JOURNAL



WINTER 2023 Edition

KIMISIS TIS THEOTOKOU GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

HOLMDEL NEW JERSEY



Top News:

Christmas Concert Host / Christmas with Santa / Greek School

Father's Message



CHRISTMAS 2023

Dearest Sisters and Brothers,

"During this special time of the year, we recall the Story of the Nativity: Jesus was born of a Virgin, so that we might be born of God. He took on human flesh, that He might give us His Spirit. As a baby, He lay in a Manger, that we could reside in His Kingdom. He came down to earth, so that we might be allured to Heaven. This all happened because Christ loves us. Our hearts are not made from stone! We can find the ability to assimilate His love in our soul and allow God's love to guide us. Indeed! It is God's Love that surpasses all wisdom and all human glory!"

The wonder we feel at Christmas time is a strong sentiment of hope that reassures us that God is always with us. Perhaps—even for a moment—during the twelve days of Christmas, we will be blessed to feel the innocence and the wonder that Children display near and around the Christmas Tree!

Let us also remember that Christmas is also a time to reflect on the year that just passed: The wars, the injustices, the upheavals, and the demographic changes. Although we are during challenging current events, it is also a time to reflect on hope. The Bible lesson teaches us that Christmas is the light that shined in the darkness! As followers of Jesus, we are challenged to become that light for each other. We're all invited to relive Christ's birth through the innocent eyes of children!

Locally, on the parish level, Christmas reminds us that we are a parish family. We belong to God, but we also belong to one another. Let us pray for each other's successes and advancements in life. Let us pray for each other's divine enlightenment. Let us bolster and uphold each other in prayer, as only a family can do.

A Merry Christmas to All!

Father's Message



2024!

As the 2023 calendar year closes with the Birth of Christ - the Nativity of our Lord for our Salvation, the New Year begins with His Circumcision – dedication, and the most important Feast, His Epiphany, and Manifestation of the Holy Trinity as One God who loves mankind and works earnestly for its salvation.

The feast day of the Baptism of our Lord has a special message for us as citizens of the 21st Century. Although Jesus was proclaimed the King of Kings, His Royalty is of a different texture, of unique elegance, and illustrates authentic grandeur. He reigns in our world with distinct authority...as He commands an unparalleled approach.

After numerous wars and political uprisings our generation today has witnessed people repealling the notion of God. They identify the Divine with the affluent plutocracy and even with materialism. Churches today tend to be adorned with expensive marble and granite and are embellished with gold and silver appointments.

Then, there are others who ignore God, as He is identified with the weak, the powerless, the lower classes of Society. Their orientation in life leans towards adopting a God Who is a Superherotype and renders exceptional super-human powers and commands immense wealth. They seek a God with potency and infinite opulence. Unfortunately...

...both camps have misunderstood Jesus Christ!

God reigns with absolute love. He can never be described as weak nor frail. His love is both dynamic and creative. At one point the disciples were arguing about who would have the honor and be seated next to Jesus as presides from His Heavenly Throne. In Luke 22: 25-27, the Lord tells the disciples (and us) that the greatest person in the world is not the one who is sitting on a throne but rather the person who serves mankind—who serves the impoverished.

The Feast Day of the Theophany asks us to recall our own baptism. We are called to remember the commitment we made to God to lead a life of Holiness. As Baptism was our initiation into the Christian Faith, it defined our Christian Identity.

More importantly, our baptism gifted us with a vision of God. It maintained that Jesus is the King of the world—not in the sense of Lording over us but in the sense that we are expected to model ourselves after Him, while Serving One Another.

Let us understand that January 6th should be a day as a new beginning. Let us commit ourselves to serve the Church and uplift Society, by serving others. Ours is a JOYFUL SERVICE, not done begrudgingly. It is our gladfully offering to others by making THEM our priority and not ourselves. Serving our fellow brother and sister should be one of the primary resolutions for 2024.

On behalf of the Parish Council, the Philoptochos BAHA Society, PTO, Goya, Joy, Hope, Kali Parea, organizations, Sunday School, Greek School, AHEPA, Girl Scouts, Maids of Athena, office staff and my family, wishing upon you and your families a blessed, joyful, and prosperous New Year.

In His Service, Fr. Panagiotis Lekkas

ΚΑΛΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΑ



Χριστούγεννα 2023

Η γέννηση του Χριστού ως μυστήριο της θείας οικονομίας είναι ξένο για το λογικό μας, παράδοξο για τη ζωή μας-ανήκει σε μία άλλη διάσταση, σε μία άλλη συχνότητα. Για να συντονιστούμε μαζί του και να πιάσουμε το κανάλι του, μας χρειάζεται Πνεύμα Άγιο. Και σ' αυτό ακριβώς έρχεται να μας βοηθήσει η Εκκλησία του Χριστού. Με το τρόπο της μας παίρνει από το χέρι και μας οδηγεί στη Βηθλεέμ- μας βάζει μέσα στο σπήλαιο και μας γονατίζει μπροστά στη φάτνη. Εκεί, όταν εμείς με ταπείνωση δεχθούμε να γίνουμε μαθητές της, μας διδάσκει το μεγάλο γεγονός, πώς ο Θεός έγινε άνθρωπος.

Βέβαια, ίσως κάποιος αντιτείνει ότι όλος ο κόσμος σχεδόν τα ξέρει τα Χριστούγεννα, και μάλιστα οι περισσότεροι τα γιορτάζουν κιόλας, ως χριστιανοί. Εν τούτοις, δεν πρόκειται γι' αυτό. Η γέννηση του Χριστού δεν έχει καμιά σχέση με την κοσμική γιορτή, που φέρνει το όνομά της και περιορίζεται σε ορισμένα τυπικά θρησκευτικά καθήκοντα. Αυτή είναι ίσως μία θαυμάσια γιορτή για το πεπτικό μας σύστημα ή για τις εθιμοτυπίες μας, αλλά δεν προσφέρει τίποτε σ' αυτούς που πεινούν και διψούν τη δικαιοσύνη, σ' αυτούς που μ' όλες τις ανέσεις και τα αγαθά τους μένουν ανικανοποίητοι, διότι τους λείπει ο Θεός.

