

SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINNING

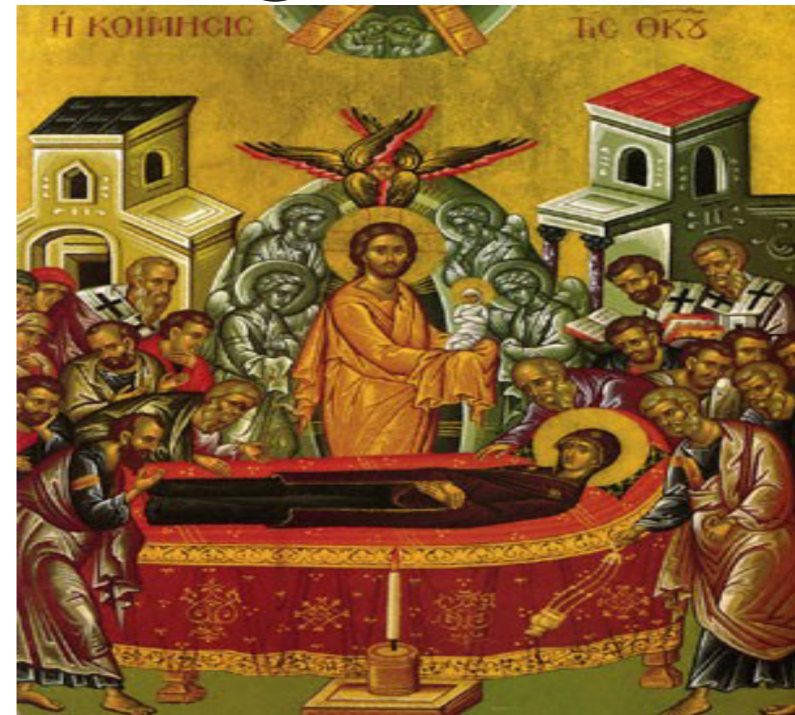
Sunday School for the 2026-2027 school year will begin on **Sunday, August 23rd**. We would like to see every child in the community participate in this important aspect of Christian Education. If your child has not yet attended, please make every effort to bring them. Registration is on August 9th, please see Anna Gilman, in the large hall, so that we can place your child in the proper class. There are a total of five levels available. They are: 3-5 years old; 1st-3rd grades; 4th-6th grades; and the Middle School, High School class.

Please note that classes begin every Sunday at 9:45 a.m. It is important that each child be there on time to receive the full benefits of the program. At 10:25 a.m. the classes end, and the students then go to church to sit with their parents. If you cannot bring your child, please use car pools so that the children can be there every Sunday.

Meeting for Sunday School parents of all grades
to discuss upcoming year and events | August 16th

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church
697 Asheville Highway
PO Box 1107
Spartanburg, SC 29304

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS August 2026



Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos
August 15th

August 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 9th Sunday of Matthew 9:45 Orthros 10:15 Divine Liturgy 11:45 Dance Practice	3 Paraklesis 5:00 pm	4 Making Melomakarona 10:00 am	5 HOLY TRANSFIGURATION 4:30 pm Orthros 5:00 pm Divine Liturgy	6 Making Melomakarona 10:00 am	7 Paraklesis 5:00 pm	8
Fast of the Falling Asleep of the Holy Theotokos August 1st-14th				FISH Allowed		
9 10th Sunday of Matthew 9:45 Orthros 10:15 Divine Liturgy 11:45 Dance Practice 12:30 Parish Council Meeting	10 Paraklesis 5:00 pm	11	12 Paraklesis 5:00 pm Catechism Class 6 - 7 pm	13 Making Diples 10:00 am	14 Great Vespers 5:00 pm Making Diples 10:00 am	15 Dormition of the Theotokos 8:30 Orthros 9:00 Divine Liturgy
Fast of the Falling Asleep of the Holy Theotokos Aug 1st-14th						
16 11th Sunday of Matthew 9:45 Orthros 10:15 Divine Liturgy 11:45 Dance Practice 12:00 Sunday School Parents Meetings	17	18	19 Catechism Class 6 - 7 pm Fast Day	20	21 Fast Day	22
23 12th Sunday of Matthew 9:45 Orthros 9:45 Sunday School 10:15 Divine Liturgy 11:45 Dance Practice 12:15 Philoptochos Meeting	24	25	26 Catechism Class 6 - 7 pm Fast Day	27	28 Fast Day	29 Strict Fast Day
30 13th Sunday of Matthew 9:45 Orthros 9:45 Sunday School 10:15 Divine Liturgy 11:45 Dance Practice	31	1	2			

The Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos

We have run through the entire cycle of the liturgical year, and we have passed through all the stages of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ his nativity, his teaching, his death on the cross and his glorious resurrection, his ascent into heaven, his sitting at the right hand of the Father. Christ's earthly mission on behalf of humanity is fully completed with the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The life of the Church, the Body of Christ, begins on that day. The Holy Spirit reveals himself through the saints, their radiance in the world is the fruit of Pentecost.

The church reserves a very special place among the saints for Mary, the most-holy Mother of God. Through her, the Son of God became the Son of man. Her virgin womb is more spacious than the heavens we say in our hymns, because it has contained God. The infinite, limitless God has allowed himself to be contained in the womb of a mother. The body of the most-holy Virgin was the physical envelope which assisted the incarnations. This is why the liturgical year, which is the image of the life of Christ, is also circumscribed by two events in the life of Mary, her birth and her death. In fact, the first feast of the liturgical year is the Nativity of the Virgin (September 8: see the first volume). We complete this book with the last feast of the church year, Dormition, celebrated on August 15. To mark the significance of this day, it is preceded by a two-week fast, August 1-14, a period of preparation needed to glorify this event. What event do we commemorate at Dormition?

We have no historical documentation about Mary's death; no scriptural text mentions her end. Only the apocryphal gospels contain a detailed account of the Virgin's death, placing it at Jerusalem. We will return later to these writings, for it is they that inspired the icon and the liturgical text of the feast. But these accounts, very late in origin and full of legendary detail, accounts which the Church has not accepted as canonical, should not trouble us, for the veneration of Mary is based not on folklore, but on Tradition, which is the complement of Scripture.

Indeed, tradition is the living memory of the Church, a memory which is transmitted from generation to generation. Ever since the time of the apostles, we keep in our memory the certainty that Mary, like her Son, has passed through death, and that like him she has risen. This is why the feast of the Dormition is a second Pascha, a passage from death to life, according to St. John's gospel:

In the tradition of our faith, we also keep the vision of Mary's ascent to heaven with the body. We call this mystery the "Assumption." Like her Son, ascended to the Father, so Mary was taken by angels and transported into heaven with her body.

Seeker: There were witnesses to the ascension of Christ, the apostles and the Mother of God; but there is no proof of Mary's ascent into heaven.

Sage: That is true. But the Fathers of the Church have always venerated Mary as being glorified in her body. Their consciences dictated to them the following revelation: she who contained God in her womb is a virgin before, during and after her childbirth. Her ever virgin body has served as a vessel for the incarnation. It is from her most-pure flesh that Christ's body was made. She, just like her Son, was not tarnished by corruption, for she remained sinless.

Seeker: Is this the Immaculate Conception? This is the Roman Catholic teaching about the Virgin Mary.

Sage: No, the Orthodox do not say that Mary was conceived without sin. She was born from the lineage of David and bears the mark of sin which weighs on all humanity ever since the fall of our first parents. She is not apart from fallen humanity; she is one with her ancestors and with all men, saints and sinners, whom Christ wanted to save. But we venerate Mary as the one who, because of her faithfulness to God, committed no sins and, through her holy life, made possible God's coming on earth. Because of her sanctity Mary was able to receive the Holy Spirit and to conceive the Son of God, because *the power of the Most High overshadowed her* (Lk 1:35). Through the incarnation, Mary is totally united to the Holy Trinity: the fruit of her womb is the Son of the Father, conceived of the Holy Spirit.

