

“GLORY TO THEE, WHO HAS SHOWN US THE LIGHT”

A large advertising billboard once had this message: “The darkness can kill you.” It was an ad for electric light bulbs, but what it said is profoundly true: **DARKNESS BRINGS DEATH.** People like the light and fear the darkness. The first thing you do when you come into a dark house is turn on the lights. Even plants seek the brightness of the sun.

One of the most profound statements that Jesus made during His years among us was this: “I am the light of the world. Whosoever comes after Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

What a name this is for our Lord! The Light of the World. Everything outside of Christ is darkness. But with Christ, there is light. It is no accident that burning lamps and candles are closely associated with the Christian faith. When a baby is brought for Baptism, the sponsors hold lighted candles to symbolize that this is now a child of the light, a child of Christ. Candles are lit for every service. And when a person dies and is brought to the church for burial, again lighted candles are placed about the body, to show that even in death there is a lighted way to go to Christ.

Jesus also referred to His followers as light . . . “You are the light of the world . . . So let your light shine, that men might see your good work and glory your Father who is in heaven . . .” Just as, for example, the moon reflects the light of the sun, so we are to reflect the light of Christ.

We are the ones who can now dispel the darkness of fear, despair, evil and sin in the world. There is an old saying that Christ now has no hands but our hands to do His work on earth, no feet but ours to carry Him to the sick, needy, poor and outcast; no tongue but our tongues to teach and comfort and do His bidding in the world. Surely there is much truth to this concept.

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

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www.saintsophiachurch.org email: office@saintsophiachurch.org

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

Rev. Fr. Symeon Williams
frsymeon@saintsophiachurch.org
Metropolis of New Jersey



July 13, 2025
Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council
Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel
Stephen of Mar Sabbas Monastery
Holy Martyr Golinduc



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 The Holy Fathers – Iperdhedoxasmenos i, Christe (“Supremely glorified are You, O Christ”)

Supremely blessed are You, O Christ our God. You established the holy Fathers upon the earth as beacons, and through them You have guided us all to the true Faith, O greatly merciful One, glory be to You.

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

Greek

Ὡς ελαία κατά καρπος ανεβλάστησας, ἐν ταῖς ἀνλαῖς τοῦ Κυρίου, Σοφία μάρτυς σεμνή, καὶ προσήγαγες Χριστῷ καρπὸν ἡ δύτατον, τοὺς τῆς νηδύος σου βλαστούς, δι’ α γώνων εὐαγών, Ἀγάπην τε καὶ Ἐλπίδα σὺν τῇ θεόφρονι Πίστει, μεθων δυσώπει υπέρ 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 nidynos 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 – Prostasia ton Christianon (“O unfailing protection of Christians”)

O unfailing protection of Christians, and our faithful advocate before the Creator: though we are sinners, do not ignore our entreaty; but in your goodness, grant your timely help to us who appeal to you in faith. Quickly make intercession; on our behalf make speedy supplication, O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you.

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 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.

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/LZAHY16LSZ> **OR**
4. Use the QR form below (also found on the box in the narthex) which takes you to the anonymous form.



July 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 to a specific charitable organization selected by Philoptochos.

Donations made to the Philoptochos Poor Box in June and July will be provided to Marvin's Home, a Montgomery County nonprofit that furnishes homes for young adults aged out of foster care. You can learn more about this worthwhile organization at www.marvinshome.org.

Thank you for your generosity in support of St. Sophia Philoptochos's efforts in supporting organizations in our mission to "help the poor, the destitute, the hungry, the aged, the sick, the unemployed, the orphaned, the imprisoned, the widowed, the handicapped, the victims of disasters, to undertake the burial of impoverished persons and to offer assistance to anyone who may need the help of the church through fundraising efforts".



Communion wine as a church donation: Communion wine is always needed by the church. If you would like to donate wine, Fr. Symeon prefers the following wines: Nama Byzantino Sweet Red Wine OR St. John Commandaria (of Cyprus).

Help us keep the vigil lamps burning bright: Olive oil is a perpetual need for the church in order to keep the vigil lamps or καντήλια (kandilia) burning bright. The eternal light burns on the Holy Altar, and the vigil lamps are in front of the icons on the iconostas. If you would like to donate olive oil, you may bring it to the Parish office or the church at any time throughout the year.



Epistle Reading

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to Titus 3:8-15

Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous.

Verse: Blessed are they whose transgressions have been forgiven.

Titus, my son, the saying is sure. I desire you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds; these are excellent and profitable to men. But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile. As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned.

When I send Artemas or Tychicos to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful.

