“ASCEND THE LADDER OF THE VIRTUES”

On the 4th Sunday of Lent, we annually commemorate a 7th century monastic saint: ST. JOHN CLIMACUS. He is best remembered today for his spiritual writing entitled the “Ladder of Divine Ascent.” In this marvelous work, he compares the quest for spiritual perfection with climbing a 30-step ladder, with each rung corresponding to a year in the life of Christ that was hidden from the world. Even today, many Orthodox monasteries will begin the season of Great Lent with a public reading of Climacus’ book.

While the “Ladder of Divine Ascent” was written primarily for those living a monastic life, it offers wonderful spiritual advice from which we can all benefit. Listen to some of John’s profound comments in his spiritual work:

“In a meek heart, the Lord will find rest.”

“Humility is a divine shelter to prevent us from seeing our achievements.”

“Those who wish to learn the will of God must first suppress their own will.”

“Run from places of sin as from the plague, for when fruit is not present, we have no frequent desire to eat it.”

“Let your prayers be completely simple. Remember that both the Publican and the Prodigal Son were reconciled with God by praying only one phrase.”

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin 

St. Sophia/SS. Faith, Hope & Agape Greek Orthodox Church

April 14, 2024
ENTRANCE HYMNS

Resurrectional Apolytikion – To Fedhron Tis Anastaseos ("The Joyful News of Your Resurrection")
The joyful news of your resurrection was proclaimed by the angel to the women disciples. Having thrown off the curse that fell on Adam, they ran elatedly to tell the apostles: Death has been vanquished; Christ our God is risen from the dead, blessing all the world with his great mercy.

Apolytikion for John Climacus - Tes ton dhakion sou roes ("With the rivers of your tears")
With the rivers of your tears, you have made the barren desert fertile. Through sighs of sorrow from deep within you, your labors have borne fruit a hundred-fold. By your miracles you have become a light, shining upon the world. O John, our Holy Father, pray to Christ our God, to save our souls.

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

Greek
Os elia kата karpos anevlastías, en tais anlais tou Kurioi, Sophía mártis semnē, kai prosýnganhes Xristí karpon òn ētaton, touz tis nýdous sou blástopoû, òi ai gýmon evagón. Anýpēn te kai Ἐλπída sūn tì théferei Pístei, meðh òn dyxónter µetá pánthos ἤmwn.

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 evagón, Agapi te ke Elpida, syn ti theofroni Pisti; meth' on dyxopi 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 – Ti ipermacho ("O Champion General")
O Champion General, I your City now ascribe to you * triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude, * being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. * Inasmuch as you have power unassailable, * from all kinds of perils free me so that unto you * I may cry aloud: * Rejoice, O unwedded Bride.
O Lord, how manifold are your works. You have made all things in wisdom. Verse: Bless the Lord, O my soul.

BRETHREN, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore to himself, saying, “Surely I will bless you and multiply you.” And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.
GOSPEL READING

At that time, a man came to Jesus kneeling and saying: “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.” And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, “How long has he had this?” And he said, “From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us.” And Jesus said to him, “If you can! All things are possible to him who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!” And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again.” And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting.”

April 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 Narthex. Each month 100% of the donations are designated for a local charity.

Donations made to the Philoptochos Poor Box for April benefit Mitzvah Circle, which provides basic material goods, case management, coaching and referrals to those facing poverty, homelessness, serious illness, and difficult circumstances. They are located in Jeffersonville, near Walmart. You can learn more about Mitzvah Circle at www.mitzvahcircle.org. Please pray for those affected who are helped by Mitzvah Circle 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!

HOLY WEEK ITEMS FOR SPONSORSHIP

The following items used during Holy Week still need sponsors.
To sign up please speak to Elaine in the Parish office (610-650-8980) on weekdays.

