The News from St. Nektarios

Issue 2
Spring 2026

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Our Mission:

St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church is dedicated to the continuation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ's ministry of salvation through the proclamation and teaching of the Gospel; through Baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and through loving service to God and to mankind.

Our Vision:

The community will provide a loving, caring and welcoming environment where all belong and grow in the faith through worship, service, witness, and fellowship.

Catechumen Induction

Sunday, May 31 2026 Holy Pentecost

By Fr. Andreas Houpos

TEN DAYS AGO , we were gathered to proclaim and enter into the truth of our Lord's ascension. The description of that event in the first chapter of the book of Acts tells us that the disciples were obedient to Jesus, descending from the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem, to await the coming of the Holy Spirit. There, it says, they were gathered together in prayer—the apostles, the Theotokos, all the faithful—and "the company of persons was in all about one hundred and twenty" (1:15).

Now, ten days later, we turn once more to the book of Acts as we proclaim and enter into the truth of the coming of the Holy Spirit. The selected reading for Pentecost is short, and finishes with the amazement of a multiethnic crowd hearing Galileans speaking in their own languages. Were the passage to be longer, we would go on to hear that those who received the message "were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls" (2:41).

My brothers and sisters, behold the power of man's cooperation with the Holy Spirit of God: in mere hours, the membership of the Church grew by three thousand. Ten days after the Lord commissioned his disciples to go into the world to make disciples of all nations, and within moments of his sending to the Holy Spirit to animate that charge, there was a twenty-four-hundred percent increase in the population of those with the name of Christ.

Today, we have in our midst a new number who have heard a sound and come to investigate. Something foreign has struck their ears with intelligibility that, paradoxically, cannot yet be understood. The name of Jesus Christ, perhaps long veiled by other voices, hits home as never before. Having come to see what the commotion is, they find those of us already here "filled with new wine", and see the holy breath of God constantly heaving and churning his church toward new life.

> *". . . by becoming a catechumen you are being engaged to Christ; in your future reception into his Church, you shall be wed to him . . ."*

To you who stand among us today, perhaps with a degree of discomfort or bewilderment, or perhaps with excitement and anticipation, we welcome you here from the ruins of the Tower of Babel. That ancient edifice representing herculean efforts of the human ego was dismantled by a single divine notion, by introducing new tongues that would halt production and reduce progress. It showed the weakness and pitiful state of man having forgotten God—or, rather, having thought that God could be gotten, acquired like some prize, by our own cunning.

The spirit of Babel is an unholy spirit. Indeed, it is none other than the spirit of the evil one. Since its humiliation by the one true and living God, it has wandered the earth in search of hearts that would accept it and validate it—even among those who would be called Christians—bringing its hubris and decadence and pride and babbling nonsense. It is the spirit of the age, the spirit that drives men and women to seek their own, to say "come, let us make a name for ourselves" like the builders of that ill-fated tower.

Here, in the Church, take refuge in clean-cut stones of faith, knit together by humility, in the truth that God cannot be acquired by our own devices, that we have no tower to build up, but an idol of self to be torn down. We have no name to make for ourselves, but stand ready to take on the name of Christ. Rather than build an edifice to reach him, we start to see that he has built the Church to reach us. He taught us that "the one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted". Blind ambition spreads darkness; the light of humility spreads sight. As Christ has said to us today: "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life".

(Continued on page 12)

In Our Prayers

Tim John Pat Joe Johanna Edward Tina Theona Helen DG Chuck Handsel Mason Angela Mary Robin John & Elaine Jennifer & family Eleftheria Mary Shan Dawn Grant Caerra Jack Phyllis KS McKaela Melton family Joanne BE Luna Holly Christina Stephen DG Barbara Gloria Phil & Ronnie Daniel John Michelle MP MSR Jeff Shannon Sandy Glen Tish Cheryl Brian Elliot Paul Dina Cris John Ashley Christian Daniel John D. Dorothy Ella Terry Chris Erma (Hermione) Phyllis John Emmanoeuel Kiki Marihiam Rebekah Don Helen Tom Debbie Hanna Tim Missy Chris Jeremy Daniel Dino Greg

IN APPRECIATION AND THANK YOU

To Diane Gilbert and Copy Cat Printing for printing the newsletter.

Dear Evelyn and the Community of St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church,
Once again, we at The Liturgical Arts Academy are thankful for the continuing kind support of the parish of St. Nektarios. As we celebrated a second successful Winter Academy last month, we thank you for printing the service music which was used by our chant students and instructors. We appreciate the participation of Fr. Andreas, Sam Herron, and students from St. Nektarios. Your parish has been a faithful friend to us, which is such an encouragement to our ministry. We value your partnership with us and want you to know that we do not take it for granted! May God continue to bless you all.

