

† † † **GOD KEEPS A PROMISE** † † †

According to the law of Moses, all Hebrew parents were required to bring their first-born son to the Temple on the 40th day after his birth. This was done in remembrance of the Hebrew exodus from Egypt and their freedom from slavery -- when their first-born sons were protected from the "angel of death," -- who slew the young male children of the Egyptians. It was customary to bring a sacrifice to the Temple that day in thanksgiving to God.

Obedient to the precepts of their people, Joseph and Mary brought the infant Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem 40 days after His birth. As their sacrifice, they brought two young doves with them. While there, they encountered the Righteous Simeon -- a pious man who was advanced in years. God promised him that he would not die until he saw the coming of the Messiah. When Simeon came upon Christ and His parents, he knew that this was the One for Whom the world had waited: the Light Who would enlighten the Gentiles. Indeed, Simeon knew that he could now "depart in peace." Simeon blessed them and proclaimed that: "this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel." (Luke 2:34)

Before returning home, Mary, Joseph and Jesus also met Anna, a prophetess who had lived in the Temple some 84 years as a widow. She, too, recognized the true identity and mission of the young Child.

This event is celebrated as the FEAST OF THE MEETING OF THE LORD by our Holy Orthodox Church in February each year. To further emphasize the coming of the "Light" into a darkened world, candles are blessed on this holy day.

*The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin* . . . . . Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey . . . . . Litho in U.S.A.



**St. Sophia/SS. Faith, Hope & Agape  
Greek Orthodox Church of Valley Forge**

900 South Trooper Road  
Jeffersonville, PA, 19403

Tel.: (610) 650-8960 • Fax: (610) 650-8961

[www.saintsophiachurch.org](http://www.saintsophiachurch.org) email: [office@saintsophiachurch.org](mailto:office@saintsophiachurch.org)

Sunday Worship: 8:45 am - Orthros: 10:00 am Divine Liturgy  
Office Hours - 10 am to 4 pm

Rev. Economos Peter J. Thornberg, Proistamenos

[frpeter@saintsophiachurch.org](mailto:frpeter@saintsophiachurch.org)

Metropolis of New Jersey



February 4, 2024  
15th Sunday of Matthew  
Isidore of Pelusium ♦ Nicholas the Confessor  
Hieromartyr Abramius

## ENTRANCE HYMNS

### Resurrectional Apolytikion – Ote Katilthes (“When Thou Descended”)

*When You descended to the Realm of Death, You, the Life that is deathless, then did You Hades lifeless rend with the Lightning of Divineness. And when You did raise up those dead from deep within the earth, Then did all the powers that are in the Heavens above cry out, O Lifegiving Christ, You Who are our God, Glory to You.*

### Apolytikion for the Presentation – Chere, kecharitomeni (“Rejoice, O Lady full of grace”)

*Lady full of grace, rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, for Christ our God, the Sun of righteousness has risen from you and He illumined those in darkness. And you, righteous Elder, be glad in heart, receiving in your embraces the One who liberates our souls and bestows on us the Resurrection.*

### Apolytikion of St. Sophia/Ss. Faith, Hope & Agape

#### Greek

*Ὡς ελαία κατά καρπος ανεβλάστησας, ἐν ταῖς ἀναλαῖς τοῦ Κυρίου, Σοφία μάρτυς σεμνή, καί προσήγαγες Χριστῷ καρπὸν ἢ δύατον, τοὺς τῆς νηδύος σου βλαστούς, διὰ γώνων εὐάγων, Ἀγάπην τε καὶ Ἐλπίδα σὺν τῇ θεόφρονι Πίστει, μεθῶν δυσώπει ὑπὲρ πάντων ἡμῶν.*

