

Dear Parishioners,

Christ is born! Glorify him!

“O Christ, what shall we offer You for Your coming on earth as a Man for our sake? Every creature that has its being from You gives thanks to You: the angels offer hymns of praise, the heavens give a star; wise men present their gifts, and the shepherds, their wonder, the earth provides a cave and the desert a manger. As for us, we offer you a Mother, a Virgin Mother. O God who are from all eternity, have mercy on us”

(Christmas Eve Vespers)

What shall we offer Christ this year as we celebrate His Nativity? What birthday gift will please Him and God His Father and His mother Mary, most of all?

Surely the greatest gift we can give Jesus is to accept the gifts which God the Father gives to us through Him. And surely the greatest gift that Jesus gives us from the Father is Himself, His life, His teaching and His body and blood for our salvation.

Let us accept God's gifts to us in His Son Jesus. Let us accept Jesus Himself as God's greatest gift. And let us offer ourselves in return to Him, with gratitude and joy, as the Nativity present which will please Him the most.

May your Christmas Season be filled with peace and joy and may the New Year 2012 be for you and your loved ones a year of the Lord's favor in every way.

With Love in the Incarnate Christ,

Fr. Anargyros

Αγαπητοί Ενορίτες,

«Ο Λόγος σάρξ εγένετο και εσκήκωσεν εν ημίν...πλήρης χάριτος και αληθείας» Ιωαν. (Α' 14)

Μυστήριο βαθύ και ακατανόητο έρχεται εις το φως με τη γέννηση του Σωτήρος Χριστού εις τη Βηθλεέμ. Η γέννηση του Σωτήρος Χριστού φανερώνει την άπειρον αγάπη του Θεού προς τον κόσμο. Άγγελοι και άνθρωποι υπηρετούν με φόβο και χαρά εις το μυστήριο της ενανθρωπήσεως του Υιού

του Θεού. Του έργου της σωτηρίας του κόσμου που ήτο προαιώνιος βουλή και απόφασις του Θεού. Άγγελος διαφωτίζει τον πιστό Ιωσήφ δια την γέννηση του υιού της Παρθένου και ορίζει το όνομα του Σωτήρος και εξηγεί την έννοια που έχει το όνομα αυτό. Ιησούς, δηλαδή Σωτήρ, θα είναι το όνομα του παιδιού.

Βλέπουμε εκεί εις τη Βηθλεέμ βρέφος αδύνατο και μητέρα πτωχή και προσάτη εργατικό και φάτνη αλόγων ζώων. Και όμως ο γεννηθείς είναι ο Λόγος, ο Υιός του Θεού ο Μονογενής, που υπήρχε πρό πάντων των αιώνων. Είναι ο παντοδύναμος Κύριος, η πηγή της ζωής, το φώς το αληθινό. Έλαβε σάρκα ανθρώπινη, δια να πλησιάσει τους ανθρώπους. Εφόρεσε την δική μας πτωχεία, δια να μας μεταδώση τον πλούτο των πνευματικών δωρεών Του. Είναι «πλήρης χάριτος», πηγή χαρισμάτων πνευματικών με τα οποία ανηψώνει τον άνθρωπο και του δίδει την πραγματικήν του θέσιν κοντά εις τον Θεό. Αλλά είναι και «πλήρης αληθείας». Διότι, αυτό είναι η ενσαρκωμένη αλήθεια, που έρχεται από τον Θεό και αυτή θέλει να μεταδώσει σε όλους.

Ας δεχτούμε λοιπόν αγαπητοί μου, με χαρά την ταπεινή γέννησιν Του και ας του προσφέρωμε , δώρα, την πίστιν, την ευγνωμοσύνην και την αγάπη μας.

Με αγάπη προς τον Ενσαρκωθέντα Χριστόν,

Πατήρ Ανάργυρος

## **GREETINGS!**

Fr. Anargyros, Fr. John, the President of the Parish Council and its members, President of the Philoptochos and its members, PTO President and its members, the teachers of the Greek and Sunday Church Schools and the entire staff of St. Athanasios Parish wish everyone....**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!!**

## **ΕΥΧΕΣ**

Ο πατήρ Ανάργυρος, ο πατήρ Ιωάννης, ο πρόεδρος και τα μέλη του Εκκλησιαστικού Συμβουλίου, η πρόεδρος και τα μέλη της Φιλοπτώχου Αδελφότητος, η πρόεδρος και τα μέλη τού Συλλόγου Γονέων και Διδασκάλων, οι Διδάσκαλοι του Ελληνικού και Κατηχητικού Σχολείων και

