

Resurrectional Apolytikion in the Plagal First Mode

As the Father and Spirit are unoriginate, * so the Word, who was born from the Virgin for us. * Let us praise Him, O believers, and let us worship Him. * For our salvation He was pleased * to be crucified in the flesh, * and to undergo death, * and to resurrect the dead, by His glorious resurrection.

Apolytikion for Macarius the Great of Egypt in the First Mode

As a citizen of the desert and an angel incarnate * and a wonder-worker you shone forth, O Makarios our God-bearing father. * Since you received the spiritual gifts * by fasting and vigilance and prayer, * you can cure those who are ailing and heal the souls * of those who run to you with faith. * Glory to Him who gave His might to you; * glory to Him who placed a crown on you; * glory to Him who operates through you, providing cures to all.

Memorial Hymn

Remember, O Lord, as You are good, Your servants, and forgive every sin they have committed in this life. For no one is sinless except You, Who have power to grant rest to those who have fallen asleep.

Apolytikion of the Church in the Fourth Mode

You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, after You filled the Disciples with joy, by promising to send them the Holy Spirit, and You blessed them and established their faith, that You are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

Ἀνελήφθης ἐν δόξῃ, Χριστέ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, χαροποιήσας τοὺς Μαθητάς, τῆ ἐπαγγελίᾳ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος· βεβαιωθέντων αὐτῶν διὰ τῆς εὐλογίας, ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ λυτρωτὴς τοῦ κόσμου.

Apolytikion of St. Katherine (Protectress of our Chapel)

Let us praise and extol the all-lauded Bride of Christ,* the Protectress of Sinai, divine Saint Katherine,* as the one who gives aid and her assistance to us;* for she brilliantly suppressed the impious orators,*with the sword of the Spirit.* And being crowned as a martyr,* she asks that all receive the great mercy.

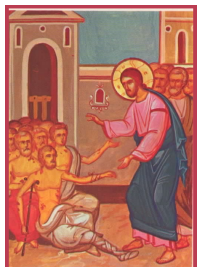
Seasonal Kontakion in the First Mode

You sanctified the womb of the Virgin by Your birth, and by Your presentation You blessed the hands of Symeon, when You came, and You saved us, O Christ our God. Now we pray You give peace to Your world at war, and let love for Your people prevail in all, O only benevolent Lord.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:4-11.

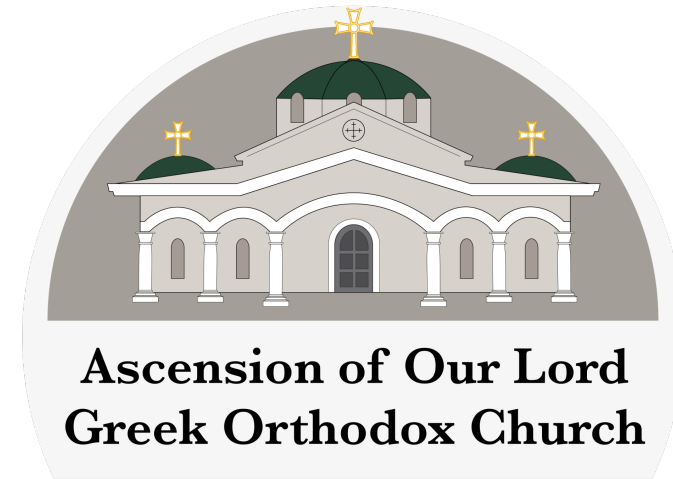
Brethren, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

The Gospel of Luke 17:12-19



At that time, as Jesus entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When He saw them He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus's feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus: "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him: "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

Ascension of Our Lord Greek Orthodox Church



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WEEKLY PARISH BULLETIN January 19 - 26, 2025

WELCOME TO THE ASCENSION PARISH! Your presence has brought us much joy! We hope your visit is memorable and meaningful in every way. Our doors and hearts are always open to you. Please join us for fellowship following the Divine Liturgy and visit with Fr. Sotiri and with members of the Parish Council. They will answer questions and provide you with information regarding Ascension's ministries and vibrant parish life.

