



Mother of God Orthodox Church

904 Cherry Hill Road + Princeton, NJ 08540 + mogoca.org



Joy of all who sorrow art thou
and protectress of the oppressed,
feeder of the hungry, consolation of travelers,
haven for the tempest tossed,
visitation for the sick,
protection and aid for the infirm, staff of old age,
O, all pure Mother of the Most High God,
Hasten, we pray, to save thy servants.

We welcome
all who seek to know
Christ in His Word
and in His Church.

A Message from Father Peter

Come, let us greatly rejoice in the Lord, as we sing of this present mystery: the wall that divided God from humanity has been destroyed; the flaming sword withdraws from Eden's gate; The Cherubim withdraw from the Tree of Life; and I, who had been cast out through my disobedience, now feast on the delights of Paradise: . . . (Nativity Stichera at "Lord I Call")



Soon we will be celebrating the most amazing and unimaginable feast, the Incarnation of the Word of God. In the words of the hymn, we hear that the division that existed between humanity and God has been destroyed by God's transcendence, taking upon Himself His creation and being born of Mary, who we call the Theotokos, birthgiver of God. The new relationship between God and humanity is brought about by the Word of God's obedience to the Father and allowing himself to be enfleshed in the person of Jesus Christ. What wonder, what mystery, what a gift we are given.

This past year there has been much confusion, division and hurt in our world. Yet, God has not forsaken us. During all this confusion and division, there are people and organizations who have come forth to remind us that we must be responsible and care for each other. I witness this in our very community at MOG. We have come together to support those in need through your generous contributions to St. Basil's House, IOCC, St. Andrew's camp and other needs. Your love of God, your faith and hospitality has allowed us to grow, and to allow new ministries to grow. I see in the children of our parish the depth and love they have for Christ and "their church." I was told

recently that some of our children in fact have tried to evangelize others in their family and friends to come to "their church." Inviting others to share in this gift of love, compassion and forgiveness, that we receive from Christ, must be the mission of each and every one of us. We are called to bring others into the unity brought by Christ who comes to us as a child, in need of care and nurture.

In this new year that we will begin, I am so grateful to all who have shared in the vision of growth and made the building project a reality. We now have the space for fellowship and educational programs that will allow us to further bring down the walls of division and share in the love and unity we have in Christ.

Christ is Born!



Services, Feasts & Special Events

~ December 2025 ~

Sunday liturgical services are at MOG @ 9:30 A.M. (All are welcome. Masks are optional.) **When services are held inside, capacity may be limited.** Saturday Vesper Services are at MOG @5:00 P.M.

We will continue to stream the services online for those of you who are unable to attend the live services. You can view the live stream and recast at <https://www.youtube.com/@mogprinceton>. **CONFESSION WILL BE HEARD ON SATURDAYS, BEFORE OR AFTER VESPERS, OR BY APPOINTMENT.**

Saturday, December 6th	4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service
Sunday, December 7th	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy followed by St. Nicholas Festivities
Saturday, December 13th	4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service
Sunday, December 14th	930 A.M. Divine Liturgy followed by Church School preparation for Archbishop Michael's visit on 12/28 (Christmas Carols)
Saturday, December 20th	4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service
Sunday, December 21st	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ CHURCH SCHOOL WINTER BREAK FROM 12/21/2025 THROUGH 1/4/ 2026
Wednesday, December 24th	5:00 P.M. Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Thursday, December 25th	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy, Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Saturday, December 27th	4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service
Sunday, December 28th	9:30 A.M. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy/ Archbishop Michael's visit



