



Issue 2

April-May 2024

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THE NEWS FROM ST. NEKTARIOS

DO YOU WANT TO BE HEALED?

Fr. Andreas G. Houpos

DO YOU WANT TO BE HEALED?"

This is the question Jesus asked the paralyzed man at the side of the healing waters of the Sheep Gate pool in the Gospel of the Paralytic (John 5:1-15). His reply was, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool." Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk". The paralytic was instantly healed and he picked up his mat and walked. St. John presents this historical account to help us come to understand just who this Jesus is. Further, that we might believe in Jesus, and, by that belief, have life in his name.

For you and for me, living nearly two thousand years later, living not only after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, but having also been joined to his Church by baptism and chrismation, an encounter with Christ is nearer to us than the therapeutic waters of the Sheep Gate Pool were to the paralyzed man.

Still, you and I are at risk for a paralysis far more grave—that is, a paralysis of soul rather than body. Bearing the name of Christ, and having been given the possibility to overcome sin and death with him, makes us bigger targets for the forces of evil. We are attacked from every side. If we do not keep our guard up, we may find ourselves pinned down, dazed, or even mortally wounded in spirit.

But Christ does not leave

us easily. Even if we lie paralyzed on the portico of a new "pool" (that is, the Church), just as he did at the Sheep Gate Pool, Jesus, seeing our calamity, calmly approaches and asks:

"Do you want to be healed of that grudge you carry? It has paralyzed your soul. Remember, you also carry my name: Prince of Peace.

... an encounter with Christ is nearer to us than the therapeutic waters of the Sheep Gate Pool were to the paralyzed man.

Do you want to be healed of your obsession for having the latest fashion, of wearing provocative or flashy clothing, in order to attract and impress everyone but me? This has entangled and paralyzed you. Did you forget the saying, that "all those who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ"? What did you do with me, your baptismal garment?

Do you want to be healed of that tongue that insults and hurts and gossips and speaks idly and tells lies? This has paralyzed you. Your tongue was made to comfort, to pray and bless and sing praises, and to taste my precious Body and Blood, which was broken and poured out for you.

Do you want to be healed

of your frivolity—being able to recount sports statistics for season upon season, or knowing the most intricate details of the latest TV drama, or memorizing vain and vulgar songs? These things have paralyzed your soul. You forgot that I invited you to learn the lives of my friends, the Saints, to love the Holy Scriptures, and to know and understand sacred hymns—and through them all to know me.

Do you want to be healed of your obsession with hoarding clothes and food, of always having the latest device or car, and taking lavish vacations, yet barely being able to spare a dollar or even a good word to someone in need? This greed has paralyzed you. You forgot what I told you: whatever you do to the least of these my brethren, you do to me.

Do you want to be healed of that draining, dangerous relationship, of that dependence on pleasure? Do you want to be healed of the ways you harm yourself or others? Your lust and anger have paralyzed you. You forgot that you are a member of my body, and that you were made in my image and likeness.

Do you want to be healed of your deep sadness or bitterness? These have drained and paralyzed you. Remember, through my Cross, joy has come to the whole world.

Do you want to be healed

(Continued on page 16)

In the Spotlight

Spiritual Life Center Renovation

Things are abuzz as our remodeling is underway in our Spiritual Life Center! Our office and classroom space renovations continue to progress, our temple's exterior doors and columns are receiving long-overdue repairs and new paint. We have taped and mudded the drywall, fire caulked, primed all new drywall, installed door frames and light fixtures, re-

Inspected HVAC (due to misinterpretation of the scope of work), first coat of finish paint applied, over-head inspection (trades affected: HVAC, building, electrical, fire), installed flooring, installed data cabling and we received from Greece the custom-made Cross that will eventually adorn the top of our Life-giving Spring (shown here temporarily placed for fitting). Glory to God!



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We're reconfiguring interior rooms in the Spiritual Life Center to accommodate offices and to completely free up much-needed

classroom space. While this will be a step in the right direction, and gives us a preview of the more comprehensive overhaul to come, it still leaves us with very limited space. We are so close to moving forward with our greater expansion, and need YOUR PARTICIPATION! You've seen our growth and our active campus. Let's join together to prayerfully put our names on paper and resources in the bank to make this next phase of our story in Christ materialize! If you haven't yet, see our office about making a pledge toward our building fund. May it be blessed!



