



TRANSFIGURATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Fr. Stephen Lawrence, Pastor

## Sunday School Cook-out

by Cathy Koufogazos, Trans-a-Gram Editor

On Sunday, September 11, the first day of Sunday School, the Sunday School Department sponsored an indoor cookout and ice cream social after the Divine Liturgy. The event, held in the church hall, was well attended by a full house of parishioners and their families.

The event marked the first of many family-oriented activities planned for the year. Look for details of upcoming events in the *Trans-a-Gram* and on the church's website at [www.transchurch.org](http://www.transchurch.org).

Our thanks to everyone who helped to make this event such a great success.



NICK PAPPAS

The food line went out the door at this year's Sunday School cook-out. Over 100 people were in attendance to share fellowship on the first day of Sunday School.



### In this issue

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Fr. Stephen begins a new series on the power of stories to convey truth and remind us of who we are. This month: *God Before Creation.*

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# God Before Creation

by Fr. Stephen Lawrence

## In the Beginning...

We all know the story of the Garden of Eden, at least the broad outlines. And we all know the story of the Six Days of Creation. These are the stories that begin our Bibles, the stories found in the Book of Genesis. But these aren't the stories I want to begin with ... instead I'd like us to venture back before Creation. For our journey to begin, we need to go back before the beginning.

Allow me one caveat before we begin: There are precise ways of talking about God and there are poetic ways of talking about God. Though I don't claim to be a poet I do want to emphasize that in telling stories this year, we aren't going to be speaking precisely. We are going to venture into metaphor and image. I'd like us to do this so that we can experience the story of our Faith. But do submit any questions that come to your mind to our "Stump-the-Priest" question box in the Narthex if I inadvertently confuse you. Now, on with the story...

Before time. Those two words don't even go together. How can there be a 'before' if there is no time? No past, no present, no future. No when. So many of the things of God are simply beyond our understanding; trapped here in our experience of time and space we just cannot imagine an existence without either one. Yet, we are taught that God exists outside of space and time. He just is. He just exists. And even before He created the universe, before time and space, He existed. What that was like is beyond our ability to even imagine. We cannot fully know what His life was like outside of Creation. But there is one thing we can know; one thing that He has revealed to us. Even before He created, God was never alone.

As confusing as the idea of the Trinity is, as much as we'll never be able to fully comprehend exactly how the Trinity works, there is one thing we can understand. God has always existed in community; He has always had company. The Father was never without the Son; the Holy Spirit never went looking for the other two Persons. It's like standing before a fire — there is never a time when the flame is without heat or light. They all just exist together, even though the light and the heat come from the flame. So, too, the Holy Trinity has always existed as Three. And that's what this story is about. The first chapter of Genesis tells of Creation; but hidden between the lines of that account is the mysterious and provocative idea of the Holy Trinity before Creation — intending to create, deciding to act. Though we will never know what that 'conversation' was like, we do know why God — God as Holy Trinity — created. So, though we can't tell this story in the traditional way (since the characters and the setting are beyond our ability to imagine), the point of it all is the truth of our Creation; the truth revealed to us by God Himself — that we were created as

an outpouring of the Holy Trinity's love. Come with me, then, on an imaginary visit to God before Creation.

God moved — an eternal movement, a cosmic dance. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit moving toward each other in a communion of divine love. Love so perfect, so immense that even the infinite expanse of the Holy Trinity's divine life was not enough to contain it. And so a divine voice called out, "Why don't we create others to love?" But how should this be done? Could the Holy

*"The first chapter of Genesis tells of Creation; but hidden between the lines of that account is the mysterious and provocative idea of the Holy Trinity before Creation — intending to create, deciding to act."*

Trinity create humanity simply as an object to love? Wouldn't that then make humanity little more than well cared for slaves, merely existing like some sort of cosmic pets? "We could give them free will," the voice continued, "Without the ability to choose they could never truly love us in return anyway." This solved the problem nicely, of course. Love isn't love unless it is freely given. And a love unreturned isn't the fullness of Love. So a free,

unencumbered choice of whether or not to love God back is necessary for us to experience His love in the first place. Freedom is necessary to love. "And if they choose to not love us?" The question rang out in the eternal silence.

