



# ST. THOMAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH



## St. Irene Philoptochos Newsletter

### MAY 2019

#### RECENT EVENTS

**February 17, 2019**

**Membership Drive  
Chocolate and  
Strawberries Meet &  
Greet**

**March 5, 2019**

**Founder's Day Dinner**

**March 12, 14, 19, 21,  
2019**

**Volunteers Cherry Hill  
Food Pantry**

**March 17, 2019**

**Sunday of Orthodoxy  
Loukoumades Sale**

**April 6, 2019**

**Rise Against Hunger  
St Luke's Broomall**

**April 7, 2019**

**Greek Independence  
Day Parade  
Philadelphia**

**April 21, 2019**

**Palm Sunday  
Loukoumades Sale**

### FR. CHRISTOFOROS' GREETINGS

Dear Ladies and Friends of the St. Irene Philoptochos Society of St. Thomas,

With joy and gratitude, I greet you all, praying to our Lord for the wellbeing and health of you and your families.

Another Ecclesiastical year is coming to an end, and thus we are preparing to enjoy the summer and with it, the many blessings the Lord is providing to all of us abundantly. However, that doesn't mean that the good work of our Philoptochos will cease or take a break. The needs of the people are many and not limited to the seasons of the year. I know very well that many ladies of our Philoptochos will continue their hard and silent work throughout the summer for the Glory of God and the comfort of the least of our brothers and sisters.

At this point, I want to wish to the new members of the Board that is coming up, a blessed, productive and peaceful service in the Lord's vineyard, as they will be called once again to fulfill the mission of our Philoptochos which adheres to our Lord's sacred and immaculate words: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)



I thank all the members of our Chapter for their commitment and dedication and all the supporters of their hard work. I commend the tireless care and work of our President, Mrs. Carol Pappas and all the Board members, and many thanks to Mrs. Pat Millili for taking the time out of her busy schedule between her baby grandchildren to put this beautiful newsletter together once again. The "Chapter Challenge" is moving along and every Organization of our Church is willing to help this philanthropic project.

I would also like to share with you my joy and excitement as we have begun the renovation of our beloved Church and I ask for your prayers and support, so that we successfully come to the completion of this project by the middle of September. We have undoubtedly entered a new Era in the life and the history of our Church, and we should all be supportive, thankful and very proud of this!

In conclusion, let us wish to our new Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, who was elected on May 11, 2019, and will be officially Enthroned on June 22, 2019, a blessed ministry in the Lord's vineyard in the United States and may God grant Him strength and many years!

Have a blessed, restful and joyful summer  
and get ready for the "AGORA 2019"!!!

**With love in our Lord and much gratitude,  
Fr. Christoforos Oikonomidis**

## MAY 2019

**April 26, 2019**  
**Holy Friday**  
**Epitaphios and**  
**Church Preparation**

**May 7, 9, 14, 16, 2019**  
**Volunteers at Cherry**  
**Hill Food Pantry**

**May 9, 2019**  
**Father Christoforos'**  
**Nameday Celebration**

**May 15, 2019**  
**Bid 'n Buy**  
**St. Thomas**

## FUTURE EVENTS

**June 4, 2019**  
**End of Year Dinner**  
**and Board Elections**  
**Black Olive**

**June 22, 2019**  
**Enthronement**  
**Ceremony of the new**  
**Archbishop of**  
**America**  
**ELPIDOPHOROS**  
**Archdiocesan**  
**Cathedral, NYC**

## ΧΑΙΡΕΤΙΣΜΟΣ π. ΧΡΙΣΤΟΦΟΡΟΥ

Αγαπητά μέλη και φίλοι της Φιλοπτώχου Αδελφότητος «Αγία Ειρήνη»,

Με αισθήματα χαράς και αγαλλιάσεως χαιρετίζω όλους τους αναγνώστες της όμορφης αυτής εκδόσεως του ενημερωτικού δελτίου της Φιλοπτώχου μας, και εύχομαι υγεία και κάθε ευλογία σε εσάς και τις οικογένειές σας.

