



# ST. THOMAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

## St. Irene Philoptochos Newsletter

JAN 2018

### RECENT EVENTS

October 1, 2017  
Anniversary Gala  
Adelphia

October 5 – 8, 2017  
AGORA

October 29, 2017  
Loukoumades Fund  
Raiser

November 5, 2017  
Ambassador Awards  
Dinner  
Merion Caterers

November 11, 2017  
Children's Medical Fund  
Luncheon  
The Venetian

December 12, 2017  
Christmas Dinner  
Adelphia

### New officers elected for the 2017 – 2019 term



Spiritual Father – V. Rev. Fr.  
Christoforos Oikonomidis  
Carol Pappas – President  
Tulla Sandilos – Vice President  
Popi Stamatiades – Treasurer  
Roula Criaris – Assistant Treasurer  
Rania Pappas – Corresponding  
Secretary  
Rose Mitropoulos – Recording  
Secretary

### President's Message

*Happy New Year!*

*It is such an honor to be addressing you as the President of the St. Irene Philoptochos. The St. Irene board and I wanted to keep everyone in the St. Thomas community updated as to what we are doing.*

*We started in September getting ready for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala and the St. Thomas Agora. In the fall we continued our food donations and volunteering at the Cherry Hill Food Pantry. In December, we started our "One Warm Coat" Drive which will run through January. Again this year, we put together the community Christmas card, collected for the Poinsettias to decorate the church for Christmas, and took orders for Vasilopita. At our Christmas Dinner at Adelphia Restaurant, fun was had by all!*

*The new year starts out with our membership drive. The strawberries and champagne coffee hour in January gives everyone a chance to learn more about Philoptochos. Opa-cize in February will get us all moving while having a great time. February 25<sup>th</sup> will be our Fellowship Luncheon with Greek American author of children's books, Demetra Tsavaris-Lecourezos. We look forward to baking and selling Koulourakia and Tsourekia for Easter and then our biggest fundraiser the Bid 'n Buy, May 16<sup>th</sup>.*

*Thank you for helping us with all of our fundraisers. It enables us to help people in need, and to fulfill all of our local and national commitments.*

*We all know that there are so many people in need, in our church and local communities to needs around the world. As Philoptochos members we know the joy in helping others. We invite all in our church to join St. Irene Philoptochos and help even more people.*

*With love in Christ,  
Carol Pappas, President  
St. Irene Ladies Philoptochos Society*

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## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

January 7, 2018  
Strawberries and  
Champagne Membership  
Drive  
St. Irene Hall

February 2, 2018  
OPA-cize - 7pm  
Danielle Kousoulis  
Center

February 25, 2018  
Founder's Day Luncheon  
Danielle Kousoulis  
Center

March 11, 2018  
Mall Walk  
Voorhees Town Center

May 16, 2018  
Bid n Buy  
Danielle Kousoulis  
Center



## AGORA 2017 PREPARATIONS

*The members of Philoptochos and the ladies of St. Thomas prepared all the pastries for the 2017 AGORA during an intense baking schedule in September. Chairperson for the baking was Popi Stamatiades.*

## AGORA 2017



*The members of Philoptochos prepared the room and sold the pastries at AGORA 2017 resulting in a record breaking year of sales!*





## **GOLDEN JUBILEE GALA**

**October 1, 2017**

*How wonderful it was to celebrate; young and old, "originals" and new members, all together to remember our past 50 years and be very encouraged for the future.*

## **METROPOLITAN EVANGELOS AMBASSADOR AWARD**

**November 5, 2017**

*This year's recipient on behalf of the Philoptochos Society was our very beloved Mrs. Amalia Kokolis for her outstanding years of service.*

**PANTA AXIA!**



## **PHILOPTOCHOS CHILDREN'S MEDICAL FUND**

**November 11, 2017**

*This event is hosted by a different Metropolis Bi-annually. This year The Metropolis of New Jersey hosted the luncheon and it was a huge success by exceeding expectations. These funds help those children very much in need. The St. Irene Philoptochos has a very large heart, and was able to provide \$5000 towards this very worthy cause.*





# **Philoptochos 2017 Christmas Dinner**

**December 12, 2017**





## **Upcoming Membership and Fundraiser Opportunities!**



*Get Involved! Even if doing just one thing, every membership donation, every helping hand and every smile is like a pebble thrown in the water making the ripple grow wide and deep into many hearts.*

### **Strawberries and Champagne!**

**January 7, 2018**

**Join us after Church during coffee hour and learn more about what Philoptochos is and HOW you can join!**



### **OPA-cize**

**February 2, 2018 @ 7pm**

**Danielle Kousoulis Greek Cultural Center Join us for a night to remember as we exercise the GREEK way... OPA! This event is another opportunity to help Philoptochos with your heart while exercising your heart! Don't miss out on a great time and a lot of laughs!**

