Mother of God Orthodox Church

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



Joy of all who sorrow, art thou 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.



Message from Father Peter

Enter His gates with thanksgiving,
and His courts with praise!
Give thanks to Him; bless His name!
(Psalm 100:4)

November invites us to begin the Advent season with thanksgiving and anticipation. As we prepare to welcome the Incarnate Christ Child anew into our lives, we also celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday in the United States of America. These observances draw our attention to gratitude as a spirit in which to prepare for Christ's coming.

The Church marks the six weeks before the Nativity of Christ as a time of fasting and prayer, inviting us to rediscover the gift of the Incarnation. God has chosen to take on our humanity and be born as a child so that we can be reborn. Through this gift, He restores what it means to be human: to be created in the image and likeness of God. This season therefore calls us to reflect on the true meaning of thanksgiving.

Psalm 100 offers us a daily prayer of thanksgiving and a reminder of God's majesty and love for His creation. Its call to shout joyfully to the Lord and serve Him with gladness (verses 1–2) speaks both to our personal encounter with God and to our encounter with Him as a worshipping community. The psalm calls us to come before His presence with singing and to acknowledge that the Lord is God: He has made us, and not we ourselves. When we gather as a community of faith, we answer that call by singing hymns of praise and thanksgiving to the God who created us and all that we know. We are created in His image. In the Incarnation, the Creator enters His creation to reunite what disobedience has separated.

During Advent, we prepare our whole being for the coming of the Incarnate Word of God, so that we can receive His gift and live in thanksgiving. The psalmist calls us to enter His gates with thanksgiving. This invitation speaks of access restored: we are no longer banished from the garden, for its gates have been opened. The curtain that once kept humanity out of the Holy of Holies has been torn in two, and the Theotokos gives birth to the transcendent One.

When we gather as a community of faith to celebrate the Eucharist, our thanksgiving, we enter His gates with gratitude, praising and singing to the One who has chosen to be born of Mary.

For the feast of the Nativity, we will sing: "Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephrata!" This proclamation calls us, the faithful, to "make ready" through fasting, confession, repentance, prayer, communion and almsgiving, so that we may receive the Incarnation of God. Its imagery evokes the opening of the "spiritual paradise" of the Theotokos's womb, where Christ, the "Tree of Life," is born.

Now is the time to prepare to receive the newness of life given to us in the Incarnation of the Word of God.

Services, Feasts & Special Events ~ November 2026 ~

Sunday liturgical services are at MOG @ 9:30 A.M. Saturday Vesper Services are at MOG @5:00 P.M. All are welcome.

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, November 7th	**NO Vespers Service**
Sunday, November 8th	**9:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy / No Church School**
Wednesday, November 11th	**6:00 P.M./ Inquirers Class at MOG**
Saturday, November 14th	**4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service**
Sunday, November 15th	**9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy followed by Church School**
Wednesday, November 18th	**6:00 P.M./ Inquirers Class at MOG**
Saturday, November 21st	**9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy, The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple**
Saturday, November 21st	**4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service**
Sunday, November 22nd	**9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy followed by Church School**
Wednesday, November 25th	**6:00 P.M./ Inquirers Class at MOG**
Saturday, November 28th	**4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service**
Sunday, November 29th	**9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy, followed by Church School**

SAVE THE DATE:

December 5-6: Archbishop Michael's annual Pastoral Visit to MOG

Saturday, Vespers 5 pm

Sunday Greeting of the Archbishop 915am

View the master MOG calendar at:



http://www.bit.ly/MOG_calendar



Church School – November is when we will be practicing for our Nativity play.

Christ is in our midst! The 2026-27 church school season has begun! The goal is to teach children to know and love their God with all of their heart, mind and soul. This is a community effort. When children see those around them, especially their church friends, participating and worshipping in Church, there is a joy to join and partake in the beauty and mystery of God's gifts.

St John Chrysostom says, "Let everything take second place to our care of our children, our bringing them up to the discipline and instruction of the Lord. If from the beginning we teach them to love true wisdom, they will have great wealth and more glory than riches can provide."

