

ὁ ἄγιος

ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
KNOXVILLE, TN

FALL 2023

# ABIDING IN THE VINE

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.” - John 15:1

“Εγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή, καὶ ὁ Πατήρ μου ὁ γεωργός ἐστιν.” - Ἰωάν. 15:1

## MESSAGE IN THE MUSIC

*Resurrection Dismissal Hymns {2nd Tone}:*

### *Giving Us the Lift We Need*

BY REV. FR. ANTHONY STRATIS, PROTOPRESBYTER

Traditionally, most feasts have a standard icon which we immediately relate to that day. However, when it comes to Pascha, there is more than one standard. With the Apolytikion of the Second Tone [Ἦχος Δεύτερος], we can identify references that relate to a particular Paschal icon. A brief study of the words from this hymn, indicated in the following paraphrased translation, will illustrate this fact: ***“When You descended unto Death, You Who are Life Immortal, subjected Hades to death by the lightning-flash of Your divinity. You also raised from the underworld those who were perishing there, as all the heavenly powers cried out: O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to You.”***

Initially observable are certain statements we make when we chant this hymn. We are testifying that Jesus is God. He is the Christ (that is, the Anointed One), Who is Eternal and the Source of Life. We are then justified for acknowledging and glorifying Him. Regarding His Resurrection, we are professing that He descended into the darkness of the underworld. Jesus made this descent through His divinity, with the radiance of a lightning-flash,



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# ST. GEORGE CONTACTS

## Presiding Priest (Proistamenos)

Rev. Fr. Anthony Stratis,  
Protopresbyter  
[franthonystratis@gmail.com](mailto:franthonystratis@gmail.com)

## Parish Priest (Ephemerios)

V. Rev. Fr. Dionysis  
Lampropoulos, Archimandrite  
[fr.dionysis@gmail.com](mailto:fr.dionysis@gmail.com)

## Deacon

Rev. Deacon Mark Smith  
[stgeorgeknoxville@gmail.com](mailto:stgeorgeknoxville@gmail.com)

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## *The Lift We Need, Cont.*

miraculously abolishing the power of Hades as He raised those who were perishing there.

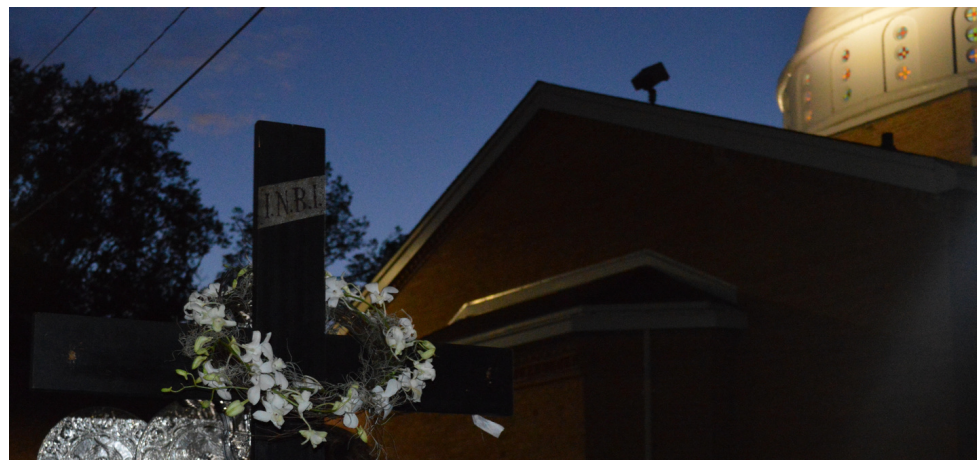
Summarizing the meaning of this hymn, we are proclaiming our faith in Christ Who submitted Himself to death for our salvation and, being God, liberated those who were bound in Hades. As we chant this hymn we are reaffirming our belief in Christ. We reaffirm that He alone is our God and Savior, in Whom is our hope for salvation and eternal life.

“Ότε κατήλθες πρὸς τὸν θάνατον, ἡ Ζωὴ ἡ ἀθάνατος, τότε τὸν Ἄδην ἐνέκρωσας τῆ ἀστραπή τῆς Θεότητος, ὅτε δὲ καὶ τοὺς τεθνεῶτας ἐκ τῶν καταχθονίων ἀνέστησας, πᾶσαι αἱ Δυνάμεις τῶν ἐπουρανίων ἐκραύγαζον· Ζωοδότα Χριστέ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν δόξα σοι.

As we concentrate further on the text of this beautiful hymn, we are able to envision and identify the specific Resurrection icon in question: Christ’s Descent into Hades. At the icon’s center is

Jesus Himself, lifting the dead out of the tombs. In doing so, symbols of the bondage of Hades (locks, shackles, chains) have been left aside, shattered and rendered ineffective. Consequently, situated at the very bottom of the icon is the skull, indicating that Christ’s victory leaves behind nothing more than a lifeless and impotent relic of the evil one.

This Apolytikion presents us with yet another way to profess our faith in the Resurrected Christ. For He gives us hope and encouragement, not only on Pascha, not only on Sunday, but every day and every moment of life. When we need to be uplifted, especially when entangled in the depths of our daily lives, Jesus stands with us to lift us back up. *“O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to You!”*



Holy Friday Procession



# SCHEDULING POLICY

BY REV. FR. ANTHONY STRATIS, PROTOPRESBYTER

Dear Faithful Saint George Member:

It is a curious phenomenon how we seem to have just begun the relaxed pace of summer not too long ago and suddenly, before we know it, schools will be starting up once again. Considering that all of our lives seem to become increasingly busy with each passing year, it stands to reason that we would want to keep schedule conflicts to a minimum, particularly when such conflicts are easily avoidable. In that spirit, we are taking the time to post this notification as a general reminder of our parish's currently standing **Scheduling Policy**. Please note the following facts:

Whenever scheduling any meeting, event, sacrament, liturgical service, or activity concerning parish clergy, organizations, committees, or individuals whose participation is expected, or when convening anywhere on parish property, that function must be **scheduled and confirmed in advance** through the parish Priests and the Church Office.

