



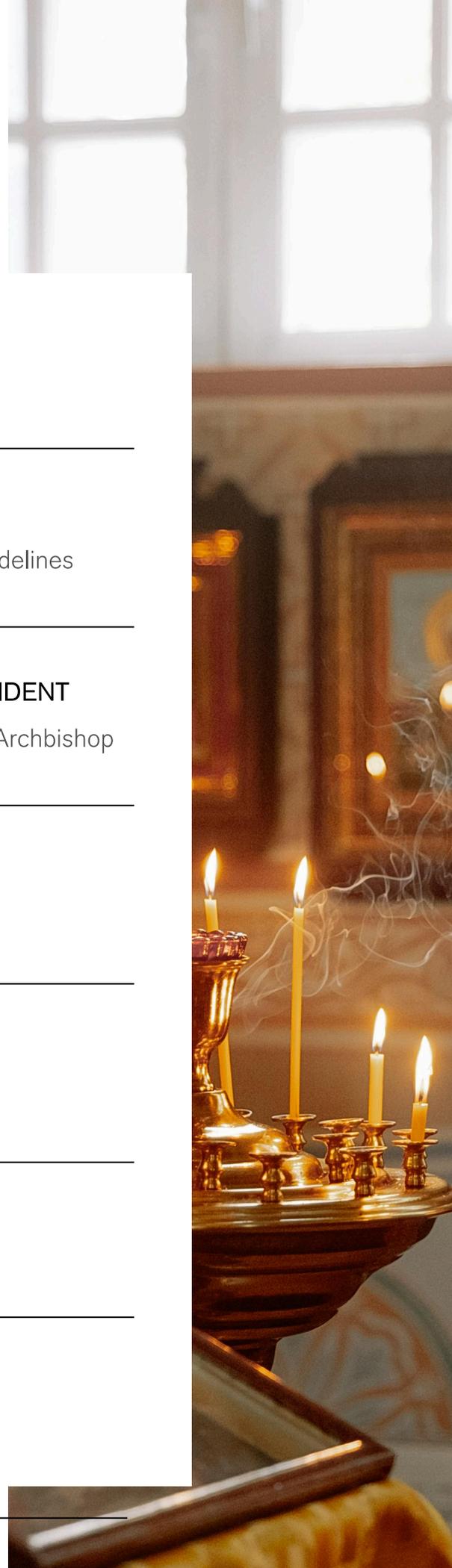
DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

the testament



table of contents

06	FR. PAT'S INSIGHTS Great Lent
08	FROM THE EDITOR Testament Submission Guidelines
10	PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT Welcoming His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America
12	PHILOPTOCHOS Welcome Spring!
14	IN THE COMMUNITY News from our Ministries
20	STEWARDSHIP 2026 Campaign
21	CHURCH CALENDAR March & April 2026





ARCHPASTORAL VISITATION BY HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP ELPIDOPHOROS OF AMERICA

SUNDAY, MARCH 8TH, 2026
8:30 AM HIERARCHICAL DIVINE LITURGY



St. Sophia welcomes His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America to our community. His Eminence is looking forward to being with our entire parish and celebrating the Divine Liturgy with us. Please plan to come early and experience the entirety of the majesty of this special liturgy. His Eminence will arrive around 8:45 AM.

LENTEN BRUNCH TO FOLLOW CHURCH SERVICES IN HONOR OF HIS EMINENCE.

the testament

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THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST. SOPHIA IS A PARISH UNDER THE SPIRITUAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL SHEPHERDING OF HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP ELPIDOPHOROS OF AMERICA OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA, UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE.



Photo
251
Year: 1959



COVER PHOTO: 1959 HOLY FRIDAY, ST. SOPHIA GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH ARCHIVES

The Papalagouras family joined together in prayer around the dinner table. Panagioti and Sophia both had an extremely difficult time with their classes at school, and Panagioti was battered and bruised from rugby practice. His mom, Eleni, commented on the discoloration around his eyes and his response was to attempt to roll his eyes, only to discover that it caused him pain. That act actually broke the tension everyone seemed to have as he related how he ended up with two black and blue eyes. His animated recreation of dropping the ball and tripping over it burying his face in the field while other teammates tripped and landed on top of him had his family rolling with laughter. George, his dad, was also excited to be home after a hectic day at the office. Like his children, he was eagerly waiting for dinner to be served. Eleni, after all, was worthy of being declared "Chef of the Year," at least in their house.

Exiting the kitchen, Eleni carried a platter of steaming hot greens saturated in lemon and garlic and a giant loaf of flat bread. That captured the rest of the family's attention, as mirth turned to shock. Sophia was the first to regain her composure. "What is this? I am so hungry." Panagioti, whose puffy eyes were worthy of two steaks, was not far behind. "What's that?" Dad just sat in silence, but the disappointment in his expression said it all. Eleni, measuring the disappointment, asked, "Don't you know what today is? Were you all asleep at church yesterday?"