Every Sunday the children choose a job from the star chart. This is a wonderful, whole sensory engagement that Kristina put into place while she was directing church school. The children look forward to their church jobs. This guides them to know when to go, where to stand, when to wait, touching and smelling the candles, and moving in and through the church service.

This year we are blessed to have 16 children enrolled, as well as 6 volunteer teachers! The children are divided by age into 3 groups. Each group has a group name. We have: the St. Nicholas group, led by Mina and Liza; the St. Olga's with Natalia and Matt; and, the Cherubims led by Markus and Carrie. This year Anna will be directing the Nativity play. The play will be on December 6th. This aligns with Archbishop Michael's visit.

The children have started learning about the 12 feasts; one each Sunday. As we move into the Nativity Fast, the play will be the main focus as well as planning service projects, deepening friendships with social activities, fundraising for our school field trip, and broadening our church school library. After the winter break, we will move into Saint studies, which will culminate in final presentations of the children's own name's day Saint.

Icons help us remember stories from the bible and are "windows into heaven." In January, we pray to find an Iconographer to teach an art workshop for the children.

Please consider donating to the church school fund. The money is used for supplies, books, trips and anything else needed to keep this ministry thriving and keep our children strong in the faith. Please also take a look at our church school calendar if you would like to stay informed about what we are studying. Feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Lastly, thank you to Father Peter and Matushka Jeanne for your guidance and support in this ministry. Thanks to all who support with prayers and donations!

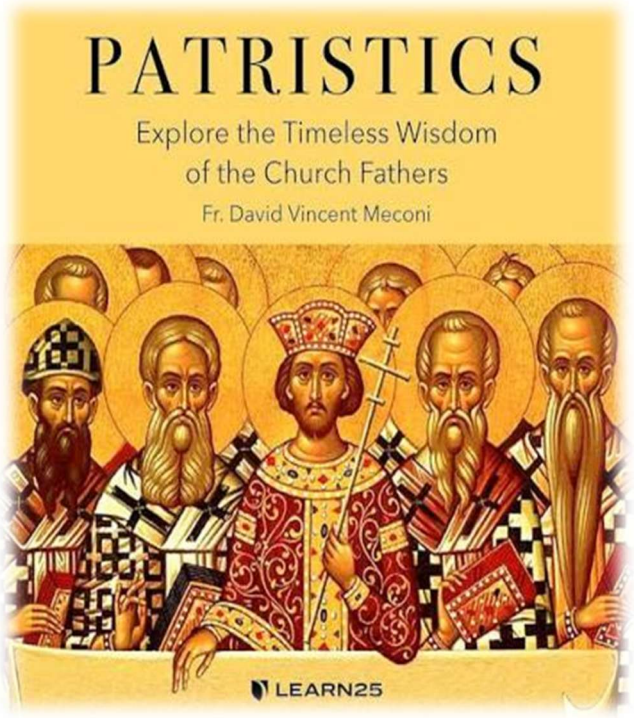
Mother of God Church School Calendar 2-26-2027

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1mmakb3xlHCnxhq0Ef2Q11k6f8Lkqx0gk6sI9VG04clc/edit?gid=0#gid=0

In Christ, Carrie Ellmore-Tallitsch

Wisdom of Our Church Fathers

The wisdom of the Orthodox Church Fathers (known as *patristics*) centers on acquiring a pure heart, unceasing prayer, and achieving union with God (*theosis*) through humility and love.



On the great desire of God

~ Words of the Church Fathers ~
~ On the great desire of God

'God will have all men to be saved' (I Tim; 2:4).

God desires that all men be saved; for this the Lord Jesus descended into hell, to save those also who had lived on earth before His coming. For, if He had not descended into hell, an enormous number of righteous souls would have perished forever. And further: if He had not descended into hell, it, the greatest abode of evil against God and the human race, would have remained undestroyed.