We can legitimately ask why the Word of God took so long to descend to earth and become incarnate in order to save fallen humanity. But only after the middle of the sixth millennium after Adam's sin did he find on earth a virgin pure not only in body, but also in spirit. There was only one such woman, unique in her spiritual and bodily purity, who was worthy to become the church and the temple of the Holy Spirit. (St. Dimitri of Rostov, 17th Century).

The Feast of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary - Volume II - The Incarnate God.



St. Nicholas News Monthly Bulletin of

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church
697 Asheville Highway
P.O. Box 1107
Spartanburg, SC 29303

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Home Phone: (864) 579-0882
Website: www.stnicholasgoc.org

August 2026

SUNDAY

Orthros | 9:45 am

Sunday School | 9:45 am

Divine Liturgy | 10:15 am

WEEKDAY

Orthros | 8:30 am

Divine Liturgy | 9:00 am

Schedule of Services

Holy Confession: Available by appointment.

Weekday Services

August 3, 7, 10, & 12 | Paraklesis Service - 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 5 | Divine Liturgy for Transfiguration of our Lord - 5:00 p.m.

Friday, August 14 | Great Vespers - 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 15 | Dormition of the Theotokos - 9 a.m.



Greek Festival

September 18-20, 2026
www.SpartanburgGreekFestival.com

The SignUp Genius is ready for you.
Reserve your spot today!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/greekfestival26#>

The website has more information on
Dance Practice, Food Prep Dates etc
<https://www.stnicholasgoc.org/volunteers>

Festival Chairman:
Constantine Ghionis

Festival Food Prep Schedule

	AUGUST COOKING SCHEDULE (Subject to change)
4	Tuesday Making Melomakarona 10 am
6	Thursday Making Melomakarona 10 am
13	Thursday Making Diples 10 am
14	Friday Packaging Diples 10 am
	Making Pastichio TBA
	Making Pastichio TBA
	Making Pastichio TBA
	SEPTEMBER COOKING SCHEDULE
	Subject to change
12	Saturday Dolmathes 9 am
13	Sunday Dolmathes & Souvlakia preparation after coffee hour.

2026 FESTIVAL SPONSOR OPPORTUNITIES

- **Platinum (\$2,500+)** Includes logo on back of admission passes (5,000), listing on all promotional materials, 10 meals at event, 250 admission passes to event.
- **Gold (\$1,000+)** Includes listing on all promotional materials, 5 meals at event, 100 admission passes.
- **Silver (\$500+)** Includes listing on all promotional materials, 50 admission passes.
- **Bronze (\$250+)** Includes listing on all promotional materials, 25 admission passes.
- **Friend (\$150+)** 10 complimentary admission passes to event..

Visit our website SpartanburgGreekFestival.com to register online or email SpartanburgGreekFestival@gmail.com.

Deadline for print materials is **August 15** after which representation will be on the festival website only. Sponsorship has its benefits, but we are grateful for donations of any amount!

Festival Dance Practice

Subject to change - see website for any updates*

ASTERIA GROUP (4-7)

August 16 | 11:45-12:15
August 23 | 11:45-12:15
August 30 | 11:45-12:15
Sept 6 | 11:45-12:15
Sept 13 | 11:45-12:15
Sept 17 | 5:30 - 7 pm

ODYSSEY GROUP (8-12)

August 16 | 12:15-1 pm
August 23 | 12:15-1 pm
August 30 | 12:15-1 pm
Sept 6 | 12:15-1 pm
Sept 13 | 12:15-1 pm
Sept 17 | 5:30 - 7 pm

NEO KYMA GROUP (13+)

August 9 | 1-3 pm
August 16 | 1-3 pm
August 23 | 1-3 pm
August 30 | 1-3 pm
Sept 6 | 1-3 pm
Sept 13 | 1-3 pm
Sept 17 | 6 - 7:30 pm

*Website: <https://www.stnicholasgoc.org/dance-practice>

Registration for the dance groups will begin July 12th through August 16th.
Contact Vasi Kourlas to register: vkourlas@gmail.com