Sincerely,
Christine Salzman TLAA
Executive Director

FOCUS ON OUR COMMUNITY

Celebrations, Milestones, Comfort & Support

REMEMBERING THOSE SERVING OUR COUNTRY

Aidan Thomas Seth Helene Jordan Krassimire Cristofer Nicholas Michael Constantine Zack Matthew Amanda Danielle Anton Jimmy Jerry Georgia

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES

To Ioanna and Nolan Atkinson for the birth, 40th day blessing and baptism of their son, Andrei Evangelos Wayne and to his godfather, Rhett Chapman
To Dallas Baker for this baptism and to his sponsor, Nolan Atkinson
To Davin Berg for this baptism and to his sponsor, Dustin Johnson
To Jackson Blevins for his baptism and to his sponsor, Nolan Atkinson
To Mariia Bilusiak for her chrismation and to her sponsor, Christos Efthimiadis -
To Johnathan Brinson for his chrismation and to his sponsor, John Kozey
To Courtney and River Bryant for their baptisms and to their sponsors, Brooke and Zack Hair
To Molly and Justin Carruthers for the birth and also the 40th day blessing of the son, Silas and mom
To Angelica Rojas and Georgios Chinoporos for the baptism of their daughter, Angel, and to her godmother, Stamatia Chinoporou
To Marian Bay and Thomas Clewell for the birth, 40th day blessing and baptism of their daughter, Anastasia and to her godparents, Merrigrace Clewell Helms and Silas Helms
To Cana Condon for his baptism and to his sponsor, Dustin Johnson
To Julie and Philippe Daily for their baptisms and to their sponsors, Michelle Anderson-Law and Ben Dresser
To Michaelina and Chris Franks for the baptism of their daughter, Vasiliki and to her godmother, Elizabeth Kleto
To Naomi and Kevin Gongon for their baptisms and to their sponsors, Tami and Scott Cameron
To Wesley Hane for his baptism and to his sponsor, Zack Hair
To Grayson Hess for his chrismation and to his sponsor, John Kozey
To Luciana and Dustin Johnson for the baptism of their son, Arthur and to his godfather, Nolan Atkinson
To John (Jack) Krueger for his chrismation and to his sponsor, Jacob Leatherman
To Daniel Marshall & daughter, Lea for their baptisms and to their sponsors, Sam Herron and Emily Hahn
To Andrew Miller for his chrismation and to his sponsor, Tyler Hahn
To Cristian Orellano for his baptism and to his sponsor, Marko Milich
To Anders Pierson for his baptism and to his sponsor, John Kozey
To Caitie and Basile Polivka for the birth and 40th day blessing of Basill III, Dela and Symeon's brother, Ciaran
To Peyton and Zach Poston for the 40th day blessing and baptism of their son, Luke and to his godmother, Bess Asimos
To Magy Rophael for her chrismation and to her sponsor, Ayoub Ayoub
To Juliana Roupas and John Morrisette on the Orthodox marriage and to their sponsor, Adam Roupas
To Andrew Rumpf for his chrismation and to his sponsor, George Koutroumpis
To Justina Sedhom and Shane Scully for their Orthodox wedding and to their sponsor, Ayoub Ayoub
To Jonathan Shembo for his baptism and to his sponsor, Vladimir Kartaiev
To Julia Soliman for her chrismation and to her sponsor, Caroline Mellekas
To Kaitlin Starr for her baptism and to her sponsor, Madalina Lowen
To Vianca and Pavlo Triantafyllides for the birth of Pavlo Jr.'s brother, Samuel Richard
To Paige Vick for her chrismation and to her sponsor, Nino Vashakidze
To Jarib Walden for his baptism and to his sponsor, Ben Dresser
To Anita and Laszlo Weber for the 40th day blessing of their daughter, Sofia, and mom
To Jane and Christopher Weber for baptism of their daughter Elinor and for Jane's chrismation, and to their sponsors Alyssa and Lisa Weber.
To Bess and Brooks Whitmore for the baptism of Sophie's sister, Lena and to her godmother, Rachel Kokenes