Για το μικρό ποίμνιο, για τους χριστιανούς όχι της ταυτότητος, αλλά της συνειδήσεως, τα Χριστούγεννα είναι ένα μυστήριο απρόσιτο και στο πιο μεγάλο σοφό χωρίς το θείο φωτισμό. Είναι ακόμη μία γιορτή που θα τους βοηθήσει να ζήσουν την ενανθρώπηση του Χριστού όχι σαν ένα γεγονός του καιρού εκείνου, αλλά σαν μία πραγματικότητα του σήμερα. Διότι αυτό θα πει γιορτάζω- φεύγω απο το χρόνο μου και από τον τόπο μου, και μπαίνω στην αιώνια ώρα του Θεού, για να ζήσω την ιστορία του σαν ιστορία μου. «Σήμερον ο Χριστός γεννάται», ψάλλει η Εκκλησία μας σπάζοντας τα χρονικά και τοπικά όρια και μεταφέροντας τους πιστούς σε ένα διαρκές παρόν. Αυτός ακριβώς είναι και ο κυριότερος τρόπος που διαθέτει, για να μας μυήσει στο σχέδιο της θείας οικονομίας. Η λατρεία, ο λόγος του Θεού, τα μυστήρια, όλα αποβλέπουν στο να μας ελευθερώσουν από τα δεσμά του τόπου και του χρόνου και ή να φέρουν το γεγονός στην εποχή μας ή να μεταφέρουν εμάς στην εποχή του. Αυτή τη δυνατότητα τη δίνει μόνο η Εκκλησία, διότι μόνο αυτή έχει θε-ανθρώπινο χαρακτήρα, χαρακτήρα που αγκαλιάζει και τον άνθρωπο και το Θεό, ούτως ώστε να βρίσκεται και μέσα και έξω από το χρόνο. Αφ' ενός στέκεται κοντά και στον πιο μεγάλο αμαρτωλό, και αφ' ετέρου ζει στην αιωνιότητα του Θεού.

Όταν αυτό είναι το βαθύτερο νόημα κάθε γιορτής, μπορούμε πολύ καλά να καταλάβουμε, πόσο ανταποκρίνεται ο εορτασμός των περισσότερων ανθρώπων στη σημασία των Χριστουγέννων. Το ένα αποτελεί αποκάλυψη Θεού, να γίνουμε θεοί όπως ο Θεός έγινε άνθρωπος, να φύγουμε από τη γη στον ουρανό όπως ο Θεός έφυγε από τον ουρανό και ήλθε στη γη- το άλλο αποτελεί μία ακόμη ευκαιρία εθιμοτυπίας, μία γιορτή ρουτίνας και ένα κατεστημένο αμαρτίας.

ΚΑΛΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΑ

ΚΑΛΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΑ



2024

Ενώ το 2023 κλείνει με την γιορτή της ενανθρωπήσεως του Κυρίου μας. Το 2024 ανοίγει με τις εορτές της Περιτομής του Χριστού μας, του Αγ. Βασιλείου και συνεχίζει με την υπέρλαμπρή γιορτή της Βαπτίσεως του Κυρίου μας και της Επιφανείας της Αγ. Τριάδος ως κατεξοχήν ενεργό Θεό στην σωτήρια του ανθρώπου.

Από τα Ευαγγέλια γνωρίζομε ότι ο Ιησούς είχε επικοινωνία με τον Ιωάννη τον Βαπτιστή. Ο Ιησούς, επί μακράν χρονικό διάστημα επισκεπτόταν συχνά τον Βαπτιστή και τους μαθητές του και αντάλλαζαν απόψεις επί διαφόρων θεμάτων της κοινωνικής επικαιρότητας και της θρησκευτικής καταστάσεώς του λαού, καθώς και της πνευματικής ηγεσίας του.

Η κατάσταση ήταν αποκαρδιωτική. Κυριαρχούσε η υποκρισία και ο φαρισαϊσμός στο θρησκευτικό χώρο, η διαφθορά και η ανηθικότητα στο κοινωνικό. Ο λαός, αν και αποζητούσε ποιμένες σωστούς, την εποχή εκείνη είχε εγκαταλειφθεί στο έλεος ανίκανων και διεφθαρμένων αρχόντων. Έτσι αιτιολογείται ο δριμύς κριτικός λόγος και το πύρινο επικριτικό κήρυγμα του Ιωάννη του Βαπτιστή, που στο τέλος προκάλεσε την οργή των ανθρώπων της εξουσίας και την τελική καταδίκη του με αποκεφαλισμό.

Μη ξεχνάμε ότι ο Ιησούς και ο Ιωάννης, πέρα από τη βαθιά πνευματική εκτίμηση που έτρεφε ο ένας προς τον άλλο, συνδέονταν και με συγγενικό δεσμό. Υπήρχε έντονη συνεργασία και άμεση σχέση του πνευματικού κινήματος του Βαπτιστή και του σωτηριολογικού έργου του Κυρίου.

Η ζωή του Βαπτιστή μας θυμίζει ότι η καθημερινή ζωή δεν είναι πάντοτε μια ζωή ποιητική, μελωδική, μια ζωή εξάρσεων και εμπνεύσεων. Τότε, όπως και σήμερα, η καθημερινή ζωή με την οικονομική δυσπραγία, ήταν προσγειωμένη, καταπιεστική, και ταπεινωτική. Πολλοί άνθρωποι παραπονούνται σήμερα ότι η ζωή τους έχει χάσει κάθε νόημα και αξία.