It was a truly daunting question. If the whole point of Creation was to extend the divine life of the Holy Trinity to humanity; and if the very heart of this Divine Life was the love which existed within the Holy Trinity; and if participation in this Trinitarian love could only be offered as a gift freely received (otherwise it would be slavery rather than love); and if this gift was then refused by humanity, then humanity had the power to undo the entire point of God's creating in the first place. Even worse, if humanity freely refused the gift of God's love then humanity would then also be unknowingly refusing to participate in divine life — the very thing humanity was created for in the first place. So God's decision to give humanity free will would also give humanity the ability to nullify both God's creative act and humanity's own intrinsic purpose. The Trinity's decision to create would carry an immense risk.

The question hung in the moment before time began. What if humanity chose to not return God's love? What if humanity chose willful blindness and selfish ambition over God's love? What if humanity chose to love our finite selves instead of our infinite God? What if humanity chose to be lost? "If they choose to not love us and to abandon the divine life we're offering them, then we'll just have to find another way to rescue them. We'll have to find a way to take away their blindness, a way to help them see what it is that they're being offered. After all, even if they choose to not love us, we have already chosen to love them."

*Next Month: We'll find ourselves on firmer storytelling ground ... The Garden of Eden.*

✠ Fr. Stephen



# Services, Sacraments and Calendar of Events

For up-to-date information, contact the church at 978-458-4321

## Sunday Services

**Orthros:** 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

**Divine Liturgy:** 9:30 a.m.

October 2, October 9, October 16, October 23,  
October 30

## Special Services

October 26 (Wednesday) .....*Divine Liturgy, 9:30 a.m.*  
(*St. Demetrios*)

## Trisagion Names

Please submit names of your departed loved ones and the month in which they passed away so that Fr. Stephen can offer a *Trisagion* on the anniversary of their entry into the

Kingdom of God. Each month we will commemorate those who have fallen asleep in that month. No donation is required.

## Sacraments

### Baptisms

*August 21:* **Luke Gregory Floor**, son of Gregory and Cassandra Floor; sponsors Melanie Pappas and Nicholas Pappas

*August 21:* **Nektaria Evanthea Vardal**, son of Panagiotis and Stephanie Vardal; sponsors Natalic Makridis and Demetrios Economou

*We welcome Luke and Nektaria as our newest Orthodox Christians.*

### Weddings and Marriage Blessings

*September 3:* Philip Eliopoulos and Sarah Howarth, sponsor Angelique Eliopoulos

*September 10:* George Papageorgiou and Joelynn Coupal; sponsors Caterina Perry and Jason Hantzis

## Save the Date

### Bible Study

October 5, 12, 19 (Wednesdays): Bible Study, 10:00 a.m.

### Sunday School

October 17 (Monday): Sunday School Teachers' Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

October 23 (Sunday): Sunday School Family Brunch, after Liturgy

### Family and Youth Activities

October 21 (Friday): Family Night, 6:00 p.m.

### Vacation Church Camp (VCC)

November 19 (Saturday): Advent Camp, 9:30-2:00

February 25, 2012 (Saturday): Lenten Camp, 9:30-2:00

April 13, 2012 (Friday): Holy Friday Retreat

July 23-27, 2012 (Monday-Friday): Vacation Church Camp

### Philoptochos

October 28 and 29 (Friday and Saturday): Transfiguration Philoptochos Retreat, St. Methodios Faith and Heritage Center

December 3 (Saturday): 13<sup>th</sup> Biennial Children's Medical Fund Luncheon, Old Greenwich, CT

December 4 (Sunday): 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Tea

### Other Church Dates

October 1 (Saturday): Metropolis of Boston Clergy-Laity Conference

October 3 (Monday): Parish Council, 6:30 p.m.

October 5 (Wednesday): Festival Wrap-Up Meeting, 6:00 p.m.