**\$20 Entrance fee – Proceeds to benefit various Philoptochos Charities**





## Founders Day Luncheon

**February 25, 2018 @ 1pm**

**Danielle Kousoulis Greek Cultural Center**

*Spend an afternoon of fellowship and fun as we enjoy a delicious meal, great conversation and listen and support a fellow Greek-American, author;*

**Demetra Tsavaris-Lecourezos**

**Author of**

***Letters from Around the World: Learning the Greek Alphabet  
Ready, Set, OPA! (Young World Travelers)  
Young World Travelers and the Magical Crystal Globe***

Do you have an extra coat or two? **Donate it!**

### **St. Irene Philoptochos**

is holding a **One Warm Coat** drive and collecting clean, gently worn coats of all types and sizes.



Donations will be accepted:

***In the St. Irene Hall***

*(Place in boxes noted for **One Warm Coat** between January 22<sup>nd</sup> to February 19<sup>th</sup>)*

*Donated coats will be distributed throughout Camden County!*



ONE WARM COAT®

Learn more: [www.onewarmcoat.org](http://www.onewarmcoat.org)

## Cherry Hill Food Pantry

*The ladies of Philoptochos volunteer their time and talents at Cherry Hill Food Pantry, a charity that addresses the needs of individuals, families and seniors who struggle to meet their bills. The Food Pantry is a non-profit organization that currently serves 850 families in the area. The ladies help the staff stock shelves and distribute groceries. Philoptochos also provides financial support as well as goods through frequent food drives. Anyone over the age of 14 can help. We will be volunteering on Tuesdays 2/13 and 2/20 (5:00 – 7:30 pm) as well as Thursdays 2/15 and 2/22 (10:00am – 1:00pm). If you are interested in volunteering please contact Marina Shook at 856.489.7723 or Rania Pappas at 856.316.8914.*



## Help Us Feed People in Need!

Once again, we will be collecting non-perishable items  
for the Cherry Hill Food Pantry,

the non-profit organization that serves 850 families in the area.

Please consider donating some of the items noted on the list below and help people in need!  
You can drop off all items in the boxes marked: **FOOD DRIVE**, located at the entrance of the  
“Balis Educational Building” & the “Danielle Kousoulis” Greek Culture Center.

### Items Needed

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b><u>High demand items requested by the Pantry</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Laundry Detergent</li><li>• Soap, Shampoo, Deodorant, Toothpaste</li><li>• Jelly</li><li>• Side Dishes</li><li>• Canned Collard Greens</li><li>• Canned Meat</li></ul> | <p><b><u>Fruits &amp; Vegetables:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vegetables (canned)</li><li>• Fruit (canned)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fruit cups</li><li>• Applesauce</li><li>• Dried fruit</li></ul></li></ul> <p>(raisins, cranberries, prunes)</p> | <p><b><u>Breads &amp; Cereals:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Breakfast cereals (whole grain)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oatmeal</li><li>• Rice</li></ul></li><li>• Pasta (whole grain)</li><li>• Pancake mix</li></ul> |
| <p><b><u>Mixed Items:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Macaroni &amp; cheese</li><li>• Canned soups, Canned stews, chili</li><li>• Cake mix &amp; Icing</li><li>• Ravioli, Spaghettios, etc.</li><li>• Granola Bars</li></ul>                              | <p><b><u>High Protein Items:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Peanut butter</li><li>• Canned tuna or salmon</li><li>• Canned chicken or ham</li><li>• Beans — canned or dry</li><li>• Peanuts, sunflower seeds, almonds</li></ul>                                      |  |



## **Mission Statement**

The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc., is the duly accredited women's philanthropic society of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The mission of the Society shall be:

- 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 fund raising efforts; and
- To promote the charitable, benevolent, and philanthropic purposes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, through instructional programs, presentations, lectures, seminars and other educational resources;
- To preserve and perpetuate Orthodox Christian concepts and the Orthodox Christian Family, and through them, to promote the Greek Orthodox Faith and traditions, in accordance with its doctrines, canons, discipline, divine worship, usages and customs;
- To promote participation in the activities of the Greek Orthodox community, with the cooperation of the Parish Priest and the Parish Council.

The charitable work of the Society shall be performed with discretion, courtesy and kindness.

## **Philoptochos National Ministry Commitments**

**Membership/Per Capita (January)** - This amount was voted upon at the 2010 Philoptochos Convention, \$15 per member.

**Academy of Saint Basil-Vasilopita (January)** - Today, the Philoptochos continues to be one of the main financial supporters of the Academy through two commitments: **Vasilopita and Sisterhood**. The Vasilopita event is conducted during the month of January across the United States by every Chapter in every parish. It is the main source of funding for the operating expenses of the Academy.