FOCUS ON OUR COMMUNITY

Celebrations, Milestones, Comfort & Support

IN OUR PRAYERS

Tim John Pat Joe Kim Johanna Edward Tina Theona Helen DG Chuck Handsel Mason
Angela Mary Robin & Benny John & Elaine Jennifer & family Eleftheria Mary Shan Dawn Grant
Jack Phyllis Melton family Joanne Christina Stephen Barbara & Spiro Gloria Phil & Ronnie
John Michelle & family MP MSR Ashley Christian Jeff Shannon Glen Tish Cheryl & Brian Paul Dina
John T. John D. Terry Dorothy Erma (Hermione) Phyllis John Emmanoeuel Marihiam Helen Tom
Debbie Roula Hanna Chris Greg Grant Max

FOR THOSE IN SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY

Helene Jordan Krassimire Nicholas Michael Constantine Zack
Matthew Amanda Danielle Anton Jimmy Thomas Cris

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES

To Samara Clewell and Chris Shadrack on their engagement
To Julia Woodward and Emad Soliman on their marriage and to the sponsor, Gerry Clonaris
To Joanna Caushaj and Jacob Fultz on their marriage
and to the sponsors, Joanna Gounaris and Chris Holevas
To Jislina and Simon Tekin on their marriage and to their sponsor, Yuhan Tekin

BIRTHS & 40TH DAY BLESSINGS

To Anne and Kyle Duarte on the 40th day blessing of Noah's sister, Angelia Fotini
To Vivian (Fotinos) and Charles Cutajar on the 40th day blessing of their son, Vincenzo Christos
To Peyton (Miller) and Zach Poston on the birth of their son, Noah Miller Poston
To Stephanie and Chris Koutroumpis on the birth of Jack's brother, Max
To Basil and Caitie Polivka on the birth of Basil and Dela's brother, Symeon

CHRISMATIONS & BAPTISMS

To Walid Muammar on his chrismation and to his sponsor, John Couchell
To Kaitlyn and Nickolas Davros on the baptism of Kinsley's sister, Riley
and to the godparent, Dr. Akaterina Davros
To Joshua Morris on his baptism and to his sponsor, Naguib Assad
To Scott, Tami, Asher, Isabella and Alma Cameron on their baptisms and to the sponsors,
Dwayne Cogdil, Anastasia Stonestreet, Gerry Clonaris, Katie Caltis & Caroline Mellekas
To Angela & Michael Thomopoulos on the baptism of Evie's sister, Mila
and to her godparent, Gabriella Demas
To Joseph Kurchock on his chrismation and to his sponsor, Matthew Baker
To Jacob Fultz on his baptism and to his sponsor, Chris Holevas
To Kim Leatherman on her baptism and to her sponsor, Silva Awaimrin
To Courtney, Jordan and Acacia Zielinski on their baptisms and to their sponsors,
Elie and Irma Azar and Brooke Hair

WITH SYMPATHY ON THE REPOSE OF OUR BELOVED BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

To the Candela family for the repose of Jean's husband, Joseph
To the Onishchenko and Nistratova families for the repose of Nataliya's husband, Tarras
To the Stojkovich family for the repose of Goran's father, Predrag Stojkovich
To the Mantekas, Karanikas-Martin and Tassios families for the repose of Georgia Mantekas
To the Papathanasiou family for the repose of Eleni Papathanasiou
To the Pavlakos family for the repose of Connie's brother, George Pavlakos
To the Katsanos, Kaltsounis, Liapis, Kanos, Politis, Bisbikis and Karadimas families on the repose of
Ekaterini "Kathy's" husband, Dimitrios Vasilios Katsanos
The family of Anna Georges for her repose
To the family of Katina Antoniou for her repose

IN APPRECIATION

Thanks to Diane Gilbert and Copycat for printing the Church Bulletin and Newsletter.
Thank you to all who allowed us to use your photos for this month's newsletter.

Paschal Greetings from Around the World



Thank You to our Gospel Readers

Arabic	Emile Khuri
Armenian	Azad Khuri
French	Naguib Farah
Georgian	Aka Vashakidze
German	Madeleine Tekin
Latin	Presb. Maria Dalber
Portuguese	Ana Levantis
Romanian	Adina Cotoman
Russian	Tatiana Vlade
Spanish	Chantal Triantafyllides
Turkish	Mary Tash
Ukrainian	Mary Greh