Το καλοκαίρι έφθασε και οι ρυθμοί της καθημερινότητας θα μειωθούν καθώς έχουμε ανάγκη από την ηρεμία και την ξεκούραση που προβάλλει αυτή η εποχή. Όμως το έργο και η διακονία της Φιλοπτώχου δεν τελειώνει, ούτε παίρνει διάλλειμα, ούτε πάει διακοπές, καθώς οι ανάγκες των ανθρώπων συνεχίζουν να υφίστανται. Κατά την διάρκεια του καλοκαιριού, θα είμαστε εδώ, έτοιμοι να βοηθήσουμε, να βρεθούμε δίπλα σε όποιον έχει ανάγκη, να προγραμματίσουμε, να σχεδιάσουμε. Το πρόγραμμα "Chapter Challenge" συνεχίζει κανονικά, με την συμμετοχή όλων των Οργανώσεων της Ενορίας μας, καθώς και οι προετοιμασίες για την Αγορά του Οκτωβρίου.

Στο σημείο αυτό θα ήθελα να συγχαρώ τα νέα μέλη του Συμβουλίου της Φιλοπτώχου Αδελφότητός μας, τα οποία θα προκύψουν από την εκλογική διαδικασία της 4<sup>η</sup> Ιουνίου, και θα αναλάβουν τα καθήκοντά τους εν μέσω καλοκαιριού, και θα έχουν τον χρόνο να προετοιμαστούν για μία δύσκολη και γεμάτη προκλήσεις χρονιά και θητεία. Τις ευχαριστώ που δέχθηκαν με χαρά αυτήν την μεγάλη και ωραία ευθύνη και τους εύχομαι καλή δύναμη και να τις ευλογεί η Υπεραγία Θεοτόκος στο έργο τους.

Ευχαριστώ όλα τα μέλη μας, την Πρόεδρο κα Κάρολ Παππά και τα μέλη του Συμβουλίου για την σκληρή δουλειά που κάνουν χειμώνα καλοκαίρι, ενώ ιδιαιτέρως ευχαριστώ την κα Παναγιώτα Μιλλιλή για την δημιουργία αυτής της εκδόσεως για μια ακόμη φορά, παρά τις πολλές τις ευθύνες τώρα που ο Θεός της χάρισε δύο πανέμορφα εγγόνια μέσα σε ένα χρόνο!

Κλείνοντας τις σκέψεις μου, θέλω να μοιραστώ μαζί σας την χαρά μου για την ανακαίνιση της Εκκλησίας μας, η οποία έχει ήδη αρχίσει και ζητούμε την βοήθεια και συμπαράσταση όλων ώστε να έλθει αισίως εις πέρας και να χαρούμε όλοι μαζί, σαν μια οικογένεια, το ανακαινισμένο και πανέμορφο πνευματικό μας σπίτι, τον αγαπημένο μας Άγιο Θωμά.

Ακόμη, σας υπενθυμίζω ότι στις 22 Ιουνίου 2019 θα πραγματοποιηθεί η Τελετή Ενθρονίσεως του νέου Αρχιεπισκόπου Αμερικής κ. Ελπιδοφόρου στην Νέα Υόρκη. Με πολύ σεβασμό του ευχόμαστε έτη πολλά και καρποφόρα και να είναι ΑΞΙΟΣ!

Καλό και ευλογημένο καλοκαίρι και ας προετοιμαστούμε όλοι μαζί για την «ΑΓΟΡΑ 2019».

**Με αγάπη Χριστού,  
 π. Χριστοφόρος Οικονομίδης**

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**



I want to thank everyone for the great response we received for our “Chapter Challenge”, a community service project that we were selected to do from the Metropolis and National Philoptochos. We chose to help Joseph’s House Adult Shelter and Covenant House Shelter for young adults 18 – 21 years of age. We have had a coat drive, filled snack bags & hygiene bags, sold loukoumades, planted flower seeds, collected pajamas, prepared food, filled Easter baskets, collected flip flops & sunscreen, received Visa gifts cards and received tickets for the Camden Aquarium.