All who are with me send greeting to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Ἀνάγνωσις ἐπιστολῆς Πρὸς Τίτον 3:8-15 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

*Εὐφράνθητι ἐπὶ Κύριον, καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε δίκαιοι.
Στίχ. Μακάριοι, ὧν ἀφέθησαν αἱ ἀνομίαι.*

Τέκνον Τίτε, πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, καὶ περὶ τούτων βούλομαί σε διαβεβαιοῦσθαι, ἵνα φροντίζωσιν καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι οἱ πεπιστευκότες θεῷ. ταῦτά ἐστιν καλὰ καὶ ὠφέλιμα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις · μωρὰς δὲ ζητήσεις καὶ γενεαλογίας καὶ ἔριν καὶ μάχας νομικὰς περιίτασο, εἰσὶν γὰρ ἀνωφελεῖς καὶ μάταιοι. αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον μετὰ μίαν καὶ δευτέραν νουθεσίαν παραιτοῦ, εἰδὼς ὅτι ἐξέστραπται ὁ τοιοῦτος καὶ ἀμαρτάνει, ὧν αὐτοκατάκριτος. Ὅταν πέμψω Ἀρτεμᾶν πρὸς σέ ἢ Τυχικόν, σπουδάσον ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με εἰς Νικόπολιν, ἐκεῖ γὰρ κέκρικα παραχειμάσαι. Ζηνᾶν τὸν νομικὸν καὶ Ἀπολλῶν σπουδαίως πρόπεμψον, ἵνα μηδὲν αὐτοῖς λείπη. μανθανέτωσαν δὲ καὶ οἱ ἡμέτεροι καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι εἰς τὰς ἀναγκαίας χρείας, ἵνα μὴ ὦσιν ἄκαρποι. Ἀσπάζονται σε οἱ μετ' ἐμοῦ πάντες. Ἀσπασαί τοὺς φιλοῦντας ἡμᾶς ἐν πίστει. ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

GOSPEL READING

The Gospel According to Matthew 5:14-19

The Lord said to his disciples, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ

Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Ματθαῖον 5:14-19 Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ μαθηταῖς· Ὑμεῖς ἐστε τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου. οὐ δύναται πόλις κρυβῆναι ἐπάνω ὄρους κειμένη· οὐδὲ καίουσι λύχνον καὶ τιθέασι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τὸν μόδιον, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τὴν λυχνίαν, καὶ λάμπει πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ. οὕτω λαμψάτω τὸ φῶς ὑμῶν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὅπως ἴδωσιν ὑμῶν τὰ καλὰ ἔργα καὶ δοξάσωσι τὸν πατέρα ὑμῶν τὸν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφήτας· οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι, ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι. ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν, ἕως ἂν παρέλθῃ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ, ἰῶτα ἐν ἡ μία κεραία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται. ὃς ἐὰν οὖν λύσῃ μίαν τῶν ἐντολῶν τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων καὶ διδάξῃ οὕτω τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ἐλάχιστος κληθήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν· ὃς δ' ἂν ποιήσῃ καὶ διδάξῃ, οὗτος μέγας κληθήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν.

SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

Fri. July 11 th	6:30 pm	Adult Catechism (led by Fr. Symeon) – in the church hall
Sat. July 12	5:00 pm	Vespers
Sun. July 13 th	8:45 am	Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council
Fri. July 18 th	6:30 pm	Adult Catechism (led by Fr. Symeon) – in the church hall
Sun. July 20 th	8:45 am	Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 6 th Sunday of Matthew; The Glorious Prophet Elias
Sun. July 27 th	8:45 am	Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 7 th Sunday of Matthew
Fri. Aug. 1 st	6:00 pm	Small Paraklesis to the Theotokos
	7:00 pm	Catechism & Potluck (in the church hall)
Sun. Aug. 3 rd	8:45 am	Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 8 th Sunday of Matthew
Mon. Aug. 4 th	6:30 pm	Small Paraklesis to the Theotokos
Tues. Aug. 5 th	6:30 pm	Vespers for Holy Transfiguration
Wed. Aug. 6 th	8:45 am	Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Holy Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Thurs. Aug. 7 th	6:30 pm	Small Paraklesis to the Theotokos
Fri. Aug. 8 th	6:00 pm	Small Paraklesis to the Theotokos
	7:00 pm	Catechism & Potluck (in the church hall)
Sun. Aug. 10 th	8:45 am	Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 9 th Sunday of Matthew
Mon. Aug. 11 th	6:30 pm	Small Paraklesis to the Theotokos
Tues. Aug. 12 th	6:30 pm	Small Paraklesis to the Theotokos
Wed. Aug. 13 th	6:30 pm	Small Paraklesis to the Theotokos
Thurs. Aug. 14 th	4:30 pm	Decoration of the Kouvouklion – As is our tradition, we will decorate the kouvouklion with flowers for Great Vespers and the Divine Liturgy for the Falling Asleep (Dormition) of the Theotokos. Everyone is welcome to bring flowers from their gardens and to stay and help decorate the kouvouklion.
	6:30 pm	Great Vespers & Artoklasia – Dormition of the Theotokos
Fri. Aug. 15 th	8:45 am	Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Dormition of the Theotokos

Live streaming of Services: Liturgical services are now live streamed on **YouTube**. You DO NOT need a **YouTube** account to access the on-line services, nor do you need to subscribe. Simply click on the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/@stsophiaVF>.