October 7 (Friday): **Trans-a-Gram** submission deadline for November issue

October 22 (Saturday): Marriage Preparation Seminar, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

## Sunday Epistle and Gospel Readings

### 10/2/2011

Matins: [Luke 24:13-35](#)

Epistle: [St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:1-10](#)

Gospel: [Luke 6:31-36](#)

### 10/9/2011

Matins: [Luke 24:36-53](#)

Epistle: [St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 4:9-16](#)

Gospel: [Luke 7:11-16](#)

### 10/16/2011

Matins: [John 20:1-10](#)

Epistle: [St. Paul's Letter to Titus 3:8-15](#)

Gospel: [Luke 8:5-15](#)

### 10/23/2011

Matins: [John 20:11-18](#)

Epistle: [St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 1:11-19](#)

Gospel: [Luke 8:26-39](#)

### 10/30/2011

Matins: [John 20:19-31](#)

Epistle: [St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 1:11-19](#)

Gospel: [Luke 16:19-31](#)



# Parish Council Elections

by Cathy Koufogazos, Trans-a-Gram Editor

Parish Council elections will be held on December 11, 2011. Six Council members will be elected for a two-year term serving through December 2013. These newly elected candidates will join the six other council members elected last December to a two-year overlapping term, to establish a complete Parish Council of 12 members.

Any parishioner in good standing who desires to be a candidate for the Parish Council must:

- Obtain an official Application for Nomination from the Parish office, and complete the form;
- Place the completed form in a sealed envelope addressed to the Chair of the Board of Elections; and
- Return the envelope to the Parish office by hand or by mail by 1:00 p.m. on Friday, November 4, 2011, prior to the second General Assembly on Sunday, November 6.
- Attend a Parish Council Candidate Seminar prior to the election. See Fr. Stephen for the date and any questions you may have.

It's truly amazing and inspiring to think about how much our parish family gains from the accumulated and heartfelt commitment of each of us. If we give our time and talents to our parish — if we each make our own personal commitment to our parish's success — then our parish will continue to flourish and to attract new people.

Serving on the Parish Council is one of the most rewarding experiences you will have as a parishioner. Think about the talents, skills, and interests that you can offer to our parish. We have so many members, with so many possibilities to bring our parish to the next level! Who knows what great ideas are waiting to be introduced?

If you have any questions please contact our parish Office Secretary, Jeanne Brady, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at 978-458-4321. Jeanne will put you in contact with Fr. Stephen, or with Georgia Dristiliaris, Chairperson of the Board of Elections.

## Grecian Festival Balance Sheet

by Konstantinos Kalabokis, Parish Council Treasurer

Income		Expenses	
Food Line	\$30,857.00	Facilities	\$35,506.10
Beer	\$11,882.00	Food/Drink	\$21,274.00
Pastry	\$6,986.00	Advertisement	\$10,565.68
Fast Food	\$3,588.00	Entertainment	\$4,823.80
Raffle	\$3,548.00	Road Race	\$2,787.00
Vendor	\$3,486.00		
Gyros	\$3,442.00		
Road Race	\$3,430.00		
Loukamathes	\$3,304.00		
Kids Town	\$1,600.00		
Tours	\$339.00		
<b>SUBTOTAL (3 days)</b>	<b>\$72,462.00</b>		
Vendor's Table Fee	\$875.00		
Program Book	\$32,550.00		
Donations	\$3,310.00		
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$109,197.00</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$74,956.58</b>
		<b>PROFIT:</b>	<b><u>\$34,240.42</u></b>



# Ministry Fair Wrap-Up

by Cathy Koufogazos, Trans-a-Gram Editor

This year's **Ministry Fair** was held on Sunday, September 18, after Divine Liturgy. Representatives from each of the ministries talked with parishioners about ministry activities over the past year and answered questions about plans for the coming year. There is much work to be done and endless ways that parishioners can help.

Each ministry team was created in response to our Lord's commands and focuses on a different aspect of parish life:

- *Liturgical:* To support the liturgical life of our parish by enriching the beauty of our Divine Liturgies and cultivating meaningful participation in the worship and adoration of God.
- *Ministry:* To invite parishioners to encounter Christ by serving the needs of others.

## September Family Night

by Susan Mitchell, Family Night Coordinator

Thank you to the de la Torre family for hosting the Feast of Saint Sophia Vesper Reception on September 16, which also served as the September **Family Night**. Hosting a Family Night is a wonderful way to work together as a family or as a group of friends and offer an evening for parishioners to join together in a relaxed atmosphere. Family Nights are held on the third Friday of each month. If you are interested in hosting a Family Night, please contact Susan Mitchell at [susanmitchell73@yahoo.com](mailto:susanmitchell73@yahoo.com) or at 978-453-4551.