WITH SYMPATHY ON THE REPOSE OF OUR BELOVED BROTHERS AND SISTERS

To the Booker and Roupas families for the repose of Donna's mother, Mildred Booker
To the Lamprinakos and Collias families for the repose of Maria Collias
To the Habal, Haidar and Lane families for the repose of Tom's wife, Pina Habal
To the Harakas, Porter and Hill families for the repose of Norma's husband and Peter's father, Andrew
To the Hazlehurst, Koinis, Whittaker, Poole and Cantey families for the repose Sophia Hazlehurst's husband, Yates
To the Hondros, Harmon, Kleto, Nelson, and Xanthos families for the repose of Barbara Hondros' Husband, Spiro Hondros
To the Kost and Karantonis families for the repose of Presbytera Ellia's mother, Petroula "Patti" Kost
To the Karres, Dizes and Sarris families for the passing of Andrew and George's father, Theodore Karres
To the family of Jim Keown, to his godchildren and the St. Nektarios staff for his repose
To the Lee family for the repose of John's wife, Christina Kefalogiannis Lee
To the Koskinas, Davis, Triantafilopoulou, Retsios, and Georgopoulou families for the repose of Aphrodite Davis' father, Gus Koskinas
To Kathryn and Chris Mason and family for the repose of Kathryn's father, Ray Baker
To the Melissaris family for the repose of Christina's brother, Nicholas Melissaris, in Greece
To the Morros family for the passing of Vina's husband, Dr. Constantine "Cass" Demetrios Morros
To the family of Nick Yiotis for his repose

REMEMBERING OUR BELOVED, JIM KEOWN

My Beloved in Christ,

On behalf of our clergy, our Parish Council, and our staff, it is my sacred duty to inform you that our dear Sexton, Jim (Iakovos) Keown, has reposed in the Lord. After not showing for Presanctified Liturgy, he was found unresponsive at home. EMS arrived swiftly, but there was nothing that could be done. It appears that Jim passed from this life while in his sleep, at some point on Friday, March 20.

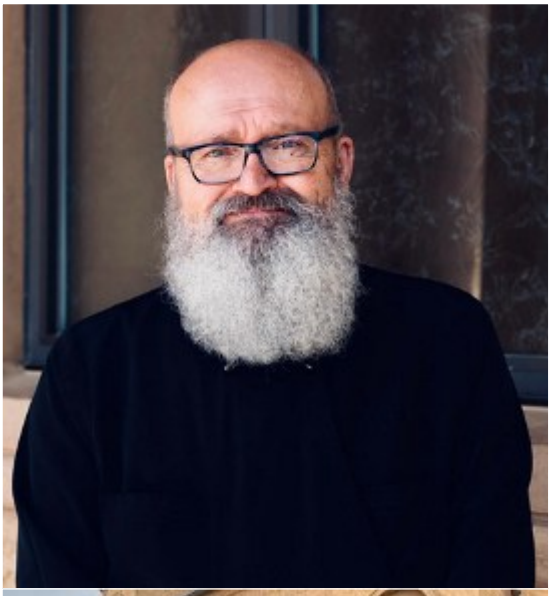
My heart is heavy with this loss, a loss for our liturgical and ministerial work here at St. Nektarios Church. However, it is at the same time brightened with the strong hope and faith that Jim now joins in the uninterrupted worship of our Lord with the angels and all of the saints. Moreover, he leaves in his wake many souls that were touched and guided into the Church by his one-of-a-kind presence and love.

Our condolences go out to Jim's family, and encouragement to his many godchildren, and friends and brothers and sisters in Christ—here and across the country and globe—that are richer for having had him in their lives.

May the memory of the servant of God, Iakovos, be eternal!

In Christ, Who is Our Life,

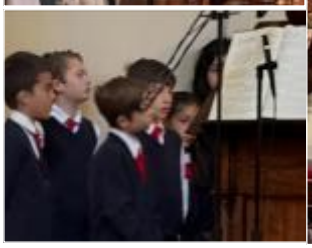
+Fr. Andreas



Above: Pictured here are some of Jim's many godchildren and friends gathered with Fr. Andreas on the day of Jim's funeral. Fr. Nektarios and Nigel Mitchner came from a far distance to pay their respects as well. **Below:** Some photos of Jim taken over the years including a photo of Jim and Safwat (who recently reposed) with mailing volunteers (Bottom left) *(Photos courtesy of Kim Braswell)*

Annunciation of the Theotokos

The Orthodox Feast of the Annunciation celebrated on March 25, commemorates the moment when Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary in Nazareth to announce that she would bear the Son of God, Jesus Christ, as recorded in Luke 1:26-38.



Our celebration of the great feast of the Annunciation was, in part, celebrated with our brothers and sisters at Annunciation Church in Winston-Salem and we offered a splendid Orthros and the Divine Liturgy at St. Nektarios. The latter was chanted partly by our St. Sophia School students, who later offered a program recognizing Greek independence. The faithful enjoyed a meal and fellowship together. Thank you to our luncheon sponsors and the volunteers who lovingly prepared the celebratory feast.

St. Nektarios Outdoors Ministry

Advancing on the Road to the Kingdom

"When you walk in a forest and see the young shoots of the plants learn a lesson from God's plants—that every tree each summer unfailingly puts forth at least one shoot of considerable size. Every tree endeavors each year to advance by the strength that God has given it; therefore, say to yourself: 'I, too, must each day, each year, absolutely grow higher and higher morally, must advance on the road to the Kingdom of Heaven through the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ and his Spirit dwelling and working within me.'"

