



Issue 3
June & July 2024

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THE NEWS FROM ST. NEKTARIOS

LOVE FOR GOD

Fr. Andreas G. Houpos

One day I was in an airport, at the luggage carousel waiting for my bags to come out.

While waiting, I noticed a young woman, maybe in her early twenties. It was obvious that she was waiting for someone who meant a lot to her. She was shifting on her tip-toes, with her head stretched up as far as it would go, looking for this person. Her head dodged left and right as the crowd streamed by in front of her, to catch the first possible glimpse.

And then...the moment!

Her eyes widened, and her mouth instantly formed a broad and open smile, seeming to silently shout 'My love!'. As if with one motion, she briefly clapped her hands and bounced in excitement, and without hesitation started toward this person. Her strides were determined, and oblivious to the crowd around her as she made her way through.

As I lost sight of her, then glanced again to the carousel, which was now moving, the thought occurred to me:

"I really hope that is what Christ's second coming will be like for us."

What a beautiful and terrible thought! We all know that our initial reaction to a circumstance, especially if it is a surprise, gives away our true thoughts or feelings, the inner state of the soul. When Christ arrives, what will our reaction be? Beaming, uncontainable joy, like that of the young woman in the airport? Or will there be dread and horror in that moment, when we realize all those things we decided to not take seriously were true after all, or we realize it's too late to act on those matters of faith we thought we could worry about later?

When Christ arrives, what will our reaction be?

As we hear from Christ's own words in the gospel account of the Evangelist Matthew: "Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (24:44).

It only seems right that we Christians would be the kind of people who live life in such a way that we are in constant anticipation of the

arrival of our Love—that is, Christ—so that on that dreadful day of Judgment we will only be ecstatic to see him. Jesus' words here should not induce panic or move us to live life in fear. On the contrary, they are an invitation to live life to its fullest, in love and in the path of God's will, which ultimately leads to joy and eternal life.

The truth about a life led in this type of anticipation for Christ—like that of young lady in the airport waiting for her special someone—is that it makes Christ present in our lives all the time. It also makes him present in the lives of others, through our witness. A life lived in the love of Christ makes him present to us constantly; love in the Spirit does not wane on account of physical distance and separation. Rather, when Jesus comes on that fateful day, the ineffable joy that we will have will be for the longed-for beginning of our eternal life with God, finally putting off the weaknesses and sorrows of earthly life, participating in God's eternity by his grace.

May the love of Christ pierce our hearts, and may our spirits ever be in eager anticipation of his arrival. ❖

In the Spotlight

Happy Birthday to
Fr. Andreas!

May the Lord bless you
with many years!



Congratulations to
Sam Herron



We congratulate our Protopsaltis, Samuel Herron, for the completion and publication of his musical settings for the Divine Liturgy. This is a highly significant volume, as it is among the first of its kind presenting contemporary English liturgical translations through-composed with fidelity to the received tradition of Byzantine notation and theory. In a very real way, our parish has not only been an integral part of the existence of this work, but also in continuing the momentous advancement of the spread and maturation of Orthodox liturgical practice in the English-speaking world. ❖

Released on July 19 Order now at
cappellaromana.org/publishing

FOCUS ON OUR COMMUNITY

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 Mariham Helen
Tom Debbie Roula Hanna Chris Greg Grant Max George

FOR THOSE IN SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY

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

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES

CHRISMATIONS, BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS

To Samara Clewell and Chris Shadrick on their marriage and
to their sponsors, Karji & Jeffrey Dunkle

To Bella and Subin Shaji on their marriage

To Angie & Michael Thomopoulos on the baptism of Evie's sister, Mila Gisele and
to her godmother, Gabriella Demos

To Vianca and Pavlo Triantafyllides for the baptism of their son, Pavlo and
to his godmother, Justine Dellinger

To Vivian & Charles Cutajar on the baptism of their son, Vincenzo Christos "Vikentios" and to his
godfather, Christos G. Fotinos

To Erin Bowman on her baptism and to her sponsor, Jenny Neale

To Christina & Stephan Buburuz on the baptism of their twins, Emma & Gabriel and their godparents,
Alina and Oleg Havrun and Natalia Nicolaev and Maxim Motinga

To Justin and Eleni Gonnelli on the baptism of JD and William's brother, Travis Costa