**Scheduling** an activity is simple!

**(1) Notification:** Either in a written note or by email, turn in your request to the Church Office, or to Fr. Dionysios, or to me. Your note should indicate the activity, who is involved (such as name of the organization), and the date and time desired, with your contact information.

**(2) Confirmation:** Once your request has been confirmed, your activity will be included on the Parish Calendar as well as the calendars of both Priests. Alternatively, if there is a conflict, you will be contacted so that a resolution can be arranged.

- Any scheduling of meetings or activities that takes place without following this protocol runs the risk of conflicts.
- In such cases, priority would go to anyone who did follow the correct procedure. Of course, small gatherings taking place in private residences may ignore this policy, unless they too, would like to avoid potential conflicts for the few involved.
- Notice that there will be no scheduling of sacraments or liturgical services outside of this protocol.

In addition, any organization activity that impacts the parish as a whole is customarily brought before the Parish Council for approval when deemed appropriate.

This policy does not apply to scheduling your Confession, or any private meeting or appointment with either Fr. Dionysios or with me.

In advance, I thank you for your understanding of and compliance with the above information.



Rev. Fr. Anthony Stratis

# ST. COSMAS THE AETOLIAN, AN ORTHODOX ENLIGHTENER

BY V. REV. FR. DIONYSIS LAMPROPOULOS, ARCHIMANDRITE

While researching and organizing my material to write this article, I recalled the trouble I had to go through in high school while learning about St. Cosmas of Aetolia, a significant figure of the “Modern Greek Enlightenment.” The Modern Greek Enlightenment was the intellectual movement developed among Greek scholars and constitutes an extension of the broader movement of the European Enlightenment that prevailed between 1688-1789 AD and forged the Modern European civilization at large. Brilliant minds of that era, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, Voltaire, Diderot, Montesquieu, and Goethe, are some of the significant representatives of the Enlightenment that strove through their intellectual legacy to liberate the human mind from all the dark boundaries of the Middle Ages and help it be enlightened through rationalism and critical thought. Following the footsteps of the aforementioned European pioneers, Greek intellectuals of that era worked hard to spread the new ideas of free thought and rationalism to the Greek populace, who lived under the Ottoman yoke and struggled with illiteracy.

At this point, we could assume that the collective contribution of these intellectuals was significant in inspiring the Greek Revolution in 1821, just as it was Voltaire’s and Montesquieu’s for the birth of the French Revolution in 1789. However, before such assumptions can be conveyed, the question that needs to be asked is: who writes the historical accounts? This is a critical question because we can understand the historical discourse’s perspective by understanding the historian’s viewpoint. If, for example, a politician writes history, then politicians in that discourse seem to hold a more important and more determining role than they might have held in reality. In our case, I am afraid, intellectuals have

written history, and they inevitably displayed their kin as the “moving force” of historical development. Thus, we read that it was Voltaire and his ideas who fired the French Revolution, but in fact, the impetus for the citizens of Paris to rebel against King Louis XVI was the rapid increase in the price of coal, which occurred in July of 1789.



All the same, Greek scholars, following the contemporary mainstream of secularism overestimated the role of the intellectuals of the Enlightenment and dedicated a great deal in their writings to explain how

rationalism and critical thought led to the Revolution of 1821 and finally to Independence. Sadly, they do not leave much room in their historical discourses for the armed leaders, the intense and bloody warfare, in other words, to all those who actually fought and won the war against the Turks. Moreover, it is typical for these secular-minded scholars to diminish the role of the Orthodox Church during this period. Although the illiterate Greeks took up arms against the Turks to defend “*the sacred faith in Christ and the Freedom of the Fatherland,*” in modern historical books, one can read how Voltaire, Chateaubriand, and Lord Byron influenced the outbreak of the Greek Revolution.



Nonetheless, even the most secular historian cannot underestimate the tremendous contribution that a simple monk, Saint Cosmas the Aetolian, had in massively educating the ethnic Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century. Although Saint Cosmas did not argue in favor of cold rationalism, none can deny him the title of the “Enlightener.”

In this article, we will give a concise presentation of the life and the conduct of Saint Cosmas, the Aetolian, and the Orthodox Enlightener of Hellenism. He was born in 1714 in the small village of Mega Dentro, in the region of Aetolia (Southwest part of Central Greece, north of the Peloponnese). Like most of the Greek population who lived under Ottoman Rule, he grew up illiterate. In his mid-twenties, a deacon named Ananias came to Mega Dentro and taught the young Conostas (*Κώνστας* was his secular name before it was changed to Cosmas) how to read and write. Soon after, he left his village, traveled to Mount Athos, and enrolled in school at the Monastery of Vatopaidi. Evidently, the Orthodox Church provided the only option for education in occupied Greece (i.e., from the 15th to 19th centuries). After finishing his studies, he moved to the Monastery of Philotheou, where he was tonsured a Monk and received the name Cosmas. After a few years, he was also ordained to the priesthood.

Having received an excellent education, the young Cosmas realized the extent of the spiritual famine which Christians suffered at that time, a famine like the one described by the Prophet Amos: “*Behold the days are coming, says the Lord God, that I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord* [1].”

He often said to his fellow monastics: “*Our Christian brothers are in great need of the word of God. Therefore, all the educated should not go into the houses of the rich or into the courts of the nobles, where they waste their knowledge in vain, seeking to obtain wealth and power. Still, instead, they should seek to obtain a reward from heaven and the glory that does not fade out by teaching the people who live under the state of illiteracy.*”[2]

Thus, realizing the task he had to carry out for the Church, St. Cosmas received the blessing of the abbot to leave the Monastery. He traveled to Constantinople and appeared before Metropolitan Seraphim, who, at the time, was the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne. He received his blessing to travel and preach throughout Greece.

His Apostolic Mission had now begun. From Constantinople, he traveled to Naupactos, Vrachori (Agrinio), and Mesologgi, cities of the southwest Greek mainland (this region is also known as Roumeli). Then he returned to Constantinople to receive permission and the blessing from the newly elected Patriarch Sophronios. Having received the Patriarch’s blessing, St. Cosmas continued his journey to the Aegean islands.

