kicked things off with a Beginning-of-Season Blessing and a Basketball Breakfast to celebrate our teams and build school spirit.

A heartfelt thank you to all our coaches, families, and players who donated and helped make our breakfast a success — your support truly means a lot!

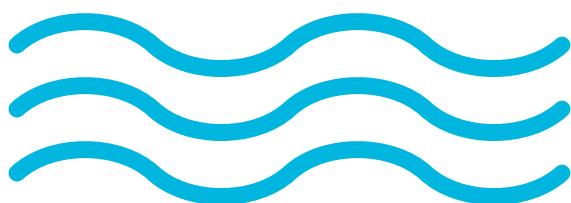
Weekend game schedules (Saturdays and Sundays) will be shared on our social media pages — follow us on Instagram and Facebook to stay updated and come cheer on our teams!

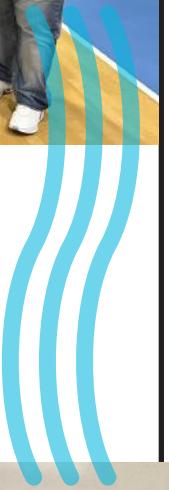
## StNicholasFlushingBasketball

Please note: our “Shootathon event” has been postponed until after the season ends. We look forward to rescheduling it in April — stay tuned for more details! on Instagram and Facebook to stay updated and come cheer on our teams!

## StNicholasFlushingBasketll

Please note: our “Shootathon event” has been postponed until after the season ends. We look forward to rescheduling it in April — stay tuned for more details!





## BASKETBALL PRAYER - ATHLETICS SUNDAY

Lord Jesus Christ our God, we thank You for giving us life, health and our community. We are gathered here today to ask Your blessing and protection as we begin our basketball season. Keep us safe from all temptation and harm of both body and soul. Help us to achieve all of our goals in a Christian manner so that our actions may bring glory to Your Holy Name.

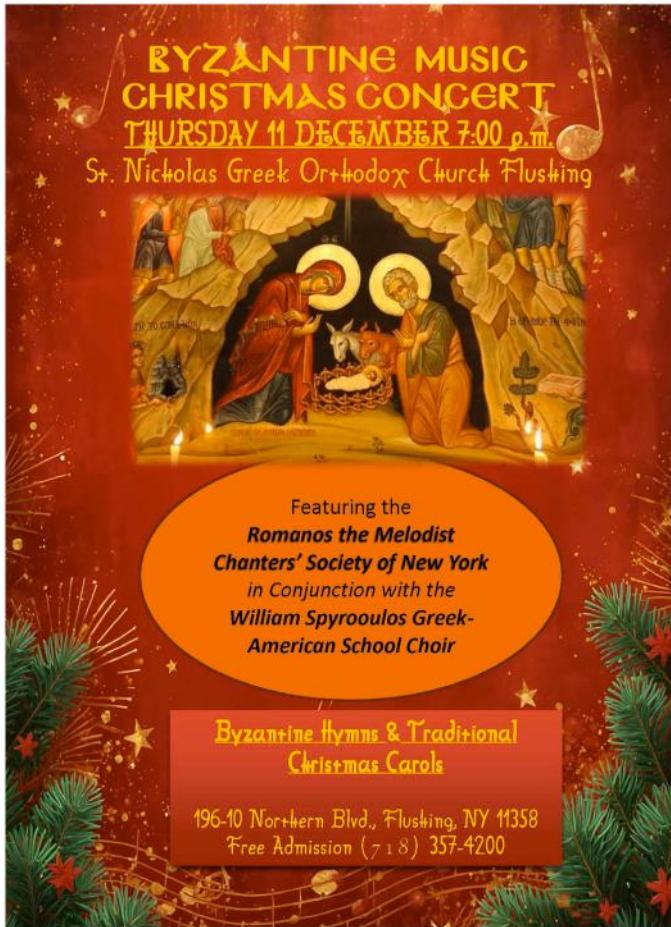
Allow us to see Your holy will in all of our successes and failures during this season remembering that every circumstance is a lesson for our growth. As we strive to improve our skills as athletes help us to remember that our ultimate goal is to be with You.