We had help from Youth Ministry, Sunday School, Hope & Joy, Greek School, Senior Citizens, Maids of Athena, Daughters of Penelope, Hellenic Heritage Dance Group, St. Thomas Choir and the entire St. Thomas community. We look forward to working with everyone again through April, 2020.

We will be electing a new Board of Directors for the next two years. Thank you to the current board for all of your hard work the last two years. We are very blessed to have Father Christoforos to help and support us every step of the way.

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 parish to join St. Irene Philoptochos to help even more people.

I would like to thank everyone in our parish who always support our philanthropic endeavors. I hope you have a great summer!

With Love in Christ,

**Carol Pappas, President  
St. Irene Ladies Philoptochos Society**

# Chapter Challenge

Our chapter is honored to have been challenged to raise our level of care for the needy around us. We were selected to present our work at the next Philoptochos National convention in 2020. Nine chapters are selected, one from each Metropolis. They are given \$100 seed money each and the challenge is to select a project that reflects the work of the Philoptochos. Chapters develop, design and implement a project of their own creation and choice. Part of the challenge is to raise awareness and involve the whole parish in helping the needy. You may go to [www.philoptochos.org](http://www.philoptochos.org) and go to the Resources tab (at the top of the page) then down to Chapter Challenge to see what awesome challenges have been done in the past.

We, as a chapter, have decided to aid two needy organizations in our area. Joseph's House of Camden, which provides men and women emergency shelter and access to supportive housing and comprehensive social services, and Covenant House (Camden and Atlantic City), which provides sanctuary and support for youth ages 18-21 facing homelessness or human trafficking. Many events have taken place and many more are planned. Please join us in helping in anyway you can. Suggestions are always welcome. Below are the activities sponsored by Philoptochos that some of you may have already participated in. We thank you and look forward to even more involvement in the future.

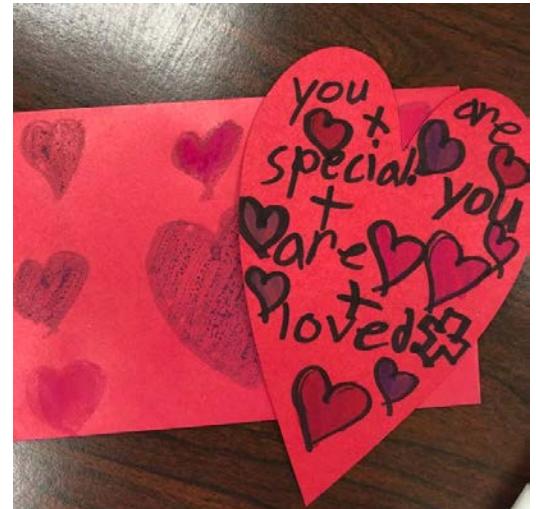
**November 18, 2018 Youth Sunday** - During coffee hour the community of St Thomas participated in the Community Wide Thanksgiving Project, the assembly of "Blessing Bags" filled with snacks and Personal Hygiene Bags that benefit Joseph's House.



**January 15, 2019 - General Philoptochos Meeting open to all Church Ministry groups for presentations by Josephs House of Camden and Covenant House of Camden and Atlantic City. January was also Coat Drive by Philoptochos for both Houses and it was kicked off by an initial donation to both representatives followed by a visit with bags full of coats donated by the congregation.**



**February 10, 2019 - Godparent's Sunday, Sunday School contributed and students assembled "Blessings Bags" filled with healthy snacks and created Valentines cards for the people at Joseph's House and Covenant House.**



**March 10, 2019 - Hope and Joy students planted flower pots for the young adults of Covenant House.**



**March 17, 2019 - Sunday of Orthodoxy** The members of Philoptochos held a Loukoumades sale, all proceeds go toward funding Chapter Challenge projects/events.