View the master MOG calendar at: http://www.bit.ly/MOG_calendar



Church School



❖ **St. Nicholas Festivities on Sunday,
December 7th.**

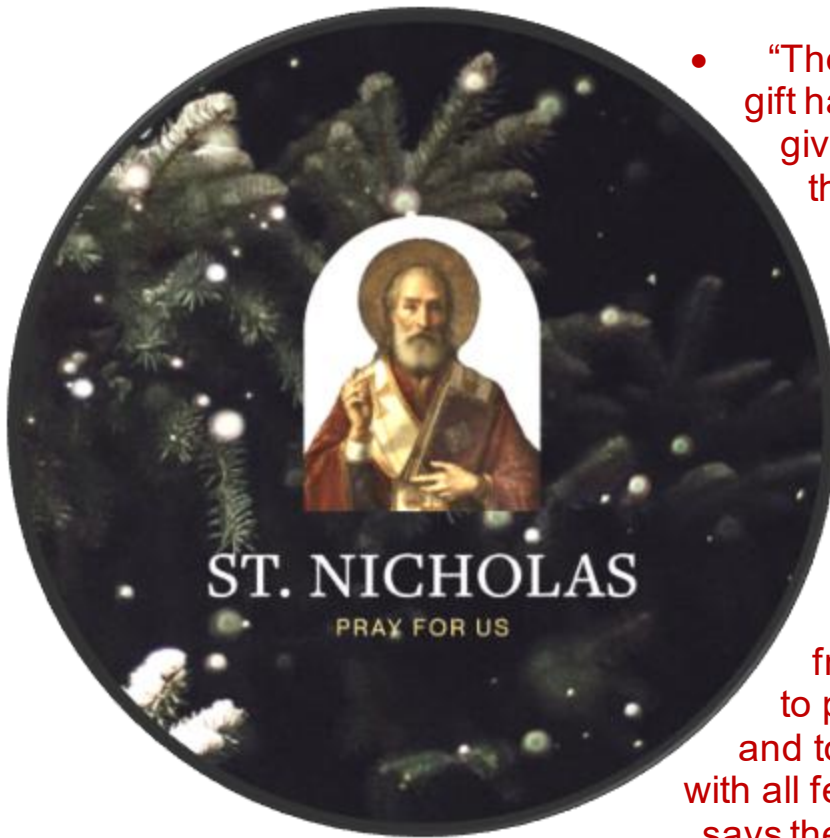
❖ **Winter Break from 12/21/2025 -
1/4/2026**

**If you are interested in volunteering or
need to contact Kristina regarding the
Church School you may reach her at:
kbaktis@gmail.com**

Thank you.



Wisdom of Our Church Fathers



- “The giver of every good and perfect gift has called upon us to mimic Gods giving, by grace, through faith, and this is not of ourselves.”

- Children, I beseech you to correct your hearts and thoughts, so that you may be pleasing to God. Consider that although we may reckon ourselves to be righteous and frequently succeed in deceiving men, we can conceal nothing from God. Let us therefore strive to preserve the holiness of our souls and to guard the purity of our bodies with all fervor. Ye are the temple of God, says the divine Apostle Paul; If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.”



The Sisterhood of Saints Mary and Martha



On November 8th, the Sisterhood of Sts. Mary and Martha hosted our first Heritage Bake and Craft Sale. Heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make this event such a wonderful success. The beautiful, spring-like weather added to the joy of the day, and we are deeply grateful to all who baked, crafted, volunteered or came to support the effort. If you are a baker or crafter and would like to participate in next fall's sale, please let us know—we would love to include you!

A sincere thank you, as well, to all who contributed to the Thanksgiving Food Drive for St. Basil's House. Your generosity was truly reminiscent of the miracle of the loaves and fishes—Deacon John and Matushka Judith's car was filled to the roof with your donations!

Upcoming Events

- **St. Nicholas Potluck & Hot Cocoa Social**

Sunday, December 7th

Please join us for fellowship as we honor St. Nicholas and enjoy a warm, festive gathering together.

- **Visit of His Eminence, Archbishop Michael**

Weekend of December 28th

We are blessed to welcome our beloved Archbishop Michael this month. All are encouraged to attend Vespers on Saturday and the Divine Liturgy on Sunday as we come together to greet him with love and prayer.





Thank you to all who serve in this ministry.

***“The bee is more honored than other animals not because she labors,
but because she labors for others.”***

~St. John Chrysostom



Church Hospitality

Please contact Matushka Jeanne at jbaktis@hotmail.com or (915) 255-9896 if you are able to sponsor a coffee hour after Sunday Liturgies.