#### English Phonetics for Greek

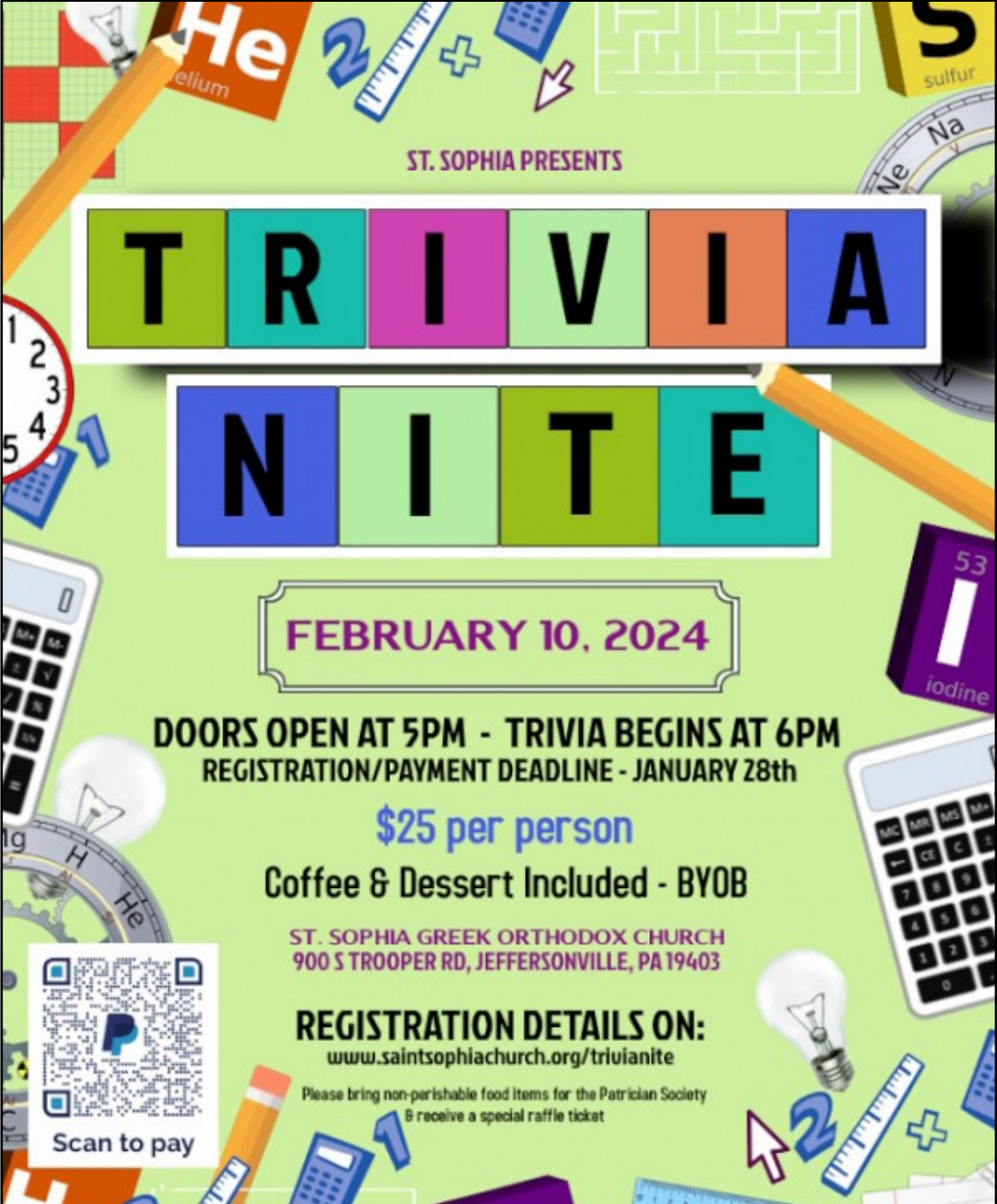
*Os elea kata karpos anevlastisas, en tes avles tu Kyriou Sofia martys semni, ke prosigages Christo karpon idytaton, tus tis nidyos su vlastus, di' agonon evagon, Agapin te ke Elpida, syn ti theofroni Pisti; meth' on dysopi yper pandon imon.*

#### English

*As an olive tree laden with fruit you sprouted forth, in the courtyards of the Lord, Sophia martyr dignified, and you brought to Christ a fruit most sweet, Namely your womb's own sprouts, brought up by instructive deeds: your daughters Love and Hope, along with God-minded Faith; together intercede with God for us all.*

### Seasonal kontakion – O mitran parthenikin (“The womb of a virgin”)

*You sanctified the virginal womb by Your birth, O Lord, and blessed the hands of Symeon fittingly, O Christ God; and even now You came and saved us. Now, give peace to our Nation in time of war, and empower our Leaders, so loved by You, the only one who loves humanity.*