ολόκληρο το προσωπικό της ενορίας του Αγίου αθανασίου, εύχονται σε όλους....ΚΑΛΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΑ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΤΥΧΙΣΜΕΝΟ ΤΟ ΝΕΟ ΕΤΟΣ

## ICON OF THE NATIVITY

One of the most famous icons is that of the Nativity. Its symbolism is that of the Creator of the Universe entering history as a newborn babe. The little helpless figure in swaddling clothes represents the complete submission of Christ to the physical conditions governing the human race. Yet He remains Lord of Creation. The angels sing praises. The Magi and the shepherds bring their gifts. The sky salutes Him with a star. The earth provides Him with a cave. The animals watch Him in silent wonder, and we humans offer Him one of us, the Virgin Mother.

The lower scenes underline the scandal of the Incarnation. The right-hand scene shows the washing of the infant by the mid-wife and her assistant. It tells that Christ was born like any other child. The scene on the left portrays Joseph, who, having observed the washing of the infant, is once again assailed by doubts as to the virginity of his spouse. He is tempted by the devil, who suggests if the infant was truly divine He would not have been born in the human way. The Mother Mary is in the center and from her reclining position looks at Joseph as if trying to overcome his doubts and temptations.

## GOYA

I am pleased to say that our new GOYA year has been off to a good start, with past events such as the kick-off dance, the Holy Cross Celebration, and the Mr./Miss GOYA pageant in September and October. Especially in regards to the Mr./Miss GOYA pageant, where our very own Chris Georgiadis won the title of Mr. GOYA!

Our annual fundraisers for this year have also been a success, with our recent loukoumades sale and the Yankee Candle sale. We also had the annual bowling tournament and dance on November 5<sup>th</sup> where a few of our own GOYAnS won medals in the tournament, including Kristi Marcopoulos who won highest scoring girl! On November 19<sup>th</sup> our church had a Lenten Christmas Retreat, which was a nice way for all the GOYAnS to come together and learn more about our faith. The next event will be Bridges alongside a District Retreat coming up on December 9<sup>th</sup> at Wyckoff Church. Bridges is a good opportunity to give back to those who are less fortunate than us, and the

Retreat is another good chance to learn more about our faith. Later this month on December 28<sup>th</sup> is the annual Christmas Dance, which will be taking place at the Randolph Church.

On a final note, I would again like to congratulate Chris Georgiades for Mr. GOYA and thank everyone who has helped to make this year a special one for me as well as my fellow board members. I would also like to encourage everyone to attend Sunday School and be part of our Church community which is such an important aspect of GOYA. I look forward to the rest of the year and hope that you are as well.

With Christ's Love,

Eleni Skoutakis  
GOYA President.

## **Greek Orthodox Metropolis of NJ**

### **Mr. / Ms. GOYA Results**

Chris Georgiades - 1st Place  
Eleni Skoutakis - 3rd Place

### **Scholarship Award**

Sophia Marcopoulos  
Angela Panagiotopoulos

## **SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL**

Father Anargyros is happy to announce that Thea Portelos will be our new Assistant Church School Director. A warm welcome to Thea!

Our Sunday Church School Children have been busy learning and living their Orthodox faith in their classrooms and by participating in special Church School activities throughout the fall and winter seasons. In November, our annual Church School Food Drive marked the Christian spirit of giving by collecting food for needy families. Our families and children collected several boxes filled with Thanksgiving food items that were donated to needy families in our area. We offer special thanks to Josianne Sangaret-Sako, Maria Kolaros, and their children for organizing this event.

The theme of this year's Christmas Lenten Retreat was "The True Gifts of Christmas". The teachers and parents prepared a wonderful day of discussions, singing, activities and holiday baking. The participants focused on the real meaning of Christmas, and how we celebrate this

important holiday in the Greek tradition. The Retreat Committee included teachers Christina Georgotas, Sotiria and Maria Stavropoulos, Christine Karabetsos and Anna Zalokostas. Great job!

We are looking forward to a joyous Christmas Church School/ Greek School Holiday Program. Please come to this special program on December 18 and watch our children reenact the Nativity of our Lord. Enjoy the holiday season by singing Christmas Carols, Kalanda and seasonal hymns.