“Work is a blessing, a gift from God. Work gives vigor to the body and refreshes the mind. If God had not given us work, man would have become moldy. Those who are diligent continue to work into their old age.” ~ Saint Paisios of Mount Athos





ANNOUNCEMENTS

Donations for St. Basil's House

Mother of God continues to support St. Basil's House with food donations, placed in the collection bin at the side entrance of the Church.

Please, when you shop, think of those in our community who are in need and bring your offerings to the Church.

Church School

Dec. 7 – St. Nicholas Festivities
Dec. 21 - Jan 4 -- Winter Break

For more information or to volunteer, contact Kristina Baktis, kbaktis@gmail.com.

Donations for a Garden Fund

MOG is seeking donations for a garden fund to finance more plantings to beautify the outdoors around the church.

A donation basket for this purpose is on the table in the side-door entry room.

Please write "beautification fund" somewhere on your check or just donate cash.

Thank you!

- ❖ Catechetical Class has begun. Anyone interested in joining, please contact Fr. Peter
- ❖ Inquirers class via Zoom:
Dec 4. Contact FP at pabaktis@gmail.com for the Zoom link.
- ❖ Confessions by appointment, please contact Fr. Peter
- ❖ Thanks to all who donated to the Fellowship Space fundraiser. Please make your 2026 pledges!





December 2025
stbasilshousenj@gmail.com

*From St. Basil's House to your home, Merry Christmas & A Joyous New Year! Thanks to everyone who has contributed in 2025 and we look forward to continued support in 2026! Please continue to **pray** for us, and for our neighbors. Please pray that God will send people to help so that the work may continue.*

-- Judith



GROCERY & TOILETRY NEEDS

(for neighbors served through St. Basil's House)

- **Canned Goods:** pasta sauces, soups, peaches, pears, mixed fruit, applesauce, vegetables (corn, beans, peas, carrots, yams, tomatoes, etc.), beans (chickpeas, black, kidney, pinto, white), prepared meals (SpaghettiOs, ravioli, chili, stews, mac & cheese cups)
- **Proteins:** canned tuna, chicken, sardines, salmon, mackerel, turkey, peanut butter, peanuts, grape jelly, strawberry jam, honey
- **Grains:** spaghetti, elbow macaroni, pasta, rice (white & brown), oatmeal, boxed mac & cheese, cold cereals
- **Drinks:** UHT milk (low fat, whole), unsweetened soy/oat/almond milk, fruit juices
- **Toiletries:** shampoo, conditioner, bath/face soap, lotion, toilet paper, tissues, wet wipes, hand sanitizer, toothpaste, individually wrapped toothbrushes, women's sanitary products, adult incontinence supplies, deodorant.



<https://www.facebook.com/stbasilshousenj/>

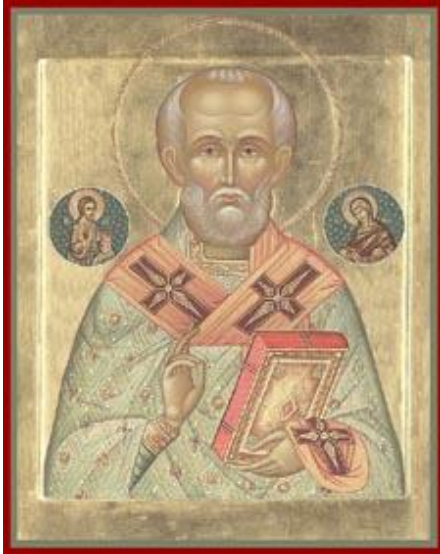


[stbasilshousetrentonnj](https://www.instagram.com/stbasilshousetrentonnj)



Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia

Commemorated on December 6



Saint Nicholas, the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia is famed as a great saint pleasing unto God. He was born in the city of Patara in the region of Lycia (on the south coast of the Asia Minor peninsula), and was the only son of pious parents Theophanes and Nonna, who had vowed to dedicate him to God.

As the fruit of the prayer of his childless parents, the infant Nicholas from the very day of his birth revealed to people the light of his future glory as a wonderworker. His mother, Nonna, after giving birth was immediately healed from illness. The newborn infant, while still in the baptismal font, stood on his feet three hours, without support from anyone, thereby honoring the Most Holy Trinity. Saint Nicholas from his infancy began a life of fasting, and on Wednesdays and Fridays he would not accept milk from his mother until after his parents had finished their evening prayers.

