



THE TESTAMENT

SAINT SOPHIA GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - ALBANY, NY

September / October 2026



Parish Directory

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday
9:00AM -5:00 PM
518-489-4442

CLERGY

Proistamenos
Rev. Fr. Neofitos Sarigiannis
frneofitos@stsophiaalbany.org

RETIRED CLERGY

Rev. Fr. Dennis L. Nagi, Ph. D

CHURCH CONTACT

Margaret Danes
Mary Patelos
parishoffice@stsophiaalbany.org

WEBMASTER

Chris Pappis
webmaster@stsophiaalbany.org

CHANTER

George Lenares

CHOIR DIRECTOR

Harry Ermides

ACOLYTES

Nikolaos Vann

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

MANAGER
Alfredo Ramos
maintenance@stsophiaalbany.org

BOOK KEEPING

Helen (Eleni) Vasilakos
stsophiabkg@gmail.com

ICONOGRAPHER

Efthimios Stoja

PARISH COUNCIL

PRESIDENT

Michael Christakis
pcpresident@stsophiaalbany.org

VICE-PRESIDENT

Sultana Varvarousis

FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Anastasia Vasilakos

RECORDING SECRETARY

Christine Harvey

TREASURER

Mark Stevens

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Yiannis Googas
Robert Hahn
Peter Pappas
George Pappis
Maria Pidgeon
Bessie Sokaris
Keather Papa

ADULT MINISTRIES

PHILOPTOCHOS

Demetra Xythalis Vann

SAINT SOPHIA SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Georgia Melas, Committee Chair
Frosine Stolis
James Stolis
Helen Tomaso
Christine Prudente
Foti Ranzaklis

FAMILY PROMISE

Peter Melas

SENIOR CITIZENS

James Stolis

MAKARIA

Dora Mokhiber & Elaine Sokaris

YOUTHMINISTRIES

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Maria Sokaris
sundayschool@stsophiaalbany.org

HELLENIC EDUCATION

Lainie Damaskos-Christou
Ioanna Loula
greeklanguageacademy
@stsophiaalbany.org

GREEK FOLK DANCE

Diane Cohen
Maria Pidgeon
stsophiadancers@gmail.com

GOYA

Mary Googas
Michael Koutelis
Soula Landi
Bessie Sokaris

JOY

Sia Googas
Keather Papa
Lea Stevens
joy@stsophiaalbany.org

AHEPA FAMILY

AHEPA PRESIDENT

Andrew Chakmakas

DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE PRESIDENT

Vasso Potter
dopalope158@gmail.com

SONS OF PERICLES PRESIDENT

Christo Melas

MAIDS OF ATHENA PRESIDENT

Zeffi Kondoprias
sophia48maids@gmail.com

BEYOND THE TOMB

Bible Study: Orthodox Customs, Holidays, and the Resurrection
Accounts Depicted in Our Church

Select Tuesdays at 6:30 PM



Fr. Neofitos Sarigiannis

All Are Welcome!

9/29/26 10/6/26 10/20/26

10/27/26 11/3/26 11/17/26

11/24/26 12/1/26 12/15/26

We will be off on: 10/13, 11/10, and 12/8

2026

September

CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 Ecclisiastical New Year Adult Exercise: 11:15AM Senior Program 12:00PM	2 Knitters 12:15PM	3 Senior Lunch 12:30PM	4	5 Hall Rental 6:00PM
6 Orthros: 8:30AM Divine Liturgy: 9:30AM Hall Rental 6:00PM	7	8 The Nativity of the Theotokos Orthros and Divine Liturgy: 8:30-10:30AM Senior Exercise: 11:15AM Senior Program 12:00PM	9 Knitters 12:15PM	10 Senior Lunch 12:30PM	11	12 Wedding 1:00PM
13 Orthros: 8:30AM Divine Liturgy: 9:30AM Great Vespers: Holy Cross Middletown 7:00PM	14 The Exaltation of the Holy Cross Orthros and Divine Liturgy: 8:30-10:30AM	15 Senior Exercise: 11:15AM Senior Program 12:00PM	16 Knitters 12:15PM	17 Sts. Sophia, Faith, Hope and Love Orthros and Divine Liturgy: 8:30-10:30AM	18	19 First Day of Youth Greek School Hall Rental 5:00PM
20 Orthros: 8:30AM Teaching Divine Liturgy: 9:30 Blessing of the School Year Church Picnic Ministry Sign-Ups	21 GOYA Boston Trip 7:30AM Departure	22 Senior Exercise: 11:15AM Senior Program 12:00PM	23 Conception of St. John the Baptist Orthros and Divine Liturgy: 8:30-10:30AM Knitters 12:15PM OPA-cize 6:30PM	24 First Day of Adult Greek School 6:00PM	25	26 Repose of St. John the Evangelist Orthros and Divine Liturgy: 8:30-10:30AM Hall Rental 10:00AM Youth Greek School 9:00AM-1:00PM Greek Dance 11:30AM
27 Orthros: 8:30AM Divine Liturgy: 9:30AM Sunday School Greek Dance 11:45AM Baptism 1:00PM Baptism 2:30PM	28 NORC Book Club 1:00PM	29 Senior Exercise: 11:15AM Senior Program 12:00PM First Bible Study 6:30PM Gym: Chorus 7:00PM	30 Knitters 12:15PM OPA-cize 6:30PM			4