**March 19, 2019:** The Senior Citizens of St Thomas, funded by Philoptochos, prepared roasted chicken and potatoes, vegetables and baked ziti. It was delivered to Joseph's House that same day.



**During the month of March, the Greek School sponsored a Pajama and T-shirt Drive for the young adults of Covenant House.**



**The Maids of Athena prepared Easter Baskets for Covenant House.**



## Upcoming Chapter Challenge Events

The Daughters of Penelope and AHEPA will sponsor a Flip-Flop and Sunscreen Drive during the month of May.

The Hellenic Heritage Dance Group has pledged to provide giftcards for the young adults of Covenant House.

The St Thomas Choir has pledged to donate tickets to the Camden Aquarium for the young adults of Covenant House.

These and many more events are planned by Philoptochos and the community. Please join us in helping these homeless and needy adults and young adults in our area. Contact Mrs Carol Pappas if you would like to volunteer your time and or talent and if you would like to donate to this worthy cause.

## Membership Drive February 17, 2019

We hosted our annual new member drive with a “Meet and Greet” after church. Chocolate and strawberries helped encourage members of our parish to stop by, ask questions and meet current members of our chapter.



# FOUNDER'S DAY DINNER

On March 5, 2019 members of St Irene Philoptochos met for dinner to remember and honor our founders at Rexy's Restaurant and Bar.



## Rise Against Hunger April 6, 2019

Our members joined with Philoptochos chapters from across the Delaware Valley in the assembly of 35,424 meals at St Luke's Church in Broomall. **Rise Against Hunger** is an international hunger relief organization that distributes food and life-changing aid to the world's most vulnerable.



## Greek Independence Day Parade April 7, 2019



Annual Greek Independence Day Parade on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia.

**Palm Sunday Loukoumades Sale**  
**Koulourakia and Tsoureki Sale**  
**April 21, 2019**



National Philoptochos Website: <http://www.philoptochos.org/>  
Metropolis of New Jersey Philoptochos: <http://www.nj.goarch.org/philo/philoptochos/philoptochos.htm>  
St Irene Ladies Philoptochos Society: [st.renephiloptochossociety@gmail.com](mailto:st.renephiloptochossociety@gmail.com)  
And LIKE us on Facebook @St. Irene Philoptochos Society

## Easter Lillies



The **Philoptochos Annual Easter Lillies Fundraiser** was a huge success again this year. The lilies are donated by our community in memory of or to honor a loved one or family. Please consider joining us next year in this touching project.



## Epitaphios 2019

The Epitaphios was once again beautifully decorated by the members of our Philoptochos under the directions of our florist Mrs. Fotini Kousoulis.

The flowers and candles are all community donations in memory of or to honor a loved one or family. All flower donations for Easter and during the year are coordinated by Mrs. Katerina Kokolis and Mrs. Ourania Melissaratos.

## **Father Christoforos Nameday Celebration May 9, 2019**

The community joined in the celebration of Father Christoforos' Nameday with a coffee reception after liturgy on Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup>. We wish Father Χρονια Πολλα. Thank you to all the parishioners for the many delicious treats!!



## **Bid-n-Buy, May 15, 2019**

We send a big THANK YOU to all of our members and friends for making our 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Bid-n-Buy, "Kentucky Derby", a huge success! A special THANK YOU to Tony Black, son of Margie Black, for his guest appearance. Tony is a jockey who rode in the Kentucky Derby twice! He donated his time to speak to our guests and pose for pictures in his silks during the evening. It was a great event that culminated the hard work and efforts of all our members, fellow parishioners and Board members! And of course, a big THANK YOU to all our donors, businesses and individual for their support in every way! We were so pleased to see all our guests participate and enjoy themselves for a great cause, our various charitable and philanthropic commitments! Hope to see you all again next year!