BIRTHS & 40TH DAY BLESSINGS

To Molly Jackson and Justin Caruthers on the birth of their daughter, Savannah

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 and 40th day blessing of Basil and Dela's brother, Symeon

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

To the family of Philip Abernathy on his repose

To the Xanthos, Hondros, and Kleto families on the repose of Theodora Xanthos, mother of Jimmy
Xanthos and family and sister of Spiro Hondros and Niki Kleto

To the family of Papanastasiou family on the repose of
Penny's husband and Alexia's father, Constantinos (Dino)

To the Mantekas, Karanikas, and Tassios families on the repose of their brother, Dino Mantekas

To the Hillmann family on the repose of Kent's mother, Patricia

IN APPRECIATION

The family of Philip Abernathy would like to thank the community for your outpouring of kindness.
We feel the love so strongly and it means the so much to us.

Spero, Georgia and Christina Nixon extend their thanks to all the members of St. Nektarios and all
donors to the Medical Assistance Fund for your generosity by helping pay their hotel bills while they
spent most of 2024 in Cleveland for Christina's treatments. They also extend their gratitude for all the
love, support and prayers for Christina and their family.

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.

**Please notify the office to schedule Clergy visits, request prayers,
and include announcements in our Focus on our Community**

ST. SOPHIA SCHOOL



The St. Sophia School

Following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, June 9, we held a special Parish Assembly. Parishioners heard the proposal to host The St. Sophia School, Charlotte's first private, K-5 Greek Orthodox Parochial school, for its inaugural 2024-25 year. In a packed hall, and after an extensive question-and-answer session, the motion passed with support from the overwhelming majority of those in attendance.

May the year be blessed and fruitful for the school as it takes its first steps in shaping hearts and minds, while also continuing its search for a more permanent home, and may the Lord enlighten and equip us to be good hosts. ❖



MISSION

The mission of The St. Sophia School is to educate the whole child - academically, culturally, and spiritually - in a warm, structured, community-based environment.

VISION

The St. Sophia School's graduates are thoughtful, well-rounded, capable students who value religious and cultural heritage and give back to their communities.



We believe that academic achievement and personal fulfillment are the natural outcomes of an education that seeks to foster a love of learning.

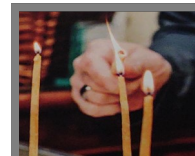
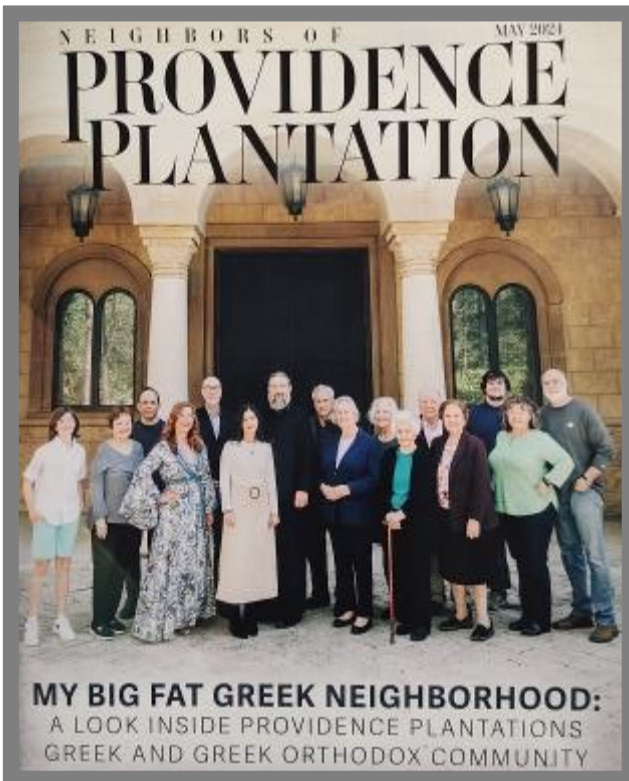
Blend of Traditional, Classical, and Montessori Education Models

ST. NEKTARIOS PARISHIONERS FEATURED IN PROVIDENCE MAGAZINE

Recently, members of our community were interviewed and photographed, as able, to be featured in our parish neighborhood's periodical, "Neighbors of Providence Plantation". While the piece started with the aim to highlight the neighborhood's Greek residents, it became evident to author Marlo Taylor that the

Orthodox faith was not only central to that identity, but also that it reaches all people. We thank her and her team for their thoughtful and respectful article—and we look forward to welcoming them and our neighbors to "come and see" more. May it be blessed. You may view the magazine in our church office or at

www.instagram.com/neighborsprovidenceplantation. ❖



THE BEAUTY OF OUR HOUSE



Above left: Some dedicated parishioners have been learning how to do light restoration work and mounting for some antique Russian *epitaphia* that were donated to our parish by a collector. May God guide and bless their hands!