It was Your holy Apostle Paul who said, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). May we also keep the faith alive in our hearts, thoughts, words and actions as we begin a new season, remembering Your loving presence at all times and in every place.

Lord, we ask humbly that you watch over us, our families, our teammates, our coaches and our church so that we may glorify your All-Holy and Majestic Name, together with Your beginningless Father, Your All-Holy good and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen!







# TO APXONTAPIKI THE ARCHONTARIKI

## MUSIC FOOD PAREA

The Archontariki is a monthly gathering of our senior parishioners. At St. Nicholas, we strive to reach out to all ages and offer opportunity for community fellowship and engagement. Please encourage your loved ones to participate in this wonderful new program. Please rsvp with the Church office. Thank you!

JOIN US!!  
THURSDAY, December 18 at  
12:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Ελάτε να μας  
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8:00 PM  
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## Discovering Orthodoxy Class:

A catechism for Orthodox and those inquiring about the faith

Catechism is Christian instruction which includes lessons on the history, teachings and spiritual practices of the Orthodox Christian Church.

What is Orthodoxy?  
Where did it come from?  
What does it mean to live as an Orthodox Christian today?

These are some of the questions that we will be discussing during our time together.

Classes meet every Wednesday at 8 p.m. in the main church and following the Supplication Service to the Theotokos.

Literature requirements:

The Orthodox Study Bible  
Introducing the Orthodox Church: Anthony Coniaris  
A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy: St. Nicholas Cabasilas  
The Orthodox Way: Bishop Kallistos Ware

*These books will be in stock at our parish bookstore.*



## Please join us for our WINTER LUNCHEON

Hosted by  
The St. Nicholas Ladies Philoptochos Society  
January

**SATURDAY** **24** **AT 1:00 PM**  
2026

The Lannin

1899 Hempstead Tpke, East Meadow, NY 11554  
Music By DJ Ballas

Cocktails - Luncheon - Dessert  
Featuring Designer and Chance Raffles  
\$125 Per Person

PAYMENT RECOMMENDED VIA SQUARE (SCAN BELOW) OR BY  
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R.S.V.P By January 11th

Maria Tsilos (516)-655-5405  
Barbara Preponis (917) 435-1431  
Kalitsa Fillos (917) 864-2889



## ST. NICHOLAS MEN'S LEAGUE

invites you to our annual

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**FEBRUARY 8, 2026**

**6:30 PM**

**\$60 PER PERSON**

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PAUL MISTHOS (917) 578-6528  
JIMMY PAPAGEORGIOU (917) 750-2781

## St. Nicholas Men's League Christmas Party 2025

Saturday, December 13 at 7:00 p.m.

# Vivo!

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Bayside New York 11360

Family Style Appetizers  
Buffet Dinner / Open Bar  
Music By DJ Ballas

Let's make it a night full of Joy, Laughter and Christmas Spirit

**Donation \$125**

(Preferably Cash)

Contact:

Nicholas Zolotas 917-922-1281 or Text  
George Kakivelis 718-744-8565 or Text

ST. NICHOLAS JOY

## CHRISTMAS CRAFT Celebration

Join us in making beautiful crafts to  
celebrate the birth of Jesus  
Wear Your Holiday Sweaters  
Holiday Treats are Welcomed

**21 DEC | 2:00 PM**

Cafeteria  
RSVP Required



email: stnicholasjoy@gmail.com

# THE ARK CLASSIFIEDS



## ***The St. Nicholas Ark Classifieds are Here!***

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For just \$25 per quarter, you can get up to 50 words to advertise your goods or services to our entire parish family. It's an easy and affordable way to connect with your neighbors and support the newsletter.

