**LET US BEGIN THE FAST WITH JOY!**

Although some may associate Great Lent with suffering and sacrifice, our Church gently reminds us that the 40-day Fast which precedes our Lord’s Resurrection is actually a time for us to experience a great spiritual joy. The Church’s service book for Lent – the Triodion – calls this period the “spiritual spring which blossoms with the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” For us to “harvest” these fruits, however, it is necessary for us to master two vital disciplines: PRAYER and FASTING.

St. John Chrysostom writes that prayer and fasting are like “two wings that carry a person to the heights of God.” They are the means for us to become mentally, physically and spiritually prepared to encounter the Lord in an intimate way. Prayer and fasting help us to become closer to God. The more time we spend in prayer, the less time we have to become consumed with the sins and temptations that are constantly placed before us. Fasting shows our willingness to cast aside the pleasures of the world, abstaining from wrong-doing as well as food.

While urging us to embrace these admirable virtues during the Lenten season, the Church reminds us of the emphasis that Christ Himself placed on prayer and fasting. There were countless times during His earthly ministry that Jesus became deeply immersed in practicing these disciplines. Indeed, when His disciples questioned why they were unable to cast out demons from a possessed young man, Christ pointed out to them that only through prayer and fasting could they ever receive the ability to do this.
March 17, 2024
Forgiveness Sunday
Alexis the Man of God ♥ Paul the Righteous Martyr
Patrick the Enlightener of Ireland

ENTRANCE HYMNS

Resurrectional Apolytikion – Ex Ipsus Katilthes (“From On High You Descended”)
From on high you descended, O merciful Lord. You accepted the cross and three days in the tomb to free us from the bondage of sin, O our life and resurrection. Glory to You, O Lord.

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

Greek
Ος ελαία κατά καρπος ανεβλάστησας, ἐν ταῖς ανλαῖς του Κυρίου, Σοφία μάρτυς σεμνή, καὶ προσιγγάνεις Χριστῷ καρπὸν ἡ δύτατον, τούς τῆς νηδύος σου βλαστούς, δι' ἀ γώνων εὐαγων, Αγάπην τε καὶ Ἑλπίδα σὺν τῇ θεόφρονι Πίστει, μεθ' ἀν δοσιπο να πανδον εἰμον.

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 – Tis sofias odhighe (“O Guide to Wisdom”)
O guide to wisdom, provider of prudence, disciplinarian of fools, and defender of the poor, fortify and discipline my heart, O Master; You, give me a word, O Word of the Father. For behold, I will not hinder my lips from crying to You: O merciful Lord, have mercy on me who have fallen.
Brethren, salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomeingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for God is able to make him stand.

Ἀνάγνωσις ἐπιστολῆς
Πρὸς Ὀρθομάυοις 13:11-14, 14:1-4 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

Εἴσεσθαι καὶ ἄποδοτε Κυρίῳ τὸ θείῳ ἡμῶν.
Στίχ. Γνωστὸς ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ὁ Θεός, ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ μέγα τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.

Ἄξιον γὰρ οὗ ἔγνωκεν ἡμῶν ἢ σωτηρίαν ἢ ἄποδοσιν τῷ Κυρίῳ τῷ θείῳ τοῦ χρηστοῦ.

Τὸν δὲ ἁγιασμὸν τῇ πίστει προσλάμβανεθεν, μὴ εἰς ψυχικάς διαλογισμοὺς, μὴ εἰς δικαστικάς διαγωγές, ἀλλὰ ἐν νῷ ἁγιασμοῦ προστατευόμεθα, μὴ εἰς σπεύδους καὶ ἀνένασεν, μὴ τὸ νὸόν ἀπὸ τῆς σωτηρίας ἀπορρίπτεθεν, μὴ τὸ χρηστός ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου τῶν ἀνθρώπων, μὴ τὸ ἐνυπόνων ἀπότροπον. Συνωμοσύνη τῆς πίστεως ἀρχῆς καὶ τῆς ἐπιστήμης ἀληθείας, καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀπὸ τῆς ἀλήθειας, καὶ τῆς ἀλήθειας ἀπὸ τῆς ἀλήθειας.
GOSPEL READING

The Lord said, “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

“And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men for their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may be seen by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

EVAGGÉLION
Έκ τού Κατά Ματθαίου 6:14-21 Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα

Εἴπεν ὁ Κύριος· Ἐὰν γὰρ ἀφήτε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, ἀφήσει καὶ ὦν ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐρανός· Ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἀφήτε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, οὐδὲ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ἀφήσει τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν. Ὑστερὰ ἐὰν νηστεύσητε, μὴ γίνεσθαι ὄσσεις ὁ ὐποκριτὰς σκυθρωποῦσιν ἀφανίζομεν γὰρ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν ὅπως φανῶση τοῖς ἀνθρώποις νηστεύοντες· ὡμὴ λέγω ὑμῖν οὐκ ἀπέχετο τὸν μισθὸν αὐτῶν. Σὺ δὲ νηστεύσῃς ἄλειψαις σοι τὴν κεφαλήν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπόν σου νύσαι, ὅπως μὴ φανῆ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις νηστεύσῃς, ἀλλὰ τὸ πατρὶ σου τὸ ὑπὸ κρυπτῆται τῷ πατρὶ σου τὸ ὑπὸ κρυπτῆται. Μὴ δὲ δὲ θεσπίζετε ὑμῖν θεσπίζετε ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ οἴκῳ, ὅπως τὸ φανῆ αὐτῶς οἴκῳ. Ὑπὸς καὶ ἀνθρώποις ἀφανίζετε, καὶ ὅπως κλέπται διορύσσουσι καὶ κλέπτουσι· ἔσται καὶ ἡ καρδία ὑμῶν.}

March 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 March benefit Worthwhile Wear, which provides most comprehensive services to survivors of human trafficking in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Housing, counseling, educational and other services are provided at two locations in PA. Worthwhile Thrift in Collegeville supports the good works of this nonprofit. You can learn more about Worthwhile Wear at www.worthwhilewear.org. Please pray for those affected by human trafficking and sexual exploitation who are helped by Worthwhile Wear 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) or email him at tcox@myisolutions.com. Thank you!

The Hellenic University Club of Philadelphia – Scholarships: HUC is now accepting applications for the 2024-25 Scholarships for graduating high school seniors, undergraduate and graduate students of Greek descent. Eligibility requirements, and details of the applications can be found at https://lnkd.in/drHHE_VS. Deadline April 1, 2024. For any information, please send email to: hucscholarships@gmail.com.
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
**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.

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**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Pá-ter i-mó-n o en tiς ou-ra-ní-s a-gi-as-thi-to to o-νó-ma Sou, el-thé-to i va-si-li-a Sou, ge-ní-thi-to th'é-li-má Sou, os en ou-ra-nó ke e-pi tis ghí-s.

Ton ár-ton i-mó-n ton e-pi-oú-si-on dos i-mín si-me-ron ke á-fes i-mín ta o-fe-li-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 ri-se i-más a-pó tou po-ni-roú.

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**ENGLISH PHONETICS**

Phonetics by Dr. Christine Kerchallli, orthodoxtoday.wordpress.com

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**GREEK**

Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἅγιος, ἐλθέων ἡ βασιλεία σου, γενήθηται τὸ τῆλημα σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς

Τὸν ἀρτὸν ἡμῶν τὸν ἐποίησαν δός ἡμῖν σήμερον καὶ ἄρες ἡμῶν τὰ ὀρφαλάμματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμῖς ὀρθέμενοι τοῖς ὀρφαλάμμασι ἡμῶν καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥόσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.

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**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." Philippians 4:6-7

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

"For with God, nothing is 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 **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/AKMc35x4dM **OR**
4. Use the QR form below (also found on the box in the narthex) which takes you to the anonymous form.
ARCHPASTORAL VISIT: This morning, we wish to welcome our spiritual father, His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey, as he visits our parish for the first time as our Metropolitan. Welcome also to Rev. Archdeacon Konstantinos Loukas.

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.

Luncheon Today: We invite everyone to a luncheon after Divine Liturgy in the Father John A. Limberakis Cultural Center as we welcome His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos.

Saturday of Souls: The third Saturday of Souls is Saturday, March 23rd—Orthros 8:45 am; Divine Liturgy 10:00 am. Forms for the names of the departed are available at the Pangari (and attached). Please submit your names to the Parish office by 12 noon on March 22nd. DO NOT text the names or submit them via Facebook. Please also remember your loved ones by not only submitting their names, but by making koliva and attending the holy services to offer your own prayers for their eternal rest. Please remember that the names you submit are read on all three Saturdays. Please PRINT CLEARLY, AND ONLY BAPTISMAL FIRST NAMES ARE NECESSARY.