February 23rd marked the first day of Lent. So compelling is this fasting period, that is usually complimented with the word, "Great." Yes, Great Lent, the Fast period of fasts. Forty days followed by Holy Week to prepare for the greatest of all events which has changed the course of history for mankind; the Resurrection of Jesus.

Great Lent, however, is more than just a period of fasting. It is a challenging period in which we are personally asked to look carefully examine our lives and make changes. For some, it is more a hardship, than for others. We are asked to confront ourselves and make course corrections. That is no easy task, because we prefer to judge others, rather than to confront ourselves. It is more involved than changing dietary habits. It is about prayer and contrition, worship and faith, dedication and sacrifice. Lent is the time to tweak our lives, fight sin, and evolve into a better Christian.



It is not easy to change habits. It is not easy to overcome our sinfulness, yet here we are being asked to try. Change is very difficult, but change is also possible. St. Paul was a persecutor of Christians, but Saul the persecutor, became Paul the saint. St. Mary of Egypt mocked the church, specifically the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, fled to the desert and transformed into a saint. The prodigal son was selfish and wasteful, yet returned to his father contrite and was eagerly welcomed home. This is what it is all about. It is about coming home to God.

So we ask, What does it take? It takes prayer, contrition, sacrifice, and dedication. It takes time and patience. It takes forgiveness, understanding and love. The good news is the church is willing to help.

The Church in her infinite wisdom offers more services and opportunities to pray and reflect, in order to begin the transformation. For the next forty plus days, we shall have many opportunities to transform, but it takes a willingness to take advantage of what the church has to offer.

The tone of the family dinner changed immediately. Panagioti, Sophia, and dad were so consumed by the challenges of their day, that they overlooked not only the day before, Forgiveness Sunday, but completely forgot about Clean Monday. The prayer finished and with solemn commitment they prayerfully began their journey to the Resurrection. Eleni gave a timid smile as she mused to herself, "This is going to be a better year than last year."

May God truly bless you and may you grow closer to our Savior this Great Lent, and this will be a better year than last year for us as well. I ask your forgiveness for my transgressions.

Fr. Pat



FROM THE EDITOR



2026 marks my 7th year working alongside Fr. Pat on The Testament. Following the late Helen Sokaris and her many years of service, with her blessing, I was tasked with bringing a new concept to The Testament. As many of you are aware, with that comes great responsibilities. This position involves volunteering long hours to compile, edit, and design the newsletter you receive in both physical and digital forms. This process typically takes an entire month from start to finish.

Given the time constraints both the parish office and editorial staff have faced in recent years, there will be some changes made for upcoming editions of The Testament.

Moving forward, all submissions **MUST** be submitted ***no later than*** the first of the month beginning with the May/June Testament edition. This means **no submissions will be accepted if they are received after April 1st, 2026.**

In addition, since it has been some time since specific guidelines and submission details have been provided, information is included in this edition of The Testament with things to keep in mind when submitting materials.

Please remember that it is up to the discretion of the editorial staff if materials submitted are included in the edition of The Testament. This is not done with any ill-intent to the person/people submitting information, rather mainly due to volume restrictions.

Finally, an important note: please refrain from sending any malicious or harmful communication to the editor via text message, voicemail, or e-mail regarding The Testament.

Testament submissions can be sent to: testament@stsophiaalbany.org or by scanning the QR code below.

Michèle-Gabrielle Legato
CO-EDITOR & DESIGNER



The Testament GUIDELINES

As mentioned previously we always encourage submissions from all in the community, but at the discretion of the Editors, we are unable to publish everything that gets submitted. This could be for a variety of reasons i.e.: length of Testament, formatting issues, size of document, potential copyright infringement including but not limited to: articles not written by the individual submitting, stock images that are not paid for, AI-generated content, images that you do not own, and photo submissions without consent of individual(s). Please understand this is not done intentionally or maliciously but to avoid any issues or delays. In order to avoid this from happening, please refer to the guidelines on this page in preparing materials.

Thank you for your understanding.

TESTAMENT LENGTH

The Testament is printed in a Magazine/Booklet format. The amount of pages necessary to print is in groups of 4 i.e. 12 pages, 24 pages, etc. If there are an uneven amount of pages, often times articles or flyers may need to be eliminated.

At the request of the Editors we ask that each ministry and organization keep articles **under 500 words**, with the exception of materials received by the Archdiocese, Fr. Pat and the Parish Council.

A maximum of 2 pages can be submitted if the text can fit within the 500 words or 2 page limit.

FORMATTING/FLYERS

The Testament is produced and published using Canva, an online design and publishing software. When submitting articles, they must be submitted as Google documents **ONLY**. Do not send materials via Microsoft Word, other word document softwares, or in a PDF form.

Unless flyers are coming from an outside organization or from the Archdiocese, please submit your request for a Flyer to be created in order to fit the format and theme of The Testament and to avoid Copyright infringement (see below). Flyers can take up to 2 weeks to create, so we encourage flyer requests submitted on time to avoid delays.

COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT & PHOTO SUBMISSIONS

Copyright infringement is using works or artwork without permission. This could be done in a multitude of ways either taking a published article without crediting the source, copying an image, clip art or graphic off of a search engine site and pasting it into a document or flyer. and taking a photo someone else took without their consent. This also includes any AI-generated content.

As you will see whenever The Testament is published, we will source the article and publication we're using if it is from the Archdiocesan website, a photo that was taken by someone other than the editors, and only use elements that have either been purchased to use or that are in the Canva library.

The Testament will not re-publish articles written by and published on websites or newspapers. The only exception to this is when an article comes from the Archdiocese or when we receive permission by the original Author to publish works related to the Greek Orthodox Church.

Photo Submissions

As you may notice, at present photos of individuals are always included in the publication of The Testament. This is out of respect and privacy of individuals. If you would like to submit a photo of yourself or of a group of individuals, we request that written consent be included with the image of all those in the photo. For any photos with children under 18, a parent/guardian would need to provide written consent before the likeness of their child(ren) is used in a published magazine.

PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT



Dear Parishioner,

At this year's Sons and Maids Valentine's Day Dance, I was reminded of a simple and beautiful truth: at St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church in Albany, we are a community of dancers.

For us as Greek Orthodox Christians, dance is not performance—it is expression. It is how faith, culture, and heritage come alive across generations. When our young people join hands in the circle, they are entering a sacred rhythm that connects them to their ancestors, to one another, and to the life of our Church. Our traditions are not simply taught; they are lived.

It is in this spirit of living faith that we prepare to welcome a profound blessing for our parish. **On Sunday, March 8, we will receive the Archpastoral Visit of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America.** We are deeply honored that His Eminence will worship with us. His visit affirms the vitality of our parish and the faithfulness of our community here in the Capital Region.

We take great pride in who we are—a parish rooted in Orthodox faith, rich in Hellenic heritage, and united in love and service. I hope you will be able to join us on March 8 as we welcome His Eminence with the warmth and hospitality that define St. Sophia.

As we continue strengthening parish life, please also plan to join us for our **Spring General Assembly Meeting on Sunday, March 29**, following the Divine Liturgy. We will share updates on our upcoming capital campaign, including project priorities and anticipated timelines, and engage in conversation about our shared future. Your presence and voice matter.

And mark your calendars for our **Annual Greek Festival, May 15, 16, and 17**—one of the most visible and joyful expressions of our faith, culture, and community. As we enter Great Lent, may we journey together with humility and purpose, preparing our hearts for the joy of Pascha and continuing to live our faith—together.

In Orthodoxy,

Michael N. Christakis, Ph.D.



Image above: St. Sophia Youth and Parishioners with His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros.

Saint Sophia Youth

LENTEN OVERNIGHT RETREAT

FRIDAY, APRIL 3RD 6:00PM

JOY & GOYA Members will make Prosforo, have a lesson, and enjoy a pasta dinner with option to stay overnight.

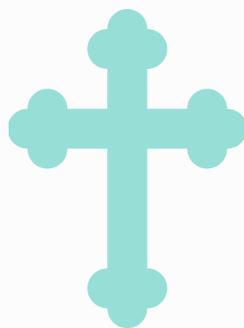
For more information, contact Fr. Pat.

SATURDAY, APRIL 4TH 9:30AM

Saturday of Lazarus (All English Liturgy)
Youth Breakfast and Palm making following Services.

SUNDAY, APRIL 5TH 9:30AM

Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy



PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY



Good Lent to All,

I hope everyone is well and getting ready to welcome Spring and most importantly Easter.

I would like to thank each and everyone one of you for the kindness and generosity you have shown in supporting our efforts to raise money for the Angelo Bousbouras Recovery Fund. It is hard to fully express my gratitude for what this community has done, we more than doubled our goal! Seeing everyone rally around and support one of our own has been incredibly moving. This is more than financial support; it's a powerful reminder that we look out for each other. Thank you for showing what it truly means to be a community, especially all our Philoptochos members who came together and helped make this event happen despite the snow storm!

Philoptochos is busy preparing and planning for various events for our Easter Holiday. On February 28th, we will have a Lenten Brunch following church service. All are welcome to attend and enjoy each other's company along with a light snack. Please feel free to bring something Lenten to share.

Please look for the basket and sign for the Epitaphio collection. The basket will be by the candles before entering church. Every year Pia Lascaris and her crew do a beautiful job decorating the Epitaphio. Last year's was absolutely beautiful, I can't wait to see what they do this year. Thank you Pia and crew for doing such an amazing job.

Lastly, membership dues are being collected for 2026. Please see Maria Ziamandanis, to submit your dues.

If you would like to join this great organization, we would love to have you. Join us at our next meeting, they are held on the second Tuesday of every month at 6:30 PM.