Senior Citizen Ministry: St. Sophia's Senior Parea is open to all senior citizens of the community. The meetings take place on Thursdays from 10:00 am to 12 noon.

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Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council
Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel
Stephen of Mar Sabbas Monastery
Holy Martyr Golinduc



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.

Standing versus kneeling on Sundays: Each Sunday is a joyful celebration of Pascha – of Christ's victory over death and sin. We experience the Resurrection from Pascha until Pentecost by standing in prayer during all liturgies and do not kneel; kneeling and prostrations are demonstrations of repentance. As every Sunday is a "little Pascha", we are reminded that the Church teaches us to remain standing on Sundays during the invocation (Ἡ Ἐπίκλησις) of the Holy Spirit (the Consecration of the Body and Blood of our Lord). In contrast, during weekday services throughout the year it is customary to kneel during the Consecration. ***In lieu of kneeling on Sundays, please bow your heads reverently and pray along with the choir.***

Coffee Hour: Thank you to Bart and Lucy Kline for offering today's coffee hour.

Mortgage Reduction Campaign: As of July 1, 2025, our mortgage balance is **\$272,543.63**. Thank you to our Stewards and friends who participated this month, and please help us continue to reduce the mortgage to \$0 in the near future.

WANTED! Coffee Hour Sponsors: Thank you to everyone who has sponsored coffee hour recently. There are still several upcoming Sundays available. If you are interested in sponsoring 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. **The sponsor is responsible for bringing the food, but the church will supply the coffee, creamer, juice, and paper products to eliminate waste and clutter. We ask that the sponsors donate \$25 (made payable to St. Sophia Church) to offset these expenses.** 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

Communion Prayers

I believe and confess, Lord, that You are truly the Christ, the Son of the living God, Who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first. I also believe that this is truly Your pure Body and that this is truly Your precious Blood. Therefore, I pray to You, have mercy upon me, and forgive my transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, in word and deed, in knowledge or in ignorance. And make me worthy, without condemnation, to partake of Your pure Mysteries for the remission of sins and for eternal life. Amen.

Behold, I approach for Divine Communion. O Maker, burn me not as I partake, For You are fire consuming the unworthy. But cleanse me from every stain.

O Son of God, receive me today as a partaker of Your mystical supper. For I will not speak of the mystery to Your enemies, nor will I give You a kiss, as did Judas. But like the thief, I confess to You: Remember me, Lord, in Your Kingdom.

Tremble, O man, as you behold the divine Blood. It is a burning coal that sears the unworthy. The Body of God both deifies and nourishes me: It deifies the Spirit and wondrously nourishes the mind.

You have smitten me with yearning, O Christ, and by Your divine eros You have changed me. But burn up with spiritual fire my sins, and grant me to be filled with delight in You, so that, leaping for joy, I may magnify, O Good One, Your two comings.

How shall I, who am unworthy, enter into the splendor of Your saints? If I should dare to enter into the bridal chamber, my vesture will condemn me, since it is not a wedding garment; and being bound up, I shall be cast out by the angels. Cleanse, O Lord, the filth of my soul, and save me, as You are the one Who loves mankind. In Your love, Lord, cleanse my soul, and save me.

Master Who loves mankind, Lord Jesus Christ, my God, let not these Holy Gifts be to my judgment because I am unworthy, but rather for the purification and sanctification of both soul and body and the pledge of the life and Kingdom to come. It is good for me to cleave unto God and to place in Him the hope of my salvation.

O Son of God, receive me today as a partaker of Your mystical supper. For I will not speak of the mystery to Your enemies, nor will I give You a kiss, as did Judas. But like the thief, I confess to You: Remember me, Lord, in Your Kingdom.

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-fí-e-men tis o-fí-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.

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

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
μή εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς
πειρασμόν, ἀλλά ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπό
τοῦ πονηροῦ.

FOCUS

+ PHILADELPHIA +

Facing the needs of our neighbors, together.

FOCUS North America exists to serve the poor by bringing together Orthodox Christian churches and community partners to provide Food, Occupation, Clothing, Understanding, Shelter, and other assistance to address the needs of local communities.

FOCUS Philadelphia – based out of Saint Sophia and led by John Pogas as Center Director – is committed to understanding and addressing the needs of our neighbors. As Christ said, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of my brothers and sisters, you did for me” - Matthew 25:40

We serve hot meals in

- Norristown every Wednesday evening at 7:00 PM
- Philadelphia every Thursday evening at 8:00 PM

Discover how you can support this vital ministry either by volunteering, donating food, funding or simply spreading the word. Visit www.focusphiladelphia.org to learn more or use our SignUpGenius (link below).



Link to SignUpGenius