## Mark Gulezian Honored

by Cathy Koufogazos

On Sunday, September 18, Mark Gulezian was honored after Divine Liturgy for his many years of service as the church's organist. On behalf of the parishioners and the parish council, Fr. Stephen and Konstantinos Kalabokis presented Mark with a beautiful plaque with words of appreciation from the parish and a picture of Mark seated at the organ.



CATHY KOUFOGAZOS

- *Evangelism:* To present Greek Orthodox Christianity to the public and to invite the public to "come and see."
- *Fellowship:* To encourage an authentic spirit of community by cultivating genuine ties of trust and affection within our parish family.
- *Discipleship:* To inspire Christ-like living by educating parishioners in the holy tradition of the Greek Orthodox Church and by nurturing the spiritual life of our community.
- *Parish Administration:* To oversee the financial, IT, legal, staffing, and other necessary details of the parish's institutional life.

Each team invites you to find a place to offer your time and talents. For more information, call the church office, contact Fr. Stephen, or speak with any member of the Parish Council.

## New "Mommy and Me" Ministry

by Cathy Koufogazos

There is a new ministry in our church for moms, dads, grandparents, and others who come to church with children ages 40 days to four years old. After communion, gather together for fellowship with other parents and participate in a short lesson with your infants and toddlers. The "Mommy and Me" classroom is set up downstairs in the back of the church hall, in the old church office. Contact Presbyteria Kelley for more information.



PHOTOS BY CASSANDRA FLOOR





## Reflections

by Olivia Sintros, Parish Council President

“Welcome Back” is a familiar greeting as the summer ends and fall begins. “Welcome Back” from the lazy days of summer; “Welcome Back” to school; “Welcome Back” to Monday Night football — but is “Welcome Back” to church the message we want to send?

I checked on several church web sites and found a variety of “Welcome Back” events.

A parish council member recently commented at a meeting that he was never away ... good point! Of course, I realize that the choir takes a hiatus, as does Sunday School, but the church is always here for us; and so it begs the question, “Are we always here for our church?” The question is rhetorical, and the answer is personal to each of us. There are a myriad of reasons why people might choose not to go to church. September 18 was promoted as National Back to Church Sunday, a day set aside to encourage both church and non-church individuals to “Come and See.” Some parishioners did bring friends to church that day and enjoyed fellowship with us after liturgy. Let’s remember that that our doors are always open and that everyone is always welcome.

On the subject of “welcome,” and on behalf of the parish, I would like to welcome Kristina Yepcz. You can find Kristina seated at the organ on Sunday morning. Kristina is a senior at Brandeis University, and her major is music composition. We are thrilled to have such a student of music accompanying our choir.

Again, on behalf of the parish, I would like to welcome Patty Vaporis, our newly appointed Youth Director. Patty’s husband John is an altar server and summer student at Hellenic College/Holy Cross. Patty’s enthusiasm is contagious, and she is looking forward to coordinating youth activities for our parish. If you are interested in assisting Patty, please contact her at [pdv649@yahoo.com](mailto:pdv649@yahoo.com). I’m sure she would love to hear from you.



New church organist Kristina Yepcz.



## Treasurer’s Report

by Konstantinos Kalabokis, Parish Council Treasurer

### Account Summary (September 12, 2011)

Account	Balance	Comments
Altar Fund	\$3,485	
Festival Checking	\$39,141	(\$22,000 in pending bills)
General Checking	\$23,783	(Youth Director \$10,625)
Mortgage Elimination	\$18,281	
Money Market Saving	\$133,741	
<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$218,431</b>	

If you have any questions, or are interested in helping, please contact me at [treasurer@transchurch.org](mailto:treasurer@transchurch.org).

## Mortgage Elimination Program

by Susan Pappas, Program Chairman

Since the reminder letters to the Mortgage Elimination Program were sent out in late August, six more parishioners have made their contributions. That brings the total to 66 parishioners and the contribution total to \$19,655.00. This total reflects some memorial contributions as well. Most of the contributing parishioners have paid in full and a few are making monthly payments.

It does not look like we will hit our goal of 100% parishioner participation before the campaign ends. However, we still have to make our monthly payments to Enterprise Bank of roughly \$3,200.