Language	Greeting	Response	Language	Greeting	Response
Albanian	Krishti U Ngjall!	Vertet U Ngjall!	Greek	Christos Anesti!	Alithos Anesti!
Arabic	El Messieh Kahm!	Hakken Kahm!	Hawaiian	Ua ala hou 'o Kristo!	Ua ala 'I 'o no 'oia!
Armenian	Kristos haryav ee mere-lotz!	Orhnia! eh harootyunuh kristosee!	Indonesian	Kristus telah bangkit!	Benar dia telah bangkit!
Bulgarian	Hristos Voskrese!	Vo istina Vokrese!	Italian	Cristo e' risorto!	Veramente e' risorto!
Chinese	Helisituosi Fuhuole!	Qeshi Fuhuole!	Japanese	Harisutos Fukkatsu!	Jitsu ni Fukkatsu!
Coptic	Pchristos Aftooun!	Alethos Aftooun!	Korean	Kristo gesso!	Buhar ha sho nay!
English	Christ is Risen!	Truly He is Risen!	Latin	Christus Resurrexit!	Vere Resurrexit!
Eritrean-Tigre	Christos Tensiou!	Bahake Tensiou!	Norwegian	Christus er oppstanden!	Sandelig han er oppstanden!
Estonian	Kristus on üles tõusnud!	Ta on tõesti üles tõusnud!	Portuguese	Cristo Ressuscitou!	Em verdade Ressuscitou!
Ethiopian	Christos t'ensah em' muhtan!	Exai' ab-her eokala!	Romanian	Hristos a inviat!	Adeverat a inviat!
French	Le Christ est réssuscité!	En verite il est réssuscité!	Russian	Khristos voskrese!	Voistinu voskrese!
Georgian	Kriste Ahzdkhah!	Chezdmari-det!	Serbian	Cristos Vaskres!	Vaistinu vaskres!
German	Christus ist auferstanden!	Wahrlich Er ist auferstanden!	Spanish	Cristo ha resucitado!	En verdad ha resucitado!
			Syriac	M'shee ho dkom!	Ha koo qam!
			Turkish	Hristos diril—di!	Hakikaten diril—di!
			Ukrainian	Khristos voskres!	Voistinu voskres!
			Welsh	Atgyfododd Crist!	Atgyfododd yn wir!





OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA

Lent Began - March 17, 2024

"Lent is the period of time for self-examination by the believer; of putting on the spiritual armor of the Militant Church; of applying the riches of prayers and almsgiving; of adopting deeply the meaning of repentance; of atonement and reconciliation with God Almighty."

From Great Lent - A Week by Week Meaning by Rev. George Mastrantonis



Forgiveness Vespers

Before we entered the Lenten fast, we were reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. On March 17th our Forgiveness Vespers directed us further on the path of repentance and helped us to acknowledge our need for forgiveness from God and to seek forgiveness from our brothers and sisters in Christ. The service was followed by a light Lenten meal and a presentation by special guest, Archimandrite Anastasios of Cameroon.

Forgiveness Service on March 17th

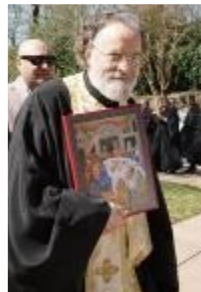


Clean Monday

Our clergy, staff and ministry leaders came together for teaching, prayer for a blessed Lenten season, and strength for the fast.

Sunday of Orthodoxy

On the first Sunday of Lent, we commemorated the restoration of the holy and venerable icons. As everyone processed around the church on this beautiful day, they joyfully displayed their special icons from home. We venerated the icons in honor of the holy men and women of God who suffered and died for the truth of the gospel so that we might come to the knowledge of Christ.



Photos above and right:

Sunday of Orthodoxy

Photos below:

Presanctified Divine Liturgy followed by Lenten Soup Supper and reading by Fr. Andreas



Pictured above: Small Compline with Salutations and Fr. Andreas answering questions about Orthodoxy from parishioners

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA



Weekly Services and Teachings

The first week of Lent had an intensified service schedule with the daily compline and the reading of the Canon of St. Andrew. The weeks that followed held Great Compline services on Mondays. Presanctified Divine Liturgy followed by teaching by Fr. Andreas along with a Lenten soup supper was held on Wednesdays.

On Thursdays we offered a time over the lunch hour for parishioners to listen to teaching by guest speakers called, "Lent, Lunch and Learn with a different speaker each week during April. Our speakers included Fr. Steve Dalber of St. Nektarios, Fr. Robert Lawrence of St. Luke, Fr. Steven Klund of St. Nicholas in Wilmington, by way of Zoom, Protopsaltis, Sam Herron and Chef, Peter Reinhart.

On Fridays we held Presanctified Divine Liturgy during the day and Small compline with Salutations to the Theotokos in the evening and vespers on Saturday evening.

Veneration of the Holy Cross

On the third Sunday of Great and Holy Lent (April 7th), the Orthodox Church commemorated the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Services included a special veneration of the Cross, which prepared the faithful for the commemoration of the Crucifixion during Holy Week. Not only does the Sunday of the Holy Cross prepare us for commemoration of the Crucifixion, but it also reminds us that the whole of Lent is a period when we are crucified with Christ.