***PLEASE DO NOT SELECT YOUR ITEM OR SEND IN PAYMENT UNTIL SPEAKING WITH ELAINE IN THE PARISH OFFICE***

In order to give many people the opportunity to sponsor an item, we request that each family sponsor only 1 item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>COST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easter Egg Dye</td>
<td>$45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers for the Crucifix at Service of the Passion</td>
<td>7 @ $45 ea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candles for the Altar (Liquid Wax for refillable candles)</td>
<td>$35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive oil for oil lamps (there is a perpetual need for this)</td>
<td>Please bring directly to church or Parish office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your support of our Parish!
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.

GREEK
Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἁγιάσθητι τὸ ὄνομά σου, ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημα σου, ὥς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπισκόπον δῶς ἡμῖν σήμερον καὶ ἀφεῖς ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὥς καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀφίεσθε τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκητε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν πονηρῶν.

ENGLISH PHONETICS
Pá-ter i-món o en tis ou-ra-nis a-gi-as-thi-to to o-no-ma Sou, el-thé-to I va-si-li-a Sou, ge-ni-thi-to to the-li-ma Sou, os en ou-ra-nó ke e-pí tis ghis.

To-n ár- ton i-món ton e-pí-ou-si-on dos i-mín si-me-ton ke à-fes i-mín ta o-fe-li-ma-ta i-món, os ke i-mís a-fi-e-men tis o-fi-le-tés i-món ke mi i-se-nég-ki s i-más is pi-ras-món, al-la ri-se i-más a-pó tou po-ni-rou.

Phonetics by Dr. Christine Kerdahl, orthodoxtoday.wordpress.com
Today we celebrate the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great. The differences between this Liturgy and the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom are found in the priest's prayers of the Anaphora, between pages 55-63 of your Divine Liturgy books. The Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is celebrated on Christmas Eve, the feast of St. Basil, the Feast of Theophany, Holy Saturday morning, and the Sundays of Great Lent.

Welcome Fr. Christos Christofidis! Fr. Christos Christofidis (and Presvytera Joanna) return once again today to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in Fr. Peter's absence.

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.

Please Update Your Contact Information: Have you moved recently? Are you receiving our weekly emails and occasional phone calls? If any of your contact information has changed (emails, phone numbers, address) please send an email to the Parish office at office@saintsophiachurch.org to update this information. Thank you!

Readers for Salutations to the Theotokos: The final Salutations to the Theotokos are on Friday evening, April 19th beginning at 7:00 pm. We are looking for readers for the English and Greek for that evening. If you are interested in reading, please call the Parish office to put your name on the list.

Sponsor 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. We need sponsors for 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!
Good Friday Luminarias: Once again, our PTO is selling Good Friday Luminarias. During the Good Friday Retreat, our GOYAns will prepare them and set them out around the church for the Good Friday Evening Service. The Luminarias will line the walkways around the church along the path of the Epitaphio. Each Luminaria can be personalized with the name(s) of loved ones who have fallen asleep in the Lord. You may donate as many as you like.

To participate, please send an email to Cathy Cox at catcox1@verizon.net by May 1st with the exact spelling of the names you would like on each Luminaria. Please consider making a $5 candle donation to St. Sophia for each Luminaria using the donation options on our website (PayPal, Venmo or Zelle). If you do not have email, just write the names you would like on each Luminaria on a piece of paper and place it in the candle basket in the Narthex with your donation.

The 47th Annual AHEPA Track and Field Meet will take place on Saturday, May 11th (rain date Sunday May 12th) at 10:00 am at Drexel Hill Middle School. All children ages 5 and up are welcome to participate and no experience is necessary! There will be races and field events starting at 50 meters and up. Adults are welcome to participate as well!

If you’d like to join “Team Saint Sophia“, please email Coach Donna or Coach Lou (donnachristou@gmail.com or christoulou69@gmail.com) with your child’s name and birthdate and they will be added to the roster. We are looking forward to having a great team again this year!!