## Bid-n-Buy, May 15, 2019



*122nd Running of the Kentucky Derby*

EIGHTH RACE		
EXACTA WAGERRING ON THIS RACE		
TRACK RECORD SECRETARY 10.1386, 1987, 1.20% ONE MILE AND ONE QUARTER		
1. COUNTRY SPEECH	126	15-1
2. HONOUR AND GLORY	126	12-1
3. DAUDENCE	126	10-1
4. LOUIS QUATORZE	126	10-1
5. CAVONNIER	126	10-1
6. DEMORAH	126	10-1
7. ORNAMENTONE	126	10-1
8. EDITION'S NOTE	126	10-1
9. PAULO MACHADO	126	10-1
10. CARROT MAGIC	126	10-1
11. UNBRIDLED'S SONG	126	10-1
12. BLOW OUT	126	10-1
13. CORKER	126	10-1
14. BUILT FOR PLEASURE	126	10-1
15. CITY BY NIGHT	126	10-1
16. MATTY II	126	10-1



## Bid-n-Buy, May 15, 2019



## Cherry Hill Food Pantry 2019



A great big THANK YOU to all the volunteers of the community for giving of their time, efforts and compassion to the Food Pantry of Cherry Hill.

## THE NEW ARCHBISHOP OF AMERICA ELPIDOPHOROS

It is with great joy we announce the Election and Enthronement of the new Archbishop of America, Elpidophoros. The Enthronement Service will take place on **Saturday, June 22nd 2019 at 11:00AM** at the Archdiocesan Cathedral in New York City. You are invited to participate in the historic Service of His Enthronement by responding with your RSVP as soon as possible by sending email to this address: [EnthronementService@goarch.org](mailto:EnthronementService@goarch.org)

May God grant His Eminence a blessed Archiepiscopal Ministry and many years!



**Archbishop-elect Elpidophoros** was born in 1967 in Bakirköy, Istanbul. He studied at the Department of Pastoral Theology, Theological School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, from which he graduated in 1991. In 1993, he finished his postgraduate studies at the Philosophical School of the University of Bonn, Germany submitting a dissertation entitled, "The Brothers Nicholas and John Mesarites."