These two reasons, therefore, woke Christ the life-Giver and sent Him down in spirit into hell: firstly, to destroy the nest of the powers of hell; and secondly, to lead forth from hell to Paradise the souls of our forefathers and the prophets and righteous men and women, who had fulfilled the ancient Law of God and had thus been pleasing to Him.

Before Satan had done exulting in Christ's humiliation and death on the Cross, Christ appeared, living and almighty, in the midst of hell, the chief abode of Satan. What unexpected and devastating tidings for Satan! For three years he had plaited a noose for Christ on earth, and in three days Christ destroyed his kingdom and led out the most precious booty in the form of a swarm of righteous souls.

Thou desirest that all men be saved, O Lord. We pray Thee: save us also, for there is neither salvation nor a Saviour apart from Thee. In Thee only do we hope, and Thee alone do we worship, Thee and the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

The Sisterhood of Saints Mary and Martha

Thanksgiving Almsgiving Outreach: The Sisterhood of Saints Mary and Martha

"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever!" (Psalm 106:1)

This November, the Sisterhood is partnering with our parish youth to share the warmth and joy of Christ's love with families served by Saint Basil's House in Trenton, New Jersey.

The Sisterhood will assemble special Thanksgiving gift packages featuring traditional "Thanksgiving Blessing Mix" treat bags, lovingly packed by Sisterhood members, and handmade holiday cards created by our church school children.

How You Can Support This Ministry

To help our Neighbors enjoy a joyful Thanksgiving meal, we invite parishioners to support this almsgiving effort by contributing $20 ShopRite gift cards. You may also donate by check or cash, and the Sisterhood will purchase the gift cards. If you do want to donate by check, please make checks payable to **Mother of God Church**, write "Sisterhood Thanksgiving Drive" in the memo line, and give the check directly to **Matushka Jeanne**.

Donation deadline: Sunday, November 15, 2026.

Thank you for your generosity, prayers and commitment to sharing the Mother of God's hospitality with neighbors in need this holiday season. May the Lord richly bless you and your families!

In Christ,
Matushka Jeanne

"The bee is more honored than other animals not because she labors, but because she labors for others." *~St. John Chrysostom*

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

Church school begin on September 13th for the 2026-2027 School Year

For information or to volunteer, contact Carrie Ellmore-Tallitsch at carrieellmore@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 at pabaktis@gmail.com
- Inquirers class are held at MOG Contact FP for information
- Confessions by appointment, please contact FP
- Thanks to all who donated to the Fellowship Space fundraiser. Please finalize your 2026 pledges!

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*



October 2026

stbasilshousenj@gmail.com

THANK YOU for donating **canned goods, toiletries**, **clothing, toys, books**, small household items and re-usable shopping bags in the bin in the vestibule at MOG; your gifts are greatly appreciated. We are privileged to receive the lovely gifts and to pass them along to our neighbors.



Special thanks to Carrie and her crew for their work in Ephrosini & Jackie's **Garden** at MOG! We have been pleased to distribute herbs, kale, lettuce, tomatoes, green beans and zucchini.

We have been blessed to be able to continue to meet on **Wednesday mornings** during October for breakfast, Bible study and the distribution of clothing and groceries. Grace, Matthew, Natalia T. and Mina have helped to serve; Joe has cooked delicious food. Fr. Peter and Mat. Jeanne led the gathering on October 14.

Natalia T. and George hosted an open house on the morning of **Saturday**, October 3, and they brought their fellow-parishioner, Stefan and their catechumen-friend, Jorge; Natalia brought breakfast and led us in an autumn-themed craft. The participants prayed the Jesus Prayer together. The men helped to tidy up the back yard. Natalia T. and George plan to host gatherings on Saturdays, November 7 and December 5.

If volunteers were available, we would be able to host **other Saturday** gatherings; please consider serving in this way; we each have gifts to share. How about sharing music? or painting? baking? a seminar on nutrition? recycling? or prayer? or sharing the stories of saints?