From his childhood Nicholas thrived on the study of Divine Scripture; by day he would not leave church, and by night he prayed and read books, making himself a worthy dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. Bishop Nicholas of Patara rejoiced at the spiritual success and deep piety of his nephew. He ordained him a reader, and then elevated Nicholas to the priesthood, making him his assistant and entrusting him to instruct the flock.

In serving the Lord the youth was fervent of spirit, and in his proficiency with questions of faith he was like an Elder, who aroused the wonder and deep respect of believers. Constantly at work and vivacious, in unceasing prayer, the priest Nicholas displayed great kind-heartedness towards the flock, and towards the afflicted who came to him for help, and he distributed all his inheritance to the poor.

There was a certain formerly rich inhabitant of Patara, whom Saint Nicholas saved from great sin. The man had three grown daughters, and in desperation he planned to sell their bodies so they would have money for food. The saint, learning of the man's poverty and of his wicked intention, secretly visited him one night and threw a sack of gold through the window. With the money the man arranged an honorable marriage for his daughter. Saint Nicholas also provided gold for the other daughters, thereby saving the family from falling into spiritual destruction. In bestowing charity, Saint Nicholas always strove to do this secretly and to conceal his good deeds.

The Bishop of Patara decided to go on pilgrimage to the holy places at Jerusalem, and entrusted the guidance of his flock to Saint Nicholas, who fulfilled this obedience carefully and with love. When the bishop returned, Nicholas asked his blessing for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Along the way the saint predicted a storm would arise and threaten the ship. Saint Nicholas saw the devil get on the ship, intending to sink it and kill all the passengers. At the entreaty of the despairing pilgrims, he calmed the waves of the sea by his prayers. Through his prayer a certain sailor of the ship, who had fallen from the mast and was mortally injured, was also restored to health.

When he reached the ancient city of Jerusalem and came to Golgotha, Saint Nicholas gave thanks to the Savior. He went to all the holy places, worshiping at each one. One night on Mount Sion, the closed doors of the church opened by themselves for the great pilgrim. Going round the holy places connected with the earthly service of the Son of God, Saint Nicholas decided to withdraw into the desert, but he was stopped by a divine voice urging him to return to his native country. He returned to Lycia, and yearning for a life of quietude, the saint entered into the brotherhood of a monastery named Holy Sion, which had been founded by his uncle. But the Lord again indicated another path for him, "Nicholas, this is not the vineyard where you shall bear fruit for Me. Return to the world, and

glorify My Name there.” So he left Patara and went to Myra in Lycia.

Upon the death of Archbishop John, Nicholas was chosen as Bishop of Myra after one of the bishops of the Council said that a new archbishop should be revealed by God, not chosen by men. One of the elder bishops had a vision of a radiant Man, Who told him that the one who came to the church that night and was first to enter should be made archbishop. He would be named Nicholas. The bishop went to the church at night to await Nicholas. The saint, always the first to arrive at church, was stopped by the bishop. “What is your name, child?” he asked. God’s chosen one replied, “My name is Nicholas, Master, and I am your servant.”

After his consecration as archbishop, Saint Nicholas remained a great ascetic, appearing to his flock as an image of gentleness, kindness and love for people. This was particularly precious for the Lycian Church during the persecution of Christians under the emperor Diocletian (284-305). Bishop Nicholas, locked up in prison together with other Christians for refusing to worship idols, sustained them and exhorted them to endure the fetters, punishment and torture. The Lord preserved him unharmed. Upon the accession of Saint Constantine (May 21) as emperor, Saint Nicholas was restored to his flock, which joyfully received their guide and intercessor.

Despite his great gentleness of spirit and purity of heart, Saint Nicholas was a zealous and ardent warrior of the Church of Christ. Fighting evil spirits, the saint made the rounds of the pagan temples and shrines in the city of Myra and its surroundings, shattering the idols and turning the temples to dust.