ST. SOPHIA PRESENTS

# TRIVIA

## NITE

**FEBRUARY 10, 2024**

**DOORS OPEN AT 5PM - TRIVIA BEGINS AT 6PM**  
REGISTRATION/PAYMENT DEADLINE - JANUARY 28th

**\$25 per person**  
**Coffee & Dessert Included - BYOB**

ST. SOPHIA GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
900 S TROOPER RD, JEFFERSONVILLE, PA 19403

**REGISTRATION DETAILS ON:**  
[www.saintsophiachurch.org/trivianite](http://www.saintsophiachurch.org/trivianite)

Please bring non-perishable food items for the Patrician Society  
& receive a special raffle ticket

Scan to pay

## Project Mexico 2024



The photo above (on the left) shows Carlos, Lucera and their children standing in front of their new home. Prior to July 2023, they had to endure winters in a makeshift home that included a dirt floor. The photo on the right shows their sons celebrating the fact that they will not have to endure another winter of mud in their home during the winter rainy season.

Everything changed when we handed the keys to Carlos and his family. While they thanked us for the home, WE thanked them for opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ and put our Faith in the Lord to work for this very beautiful family.

Our parish has once again committed to fielding a group of volunteers to help Project Mexico build a house for a needy family in Rosarito, Mexico. This deeply rewarding experience has now become a regular ministry for our Parish. Our team has committed to building a home from July 5 – 11, 2024, but we need your help. We have 7 people on our team and need at least 3 more. If you would like to learn more, join the team, or learn how you can help sponsor our team, please email John Pogas, the group leader, at [johnpogas@gmail.com](mailto:johnpogas@gmail.com).

## Epistle Reading

The reading is from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 4:6-15

*The Lord is my strength and my song.  
Verse: The Lord has chastened me sorely.*

Brethren, it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believe, and so we speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

### Ἀνάγνωσις ἐπιστολῆς Πρὸς Κορινθίους β' 4:6-15 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

*Ἰσχύς μου καὶ ὕμνησίς μου ὁ Κύριος.  
Στίχ. Παιδεύων ἐπαίδευσέ με ὁ Κύριος.*

Ἀδελφοί, ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν ἐκ σκότους φῶς λάμπαι, ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν· ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι, ἀλλ' οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι· ἀπορούμενοι, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐξαπορούμενοι· διωκόμενοι, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγκαταλειπόμενοι· καταβαλλόμενοι, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι· πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῇ. Ἀεὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦν, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν. Ὡστε ὁ μὲν θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται, ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν. Ἔχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως, κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα, καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν· εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ ἐγείρας τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἡμᾶς διὰ Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ, καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν. Τὰ γὰρ πάντα δι' ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσασα διὰ τῶν πλειόνων τὴν εὐχαριστίαν περισσεύσῃ εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ.



**GOSPEL READING**  
**The Gospel According to Matthew 22:35-46**

At that time, a lawyer came up to Jesus and asked him a question, to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, "What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I put your enemies under your feet'? If David thus calls him Lord, how is he his son?" And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

**ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ**

**Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Ματθαῖον 22:35-46 Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα**

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, νομικός τις προσῆλθε τῷ Ἰησοῦ, πειράζων αὐτόν καὶ λέγων· Διδάσκαλε, ποία ἐντολὴ μεγάλη ἐν τῷ νόμῳ; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἔφη αὐτῷ· Ἀγαπήσεις Κύριον τὸν Θεόν σου ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου· αὕτη ἐστὶ πρώτη καὶ μεγάλη ἐντολή. δευτέρα δὲ ὁμοία αὐτῇ· ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν. ἐν ταύταις ταῖς δυσὶν ἐντολαῖς ὅλος ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται κρέμονται. Συνηγμένων δὲ τῶν Φαρισαίων ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτοὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων· Τί ὑμῖν δοκεῖ περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ; τίνος υἱός ἐστι; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· Τοῦ Δαυὶδ. λέγει αὐτοῖς· Πῶς οὖν Δαυὶδ ἐν Πνεύματι Κύριον καλεῖ αὐτὸν λέγων, εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τῷ Κυρίῳ μου, κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου; εἰ οὖν Δαυὶδ καλεῖ αὐτὸν Κύριον, πῶς υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ἐστι; καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο αὐτῷ ἀποκριθῆναι λόγον, οὐδὲ ἐτόλμησέ τις ἀπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας ἐπερωτῆσαι αὐτὸν οὐκέτι.