The women of SS Mary and Martha at MOG will be providing ShopRite gift cards for us to share with our neighbors at **Thanksgiving**. The people of St. Demetrios, Union, will be donating new hats, scarves and gloves to be distributed at **Christmas**; one of their parishioners will be hand-knitting hats and scarves again this year. The Sunday School children at MOG will be decorating Christmas stockings and wrapping small gifts; the gifts will be provided by the people of St. Vladimir's, Trenton, and SS Peter & Paul, South River. Please consider joining us when we distribute the stockings at a noon gathering on Saturday, December 19.

Please continue to **pray** for us, and for our neighbors. Please pray that God would send people to help so that the work may continue; dependable, younger, stronger volunteers are very badly needed.

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

stbasilshousetrentonnj

A Thanksgiving Prayer of St. Basil the Great

O Master Christ our God, King of the Ages, Maker of all things: I thank Thee for all the good things Thou hast given me, especially for the Communion with Thy Most Pure and Life-Creating Mysteries! I pray Thee, O Gracious Lover of Man: preserve me under Thy protection, beneath the shadow of Thy wings! Enable me, even to my last breath, to partake worthily and with a pure conscience of Thy Holy Things, for the remission of sins and unto life eternal! For Thou art the Bread of Life, the Fountain of Holiness, the Giver of all Good; to Thee we ascribe glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

Metropolitan Tikhon and Archbishop Michael • Diocesan Assembly • October 29, 2026

















Holy, All-Praised Apostle Philip

Commemorated November 14th



The Holy and All-praised Apostle Philip was a native of the city of Bethsaida in Galilee. He had a profound depth of knowledge of the Holy Scripture, and rightly discerning the meaning of the Old Testament prophecies, he awaited the coming of the Messiah. Through the call of the Savior (John 1:43), Philip followed Him. The Apostle Philip is spoken about several times in the Holy Gospel: he brought to Christ the Apostle Nathaniel (i.e. Bartholomew, April 22, June 30, and August 25. See John. 1:46). The Lord asks him where to buy bread for five thousand men (John. 6: 5-7). He brought certain of the Hellenized Jews wanting to see Jesus (John. 12:21-22); and finally, at the Last Supper he asked Christ to show them the Father (John. 14:8).

After the Ascension of the Lord, the Apostle Philip preached the Word of God in Galilee, accompanying his preaching with miracles. Thus, he restored to life a dead infant in the arms of its mother. From Galilee he went to Greece, and preached among the Jews that had settled there. Some of them reported the preaching of the Apostle to Jerusalem. In response, some scribes arrived in Greece from Jerusalem, with one of the Jewish chief priests at their head, to interrogate the Apostle Philip.
The Apostle Philip exposed the lie of the chief priest, who said that the disciples of Christ had stolen away and hidden the body of Christ. Philip told instead how the Pharisees had bribed the soldiers on watch, to deliberately spread this rumor. When the Jewish chief priest and his companions began to insult the Lord and lunged at the Apostle Philip, they suddenly were struck blind. By his prayer the Apostle restored everyone's sight. Seeing this miracle, many believed in Christ. The Apostle Philip provided a bishop for them, by the name of Narcissus (one of the Seventy Apostles, January 4).
From Greece the Apostle Philip went to Parthia, and then to the city of Azotus, where he healed an eye affliction of the daughter of a local resident named Nikoklides, who had received him into his home, and then baptized his whole family.

From Azotus the Apostle Philip set out to Syrian Hieropolis (there were several cities of this name) where, stirred up by the Pharisees, the Jews burned the house of Heros, who had taken in the Apostle Philip, and they wanted to kill the apostle. The apostle performed several miracles: the healing of the hand of the city official Aristarchus, withered when he attempted to strike the apostle; and restoring a dead child to life. When they saw these marvels, they repented and many accepted holy Baptism. After making Heros the bishop at Hieropolis, the Apostle Philip went on to Syria, Asia Minor, Lydia, Emessa, and everywhere preaching the Gospel and undergoing sufferings. Both he and his sister Mariamne (February 17) were pelted with stones, locked up in prison, and thrown out of villages.