**Social Services, Cancer & Other Major Illnesses Fund (January)** – The Department of Social Services is a very important, vital element of our organization. The mission of the department is to improve the quality of life of those in need, in a way that maintains the dignity and self-respect of the individuals. Through confidential and professional services, the office provides outreach, education, information, support, intervention, motivation, advocacy, financial assistance and referral to local and broader resources. At the 2010 National Conference, the membership approved the merging of the Cancer Fund into the Social Services Fund, thereby reducing the total number of national commitments.

**Autism Assistance Fund (February)** – Autism is a complex, life-long, neurological disorder that inhibits a person's ability to communicate and develop social relationships and this disorder is diagnosed in one out of 88 children in the United States. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has called autism a national public health crisis. This fund will heighten awareness of autism and provide assistance and support to persons with the autism spectrum.

**Saint Photios Shrine (February)** – In 1965, the Archdiocese purchased the Avero House in historic Saint Augustine, Florida to commemorate the arrival of the first Greek settlers to the New World in 1768. The Philoptochos has continued to provide financial assistance towards the preservation of the National Shrine.

**Orthodox Christian Mission Center and Support a Mission Priest (OCMC and SAMP) (March)** – The Philoptochos Society provides financial support to the OCMC missionary teams, strengthening their ability to empower the Orthodox Church worldwide to carry its message to those who have yet to hear it and bring them within its fold. The Philoptochos, through the support a Mission Priest program, provides financial support enabling Orthodox bishops and priests in mission areas to build and restore churches, community centers, schools and medical facilities, as well as, to participate in training, teaching and field management, therefore increasing productivity.

**Hellenic College Holy Cross School of Theology Lenten Event (March)** – The Lenten Event is celebrated on the Third Sunday of Lent, observing the Veneration of the Holy Cross. The Chapters are requested to arrange a Lenten Event following the Divine Liturgy. Donations raised are used for the operational expenses of the school.

**Sisterhood of Saint Basil Academy (SBA) (April)** – This program provides for the ongoing physical needs of the children of Saint Basil Academy, such as clothing, furniture, equipment and essentials for the dormitories, kitchen, etc. as well as graduation costs, awards and gifts.



**International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) (April)** – The IOCC is the official humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians, which provides food, shelter and economic self-sufficiency and hope to those in need around the world.

**75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Founders Fund (May/June)** – 2006 marked the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Society's founding. This historic milestone offered all Philoptochos members, and our entire Greek Orthodox community in America, an opportunity to reflect on our history, our founders and the generation of women who have selflessly worked to fulfill the mission of the Society. To commemorate the lasting contributions and memory of the founding members, this discretionary commitment will provide financial support to existing continuing care facilities serving the aging Greek Orthodox population in the United States and the establishment of similar facilities.

**Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) (May/June)** – This was organized to support Orthodox Christian fellowship on college campuses throughout the United States. The OCF affords Orthodox Christian young adults the opportunity to meet, experience and witness the Orthodox Christian faith and church, through community life, prayer and service to others.

**Hellenic College/Holy Cross Scholarship Fund (September)** – For more than 20 years, Scholarships have been awarded to worthy and dedicated students at both schools to assist them with their tuition expenses.

**Retired Clergy and Widowed Presbyteres Benevolent Fund (RCA)** (September) – The Retired Clergy Association (RCA) of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America was established in 1988. The monies raised through this commitment will be donated to the RCA Benevolent Fund which provides support and guidance for retired clergy who are facing financial difficulties.

**National Philoptochos Emergency Fund (October)** – In recent years, there have been an unprecedented number of natural disasters in the United States and throughout the world that have depleted the voluntarily supported Emergency Fund. This discretionary commitment enables Philoptochos to respond immediately to those in need in times of national or international disasters.

**Ecumenical Patriarchate (November)** – The philanthropies of the Ecumenical Patriarchate such as Balukli Greek Hospital and Nursing home, school, shrine and parishes in Istanbul are supported by this commitment.

**National Sisterhood of Presbyteres (NSP) Benevolent Fund (November)** – The National Sisterhood of Presbyteres was formally established in 1982, and consists of all Presbyteres of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The monies raised through this commitment will be donated to the NSP Benevolent Fund, which was short-term support for clergy and their families in a time of crisis.

**United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)** (December) – In 1979, to commemorate the United Nations' "International Year of the Child", Philoptochos became a NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) with the United Nations and UNICEF. Through the commitment for UNICEF, Philoptochos donations help this global organization to protect the rights, health, and well-being of all children.

**General Medical Fund (December)** – The General Medical Fund was established in response to a need to provide a funding mechanism for persons seeking assistance in connection with illnesses not specifically covered by other, restricted National Philoptochos funds and programs. The Fund does not incorporate the kinds of restrictions commonly associated with other programs, thereby allowing its financial resources to be available for even the most unusual and uncommon medical conditions and resulting financial issues.