Ο Ιωάννης ο Βαπτιστής μας δίδαξε με τα λόγια του και με το παράδειγμα του ότι, η καθημερινή ζωή αποκτά νόημα, δύναμη και ομορφιά όταν ζούμε τη ζωή μας με κέντρο τον Ιησού Χριστό.

Η καθημερινή ζωή είναι μια σύνθεση από τραγούδια χαράς και από θρήνους λύπης. Είναι ένας ανοικτός λογαριασμός από επιτυχίες και αποτυχίες. Όταν όμως σφραγίσουμε όλα τα στοιχεία της ζωής, γίνονται οικοδομικοί λίθοι της ζωής μας. Με την ανάμνηση του Ιησού και με τη παρουσία της αγάπης Του στη ζωή μας, αποκτούμε νόημα θετικό και αξία ουσιαστική.

Ο Ιωάννης, με τη ζωή του, μας δίδαξε τα γνωρίσματα του αληθινού ταπεινού ανθρώπου. Για τον λόγο αυτό, ο Χριστός τον ανύψωσε σε ένα σημείο που δεν έχει ποτέ υψωθεί άλλος άνθρωπος. Ο Ματθαίος, στο Ευαγγέλιο του, (Ματθ. 11: 11) μας λέγει "Δεν γέννησε μάνα σε όλο τον κόσμο, άνθρωπο μεγαλύτερο από τον Βαπτιστή Ιωάννη."

Η Εκκλησία, μας καλεί να μιμηθούμε το υπέροχο παράδειγμα του Αγίου Ιωάννη του Βαπτιστή που ήταν παράδειγμα που συνδυάζει ταπεινοφροσύνη και αγάπη με αγιότητα. Αυτές τις αρετές θα πρέπει να αγωνιστούμε κατά το 2024 για να τις αποκτήσουμε και να προοδεύσουμε πνευματικά.

Το Εκκλησιαστικό Συμβούλιο, το προσωπικό τού γραφείου και όλες οι οργανώσεις της ενορίας της Κοιμήσεως της Θεοτόκου σας ευχόμαστε χρονιά πολλά και ευλογημένο το καινούργιο έτος 2024. Σας παρακαλώ πολύ στην συνεισφορά του 2024 να προσφέρετε περισσότερο από ότι προσφέρατε την περσινή χρονιά για τις ποιμαντικές ανάγκες τής ενορίας μας.

ΚΑΛΟ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΛΟΓΗΜΕΝΟ 2024

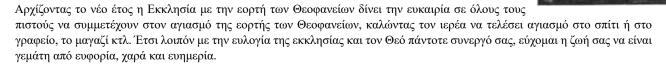
House Blessing 2024



Αγαπητοί ενορίτες,

Τα Άγια Θεοφάνεια του Κυρίου ημών Χριστού είναι η σημαντικότερη εορτή της Ορθοδόξου Εκκλησίας στην αρχή του Νέου Έτους. Είναι ημέρα αγιασμού και Πνευματικής ευφροσύνης των Ορθοδόξων Χριστιανών. Η ευαγγελική επιβεβαίωση του Θεού Πατέρα για το Μεσσιανικό έργο του Χριστού επί της γης, αποτελεί θρησκευτικό κίνητρο για κάθε ένα από εμάς να αναβαπτίσουμε τα θρησκευτικά μας πιστεύω και να ανακαλύψουμε το νόημα της Χριστιανοσύνης στην επί γης ζωή μας.

Εύχομαι ο Θεός να σας χαρίζει την «εν Χριστώ» νουθεσία στην ζωή σας, έτσι ώστε να αντιληφθείτε το ουσιαστικό νόημα που κατέχουμε ως Χριστιανοί μέσα στην κοινωνία.



Σας παρακαλώ να συμπληρώσετε το απόκομμα με τα απαραίτητα προσωπικά σας στοιχεία που χρειάζονται για την επίσκεψη του Ιερέως και να σταλεί πίσω στο γραφείο. Για οποιαδήποτε περαιτέρω πληροφορία ή διευκρίνηση, είμαι στη διάθεσή σας, (732)749-7564.

My beloved friends and parishioners,

The Feast of the Epiphany of our Lord is one of the holiest and most significant events in the Life of Christ and of His Holy Church. As we hear the Voice of the Father reveal the true identify of Jesus Christ, $\alpha \zeta$ His "Beloved Son" in the Jordan River, let us open our ears, eyes, minds, heart, and souls and accept Him $\alpha \zeta$ our personal Lord, Savior and God.

My prayer is that we become vessels through which the Grace of the Holy Spirit will flow and enter the heart of all the people, illuminating their minds and sanctifying their lives so that they may either begin, or continue to live a life in Christ.

Furthermore, having participated in the Holy celebration of the Baptism of Christ and witnessed the Divine revelation (Theophany), and having received and partaken of the Blessed and Sanctified Waters, we are also called upon to sanctify our homes or our place of business. In accordance with the tradition of our Holy Orthodox Church, if you desire to have your home and place of business blessed, please do not hesitate to call the parish office at (732)749-7564. I will be most happy to contact you and make the proper arrangements for a pastoral visitation. Please fill out the attached form and return it to the church office.

WISHING UPON YOU THE GRACE, LOVE AND BLESSINGS OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, AND A HAPPY HEALTHY AND BLESSED YEAR!

Prev. Protopresbyter Panagiotis Lekkas Presiding Priest

Για την τέλεση Αγιασμού στο σπίτι, γρα	ιφείο, ή επιχείρηση, παρακαλώ τον Ιερέα να επικοινωνήσει μαζί μου
ONOMA/NAME	TΗΛΕΦΩΝΟ/TELEPHONE #:
ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΣΗ/ADDRESS:	
ΚΑΤΑΛΛΗΛΟΤΕΡΗ ΗΜΕΡΑ ΚΑΙ ΩΡΑ/ Ρ	PREFERRED DATE & TIME:

Networkiing Event 2/8/24



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\$40 ONLINE REGISTRATION, INCLUDES FULL OPEN BAR, A SELECTION OF APPS, AND ENTERTAINMENT!