The Gospel tells us that “when the man heard this he became very sad. “ And it is in that sadness that we find the answer to an important question—the question of why Christ asked this particular man, and not another, to sell all his possessions. He seemed to be a person of virtue, responsibility and personal faith. But he was also a person who was good, who did good, and who sought to be better under only one condition—and that was that it not cost him anything. He was willing to obey the commandments, to participate in worship, to be responsible for, and careful of others, but would do so only if they did not reduce his own wealth, comfort, social privilege or anything else that he held dear. And so, in the end, the young man turned away in great sadness. He refused the challenge laid down by Christ because he had many possessions. His tragedy was that he loved those things more than he loved people; and he loved himself more than he loved others. And any man who puts things before people and self before others, must turn his back on Jesus Christ.

There is a great deal of wisdom in the Word of God heard in this morning’s Gospel. But as St. Paul so eloquently expressed it, “The word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through, to where soul and spirit meet, to where joints and marrow come together. It judges the desires and thoughts of man’s heart. There is nothing that can be hid from God; everything in all creation is exposed and lies open before his eyes. And it is to him that we must all give an account of ourselves.” (Heb. 4:12-13).

Is it any wonder then, that we are frightened by the Word of God no less than the young man who came to Jesus? The truth is that many of us in today’s world and today’s church have an embarrassment of riches which we hold very dear. But because we have become so accustomed to these comforts, we no longer see ourselves as wealthy. We have allowed yesterday’s luxuries to become today’s necessities. The fact remains, however, that while much of this world goes hungry, we remain trapped in the grip of consumerism.

But as St. Paul reminded us, the Word remains a double-edged sword and we stand under its judgement. There is no escape. And so each one of us is called to personal assessment. If God becomes our all, then we live more simply, ask more questions about accumulating possessions, and are more conscious of the needy. It is not so much a question of surrendering things; that just creates a feeling of emptiness. Rather it is a question of acquiring a spiritual treasure in our hearts that does not leave room for the endless acquisition of earthly goods.

And so the question remains—what is it that stands between us and God? What blocks our path? Like Solomon, we pray for wisdom—the wisdom to know the answer and to act upon it. The wisdom to discard what deflects us from the gate to life which is narrow, and which few people find (Mt. 7:13-14), but which leads to the riches of heaven, riches that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor the mind of man imagined, but that God has prepared for those who love Him. (I Cor. 2:9).

“Sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; then come and follow me.”

Fr. Andrew Demotses

These words, brothers and sisters, spoken by Christ to the young Jewish leader of today’s Gospel reading, are words that have been misunderstood, misrepresented, and taken out of their context to support all manner of religious and social theories. But the whole of the Gospel makes clear, that these words are not intended to apply as a general rule for all Christians. In other words, it was not Christ’s intention that we should all renounce our property, nor did he mean to tear up the roots of society as we know it, and to propose a new social order of any kind.

Several examples will serve to prove our point. Zachaeus the Publican had accumulated great wealth in unethical ways. And yet, at the time of his repentance, Christ did not ask him to sell all he had, and not a word was said to him as to the future use of his money. If he gave away half of what he owned, and if he chose to reimburse four-fold those whom he had wronged and defrauded, it was his own enlightened conscience which suggested this course of action. At another time, when a younger brother came to Jesus and asked him to persuade his older brother to divide their inheritance, the Lord refused to meddle in the redistribution of their property. Finally, we know that neither Joseph of Arimathea nor Nicodemus, both men of considerable substance, were told to sell all and to give to the poor. It is clear in the witness of the Gospels, therefore, that although Jesus knew of the dangers and temptations of material possessions, He did not ask everyone who wished to be a disciple to entirely renounce their earthly goods.

And this principle has also been confirmed in our history and traditions as well. For many indeed are the righteous kings, queens, and rulers who lived comfortably, but whose heart’s first desire was to meditate on God and on his law. Their possessions counted as nothing; their real treasure was in the reign of God, and they were thus able to attain to the loftiest heights of sanctity.