In 1775, he returned to Mount Athos to enrich his knowledge of the writings of the Fathers of the Church. After a long and rigorous study in the Athonite libraries, he traveled to Thessaloniki, Beroia, and the whole region of Macedonia. From there, he moved south to the regions of Aetolia, Akarnania, Evrytania, and Epirus to Arta, Preveza, and the Ionian islands of Zakynthos and Cephalonia. In the account of St. Cosmas’ life, written by St. Nicodemos the Athonite, we read about several miracles that St. Cosmas worked during his journeys.

[1] Amos 8:11

[2] St. Nicodemos the Athonite, *Neon Martyrologion*, Athens 1856, pg. 200.

Moreover, St. Nicodemos has added in the narrative a personal note to describe the preaching of St. Cosmas: “*His sermon, as I witnessed it, was of the utmost simplicity, resembling the early sermons of the Fishermen.*”

His reputation was spreading widely among the Christian populations. Even Curt Pasha (the Turkish local leader) of Epirus invited him to visit the city of Ioannina. Curt Pasha was so impressed with Cosmas that he offered to give him whatever gift he wanted. St. Cosmas gladly accepted the Pasha’s offer and chose only a stool decorated with an elaborate velvet cloth. As he explained to the Pasha, he would use that stool every time he would preach. Indeed St. Cosmas always carried that stool with him and used it to step on and preach so that everyone could see him, as he was very short in stature. In some of the early icons of St. Cosmas, he is depicted stepping on the stool.

Concerning the preaching of St. Cosmas, it always followed after proper preparation. More specifically, St. Cosmas traveled from place to place, escorted by priests. Whenever he arrived in a village or a city, he had the people there fast for at least three days. Then, he encouraged everyone to go to Confession, and following that, he had the priests officiate the Sacrament of Unction and anoint the people with sacred oil. After this, he would begin his preaching. Furthermore, his endeavor extended beyond re-introducing Christians to a Sacramental Life. St. Nicodemos makes a particular reference to a fundraiser that St. Cosmas ran throughout the region of Epirus. He asked all the rich and well-off Christians to pay 12 *grosia* (i.e., Turkish silver coins) to purchase baptismal fonts. With the amount he collected, he managed to buy four thousand (!!!) baptismal fonts for all the local parishes.

Our Orthodox Church Tradition has given St. Cosmas the title of the “Equal to the Apostles” for all his endless missionary journeys and his God-inspired zeal to re-catechize the Greek Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire. However, as was mentioned at the beginning of this article, St. Cosmas is also regarded as one of the “Enlighteners” of the Modern Greek Enlightenment Movement. Contemporary historians tend to focus on St. Cosmas’ educational contribution, whereas they undermine or even leave out his spiritual legacy. Personally, I disagree that the ministry of St. Cosmas should be distinguished into spiritual and educational. As one “Equal to the Apostles,” St. Cosmas preached nothing further from the Apostolic message of “Christ is all and in all.” Everything he worked for, every initiative of his, every hardship he endured, was for the sake of Christ and His Holy Church. That said, some contemporary historians insist on focusing only on his educational legacy and undermining his spiritual heritage, but can one exist without the other? Nowadays, we experience the horrific results of providing our children with a godless education, and on top of that, we wonder why our culture is trapped in a perpetual decline!

St. Cosmas was a monk whose entire life can be summed up by the phrase, “Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being [3].” He also cared for the education of his fellow Christians much more than any secular enlightener. He endeavored to establish a school, an educational entity, in every place he visited. Although we do not have the exact number, it is estimated that he established approximately two hundred schools throughout all the regions he traveled. He created an enormous network of teachers and educators who journeyed from place to place and rekindled Greek education after four centuries of illiteracy.

[3] 1 Corinthians 10:24



*St. Cosmas, Cont.*

As he lived all his life imitating the example of the holy Apostles, he completed his earthly life in an apostolic manner. During his last journey, he preached in the city of Ioannina, which constituted a central commercial hub for the Balkans. St. Cosmas instructed the Christians to refrain from work on Sundays and dedicate the day to the Lord. Instead, he said they could work on Saturdays. These words infuriated the Jewish merchants of the city, who controlled the local commerce and had imposed Saturday as the day of rest. Seeing that Christians followed the words of St. Cosmas, they wanted to get him out of the way. Thus they bribed Curt Pasha, the same Pasha who had appreciated that gifted monk earlier and had given him a stool as a gift. After receiving a generous “bakshish,” the Pasha agreed to the execution of St. Cosmas. Some days later, Turkish soldiers arrested St. Cosmas near the village of Kolikontasi, and hanged him. Then they threw his dead body into the river.

A few days later, the Christians learned what had happened to their spiritual teacher. A delegation of faithful, led by a devout priest, went to Curt Pasha and requested permission to take St. Cosmas’ body and give it a proper burial. Curt Pasha, with much remorse, not only granted his consent but also sent some soldiers to assist the Christians. His body was found standing on the river's waters without any sign of decay. They took his body and buried it in Kolikontasi. Thus, St. Cosmas acquired the crown of eternal glory. St. Nicodemos' account of St. Cosmas’s life provides the information that he was martyred on August 4th of the year 1779, a day that falls during the period of strict fasting for the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos. However, for Christians to celebrate the feast day of their spiritual father and teacher, our Orthodox Church placed his commemoration on August 24th.

May St. Cosmas, the Aetolian, this spiritual giant of small stature, always intercede with God for us.

# THE DIVINE LITURGY: PART VI

## *The Trisagion (Thrice Holy) Hymn*

CONTRIBUTED BY REV. FR. CHRISTOS MARS, ANNUNCIATION CATHEDRAL, ATLANTA

In the Divine Liturgy, following the end of the Third Antiphon, and the conclusion of the Kontakion, we move to the next major part of the Divine Liturgy, the Trisagion (Thrice Holy) Hymn. This section of the Liturgy begins with the call to prayer by the Deacon or Priest “*Let us pray to the Lord.*” The people respond with “*Lord, have mercy.*” Before the exclamation of the Priest, there is a prayer that is read, although in most churches, this prayer is read in a low voice by the Priest while the Trisagion (Thrice Holy) hymn is being chanted.