Saturday of Lazarus Teaching Divine Liturgy, Palm Cross Making and Palm Sunday

On Lazarus Saturday, The Church bears witness to the power of Christ over death and exalts Him as King before entering the most solemn week of the year. We make Palm Crosses in anticipation of the commemoration of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem following His glorious miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. Having anticipated His arrival and having heard of the miracle, the people went out to meet the Lord and welcomed Him with displays of honor and shouts of praise. "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"





OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA

The Bridegroom Services,

Beginning on the evening of Palm Sunday and continuing through the evening of Holy Tuesday, the Church observes the Service of the Bridegroom. The name of the service is from the figure of the Bridegroom in the parable of the Ten Virgins found in Matthew 25:1-13. Christ is the divine Bridegroom of the Church. We are instructed of our need for spiritual vigilance and preparedness, watching and waiting for the Lord, who will come again to judge the living and the dead. The troparion (hymn of the service) conveys this expectation:

Behold, the Bridegroom cometh in the middle of the night, and blessed is that servant whom He shall find watching; and again unworthy is he whom He shall find heedless. Beware, therefore, O my soul, lest thou be overcome with sleep, lest thou be given up to death, and be shut out from the Kingdom. But rouse thyself and cry: Holy, Holy, Holy art Thou, O God, through the Mother of God, have mercy on us.

Holy Wednesday

On Great and Holy Wednesday, the day begins with the service of the Presanctified Liturgy. Later in the day, the Sacrament or Mystery of Holy Unction is conducted. It is offered for the healing of soul and body and for forgiveness of sins. At the conclusion of the service, the clergy anoint the body with oil, and the grace of God, which heals infirmities of soul and body, is called down upon each person. The biblical basis for the Sacrament is found in the book of James 5:14-16:

Is any among you are sick, let him call for the presbyters of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

Holy Thursday

In the morning at the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, two Lambs are consecrated. The second Lamb is for the Reserved Sacrament which is used especially to give communion to the sick during the next year. At St. Nektarios, a congregant offers flour to be placed around the oil that is blessed during the Holy Wednesday Unction Service. This flour is then used to make the prosfora to be used during the Thursday morning Liturgy.

At the evening Passions Service several events are commemorated: the washing of the disciples' feet, the institution of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, the agony in the garden of Gethsemane, the betrayal of Christ by Judas, and our Lord's crucifixion.

After the clergy process the cross of Christ, the congregation prayerfully and solemnly comes forward to light a candle at the cross and venerate the icon of the crucified Christ.



*Tuesday morning
Philoptochos egg-dyeing*



OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA



Holy Friday Afternoon

In the morning, the services of the Royal Hours are observed. The afternoon vespers are a continuation of the Royal Hours. During this service, the Body of Christ is removed from the Cross. Then, His body is wrapped with a white sheet, as did Joseph of Arimathea. This year our Joy Hope children assisted in the Taking Down From The Cross with Fr. Panayiotis, Caroline Mellekas and Maryann Zitsos.



Holy Friday Evening

The Lamentation service is the Matins for Holy Saturday morning. The Church contemplates the mystery of the Lord's descent into Hades, the place of the dead. Death, our ultimate enemy, is defeated from within. The focus is on the Tomb of Christ. It is life-giving, a source of power, victory and liberation. After the singing of the lamentations and with lighted candles, the congregation proceeds outside to process around the church. As we return, everyone has the opportunity to walk under the tomb of Christ as they re-enter the church.



Holy Saturday Morning

The Liturgy held on the morning of Holy and Great Saturday is that of Saint Basil the Great. In this morning's baptismal liturgy, the first sign of the Resurrection, we welcome new brothers and sisters into our family of faith and communion. We also bless Pascha baskets lovingly and artfully prepared by the faithful, in anticipation of the feast. Glory to God! This service is full of the coming Paschal joy. After the reading of the Epistle, the priest follows the custom of tossing of laurel, saying: "Arise, O God, and judge Thou the earth: for Thou shall take all heathen to Thine inheritance".



Resurrection Service

Before midnight, the congregation gathers and sits in a dimly lighted sanctuary. A few minutes before midnight the sanctuary goes dark. Then the Fathers come out singing "Come ye and receive light from the unwaning life, and glorify Christ, who arose from the dead".



Agape Vespers

Also called Vespers of Love, this service continues the celebration of Pascha. At this service the Gospel reading (John 20:19-25) depicts the first appearance of the risen Lord to his disciples, and is recited in as many languages as are known by those present in our parish. This symbolizes that the glorious resurrection of Christ is proclaimed to all the nations of the world.



NEWCOMER BRUNCH



Left to Right:

Fr. Andreas Houpos, Kim Braswell, Linda Borowski, Sandy Capousis



Leslie & Graham Pitt



Heba & Korolos Korolos



Megan Wrappe & Steve Kalpos



Aiden Banks

Our Newcomers enjoyed our Spring Newcomer Event with a nice brunch with two delicious chocolate raspberry cakes and not a piece was left. Members of our Welcome Ministry greeted parishioners, visitors and newcomers at the Welcome Tables under the Portico. Since it was Name Tag Sunday, we also asked everyone to wear a name tag so we can get to know each other better.