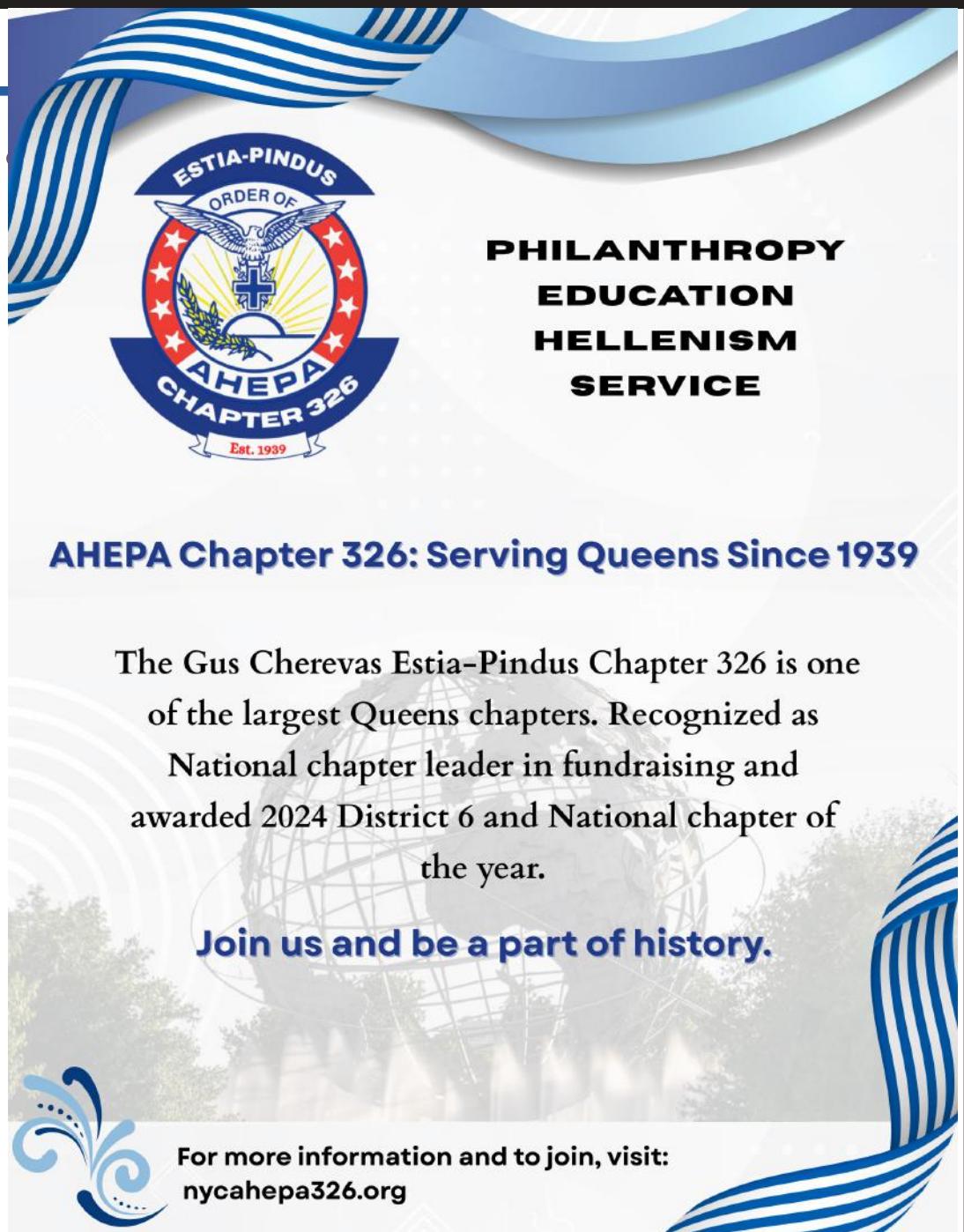
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# FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS



 **HAPPY HOLIDAYS**  
FROM THE FLUSHING  
**AHEPA CHAPTER!**

## Greetings, St. Nicholas Family

The Flushing AHEPA Chapter wrapped up a very busy and successful Fall calendar, and we extend our sincere thanks to all who attended, supported, and sponsored our events.