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Education Seminar 2/10/24





GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

January 11, 2024

To the Very Rev. and Rev. Clergy
Esteemed Members of the Parish Councils
Directors and Faculty of the Religious Education Programs of the
Northern New Jersey Region of the
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey

My beloved in the Lord,

I hope and pray that this letter finds all of you well, both physically and spiritually as we enter into the New Year 2024.

The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey in its continued efforts to cultivate and enhance the Religious Education Schools of the parishes, as well as to assist our dedicated teachers in better education our beloved children, will be hosting a Religious Education Teachers Seminar for the Northern New Jersey Region on Saturday, February 10, 2024, at the Ss. Nicholas Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church located at 80 Laurel Ave in Roseland, New Jersey. The seminar will begin at 9:00am and will conclude at approximately 2:00pm with lunch provided.

Please know that all teachers serving in our communities are expected to attend and participate in this important Seminar. However, although this Seminar is intended for the teachers, all those interested are invited to attend. Please RSVP directly to the Ss. Nicholas, Constantine and Helen parish at 973-251-2920 by February 2, 2024, in order to allow for proper preparations to be made the host community.

Praying that our loving Lord continues to bless you, your families and all the dedicated faithful of our sacred Metropolis, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

† APOSTOLOS

F Metropolitan Agostolog

Metropolitan of New Jersey

Camp Good Shephard







CAMP GOOD SHEPHERD

CGS MD: JUNE 15-22

CGS NJ:JUNE 23-29

CGS VA SESSION 1: JULY 7-13

CGS VA SESSION 2: JULY 14-20

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Registration Link: Scan or Click Below



More Information: https://www.nj.goarch.org/camp-good-shepherd

Camp Good Shephard











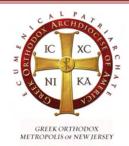






Clergy Laity 4/9/24





SAVE THE DATE



2024 Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey Clergy Laity Assembly and Philoptochos Convention

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

The Waterfall 3416 Philadelphia Pike Claymont, DE 19703

More information will be forthcoming.

Letter from the President



Hello Kimisis Family,

It is my pleasure and honor on behalf of the Parish Council to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy 2024! We pray you and your loved ones are sharing wonderful memories together.

Our ministries have had a busy fall season. The members of our Altar, Sunday School, Greek School, PTO, Joy and Hope, GOYA, Greek Folklore Dancing, Girl Scouts, Maids of Athena, Volleyball & Basketball Teams, and our newest organization, Kimisis Preschool Group have been very busy interacting through religion, culture, and volunteerism. If you are interested in still registering for any organization, please visit our website at https://www.kimisis.com/parish-ministries/ministries or contact the office with any questions.

As stated in Ephesians 4:16: "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." Kimisis has built itself up in love. We are very blessed to have ministries, businesses, and individuals who donate above and beyond to the church's operations and improvements. Your stewardship and donations are truly appreciated.

On December 9th, our community successfully hosted "A Christmas Concert" with the blessings and presence of His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of NJ on behalf of the Metropolis of NJ. Thank you to Fr. Panagiotis Lekkas, all our volunteers, donors, choirs, and guests for an inspirational evening.

We look forward to spending more beautiful events with all of you in the upcoming year through our various ministries beginning with Vasilopita Sunday, January 7th hosted by our Ladies' Philoptochos. Please see all our upcoming events on our website and Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/KimisisHolmdel/.

Although 2024 is just beginning, please keep your calendars marked for our annual Bayshore Greek Festival, June 6, 7, 8, & 9. Our festival committee needs your help! Let us continue to make each year more successful than the last. New ideas and volunteers are always welcomed! Contact me at 1234properties@gmail.com if you would like to join the committee. The future of our church, religion, and traditions rest on the continued support of all our families.

As we enter the new year, please keep our Kimisis families in your prayers. I look forward to seeing you in this joyous occasion as we celebrate the birth of Christ and share in the spirit of Christmas together.

Καλά Χριστούγεννα και ευτυχισμένο το νέο έτος.

Respectfully,

Despina "Debbie" Mattos President, Kimisis Parish Council

Stewardship News



On behalf of Father Panagioti Lekkas, the Parish Council, and the Stewardship Committee, we thank every Steward and Family's support of the Stewardship Program of Kimisis Tis Theotokou Greek Orthodox Church. Your Stewardship commitment is a testament to your commitment and dedication to your spiritual growth, the continuity of our beloved Orthodox Faith and the legacy of our Community of Kimisis Tis Theotokou.

As a financial update, at the end of November, after a vibrant Stewardship Sunday held on November 19th, we have 298 Stewards contributing to Stewardship with their treasure. This brings our total to \$223,906. There are 161 families that have paid their pledge in full and another 137 families who are paying with weekly envelopes, or online giving.

We also thank the many who give of their time and talent and serve as critical pillars built upon the foundation of treasure that, together, ensures that our community can keep its doors open for all the Faithful.

As a Stewardship Committee, as a Parish Council, and more importantly, as a Community, we are firmly committed to having open dialogue, clear and effective communication with our parishioners and transparency that will help drive our mission and frame our vision for our community. Stewardship for many is viewed as the community's fundraising division to ensure that our mission is fulfilled daily, our programs are properly funded and our church is vibrant. And while this is accurate, stewardship is much more than that.

To be a good steward is to not only be a good caretaker while you are alive, but to create a lasting legacy that transcends generations and lives in you and your family and in the community for eternity. God endures while we lose founders of our community, loved ones and friends.