The Valley Forge Chapter 432 of AHEPA is sponsoring a Super Bowl Block Pool with proceeds to benefit the establishment of a local chapter scholarship fund.

Each block is \$10 – Please visit URL via browser.

<https://superbowlpoolsite.com/contest/515370?p=ahepavfc432>

Payments for each \$10 block can be made by cash or check made payable to – AHEPA VFC 432

Please, contact Chapter President – Matt Stolarczyk – [mattstolarczyk@cs.com](mailto:mattstolarczyk@cs.com) – (215)740-8841 - to purchase blocks and to make payment.

## February Poor Box Donations Thank you for considering a gift!

Please consider supporting the philanthropic outreach of our Church through the Philoptochos Poor Box located in the Pangari. Each month 100% of the donations are designated for a local charity.

Donations made to the Philoptochos Poor Box for February benefit **Meals on Wheels of Chester County**, which provides nutritious meals and personal interaction to homebound adults to help them live independently in their own homes. You can learn more about this worthwhile nonprofit at <https://mowcc.org>. Please pray for the elderly and their families who are helped by Meals and Wheels as well as those who work on their behalf.

Please consider donating to this worthwhile charity at:  
<http://www.saintsophiachurch.org/poorboxdonations.html> or submit a check payable to St. Sophia Philoptochos and indicate Poor Box on the memo line. God bless you!

**HELP WANTED!** We are looking for friendly, welcoming faces to be part of our Pangari Team. You do NOT need to be a member of the Parish Council to serve Pangari duty. What you do need to do is welcome fellow parishioners, make change when they purchase candles, help with passing the collection tray, etc. It's a great way to serve the Parish and to learn more about how the Parish operates as you'll be serving next to existing Parish Council members. If you are interested, then please reach out to either Elaine Piligian (Parish secretary) or John Pogas.

**The Choir is Looking for New Members:** Can you sing? Do you play piano? The choir is looking to expand our membership. All are welcome to sit in on our rehearsals and/or Liturgies to learn more about our music and to see if the choir is right for you. Please call Tom Cox with questions ([215-859-1009](tel:215-859-1009)) or email him at [tc Cox@mysolutions.com](mailto:tc Cox@mysolutions.com). Thank you!



## THE NICENE CREED (The Confession of Faith)

I believe in one God, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages;

Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not created, of one essence with the Father, through Whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried;

And He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father;

And He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; His kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Creator of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets.

In one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come.

Amen

## PRAYER MINISTRY



*"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philipians 4:6-7*

*"And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing you will receive." Matthew 21:22*

*"For with God, nothing will be impossible." Luke 1:37*

Clearly, there is nothing more powerful than the power of prayer. Imagine someone struggling or suffering and then having multiple people praying for them daily! Our "Prayer Warriors" do just that. They will pray for individuals added to the list daily for a period of 6 months.

If you know of someone in need, you can add them to our prayer list using one of the following methods:

1. Fill out a request form at the box found in the church narthex **OR**
2. Send an email to [Prayers@SaintSophiaChurch.org](mailto:Prayers@SaintSophiaChurch.org) **OR**
3. Use the anonymous online form (the link is found under Prayer Ministry on our website), or you can use this link <https://forms.office.com/r/kMx49JdptM> **OR**
4. Use the QR form below (also found on the box in the narthex) which takes you to the anonymous form.



### THE LORD'S PRAYER

#### ENGLISH

Our Father, who art in heaven;  
hallowed be Thy name, Thy  
Kingdom come, Thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses, as  
we forgive those who trespass  
against us; and lead us not into  
temptation, but deliver us from  
evil.

#### ENGLISH PHONETICS

Pá-ter i-món o en tis ou-ra-nís  
a-gi-as-thí-to to o-no-má Sou,  
el-thé-to I va-si-lí-a Sou,  
ge-ni-thí-to to thé-li-má Sou, os  
en ou-ra-nó ke e-pi tis ghis.