Above right: Fr. Andreas and our sexton, Jim Keown cleaning the petals from the sanctuary

COME AND SEE — BUILDING FOR GENERATIONS

Things were abuzz as our remodeling began in mid May in our Spiritual Life Center! Our first phase of office and classroom space renovations is complete. We configured interior rooms in the lower level Spiritual Life Center to accommodate offices and to completely free up much-needed classroom space.

On July 14, the Building For Generation committee invited all our parishioners to “Come and See” the completed work. Summer Coolers were served to thank everyone for visiting the lower level . Parishioners were able to see the temporary boardroom, new offices for Marko, Caroline and Sam, and the long awaited large multipurpose/classroom. Prior to this renovation, Caroline, Sam and Fr. Steve shared space with classrooms. Now we have 6 classrooms to be used by Catechism, Homeschool, Greek Language School and St. Sophia School. Dennis and Kabee Kokenes, Theodora Sexstone, Sam Boulmetis and Costa Vrettos were on hand to answer questions about this phase.

While this is 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. ❖



Temporary Boardroom and Library and Fr. Steve's office



Multi-purpose and Classroom



Youth Director
Caroline Mellekas



Facility Manager
Marko Millich



Music Director
Sam Herron

FINANCIAL MATTERS – Stewardship & Budget

TO FUND MINISTRY, OUR
2024 STEWARDSHIP GOAL IS

\$1,050,000

531 STEWARDS HAVE PLEDGED

\$895,071

TO DATE, OFFERINGS EQUAL

\$588,700



FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions



What does my offering cover?

It covers our operating costs, such as:

- Worship Services
- Ministry Support
- Clergy & Staff
- Communications
- Facility Maintenance
- Archdiocese Commitment

Stewardship offerings **do not** go towards special fundraising and projects (iconography, building fund, capital campaign, charity, etc.).

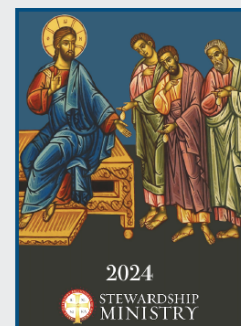
What amount should I pledge?

An amount prayerfully discerned. Consider:

- All we have is from God. What shall we give back to him?
- What can we worthily present to our King and Lord?
- Scripture gives the example of a *tithe*, ten percent of income.
- What demonstrates our care for His Church and People?
- Pledge from a place of gratitude, aiming for generosity.

How do I join to do my part?

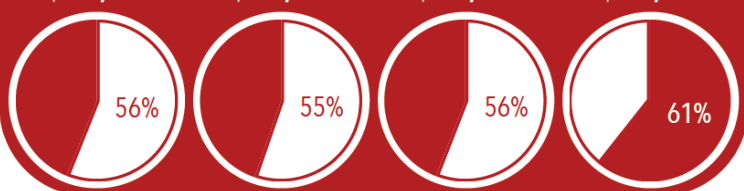
- Visit stnektarios.org and select the Stewardship Ministry icon (pictured at right)
- **OR** scan the QR code in the upper right corner of this column
- **OR** pick up a stewardship form at church



INCOME	ACTUAL	BUDGET	%
Stewardship	\$588,702	\$1,050,000	56%
Other	128,280	232,000	55%
Total	716,982	1,282,000	56%
Expenses	\$777,707	\$1,282,000	61%
Net Income	-\$60,725		

- As of July 1, 56% of year
- Income is at 56%, short \$26k
- Paid & accrued expenses at 61%, over by \$34k