St. John of Kronstadt, adapted from My Life in Christ

As we seek to grow in Christ, the Outdoors Ministry invites you for a morning outdoors, time together, and simply being in God's creation.

Guests from St. Anthony's in Rock Hill

We were blessed on Wednesday, March 12 to welcome Fr. Joseph Wessler, along with several members of St. Anthony's OCA Parish in Rock Hill, South Carolina, who joined us in worship at the Presanctified Liturgy, At the conclusion of the service, Fr. Joseph offered a homily, strengthening and edifying the faithful.

Our Orthodox brethren contributed abundantly to our weekly Lenten meal that followed the service. It was an evening filled with the spirit of Christian unity and fellowship. Josh Morris of our Outdoors Ministry extended an invitation to all to attend the upcoming parish hike at Crowder's Mountain on March 28.

We were further enriched by Fr. Andreas' reading of a homily on the Cross by St. Ephraim the Syrian, calling us to deeper reflection during this sacred season of Great Lent.

May the Lord continue to grant us many such opportunities to gather in prayer, worship, and fellowship as one body in Christ.

Adult Religious Education ~ Lent, Lunch & Learn

The Lent, Lunch and Learn (LLL) series continued in its 9th year. Parishioners and friends could chose to attend in person or virtually on Thursdays at lunch time during our Lenten season.

Fr. Steve Dalber launched the first session on March 5th with a reflection on "Lent: Our Annual Sabbatical." The Church in its wisdom, provides this 40-day period of time for more intentional study of scripture, focus on our faith, developing our prayer life as we prepare for Pascha.

The Young at Heart graciously hosted the second session during their monthly lunch gathering. In collaboration with LLL, Gerry Clonaris was our speaker.

The third session on March 19 warmly welcomed Fr. Robert Lawrence of St. Luke Greek Orthodox Church in Mooresville, who shared his insight about the fall of Adam in his presentation: "Creation, the Heart Song of God."

The group went on the road for the fourth and final week. Participants traveled to Panagia Prousiotissa Monastery in Troy, where they were greeted with love and joy. Gerontissa Agne, the Abbess of the monastery, spoke to our group in the chapel, about the history of the monastery, and about monasticism. Afterward, the sisters put into practice that essential monastic virtue of hospitality, by offering a delicious meal and more time with Gerontissa. A visit to the monastery bookstore capped the visit.

We are blessed to have such a monastery within reasonable driving distance. Monasticism is an essential function in the Church. Visits like this can challenge, inspire, and invigorate those living in "the world", and also do the same for the monastics. Both ways of life are distinct, but ultimately have and allow for the same union with Christ.

St. Nektarios Philoptchos Society

Our Philoptochos strives to engage our entire parish, collaborating inter-generationally with different ministry groups to serve those in need, while building the bonds of community and faith.

Feeding the Hungry

On Thursday evening, March 19, Philoptochos brought together many volunteers for our Lenten Service Project. With cheerful dedication and generous giving of their time, the group assembled over 600 sandwiches to support Roof Above, a local ministry serving those experiencing homelessness. Truly, many hands made for swift and meaningful work.

Spiritual Renewal

On March 22nd, members of our chapter were blessed to attend the 20th Annual Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos Spiritual Retreat at the Alexios Retreat Center. Service projects, presentations, campfire reflections made it a beautiful and meaningful time of faith, fellowship, and spiritual renewal.

6K raised for Charity and the Parish St. Nicholas Benevolence Fund

Many answered the call to help prepare for the annual Palm Sunday Luncheon. Sincere thanks go to our incredible volunteers who dedicated hundreds of hours to selling tickets, preparing the food, setting up, and serving our luncheon guests. A significant portion of the proceeds supports the Benevolence Fund, overseen by our clergy to provide emergency financial assistance to those in need.

Serving our Parish on our Journey to Pascha

On Tuesday of Holy Week, a dedicated team of volunteers lovingly dyed 600 eggs for the Resurrection and Agape Services.

Skilled hands crafted beautiful floral arrangements that adorned the Kouvouklion, carrying the icon of our Lord's crucified body.
For the Holy Friday Procession, vigil candles lined the route, offering parishioners a meaningful way to honor and remember their departed loved ones.

May God continue to bless the work of the Philoptochos and all those who serve with love and devotion.