Demetra Kythalis Vann

HOSTED BY SAINT SOPHIA YOUTH



Palm Sunday

LUNCHEON



April 5th, 2026

Adults \$20.00

Youth 6-17 \$10.00

Children 5 and under Free



family promise

Peter Melas, St. Sophia Contact
biggolos@gmail.com



Family Promise of the Capital Region (FPCR), which St. Sophia is a member of since 2015, is a community-funded 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to helping children and families experiencing homelessness achieve lasting stability. FPCR is one of 174 affiliates of the national Family Promise organization, which operates across 40 states and has a strong record of success. Nationally, 78% of participating families secure stable housing, often within three to four months. FPCR has secured stable housing for 95% of participating families.

FPCR does not operate like a traditional shelter. Instead, it partners with local congregations that open their facilities to host families in need. Volunteers from these congregations are trained by FPCR to provide safe shelter, home-cooked meals, homework assistance, and meaningful companionship to guest families. This community-based approach creates a supportive, dignified environment for families during a time of crisis.

Families are referred to FPCR through local social service agencies, schools, and community members. Each participating congregation hosts up to four families at a time, four times per year, for one-week rotations. During their stay, families are transported daily by FPCR van to the Day Center, where they can shower, do laundry, access computers, and receive individualized case management services. Pre-school-aged children remain with their parents, while school-aged children are transported to and from school to maintain educational continuity.

The success of FPCR's program is measured by the long-term stability and security of the families served. Key outcome areas include housing stability, food security, access to health care, job retention, and educational progress. Importantly, FPCR's support does not end once a family secures housing. The organization continues to provide counseling, case management, and supportive services for a minimum of one year to help ensure families do not relapse into homelessness.

Through strong community partnerships and a proven national model, FPCR provides families with not just shelter, but the tools and support they need to build a stable and sustainable future.

If you are interested in learning more about Family Promise contact Peter Melas at 518-949-6049, biggolos@gmail.com.

holy sacraments

Marriage

Saturday, February 21st

**Paul Neaton with Maria Melas
Kristina Marinopoulos, Koumbara**



ANNUAL
GREEK
FESTIVAL
2026

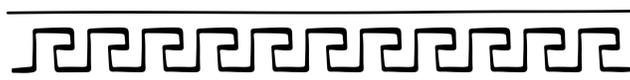
MAY 15 | 6 PM - 10 PM

MAY 16 | NOON - 10PM

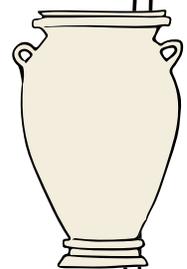
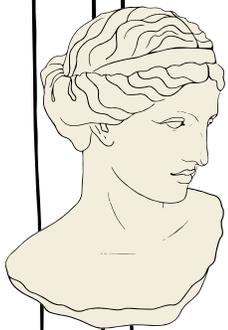
MAY 17 | NOON - 6 PM