After Divine Liturgy during our Community Brunch, our Newcomers were invited onto the Porch for a casual meet and greet with Fr. Andreas. They enjoyed bacon, sausage, eggs, grits and biscuits as well as a special cake. This may have been our most attended Newcomer Brunch ever. If you are not pictured here, please let us know and we will be happy to include your photo in a future issue of the newsletter.

Thank you to Linda Borowski and our Welcome Ministry for coordinating this event. Thank you to Ayoub Ayoub and Safwat Wassef with our Hospitality Team for preparing the abundant brunch buffet. ❖



Kristin & Chad Avestas



Fr. Andreas' parents, Presbytera Meredyth, and Grace Monk



Joseph Kirchock (far right) and friends



MISSIONS & PHILANTHROPY MINISTRY

The Missions and Philanthropy Ministry held two shredding and blood drive events, one in the fall and one this spring. Thank you to all who came out to support these important events and gave the gift of life. The proceeds of the shredding event go to support the programs of the Ministry.

Pictured here are: our latest blood drive (left) and one from our fall blood drive last September (far right). ❖



GREEK LANGUAGE SCHOOL

The Feast Day of the Annunciation of the Theotokos and the commemoration of the beginning of the Greek Revolution of 1821 were celebrated by the students of our St. Nektarios Greek Language School this year on Sunday, March 24th, 2024 at our Spiritual Life Center. Under the vigilant eye of their teachers, Presbytera Lea Tsahakis, Sophia Shinas, and Anastasia Holevas, the students presented a wonderful program to us that included the chanting of the Apolytikio of the Annunciation of the Theotokos, singing patriotic songs, reciting poems, and dance! We congratulate all the students for their excellent performance! We thank both Priests of our community for honoring us with their presence namely, our Father Andreas G. Houpos, who offered the opening remarks of the program, and Fr. Panagiotis Steele. We also extend thanks to Father Paul Tsahakis, Priest of the Holy Monasteries of Panagia Proussiotissa in Troy and St. Nektarios in Aegina, who offered closing remarks and a prayer at the end of the program. A great big thank you to all the parents who assisted us before and during our 25th of March celebratory program! ❖



Feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos



On the auspicious feast of the Annunciation, we offered the Divine Liturgy, as well as artoclasia and blessing kollyva, along with a prayer to mark the anniversary of independence for the Greek nation. We also welcomed Presbytera Eirini and children, who have now joined Fr. Panayiotis here at their new home in Charlotte. May God grant them a fruitful ministry! Moreover we mark that it is the name day of our own Parish Administrator, Evelyn (Evangelia) Klund. God grant all who celebrate today many years, unto salvation! ❖



ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ARE touches many aspects of our parish life, including staffing, youth and young adult ministry, family ministry, outreach, multimedia, introductory and continuing catechism, liturgics, and seasonal events. On May 22nd our Adult Religious Education (ARE) team held the first session for planning the 2024-25 ecclesiastical year. We looked at what worked and what didn't for 2023-24, considered new possibilities, and revisited past endeavors.

The team will reconvene in late summer to produce the final catalog and schedule of offerings, in time for the new ecclesiastical year. Pictured below are photos from some of the 2023-24 events. ❖



Lent, Lunch and Learn

The faithful were offered an opportunity during Lent to focus on personal spiritual growth and internal reflection. Participants took time from their busy daily lives to come together in person and virtually over four Thursdays in April.

There was fellowship time, a Lenten lunch provided by our faithful and presentations by Fr. Steve Dalber, Fr. Robert Lawrence, Fr. Steven Klund by way of Zoom, Chef, Peter Reinhart and Protopsalte, Sam Herron.



We thank our presenters for their time and teachings. We thank Gerry Clonaris, Director of Adult Religious Education, for organizing these sessions. We thank Nina Dzyak and Evelyn Klund for the AV support to be able to offer the sessions to our virtual participants. We give a special thank you to all our faithful who provided the delicious food each week and also to sing Happy Birthday to Kim Sheree' Clewell. These sessions sent us into Holy Week armed with prayer and true love for our Lord and for one another! ❖



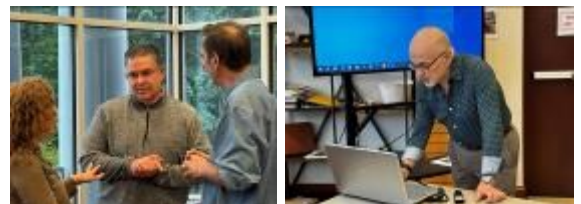
The Orthodox Film Club

The Orthodox Film Club gathers periodically throughout the year and is a ministry for film lovers of all ages. The film club views and discusses videos and movies from an Orthodox perspective. Movie snacks are provided.