We are in a new Ecclesiastical year. Please give careful consideration to this program and donate from the heart. We all enjoy the use of the Family Life Center with its classrooms, meeting rooms and offices.

Remember, whether you pay monthly or all at once, your donation to this important program is much needed and greatly appreciated. We hope to collect \$300 from each parishioner, but any amount larger or smaller is wonderful.

Mortgage Elimination cards are available at the front entrance of the church or by calling Jeanne in the office during the week.



# Parish Council Report

by Nick Pappas, Parish Council Secretary



The Parish Council met September 12 and took the following actions:

- Accepted the monthly financial report through July, which showed income of \$199,866.37 and expenses of \$149,200.45 for a balance of \$50,665.92. As of September 12, the general checking account showed a balance of \$23,783 and the total of all parish accounts stood at \$218,431.
- Accepted a financial report for Grecian Festival '11, which showed income of \$109,197 and expenses of \$74,956.58 for a profit of \$34,240.42. A festival wrap-up meeting has been scheduled for October 5 at 6:00 p.m.

- Voted to transfer \$25,000 from the festival checking account to the general checking account to meet the \$25,000 budgeted for special events in our 2011 operating budget.
- Authorized Treasurer Konstantinos Kalabokis to investigate terminating our contract with electricity provider Glacial Energy and replacing it with Dominion at a lower rate.
- Voted to donate \$60 to purchase a raffle ticket to support a September 16 fundraiser for St. George Antiochian Church at the Andover Country Club.
- The council will next meet on October 3 at 6:00 p.m.

## Stewardship Report

by Olivia Sintros, Stewardship Reporter

We, as always, are very grateful to and thank those 333 stewards who have pledged their support to our parish ministries through weekly giving, annual giving, or in some other way supporting our parish ministries. The data below shows that at this point in the year, we have for the first time surpassed our budgeted goal in total money pledged. This is a wonderful accomplishment! If you are not one of our 333 stewards for 2011, won't you please consider submitting your commitment card, as well as activating your participation by joining one of our ministry teams. An active member participates in the liturgical life of the church and contributes to the best of his/her ability their time, talent and treasury. The Transfiguration Church wishes for your active participation.

### As of 8/31/11

Participating stewards to date: 333.....	
Total pledged:.....	\$143,718 (101% of goal)
Received to date:.....	\$117,077 (82% of goal)
Budgeted goal:.....	\$142,000

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# Philoptochos Society

by Soula Spaziani, Philoptochos President

A motto of Philoptochos is "One woman asking another woman to care." Our chapter here at Transfiguration Church certainly cares and has always been committed to assist actively and lovingly those less fortunate and to make a difference. With the new ecclesiastical year, we have numerous projects and events planned, and we welcome returning and new members to share that mission. The following are some highlights of our work.

## Outreach

*Visiting Angels:* Many thanks to Christine Faneros for coordinating visits to our nursing home and shut-in parishioners. If you are able to volunteer some time to visit, or if you know anyone who would like a visit, please contact Christine Faneros at 978-265-7249 or the church office at 978-458-4321. The connection and companionship on both ends is invaluable. These visits will certainly brighten your day and will be so appreciated.

*House of Hope:* One of our ongoing outreach programs is serving dinner to mothers and children at the House of Hope. Our commitment is on the fourth Thursday of each month. Thank you to Iris Malliaros for continuing to coordinate this very worthwhile need. If you're able to sign up for a time slot, please contact Iris at [Iris.Malliaros@uml.edu](mailto:Iris.Malliaros@uml.edu). This can be a valuable community service opportunity for families and teenagers or children to experience together.

*Literacy Program:* We are celebrating our fifth year of this initiative. Last year, over 1,000 books presented in book bags were distributed to the very appreciative students of the Moody Elementary School. Parishioners and friends of the Transfiguration are asked once again to donate new or gently used children's books. Collection bins are located in the upper and lower lobbies of the church. With this being the fifth year anniversary, a larger elementary school in need will be selected.

*Food Bank:* There is a continuing need for non-perishable food donations. The Merrimack Valley Food Bank and area shelters all need our help in these tough economic times. Donations are collected in the box in the main lobby of church.