FOOD | DRINKS | LIVE MUSIC

440 WHITEHALL ROAD ALBANY, NY



MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON



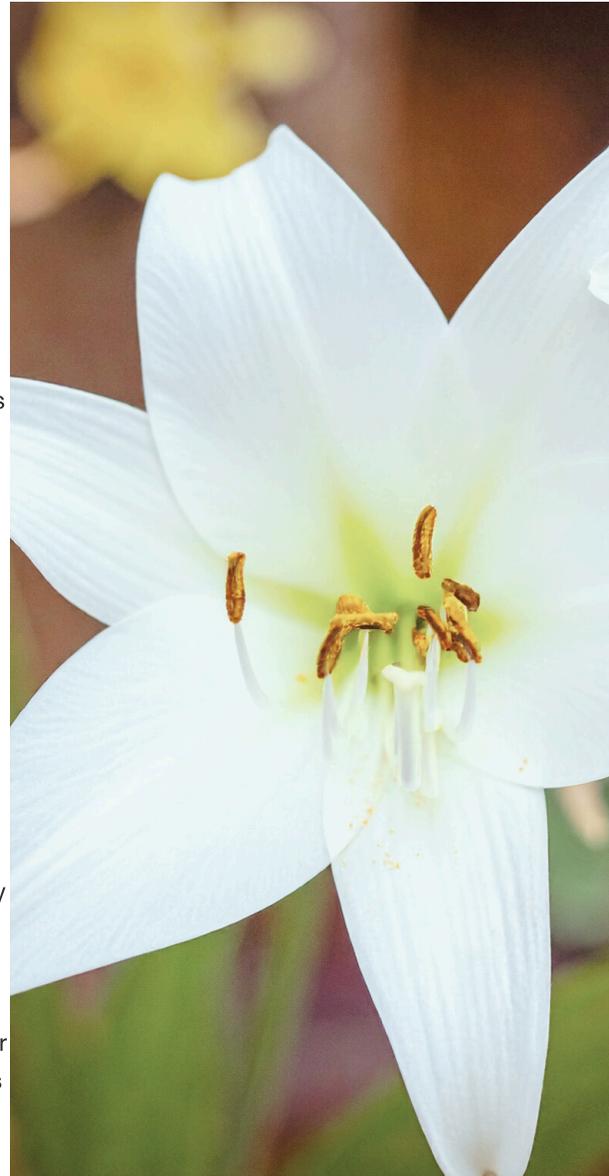
GREAT LENT DONATIONS

Holy and Great Lent is a most solemn yet beautiful season of the year. In the Orthodox Church there are a number of special services to commemorate our Lenten journey. This includes the Salutations of the Most Holy Theotokos held on the first five Fridays of Lent. The role of the Panagia in our lives is great. This is why we supplicate our Panagia to support us during this period with her maternal love and affection as well as to intercede on our behalf to our Father in Heaven. The Salutations Services as well as the other services of Lent and Easter usually feature a beautiful Byzantine icon decorated with a wreath of fresh flowers.

These services include: 1st Salutation, 2nd Salutation, 3rd Salutation, 4th Salutation Akathist Hymn, Service of the Bridegroom—Palm Sunday evening, The Last Supper Resurrection Icon. Additional donations include: Sunday of the Holy Cross—300 Daffodils, Palms for Palm Sunday, Holy Oil, Cotton Balls, Q-tips for Wednesday Holy Unction, Two Hand Towels, Crown of Thorns for the Crucifixion Service—Holy Thursday, Two linen sheets for the Unnailing Service—Good Friday, Red Carnations for the Unnailing Service, Flowers for the Resurrection Lavaros, Embellished Resurrection Candles, Easter Eggs for the Resurrection Service, and Lily Plants for the Resurrections Service.

Monetary donations for the Epitaphios:

The Philoptochos will have a collection basket on Sundays in the exo-narthex for donations for the Epitaphios. In addition, donations will also be accepted in the church office by mail, phone, or in person. Also note that donations will be reflected in your end-of-the-year stewardship and donation statement.



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Michél-Gabrielle Legato, Director
e: sundayschool@stsophiaalbany.org

Spring is upon us and so is the Lenten period! Beginning Sunday, March 1st, our Sunday School students will spend time learning about the importance of Great Lent and its significance. You will also see many of our children actively participating during Holy Week.

Please take a moment to review the updated Sunday School schedule for Spring 2026:

Sunday, March 1st - Sunday of Orthodoxy,
10:00 AM Classes in session
Don't forget your icons!

Sunday, March 8th - Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, 9:00 AM Classes in session
(Sunday School will begin 1 hour earlier)

Sunday, March 15th - Veneration of the Holy Cross, 10:00 AM Classes in session

Sunday, March 22nd - 10:00 AM Classes in session (Greek Independence Day Celebration to follow Divine Liturgy)

Sunday, March 29th - St. Mary of Egypt,
10:00 AM classes in session

Saturday, April 4th - Saturday of Lazarus,
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy (Youth Breakfast to follow)

Sunday, April 5th - Palm Sunday,
9:30 AM Family Worship, Classes not in session.
(Palm Sunday Luncheon following Divine Liturgy)

Sunday, April 12th - Easter Sunday,
11:00 AM Family Worship, Classes not in session
(Easter Egg hunt following church services)

Sunday, April 19th - 10:00 AM Classes in Session

Sunday, April 26th - 10:00 AM Classes in Session

Sunday, May 3rd - 10:00 AM Classes in Session

Sunday, May 10th - Mother's Day, Last day of Sunday School

Sunday, June 7th - Godparents Sunday, Family Worship Sunday (Church Picnic to follow services)





We Must Teach our Children the Importance of March 25th 1821 Greek Independence Day

Many years back when I was director and teacher of the St. Sophia Afternoon Greek School (as it was called then), I asked a class of new older students to explain the details surrounding Greek Independence Day. They told me about specific heroes and even the religious significance of the day. Most of them discussed how March 25th was a religious holiday and that their Yiayia goes to church on that day. I was surprised to find that the children, as well as many adults, were not aware of the historical significance of that day. The discussion further confirmed their confusion between OXI Day and Greek Independence Day. I asked them a few questions like: Why do we call March 25th “Dipli Yiorti (Double Holiday)?” Do you know how they celebrate this day in Greece and Cyprus?” Who was Kolokotronis and why was he imprisoned?” “What was the Krifo Sxoleio?” (The Hidden School). The answer to all of these questions was, “I don’t know.” Surprisingly, this is something that we see often in the new generation of Greek-Americans. The way the holiday is celebrated could be improved by providing opportunities for all to learn and enjoy.

I am publishing this article for The Testament, because as an educator I want to understand the reasons for this lack of awareness and to promote education for all. On March 25th, in Greece, Cyprus and in Greek communities around the world, schools are usually open if the day falls on a weekday. There will be speeches, plays, poems, songs and dancing by students and teachers. Chances are most of the students didn’t listen to the speeches or understand the significance of the performances! Therefore, comprehensive explanation is necessary.