There's the joke about the nosy neighbor attending a rich woman's funeral. Peering into the coffin with a friend, he asked, "How much money did she leave?" The friend smiled and replied, "All of it, of course!"

As Job laments, we come into the world naked and leave the same way. We may be dressed in our best clothing on our way out, but we take it to the grave, not the afterlife.

The joke and Job reveal a basic concept of stewardship: We don't really own anything. We may take possession of it for a period of time, but we eventually leave it for others.

Yet we spend so much of our energy and life accumulating more- as if we were going to have it forever, as we were going to live forever. Often times, in our pursuit, we shortchange the most valuable treasures – loving the Lord our God with all our being and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

That's why the Bible consistently warns us about wealth. Jesus repeatedly points out the pitfalls. Money and possessions can turn us inward, stunting our growth and preventing us from being the people God created us to be.

Stewardship News



Generosity is the preventative cure for this malady.

In the coming months, you will see a refreshed Parish Mission and Vision Statement and a fresh approach towards Stewardship focused on the Legacy of our Church. There will be an article in the quarterly KCU and other updates through email and in the Sunday bulletins. Just as our families are part of our legacy discussions, the church can play a vital role in efficiently leaving assets to heirs and guaranteeing the church and the community are vibrant for decades to come.

As such, beginning in 2024, the Stewardship Committee will be hosting Stewardship forums, open to all stewards in small groups to exchange ideas, discuss issues, and strategize. We want to hear what church means to you, we want to hear how the community serves you, but most importantly, we want to hear what we can be doing better for each and every one of you and keep our community on solid footing. We look forward to these assemblies in 2024 with the date of the first forum to be determined shortly.

Stewardship Committee of Kimisis Tis Theotokou GOC Holmdel, NJ

Steve Bontales

Ed Haliotis

Rosanna Panagakos

Kostas Koufidis



The whirlwind of this season is upon us and the fun's not over yet! I woke up smiling like a little kid today, knowing Christie and I were mere hours away from delivering Christmas cheer to a Keansburg classroom we were told really needed it. As I compile this email of our winter initiatives, I can't help but think how lucky we are to be part of such a long-standing group who has already garnered the trust of so many organizations. These days, it's not easy to raise your hand to help. Imagine walking into a school, shelter or food pantry with a heart burning to provide aid or to do a job that makes someone's life easier or better in the moment. The paperwork, background checks, and line of questioning may deter many of us from stepping in. But through Ladies Philoptochos, we bear this shield that allows us to witness the most genuine gratitude - the kind from those who need the help most. Nothing will top hearing "This is the best day ever!" from a group of six year-olds giggling with glee and gumdrop-sticky hands as Christie reads them a Christmas story. Thank you to those who paved the path for us, thank you to those who are just joining us - it's going to be a fun and very rewarding ride!

Let's take a look back on some of the opportunities we've had to help this winter:

Thanksgiving/Christmas Baskets: In November, our Ladies Philoptochos chapter gathered to compile baskets full of everything a family may need for a holiday meal. Thank you so much to everyone who donated non-perishables like corn, mashed potatoes, coffee and desserts as well as all those turkeys! While we will always respect the privacy of the recipients, please know your actions have helped spread holiday cheer to many families in need.









Holiday Appreciation Dinner: Because elves need rest too, our chapter gathered at The Greek Spot for a very cozy dinner last month. What many of you may not know is that I pushed to hold this appreciation dinner on what would have been my grandmother's 98th birthday. While she gained her angel wings this time last year, I wanted to hold tight to our tradition of helping others in need. I wanted to celebrate every one of you who gives time, donations, supplies and most of all, heart, to any and every cause presented to us. At Christmas time, we all put up ornaments and oftentimes, they come with a story. I wanted <u>your</u> story to be something you can hang on your tree year after year to remember that at this moment in time, you are providing the kind of help that matters most.







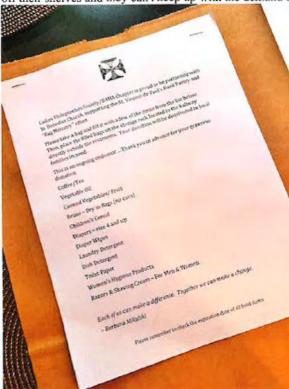
One-off social service cases: Our causes aren't always perfectly planned and wrapped with a bow. Sometimes it's just Father Panagiotis being passed a note saying someone needs the help. You all jumped up at the opportunity to help with our very quick coat-drive this month and again, while you may not see the smiles directly, know that your generosity is the reason a family stays warm this winter.

Saint Basil Academy: Last Sunday, Christie and her family attended the Saint Basil Christmas celebration. The children treated over 200 guests to Christmas carols and Christie had the opportunity to give a lovely set of books and 25 pairs of sneakers (God bless you and your family, Vasilia!) to the children on behalf of our LP chapter. This is in addition to the playroom items, books and other gifts you donated, which Christie delivered in-person earlier this winter. Archbishop Elpidophoros is seen in the pictures below with the SBA children (and little Callie!).

Operation Classroom: How did we end up in Ms. Corrin Ganley's classroom this fine morning? We were actually referred by Alexis from Keyport Central School. If you'll remember, we fundraised for Alexis's classroom last quarter and we recently learned she was just chosen for her school's Teacher of the Year Award! We're grateful to continue getting the chance to visit classrooms in our community who need an extra pep in their step. Today's visit included a Christmas story, a few rounds of Gumdrop bingo, a Christmas village cupcake party and of course, we got to deliver all the school supplies you all donated. If you know of any classroom that could use the help, please let us know so we can include them in our next Operation Classroom. All I have to say is God Bless Teachers!



Benedict's in the new year but for now, if you're in the giving spirit, please grab one of the bags pictured below from the silver rack at our church and return with any items you can donate. We've been told these items are flying off their shelves and they can't keep up with the demand so any contribution helps!