## Fundraisers

*No-Bake Cake Sale:* Many thanks to Sophia Quinn and Sophia Cakounes for coordinating our annual commitment to Hellenic College/Holy Cross to benefit the scholarship program. Thank you to our generous parishioners who donated to this worthy cause via mail or basket donations. It is not too late to send in your donation to be happily included.



PICTURES BY MELANIE PAPPAS

Philoptochos members Sophia Quinn (left) and Sophia Cakounes (right) collected for Hellenic College/Holy Cross scholarships.

*Fall Calendar Raffle:* Philoptochos is once again sponsoring the popular money raffle. Our chairladies Elizabeth de la Torre and Ellen Dobi will be mailing out tickets this month. There will be one winner for each day in November with the largest prize on

Thanksgiving. Each ticket is put back into the drawing, so you have a chance to win multiple times!

*Christmas Card:* Please watch out for the mailing in mid-October to have your name included in the Transfiguration Family Christmas Card. Many thanks to our chairladies Corrine Dubay and Ellen Vercontaire.

*Apple Pie Sales:* Apple pie orders will begin on October 30. Pies will be ready for pick-up on Sunday, November 20, just in time for Thanksgiving, and can be ordered baked or unbaked. The proceeds from this project are earmarked towards the purchase of book bags for our Literacy Program.

*Annual Benefit Tea:* Please reserve Sunday, December 4, to kick off the Holiday Season with our 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Tea. This is our largest fundraiser of the year, and your support and participation is most important. Grateful thanks to our chairlady Ann Tavoularis. Plans are underway for a very special and beautiful afternoon. Help is needed in many areas. Please contact Ann at 978-375-9460 or [atavoularis@comcast.net](mailto:atavoularis@comcast.net) to offer your assistance for this very festive, wonderful project.

## Acknowledgements

*St. Sophia Reception:* Many thanks to Elizabeth de la Torre and Annmarie Tsitsipas for hosting a lovely reception in conjunction with the St. Sophia Vesper service. Many enjoyed the beautiful family gathering.

*Feast Day of the Elevation of the Holy Cross:* Thank you to Olivia Sintros, Mary Nicholaides and Susan Pappas, who collected and prepared the beautiful tradition of the tray of basil to celebrate the feast day.

*"Pot Luck Supper" Meeting:* Many, many thanks to the Gkolias sisters — Connie, Freda, and Clara — for hosting a lovely and delicious pot luck supper in honor of our first meeting on September 22. Specifics of our full agenda and resolutions will appear in next month's issue.

*Donations:* Thank you to member Mary Moskovites for donating many pieces of her beautiful china and serving ware collection to Philoptochos. We will happily use at many of our events and are very appreciative. Many thanks also to member Cathy Dristiliaris Roy for her donation of a curio cabinet. Kathy is relocating to Florida and donated her family's beautiful curio cabinet for our Philoptochos room. We are very lucky to have such wonderful members that keep us in their hearts!

## Coming Attractions

*Ladies Retreat:* Our fourth annual Ladies' Retreat will take place on October 28 and 29 at the St. Methodios Faith and Heritage Center in Contoocook, NH. The theme is "Strengthening the Bonds of Sisterhood." If you are not able to attend the overnight portion, please know you can certainly arrive on Saturday, October 29, for the day. Please contact our chairlady, Pat Mahoney, at 978-436-0998 or at [patm1231@hotmail.com](mailto:patm1231@hotmail.com) to RSVP or for more information.

*Feast Day of Saints Cosmos and Damian:* On Sunday, November 6 — the feast day of Philoptochos patron saints Cosmos and Damian — Philoptochos sisters will sit together in the front pews for a memorial service for our deceased members. A collection basket will be held for the Patriarchate, one of our National commitments.

*Next Meeting:* Our next meeting will be on Monday, November 14, at 6:30 pm.





## Sunday School

by *Connie Gkolias,*  
*Sunday School Director*

To all our girls and boys — Sunday school began on September 11, with a “welcome back” cookout, and we had a great time. It’s so good to see all of you, but we are still looking for some of our students. Please come and join us. We have a lot of special things planned for you.

To our parents — please make sure that our children come to church and to Sunday School so that they do not miss out on lessons about our Greek Orthodox faith. We must all work together for our children.