I believe that March 25th should be celebrated like a party or gala with the whole community involved in a large event and not just the Greek School. Regardless of one’s diverse cultural background, a learning opportunity should be experienced by everyone. I remember the days when my children attended Greek School. They couldn’t wait to participate in the large dance at church celebrating Independence Day and march in the parade on 5th Avenue with their friends and yell “Zito ee Ellada!” (Hail Greece!). The parents and grandparents were equally excited as we filled two buses or more. We would stop at the bandstand and dance in the streets or on our float proudly representing St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church. We wouldn’t leave immediately after the parade but continue to a Greek restaurant for dinner and loukoumathes.

How could I convey my pride as a parent and educator when we realized that our students have understood that the main message and reason behind our Greek celebrations is that of peace and friendship between all people on this planet? Sometimes we all take these events for granted and consider them like any other ordinary day. If we continue to do so, we are not doing justice to future generations. The 205 years of freedom, for which we fought after 400 years of brutal occupation and slavery by the Ottoman Turks and the sacrifices of our freedom fighters, will become meaningless. It should be the responsibility of the teachers, parents and all of us to teach this new generation in our community of Greek-Americans, Albanians, Romanians and all cultures about the value of freedom.

We must guarantee that our children take an interest and maintain a close relationship with the Hellenic culture and language, not only in our long and magnificent history but to also feel proud of their Greek heritage, as well as their other inherited diverse cultures. After all, March 25th is not just a holiday but a day to celebrate and remember the known, and the unknown heroes who sacrificed their lives, for the freedom of our motherland. I cherish and consider myself lucky to be able to experience this wonderful community of St. Sophia. A community which respects and honors the Greeks and Philhellenes who not only love Greece and Cyprus but also “take care” of everything for which it stands in a way that mirrors the ideas behind the people who fought for it 205 years ago. May we continue the long tradition of honoring this historic event and continue to educate everyone along the way. Zito ee Ellada keh ee Kypros! (Hail to Greece and Cyprus!)

Πρέπει να διδάξουμε στα παιδιά μας τη σημασία της 25ης Μαρτίου 1821 Ημέρα της Ελληνικής Ανεξαρτησίας

Πολλά χρόνια πριν, όταν ήμουν διευθυντής και δασκάλα του Απογευματινού Ελληνικού Σχολείου της Αγίας Σοφίας (όπως λεγόταν τότε) ζήτησα από μια τάξη νέων μεγαλύτερων μαθητών να εξηγήσουν τις λεπτομέρειες σχετικά με τη Ημέρα της Ελληνικής Ανεξαρτησίας. Μου μίλησαν για συγκεκριμένους ήρωες ακόμα και για τη θρησκευτική σημασία της ημέρας. Οι περισσότεροι από αυτούς συζήτησαν πώς η 25ή Μαρτίου ήταν θρησκευτική γιορτή και ότι η Γιαγιά τους πηγαίνει στην εκκλησία εκείνη την ημέρα. Με έκπληξη διαπίστωσα ότι τα παιδιά, όπως και πολλοί ενήλικες, δεν γνώριζαν την ιστορική σημασία εκείνης της ημέρας. Η συζήτηση επιβεβαίωσε περαιτέρω τη σύγχυση μεταξύ της Ημέρας ΟΧΙ και της Ημέρας της Ελληνικής Ανεξαρτησίας. Τους έκανα μερικές ερωτήσεις όπως: «Γιατί λέμε την 25η Μαρτίου Διπλή Γιορτή;» «Ξέρεις πώς γιορτάζουν αυτή τη μέρα στην Ελλάδα και στην Κύπρο;» «Ποιος ήταν ο Κολοκοτρώνης και γιατί φυλακίστηκε;» «Τί ήταν το Κρυφό Σχολείο;» Η απάντηση σε όλες αυτές τις ερωτήσεις ήταν «Δεν ξέρω». Παραδόξως, αυτό είναι κάτι που βλέπουμε συχνά στην νέα γενιά των Ελληνοαμερικανών. Ο τρόπος που γιορτάζεται η γιορτή, θα μπορούσε να βελτιωθεί παρέχοντας ευκαιρίες σε όλους να μάθουν και να απολαύσουν.

Δημοσιεύω αυτό το άρθρο για το ενημερωτικό δελτίο της Αγίας Σοφίας, γιατί ως εκπαιδύτρια, εγώ θέλω να κατανοήσω τους λόγους αυτής της έλλειψης ευαισθητοποίησης και να προωθήσω την εκπαίδευση για όλους. Στις 25η Μαρτίου, στην Ελλάδα, στην Κύπρο και στις ελληνικές κοινότητες σε όλο τον κόσμο, τα σχολεία είναι συνήθως ανοιχτά εάν η ημέρα πέφτει σε καθημερινή. Θα υπάρχουν ομιλίες, θεατρικά έργα, ποιήματα, τραγούδια και χορούς από μαθητές και καθηγητές. Το πιθανότερο είναι ότι οι περισσότεροι μαθητές δεν άκουσαν τις ομιλίες ή δεν κατάλαβαν τη σημασία των παραστάσεων.