This prayer is actually an introduction to the hymn that is to follow. The exclamation by the priest,

just as in the Antiphons, is the ending of the prayer that he is reading. The prayer that the Priest reads is as follows: “*Holy God, You dwell among Your saints. You are praised by the Seraphim and the thrice holy hymn and glorified by the cherubim and worshiped by all the heavenly powers. You have brought all things out of nothing into being. You have created man and woman in Your image and likeness and adorned them with all the gifts of Your grace. You give wisdom and understanding to the supplicant and do not overlook the sinner but have established repentance as the way of salvation. You have enabled us, Your lowly and unworthy servants, to stand at this hour before the glory of Your holy altar and to offer to You due worship and praise. Master accept the thrice holy hymn from the lips of us sinners and visit us in Your goodness. Forgive our voluntary and involuntary*

*transgressions, sanctify our souls and bodies, and grant that we may worship and serve You in holiness all the day of our lives, by the intercessions of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints who have pleased you throughout the ages.*” Once the priest has finished the prayer he says the exclamation of the prayer, “*For You are holy, our god, and to You we give glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.*” The people respond with the “*Amen.*”

This prayer prepares the faithful people of God for the work that they are about to undertake. The prayer asks that the faithful, though they may be sinners and unworthy of the task at hand, be given the same grace as the Seraphim and the Cherubim which surround the throne of God, and continually praise Him with the Trisagion (Thrice Holy) Hymn. Though they are unworthy they ask God to forgive all of their sins and make them worthy to stand in His presence to sing to Him the song of the angels.

This is a very powerful and very emotional prayer, because it puts the faithful in a state of readiness, and prayer as they begin to sing the Trisagion (Thrice Holy) Hymn. At this point it is important to mention what the Trisagion (Thrice Holy) Hymn is and what it consists of. Of course we are all familiar with the words of this hymn, “*Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy immortal, have mercy of us.*”

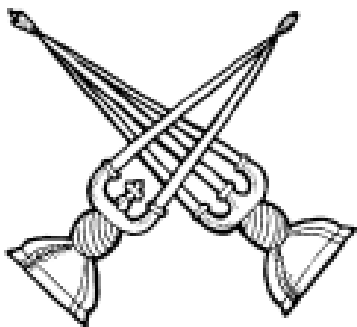
These words were revealed to the Church through angels, as this hymn is also called the hymn of the angels and was added to the worship service after the 4th Ecumenical Council, which stated that Jesus Christ is “in two natures,” being that He is both fully God and fully man at the same time. In Greek the word that is used to describe this is “*Theanthropos.*” In English we would say “*God-man.*”



*Divine Liturgy, Cont.*

This reference to Christ is in opposition to the doctrine of Monophysitism, which stated that in the person of Jesus Christ the human nature was absorbed into the divine nature like a cube of sugar dissolves in a cup of water. Therefore, Christ was left with only one nature, the Divine (Greek *mono* - one, *physis* - nature). The council also issued canons dealing mainly with the organization of the Church.

It is also important to note that the translation of this hymn as it is presented in this article has been universally accepted as the correct or closest translation from the original Greek. There have been translations of this hymn that give the worshipping Orthodox Christian a wrong impression of the faith. For instance it is incorrect to sing or say such things as “*Holy is God, Holy and Mighty, ...etc.*” This is strictly forbidden especially because it weakens the concept of God as the Trinity, as was discussed in the 4th Ecumenical Council.



Of course, the name of this hymn is derived from the fact that we sing the word “Holy,” or “Agios” three times in one verse of the hymn. Hence the name Trisagios or Three times Holy (Thrice

Holy) Hymn. It is baffling, then, that the hymn is reduced in some churches to being chanted only two times, rather than the theologically correct three times before the “*Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Both now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen*” is chanted.

As we had mentioned in our previous article, there are parts of the service that change if there is more than one priest serving with or without a deacon. And just like the previous article where there are changes to the order of the hymns, the same is true with the Trisagion

(*Thrice Holy*) Hymn as well. If there is only one priest serving with or without a deacon, the chanters or choir will sing the Trisagion (Thrice Holy) Hymn three times, followed by the “*Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Both now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.*” Then the reaffirmation of the last part of the Hymn “*Holy immortal, have mercy of us.*”

If there are two or more priests serving with or without a deacon, then the order of the chanting goes as follows: the first two times the hymn is chanted by the chanters or choir. The third time it is chanted by the clergy, the fourth time by the chanters or choir, and the fifth by the clergy followed by the “*Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Both now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.*” Then the reaffirmation of the last part of the Hymn “*Holy immortal, have mercy of us.*”

In both instances following the reaffirmation of the last part of the Hymn, the deacon or priest will make the exclamation “*Dynamis*” or in English “*Dynamis.*” It is important to point out here that it is incorrect, as we see printed in some books, to use any other translation of this such as “*Again, fervently,*” “*With more force,*” “*With more power,*” “*Once again louder,*” etc., etc. Please know that the word “*Dynamis*” does not have an equivalent translation. The only thing to do is to use the same word, “*Dynamis,*” as we use the word “*Amen.*”

Now if there is a hierarch serving then this section of the Divine Liturgy changes once again. We follow the same directions as above, when there are two or more priests serving with or without a deacon, but after the reaffirmation of the last part of the Hymn, “*Holy immortal, have mercy on us,*” and before the “*Dynamis*” there is a section that is added called the “*Agios O Theos tou Bimatos*” or “*Holy God of the Bema (Step)*” This hymn is referring to the top step area that is right in front of the Royal (Beautiful) Gates, but is not inside of the