We are always looking for help. Please see Connie or Harilikia on any Sunday if you would like to help out.

Our Sunday School annual brunch is on Sunday, October 23. Please mark your calendars and join us!



## Choir

by *Louis Stamas,*  
*Choir Director*

On Sunday, September 11, our new organist **Kristina Yopez** accompanied the choir for the first time in a Divine Liturgy! Welcome, Kristina!

Each year, on the first Sunday in October (on or after the Feast of St. Romanos the Melodist, the patron saint of church musicians), parishes across the Archdiocese

of America celebrate **National Church Music Sunday**. This commemoration was inaugurated in 1982 by His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America, and it has been re-affirmed by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America.

National Church Music Sunday is a day that we set aside particularly to honor the contributions of local choir members, psaltai, and music educators who serve their churches through the hymnology of our Orthodox Church. In addition, it is a day when we recognize the work of the diocesan choir federations, as well as the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians, who through their music ministry, strive to enhance the development of church choirs, church musicians, and liturgical music at diocesan and archdiocesan levels.



## Fellowship Hour

by *Susan Pappas,*  
*Fellowship Hour Coordinator*

*September 4:* Sponsored in honor of Nicholas and Christine Nicholaou on their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, by their daughters Thea and Elaine. Congratulations!

If you would like to sponsor a fellowship hour in honor of someone, for a special occasion, or in memory of a loved one, please contact Susan at 603-886-4717 or at [smpappas16@yahoo.com](mailto:smpappas16@yahoo.com). The cost is still \$50. You can also supplement the refreshments with your own special treats.



## Youth Activities

by *Patty Vaporis,*  
*Youth Director*

As a parent, I can say with certainty that there cannot be one moment during the day that, no matter what we are doing, no matter the time (even as we sleep), that we cannot hear or feel our children. There is always that undercurrent ... that hum.

We love them so unconditionally, that sacrifice dissolves in meaning to become love. When they tell us how much they love us, we secretly think how they will never know the depth of this love, until they experience parenthood themselves.

My hope is for our church to follow our children along the arc of their lives. To realize that their relationship here will reflect what is in the deepest part of themselves. To be a community of individuals that finds this church a place of expression and comfort. I would like to create an environment that fosters relationships and one that always feels like home.

There will be activities and events that will hopefully surprise and excite our children. They will create, play and make lifelong friends.

I am going to ask you for your support and prayers.

You can reach me at [pdv659@yahoo.com](mailto:pdv659@yahoo.com), or at church.



## Online Bookstore

by Sandra Gulezian

We’re pleased to report that there are efforts underway to offer more goods and services to the parish through the church bookstore.

A visit to the Hellenic College/Holy Cross Bookstore and Transfiguration Monastery in Brookline, MA, allowed us to offer new items to the parish. Some of the book titles we selected were based on their overall appeal to families in today’s society, such as *Orthodoxy for the Non-Orthodox*, *Where are we Going so Fast?*, and *Children in the Church Today*. We also chose to offer more religious and ethnic items that we thought would be appealing — such as Cross nightlights, wooden prayer plaques, and a variety of incense fragrances.

All items from HC/HC bookstore are “on consignment,” meaning there is no upfront money required for the items

we offer. The church makes anywhere from 20–40% back on all purchases, depending on the item. Those items that don’t sell may be returned to HC/HC bookstore with no penalty to us — this is a great thing!

The Transfiguration Monastery is our source for icons. We are pleased to report that we are offering our parishioners a new service, by taking orders for icons, and filling them on a monthly basis. Already, we have fulfilled and delivered multiple orders.

If you have any suggestions for other services or items that can benefit the parish, please share your ideas. Please contact me with questions/orders about books, religious/ethnic gifts, or icons, at [msgulezian@comcast.net](mailto:msgulezian@comcast.net) or at 978-649-3387.

# Archpastoral Reflections

by Metropolitan Methodios



The story is told about a number of frogs which were placed by scientists in a tub of water whose temperature was exactly the same as the pond from which they were taken. The scientists slowly increased the temperature and were soon astonished to see that, even though the water gradually became warmer, the frogs did not react. It was only when the temperatures were increased to a boiling point that the frogs reacted.