Εγώ πιστεύω ότι η 25η Μαρτίου πρέπει να γιορτάζεται σαν πάρτι ή γλέντι με όλη την κοινότητα να συμμετέχει σε μια μεγάλη εκδήλωση και όχι μόνο το Ελληνικό Σχολείο. Ανεξάρτητα από την ποικιλόμορφη πολιτιστική κληρονομία του ατόμου, μια ευκαιρία μάθησης πρέπει να βιώσει ο καθένας. Θυμάμαι τις ημέρες οι οποίες τα παιδιά μου πήγαιναν στο Ελληνικό Σχολείο. Ανυπομονούσαν να συμμετάσχουν στον μεγάλο χορό στην εκκλησία για την γιορτή της Ημέρας της Ανεξαρτησίας και να παρελαύνουν στην 5η Λεωφόρο με τους φίλους τους και να φωνάζουν «Ζήτω η Ελλάδα!» «Η Ελλάδα δεν πεθαίνει!» Οι γονείς και οι παππούδες ήταν εξίσου ενθουσιασμένοι καθώς γεμίσαμε δύο λεωφορεία ή περισσότερα. Σταματούσαμε στο περίπτερο της Ορθόδοξης Εκκλησίας της Αγίας Σοφίας. Δεν θα φύγαμε αμέσως μετά την παρέλαση, αλλά θα συνεχίσουμε σε ένα ελληνικό εστιατόριο για δείπνο και λουκουμάδες.

Πώς θα μπορούσα να μεταφέρω την περηφάνια μου ως μητέρα και εκπαιδύτρια όταν συνειδητοποιούμε ότι οι μαθητές μας έχουν καταλάβει ότι το κύριο μήνυμα και ο λόγος πίσω από τις ελληνικές γιορτές μας είναι αυτό της ειρήνης και της φιλίας μεταξύ όλων των ανθρώπων σε αυτόν τον πλανήτη. Μερικές φορές τα γεγονότα ως δεδομένα και τα θεωρούμε όπως κάθε άλλη συνηθισμένη μέρα. Εάν συνεχίσουμε να το κάνουμε, δεν αποδίδουμε δικαιοσύνη στις επόμενες γενιές. Τα 200 και πλέον χρόνια ελευθερίας, για τα οποία πολεμήσαμε μετά από 400 χρόνια βίαιης κατοχής και σκλαβιάς από τους Οθωμανούς Τούρκους και τις θυσίες των αγωνιστών της ελευθερίας μας, θα γίνουν χωρίς νόημα. Θα πρέπει να είναι ευθύνη των δασκάλων, των γονέων και όλων μας να διδάξουμε αυτή τη νέα γενιά στην κοινότητά μας των Ελληνοαμερικανών, Αλβανών, Ρουμάνων και όλων των πολιτισμών για την αξία της ελευθερίας.

Πρέπει να εγγυηθούμε ότι τα παιδιά μας ενδιαφέρονται και διατηρούν στενή σχέση με τον ελληνικό πολιτισμό και τη γλώσσα, όχι μόνο στη μακρά και μεγαλειώδη ιστορία μας, αλλά και να αισθάνονται περήφανα για την ελληνική κληρονομία τους, καθώς και για τους άλλους κληρονομικούς διαφορετικούς πολιτισμούς τους. Άλλωστε, η 25η Μαρτίου δεν είναι απλώς μια γιορτή, αλλά μια μέρα για να γιορτάσουμε και να θυμηθούμε τους γνωστούς και τους άγνωστους ήρωες οι οποίους θυσίασαν τη ζωή τους για την ελευθερία της πατρίδας μας. Εγώ θεωρώ τον εαυτό μου τυχερή που μπορώ να ζήσω σε αυτή την υπέροχη κοινότητα της Αγίας Σοφίας. Μια κοινότητα που σέβεται και τιμά τους Έλληνες και τους Φιλέλληνες που όχι μόνο αγαπούν την Ελλάδα και την Κύπρο αλλά και «φροντίζουν» για όλα όσα στέκεται με τρόπο που αντικατοπτρίζει τις ιδέες πίσω από τους ανθρώπους που αγωνίστηκαν για αυτήν πριν από 205 χρόνια. Μακάρι να συνεχίσουμε τη μακρά παράδοση να τιμούμε αυτό το ιστορικό γεγονός και να συνεχίσουμε να εκπαιδεύουμε όλους στην πορεία.

Ζήτω η Ελλάδα και η Κύπρος!

2026 STEWARDSHIP

2026 Stewardship Pledge Campaign

As we begin our 2026 Stewardship Pledge Campaign, we invite you to prayerfully reflect on the blessings God has given you and on the role St. Sophia plays in your life. Stewardship is a meaningful expression of our faith—one that calls us to offer our time, talents, and financial resources in gratitude and in service to our parish community.