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!
**Spring General Assembly:** The Spring General Assembly meeting will take place on **Saturday, May 11, 2024, at 10:00 am** in the Fr. John A. Limberakis Cultural Center. Official notices will be sent to homes in mid-April. We look forward to seeing you there.

Please note that to vote in the General Assembly, you must have returned a 2024 Stewardship Commitment (Pledge) Form and be current in your commitment. For your convenience, pledge forms are available at the Pangari and on our website [https://www.saintsophiachurch.org/stewardship](https://www.saintsophiachurch.org/stewardship).

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**SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri. Apr. 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Salutations to the Theotokos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. Apr. 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Sights &amp; Sounds at St. Demetrios</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun. Apr. 14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>8:45 am</td>
<td>Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy – St. John Climacus</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12:30 pm</td>
<td>Greek School (Adults)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. Apr. 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5:30 pm</td>
<td>Great Compline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. Apr. 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Little Angels</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Presanctified Liturgy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs. Apr. 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Greek School (Children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. Apr. 19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Salutations to the Theotokos – The Akathist Hymn</td>
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<td>Sun. Apr. 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>8:45 am</td>
<td>Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy – St. Mary of Egypt</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12:30 pm</td>
<td>Greek School (Adults)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. Apr. 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Great Compline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. Apr. 24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Presanctified Liturgy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Little Angels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs. Apr. 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Greek School (Children)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Lenten Sook Study – in the church hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. Apr. 27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>8:45 am</td>
<td>Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy – Saturday of Lazarus</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pancake breakfast after Liturgy; Palm Cross Folding; Tsourekí Pickup</td>
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**AS PASCHA APPROACHES, WE WILL PROVIDE THE HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE**
17 BAGS COLLECTED TO DATE. GETTING CLOSER TO OUR 40 BAG GOAL!

Orthodoxy on Tap Philadelphia is Inviting Your Young Adults & Young Professionals for a Pan-Orthodox Evening of Prayer, Fellowship, and Discussion w/His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos Friday, April 19th @ 6pm Please bring a Lenten (Vegan) Dish to share!

Lenten Food Drive

...for I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me...
Matthew 25:35

March 18 - April 27
Goal: 40 Bags in 40 Days

Needed Items:
Juice, Peanut Butter, Beans, Lentils, Nuts, Canned Meat, Stews, Vegetables & Fruit, Tomato Paste/Sauce, Soup, Rice, Pasta, Instant Potatoes, Macaroni & Cheese, Crackers, Breakfast Foods and Personal Care Items (Diapers, Soap, Laundry Detergent & Feminine Hygiene Products)

Please DO NOT donate expired food, open packages, perishable food, or glass jars.

Drop Off All Donations in Lobby of Cultural Center

St. Sophia Philoptochos

Tiropites & Spanakopites

Frozen 6-packs - $25

Limited Supplies
We accept Zelle (ladies@saintsophiachurch.org) and Venmo payments
For orders: Kathy T. 610.539.5413

Orthodoxy on Tap Philadelphia

What: Akathist to Theotokos followed by a Lenten Potluck
When: April 19th, at 6:00
Where: Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church
7921 Old York Road, Elkins Park, PA 19027
RSVP in the Philly OOT GroupMe or by emailing forrydaniel@gmail.com

Please bring a vegan dish to share!
Donate Easter Lilies to help decorate our church at Pascha

These plants, at $25.00 each, may be donated “In Honor of” or “In Memory of” loved ones.

Please make checks payable to Saint Sophia Church and return this form and payment to the Parish office by Sunday, April 21, 2024.

Yes, I would like to donate _________ Easter Lily Plant(s) at $25.00 each.

Please accept my gift:
In Memory of:

In Honor of:

Donor’s name and address:

PLEASE FILL OUT THE FORM COMPLETELY

Please return this form to the church along with your check. Payment by Venmo, PayPal or Zelle is also accepted.