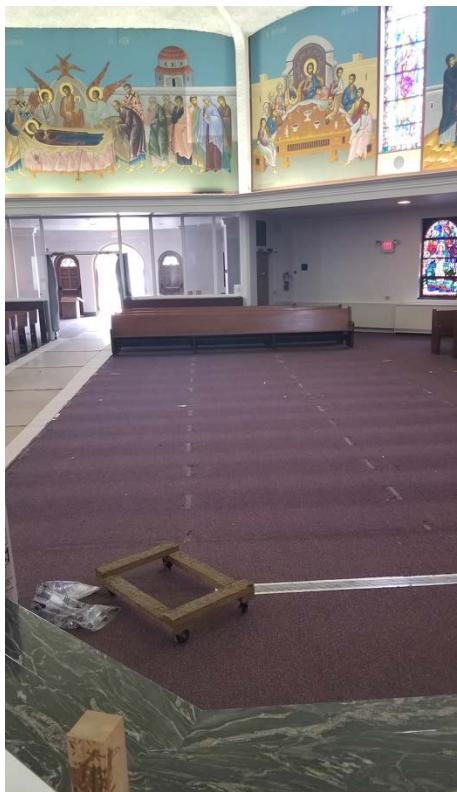
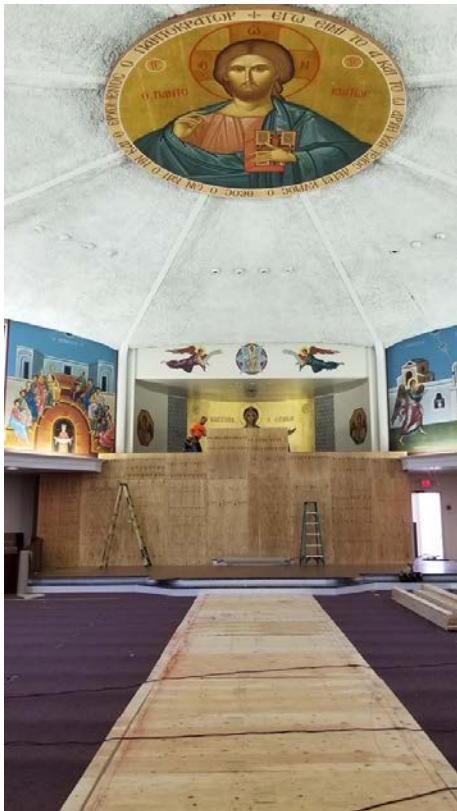
He was ordained a Deacon in 1994 at the Patriarchal Cathedral and was appointed as the Codicographer of the Holy and Sacred Synod. In 1995, he was appointed Deputy Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod. From 1996-1997 he studied at the Theological School of St. John the Damascene in Balamand, Lebanon, where he improved his knowledge of the Arabic language. In 2001, he presented a doctoral dissertation at the Theological School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki under the title: "Severus of Antioch and the Council of Chalcedon" proclaiming him a Doctor of Theology. In 2004, he was invited to Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Boston, where he taught as a visiting professor for one semester. In March 2005, at the proposal of His All-Holiness, he was promoted by the Holy and Sacred Synod to the position of Chief Secretary and was ordained to the priesthood by the Ecumenical Patriarch in the Patriarchal Cathedral. In 2009, he submitted two dissertations to the Theological School of Thessaloniki and was unanimously elected Assistant Professor of Symbolics, Inter-Orthodox Relations and the Ecumenical Movement. The dissertations are entitled: "The Synaxis's of the Hierarchy of the Ecumenical Throne (1951-2004)" and "Luther's Ninety-five Thesis. Historical and Theological aspects. Text - Translation - Commentary."

In March 2011, he was elected Metropolitan of Bursa and in August of the same year was appointed Abbot of the Holy Patriarchal and Stavropegial Monastery of the Holy Trinity on the island of Halki. He has served as the Orthodox Secretary of the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Lutheran World Federation and as a member of the Patriarchal delegations to the General Assemblies of the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches.

He was the Secretary of the Pan-Orthodox Synods in Sofia (1998), Istanbul (2005), Geneva (2006), and Istanbul (2008). He has been a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches since 1996.

The Archbishop-elect was also a featured speaker at the 2013 Archon International Conference on Religious Freedom held in Berlin, Germany.

## **PROGRESS OF THE RENOVATION OF OUR CHURCH**



On Sunday, May 26, 2019, we celebrated for the first time the Divine Liturgy in the Danielle Kousoulis Hellenic Cultural Center, which has become our temporary Church, until the completion of the renovations of our Church. All Services and Sacraments will be celebrated in the Gym during the summer, and therefore no other activities will be taking place in it. At this point, we are kindly asking for your financial support which is very much needed and requested. Please contact the Church office, see any member of the Parish Council or simply visit: [www.goc-stthomas.com](http://www.goc-stthomas.com) to complete your pledge.