COMMUNION GUIDELINES: To partake of Holy Communion, one must be a Baptized/Chrismated Orthodox Christian and be in good standing with the church. Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and regular participation in Holy Confession are welcome to receive communion. One should also be present at the Liturgy before the Scripture readings. Please follow the directions of the ushers during Holy Communion, and, also please allow the Sunday Church School staff and students to commune first so they can make their way to class and promptly begin their lessons. Thank you.

Spiritual Reflection

"The key that opens the fountains of the Holy Mysteries is the grateful heart, the thankful heart. If you achieve in saying "thank you" to God, if you feel the need to thank God for the things He has given you, then know that the Grace will grow inside you. If you do not do this and you are content with what is given to you or somehow you ask for more but without this sense of gratitude then it will take a lot of time until you learn how to rightly assess things and pay thanks to God."

St. Isaac the Syrian

Weekly Calendar

Sunday 8:15 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	January 19 Orthros Divine Liturgy Sunday Church School <u>Memorials</u> Eleni Paganis (6 months) Stamatis D. Kiriakos (50 yrs) Coffee Fellowship hosted by Sunday Church School Grades 2-4 Cybercrime Prevention Presentation during Fellowship and open to all. Philoptochos General Meeting to follow.	12th Sunday of Luke
Monday 8 a.m. 9 a.m.	January 20 Orthros Divine Liturgy	Righteous Euthymius the Great
Tuesday 5 p.m. 7 p.m.	January 21 Greek School Parish Council	
Wednesday 6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	January 22 Small Paraklesis YAL Meeting	St. Anastasios the Persian
Thursday 6:15 p.m. 7:45 p.m.	January 23 Adult Greek School: Beginners/Advanced Beginners Adult Greek School: Intermediate/Advanced	
Friday 10 a.m. 7 p.m.	January 24 HOPE Group Vigil for St. Gregory the Theologian (Vespers, Orthros, Liturgy)	
Saturday	January 25	St. Gregory the Theologian
Sunday 8:15 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	January 26 Orthros Divine Liturgy	15th Sunday of Luke

+ **PASTORAL NEEDS, HOSPITAL CALLS, NURSING/REHAB AND HOME-BOUND PARISHIONERS:** If you have a pastoral need or emergency and would like to speak to Fr. Sotiri, or know of someone who would like to schedule a pastoral visit, please contact Father via the office.

+ **A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR PHILOPTOCHOS AND KOINONIA MEN'S MINISTRY** for hosting a beautiful Vasilopita fellowship last week following Divine Liturgy. It was a very warm gathering and perfect way to celebrate the beginning of 2025 together as a church family.

+ **NEW IN OUR BOOKSTORE—Let's Cook!** Now that you've had a taste of the incredible Philoptochos cookbook, do you wish you had a bit of the leftovers? You may be in luck! A very limited number of cookbooks are still available in our Ascension Bookstore beginning today. Copies are \$35 at the bookstore, payable by cash or check ONLY, while they last. The cookbook team sincerely thanks you for your overwhelming support of our Philoptochos fundraising project. Proceeds will benefit the Ascension Iconography Fund. Order pickup has now ended. Still need to pick up your paid copies? Please contact Mary Ellen Esser at esserfamily@msn.com.

STEWARDSHIP 2025

For the first time in Ascension's history, we reached more than 400 stewards in 2024! Glory to God! Let's keep this strong momentum into 2025. The theme of the 2025 Stewardship Campaign is, "Your own from Your own." Everything that has been given to us in this life by God, we give back as an offering to God. Let us draw together as a parish family to demonstrate our gratitude and lovingly serve God by supporting Ascension. Stewardship is the lifeblood of our Parish. To date, we thank the 155 families that have pledged \$309,186 as well as generously offer their time and talents to this Parish! As of this week, we are at 48% of our 2025 stewardship target of \$650,000. *(Please be aware that Stewardship doesn't automatically renew annually. We ask that you recommit your annual stewardship of time, talent and treasures by completing the online 2025 Stewardship Pledge form.)* If you have any questions, please contact the office.