St. Nektarios Music Mnistry

The Canon of Pascha

Reflection written by Samuel Herron, Protopsaltis

The Mystic Pascha is a common phrase found in the hymnography of Pascha to refer to the Resurrection of Christ, and I find it also reflects how the music, text, and liturgical ethos of Pascha constitute a unique aspect of being an Orthodox Christian. For the Orthodox Christian, Pascha is as much a feeling - a sensation felt deep in the soul that is brought on by the liturgical event with its many external stimuli, whether they be the colors of the feast, the music, the sounds, or the food - as it is a doctrine. Pascha feels different from any other time of year, different from any other experience a Christian can have in their lifetime. The music of Pascha is a large part of curating this mystical feeling; the troparion Christ is Risen is as sacred for its melody as it is for its words. They are inseparable.

As such, I wanted to highlight a beautiful and poetic centerpiece of the hymnography of Pascha that we subsequently sing every day of Bright Week and every Sunday until the Thursday of the Ascension of Christ: the Paschal Canon, authored by John of Damascus, Saint, Theologian, and Hymnographer. The canon is the most important hymnographic genre of the Orthodox Church, and the Canon of Pascha is the Canon of Canons, just as Pascha is the Feast of Feasts.
A canon in Orthodox hymnography is a structured poem-cycle sung during the morning service (Matins). It consists of up to nine sections called odes, each of which is built on a biblical song, the most familiar being the song Moses and the Israelites sang after crossing the Red Sea (Ode 1) or the song of the Theotokos, the Magnificat (Ode 9; Luke 1:46–55). In practice, Ode 2 is almost always omitted except during Great Lent, so most canons have eight odes, though canons can have one, two, three, four, eight, or nine odes in total depending on the day and liturgical commemoration.

Each ode opens with a model stanza called the heirmos (from a Greek word meaning "chain" or "link"), which sets the melodic pattern and meter for everything that follows in that ode. The stanzas that come after, called troparia, pick up the same melody and rhythmic shape, so the heirmos acts as a musical template that chains the whole ode together.

The genre was developed in its mature form during the seventh and eighth centuries, with St. Andrew of Crete (author of the Great Canon) and the aforementioned St. John of Damascus among its most important early practitioners. A canon can be penitential, festal, or commemorative; what unifies the genre is that each ode's poetry is always anchored, however loosely, to the theme of its corresponding biblical song. So Ode 1 troparia tend to evoke deliverance and exodus imagery, Ode 9 troparia magnify the Theotokos, and so on.

For a reader with no background, the simplest analogy might be this: imagine a hymn-cycle with eight movements, each set to its own tune, where every movement riffs on a different passage of Scripture, and the whole cycle, taken together, unfolds a single theological theme from start to finish. That is a canon.

The Paschal Canon borrows heavily from the Paschal Homily of St. Gregory the Theologian, and the themes found in it express the very essence of Orthodox theology, providing exegesis on the reason for Christ and His Resurrection and even on the reason for our existence as human beings. St. John's brilliant work is theologically dense but is also intended to be sung in its entirety, and both of these ideals must be preserved in translation.

Translating strictly for meaning without concern for the metrical patterns and melodies of the original heirmoi ignores the reality that the faithful encounter this wonderful poetic exegesis in triumphant song during the liturgy, with their candles lit, providing the light of the Resurrection to the world in the dead of night, not as a theological treatise to quietly contemplate in metaphysical meditation while in solitude.

I encourage you to read and listen to the Paschal Canon throughout the Paschal season, and to find the joy, beauty, and magnificence in its prose and meter. The Paschal Canon is high art, the equivalent of a masterful Pantocrator dome icon, a beautiful and worthy text with which to proclaim the good news of the Resurrection of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ from the dead.

With torches in hand, let us meet Him Who now comes forth from the sepulcher, radiant like a bridegroom. With the Angels' festive ranks together let us celebrate the saving Pascha of God with hymns.

(Ode V, Troparion 2, the Paschal Canon)

Young Aspiring Chanters Conference

March 12 - Protopsaltis Samuel Herron was invited to lead a Young Aspiring Chanters Conference at St. Mark Church in Boca Raton, FL. We congratulate him, and those who facilitated and participated in this worthwhile event.

Greek Language School

With the blessing of our Proïstamenos Protopresbyter Andreas G. Houpos and the opening remarks of our Presbyter Panayiotis Steele, our students celebrated the commemoration of the Feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos and the anniversary of the Greek Independence Day in the presence of so many parishioners, parents, and friends who honored us with their presence on Sunday, March 22nd following the Divine Liturgy at our Spiritual Life Center. Children waving white and blue-striped flags, chanting ecclesiastical hymns, wearing beautiful, new traditional Greek costumes from Thessaloniki, singing patriotic songs, and reciting inspiring poems! We congratulate the children for an excellent performance and we are grateful to our wonderful teachers, parents and volunteers who assisted us. We are so thankful to Dimitrios Andritsogiannis for significant role he played in bringing our dream of traditional costumes to fruition.