In the year 325 Saint Nicholas was a participant in the First Ecumenical Council. This Council proclaimed the Nicene Symbol of Faith, and he stood up against the heretic Arius with the likes of Saints Sylvester the Bishop of Rome (January 2), Alexander of Alexandria (May 29), Spyridon of Trimythontos (December 12) and other Fathers of the Council.

Saint Nicholas, fired with zeal for the Lord, assailed the heretic Arius with his words, and also struck him upon the face. For this reason, he was deprived of the emblems of his episcopal rank and placed under guard. But several of the holy Fathers had the same vision, seeing the Lord Himself and the Mother of God returning to him the Gospel and omophorion. The Fathers of the Council agreed that the audacity of the saint was pleasing to God, and restored the saint to the office of bishop.

Having returned to his own diocese, the saint brought it peace and blessings, sowing the word of Truth, uprooting heresy, nourishing his flock with sound doctrine, and also providing food for their bodies. The face of Saint Nicholas resembled that of an Angel, resplendent with divine grace. A brilliant ray shone from his face, like that which shone from the face of Moses (Exodus 34:29), so that those who looked at him were astonished. Whoever was oppressed by some affliction or passion of the soul had only to behold the Saint, and his sorrow was eased at once. As for those who conversed with him, they soon found themselves advancing on the path of virtue. Not only were the faithful moved to compassion, but unbelievers as well, and they directed their steps on the path of salvation when they heard him speak. The evil of unbelief which had been implanted in their hearts since childhood was uprooted, and in its place, the word of truth was sown.

Even during his life the saint worked many miracles. One of the greatest was the deliverance from death of three men unjustly condemned by the Governor, who had been bribed. The saint boldly went up to the executioner and took his sword, already suspended over the heads of the condemned. The Governor, denounced by Saint Nicholas for his wrong doing, repented and begged for forgiveness.

Witnessing this remarkable event were three military officers, who were sent to Phrygia by the emperor Constantine to put down a rebellion. They did not suspect that soon they would also be compelled to seek the

intercession of Saint Nicholas. Evil men slandered them before the emperor, and the officers were sentenced to death. Appearing to Saint Constantine in a dream, Saint Nicholas called on him to overturn the unjust sentence of the military officers.

He worked many other miracles, and struggled many long years at his labor. Through the prayers of the saint, the city of Myra was rescued from a terrible famine. He appeared to a certain Italian merchant and left him three gold pieces as a pledge of payment. He requested him to sail to Myra and deliver grain there. More than once, the saint saved those drowning in the sea, and provided release from captivity and imprisonment.

Having reached old age, Saint Nicholas peacefully fell asleep in the Lord. His venerable relics were preserved incorrupt in the local cathedral church and flowed with curative myrrh, from which many received healing. In the year 1087, his relics were transferred to the Italian city of Bari, where they rest even now (See May 9).

The name of the great saint of God, the hierarch and wonderworker Nicholas, a speedy helper and suppliant for all hastening to him, is famed in every corner of the earth, in many lands and among many peoples. In Russia there are a multitude of cathedrals, monasteries and churches consecrated in his name. There is, perhaps, not a single city without a church dedicated to him.