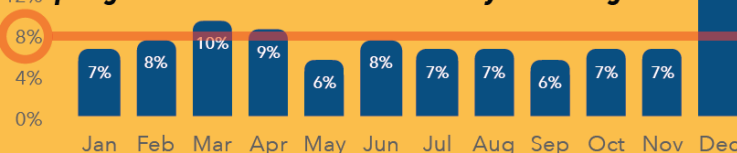
STEWARDSHIP INCOME	OTHER INCOME	TOTAL INCOME	TOTAL EXPENSES
\$588,702	\$128,280	\$716,982	\$777,707



CONSIDER: 531 pledges working towards **\$1,050,000** would average **\$165/month**. The current average pledge is only **\$140/month**. *JD Power* reports the average mobile phone bill in the USA is **\$144/month**...



To keep cashflow steady, **we need to receive 8% of pledges each month**. This is a cashflow trend chart using 5 years of data. **Your pledge should be at least 2/3 fulfilled by end of August.**



DIVINE SERVICES

FEAST OF THE ASCENSION

*We are one in Christ,
one in the Eucharist.*

On the high and holy day of our Lord's Ascension, the Mystical Supper was celebrated by our community at home in Charlotte and on the road with our youth pilgrimage in St. Augustine.

For is this not part of the awe in Christ's Ascension: that his flesh left us to ascend to the heavens, and yet his Body and Blood are left with us in a mystery on earth? Thus no matter where he is, or we are, we abide in him and he in us.

Glory to God for the mystery of this unity, Lord, grant us to know you in this life so that we may continue with you in the world to come! ❖



GARDEN OF THE LIFE-GIVING SPRING

10th Anniversary Blessing



Indeed, we are quite literally the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ by adoption in Holy Baptism. We have God the Father as our own Father, and the Mother of Jesus is also our Mother. On "Mother's Day" 2024, we were blessed with the opportunity to venerate our common Mother, the Theotokos, who is the life-giving spring. Our beautiful Garden in her honor was renewed and rededicated on the occasion of its tenth anniversary. Thanks to God's provision and the generosity of many, it has become a source of healing for many people. Our faithful, and our neighbors alike, regularly stop to hear its living, soothing waters, and pray in the shadow of Panagia's embrace ❖



YOUNG AT HEART



The 2023-24 Young at Heart Ministry activities ended with our June 13th annual Father's Day celebration. We welcomed Fr. Panayiotis for a special meet and greet segment. It was our first time to get to know him since he joined St. Nektarios in March.

As is customary in the monthly gatherings, we honored our members who had June and July birthdays. Andrew Boukidis was recognized as Father of the Year. And of

course, thank you to our hosts for a delicious BBQ dinner.

The board is planning for the 2024-25 year with our first meeting to be held on September 12. Membership renewal forms will be mailed in mid August with our schedule of dinner/lunch gatherings, activities and speakers.

Our mission is to offer a social and supportive network, fostering relationships

among our senior members 55 and older. Board positions are open for all who are interested to help lead the way.

Please contact Steve Panteliodis (at ddstevep@yahoo.com or 704-400-8041) or Presb. Sandy Stanar (At 443-745-0986 or ssstanar3@gmail.com) for more information, suggestions on activities and ideas for the next program year. ❖



Top photo: Our Young at Heart June gathering ~ **Above left:** Our June hosts ~ **Above middle:** Our May, June & July Birthdays
Next right: Father of the Year, Andrew Boukidis ~ **Far right:** Evelyn Klund running our Audio Visual equipment

MUSIC MINISTRY

TRISAGION SCHOOL OF BYZANTINE CHANT WORKSHOP

Visitors from around the country joined us for the Byzantine Chant Workshop. The workshop was offered by the Trisagion School, hosted by our parish. Instructors Richard Barrett, Sam Herron and participants are pictured here working through music for the Divine Liturgy.