We invite all to join us on December 29 for a visit to St. Michaels Home for the Aged. Those who have attended this event in the past know the tremendous warmth and love of this event. There is nothing that compares to the smiles that we see on the faces of the residents when we sing and dance with them. It's a fun time for everyone! This event is one of the memorable events of the year. Please join us.

## **GODPARENT / GODCHILD SUNDAY**

**February 5th**

On Sunday, February 5th, the Church Sunday School will be hosting Godparent Sunday. Invitations will be prepared for each child to send to their respective Godparent. This is a special day for Godchildren and Godparents to gather with family and friends for worship and fellowship. There will be a brunch following the Divine Liturgy. Additional information will be forthcoming.

**WISHING EVERYONE A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED AND  
JOYOUS NEW YEAR!**

**The Sunday Church School Faculty**

## **PHILOPTOCHOS**

On behalf of St. Irenes' Philoptochos we extend to you our heartfelt wishes for a wonderful and blessed advent and Christmas Season. We thank all of you for your support of our philanthropic efforts.

Congratulations to our Philoptochos members for holding a successful Lord & Taylor Fundraiser, and for their outstanding effort towards our annual fashion show which was held November 10, 2011, where we raised funds for Alzheimers Research and the Parkinsons Foundation. Upcoming events for Philoptochos are;

The National Philoptochos Childrens Medical Luncheon, which is being held this year in Greenwich, CT on December 3, 2011. Proceeds of this biennial event provides assistance to children's medical charities across the United States. A delegation of our ladies will be attending. If you would like to attend see Thea Portelos.

We look forward to participating and sponsoring our communities annual St. Michael's Visitation, which is scheduled for Wednesday, December 29, 2011. Tentatively, bus will be scheduled to depart 11:30 am from our Church. This visitation is open to the entire community, and enables us to spread Christmas tiding and cheer to the residents of St. Michael's, along with the children in our youth programs and Church School.

Sponsorship of the Annual Vasilopita on New Years Day. We will also be hosting our annual Ladies Night Out sometime in the beginning of the year.

As always our organization is open to new members. Membership is open to all Orthodox Christian Woman over the age of 18. Associate memberships are available for men as well.

Sincerely,  
Thea Portelos  
President

## **ΝΕΑ ΑΠΟ ΤΟ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΣΧΟΛΕΙΟ**

Την Τετάρτη 2 Νοεμβρίου, το Ελληνικό μας σχολείο παρουσίασε την γιορτή της 28ης Οκτωβρίου, στην κοινοτική μας αίθουσα. Χαρούμενοι και γεμάτοι ενθουσιασμό οι μαθητές μας απήγγειλαν τα ποιήματα τους, και τραγούδησαν πατριωτικά επετειακά τραγούδια. Η σημαντική αυτή ιστορική επέτειος, με τις θυσίες όλων αυτών που αγωνίσθηκαν για τα ιδανικά της πατρίδας μας, είναι βαθιά χαραγμένη στην ψυχή μας, γι αυτό και όλοι βροντοφωνήσαμε:

**ΖΗΤΩ ΤΟ ΕΠΠΟΣ του 1940**

**ΖΗΤΩ Η ΕΛΛΑΔΑ**

Την Κυριακή 6 Νοεμβρίου, το Ελληνικό μας σχολείο με την συνεργασία του Συλλόγου Γονέων και Διδασκάλων, παρουσίασε την πολιτιστική εκδήλωση "Ταξίδι στην Ελλάδα".

Νοιώσαμε περήφανοι καμαρώνοντας τα υπέροχα έργα των μαθητών μας, απολαύσαμε την ποικιλία των νόστιμων φαγητών, διασκεδάσαμε με το μουσικοχορευτικό πρόγραμμα που καταχειροκροτήθηκε.

Ήταν μία επιτυχημένη εκδήλωση, που άφησε τις καλύτερες εντυπώσεις.

Ένα μεγάλο ευχαριστώ σε όλους τους γονείς που εργάσθηκαν πολλές ώρες για την ετοιμασία του προγράμματος αυτού, στις δασκάλες μας για τις μαγειρικές και ζαχαροπλαστικές τους προσφορές, αλλά και για την επιμέλεια των χειροτεχνικών εκθεμάτων, στους μαθητές μας, στον Πατέρα Ανάργυρο για τις συμβουλές και στήριξη του, και τελικά όλους όσους μοιράσθηκαν μαζί μας το όμορφο αυτό "Ταξίδι στην Ελλάδα".