Sunday Volunteers

Prophoro Bakers : Tasia Alexakos & Sophie Beris
Epistle Reader: Tom Kiriakos
Greeters: Jayne & Chris Chatzidakis
Ushers: UIC: Alex Gianaras, Nick Poteres, Diane Sigalos, Nick Marino, Dean Argiris, Jessica Hallam

Prayer Requests

PLEASE INCLUDE IN YOUR PERSONAL PRAYERS the servants of God: Eleni, George, Anastasia, Stella, Mitchell, Joanne, Panagiotis, Christina, Dee, Helen, Sophia, Connie, Katerini, James, Theresa, Peter, Anna, Alexander, Anthony, Magdalena, Maggie, Panagiotis, Paraschos, Chris, Don, Justin, Ignacio, Finn, Kevin, Theodore, Mary, Madison, Trinity, Evangelos, John, Rick, Robert, Tom, Georgia, Kristi, Rob, Maureen, Antonia, Christina, Constantine, Irene, Iliana, John, Carolyn, Mary, Maria, Patrick, John, Panagiota, Luci, Stephanos, Leonidas, Vasiliki, Nikki, Anastasios, Stacey, Adriane, Eleni, Helen, George, Gregory, Irene, Artemis, Efstathia, Maria, Vasilios

Condolences

WE EXTEND OUR DEEPEST CONDOLENCES to the family of Voula Karambelas who fell asleep in the Lord Monday, January 13, 2025. Voula was the beloved wife of Dimitrios Karambelas for 62 years; and the loving mother of Tom Karr and Jenny (Karambelas) Valsamas. She was the devoted mother-in-law to Angela Kalb and Yanni Valsamas, and proud grandmother of Angela Athena Karr and Despina Ismini Valsamas. Her funeral took place at Ascension this past Wednesday, January 15. May her memory be eternal.

Announcements

+ **CYBERCRIME PREVENTION PRESENTATION by Lake County Sheriff's Office TODAY** in the Anagnos Fellowship Hall, hosted by Philoptochos. Join us by the stage after Coffee Hour to learn ways to prevent being a Cybercrime victim. See the flyer for more details. Philoptochos will hold a brief General Meeting after the Presentation.

+ **CALLING ALL YOUNG ADULTS:** Ascension's Young Adult League (YAL) will hold its first meeting of the new year this **Wednesday, January 22nd** following the 6:30 p.m. Small Paraklesis Service. Food and refreshments will be served. We invite all young adults to join us for our monthly events! Please contact Alex Karkazis at alexanderckarkazis@gmail.com to be sure you are on our mailing list. Thank you!

+ **A VIGIL COMMEMORATING ST. GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN** will take place on Friday, January 24th, beginning at 7 p.m. on the eve preceding the Saint's January 25th Feast Day. Please see flyer for more information.

+ **OUR ANNUAL DIVE FOR THE CROSS EVENT** will take place on Sunday, January 26 from 3 – 5 pm at the Highland Park Rec Center Pool. This is a beautiful celebration of our Lord's Baptism in the Jordan River, and bestows a blessing on the diver that retrieves the cross from the water. Diving is reserved for K-12th graders and is \$15 per diver. Please see flyer for more information and RSVP by January 21st.

+ **SAVE THE DATE: ASCENSION'S ANNUAL YOUTH SUNDAY IS FEBRUARY 2!** Mark your calendars for this special day when we celebrate all the youth of our parish and the vibrancy they bring to our community through our many ministries. Our youth will be serving in many capacities in church that day, and we will enjoy an extended celebratory coffee fellowship in their honor. We are also excited to welcome our keynote speaker: Dr. John Fotopoulos, Archon of the Ecomunal Patriarchate and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, IN. Stay tuned for more information and plan to join us on this special day.