Sunday of Orthodoxy: Next Sunday, March 24th, we will have the Procession of the Icons at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. We ask that the children of the Parish (as well as any adults who so wish) bring in an icon of their own so that they may participate in the procession. This is such a tremendous way to teach our children the importance of icons in the Orthodox Christian Faith.

TODAY– Cheesefare Sunday Tiropites/Spanakopites: The Ladies’ Philoptochos will be selling frozen Tiropites and Spanakopites during today’s luncheon. The proceeds of this sale will benefit one of the numerous charities of the Philoptochos.
Readers for Salutations to the Theotokos: The first Salutations to the Theotokos are on Friday evening, March 22nd beginning at 7:00 pm. We are looking for readers for the English and Greek for that Friday and the following four Fridays. If you are interested in reading, please call the Parish office to put your name on the list. Also, if you wish to decorate the icon of the Panagia with flowers on one of the Fridays, please call the Parish office to let us know which Friday you are choosing.

Sponsoring Coffee Hour: If you are interested in hosting a coffee hour, please sign up on the Coffee Hour Sponsor Sheet on the window at the back of the hall near the coffee/refreshments table. There are several Sundays available in the coming weeks. Please note that the church will supply coffee, creamer, juice, and paper products to eliminate waste and clutter. We ask that coffee hour sponsors donate $25 (payable to St. Sophia Church) to offset these expenses. Thank you!

Help Wanted: Our good friends at the Collegeville Diner are looking to hire much-needed staff! They are looking to hire a host/hostess to work Mon-Sat, 8am-3pm. If you or anyone you know is interested, please contact Dimitri (Jim) Voutsinas at jim.voutsinas@gmail.com or at 215-989-1950.

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**SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Service Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat. Mar. 16th</td>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Orthros; 9:00 am Divine Liturgy (note earlier time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Saturday of Souls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. Mar. 17th</td>
<td>8:45 am</td>
<td>Orthros and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy – Forgiveness Sunday</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Archpastoral Visit of His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of NJ</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12:30 pm</td>
<td>Greek School (Adults)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. Mar. 19th</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clean Monday – Lent Begins</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Great Compline</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:30 PM</td>
<td>Choir Rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues. Mar. 19th</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Festival Meeting in the church hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. Mar. 20th</td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Little Angels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Presanctified Liturgy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu. Mar. 21st</td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Greek School (Children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. Mar. 22nd</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Salutations to the Theotokos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. Mar. 23rd</td>
<td>8:45 am</td>
<td>Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Saturday of Souls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. Mar. 24th</td>
<td>8:45 am</td>
<td>Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy – Sunday of Orthodoxy;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Procession with Icons</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Greek School Independence Day Program after Liturgy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:30 pm</td>
<td>Greek School (Adults)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Great Vespers for the Annunciation of the Theotokos</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(at Annunciation/Evangelismos G.O. Church, Elkins Park)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to be followed by a reception hosted by the Philoptochos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. Mar. 25th</td>
<td>8:45 am</td>
<td>Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy (at St. Sophia)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Great Compline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. Mar. 27th</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Presanctified Liturgy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Little Angels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. Mar. 28th</td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Greek School (Children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. Mar. 29th</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Salutations to the Theotokos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. Mar. 31st</td>
<td>8:45 am</td>
<td>Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy – St. Gregory Palamas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:30 pm</td>
<td>Greek School (Adults)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. Apr. 1st</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Great Compline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. Apr. 3rd</td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Little Angels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Presanctified Liturgy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. Apr. 4th</td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Greek School (Children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. Apr. 5th</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Salutations to the Theotokos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. Apr. 6th</td>
<td></td>
<td>District Oratorical Festival at St. Luke, Broomall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. Apr. 7th</td>
<td>8:45 am</td>
<td>Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy – Sunday of the Holy Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Greek Independence Day Parade TODAY!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The bus departs from St. Sophia at 12:00 Noon SHARP!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tsoureki Sale

Order by April 20
Pickup April 27

Name: ___________________________ Phone: ___________________

Quantity: _____ @ $20 each = Total Paid: _______

Make checks payable to St. Sophia Philoptochos, pay with Zelle (ladies@saintsophiachurch.org) or Venmo

Goya - Joy/Hope
Family Bowling Outing

MAR 30
2024
5:00PM

Bowlero Limerick
653 W Ridge Pk, Limerick, PA 19468

RSVP by 3/24: Matt 484.919.6602
or mattham@aol.com
NOW ON SALE!