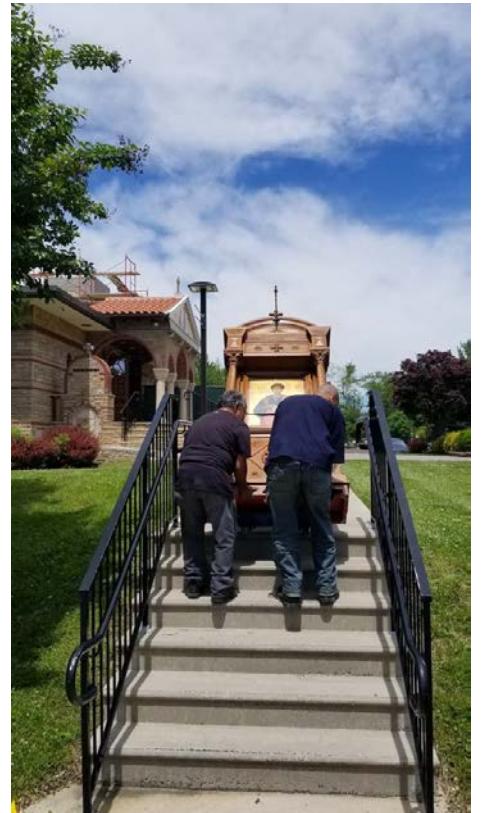
**WE ARE VERY EXCITED AND OPTIMISTIC AS WE ARE NOW ENTERING INTO A NEW ERA IN THE LIFE AND THE HISTORY OF OUR PARISH! WE OWE THIS TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE WORKED SO HARD FOR THIS CHURCH, TO OUR CHILDREN AND TO THE FUTURE GENERATIONS OF ST. THOMAS. OUR FUTURE IS NOW!**



**The ladies of the Board with Father are inspecting the renovation progress in the St. Irene's Hall**

Την Κυριακή 26 Μαΐου τελέσαμε για πρώτη φορά την Θεία Λειτουργία εντός του προσωρινά διαμορφωμένου Ιερού Ναού στο Ελληνικό Πολιτιστικό Κέντρο «Δανιέλλα Κουσούλη». Όλες οι Θείες Λειτουργίες και τα Ιερά Μυστήρια θα τελούνται εδώ μέχρι την ολοκλήρωση της ανακαίνισης του Ναού μας στα τέλη Σεπτεμβρίου. Στο σημείο αυτό, ζητούμε την υποστήριξή σας καθώς το έργο άρχισε και το όνειρό μας θα γίνει πραγματικότητα σε λίγο καιρό. Ο αγώνας για την συγκέντρωση των χρημάτων για την ανακαίνιση της Εκκλησίας μας έχει αρχίσει. Οι ανάγκες είναι μεγάλες. Ας αγκαλιάσουμε όλοι μαζί, ως μια οικογένεια, αυτό το σπουδαίο έργο, το οποίο θα μεταμορφώσει την Εκκλησία μας και θα χαρίσει χαρά και αισιοδοξία στις μελλοντικές γενεές, στα παιδιά μας. Σας παρακαλούμε να επικοινωνήσετε με το Ενοριακό μας Γραφείο, με τα μέλη του Συμβουλίου ή μέσω της ιστοσελίδας μαστο: [www.gocstthomas.com](http://www.gocstthomas.com) ώστε να ενισχύσετε οικονομικά το έργο μας.

**ΚΑΘΩΣ ΞΕΚΙΝΗΣΑΜΕ ΑΥΤΗΝ ΤΗΝ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΗ ΑΝΑΚΑΙΝΙΣΗ, ΖΗΤΟΥΜΕ ΤΙΣ ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΝ ΒΟΗΘΕΙΑ ΟΛΩΝ ΣΑΣ ΩΣΤΕ ΝΑ ΕΛΘΟΥΝ ΟΛΑ ΑΙΣΙΩΣ ΕΙΣ ΠΕΡΑΣ. ΤΟ ΧΡΩΣΤΟΥΜΕ ΣΤΙΣ ΕΠΟΜΕΝΕΣ ΓΕΝΙΕΣ. ΤΟ ΜΕΛΛΟΝ ΑΡΧΙΖΕΙ ΤΩΡΑ!**



## **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 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 Nation's "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.

National Philoptochos Website: <http://www.philoptochos.org/>

Metropolis of New Jersey Philoptochos: <http://www.nj.goarch.org/philoctochos/philoctochos.htm>

St Irene Ladies Philoptochos Society: [st.renephiloptochossociety@gmail.com](mailto:st.renephiloptochossociety@gmail.com)

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