September saw the launch of our First Annual "Cruise Under the Stars" fundraiser, which was a magnificent evening dedicated to supporting The St. Nicholas renovations project.

November brought laughter to Sarantakos Hall as we transformed it into a comedy club for one night only! Basile the Comedian helped us laugh the night away, raising crucial funds for our Scholarship Fund benefiting students in



For more information and to join, visit:  
[nycachea326.org](http://nycachea326.org)

our community. We are already planning more fun for the Winter and Spring, including Bowling, Movie Nights, and Mini Golf! Please keep

an eye out for upcoming event announcements.

In the meantime, we wish everyone a very Happy and Healthy Christmas and New Year!

# GIRL SCOUTS

## Girl Scout Troop 04212 Update

This year has been a meaningful and active one for Girl Scout Troop 04212. Our girls have been growing in confidence, kindness, and leadership through meetings, service, and special activities.

We kicked off the program year by stepping into service right away — the girls hosted a lemonade stand and donated Girl Scout cookies during the JOY Signup BBQ at church, spreading both sweetness and kindness!

We also held our bridging ceremony, celebrating each girl's accomplishments and welcoming them into their new Girl Scout levels.

Throughout the fall, our troop has been learning new skills and exploring the world around them. The girls completed a trail walk at Alley Pond Park, created their own troop T-shirts, and took part in a photography lesson to learn how

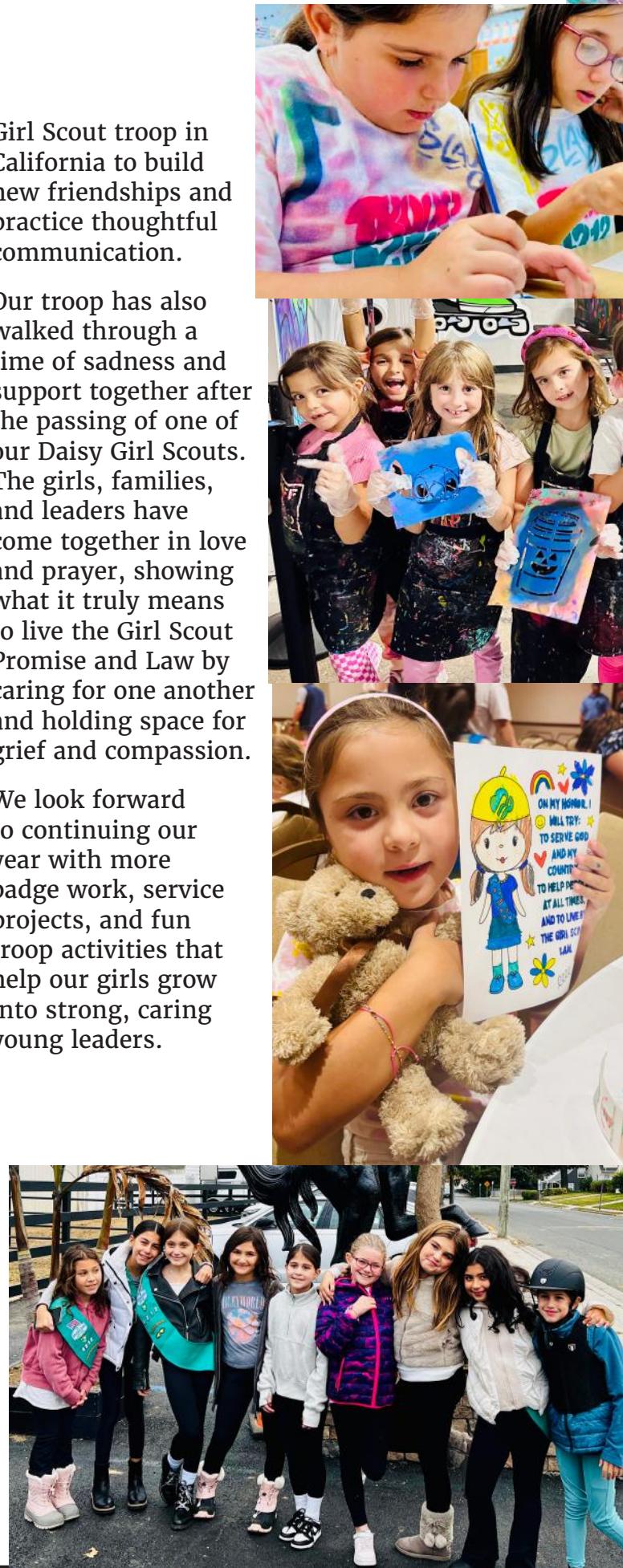
to capture the world through a creative lens. They also earned their True North Awards, showing determination and personal growth. We strengthened our ability to help others by learning CPR, empowering the girls with lifesaving knowledge. We've had amazing adventures as well — including indoor camping, a memorable day horseback riding, and a fun-filled trip to the Bronx Zoo!