GAME ON!

NINTENDO SWITCH MARDI GRAS RAFFLE

1 TICKET: $5

DRAWING ON SUNDAY, MARCH 17TH AFTER DIVINE LITURGY
Need not be present to win

PHILADELPHIA GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY 2024 CELEBRATIONS

Save the Dates

FLAG RAISING
FRIDAY
APRIL 5
1:00 PM

BANQUET
SATURDAY
APRIL 6
5:00 PM

PARADE
SUNDAY
APRIL 7
1:00 PM

*1:00 PM | Ben Franklin Parkway @ 22nd Street Festival
2:00 PM | 2012 Off Parade will begin at 22nd & the Parkway marching towards City Hall
FINANCIAL DASHBOARD FOR FEBRUARY 2024

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>February 2024</th>
<th>February 2023</th>
<th>February 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular Operating Income</td>
<td>$61,124</td>
<td>$64,283</td>
<td>$72,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Operating Expenses</td>
<td>$113,391</td>
<td>$111,770</td>
<td>$99,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Regular Operating Income or (Loss)</td>
<td>($52,267)</td>
<td>($47,487)</td>
<td>($26,847)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Non-Operating Income</td>
<td>$5,079</td>
<td>($3,518)</td>
<td>$23,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Non-Operating Expenses</td>
<td>$3,043</td>
<td>$17,199</td>
<td>$6,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Operating Net Income or Loss</td>
<td>$2,036</td>
<td>($20,717)</td>
<td>$16,883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship Income</td>
<td>$45,260</td>
<td>$44,027</td>
<td>$40,951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Regular Operating Expenses Covered by Stewardship</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Stewarding Families</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Stewardship Pledge</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses Invested in parish chosen charities and ministries</td>
<td>$2,063</td>
<td>$2,477</td>
<td>$1,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Regular Operating Expenses invested in parish chosen charities and ministries</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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.
Saturday of the Souls
Σαββατώ Των Ψυχών
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

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Most honorable brother Hierarchs and blessed children in the Lord,

The grace of our God of love has once again vouchsafed for us to enter the soul-benefiting period of the Lenten Triodion and arrive at Holy and Great Lent, namely to the arena of ascetic struggle replete with gifts from above and the joy of the Cross and Resurrection. During this blessed period, the spiritual treasure and dynamism of the ecclesiastical life as well as the soteriological reference of all its expressions are revealed with clarity.

We have already learned much from the impasse and self-righteous arrogance of the Pharisee, from the barren moralism and hard-heartedness of the elder son in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and from the callousness and condemnation on the Day of Judgment of those who proved indifferent to the “least of our brothers” that were hungry, thirsty, foreigners, naked, ill, and imprisoned. Moreover, the value and power of humility and repentance, of forgiveness and mercy were revealed to us as attitudes that the Church emphatically calls us to nurture in the period that opens up before us.

Holy and Great Lent is a welcome time of spiritual, inner and physical purification and discipline, which—as we just heard in the Gospel passage that was read—traverses through fasting, which should not be practiced “so that others may see,” and through forgiveness of our brothers and sisters: “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you” (Mt. 6.14). After all, this is what we confess each day with the Lord’s Prayer, when we say: “as we forgive the sins of our debtors” (Mt. 6.12).
Yesterday, on Cheesefare Saturday, the Church honored the memory of the saintly men and women who shone in ascetic life. Saints are not only models for the faithful in the good fight of life in Christ and according to Christ. They are also our fellow travelers, friends and supporters in the ascetic journey of fasting, repentance, and humility. We are not alone in our effort, but we have God, who encourages and blesses us, as well as the Saints and Martyrs, who stand beside us, and above all the First among the Saints and Mother of God, who intercedes for us all to the Lord. Sanctity is proof of the power of divine grace and the human synergy in the Church, which takes place through participation in the holy sacraments and fulfilment of the divine commandments. There is no “gratuitous piety” or “easy Christianity,” just as there is no “wide gate” or “spacious way” that leads to the heavenly Kingdom (cf. Mt. 7.13–14).