Capella Romana was onsite shooting an interview with Sam Herron, The Divine Liturgy English translation composer/compiler. Many thanks to Chris Mason and his able assistant and daughter, Audrey! The full segment is coming soon! ❖



GREEK LANGUAGE SCHOOL END OF YEAR PROGRAM



ώστε τα παιδιά να διδαχθούν την Ορθόδοξη πίστη, την ελληνική γλώσσα και κουλτούρα μέσα σε ένα θετικό μαθησιακό περιβάλλον. Θερμές ευχαριστίες στον ιατρό κ. Θεόδωρο Σταματάκο καθώς και στη σύζυγο του κα. Χαρούλα Σταματάκου για τη γενναιοδωρη χρηματική δωρεά που μας πρόσφεραν στην αρχή της χρονιάς θέλοντας έτσι να στηρίξουν το έργο μας και να προωθήσουν τη διδασκαλία της ελληνικής γλώσσας στην κοινότητα μας! Είμαστε ευγνώμονες και για την οικονομική στήριξη μαθητών μας που επιτεύχθηκε μέσα από τη χορηγία υποτροφιών της οικ. Κόκκινου! Σας ευχόμαστε ένα καλό καλοκαίρι γεμάτο γέλιο, χαρά και όμορφες στιγμές!



Presbytera Lea Tshakis, Vivian Karampourniotis, and Anastasia Holevas who made every effort to teach our Orthodox faith, the Hellenic language and culture in a positive learning environment. We are grateful to Dr. Ted and Mrs. Harriet Stamatakos who supported our work and promoted the teaching of the Greek language in our community through a generous monetary donation they offered to us at the beginning of the year! We thank wholeheartedly the Cockkinos Family Scholarship Committee for supporting several of our learners financially! We wish everyone a wonderful and relaxing summer filled with laughter and joyful moments! ❖



Με χαρά κι ενθουσιασμό οι μαθητές και οι μαθήτριες του σχολείου μας υποδέχτηκαν το καλοκαίρι ψάλλοντας το Απολυτίκιο της Αναστάσεως, χορεύοντας και τραγουδώντας στην τελική γιορτή που πραγματοποιήθηκε στο Πνευματικό Κέντρο της κοινότητας μας την Παρασκευή, 31 Μαΐου στις 5:00 μ.μ. παρουσία του Προϊσταμένου μας, Πρωτοπρεσβύτερου Ανδρέα Γ. Χούπου, του Πατρός Παύλου Τσαχάκη, της υπεύθυνης νεολαίας, δις. Καρολάν Μελίκα, των δασκάλων, πλήθους γονέων κι ενοριτών. Συγχαίρουμε τα παιδιά για την πρόοδο που σημείωσαν φέτος! Ευχαριστούμε τον πατέρα Ανδρέα, τον Πατέρα Παύλο, την Καρολάν, τα μέλη του προσωπικού του κοινοτικού μας γραφείου, τους γονείς, και τις δασκάλες, την πρεσβυτέρα Λία Τσαχάκη, την κα. Παρασκευή Πιτσικούλη-Καραμπουρνιώτη, την κα. Σοφία Σχοινά, και την κα. Αναστασία Χολέβα που κατέβαλαν κάθε προσπάθεια



It is with great zeal and enthusiasm that our students welcomed the carefree days of summer by chanting the Apolytikio of the Resurrection, dancing, and singing at the final celebratory program that was held at the Spiritual Life Center of our community on Friday, May 31st at 5:00 pm in the presence of our Proïstamenos, Protoperesbyter Andreas G. Houpos, Fr. Paul Tshakis, our youth director, Ms. Caroline Mellekas, the teachers, many parents, and parishioners. We congratulate the children for all their progress this year! We thank Fr. Andreas, Fr. Paul, the office staff, Kim Braswell, Evelyn Klund, Caroline, the parents and the teachers, namely Sophia Shinas,



YOUTH MINISTRIES—VACATION CHURCH CAMP

Sixty-three of our youngest parishioners came to be immersed in faith at Vacation Church Camp (VCC). Fittingly, our theme during the hot but grace-filled week of Pentecost was water. May these young hearts find refreshment and be filled to overflowing with the promise of Christ.



foremost, our young parishioners came together in worship, living out lessons learned this week in the Divine Liturgy. Some of our campers even joined the choir to chant the services. After, campers and their families, volunteers, staff, and clergy enjoyed fellowship amongst water



Special thanks to our team of volunteers dedicating the week in service to our youth: mothers, GOYAns, and Young Adults. Our Campers began the day with 3rd hour prayers and a good word from Fr. Panayiotis Steele. Afterward, they participated in a series of activities including kickball, arts & craft, chant and catechism.