+ **NOTHING BUT NET!** Love basketball? Come enjoy a family night out at a basketball game! Ascension families are invited to our "Slam Dunk" Family Outing on February 8 at 7 PM at NOW Arena (Hoffman Estates), where we will watch the Windy City Bulls take on the Maine Celtics on their Greek Heritage Night. Tickets are \$30 and come with free parking, courtside seats, and a Greek Heritage Winter Hat. Make sure you beat the buzzer: limited tickets available! Questions? Contact John Anton at janton@ascensiongoc.com.

+ **FR. SOTIRI IS AMONG THE HOMILISTS AT THIS YEAR'S SANCTITY OF LIFE PRAYER SERVICE.** Fr. Sotiri was invited by the Orthodox Christian Clergy Association (OCCA) to serve as one of the guest homilists at this year's annual Pan-Orthodox Sanctity of Life Prayer Service, Sunday, January 26th, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Please see flyer for more info, and if you are available to attend, please join us.

+ **PHILOPTOCHOS UPDATES**

- **PHILOPTOCHOS THANKS** all Ministry representatives who participated in the Parish Vasilopita Cutting Tradition last Sunday, and to all who gave a donation. All your donations are much appreciated by all the children Philoptochos helps, including those residing at St. Basil Academy.
- **Watch as we Grow! Oh, the Places You'll Go!** Come to this year's **APOKREATIKO GLENDI**, which takes place on Sunday, February 23, 2025 at the Concorde Banquets in Kildeer. Please see reservation form for details. Questions may be directed to Jayne Chatzidakis at chrishatch@aol.com / 847.636.7741 or Luba Manos at LMFINEART@hotmail.com. There will be dinner, dancing, games, and fun for all! Proceeds to benefit Children's Advocacy Organizations. Stop by to make a reservation at Coffee Hour! **Get your reservations in, early Bird prices end next Sunday!** Sponsorship Opportunities are available!

+ **KOINONIA MEN'S MINISTRY** would also like to express its gratitude to all who participated in this year's *UIC Children's Hospital* Christmas Drive. Due to your generous donations and financial support, we were able to provide over \$3,500 of brand-new toys to children in need this Christmas. Special thanks to everyone who donated toys and money to this wonderful cause!

+ **THE PANHELLENIC FOUNDATION** will accept applications for its **2024-2025 Scholarship program** from eligible undergraduate students of Hellenic until January 31, 2025. For more information, visit www.panhellenicsf.org/apply. The Foundation is holding a Scholarship Application Workshop on January 20th at 12 pm CT over Zoom. Email edanielides@panhellenicsf.org with questions.

+ **AHEPA RECENTLY ANNOUNCED LOCAL AND NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP** opportunities for current high school seniors and college/graduate students. Applications are open until mid and late March. For more information, visit <https://ahepadistrict13.org/district-13-education-scholarship> (LOCAL PROGRAM) and/or <https://ahepa.org/education/> (NATIONAL)

DID YOU KNOW?

Receiving Holy Communion—the actual Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ—should always be undertaken with great care. As noted on the front page of this bulletin, one must be a Baptized/Christmated Orthodox Christian and be in good standing with the Church to receive Communion. Beyond this, however, there are three necessary steps to take in preparing for this great sacrament. The first is repenting for our sins through Holy Confession. This should be done regularly, at least a few times a year during major fasts, but more frequently as needed. We also ask for forgiveness from anyone we've hurt—family, friends, loved ones. The second is prayer, especially by reading the Pre-Communion Prayers the night before and the morning of receiving Communion. These are not just the prayers we read as a congregation ("I believe and confess Lord..."); that's just the ending! This is a short service that helps us prepare with an attitude of humility and repentance. The third is fasting, which includes abstaining from all food and water on the morning of a Divine Liturgy if our health allows. Be sure to talk to your spiritual father about how to fast according to your ability. Having thus prepared, with the fear of God, with faith, and with love, we then draw near.