Σημειώστε τις κάτωθι ημερομηνίες:

23 Νοεμβρίου, το Ελληνικό σχολείο θα είναι κλειστό (παραμονή της Ημέρας των Ευχαριστιών.

18 Δεκεμβρίου, η Χριστουγεννιάτικη γιορτή του Ελληνικού και κατηχητικού σχολείου.

29 Ιανουαρίου, η γιορτή των Τριών Ιεραρχών -η γιορτή των Γραμμάτων.

On November 2nd, our Greek school celebrated the 28th of October (OXI day), in the community center. Our students recited poems and sang patriotic songs, with a lot of enthusiasm. We will never forget this important day of our homeland Greece, and the sacrifices of all the heroes who fought for our freedom.

LONG LIVE THE HEROES OF 1940  
LONG LIVE GREECE!!!!!!

On Sunday November 6th, our Greek school in cooperation with the PTO organization, presented the Cultural event "Journey to Greece". It was a wonderful program, well organized, and filled with happy memories, delicious food, excellent music, dances and smiling faces....Everybody admired the magnificent projects that our Greek school students had done. GREAT JOB boys and girls!!!!!!!!!!

I wish to thank all the people who worked hard for this event: Parents, teachers, students. Finally I wish to thank Father Anargyros for his advice and support, and all of you who supported the "Journey to Greece".

Please mark your calendars:

November 23rd is Thanksgiving Eve, and the Greek school will remain closed.

On December 18th, we will have our Christmas program along with the Church school.

On January 29th, we will celebrate The "Greek letters Day.

## P.T.O.

Dear St. Athanasios Families,

As the Holiday Season is quickly approaching, the entire PTO Executive Board are busy planning fun and exciting activities and events for all of our Greek School children. Our commitment to support our Greek School will be successful with everyone's help!

We thank all those who have made our recent Spanakopita Baked & Frozen Sales' so successful! Our St. Athanasios Community is not only a place where our children learn, but it is a place where they will make life-long friends. It is *Home away from Home* for both the parents and the children. This *Home* requires the support of each and every one of us.

We encourage everyone to please come to our upcoming meetings, get involved and offer us your valuable input!

*Please mark your calendars:*

**Monday, December 12, 2011:** PTO Monthly Meeting - 5:00 p.m. in Community Hall

**Sunday, December 18, 2011:** Greek School & Sunday Church School Christmas Program

**Wednesday, December 21, 2011:** Greek School Christmas Party

**Friday, December 23rd - January 2, 2012:** Christmas Break. Classes begin on 1/4/12

**Monday, January 9, 2012:** PTO Monthly Meeting - 5:00pm in Community Hall

**Wednesday, January 18, 2012:** No Greek School - St. Athanasios Feast Day

**Sunday, January 29, 2012:** Greek Letters Day/ Three Hierarchs Program

**Also, don't forget to mark your calendars for our Annual PTO "Horosperida", featuring Yianni Papastefano and his Orchestra on February 11, 2012!!**

With love in Christ,

Eleni Karounos

St. Athanasios PTO President

### **ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΙΑΤΙΚΗ ΚΑΡΤΑ:**

Για την συμμετοχή σας στην ετήσια Χριστουγεννιάτικη Κάρτα του 2011, παρακαλούμε συμπληρώσατε την φόρμα και μαζί με το δώρο σας, στήλετε αυτήν στο Γραφείο μας μέχρι 4 Δεκεμβρίου.

### **ΛΟΥΛΟΥΔΙΑ ΓΙΑ ΣΤΟΛΙΣΜΟ:**

Εάν θέλετε να δώσετε χρήματα για την αγορά λουλουδιών προς στολισμό της Εκκλησίας μας για τα Χριστούγεννα ή για τον στολισμό των εικόνων για την εορτή του Αγίου Αθανασίου, παρακαλούμε να επικοινωνήσετε με το γραφείο της Εκκλησίας μας.

### **ΑΠΟΦΗΚΗ ΤΡΟΦΙΜΩΝ:**

Η Εκκλησία μας παρέχει τρόφιμα σε οικογένειες που έχουν ανάγκη. Ζητούμε συσκευασμένα τρόφιμα, επί καθημερινής. Βάσεως. Το νέο ενοριακό αυτό πρόγραμμα θα συνεχίσει μόνο με την βοήθεια σας. Θά θέλαμε να ευχαριστήσουμε όλους τους δωριτές, με τα τρόφιμα για την ημέρα των Ευχαριστιών. Η γενναιοδωρία τους προς τους συνανθρώπους μας που βρίσκονται σε υλική ανάγκη είναι αποτέλεσμα της αγάπης τους προς τον Κύριο και Θεό μας.