Ton ár-ton i-món ton  
e-pi-ou-si-on dos i-mín  
sí-me-ron ke á-fes i-mín ta  
o-fe-lí-ma-ta i-món, os ke i-mís  
a-fi-e-men tis o-fi-lé-tes i-món ke  
mi i-se-nég-kis i-más is  
pi-ras-món, al-la rí-se i-más a-pó  
tou po-ni-roú.

#### GREEK

Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς  
ἀγιασθήτω τό ὄνομά σου,  
ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου,  
γενηθήτω τό θέλημά σου, ὡς  
ἐν οὐρανῷ καί ἐπί τῆς γῆς.

Τόν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τόν  
ἐπιούσιον δός ἡμῖν  
σήμερον καί ἄφες ἡμῖν τά  
ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καί ἡμεῖς  
ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν καί  
μη εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς  
πειρασμόν, ἀλλά ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπό  
τοῦ πονηροῦ.

Phonetics by Dr. Christine Kerxhalli,  
[orthodoxtoday.wordpress.com](http://orthodoxtoday.wordpress.com)



DVYC  
JOY/HOPE

# BIBLE BOWL

**FEBRUARY 10TH  
10AM**

**JOIN US FOR FUN, FELLOWSHIP AND FRIENDLY  
COMPETITION SHOWING OUR SCRIPTURE KNOWLEDGE**



Kindly bring laundry soap, dish soap, baby wash or baby ointment  
for donation to support the Daily Bread Community Food Pantry

St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church  
900 S. Trooper Road  
Jeffersonville, PA 19403

anniep31@gmail.com  
kari0827@gmx.com



RSVP BY 2/7/24

February 4, 2024  
15th Sunday of Matthew  
Isidore of Pelusium ♦ Nicholas the Confessor  
Hieromartyr Abramius



**Today is Godparents' Sunday!**  
**Welcome to all visiting Godparents and Godchildren!**

**St. Sophia/Ss Faith, Hope & Agape Vigil Candle:** If you are interested in sponsoring a vigil candle, please see a Parish Council member at the Pangari – no advance signup necessary and several individuals or families can sponsor each week. The proceeds of these donations will go to our Mortgage Reduction Fund. Each vigil candle lasts one week; the asking donation is \$10.

**Artoklasia:** Thank you to the Poloway family for offering today's artoklasia in celebration of the Feast of Ypapanti (the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple), which we celebrated this past Friday and Elder Symeon the God-Receiver, whose feast day we celebrated yesterday.

**Parish Council Affirmation of Office:** Today after the Divine Liturgy, we will have the Swearing-In Ceremony for the new Parish Council.

**Godparents' Day Sweets:** Please join the Ladies' Philoptochos TODAY for **Donuts and Cocoa!** Proceeds benefit the charities of the Ladies' Philoptochos Society.

**Blessing of the Homes at Theophany:** If you wish to have your home and/or business blessed, please call or email the Parish office to put your name on the list for a visitation.

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**February 11, 2024**  
**Stewardship Appreciation Sunday**

In appreciation for the tremendous support of our stewards,  
the Parish Council invites you to a complimentary luncheon on  
Sunday, February 11, 2024, immediately following Divine Liturgy.  
We hope you can join us in fellowship!

**SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS**

Sun. Feb. 4 <sup>th</sup>	8:45 am	Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Godparent Sunday – <i>Philoptochos Donuts &amp; Cocoa</i>
	12:30 pm	Greek School (Adults)
Wed. Feb. 7 <sup>th</sup>	5:00 pm	Little Angels
Thurs. Feb. 8 <sup>th</sup>	5:00 pm	Greek School (Children)
Sat. Feb. 10 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	JOY/HOPE Bible Bowl hosted by St. Sophia
	6:00 pm	Trivia Nite (Doors open at 5:00 pm)
Sun. Feb. 11 <sup>th</sup>	8:45 am	Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Stewardship Sunday – <i>Complimentary Luncheon</i>
	12:30 pm	Greek School (Adults)
Wed. Feb. 14 <sup>th</sup>	5:00 pm	Little Angels
	7:00 pm	Adult Ed – “ <i>St. Polycarp of Smyrna</i> ” – in the church
Thurs. Feb. 15 <sup>th</sup>	5:00 pm	Greek School (Children)
Sun. Feb. 18 <sup>th</sup>	8:45 am	Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
	12:30 pm	Greek School (Adults)
Wed. Feb. 21 <sup>st</sup>	5:00 pm	Little Angels
	7:00 pm	Adult Ed – “ <i>The Epistle to the Philippians</i> ” – in the church
Thurs. Feb. 22 <sup>nd</sup>	5:00 pm	Greek School (Children)
Sun. Feb. 25 <sup>th</sup>	8:45 am	Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
	After Liturgy	Parish St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival
Wed. Feb. 28 <sup>th</sup>	5:00 pm	Little Angels
	7:00 pm	Adult Ed – “ <i>The Martyrdom of St. Polycarp</i> ” – in the church
Thurs. Feb. 29 <sup>th</sup>	5:00 pm	Greek School (Children)