Middle right: Ministries working Together: We thank Presbytera Sandy Stanar who represented the Young at Heart Ministry at our Lambathes Crafting Event! The supplies that were donated by Presbytera Sandy and Presbytera Eirini Steele were lovely and very much appreciated.

A few of our students accompanied their moms and created beautiful Pascha candles to sell during our Lambathes Greek School Fundraising Event! Bravo! We thank our wonderful PTO chair-ladies for organizing the event and sponsoring supplies.

Anastasia Holevas

Left and below: Sweet and crispy, honey loukoumades were lovingly prepared and sold by our many volunteers thanks to the Tzefos, Mortis, and Wixon families who sponsored the ingredients and organized this successful fundraising school event!

Greece Land of Saints Pilgrimage Reflection

Members of our most recent pilgrimage—"Greece: Land of Saints"—gathered for a meal, and to reflect on the experience. The consensus is that the pilgrimage experience brings with it a responsibility to actively enrich our parish. Our pilgrims were engaged about a new initiative of our Stewardship Committee to strengthen the bonds of our community. We can benefit from considering how we are changed on the other side of this journey, and how we can likewise apply that experience to make our community more intentionally Christ-like.

The Far Reaching Light and the Life of the Risen Christ!

The Saturday after Pascha closed out Renewal (or "Bright") Week - the weeklong day of Pascha! Members of St. Nektarios witnessed the joy of the Resurrection across the Metropolis. His Eminence Metropolitan Sevastianos, the Alexios Retreat Center Board and staff invited all of our Metropolis parishioners to come for the Annual Pascha picnic at the beautiful Alexios Retreat Center (ARC) for a day of prayer, fellowship, and glendi!!

Fr. Andreas & Pres. Meredyth joined a number of parishioners at the ARC for the annual Pascha Picnic. With lambs on the spit, all celebrated the joy of our Lord's resurrection together!

Fr. Panayiotis tended to vital pastoral needs and served Vespers at home, after which members of our Men's Group helped Fr. Andreas clean the church upon his return from the ARC.

Meanwhile, in Knoxville, TN, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, Caroline Mellekas, accompanied some of our youth for the next round of the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival, at St. George Greek Orthodox Church. As one observer stated about the speeches: "The witness of the faith is on fire!"

As we enter into the summer months, wherever we might find ourselves, may we ever bear the far-reaching Light and Life of the Risen Christ!

Financials Matter

To fund ministry, our 2026 Stewardship Goal is

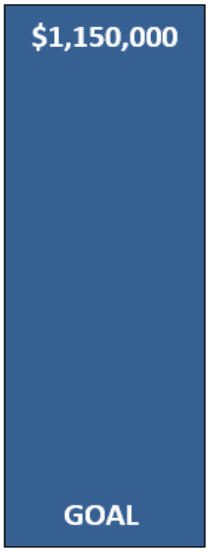
$1,150,000

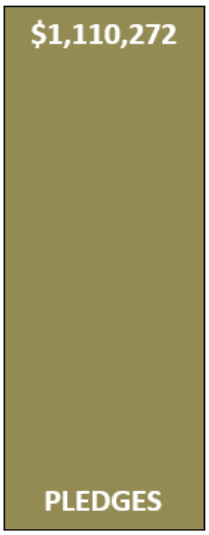
589 stewards have pledged

$1,110,272

As of 5/20, offerings equal

$431,176





For Your Pledge! Less than $40K to reach our budget goal.

As of May 20, 2026	ACTUAL	BUDGET	%
Stewardship	$ 431,176	$1,150,000	37.5
Other Income	187,121	$ 297,750	58.7
Total Income	$ 618,297	$1,468,500	42.1
Expenses	$ 658,824	$1,397,750	44.9
Net Income	*- $ 40,327*		

Notes:

- 4.5 months is 37.5% of the year.
- Income is at 42.1% and just above our budget
- Total paid expenses are at 44.9% of Budget. Allocation Payment to the Archdiocese is current. Full payment of $70K pre-paid into reserve fund.

Youth Ministries

As one observer stated about the speeches: "The witness of the faith is on fire!"

Northeast District Oratorical Festival Finals in Knoxville at St. George Greek Orthodox Church **Pictured left to right:** John Asaad, Aaron Asvestas, and Maksim Nikolov pictured with their families and Caroline Mellekas, Director of Youth Ministries

Above and below:

Joy Hope and GOYAns participating in Holy Week services, breaking the pinata and helping serve frappe' at the Agape picnic, creating their own icons, playing basketball, dance practice and creating their own hats

IN HIS SERVICE AT ST. NEKTARIOS

Where we all belong and grow in the faith through Worship, Service, Witness and Fellowship

Thank you for your generous offerings in His Service as we celebrated the Feast of Feasts.