In November, we focused on kindness in honor of World Kindness Day. The girls discussed what kindness looks like in real life—at school, in friendships, and online. They displayed kindness rocks outside the school, wrote and read kindness poems on the loudspeaker at school, and created colorful kindness posters to hang around the school as a reminder to include others, avoid cliques, and use kind words. We also launched a new pen pal program with a

Girl Scout troop in California to build new friendships and practice thoughtful communication.

Our troop has also walked through a time of sadness and support together after the passing of one of our Daisy Girl Scouts. The girls, families, and leaders have come together in love and prayer, showing what it truly means to live the Girl Scout Promise and Law by caring for one another and holding space for grief and compassion.

We look forward to continuing our year with more badge work, service projects, and fun troop activities that help our girls grow into strong, caring young leaders.





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*Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a truly  
Blessed New Year in 2026!*

*Mark your calendars: Our one-year anniversary  
edition will be arriving in March 2026! Stay  
tuned!*

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We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month.

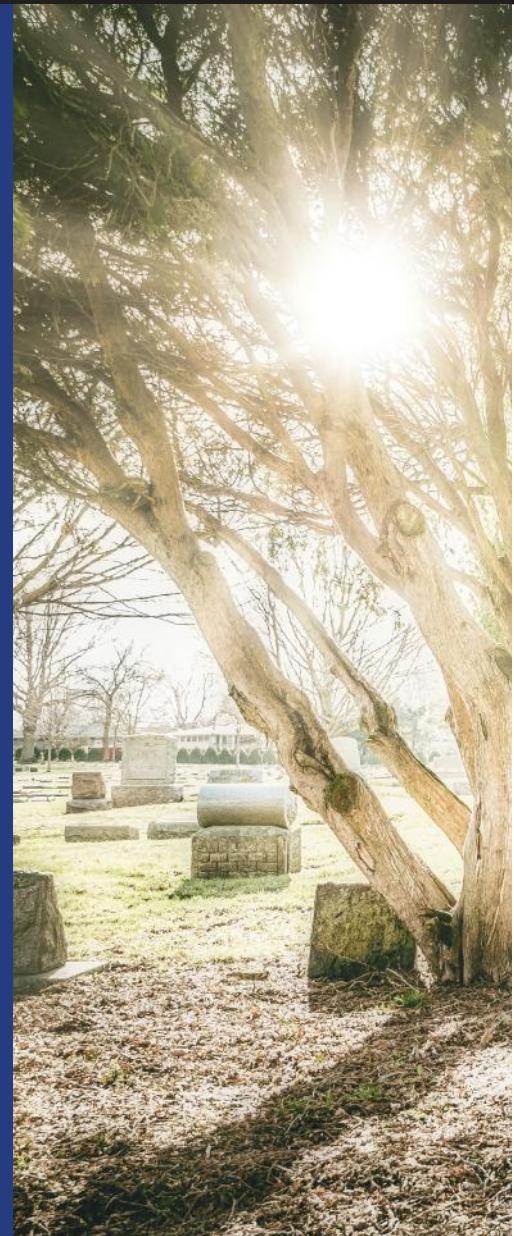
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