The Church constantly reminds us that salvation is not an individual, but an ecclesiastical event, a common discipline. During the God-guarded Holy and Great Lent, what becomes apparent for the spiritual life of the faithful is the definitive meaning of participation in the life of the community—that is to say, in the Christian family and parish, or else in the monastic coenobium. We would like to highlight the function of the Christian family as a community of life for the experience of Great Lent’s spirituality. Our predecessor among the Saints, John Chrysostom, described the family as “a small Church.” Indeed, it is in the family that occurs the rendering of our existence into that of the church; it is there that the sense of the social and communal character of human life and the life in Christ as well as the love, mutual respect and solidarity are developed; and it is there that the life and joy of cohabitation are experienced as a divine gift.

The joint endeavor to apply the ecclesiastical rule and ethos of fasting in the context of the family manifests the charismatic dimension of ascetic life and, more broadly, the conviction that whatever is true, honorable, and rightful in our life comes to us from above; that despite our own cooperation and contribution, in the end they transcend whatever is humanly achievable and accessible. After all, the communal aspect of life, the love for one another that does not seek its own, and the virtue of forgiveness, do not allow room for human rights-ism and complacency. An expression of such a spirit of “common freedom” and eucharistic asceticism is precisely the inseparable connection between fasting, charity, and participation in the parish and liturgical life of the Church. Living out this “Lenten spirit” within a Christian family leads us to the depth of truth in the ecclesiastical experience and constitutes the birthplace and source of Christian witness in our secularized contemporary world.

Brothers and children, pray that we may all travel with godly zeal along the way of Holy and Great Lent with fasting and repentance, in prayer and contrition.

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1 Commentary on the Letter to the Ephesians 20, PG 62.143.
making peace within ourselves and with one another, sharing in life and showing
ourselves to be “neighbors” to those in need through charitable works, forgiving
one another and glorifying in all circumstances the God of mercy’s name, which is
above the heavens, beseeching Him to deem us worthy of reaching Holy and Great
Week with purified minds and of worshipping with joy and delight His splendid
Resurrection.

Holy and Great Lent 2024

*BARTHOLOMEW* of Constantinople
Fervent supplicant for all before God

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To be read in churches on Cheesefare Sunday, March 17, 2024, immediately after
the Holy Gospel.
ΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΑΤΗΧΗΤΗΡΙΟΣ
ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΕΝΑΡΞΗ
ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΓΑΛΗΣ ΤΕΣΣΑΡΑΚΟΣΤΗΣ

+ΒΑΡΘΟΛΟΜΑΙΟΣ
ΕΛΕΩΙ ΘΕΟΥ
ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΕΩΣ - ΝΕΑΣ ΡΩΜΗΣ
ΚΑΙ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΗΣ
ΠΡΟΣ ΟΛΟ ΤΟ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ,
ΧΑΡΗ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΡΗΝΗ
ΑΠΟ ΤΟΝ ΣΩΤΗΡΑ ΚΑΙ ΚΥΡΙΟ ΜΑΣ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟ,
ΑΠΟ ΕΜΑΣ ΔΕ ΕΥΧΗ, ΕΥΛΟΓΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΣΥΓΧΩΡΗΣΗ

Τιμώτατοι ἀδελφοὶ Ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ τέκνα ἐν Κυρίῳ εὐλογημένα,  

Ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης μᾶς ἀξίωσε καὶ πάλι νὰ εἰσέλθουμε στὴν ψυχωφελὴ περίοδο τοῦ Κατανυκτικοῦ Τριῳδίου καὶ νὰ φθάσουμε στὴν Αγία καὶ Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή, στὸ στάδιο τῶν ἀσκητικῶν ἀγώνων, ποὺ εἶναι πλῆρες ἀπὸ δωρήματα του ωόρου καὶ ἀπὸ εὐφροσύνη σταυροαναστάσιμη. Κατὰ τὸ εὐλογημένο αὐτὸ διάστημα ἀποκαλύπτεται μὲ εὐκρίνεια ὁ πνευματικὸς πλοῦς καὶ ὁ δυναμισμὸς τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ζωῆς καὶ ὡς ὑπερυφοσκοπημένη ἀναφορὰ ὅλων τῶν ἐκφάνσεων τῆς.