We enjoyed several films this spring: St. Paisios: From Farasa to Heaven, Nicholas and Alexandra and Smyrna, My Beloved. At the March gathering we took time to sing Happy Birthday to Sofia Nicolopoulos. ❖



History of the Church



After Pascha, Gerry presented the History of our Orthodox Church from Constantine the Great to the Fall of the Byzantine Empire. They discuss the amazing reign of St. Constantine and his mother St. Helen who were responsible for the preservation and growth of our Orthodox Church., the influence of the Ecumenical Councils, the establishment Patriarchates, the schisms, the development and the fall of the Great empire and so much more of the history of our Orthodox Faith and Church. This is a program for all... converts, students of our Orthodox Faith, and anyone who wants to know more of our Orthodox Faith and church. ❖



VISIT FROM FR. NEOPHYTOS OF ELDORET IN NORTHERN KENYA



His Grace Bishop Neophytos of Eldoret in Northern Kenya, visited the United States to raise awareness and material support for the missionary work in his diocese, which includes building the diocesan center, funding clergy, digging wells for water-deprived regions, establishing and improving children's homes, schools, and clinics, and other such vital work in addition to

Orthodox liturgical life, outreach, and catechism.

His Grace served with us for several days. He began his visit Thursday, April 11th evening with our Young Adult

Ministry. The evening was centered on our living encounter with Holy Icons and their origins in the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. Holy images are an integral part of our received tradition of faith, something tangibly demonstrated on Sunday of Orthodoxy. Our participation in this tradition, and partaking of the Church's holy imagery—the antidote to pop culture toxins—opens us to God's grace and points us to eternal life.

We were blessed by His Grace in the following days, as he was present for and presides over divine services, and shares with us the work and needs of his ministry in Kenya. ❖



BEYOND ST. NEKTARIOS

Frs. Andreas and Panayiotis joined Fr. Jonathan, Fr. Jerry, Fr. Sarantis Loulakis, Vicar of the Northeast Conference, as well as clergy and laity from around the state at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church of Winston-Salem on March 25th to celebrate Great Vespers for their feastday! Many thanks to Fr. George Kouzelis, Proistamenos at Annunciation, for the gracious hospitality offered by the parish.

Photo courtesy of John Shelton, Holy Trinity ❖





ST. NEKTARIOS ENDOWMENT

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.

Hebrews 6:19

On May 19,, our Parish celebrated **Endowment Sunday**—it was a day to award scholarships, to recognize the Endowment’s achievements, and to share plans for expanding its scope in support of all ministries of the Church in the present and for the future. The Endowment currently consists of two funds.

Cockinos Youth Fund

The Endowment’s first fund was seeded by a generous gift from the Frank and Dee Cockinos Family, who dedicated the income generated to benefit youth 25 and younger. Since inception, the Endowment has awarded \$125,000 in grants and scholarships to over 65 individuals or organizations in four spheres:

Parish: Individual scholarships, St. Photios Pilgrimage, St. Stephen’s Summer Camp, Winter Youth Rally, Orthodox Home Schools initiatives, Greek Language School, Oratorical Festival, Boy Scout Camp, St. Phoebe Ministry

Local: Augustine Literacy Project, Read Charlotte, A Child’s Place National

National: Allegro Foundation, Hellenic College/ Holy Cross, St. Basil Academy

International: Child of God Kenya, Metrolina Phoenician Club for Palestine Children Relief Fund, Project Mexico, International Orthodox

Christian Charities Youth Fund

General Fund

The Endowment currently established a second fund that reaches beyond our youth and addresses the growing needs of our parish and its ministries. The income generated by this fund will initially focus on three areas:

Campus Improvement

repairs, maintenance, upgrades

Church Enhancement

iconography, furniture and fixtures

Worship Enrichment

material support, liturgical implements, continuing education

It has been seeded by generous donors who have chosen to make their gifts in honor of their loved ones. They join Frank and Dee Cockinos as members of the **Endowment Legacy Circle** and will be remembered in perpetuity as anchors of our St. Nektarios parish.

Leave A Lasting Legacy

With these two funds the Endowment’s goal is to help secure our parish’s future and to offer parishioners an opportunity to leave a lasting

legacy. The purpose is to invest the gifts we receive for future growth and *spend only the income generated from these gifts*. The Endowment charter, approved in 2017, conforms with industry standards for charitable endowments and complies with all applicable regulations. It is managed by First Citizens Wealth Management and is a 501 (c)3 approved organization.

For a closer look and more information, please reach out to a committee member: Emile Khuri, Sam Kleto, Julie Milich, Maria Mortis, Peter B. Pappas, Theodora Sexstone, and Dimitri Triantafyllides. **The Endowment accepts Bequests, Cash, Securities, Life Insurance, Real Estate, Qualified Retirement Plans, and Required Minimum Distributions.**

By Theodora Sexstone, Endowment Chair

For Today . . .

Stewardship

For Tomorrow . . .