Orthodox Faith is Active

The St. Nektarios community has been in service to God and mankind for more than a quarter of a century.
Each of us is called to put our Orthodox faith and ministries into *action*.
Faith is a continuous transformative practice of our walk to be in union with God.
Throughout our Journey to Pascha, we connected with each other to enrich our faith, our family and our Community.

Richer Worship and Brighter Witnessing

Being active participants in the sacramental and prayer life of the church.

Beyond the beauty of our worship services, we witnessed a loving commitment to living out our faith in meaningful and visible ways. Our parish embraced an **intensified worship schedule**, offering more opportunities for prayer and spiritual growth. Many participated in the **Sacrament of Confession** as they prepared their hearts for the joy of the **Resurrection**. We came together in love and remembrance, offering prayers and memorials for **our departed**. The service of **Holy Unction** brought comfort and healing—both physical and spiritual—to those in need. We somberly remembered our **Lord's Passion,** sang **Lamentations** at his death and waited in anticipation in the dark to **receive the light o**f his glorious resurrection.

A particularly joyful highlight was our celebration of **Holy Saturday morning**, where we welcomed new members into the Church through **Mass Baptisms and Chrismations**. This beautiful service was followed by the **blessing of Paschal baskets**, a cherished tradition that brought families together in gratitude and anticipation of Pascha.

We give thanks for our **active corps of volunteers**, whose dedication, generosity, and service provided a rich worship experience and welcoming and reverent environment for all present. All offered meaningful opportunities to witness and share our faith.

Chanters	**Broadcast and**	**St. Phoebe Maidens**
Parish Council	**Ushers**	**Kouvouklion Bearers**
Greeters	**Acolytes**	**Security and Safety Monitoring**
Adult Altar Servers	**Myrrh Bearers**	**Readers at the Agape Service**

We were blessed by hundreds of volunteers hours preparing for our services and offering items beyond the usual wine, oil, and prosfora.

- Cleaning liturgical item under the tent
- Tables, linens, going from purple during the week to bright for Sunday
- Changing the icons in the Narthex frames
- Preparing the Narthex sand boxes between services
- Placing the drip holders on the 1500 candles
- Printing service booklets
- Glass votives for the blessing of the oil. One sits in a bed of flour which is then used to make the prosfora for Holy Thursday morning Liturgy,
- Holy Thursday --- Solea vigil candle lighting
- Ironing the cloth to receive the icon of the Body of Christ from the cross
- Dyeing eggs – and then wiping them down before the resurrection service
- Luminaries to light the path of Holy Friday Procession
- Rose water for sprinkling

And of course sponsoring and arrangement of flowers to beautify our temple.

- Adorning the icon of the Theotokos for the weekly salutations
- Yellow carnations for the Veneration of the Cross
- Palm Sunday — Palm arrangement and palm crosses
- Bridegroom icon
- Wreath for the Cross for our Lord's Passion and bouquet at His feet.
- Adorning the Kouvouklion for Friday night
- Flower petals for Holy Saturday Morning

Vibrant Fellowship

Integrating our Faith with daily life, "dwelling in unity."

Breaking Bread Together — We shared our Lenten recipes, our international cuisines and culinary skills

- Wednesday Night Lenten meals —when many families lovingly labored to prepare homemade soups and provided side dishes to share
- Thursdays Lent, Lunch and Learn
- Friday light Lenten lunches following Presanctified Liturgy
- Third Sunday of Lent—our Middle Eastern Families generously hosted Fellowship Coffee Hour
- Breaking the fast after the Resurrection service with gallons of handmade lamb soup
- Agape picnic buffets overflowing with roasted lamb, Greek potatoes, salad, spanakopitakia, Grecian chicken, lamb off the spit, plus the dessert station to satisfy all.

Loving Service

As Christ came "to serve", we glorify God by offering good works to his Church and mankind.

Glory to God

- For the helpful hands making the palm crosses
- For our Alms-giving on the Sundays of Lent
- For our volunteers on Palm Sunday to raise funds for the St. Nicholas Benevolence Fund
- For our volunteers who made meal packs for the homeless
- For our volunteers who sorted food for the hungry
- For our visits to our shut-ins, sharing Pascha baskets
- For our parish family offering the best of each's ability

Staff Appreciation

We extend our sincere gratitude to Sam, Carolina, Marko, Kim, Silva, Sofia, Sharon, Tony, Brittany and Evelyn for the countless hours of dedication to the daily life and ministry of our parish. They ensure that facilities are prepared and supplies are available to support our rich worship—especially during intensive liturgical seasons such as Holy Week.