Our focus turned toward one of the ways we can tap into the "living water" and be spiritually "hydrated": by calling on the name of Jesus. The Church calls this the "Jesus Prayer"—"Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me"—and gives us a tool called the prayer rope. When we turn it between our fingers while saying the Prayer, it's like turning on a faucet of this living water, and it brings us spiritual refreshment. We are grateful to Fr. Andreas for sharing this image after morning prayers, gifting to our campers their very own prayer rope.

We concluded VCC by entering into the sacramental life of the Church—something the Jesus Prayer cannot stand without. We officially concluded with a splash! First and



activities and a meal on the plaza. We also dedicated a new icon to our campus, that of St. John the Baptist, whose nativity was on the first day of camp, and whose life and ministry continually reminded us of camp theme: "LIVING WATER". Fittingly, our campers left soaked in body and in spirit! Glory to God. ❖



YOUTH MINISTRIES ~ ST. PHOTIOS SHRINE PILGRIMAGE

Day 1



After a late morning departure from St. Nektarios on Wednesday, June 12th, a group of 9th and 10th graders from our parish, led by Gerry Clonaris along with chaperones and Father Andreas, began a 4 day pilgrimage to the Saint Photios National Shrine in Saint Augustine, Florida. With multiple pitstops and a seafood dinner in



southern Georgia, the group finally made it to the hotel after an entire day's worth of traveling. The 7:30 p.m. arrival time meant that the group had the evening to themselves. After settling into the rooms, many went and enjoyed the pool that the hotel had to offer before returning to the rooms for the night. This was a great opportunity to get to know our fellow students a little better. It was a positive way to end the night before visiting historic Saint Augustine and the St. Photios shrine in the old town which was waiting for us the next day.

Demetri Danieleley

Day 2



When we woke on Day 2 of our pilgrimage, we dressed in clothes for the church service at the St. Photios shrine. We had a great service and learned a lot about the history of the church and the town of St. Augustine.



Afterward, we went back to the hotel to change and get ready for our day out in the town. The mornings were always dedicated to the church and learning more about our faith. Polly gave us a historical tour of St. Photios Shrine while Fr. Andreas spoke to us about the relics that were there at the shrine and Mr. Gerry spoke to all of us regarding implementing those spiritual qualities we learned in our Sunday school classes as he said to use those things everyday, not just on Sundays. We then broke into groups and walked around the old town of St. Augustine. It was so cool to see



the streets were named after our saints. The

shrine and all the stores and historical points were located on St. George street. We also visited the Catholic Church and learned a little about the Catholic faith history and it was interesting to see the difference between the



Catholic faith and our Greek Orthodox Faith. The church felt really big and not as personal as St. Nektarios. Afterward, we visited more shops then and sat down for lunch at a

local sandwich shop. We felt so grateful that the lunch

was courtesy of St Nektarios, the fund raisers we had and all of the people who made donations for our Pilgrimage. I

just want to personally thank everyone who made this trip possible. After lunch, we went to visit the fort and we took a lot of pictures. We were getting tired so we called the best driver over, to come pick us up and drop us off at the hotel. Our group went back a little bit early to get ready for the pool and pizza party that was led by Miss Caroline. It was really fun and I enjoyed the Bible verse activity we participated in as a group to end each evening. To top off the day, Mr. Gerry took us for ice cream to top the day off and he treated us to it, which was again so special and appreciated! We have the best youth advisors, teachers and volunteers at St. Nektarios and I speak for my friends and classmates when I say, we love them and are truly grateful for all the opportunities they provide us and the care they give us. Thank you to everyone who made this amazing trip possible!

William (Vasili) Kontakis

(Continued on page 11)

YOUTH MINISTRIES ~ ST. PHOTIOS SHRINE PILGRIMAGE

Day 3

Each day of the St. Photios pilgrimage trip has been so memorable and inspiring to me. I have learned so much from visiting the Shrine, studying Scripture, and enjoying time with my peers at the beautiful beach here in Florida.