Building For Generations

For The Future . . .

The St. Nektarios Endowment

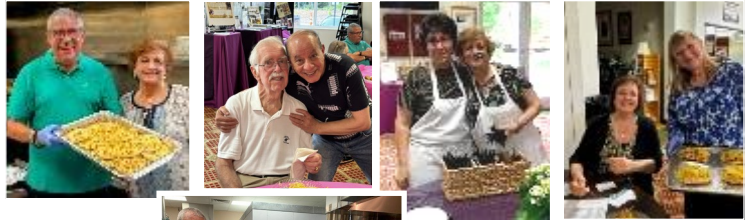


2024 Scholarship Presentation: (L to R) Scholars Hailey Schoff, Dylan Schoff, Melina Davis, with Scholars of Distinction Joanne Azar, Luka Stojkovich, Besse Karavokiros, Fr. Andreas, Fr. Panayiotis, Sam Kleto (back), Scholar Summer Clewell, Emile Khuri (back), Theodora Sexstone, Julie Milich and Maria Mortis. Not pictured, Scholar Andrew Journey.

YOUNG AT HEART



Our Young at Heart fellowship has been busy this spring sharing the love of God with each other and the world. In March, we hosted Archimandrite Anastasios Yaoundé of Cameroon. He spoke about the rise of Orthodoxy in Africa. He stressed that bringing Christ to the people includes meeting their most basic need of digging wells for water. YAH emptied the bread baskets on their tables and filled them with donations for his cause.



Our group celebrates milestones in each others lives. Congratulations went out to Mike and Ritsa on their 60th wedding Anniversary. In addition, we honored our birthday folks each month with cake and singing.



In April, the YAH Board was pleased to host the April 11th, Lent, Lunch and Learn meal featuring Shrimp Creole. The participants were captivated via a Zoom presentation by Fr. Steven Klund that deepened our understanding of the Great Fast and our journey through Lent. Thank you Gerry Clonaris for offering us this opportunity.



In May, we celebrated Mother's Day with each other. All enjoyed the fellowship and music provided by DJ Ayoub. Congratulations to Tess Sagos who was crowned Mother of the Year! ❖



In Service to the Church



Our Sexton, Jim Keown, arranged for members of our Young At Heart group to gather and solemnly clean the sacred vessels of our temple. Such loving work was offered to the glory of God, and invites gratitude from our clergy and parishioners. Marko Milich, our facilities manager, and Caleb Clewell also repaired some lighting. We ourselves are sacred vessels in need of cleaning and polishing, to befit the sacred contents we are to receive: the Holy Spirit, and the Body and Blood of Christ!



Fr. Andreas Houpos



YOUTH MINISTRIES



St. Phoebe Ministry during Holy Week

JOY/HOPE children decorating their own Paschal vigil candles on Great Friday and participating in the unnailling Vespers and Lamentations service



YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY



Young Adult Ministry discovering opportunities with the future of the 5K from the committee

Making a meal for the Women's Shelter and Setting up for Agape Picnic



Holy Week Preparing, offering a readers' Paraklesis to the Mother of God to begin an evening in Matthews and plan for summer events

Young Adult Ministry welcoming Fr. Panagiotis Steele's first visit to our parish with pizza and fellowship



Left: 2 campus clean-up sessions to beautify the grounds before Pascha, Above: Agape Picnic and Bonfire Night





Financial Matters

WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT

In the Gospel of Matthew, we read the Parable of the Talents, in which a man leaving on a long journey called three of his servants and entrusted to each a certain sum of money measured in talents. To one he gave five, to another he gave two and to the third, he gave one talent. Upon his return, the man called his servants to give account for the money with which he had entrusted them. The first two, by wise use of the money had doubled the amount they had received. To these he praised with the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord."

The third servant, who had received one talent, out of fear, had buried the talent in the ground. Upon the man's return, this servant returned to him only the one talent. In anger, the man called him a "wicked and lazy servant," and taking away the one talent, he gave it to the servant who had ten.

Jesus gave us this parable for us to consider the gifts that God has given us. Although we all receive different gifts, there is no difference in God's reward for what we accomplish with them. If you want to be a faithful servant, then take whatever you have and offer it faithfully to the Lord. It is not about how much ability you have, it is what you do with it.

The gifts we receive are to be multiplied. They are not to be buried in the ground. About this, Saint Gregory the Great wrote that hiding our talent in the earth, is to use our gifts only for earthly things.

At the time of Jesus, a talent referred to a substantial amount of money. The message to us today is that God gives each of us something of considerable value and expects good stewardship and a return on what He has given. Although Jesus speaks to us about money in the Parable of the Talents, He is really talking about something far more important.

Whatever blessings we receive, we are to multiply them. We were given our church – our local parish – built by our ancestors and all who have gone before us. We are to grow it – to multiply it – by adding to the number of faithful and growing her ministries. In the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy (16:17), we read, "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee."