The next series of Adult Education classes will begin on **Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>** at 7:00 pm, in the nave of the church:

***Saint Polycarp: Bishop, Martyr, and Teacher of Apostolic Tradition***

Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 7-8 pm - *St. Polycarp of Smyrna: The Man and His Epistle*

Wednesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 7-8 pm - *The Epistle to the Philippians: Exhortations unto Righteousness*

Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 7-8 pm - *The Martyrdom of St. Polycarp: The Text, Its Contents, Theology and Literary Format*

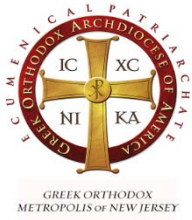
**TRIVIA NITE BASKET RAFFLE HAS BEGUN**

Tickets are available during coffee hour following Divine Liturgy through February 4, 2024.

We will also sell tickets the night of our Trivia Nite event on Saturday, February 10, 2024.







# ST. SOPHIA

SS. FAITH, HOPE & AGAPE

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF VALLEY FORGE

900 South Trooper Road, Jeffersonville, PA, 19403 • Tel.: (610) 650-8960 • Fax: (610) 650-8961

Web: [www.saintsophiachurch.org](http://www.saintsophiachurch.org) E-mail: [office@saintsophiachurch.org](mailto:office@saintsophiachurch.org)

Rev. Ekonomos Peter J. Thornberg, Proistamenos



February 1, 2024

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

As always, we would like to thank everyone for your continued commitment to our Parish and giving of your giving of time, talent, and treasure. Please take a moment to review the 2023 year-end Financial Dashboard. As promised last year, we will make every effort to provide this to you monthly. If you have any questions at all, please direct them to our Treasurer, Alex Nikas or our Stewardship Chairman, Tom Cox.

A few items to note -

- For the second year in a row, our operating income covered our operating expenses, which is a good thing. **However**, our operating income was inflated by several large memorials last year. Additionally, we needed to rely on favorable weather for our Spring Festival, increased attendance for the Craft Fair, insurance payments, etc. to put us in a position where our operating and non-operating expenses were covered for 2023.
- To get us on a path of *full self-sustainability* and eliminating our reliance on weather sensitive events like the festival, we ALL need to continue a more realistic commitment of independently meeting the needs of the Parish. In 2023 our stewardship commitment covered 67% of our regular operating expenses. That's an increase over 2022, where Stewardship covered 59% of our operating expenses. Unfortunately, it still does not cover all our operating expenses.
- Our goal is to get to **100%** Festival and fund raiser revenue, one-time gifts, etc. should be earmarked for specific ministries, special projects, and mortgage reduction – not paying our regular bills.

As with last year, we are asking all Stewards to do the following:

- A 10% increase of your annual Stewardship Commitment to help get “caught up” over the past 10+ years. As we've noted before, our median stewardship pledge has changed very little since 2012 when we opened the doors of our church. The best way to do this is with annual incremental increases of 10% until we are at a point where we are truly self-sufficient.
- Participate in the spiritual life of the Parish. We understand that life gets busy, but sometimes we need the still and prayerful moments that the Church offers. For example, Great and Holy Lent provides this opportunity by offering weekday and weeknight services.

We all need the spiritual healing that comes from God. Though we may pray on our own, it is important to gather as the family of Christ, joined by the Saints and the Angels, and receive Holy Communion. Christ is the “Medicine of Life”, and we are invited to come forward, “with the fear of God and with faith and with love.”

May our Lord and Savior bless each one of you, your families, and our Parish family, and may the most Holy and Glorious Lady Theotokos watch over all of us.