We had the opportunity to start day 3 by touring the OCMC headquarters in St. Augustine. Daniel, the media director, led our group through a tour of all the departments and offices that make organizing Orthodox missions possible. We discussed the finance, social media, marketing, and culture and language education that support the ministry of the many missionaries. They currently provide both physical and spiritual care to people in countries such as Kenya, Guatemala, Cameroon and Uganda. I was especially inspired by watching a video of an Orthodox church in Africa that the OCMC missionaries serve. The congregation was singing "Christ is Risen" at the top of their lungs. The faces of the families and children in the church



seemed to be glowing with joy as they celebrated the light of Christ's resurrection by dancing and playing instruments from their culture. After our visit to OCMC, our group enjoyed a couple of hours of the beach at Anastasia Island State Park. In the evening, we returned to St. Photios Shrine, where we



attended the vespers service. Polly and the other hospitable staff of the shrine hosted us for a delicious meal on the outdoor patio. Father Andreas hosted a Q & A for the Goyans, where we were able to ask any questions we had prepared for him, which he answered with knowledge and experience. I thoroughly enjoyed hearing his stories from before he became a priest. Later we returned to the hotel, where we all had the chance to participate in confession with Father. There were so many memories I made on this trip I will never forget! Mr. Gerry truly organized such an amazing experience for his Sunday School students to grow so much in their faith on our pilgrimage to the St. Photos shrine.



Sofia Stonestreet



Day 4

In the morning on day 4, we all attended a service for St. Augustine's feast day at the shrine. I was able to chant along with a chanter named Josh. Fr. Andreas and Fr. Maximos from Holy Trinity Church in St. Augustine were the celebrants for the service. After the service, each of the students opened a gift. The gift included two personalized letters, an icon from Father Andreas, and a book that Mr. Gerry personally picked out for each of us. I was thankful for the gifts. It was very thoughtful. The gifts represented our theme which was God and Family. The first letter was from Mr. Gerry and was a listing of special Biblical verses that focused on our relationship with God and the second letter was from our parents. You could hear the sniffing throughout the shrine as we all read these letters together. It was a very creative way to end the St. Photios experience.

After we finished opening our gifts, we went upstairs to a special dining patio in the Averro house to eat and ask Father Andreas questions. We were able to ask questions that we had about our faith. There were no limits to the questions we could ask. It was a great learning opportunity for both the adults and students. We also got a chance to learn a little more about Father Andreas' experiences as he answered our questions. We returned to the hotel to pick up our belongings, and headed home. One thing I can say for sure is that we all are very thankful that Mr. Gerry arranged this trip for us and we grew in our spiritual awareness of our faith.

To all Mr. Gerry's upcoming students, your opportunity to attend a St. Photios trip will be in 2026 and I would absolutely not miss this trip. For me, it was an educational, enjoyable experience and a beautiful place even though it was really hot. To all that read this, have a blessed day and we thank all of you who made this trip possible for us. I'm thankful for the opportunity to go on this trip. It was truly a blessing and was good for the soul. I would definitely go again.

God Bless,

Star Rosekrans

THEOTOKOS OF THE LIFE-GIVING SPRING

In the middle of the 5th Century, outside of Constantinople, there was a very large and most beautiful church named in honor of the Theotokos; it had been built by the Emperor Leo the Great. Before he became Emperor, Leo had encountered a blind man there, who was being tormented by thirst; he asked for help to find water.

Leo felt compassion for him and went in search of a source of water but found none. As he became downcast, he heard a voice telling him there was water nearby. He looked again, and found none. Then he heard the voice again, this time calling him "Emperor" and telling him that he would find muddy water in the densely wooded place nearby; he was to take some water and anoint the blind man's eyes with it. When he had done this, the blind man received his sight.

After Leo became Emperor, as the most holy Theotokos had prophesied, he raised up a church over the spring, whose waters worked many healings and cured maladies by the grace of the Theotokos; from this, it came to be called the "Life-giving Spring."

After the fall of the imperial city of Constantinople in 1453, this church was razed to the ground. It has been rebuilt and destroyed many more times. What remains is the Holy Spring which is still a source of the healing grace of the Theotokos.

The Blessed Feast Day of the Life -Giving Spring is celebrated on Bright, "Renewal," Friday after Pascha.

Adapted from www.goarch.org

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, Proistamenos
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Father Steve Dalber, Pastor Emeritus
Mobile: 704-451-6524
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Father Paul Tsahakis, Presbyterian
Mobile: (704) 608-1112
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Parish Staff

Parish Administrator - Evelyn Klund

Administration Staff

Silva Awaimrin, Kim Braswell, 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: August 12, 2024

Published: August 19, 2024