Holy Altar. This area is called the “*Bema*”, or “*Step*.” This hymn takes its name from the fact that the hierarch is standing on the step when this part of the hymn is being chanted. The Chanter and/or Priests in the Altar being chanting again the Trisagion (Thrice Holy) Hymn, stopping at specific points (“*Holy God, / Holy Mighty, / Holy immortal, / have mercy on us.*” In between these sections the hierarch offers intercessions to God to look upon the Church, which is God’s vineyard, and to help and protect it. The petition is as follows: “*Lord, Lord, look down from heaven and behold and visit this vineyard, which Your right hand has planted and You have established.*” Each time the Hierarch says this petition, the Chanters, Choir and people respond by praying to God that He may give many years, or a long life, to the Hierarch that is offering the petition on behalf of the community. “*May our Lord, grant you many years.*” “*Eis Polla eti Despota.*” Once the Hierarch has finished saying this petition three times and the Chanters and Priests have finished, then the deacon or priest will say the “*Dynamis.*”

In all three situations, the Chanters or Choir will repeat the Trisagion (Thrice Holy) Hymn one more time. Only if there is a Hierarch, is there one more section that is added, and that section begins with an exclamation from the deacon or priest: “*Lord, save the faithful*”, “*Kyrie Soston euseves.*” The Clergy are the first to respond with this exclamation by singing the same thing “*Lord, save the*

*faithful*”, “*Kyrie Soston euseves.*” However in most churches there are not two sets of chanters, therefore on many occasions this is only done twice rather than the traditional three times.



Following that the deacon or priest would exclaim, “*And hear our prayers*” “*Kai epakouson emon.*” This is repeated by the clergy. After this comes the “*Feme*,” or hymn of the Hierarch. Each member of the Clergy always commemorates the person that is their superior, or the person that they must answer to. The local clergy commemorate their Metropolitan, who in turn commemorates the Patriarch, who in turn commemorates all the other Patriarchs in the world. When the Archbishop or a Metropolitan serves, the order of the hymns is as follows: the “*Feme*” of the Patriarch followed by the “*Feme*” of the Archbishop or Metropolitan that is presiding. If however the hierarch that is presiding is only a Bishop then we only commemorate who his superior is, and usually it is the local Metropolitan. Therefore in some cases you will hear two or even three “*Femes*” being chanted while at other times you will hear only one. Each time we chant the “*Feme*” it is repeated by the clergy and not by the people except when we are doing the “*Feme*” of the presiding hierarch. In that instance it is repeated by the clergy and then by the people.

With this the Trisagion (Thrice Holy) Hymn comes to an end, but in Part VII of our small series of articles, we will look at the Scripture Readings and we will continue on our journey through the Divine Liturgy, shedding light on the most important Sacrament of our Orthodox Church.

+Fr. Christos



# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY JOHN PEROULAS

Dear St. George Parishioners,

The last six months have been a wonderful journey for our community. We have seen and witnessed a number of baptisms, chrismations, and weddings. We had our traditional blessing and cutting of the vasilopita and a fun and successful apokreas party. Holy Week and the celebration of Pascha was reverent, personal and meaningful.

Our Greek Independence Day celebration was observed with distinction and we listened to an excellent presentation given by Dr. Victor Polizos.

This year our St. George Community was a major sponsor and privileged to build a new residence for Habitat For Humanity here in Knoxville, TN. What a wonderful joy it is to help provide a roof for a needy family! I want to thank our Committee and all our volunteers that participated in the build.

Our 3rd Annual Golfing with the Greeks Tournament Fundraiser again was a huge success. The field was full and everyone enjoyed the event. Again, I want to thank our committee members and volunteers that worked very hard to put it all together for St. George. We are so appreciative of all the sponsors and participants that supported our golf tournament.

Here are some highlights of positive and successful accomplishments this year:

1. Our Sunday School program participation and Graduation was outstanding.
2. Our Greek School program is growing.
3. The Stewardship Committee Initiative is on track for 2023.
4. Our Adult Ministries including Bible Studies.
5. Our continuing Outreach to our Young Adults.
6. Our Mobile Meals Outreach and the joy it brings to our community.
7. Our Senior Citizens who made the trip to the Diakonia Retreat for a day of fellowship and spiritual gathering.
8. Lastly, the Planning Committee has been extremely active, and I expect the Chairman to present to the Parish Council a plan for future projects and improvements.

This Fall, there will be several events and Fundraisers planned by all of our Organizations. Please be mindful and check the Calendar and Church bulletin for the scheduling of these events. All of these Organizations need and will appreciate your support.

Mark your Calendar For Greek Fest October 20, 21, & 22. We will need all hands on deck for a successful festival.

On behalf of the Parish Council and myself we want to thank Fr. Anthony and Fr. Dionysis for their Spiritual Leadership and Guidance and want to thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

John J. Peroulas  
President

# AHEPA

BY TOM VARLAN, PRESIDENT



**AHEPA CHAPTER 346  
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE**

Knoxville's Ahepa chapter, along with our Daughters of Penelope chapter and with the support of our St. George community, hosted a successful Ahepa District One Family Convention

June 2-4. Social highlights included a scrumptious Friday shrimp boil enjoyed by our out of town guests and local parishioners, a Saturday tour and skybox lunch at Neyland Stadium, and farewell awards banquet at Calhoun's on the River. AHEPA would like to thank our convention co-chairs, John McCook and Al Varlan, and all AHEPAns for their participation, as well as our parish priests and the St. George community for their encouragement and support. Highlights of the awards banquet included recognitions of our Knoxville chapter as district co-chapter of the year and Al Varlan as district AHEPA of the Year.



AHEPA is the largest and oldest grassroots association of American citizens of Greek heritage and Philhellenes, with more than 400 chapters across the United States, Canada, and Europe. Our local chapter meetings are open to all, so feel free to reach out to any member of AHEPA for more information about our meetings and events.





# CHOIR NOTES

BY ELENI PALIS

Though we've had some world-traveling choir members this past few months, from Romania to the Netherlands(!), the choir continues to prayerfully sing together in Liturgy on Sundays and in practice on Tuesday evenings. We have been delighted to welcome a new member, Michael Pantos, to our choir family! Our intrepid organist, Jacob Hoyos, continues to add more hymns to his repertoire, and our librarian, Carmen Pintoc, always keeps us on track with music.