Then the Apostle Philip arrived in the city of Phrygian Hieropolis, where there were many pagan temples. There was also a pagan temple where people worshiped an enormous serpent as a god. The Apostle Philip by the power of prayer killed the serpent and healed many bitten by snakes.
Among those healed was the wife of the city prefect, Amphipatos. Having learned that his wife had accepted Christianity, the prefect Amphipatos gave orders to arrest Saint Philip, his sister, and the Apostle Bartholomew traveling with them. At the urging of the pagan priests of the temple of the serpent, Amphipatos ordered the holy Apostles Philip and Bartholomew to be crucified.

Suddenly, an earthquake struck, and it knocked down all those present at the place of judgment. Hanging upon the cross by the pagan temple of the serpent, the Apostle Philip prayed for those who had crucified him, asking God to save them from the ravages of the earthquake. Seeing this happen, the people believed in Christ and began to demand that the apostles be taken down from the crosses. The Apostle Bartholomew was still alive when he was taken down, and he baptized all those believing and established a bishop for them.

But the Apostle Philip, through whose prayers everyone remained alive, except for Amphipatos and the pagan priests, died on the cross.

Mariamne his sister buried his body, and went with the Apostle Bartholomew to preach in Armenia, where the Apostle Bartholomew was crucified (June 11); Mariamne herself then preached until her own death at Lykaonia.

The holy Apostle Philip is not to be confused with Saint Philip the Deacon (October 11), one of the Seventy.

Reprinted from oca.org



Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow



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

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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:

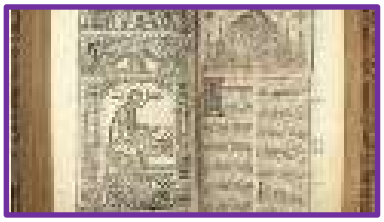
- We pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy. We pray for peace in the Middle East. We pray the same for all war-torn nations.
- Please pray for an end to gun violence, particularly in the United States – especially as we celebrate 250 years of freedom. Please pray for unity, love, peace and joy.
- Please pray for **Father Peter Baktis** as he heals from his rib injury. And for:
- **Mark**, Daria Pettus' husband, is recovering from his surgery. Please keep him and his family in your prayers.
- **Debbie Baktis**, Matushka Jeanne's sister-in-law who is awaiting a kidney transplant.
- Give Thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever: Matushka Jeanne has a great update about **David** (her niece's husband), who has been on our prayer list for a while. Thank God he is finally cancer-free!
- **Jan Perkins**, who continues to suffer from mobility and digestive issues, and please pray for Margery's friend **Roger,** who is dying of pancreatic cancer.
- The **DeLarato Family**. **Nick DeLarato**, who has health issues, and Nick's sister, **Kathy**.
- **Olga Mezina**, friend of Lana.
- **Carson & Addison**, Joe Elchak's granddaughters.
- Nina Robinson's friend, **Stella Goudard,** who has heart issues, and Stella's husband, **Rick**.
- Lauren Ugorji's: mother, **Nina Robinson**, who is having increased bouts with vertigo; husband, **Richmond**, who has health issues, adult children **Jade** & **Mike Edwards**, who continue to suffer setbacks in quest to rebuild home; **Jordan** & **Eric Mosurick**, who need jobs, and teenage **Anastasia Ugorji**. Lauren's: dad, **Don Robinson**, as he battles blood cancer; aunt **Kirra** (undergoing chemo treatments for pancreatic cancer) & uncle **Jesse Filkins;** aunts **Scott Brown Pempeit** and **Laverne Tisdale**; friend **Missy Gillespie** and Missy's husband, **Kurt,** who is now on the kidney transplant list – praise God!; and **Lydia**, a teenager and family friend diagnosed with cancer.

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: ladyofleesure@yahoo.com

COMMEMORATION OF THE DEPARTED

Memory Eternal



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

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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!!!