Having said all this, we are, nonetheless, confronted by the fact that in today’s Gospel, Christ asks the young and wealthy ruler to “sell all he has” in order to follow him. This young man has great wealth, indeed, which provides him with a handsome living. He is educated and powerful, and enjoys life from the vantage point of the highest privilege and social standing. He is also attentive to his religious responsibilities, taking care that the commandments are scrupulously obeyed, and the forms of worship carefully observed. And yet, there was an uneasiness in him; a kind of restlessness and yearning. He didn’t know what, but somewhere in the midst of all this plenty he yearned for something that was lacking. And so he came to the good teacher and asked what final thing was needed to complete his life, and to ensure his membership in the Kingdom of the elect.

Christ answers that question by telling him to “sell all he has, give the money to the poor, and come follow me.” In that answer, he confronts the young ruler with an astonishing truth—that worldly wisdom and God’s wisdom are often at odds. The wisdom which he so earnestly sought is indeed of inestimable value; it opens the path to a life with true meaning and far surpasses the riches of this world. It is the way which indeed leads to life. But its price is costly.

Announcements

CHURCH SERVICES: THE PARAKLESIS

The Paraklesis of Supplication to the Virgin Mary is celebrated in the Orthodox Church from the first through the fifteenth day of August. These are the services which are chanted to the Most Blessed Virgin on behalf of both the spiritual and physical strength of all Orthodox Faithful. We beseech the All-Loving Virgin to intercede to God Almighty for the guidance, well-being and strength of our loved ones. On August 15th, we celebrate the Feast Day of the Koimisis (Repose) of the Blessed Virgin, the Faithful then partake of the Most Sacred Sacrament in the Church, Holy Communion. The schedule of Services is listed on the monthly calendar.

STEWARDSHIP | Just a reminder that if you have not turned in a Pledge Card for 2026, there is still time to do so. They are located in the Pangari area and can be dropped in the collection tray or given to a parish council member.

43 pledged \$109,023 | Budget \$232,000 | Actual gifts ytd \$91,065

DANCE REHERSAL | Dance practice for the Greek Festival will begin on Sunday Aug 2nd for the Neo Kyma group (age 14 and up) and will begin on Aug 16th for all groups age 4 and up. Practices will begin following liturgy. Registration for the dance group will begin July 12th through August 16th. Contact Vasi Kourlas to register: vkourlas@gmail.com

SUNDAY SCHOOL MEETING | 1st day of Sunday School will be August 23rd. August 16th Sunday School Parent Meeting: Meeting for Sunday School parents of all grades to discuss upcoming year and events

GREEK FESTIVAL INFO | Lots of information about food prep dates, dance practice dates and more on the church website: <https://www.stnicholasgoc.org/volunteers>

Lifeline coming August 24th 2026

Special screening package for \$129 for our members includes:

- Carotid Artery Disease Screening
- Atrial Fibrillation Screening
- Peripheral Artery Disease Screening
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening

Call to schedule an appointment near you!
800-324-9458 and use code: **HABC001**

LIFE LINE SCREENING
The Power of Prevention



Schedule

August 2026

2	Prosphoro Mrs. Persa Georgiopoulos
	Pangari Kiki Couchell, Conrad Allen
	Coffee Hour TBA
5	Prosphoro TBA
9	Prosphoro Presbytera Ellada Nayfa
	Pangari David Jung, Mike Lydakis
	Coffee Hour TBA
15	Prosphoro Mrs. Vaya Gazos
16	Prosphoro TBA
	Pangari Themis Rubio, Mike Lydakis
	Coffee Hour TBA
23	Prosphoro Mrs. Donna Mavroftas
	Pangari Constantine Ghionis, Ramzi Ayyad
	Coffee Hour TBA
30	Prosphoro TBA
	Pangari Logan Griffith, Conrad Allen
	Coffee Hour TBA

CHURCH PAINTING PROJECT

Great news! The exterior painting of our Church and Small Hall is now complete! Thanks to the hard work of the painting crew and the incredible generosity of our parishioners, our church is looking fresh, beautiful, and ready for the Greek Festival and many years to come. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed. Your support made this possible! Current Status: We are still \$7,478 short of our full goal. If you have not yet given or would like to give more, every donation helps. Thank you again for your generosity and love for St. Nicholas!