Πολλὰ διδαχθήκαμε ἢδη ἀπὸ τὴν ύπερηφάνεια τοῦ Φαρισαίου, ἡ ὁποία εἶναι ἀδιέξοδη καὶ δικαιώνει τὸν ἑαυτό μας. Διδαχθήκαμε ἀπὸ τὸν ἄγονο ἠθικισμὸ καὶ τὴν σκληροκαρδία τοῦ μεγαλύτερου ἀδελφοῦ ἀπὸ τὴν παραβολὴ τοῦ ἀσώτου. Διδαχθήκαμε ἀπὸ τὴν ἀπονιὰ καὶ τὴν καταδίκη ἐκείνων, οἱ ὁποῖοι ἀδιαφόρησαν γιὰ ὅσους «ἐλάχιστους ἀδελφοὺς» τοῦ Κριτή εἶναι πεινασμένοι, διψασμένοι, γυμνοὶ, ἀρρωστοὶ καὶ φυλακισμένοι. Φανερώθηκε σὲ ὅλους μας ἡ ἀξία καὶ ἡ δύναμις τῆς συγχωρητικότητας καὶ τῆς ἐλεημοσύνης, στάσεων, στὴν καλλιέργεια τῶν ὁποίων μᾶς καλεῖ μὲ ἐμφάσις ἡ Ἐκκλησία κατὰ τὴν περίοδο ποὺ ἀρχίζει ἀπὸ σήμερα.

Ἡ Ἁγία καὶ Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή εἶναι ὁ κατάλληλος καιρὸς γιὰ πνευματικὴ, ψυχικὴ καὶ σωματικὴ κάθαρσις καὶ ἀσκηση. Αὐτὰ περνᾶνε, ὅπως ἀκούσαμε στὴν εὐαγγελικὴ περικοπὴ ποὺ διάβασαμε πρὶν σήμερα, μέσα ἀπὸ τὴ νηστεία, ἡ ὁποία δὲν ἐπιτρέπεται νὰ τηρεῖται «πρὸς τὸ θεαθῆναι» ἀπὸ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους. Αὐτὰ περνᾶνε ἐπίσης καὶ μέσα ἀπὸ τὴν συγχωρητικότητα πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς μας: «Ἐὰν ἀφῆτε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, ἀφήσει καὶ ὡμοὶ ὁ Ἁγίος υἱῶν ὁ σωτήρ»1.

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1 Ματθ. στ’, 14.
Αὐτὸ ἔξαλλον τὸ ὀμολογοῦμε καθημερινὰ στὴν Κυριακή προσευχή μὲ τὸ «ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν» 2.

Χθές, Σάββατο τῆς Τυροφάγου, ἡ Ἐκκλησία τίμησε τῇ μνήμῃ τῶν ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν ἀγίων που ἐλαμψαν με τὴν ἀσκησία τους. Οἱ ἁγίοι δὲν εἶναι μόνο πρότυποι τῶν πιστῶν στὸν καλὸ ἀγώνα τῆς ζωῆς μας μὲ τὸν Χριστό καὶ σύμφωνα μὲ τὸν Χριστό, ἀλλὰ καὶ συνοδοιπόροι, φίλοι καὶ ἀφρογοι στὸν ἀσκητικό δρόμο τῆς νηστείας, τῆς μετανοίας καὶ τῆς ταπεινώσεως. Δὲν εἰμιστεῖ μόνοι στὴν προσπάθεια μας, ἀλλὰ ἔχουμε τὸ Θεό νὰ μὰς εὐλογεῖ, τοὺς ἁγίους καὶ τοὺς καθημερινὰ συμπαραστέκονται. Καὶ τὴν πρώτη τῶν ἀγίων Θεοτόκου νὰ μεσιτεύει γιὰ ὅλους μας πρὸς τὸν Κύριο. Η ἀγιότητα εἶναι τεκμήριο τῆς δυνάμεως τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τῆς συνεργίας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, μέσα στὴν Ἐκκλησία, μὲ τὴ συμμετοχὴ στὰ Καθολικά, τὴν συμμετοχὴ στὴν αὐτοπροσώπη ἀνθρωπολογία τῆς ζωῆς του Χριστού, καὶ τὴν συγκρότηση στὴν κοινότητα Θεολογίας καὶ τὴν σύντομη τῆς Εὐαγγελίας καὶ τῆς Καθολικής εὐαγγελίας. Δὲν υπάρχει «ἀδάπανος εὐλάβεια» καὶ «εὔκολος Χριστιανισμός», οὔτε «πλατεῖα πύλη» καὶ «εὐρύχωρος δρόμος», ποὺ νὰ ὁδηγεῖ πρὸς τὴν οὐράνια Βασιλεία 3.