St. Sophia is more than a place of worship; it is a living, intergenerational community rooted in faith, tradition, and care for one another. Because of the faithful stewardship of our parishioners, we are able to sustain our ministries, preserve cherished traditions, support those in need, and welcome future generations into the life of the Church.

Your stewardship pledge provides the foundation for everything we do as a parish. It allows us to plan responsibly for the year ahead, maintain our facilities, support our clergy and staff, and continue offering programs and ministries that strengthen our community and deepen our faith.

As the pledge campaign begins, we ask you to take time to consider how you can support St. Sophia in the coming year. Pledges may be made online, in person, or by mail—whichever is most convenient for you. To pledge online, please visit:

<https://bit.ly/Stewardship26>

Every pledge—at every level—matters and is deeply appreciated. In the weeks ahead, we will share more about the impact of stewardship and the many ways it supports our parish life.



March 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sunday of Orthodoxy Divine Liturgy 9:30 am 10:00 AM Sunday School Procession of the Icons Vespers St. Basil, Watervliet 5:00 pm	2 Men's Basketball 6:30 pm	3 Senior Program 12:00 pm DOP 6:30 pm	4 Presanctified Liturgy 9:30 am	5	6 2nd Salutations 6:30 pm	7 Greek Language & Culture Academy 9:00 am
8 Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas Orthros & Hierarchical Divine Liturgy 8:30 am His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America 9:00 AM Sunday School	9 Men's Basketball 6:30 pm Clergy Retreat	10 Senior Program 12:00 pm Clergy Retreat Philoptochos 6:30 pm	11 No Services Clergy Retreat	12 AHEPA 7:00 pm	13 3rd Salutations 6:30 pm	14 Greek Language & Culture Academy 9:00 am
15 Sunday of the Holy Cross Divine Liturgy 9:30 am Vespers St. George, Albany 5:00 pm 10:00 AM Sunday School	16 Men's Basketball 6:30 pm	17 Senior Program 12:00 pm	18 Presanctified Liturgy 5:00 pm Illuminations 6:15 pm	19	20 4th Salutations 6:30 pm	21 Greek Language & Culture Academy 9:00 am
22 Sunday of St. John Climacus Divine Liturgy 9:30 am Vespers St. Nicholas, Cohoes 5:00 pm 10:00 AM Sunday School	23 Men's Basketball 6:30 pm	24 Senior Program 12:00 pm	25 Annunciation Divine Liturgy 9:30 am	26	27 Akathist Hymn 6:30 pm	28 Greek Language & Culture Academy 9:00 am
29 Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt Divine Liturgy 9:30 am Vespers Christ the Savior Ballston Lake 5:00 pm 10:00 AM Sunday School General Assembly Meeting	30 Men's Basketball 6:30 pm	31 Senior Program 12:00 pm Illuminations 6:30 pm				

April 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Presanctified Liturgy 9:30 am OPA-cize 6:30 pm	2	3 JOY/GOYA Lenten Retreat 6:00 pm	4 Saturday of Lazarus Divine Liturgy 9:30 am Making of Palms 11:00 am
5 Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy 9:30 am Palm Sunday Luncheon 11:30 am Family Worship - No Sunday School Bridegroom Service 6:30 pm	6 Bridegroom Service 6:30 pm	7 Bridegroom Service 6:30 pm	8 Holy Unction 6:30 pm	9 Last Supper Divine Liturgy 8:30 am Crucifixion Service 6:30 pm	10 Paschal Hours 8:30 am Epitaphios Decoration 10:00 am Taking Down from the Cross 3:30 pm Lamentations 6:30 pm	11 Divine Liturgy 9:30 am Resurrection Service 11:30 pm
12 Great and Holy Pascha Agape Service 11:00 am Family Worship - No Sunday School	13 Men's Basketball 6:30 pm	14 Senior Program 12:00 pm AHEPA 7:00 pm	15	16	17	18 Greek Language & Culture Academy 9:00 am
19 Thomas Sunday Divine Liturgy 9:30 am 10:00 AM Sunday School	20 Men's Basketball 6:30 pm	21 Senior Program 12:00 pm	22	23 Divine Liturgy St. George Schenectady 9:30 am	24	25 Greek Language & Culture Academy 9:00 am
26 Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women Divine Liturgy 9:30 am 10:00 AM Sunday School	27 Men's Basketball 6:30 pm	28 Senior Program 12:00 pm Illuminations 6:30 pm	29	30		

UPCOMING EVENTS



CAMP SAINT PAUL

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St. Sophia Mission Statement – St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church, Inc. is a not-for-profit religious community under the leadership of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, through the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople whose mission is to: (1) maintain, practice, and proclaim the Christian Orthodox faith, enhancing the spiritual growth of its communicants; (2) develop and operate programs, activities, and services for the Parishioners which serve and further the religious educational, cultural, philanthropic, and social ministries of the community as well as to protect and continuously develop the physical buildings and religious property as deemed necessary; (3) dedicate the promotion of Christian Fellowship and values between the evolving diversity of cultures and its people.