Blessing Bag Brigade: You'll be hearing from Joanna shortly. She will share a list of the items we will be gathering, packaging and delivering in the new year for those with home and food insecurity.

Limage.png

Spotlight \langler: Our very own Theodora Papsavas was chosen as her school's Governor Murphy Educational Service Professional of the Year! Huge congrats, Theo!

General Meeting: Our next Ladies Philoptochos General Meeting is Sunday, January 21, 2024, in the gym after church services. Look for a table with our large blue poster. If you haven't paid your membership dues (or if you're not sure you have:)), please respond directly to me or to our Treasurer Harriet Callis (callis@aol.com) to get that squared away before the new year. As you know, these dues help fund many of the initiatives above as well as the one-off social service cases that come our way.

If you've made it this far in my email, God bless you! Thank you for your time, your ongoing support and let's make 2024 even brighter for those who need us most!

Warmest,

Ana

Ana Cosmas President Ladies Philoptochos Society Kimisis Tis Theotokou Greek Orthodox Church - Holmdel

Sunday School



Sunday School Winter Update

December News:

Communion Breakfast – December 10 Nativity – December 17, 2023

January & February:

Classes every Sunday

March News:

First Day of Lent – March 18 Sunday of Orthodoxy – 3/24

Highlights from our 2023 Christmas Nativity



Greek School



Kimisis Greek School

Dear Friends and Family,

As we approach the end of 2023 with our incredible Kimisis Greek School, we are delighted to share some highlights from the busy and festive season of events and learning that our students have experienced.

Our students showcased their talents at the recent **PTO Christmas Luncheon**, filling the air with the joyous sounds of traditional carols. The performance was a testament to their dedication and hard work in honing their musical and Greek language skills. It was a heartwarming event that brought our community together to celebrate the spirit of the season. Thank you PTO for organizing such a wonderful event. If you would like to join the PTO, email greekschoolptokimisis@gmail.com

On December 2nd, some of our students went on a field trip to see "Elf the Musical."

What made the experience even more special was the opportunity to meet the cast, providing our students with a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the world of theater.

LOOKING AHEAD: *Greek School Vasilopita* Cutting is on Tuesday, January 9, 2024.

Three Hierarchs Celebration on January 29, 2024 where some of our students will recite poems. We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year!

Best wishes,

Evangelia Dounis, Director of Kimisis Greek School



Greek School PTO



Kimisis Tis Theotokou, Holmdel NJ Greek PTO

Our Mission

Our goal at Greek School PTO is to work closely together with our church & Greek School administrators to provide a fun & memorable experience for our Greek School Children. Our Board members along with the help of parents host a number of events annually, with the sole purpose of gathering our community and celebrating our Greek culture & faith.



Team

President - Kara Rexinis
Vice President - Helen Koufidis
Treasurer- Stephanie Fotinos
Secretary - Georgia Aravantinos
Corresponding Secretary - Catie
Haliyiannis

Wishing you

all Καλές

Γιορτές και

Καλό Χειμώνα

Our Upcoming Winter Events

Apokriatiko Glendi March 18th 2024

Greek Independence Day Coffee Hour March 24th 2024

Agia Skepi Tsourekia Sale / Easter
April 28th 2024

PTO Executive Board

President - Kara Rexinis
Vice President - Helen Koufidis
Treasurer - Stephanie Fotinos
Recording Secretary - Georgia Aravantinos
Corresponding Secretary - Catie Haliyiannis

Apokriatiko Glendi 3/16/24





Adults \$100 Teens \$50 Kids (12 & Under) \$40 Dancers \$40

Raffles 1 Sheet \$20 6 sheets \$100 Luxury prize 1 key \$25 - 5 keys \$100

RSVP by March 8th No Tickets Sold At Door

> Reserve your seats Scan QR



Or contact us greekschoolptokimisis@gmail.com 201-753-0880

https://my.cheddarup.com/c/apokriatiko-glendi-87811

Kimisis Dancers



Kimisis Dancers - Winter of 2023-2024

The Kimisis Youth Dancers started the year off with a performance at the Philoptochos

Harvest Luncheon on October 15. At the festival the three youth groups dance separately, so it is
always nice to see all three groups dancing together at this wonderful event. Two of our GOYA

Dancers, Christina X. and Sofia C, performed with the Hellenic Dancers of New Jersey at the
same event, proudly demonstrating their Hellenic heritage. The Kimsis Youth Dancers have been
practicing hard every Monday for future performances at the Apokriatiko Glendi in March 2024
and the Festival in June 2024.

The Kimisis GOYA Dancers will be competing at the Metropolis of New Jersey Hellenic Folk Dance Festival (FDF) in Annapolis, Maryland from January 12 to 14. This year we have 16 of our GOYA dancers attending to compete against churches from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. Last year the Kimisis GOYA Dancers performed a suite of dances from Pontos and this year they will perform a selection of dances from Macedonia. Best of luck to our GOYANs who will be competing!



Maids of Athena



For the Maids of Athena chapter Theodora #282, we're wrapping up a very fulfilling year. In 2024, we'll be celebrating our sisterhood more than ever with bonding events such as an ice skating night and a Valentine's Day party. We plan to take the new year slowly and with grace, for a chance to regroup and reset. On February 11, our chapter plans to have a hot chocolate fundraiser, where we'll sell delicious cocoa at Kimisis during coffee hour.

These past few months have been nothing but hard work and lots of fun. To recap, we welcomed four new girls into our chapter just a few months ago. Back in September, our Bingo night was a huge accomplishment for chapter #282, as it was one of our biggest events yet. Our sisters got all dressed up for our chapter's spooky Halloween party and we had a cozy book club meeting in October. We celebrated Thanksgiving together with a Friendsgiving, where we shared what we were thankful for over a potluck dinner. Also in November was our art supply drive in support of the local boys and girls club, where we collected and assembled bags full of items to be donated. We brought out our true pastry skills for our very successful autumn bake sale. In the final month of 2023, our chapter has had a festive Christmas party where we crafted handmade,





Maids of Athena



embellished Christmas wreaths that were previously ordered by our fellow parishioners.