... Our gift to God and His Church is a sacred act, a form of worship, and a response to all his blessings in our life – our bodies, our family, the environment, our time, our faith, our neighbor,

***Stewardship is our spirituality in action, our faith in action,
our theology in action.***

Stewardship is personal – between Jesus and us – an expression of love and commitment. A response to all that he has given us.

Some day we will stand before God and show Him what we did with all that He entrusted to us. If we have been faithful stewards of our gifts, He will say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord."

Fr. Jim Kordaris, GOARCH

**OUR 2024 STEWARDSHIP GOAL
TO FUEL OUR MINISTRIES IS
\$1,050,000**

**AS OF JUNE 8, WE HAVE RECEIVED
\$885,220 IN PLEDGES
AND \$419,541 IN OFFERINGS**



Summer is here - that means fun in the sun with family and friends; long lazy days; no school—so much to be grateful for!

By all means enjoy the summer months but please remember that the church is not on vacation. We have a vibrant worship schedule, youth camps, fellowship gatherings, Sunday youth Bible story and activity times and more. Clergy, office staff and volunteers are busy preparing for the coming year with something for everyone.

Did you know that we also experience a dip in our cash flow during June, July and August.

Ways you can keep the church cash flow steady:

- ◆ Make your stewardship pledge if you have not already done so;
- ◆ Make regular weekly or monthly offerings;
- ◆ Make your offerings before going on vacation through your bill pay service, online giving or, of course, by mail.

So You Know . . . January 1 through May 31, 2024 Operating Income and Expense Report

Stewardship Received	\$ 406,324
Other Income Received	<u>102,093</u>
Total Income	\$ 508,417
Total Expenses (paid and accrued)	<u>\$ 539,475</u>
Net Income	\$ -31,058

(Continued from page 1)

of squirming and balking when my teachings put you at odds with the world? Do you know better than I? You are paralyzed by your pride. Remember, the servant is not greater than his master; if the world hates you, remember that it hated me first.

Do you want to be healed of your fear of death, which drives you to do all of these things? You are paralyzed for fear of death. You of little faith! Did you forget that I have risen from the dead, and trampled Death by my death, giving life to those in the tombs?

Are you paralyzed? Have you been here forever with nothing to show for it? Have you failed time and time again to reach the troubled waters of the pool? Have you not bothered at times because you convinced yourself there was no point? Are you embarrassed because you weren't smart enough to move closer for the next opportunity?

Never mind any of that. I am here now. **Here. Now.** Here I stand, and I see you. I see where you are, how you got here, and I see the beautiful places you could go.

Do you want to rise? Do you want to pick up your bed? Do you want to walk?

DO YOU WANT TO BE HEALED?"

Brothers and sisters, the very existence of Christ's Church is a standing invitation for you to be healed. Whatever has you pinned down, whatever has you stuck, whatever has you making excuses, whatever has you making a fool of yourself, whatever is hurting you or whatever you are doing to hurt others, whatever has you questioning Christ and his Church—bring those things to Christ. Come for Holy Confession and tell him your version of "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool." And hear Christ tell you to rise and walk with him.

**Christ stands here asking you
if you want to be healed.
Don't miss the opportunity to respond.**

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.

DIRECTORY

Church Office: 704-708-4669

Email: office@stnektarios.org

Website: www.stnektarios.org

5108 Kuykendall Rd. Charlotte, NC 28270

Clergy

Father Andreas Houpos, Proïstamenos

Mobile: 980-333-9563

Email: fr.andreas@stnektarios.org

Fr. Panayiotis Steele

Mobile: 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, Samara Clewell,
Nina Dzyak, and Sofia Nicolopoulos

Director of Youth and Young Adults -

Caroline Mellekas

Facility Manager - Marko Milich

Sexton - Jim Keown

Protopsaltis - Sam Herron

2024 Parish Council

President: Despina Gallis

Vice President: George Harris

Treasurer: Chris Mortis

Assist. Treasurer: Elie Azar

Secretary: Gene Borowski

Assist. Secretary: Manal Choueiri

Members: George Bacogeorge,

Dave Hanegraaff, Joanne Kiser, Patrick Taylor

Philoptochos Board

President: Madalina Lowen

1st Vice President: Kathrine Cestrone

2nd Vice President: Deidre Lepkowski

Recording Secretary: Missy Davis

Corr. Secretary: Christine Malatras

Treasurer: Evelyn Klund

Ass't. Treasurer: Sharon Koutroumpis

Members: Helen Bakos, Michaelina Franks

Phyllis Giannakopoulos, Renee Keretses,

Ana Levantis, and Stephanie Scolinos

(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

Prospora

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

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 11, 2024

Published: July 18, 2024