We feel honored to learn and include music composed by Lorene Michalopulos, a former UTK professor who taught vocal music here for 25 years. The choir now sings her arrangements of both "Se Imnumen" and "Ainete," which capture the feel of Byzantine chant with choir voices. We hope you'll listen for these hymns especially, they are beautiful! Professor Michalopulos fell asleep in the Lord in 2012, but we honor her memory and think of her fondly when we enjoy her compositions.

As always, we are eager to welcome more new singers into our ranks! If you are interested in singing and joining our choir family, please contact David Ferguson at [ferguson1809@gmail.com](mailto:ferguson1809@gmail.com) for more information. We practice on Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm in the choir loft.

# DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE

BY ANN HALKIADES

Congratulations to Grace Burney on receiving the Daughters of Penelope Scholarship this year. This award was presented by Sister Linda Cepeda and Sister Virginia Anagnost on Sunday June



11. Grace will be attending East Tennessee State University in the fall.



The Daughters were busy during the AHEPA District One Convention held in Knoxville on June 2-4. We provided a variety of side items for the shrimp boil on that Friday night. On Saturday June 3rd Sisters Linda, Danni and Ann attended some of

## Daughters, Cont.

the District business meetings, and that evening several of the Sisters attended the convention dinner and awards ceremony at Calhoun's on the River.

Our annual rummage sale will be held on Saturday August 12th in the Church Hall from 8:00 AM until noon. We want to thank everyone for donating items to support our scholarship fund.



# GENESIS BOOKSTORE

BY STEVE ROSS

The Genesis Bookstore held a community event on June 4, 2023 to recognize Diane Changas (1949-2016) for her contribution to the development of the Genesis Bookstore Ministry.



The first bookstore at St. George was started by church librarian Florence Cazana over 50 years ago as a part of the library, which was located on the basement floor of the church. Over time, Diane became the primary attendant of the library and bookstore. Through Diane's leadership, the decision was made that to effectively serve the community needs, the bookstore needed to be physically present in the church hall and have its own identity. This was the beginning of the Genesis Bookstore.

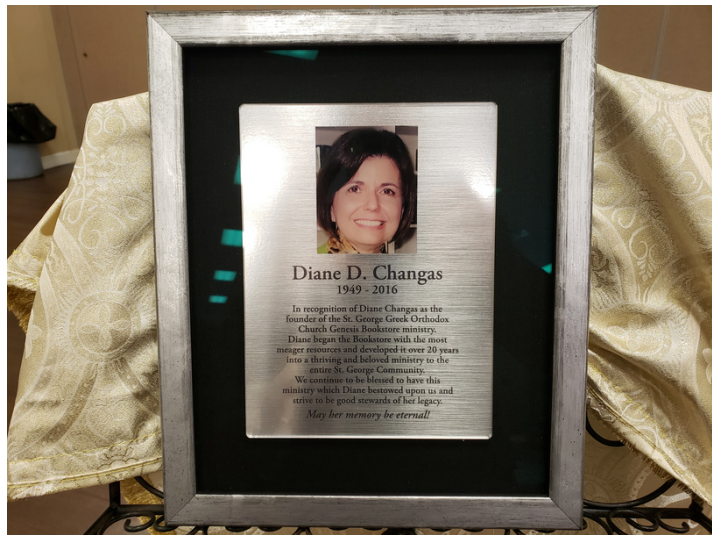




*Bookstore, Cont.*

Initially the “Bookstore” was a mobile cabinet which contained books, icons, etc. which was rolled into the hall each Sunday. Working with the Parish Council, Diane secured the Genesis Bookstore’s current location when the hall was expanded. When we reopened the Genesis Bookstore in June of 2022 it became apparent that it truly serves as a beloved ministry to our community. We wanted to recognize Diane’s efforts in creating this ministry.

Please come by the Genesis Bookstore and take a look at the plaque that recognizes Diane’s Genesis Bookstore legacy.



# HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

BY JOHN PIRSOS

We have one build day left! Members of our church have been building a new home for a Knox County family through our partnership with Habitat for Humanity. We are responsible for providing volunteers for the final build day on August 5.

The first two build days were a success, as we put up walls and vinyl siding. We will be painting the home on August 5, from 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.



Again, volunteers are welcome to join us for the final build day. No experience is needed. Habitat for Humanity will supply all the tools and safety kits. People aged 16 and older are welcome to sign up. Volunteering will count as service hours for high school and college students.



# HOPE AND JOY

BY CATHERINE BURRAGE

“But Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.’” -Matthew 19:14

HOPE stands for Holy Orthodox Primary Education and JOY stands for Junior Orthodox Youth. HOPE and JOY ministers to our preschool age (4yrs.) through 5th grade. The mission of HOPE and JOY is to cultivate and educate our young members of the Church. Our goal is to lead them to a deeper spiritual friendship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and deepen friendships with other young Orthodox Christians. This ministry gives our children the opportunity to experience the Faith through events, activities, service, fellowship, family, and fun.



This year's theme will be “Fruit of the Spirit” from Galatians 5: 22-23. Through understanding the fruits of the Spirit, our prayer is that our children will live in the Spirit and grow closer to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



We will meet once a month starting with our kick-off event “Blessing of the Backpacks” on Sunday, August 13th, 2023 after Liturgy. The kick-off event will be a time for parents to register their children while the children have snacks and participate in a craft. Then a Blessing of the Backpacks will be performed by our clergy, with the children bringing their backpacks to be blessed for the school year.

If you have any questions, please contact Victoria LaRock [vlarock@yahoo.com](mailto:vlarock@yahoo.com) or Catherine Burrage [catburrage@gmail.com](mailto:catburrage@gmail.com).



# PHILOPTOCHOS

BY KRISTIANA MOORE

## WHAT IS PHILOPTOCHOS?

Philoptochos, also known as the Greek Orthodox Philoptochos Ladies Society, was established in the United States in 1931, with our local chapter being established in 1946. Knoxville's Philoptochos has consistently supported the local community, as well as contributing on a national and international level. The word "philoptochos" literally translates to "friend of the poor." This is reflected in the programs our group undertakes which benefit the poor, sick, elderly, and needy. Philoptochos is the largest Christian women's philanthropic organization in the United States. Women of the Greek Orthodox faith at least 18 years of age are eligible for full membership in the society. To join or help the ministry in any way, contact any Philoptochos member. For information, see <https://www.saintgeorgeknoxville.com/philoptochos/>.