We can't wait to see what 2024 has in store for our chapter and we accept any challenges and new experiences that come our way. Our chapter has grown immensely, in numbers and in strength and we are thrilled to see it blossom even more in the upcoming future.





Maids of Athena Blood Drive 3/30/24





Girl Scout Troop 337



Kimisis Tis Theotokou Holmdel Girl Scout Troop 337 - by Troop Leader Stephanie Karatzia

Our Girl Scout Troop is a group of 14 energetic young Girls who enjoy being together and learning new skills. In the Fall, we learned the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law and how we incorporate the Law into everyday life. The girls enjoyed a hayride at a local pumpkin farm, made Fall crafts, made new friends, and talked about a community project. At each meeting, the girls discuss how they can be helpful. They chose a "coat drive" to help a local charity and brought new and gently worn coats to help those in need. For the Christmas season, they joined with the Kimisis GOYA and brought cheer to residents at a local nursing home where they sang carols and delivered Christmas greeting cards to the residents. Many thanks to the GOYA advisors for allowing the Girl Scouts to join in this community service, to Mrs. Helen Certa for providing the greeting cards and Miss Vanessa Haliotis who offers her help at every meeting. In January, the girls will participate in a candle ceremony and receive their earned badges. We will cut a Vasilopita and sing the New Year Kalanda. All girls are welcome to begin working on their Religious Recognition Award program. Our next plan is to meet at Girl Scout Camp, hike the trails and get familiar with camping outdoors. To prepare, we will talk about what is needed for a hike, and meet at Holmdel Park for a brisk walk through the trails. For more information on Troop 337 contact cheryl.bontales@gmail.com. Have a Happy New Year 2024







GOYA Journal Updates

Author: Lia Belitsis, GOYA executive board secretary

The concluding months of 2023 marked the end of a productive and fulfilling year for Kimisis GOYA. With the dedication of our advisors, executive board, and GOYAns, we're able to proudly enter the new year reministing all the joyous memories made as a GOYA family.



Back in October, our very own executive board president, Alana Pytel, ran for Miss Goya. After advancing in the competition, Alana gracefully delivered an eloquent and thoughtful response in front of the judges carning herself first runner up at the pageant. Alana's confidence and participation in the pageant represented our Kimisis GOYA as a whole.



Soon after, our group hosted a Harvest Night with the St. George Ocean GOYA, where everyone had the chance to dress in costume, play games, and make new friends. This successful event allowed both GOYAs to come together as one through Halloween festivities.

In the month of November, our GOYAns' bowling skills were put to the test at the annual Bowling Tournament.

Everyone had so much fun that a few weeks later, we all assembled teams and met up for some bonding time at a bowling hangout.







GOYA Sights & Sounds 2/25/24





Northern NJ Yal 3/9/24







NORTHERN NJ YAL

BEEFSTEAK FUNDRAISER

Cash Bar | Raffle Baskets | DJ & Dancing
Open to everyone! Families are welcome!

March 9, 2024 | 6:30PM-11PM

Dinner starts promptly at 7:15

The Metropolitan Cathedral of St. John The Theologian 353 E Clinton Ave, Tenafly, NJ

To purchase your tickets & for more information, please visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nnjyal-beefsteak-fundraisertickets-797288490337

All proceeds to benefit the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey

Northern NJ YAL Ministry



nnjyal@gmail.com



@nnjyal

GOYA Clothing Drive 3/23/24





COLLECTING DATE & TIMES:

SATURDAY MARCH 23 10:00 AM-1:00 PM

Donate Your Unwanted Clothes, Sheets, Towels, Blankets, Belts, Ties, Handbags, Coats, Shoes, & Stuffed animals! Help Others to Stay Warm



Kimisis Tis Theotokou Greek Orthodox Church 20 Hillcrest Road Holmdel, NJ Back Parking Lot

MORE INFO: VPYTEL@HOTMAIL.COM

Kimisis Playgroup



The Kimisis Playgroup is open to our community's children from ages 0-4. Meetings take place once or twice a month in the church gym. We currently meet on Wednesday mornings at 11am. Meetings include structured activities, storytime, singing, dancing and unstructured playtimes. Children of all abilities are welcome, and must have a parent, grandparent or other caregiver with them at all times. Older siblings are welcome to join in on the fun as well. Our hopes are that our precious children can form bonds with their peers, setting a foundation for lifelong friendships. Additionally, meetings give our children the opportunity to become more familiar and comfortable inside church walls and on church grounds. Parents and caregivers are also given an outlet to socialize with other parents and caregivers caring for children of the same age.

During our November meeting, the children prepared an imaginary Thanksgiving picnic. The older children had fun working together to prepare the meal in a play kitchen, and helped serve the younger children. The children made a turkey craft which helped improve their fine motor skills, and worked on their gross motor skills by sweeping play leaves into a square. We ended our meeting with a dance party. Please e-mail Vivian Silverman at vsilverman95@gmail.com with any questions or if you are interested in joining.

Hellenic Dancers



The Hellenic Dancers of NJ to Celebrate a Milestone

Do you know that the famous Hellenic Dancers of NJ call Kimisis home and are celebrating our 50th anniversary as the gold standard of Greek folk dance troupes?

Please join us as we callback alumni dancers from as far back as 1972 to take part in a performance as well as a spectacular show from the very talented current dancers with the hundreds of beautiful handmade authentic costumes from every region of Greece.

Our 50th Anniversary Gala takes place on Sat. Feb. 3 at the beautiful Pines Manor in Edison, N.J.

Come join the celebration! OPA!!