### **ΚΟΨΙΜΟ ΒΑΣΙΛΟΠΙΤΑΣ:**

Το κόψιμο της Κοινοτικής Βασιλόπιττας. Θα γίνει την Κυριακή 8 Ιανουαρίου 2012 αμέσως μετά την Θεία Λειτουργία. Παρακαλούμε όλους

τους ενορίτες και φίλους να παραβρεθούν στο κόψιμο της Βασιλόπιττας.

### **ΑΓΙΑΣΜΟΣ ΟΙΚΩΝ:**

Ο πατήρ Ανάργυρος θα αγιάζει σπίτια την εβδομάδα μετά τὰ Θεοφάνεια. Εάν θέλετε να έλθει να αγιάσει και το δικό σας σπίτι, παρακαλείσθε να επικοινωνήσετε με το γραφείο της Εκκλησίας μας.

### **CHRISTMAS CARD & APPEAL:**

Express your wishes for the Christmas Season to all parishioners and friends through the community Christmas Card. Donation for having your family included in the card is \$20. Please submit your completed form with your check. The deadline is December 4th. We also kindly ask that you do not forget the church in your Christmas gift list. Please send your Christmas gift for the Parish to the Church Office.

### **FLOWERS FOR CHRISTMAS / ST. ATHANASIOS:**

If anyone is interested in donating towards the purchase of poinsettias for Christmas or flowers for the adornment of the icons for the Feast Day of St. Athanasios, please contact the Church office.

### **COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY**

We wish to thank all our parishioners and friends of St. Athanasios for remembering our Food Pantry for Thanksgiving. Our Food Pantry helps families that have a need for assistance. It is very important that we keep our food Pantry filled at all times. Please remember the bank for the needy is at the entrance of the Community Center.

### **FOS BOOKSTORE**

Christmas is just around the corner, so why not stop by the bookstore to choose a special gift for that special person. We have beautiful religious items, a variety of books for adults and children and cards. We are always ready to serve your needs and special requests.

### **VASILOPITA CELEBRATION:**

The Community Vasilopita Celebration will be on Sunday, January 8, 2012 after the Divine Liturgy. We ask that all parishioners and friends to join us for this very special beginning of the New Year Celebration.

### **HOUSE BLESSINGS:**

Fr. Anargyros will be blessing homes the week after the Epiphany. Anyone wishing to have their home blessed should contact the church office.

## **PRAYER FOR THE FIRST DAY OF THE YEAR**

O Lord our God, who have placed times and seasons under

your own authority; who, in your infinite compassion and goodness, have counted us worthy to enter a New Year of your loving kindness, bless it and keep us in peace.

Loose, remit and forgive any sins that we may have committed during the year that is past, and keep us free from sin in the New Year.

Enlighten us with the light of your truth and your divine commandments. Establish in our souls your holy will, and guide us to every work that is good and pleasing to you.

Guard well our Holy church with your divine grace. Remember, Lord, our nation; train up the youth; protect the elderly; encourage the faint-hearted; gather the scattered; bring back those who have gone astray, and reunite them to your Holy Church.

Overshadow our Land with your might, and grant it gentle rain and abundance of the fruits of the earth. Speak of goodness in the hearts of our rulers; support and strengthen them, together with our armed forces by land, sea and air so that in their tranquility we may lead our life in every piety and dignity.

Let your kingdom come upon us, O Lord; the kingdom of love, goodness, peace and justice; and make us worthy to praise and glorify, with one mouth and one heart, your most honorable and majestic name, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen

## **ΙΕΡΑ ΠΑΝΗΓΥΡΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ**

Μέγας Εσπερινός

Τρίτη, 17 Ιανουρίου στις 7:00 μ.μ.

Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία

Τετάρτη, 18 Ιανουαρίου στις 8:30 π.μ.

Εορταστική δεξίωσις κατόπιν των Ιερών Ακολουθιών από την Φιλόπτωχο.

**FEAST DAY OF OUR  
PATRON SAINT ATHANASIOS**

Tuesday, January 17th – Great Vespers 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, January 18th – Orthros and Divine Liturgy 8:30  
a.m.

Reception to follow after the Services, hosted by our  
Philoptochos.