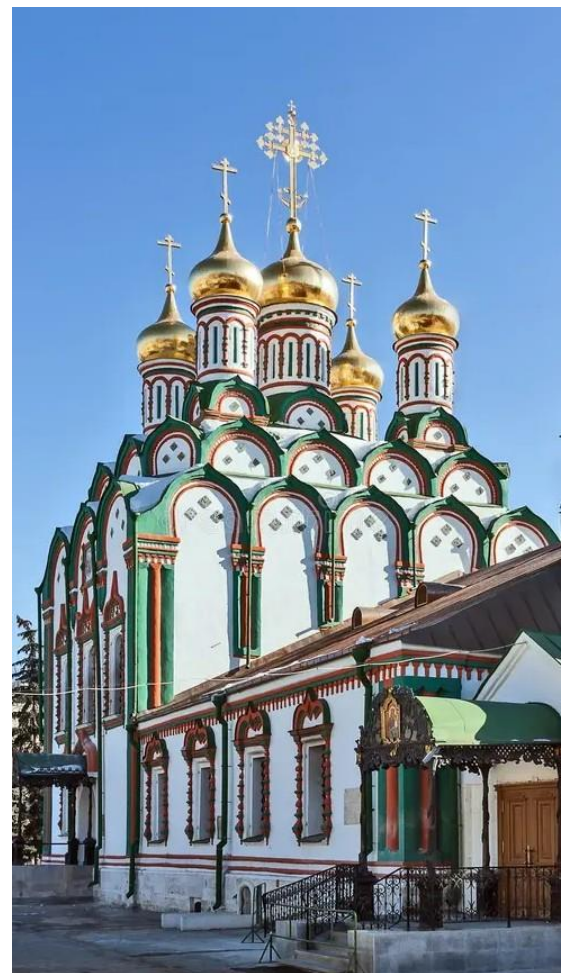
The first Russian Christian prince Askold (+ 882) was baptized in 866 by Patriarch Photius (February 6) with the name Nicholas. Over the grave of Askold, Saint Olga (July 11) built the first temple of Saint Nicholas in the Russian Church at Kiev. Primary cathedrals were dedicated to Saint Nicholas at Izborsk, Ostrov, Mozhaishk, and Zaisk. At Novgorod the Great, one of the main churches of the city, the Nikolo-Dvorischensk church, later became a cathedral.

Famed and venerable churches and monasteries dedicated to Saint Nicholas are found at Kiev, Smolensk, Pskov, Toropetsa, Galich, Archangelsk, Great Ustiug, Tobolsk. Moscow had dozens of churches named for the saint, and also three monasteries in the Moscow diocese: the Nikolo-Greek (Staryi) in the Chinese-quarter, the Nikolo-Perervinsk and the Nikolo-Ugreshsk. One of the chief towers of the Kremlin was named the Nikolsk.

Many of the churches devoted to the saint were those established at market squares by Russian merchants, sea-farers and those who traveled by land, venerating the wonderworker Nicholas as a protector of all those journeying on dry land and sea. They sometimes received the name among the people of "Nicholas soaked."

Many village churches in Russia were dedicated to the wonderworker Nicholas, venerated by peasants as a merciful intercessor before the Lord for all the people in their work. And in the Russian land Saint Nicholas did not cease his intercession. Ancient Kiev preserves the memory about the miraculous rescue of a drowning infant by the saint. The great wonderworker, hearing the grief-filled prayers of the parents for the loss of their only child, took the infant from the waters, revived him and placed him in the choir-loft of the church of Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) before his wonderworking icon. In the morning the infant was found safe by his thrilled parents, praising Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker.

Many wonderworking icons of Saint Nicholas appeared in Russia and came also from other lands. There is the ancient Byzantine embroidered image of the saint, brought to Moscow from Novgorod, and the large icon painted in the thirteenth century by a Novgorod master.



Two depictions of the wonderworker are especially numerous in the Russian Church: Saint Nicholas of Zارايسк, portrayed in full-length, with his right hand raised in blessing and with a Gospel (this image was brought to Ryazan in 1225 by the future wife of Prince Theodore, the Byzantine Princess Eupraxia, who perished in 1237 with her husband and infant son during the incursion of Batu); and Saint Nicholas of Mozhaisk, also in full stature, with a sword in his right hand and a city in his left. This recalls the miraculous rescue of the city of Mozhaisk from an invasion of enemies, through the prayers of the saint. It is impossible

to list all the grace-filled icons of Saint Nicholas, or to enumerate all his miracles.

Saint Nicholas is the patron of travelers, and we pray to him for deliverance from floods, poverty, or any misfortunes. He has promised to help those who remember his parents, Theophanes and Nonna.

Saint Nicholas is also commemorated on May 9 (The transfer of his relics) and on July 29 (his nativity).

In Italy, the relics of Saint Nicholas are in the Roman Catholic Basilica of Saint Nicholas in Bari; and his left arm is in Saint Nicholas Roman Catholic Church of Rimini.

In Russia, relics of Saint Nicholas are to be found in Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow, and in the Saint Alexander Nevsky Lavra in St. Petersburg.