By attending to the practical and operational needs of parish life, they enable the Body of Christ, with its many parts, to function smoothly and cohesively, strengthening the mission of every ministry.

Their work spans essential responsibilities including communications, production of printed materials, calendaring, volunteer scheduling, purchasing, accounting, photography for outreach and appreciation, and risk management. Through these efforts, they foster a safe, organized, and reverent environment that supports our parish mission and vision.

(Fr. Andreas' article continued from page 1)

On that day of Pentecost, when three thousand souls were added to the Church, we are told that "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers," and "day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."

This "breaking of the bread" and "the prayers" has been happening here for nearly thirty years. And we are but the newest bud on a branch on a trunk that has been growing in this way for twenty centuries. Today, you take an important step towards being grafted into this Tree of Life. Today, you commit to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, and prepare for the banquet. Today, you remind the rest of the great value of our seat at that table.

The Church is here to facilitate your current and lifelong repentance; to join you not only to this visible body of believers that now surrounds you, but to all those who have ever believed and who are alive to God. The Church is the Body of Christ; by approaching you have approached Christ; by becoming a catechumen you are being engaged to Christ; in your future reception into his Church, you shall be wed to him. This union, and ongoing communion, with Christ and with his Father and the Holy Spirit is the purpose and aim of human existence.

* * *

We glorify God and welcome you as we, too, were once welcomed by him. He welcomes you as you are today, knowing what it is you can become by his grace. And now we walk with you hand-in-hand on your path to communion with Christ and with us. Step forward with faith in God, who has faith in you.

Directory

Church Office: 704-708-4669

Email: office@stnektarios.org

Website: www.stnektarios.org

Address: 5108 Kuykendall Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28270

Clergy

Father Andreas Houpos, Proïstamenos
Mobile: 980-333-9563
Email: fr.andreas@stnektarios.org

Father Panayiotis Steele, Ephemerios
Cell: 703-964-7712
Email: fr.panayiotis@stnektarios.org

Father Steve Dalber, Pastor Emeritus
Mobile: 704-451-6524
Email: frdalber@stnektarios.org

Father Paul Tsahakis, Presbyter
Mobile: (704) 608-1112
Email: frtsahakis@stnektarios.org

Parish Staff

Parish Administrator - Evelyn Klund

Administration Staff
Silva Awaimrin, Kim Braswell, Sharon Koutroumpis, Sofia Nicolopoulos

Director of Youth and Young Adults - Caroline Mellekas

Facility Manager - Marko Milich

Protopsaltis - Sam Herron

2026 Parish Council

President: Chris Mortis
Vice President: Peter Reinhart
Treasurer: Elie Azar
Assist. Treasurer: David Hanegraaff
Secretary: Gene Borowski
Assist. Secretary: Manal Choueiri
Members: George Bacogeorge, Zack Hair, Kathryn Mason, Andrew McCullough, Dan Wixon

Philoptochos Board

President: Madalina Lowen
1st Vice President: Deidre Lepkowski
Recording Secretary: Laurel Bacogeorge
Corr. Secretary: Sharon Koutroumpis
Treasurer: Kathrine Cestrone
Ass't. Treasurer: Evelyn Klund
Members: Helen Bakos, Renee Keretses, Janet Rogers, and Nia Tefakis

(**Email:** philoptochos@stnektarios.org)

Sundays at Saint Nektarios

Worship on Sundays

Matins 7:45 a.m. and
Divine Liturgy 9:15 a.m.
Fellowship Coffee:
Following Divine Liturgy

Prosphora

Please contact the church office or Christie Asimos at 704-756-1512 if you would like to provide or sponsor Prosphora.

Coffee Hour

Please contact the church office if you would like to host or co-host a Coffee Hour on Sunday. Your Stewardship pays for the coffee hour refreshments provided by the Hospitality Ministry Team.

Flowers

You may donate flowers in honor of a family member's feast day, in memory of a loved one or friend, on the occasion of a holiday, or simply as a gift to the community of St. Nektarios. To donate flower arrangements to be placed at the Iconostasis, St. Nektarios Shrine or in the Narthex for Sunday Services, please contact the church office to reserve a Sunday.

Sacramental Wine & Pure Olive Oil

You may make a financial gift to help defray the cost of the sacramental wine that is used for Holy Communion. Please note on the memo line of your check or on the envelope "Communion Wine". You may also donate a bottle or can of pure olive oil which is then blessed at the Shrine of St. Nektarios and is offered in the anointing kits. Please feel free to bring this with you to any of our services and give to an usher on duty.

For additional information contact the church office.

Upcoming Deadline

Newsletter & Bulletin Due Dates:
Information Due: July 6, 2026
Published: July 17, 2026