It was too late. Before they knew it, they burned to death. Had they realized the slow increase in the water temperature, they would have reacted and thus spared their lives. The frogs grew accustomed to the slow rise in temperature and adapted. The change in water temperature occurred slowly but deliberately, and because of this process, the frogs failed to pay attention.

For us Orthodox Christians, the changes in the moral standards in our society have occurred so slowly that they have become imperceptible. We have adapted to the slow deterioration of moral life in society to the point where we have adapted to the moral decay in our midst and have taken it for granted. Sadly, we live in a world of moral and ethical relativism, hedonism and selfishness; in a world in desperate need of spiritual renewal. Sunday is no longer the day that we worship Almighty God and

then sit at our dinner table to enjoy fellowship. Rarely do we read the Bible. Prayers are no longer offered in our schools. The Ten Commandments have been removed from our civil courts. Lifestyles previously kept in the closet are now championed as reputable and worthy of emulation. The other day while driving to a liturgical service, a fellow priest pointed to a decal placed prominently on the bumper of the car in front of us. It was the symbol of a new atheist group in America.

The admonition of Saint Paul addressed to the Ephesians should echo in our hearts, “no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.” (Eph. 4:17) We need to re-evaluate our lives and ask ourselves how the way we live differs from the way others live who have no faith. Do we differ as Orthodox Christians from our secular and oftentimes atheist neighbors? How do we live our Orthodox Faith?

I am concerned that we have become so accustomed to sin and immoral behavior, that we do not notice it. We must not accept the prevailing permissive immoral and unethical standards of modern day society which are clearly at odds with the tenets of Holy Scripture and the teachings of the Fathers of the Church.

Remember the frogs in the experiment, and be wary of their mistake of growing accustomed to an environment which eventually caused their demise.

+ Metropolitan Methodios of Boston  
October 2011

## From the Clergy Brotherhood

by Fr. Costin Popescu

### The True Pragmatism

We live in the age of pragmatism. We value action, results, efficiency. There is not much time left for contemplation, and yet very few things are accepted without questioning.

It is important therefore to address head-on a set of important issues that have to do with the very reason of existence of the Church: why do we need a church? What is the special role of the priest? Why isn't the local parish sufficient? Do we need a bishop? All these questions have clear, logical answers, and all these answers are closely connected, as we will presently see.

We all value life. Unfortunately, our biological life is limited, and there is little we can do about it. Seventy, eighty years is all that these bodies can sustain (Ps. 89:10). If there is an alternative to the finality of death, it is definitely worth pursuing, even for the most pragmatic amongst ourselves.

This alternative exists indeed, and has been called salvation from eternal death, redemption from the tyranny of sin. There can be no salvation without a Savior, no redemption without a Redeemer, and that Savior and Redeemer is our Lord Jesus Christ. Only the Son of God can defeat the power of death, and therefore only in Him can we, limited, mortal beings, attain to Immortality.

To put this in the simplest way, we can only overcome death by being joined to Christ in one mystical Body. This Body is called the Church, and it extends both geographically and historically. It even extends beyond the earthly level of existence to include the saints that live with the Lord. We become members of this Body when we

are baptized, and we are further joined to it whenever we eat the Body and drink the Blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

Life in Christ is therefore a journey, and we cannot undertake it by ourselves. We need specialized guides that bring us into God's presence in the Mysteries of the Church. This is the role assigned by God to the priests. The priests have no special powers of their own: it is always the Power of God that is at work. Nevertheless, in His benevolence that surpasses all understanding, God has allowed humble human beings to have access to His unlimited power, for the benefit of the whole Body.

It is essential to pause here and realize that it is God who elects His priests, and that they work for the benefit of the whole Body. The individual Christian, the Christian family and even the local parish, while being essential members of the Body, are not the whole Body. A priest therefore does not merely serve individuals, families, or even his parish, but always the Church as a whole.

To make this reality concrete, the Holy Spirit has instructed the Apostolic Church to assign a bishop, or overseer (*episkopos*) for every area, as embodiment of the oneness of the church. The priests, or elders (*presbyteroi*), represent the variety of gifts, and function as a council to the bishop. There can be no Church without a bishop, just as there can be no Church without priests, and there can be no Church without the people of God.

In the Lord's Service,

*Fr. Costin Popescu is proistamenos of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Dover, NH.*



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