SAVE THE DATE:  
*Friend of the Poor 5k*

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28TH | 8 AM  
MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!

JOIN ST. GEORGE  
PHILOPTOCHOS FOR  
OUR 2ND ANNUAL  
RUN/WALK AT WEST  
HIGH SCHOOL! WE  
HOPE TO SEE YOU  
THERE!

## MEMBERSHIP

We invite all Orthodox women 18 and older to join Philoptochos in 2023! Together, we can fulfill our mission of helping those in need.

### Contact Information

- President: Kristiana Moore (865) 414-2677
- Other Contacts: Kathleen Vavalides & Marianne Jennings (865) 805-5952

## NEWLY ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS

President: Kristiana Moore  
Vice President: Kathleen Vavalides  
Treasurer: Kelly Peters  
Secretary: Mary Vavalides  
Recording Secretary: Alicia Gross  
Advisor: Marianne Jennings  
Linda Cepeda  
Elena Garlea  
Danni Varlan

PHILOPTOCHOS  
2023-2024  
GENERAL MEETING DATES

Sunday, August 13	12pm
Sunday, October 1st	12pm
Sunday, November 19th	12pm
Sunday, January 21st	12pm
Sunday, March 24th	12pm
Sunday, May 19th	12pm

All meetings will be held in the church hall.  
Food will be provided.



# SUNDAY SCHOOL

BY JOANNA TAMPAS, DIRECTOR

**WELCOME BACK!** We are excited to welcome our students back to Sunday School and begin a new year of learning and growth in our Orthodox Faith!

All youth in pre-school (3 years old by September 1) through twelfth grade are invited to join us for Sunday School beginning with the Agiasmos Service (Blessing of the Waters) and teacher meet & greet on August 27th. Classes will begin on **September 10th**. Sunday School class will begin each week at approximately 11:30 a.m., immediately following Holy Communion, and end at 12:15 p.m.

## Why is Sunday School important?

- **Sunday School prepares our youth to face the challenges of life:** Just as soldiers and athletes train for excellence, spiritual training prepares your child to deal with life challenges with faith and love.
- **Age-Targeted Teaching:** We teach the Orthodox Faith in a way that's focused towards your child's age and developmental abilities.
- **Systematic Curriculum:** Our curriculum is designed to cover topics in a sequential, grade by grade manner to build knowledge cumulatively. Please don't let your child miss out to ensure we meet the educational goals for each class as they progress through Sunday School.
- **Friends:** A community of children worshipping, learning the Orthodox Faith, studying the Bible, and discovering God together builds a bond that other secular activities can't accomplish.
- **Spiritual Mentors:** A dedicated teacher can be a Christian role model who supports you and helps inspire the Faith of your child. Let's build those relationships!
- **Sends the Right Message:** Making Sunday School a priority sets a good example for our youth. Let's demonstrate that learning God's Word is important!



St. George is blessed with devoted and dynamic teachers volunteering their time and talents. As a staff, we strive to partner with parents in the spiritual development of our youth to give them a foundation to live Christian lives and to go out into the world to share and live their Orthodox faith. If you are interested in becoming a teacher or getting involved in Sunday school, please let us know!

There is no registration fee for Sunday School, but we ask that everyone please complete a registration form to assist the staff in planning. Registration forms are available in the Church Hall. Again, we welcome students back to Sunday School with the annual Blessing of the Waters (Agiasmos) Service on **August 27th** and the first day of class on **September 10th**.

In His Service,

Joanna Tampas  
Sunday School Director  
865-414-5028



# TRIVIA NIGHT

BY LYGIA KARAGIOZIS

On June 8th, the parish hosted a community trivia night that centered around Villains of the Bible and Knoxville trivia. The evening included a delicious dinner sponsored by pizza palace and engaging trivia questions created by Fr. Dionysios and Fr. Anthony. We are looking forward to our next community event and hope to see more of you then!



# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

BY LYGIA KARAGIOZIS

St. George hosted our Vacation Bible School program from June 5-9th. This year the program grew in attendee size, days, and hours to better provide an engaging and interactive program for the youth. VBS incorporated theme days, Olympics, mission impossible, scavenger hunts, movie viewings, crafts, outdoor activities, devotionals, and various team building activities to better showcase the camp theme: Villains of the Bible.



Our Athenian, Olympian, and Spartan cabins shared many memories and experiences throughout the course of that week and built a strong foundational knowledge of their faith.



A huge thank you goes out to all who donated items and lunches for the program this year. Another big thank you goes out to all of the people that make VBS possible:



VBS, Cont.

Catherine Burrage, Faye Johnson, Victoria LaRock, Fr. Dionysios, and Fr. Anthony. We are so excited to host our VBS program for 2024. Stay tuned for updates in the near future!!



# MOBILE MEALS

BY BECKY KOTSIANIS

Are you newly retired? Only work part time? Love to serve others? Bored? Mobile Meals would love your help! Please consider helping with this worthy and fulfilling ministry of St. George. It only takes about an hour to an hour and a half of your time on a Friday morning. With our current volunteers we each deliver every 8 weeks. Mobile Meals is a program designed to deliver a daily meal to homebound seniors. Grab a friend or fellow parishioner and be a part of this service organization of St. George. It's so easy and so essential to the health and well being of our fellow Knoxvilleians. If you're interested, please contact Becky Kotsianis.





# MILESTONES

BY PRESVYTERA ELENI STRATIS



## **Congratulations...**

To Samir and Anna Harb on the birth of their baby girl, Muna Samir on May 30, 2023. Proud grandparents are Salvatore and Muna Vechuzzio.

To Zachary and Paige Smith on the birth of their baby boy, Wesley George on June 16, 2023 in Nashville, TN. Proud grandparents are Walton and Connie Smith.