Hellenic Dancers







AHEPA Chapter 517





Dear Friends of AHEPA,

We are pleased to announce that the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA) Garden State Chapter 517 will be holding its *Thirteen Annual Cigar Night Event on Wednesday, May 8th, 2024, at The Grand Marquis, 1550 Route 9 South, Old Bridge, NJ.* This year the proceeds of this event will benefit several local and national charities including AHEPA Service Dogs for Warriors, and other AHEPA Philanthropic Endeavors. Last year's Cigar Night event was an overwhelming success, selling out and raising significant amounts of money for charity.

This year we are asking you to consider advertising in our Annual Cigar Night Journal. This Journal will be given to all attendees and made available for businesses upon request. The Cigar Night Journal will allow you to promote your business, reach professionals and decision makers and make a Tax-Deductible contribution to some very worthwhile charities as well! The advertising levels range from \$150 for a quarter page ad up to the Premier Sponsor of \$5,000 for the Front cover. Please see works menu of Journal Opportunities on our website at www.ahepa517.org to find a sponsorship level that work best for you. What a great way to promote your business!

Each year our Cigar Night Event has been a huge success, increasing in popularity, attendance and increased fund raising in years past. This year we will once again offer premium open bar, scotch tasting, complimentary cigars and gifts, cigar roller, mouthwatering appetizers, raw bar, dinner, and desserts. Entertainment will be provided by the Charles Clarke Jazz Trio and our evening will conclude with raffle drawings of some great prizes. Once again, The Grand Marquis is providing us with a great room with tremendous outdoor patio space for us to enjoy our cigars and the great weather.

We invite you to attend this year's AHEPA Chapter 517 Cigar Night Event on May 8 th and consider advertising in our Journal. We anticipate another sellout again this year! In addition to having a memorable evening, you will help support many very Worthwhile Charities!

Cigar Night Event Committee	

Thank you in advance for your continued support,

AHEPA Chapter 517





AHEPA GARDEN STATE #517 13TH ANNUAL CIGAR & NETWORKING EVENT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024 6:00 PM - 10:00 PM

THE GRAND MARQUIS

1550 Route 9 South, Old Bridge, NJ 08857

Non-Smokers are Welcome All Smoking on an Outside Garden Patio

- Complimentary Cigars
- Cigar Roller
- Open Bar With Premium Liquor & Wines
- Passed Hors D'oeuvre
- Variety Of Elaborate Food Stations
- Raffles Prizes & Auction

DONATIONS: \$185

Ticket price after April 30: \$210

(Pre-Paid by Credit / Debit Card ONLY)

Scan the QR Code below to purchase tickets





FOR INFORMATION VISIT:

www.ahepa517.com/events/Cigar-Night Email: CigarNight@ahepa517.org
Our Tax id # 93-3955149











Plus other **AHEPA**Philanthropic Endeavors

AHEPA Chapter 517





AHEPA Garden State #517

13th Annual Cigar & Networking Event



\$ 5000 ____

\$ 3000 **SOLD**

\$ 2500 **SOLD**

\$ 1200 **SOLD**

\$ 1100

\$ 1000

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

6:00 PM - 10:00 PM

The Grand Marquis 1550 Route 9 South, Old Bridge, NJ 08857

Non-Smokers Welcome All Smoking on an Outside Garden Patio

SEATING LIMITED - 350 TICKETS ONLY

Paid by Credit / Debit Card ONLY Use the QR Code below to purchase your tickets





Name:

Service Dogs for Warriors, Inc.







Cell Phone:



And other AHEPA Philanthropic **Endeavors**

\$ 500 \$ 400

\$ 250

\$ 175

Proceeds to Benefit:

Ronald McDonald House' New York	fulfill	HUNGER WON'T WIN HERE
ng families close		FEED N AMERIC

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	FIFTH DISTRICT
	AHEPA
E	CANCER RESEARCH
CA.	FOUNDATION INC.
NG.	CANCER RESEARCH

Journal Opportunities ALL SPONSORS WILL BE LISTED ON OUR WEB PAGE

Premier Sponsor level

Cigar Roller Sponsor and Gold Page \$ 1500

24"x36" Poster in front of Bar (3 Bars Sponsors)

Front Cover - Outside (10 Tickets)

Back Cover - Outside (5 tickets)

Centerfold - 2 pages (5 tickets)

Front Cover - Inside - White

Back Cover - Inside - White

24"x36" Poster in front of Cigar Roller

Bar Sponsor and Silver Page

Gold - Full Page (8"w x 11"h)

Silver - Full Page (8"w x 11"h) **Bronze - Half Page** (8"W x 5" h)

White - Quarter Page (4"w x 5"h)

Address:	City:	State:	Zip:
Email:	Amo	ount Enclosed:	

AHEPA Contact you Know: _



2024 AHEPA 517 Cigar Night Journal Ad Registration Scan QR to Purchase Journal **Ad With Credit Cards**

Please email your Journal ad to : <u>Journal@ahepa517.org</u> Ads must be in color PDF, JPEG, CMYK art 300 dpi formats only

Please make checks payable to: AHEPA GARDEN STATE 517 FOUNDATION

DEADLINE April 25

Mail to - P.O. Box 735 - Holmdel - NJ - 07733 THANKS FOR YOUR "TAX DEDUCTIBLE" SUPPORT Tax id # 93-3955149

Advertise Here



Have a business and want to advertise?

For information on how to place an ad please reach out to:

Katina Hutin

c/o Kimisis tis Theotokou Greek Orthodox Church 20 Hillcrest Road Holmdel, New Jersey 07733

> info@kimisis.com 732-739-1515

Call Tuesday-Thursday to speak to Katina directly. Come to the office on Sunday after church to speak to someone.

Email or call. We are happy to help get your information to the parish.

KIMISIS TIS THEOTOKOU GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH 20 HILLCREST ROAD HOLMDEL NEW JERSEY 07733