The right hand of Saint Nicholas is in the church of Saint George the New in Bucharest, Romania.

In Greece, portions of the Saint's relics are in the Monasteries of Saint Nicholas Apo Bathia in Euboea, and Phaneromenē in Salaminos. A piece of the Saint's left arm is in the Metropolitan church of Volos. One of the Saint's teeth is at Kalabryta Monastery in the Peloponnēsos.



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MOG Basement Project: Stage One – New Septic





Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow



Contribute to Mother of God online!

- ✓ We now offer the ability to send your contributions online!
- ✓ Our members and friends have even more ways to access current and past contribution's activity – choose the way that suits your lifestyle best!

Visit mogoca.org
for more information
and to sign up.

Sign up for e-contributions today! It's free, easy, and secure.

Save time and money, while helping the environment!

- **View your current and past contributions:** Access previous contributions online, with the option to print or save to your computer.
- **Never miss a contribution:** Receive an email according to your preferred timetable for making contributions.
- **Help us honor our obligations:** Set up a recurring contribution and automatically deduct the payment from your bank account or credit card on the same day of every month.
- **Save time and money:** Don't be hassled writing checks, stamping envelopes, and/or mailing contributions. View and make contributions from anywhere at any time.
- **Earn rewards:** Use your credit card to make your contribution and earn points or rewards for every dollar you contribute.
- **Help the environment:** Reduce the impact you have on the environment by choosing to view and make your contributions online.

Prayer Requests



“...and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

~James 5:16, NKJV

Commemoration of the Living Servants of God:

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who for the sake of Your eternal mercy and loving kindness became man, and suffered crucifixion and death for the salvation of all; Who rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father, where You hear the prayers of all who call upon You humbly and with their whole heart: incline Your ear to us, and hearken to the prayer which your unworthy servants offer as a spiritual sacrifice for all Your people.

Have mercy, O Lord, upon:

- We pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy. We pray for peace in the Middle East. We pray the same for all war-torn nations.
- Please pray for an end to gun violence, particularly in the United States. Please pray for unity, love, peace and joy.
- Please pray for **George Gabriel**, and for...
- **Debbie Baktis**, Matushka Jeanne's sister-in-law who is awaiting a kidney transplant.
- Praise for Matushka Jeanne's niece's husband, **David**. His last brain scan was clear of all cancer. He is doing his chemo rounds and is handling the treatment well.
- **Jan Perkins**, who continues to suffer from mobility and digestive issues. And **Dana Talley**, who is struggling with aggressive prostate cancer. Also, please continue to pray for Margery and Jan's friend, **Carl**, who is doing better with his alcohol addiction struggles, and for Margery's godchild Juliana, who is suffering from possible cancer of the uterus and is experiencing major anxiety.
- **Jackie and Nick DeLarato**, who have health issues. Also, Nick's sister, **Kathy**.
- **Olga Mezina**, friend of Lana.
- **Carson & Addison**, Joe Elchak's granddaughters.
- Lauren Ugorji's: husband, **Richmond**, who struggles with health issues, adult children **Jade & Mike Edwards**, **Jordan & Eric Mosurick** (and all young couples struggling with health issues and getting permanent homes) and teenage **Anastasia Ugorji**. Her dad, **Don Robinson**, for continued good health as he battles blood cancer. Aunt & Uncle **Kirra & Jesse Filkins** and **Aunts Scott Brown Pempeit** and **Laverne Tisdale**. Her friend **Missy Gillespie** and Missy's husband, **Kurt**, who needs a kidney transplant.

May we join you in prayer for all of those on your minds, all of those in your prayers, and all of those in your hearts. Lord Have Mercy.

Please send prayer requests and status updates to: ladyofleasure@yahoo.com

COMMEMORATION OF THE DEPARTED

The servant of God, Phillip Schmoll. May his memory be eternal.

Daily Bible Readings - For a listing and links to the daily scripture readings go to <http://oca.org/readings>.





Please Pray for the Mother of God Joy of All Who Sorrow
Orthodox Church
as we move forward.

God's Will Be Done In All Things!!!