To Demi and Maria Klonaris on the birth of their baby boy, Nicholas “Niko” Eftichios on July 5, 2023. Proud grandparents are Jim and Lori Klonaris.

To Steven and Kelsey Cakmes on the birth of their baby boy, Nicholas “Nico” David on July 8, 2023. Proud grandparents are Nick and Tina Cakmes.

To Jennifer “Genevieve” Michaelides on her Chrismation into the Greek Orthodox Church on May 6, 2023. Her sponsor was Zoi Apostolia.

To John and Eleni (Georgiafandis) Caras on their marriage on May 6, 2023 at the Annunciation Cathedral in Atlanta, GA. Koumbaroi were Georgia Andros and David Changas. Parents are George and Chris Georgiafandis.

To Yanni and Kenzie (Cottrell) Duffey on their marriage on June 10, 2023. Koumbara was Anna Duffey. Parents are Robert and Anna Duffey.

To Theo and Nina (Zhang) Karagiozis on their marriage on June 16, 2023 at Saint Nektarios Church in Barcelona, Spain. Koumbaroi were Lygia Karagiozis and Nick Karagiozis. Parents are Achilles and Silviane Karagiozis.

## **Sympathies...**

To Tina Paris and family on the falling asleep of their daughter, sister, aunt and great-aunt Laura, on May 6, 2023. May her memory be eternal.

To Amy and Greg Midis and family on the falling asleep of Amy’s mother, Catherine Gibbons, on June 1, 2023. May her memory be eternal.

To Walton and Connie Smith and family on the falling asleep of Walton’s father, George Walton, on June 5, 2023 in Concord, TN. May his memory be eternal.

To Nick Liakonis and family on the falling asleep of their wife, mother, grandmother and sister, Kiki on July 18, 2023. May her memory be eternal.



PARISH ARTWORK



*Theotokos*  
Christina Kampas

# FALL CALENDAR

## August

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- 1 (Tue)** 9am Divine Liturgy for the Beginning of the Dormition Fast (through August 14th)
- 2 (Wed)** 6pm Paraklesis Service
- 4 (Fri)** 6pm Paraklesis Service
- 5 (Sat)** 6pm Great Vespers (Feast of the Transfiguration)
- 6 (Sun)** **9am Orthros, 10am Divine Liturgy - Feast of the Transfiguration of our Savior**
- 7 (Mon)** 6pm Paraklesis Service
- 9 (Wed)** 6pm Paraklesis Service
- 11 (Fri)** 6pm Paraklesis Service
- 13 (Sun)** **9am Orthros, 10am Divine Liturgy**  
12 pm Philoptochos meeting
- 14 (Mon)** 6pm Great Vespers (Dormition of the Theotokos)
- 15 (Tue)** 9am Orthros & Divine Liturgy (Dormition of the Theotokos)
- 20 (Sun)** **9am Orthros, 10am Divine Liturgy**  
12pm Evrytanian Society Picnic at Lakeshore Park
- 23 (Wed)** 9am Divine Liturgy (Apodosis of Dormition)
- 24 (Thu)** 9am Divine Liturgy (St. Kosmos Aitolos)
- 27 (Sun)** **9am Orthros, 10am Divine Liturgy**
- 29 (Tue)** 9am Divine Liturgy (Beheading of St John the Baptist)

## September

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- 1 (Fri)** 6pm Divine Liturgy & Agiasmos for Beginning of New Ecclesiastical Year
- 3 (Sun)** **9am Orthros, 10am Divine Liturgy**
- 4 (Mon)** Labor Day Holiday
- 8 (Fri)** 9am Divine Liturgy (Nativity of the Theotokos)
- 10 (Sun)** **9am Orthros, 10am Divine Liturgy**
- 14 (Thu)** 9am Orthros & Divine Liturgy (Exaltation of the Holy Cross)
- 17 (Sun)** **9am Orthros, 10am Divine Liturgy**
- 24 (Sun)** **9am Orthros, 10am Divine Liturgy**
- 26 (Tue)** 9am Divine Liturgy (Holy Apostle St. John the Theologian & Evangelist)
- 30 (Sat)** 9am Divine Liturgy (St. Gregory the Armenian)

## October

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- 1 (Sun)** **9am Orthros, 10am Divine Liturgy**  
12pm Philoptochos Meeting
- 8 (Sun)** **9am Orthros, 10am Divine Liturgy**
- 16 (Sun)** **9am Orthros, 10am Divine Liturgy**
- 18 (Wed)** 9am Divine Liturgy (St. Luke the Evangelist)
- 20-22 (Fri-Sun)** **GREEK FEST 2023**
- 20 (Fri)** 10:30am Opening "Agiasmos"  
6pm Paraklesis Service  
6pm Great Vespers
- 21 (Sat)** 6pm Great Vespers
- 22 (Sun)** **8:30am Orthros, 9am Divine Liturgy**
- 23 (Mon)** 9am Divine Liturgy (St. Iakovos)
- 26 (Wed)** 9am Divine Liturgy (St. Demetrios) followed by Doxology
- 28 (Sat)** 8am Philoptochos Friend of the Poor 5k Walk
- 29 (Sun)** **9am Orthros, 10am Divine Liturgy**



# WEEKLY SERVICES

## *Sundays*

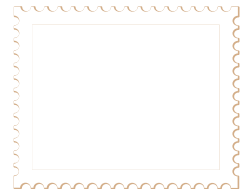
- 9:00 AM Orthros
- 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy
- 11:30 AM Sunday School  
- 12:15 PM

*Please join us for Coffee  
Hour following service.*

## *Weekdays*

Services times as announced.  
Please check our weekly  
bulletin for updates.

St. George Greek Orthodox Church  
4070 Kingston Pike  
Knoxville, TN 37919



**Phone:** 865-522-5043

**Visit us online:** [www.saintgeorgeknoxville.com](http://www.saintgeorgeknoxville.com)

 [stgeorgeknoxville@gmail.com](mailto:stgeorgeknoxville@gmail.com)

 [@stgeorgeknoxville](https://www.facebook.com/stgeorgeknoxville)