In Christ's Service,

Fr. Peter Thornberg  
Proistamenos

John Pogas  
Parish Council President

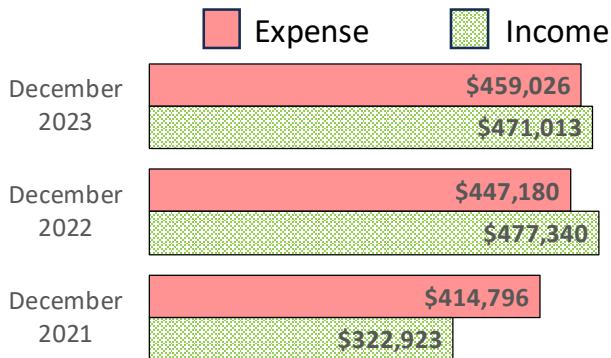
### FINANCIAL DASHBOARD FOR DECEMBER 2023

	December 2023	December 2022	December 2021
Regular Operating Income	\$471,013	\$477,340	\$322,923
Regular Operating Expenses	\$459,026	\$447,180	\$414,796
Net Regular Operating Income or (Loss)	\$11,987	\$30,159	(\$91,873)
*Non-Operating Income	\$698,325	\$151,260	\$216,503
**Non-Operating Expenses	\$531,263	\$107,112	\$65,670
Non-Operating Net Income or Loss	\$167,062	\$44,148	\$150,833
Stewardship Income	\$308,727	\$264,415	\$247,194
% of Regular Operating Expenses Covered by Stewardship	67%	59%	60%
Number of Stewarding Families	220	205	214
Median Stewardship Pledge	\$800	\$600	\$700
Total Expenses Invested in parish chosen charities and ministries	\$21,003	\$16,729	\$12,123
% of Regular Operating Expenses invested in parish chosen charities and ministries	5%	4%	3%

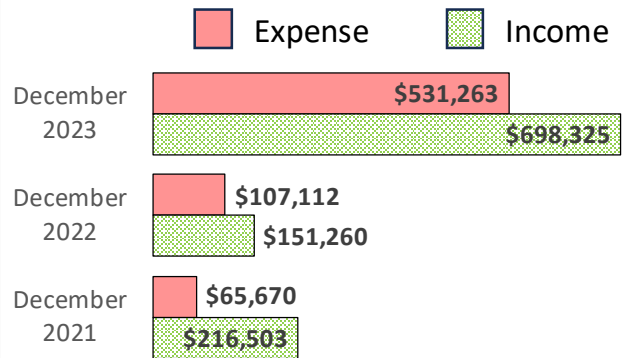
\*Non-operating income includes insurance payments, Festival and other fundraising events, church beautification and investment gains.

\*\*Non-operating expenses include Capital, beautification, and disaster recovery expenses and mortgage interest.

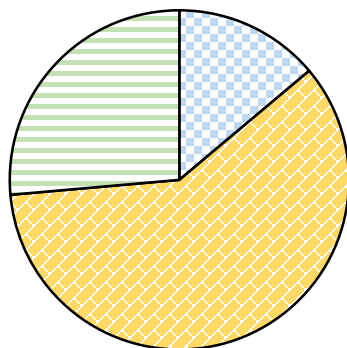
#### Regular Operating Income/Expenses



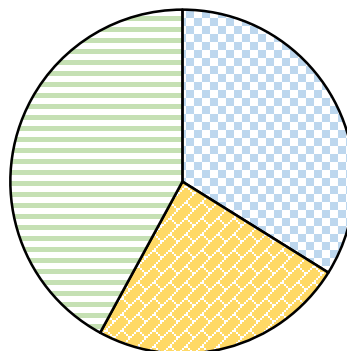
#### Non-Operating Income/Expenses



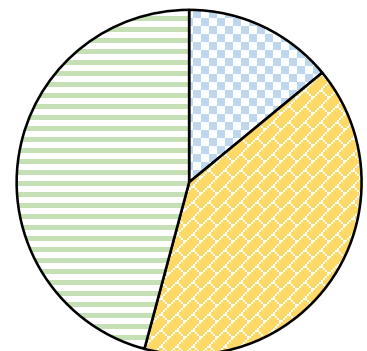
#### December 2023



#### December 2022



#### December 2021



Regular Income Less Stewardship
  \*Non-Operating Income
  Stewardship Income