Ἡ Ἐκκλησία συνεχῶς μᾶς ὑπενθυμίζει ὅτι ἡ σωτηρία δὲν εἶναι ἀτομική, ἀλλὰ ἐκκλησιαστικὸ γεγονός, κοινὴ ἀσκησιμότητα. Κατὰ τὴν θεοσκέπαστη Η.Μ. τῆς Αγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστῆς, ἀποκαλύπτεται ἡ καθοριστικὴ γιὰ τὴν πνευματικὴ ἐνορία τοῦ πιστοῦ σημασία τῆς συμμετοχῆς στὴν ζωὴ τῆς κοινότητας, στὴν χριστιανικὴ οἰκογένεια καὶ τὴν ἐν Χριστῷ ζωὴ τῆς Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστῆς. Ὁ προκάτοχός μας ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Χρυσόστομος ἀποκάλεσε τὴν οἰκογένεια «Ἐκκλησία μικρή» 4. Ὅντως, στὴν οἰκογένεια συντελεῖται ἡ ἐκκλησιοποίηση τῆς ὑπάρξεώς μας, ἀναπτύσσεται ἡ αἴσθηση τοῦ κοινωνικοῦ καὶ κοινοτικοῦ χαρακτηρά τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ἡ χαρὰ τῆς συμβίωσης ὡς θεῖα δωρεά. Ἡ κοινὴ προσπάθεια ἐφαρμογῆς τοῦ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀθικοῦ ἀθόρυβου στὰ πλαίσια τῆς οἰκογένειας, ἀναδεικνύει τὸ χαρακτηρικὸ χαρακτῆρα τῆς ἀσκητικῆς βιοτῆς καὶ ἀληθινά, τὰ σεμνὰ καὶ τὰ δίκαια στὴ ζωή μας προέρχονται ἄνωθεν καὶ ἀληθινά, τὰ σεμνὰ καὶ τὰ δίκαια στὴ ζωή μας προέρχονται ἄνωθεν, ὅτι, παρὰ τὴν δική μας προσευχὴ καὶ κατάνυξη, εἰρηνεύοντας μὲ τὸν ἑαυτὸ μας καὶ μὲ τοὺς ἄλλους, κοινωνώντας τῇ ζωῇ.

2 Ματθ. στ’, 12.
3 Πομπ. Ματθ. ζ’, 13-14.
4 Ι. Χρυσοστόμου, Υπόμνημα εἰς τὴν πρὸς Ἐφεσίους ἐπιστολήν, κ’, ΠΓ 62, 143.
ἀναδεικνύομενοι «πλησίον» δόσων βρίσκονται στὴν ἀνάγκη μὲ ἔργα φιλάνθρωπα, συγχωρώντας ἀλλήλους καὶ δοξολογώντας γιὰ ὅλα τὸ ύπερουράνιο ὄνομα τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἔλεους, δεόμενοι πρὸς Αὐτὸν νὰ εὐδοκῆσει νὰ φθάσουμε μὲ καθαρισμένη τὴ διάνοια μας στὴ Ἁγία καὶ Μεγάλη Ἑβδομάδα καὶ νὰ προσκυνήσουμε μὲ χαρά καὶ ἀγαλλίαση τὴν λαμπροφόρα Ἀνάστασή Του.

Ἁγία καὶ Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή 2024
† Ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως
dιάπυρος πρὸς Θεὸ εὐχέτης ὅλων σας

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Ἀναγνωσθήτω ἐπ᾿ ἐκκλησίας κατὰ τὴν Κυριακήν τῆς Τυρινῆς, ἀμέσως μετὰ τὸ Ἰερὸν Εὐαγγέλιον.

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