2026

October

CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Senior Lunch 12:30PM Adult Greek School 6:00PM	2	3 Youth Greek School 9:00AM-1:00PM Wedding 3:00PM Greek Dance 11:30AM
4 Orthros: 8:30AM Divine Liturgy: 9:30AM Sunday School Greek Dance 11:45AM	5	6 Senior Exercise: 11:15AM Senior Program 12:00PM Bible Study 6:30PM Gym: Chorus 7:00PM	7 Knitters 12:15PM OPA-cize 6:30PM	8 NNORC-Hall 12:00PM Senior Lunch 12:30PM Adult Greek School 6:00PM	9	10 Youth Greek School 9:00AM-1:00PM 11:00AM Baptism 12:00PM Culture Room Rental Greek Dance 11:30AM
11 Orthros: 8:30AM Divine Liturgy: 9:30AM Sunday School Greek Dance 11:45AM	12	13 Senior Exercise: 11:15AM Senior Program 12:00PM Philoptohos Meeting 6:30PM	14 Knitters 12:15PM OPA-cize 6:30PM	15 Adult Greek School 6:00PM	16	17 Youth Greek School 9:00AM-1:00PM Church Rental 2:00PM Greek Dance 11:30AM
18 Orthros: 8:30AM Divine Liturgy: 9:30AM Sunday School Greek Dance 11:45AM	19 GOYA Trip to Boston 7:30AM Departure	20 Senior Exercise: 11:15AM Senior Program 12:00PM Bible Study 6:30PM Gym: Chorus 7:00PM	21 Knitters 12:15PM OPA-cize 6:30PM	22 Adult Greek School 6:00PM	23 St. James the Brother of the Lord Orthros and Divine Liturgy: 8:30- 10:30AM	24 Youth Greek School 9:00AM-1:00PM Greek Dance 11:30AM Hall Rental 5:00PM
25 Orthros: 8:30AM Divine Liturgy: 9:30AM Sunday School Greek Dance 11:45AM Early Voting 9:00AM-5:00PM	26 St. Demetrios Orthros and Divine Liturgy: 8:30- 10:30AM NORC Book Club 1:00Pm Early Voting 12:00-8:00PM	27 Early Voting 9:00AM-5:00PM Senior Exercise: 11:15AM Senior Program 12:00PM Bible Study 6:30PM Gym: Chorus 7PM	28 Holy Protection Orthros and Divine Liturgy: 8:30-10:30AM Early Voting 12:00-8:00PM Knitters 12:15PM OPA-cize 6:30PM	29 Early Voting 9:00AM-5:00PM Adult Greek School 6:00PM	30 Early Voting 9:00AM-5:00PM	31 Youth Greek School 9:00AM-1:00PM Greek Dance 11:30AM

TEACHING DIVINE LITURGY

Sunday, September 20 at 9:30 am – The Preparation

Sunday, November 8 at 9:30 am – Liturgy of the Word

Sunday, February 7 at 9:30 am - Liturgy of the Eucharist

“Sanctify those who love the beauty of Your house. Glorify them in return by Your divine power, and forsake us not who set our hope in You”

From the Prayer Behind the Ambon, Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom



“COME AND SEE”

From the Desk of Fr. Neofitos

Together in Christ

Beloved Faithful of Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Church,

As we enter the fall season, I would like to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for the warm welcome you have extended to Presvytera Catherine, our children, George and Eleni, and me since our arrival at Saint Sophia. These first weeks have been a blessing. I am still learning the history, traditions, ministries, and personalities that make Saint Sophia such a special community. I have been especially encouraged by the love and dedication I have already witnessed—the many people who quietly serve, give their time, care for others, and work to strengthen the life of our parish.

One of the things I have come to appreciate more deeply is that a parish is much more than a beautiful building. It is a family. It is a place where we come together to worship God, to receive His grace, to carry one another's burdens, to celebrate life's blessings, and to grow together in our faith.

As I wrote in my first letter, the words of the Psalmist continue to remain close to my heart:

“Lord, I have loved the beauty of Your house, and the place where Your glory dwells.”

(Psalm 26:8)

During the month of August, as we celebrated the Dormition of our Most Holy Theotokos, I was deeply inspired by our parish's mutual love and devotion for our Holy Mother. I was especially moved to see so many of you come together in prayer and worship, attend the services, and lovingly prepare and decorate the icons, the Kouvouklion, and the Epitaphio. These acts of love and devotion are more than traditions; they are expressions of our faith and of the special place the Theotokos holds in the heart of our Orthodox Christian life.

The Theotokos teaches us through her life to say “yes” to God—not only in moments of joy, but also in moments of uncertainty, sacrifice, and change. Watching our community come together during these beautiful days reminded me that our faith is strongest when it is lived together, shared from one generation to the next, and expressed through prayer, service, and love.

As we begin this new chapter together, I believe we are also being called to say “yes” to God and to one another.

My hope for Saint Sophia is that we will continue to grow as a community of prayer, worship, service, and love. I hope that our church will be a place where our children and young people find a strong foundation in Christ; where families find support and friendship; where those who are struggling know that they are not alone; where those who are searching encounter the love of God; and where every person who walks through our doors feels that they belong. There is much to be thankful for, and there is also much we can accomplish together. In the months ahead, I look forward to listening to you and learning from you. I want to hear your hopes and dreams for Saint Sophia. I want to learn about the ministries that are close to your hearts and discover new ways that we can serve our parish, our neighbors, and those in need.

A healthy and vibrant parish does not depend upon one person. It is built by all of us. Each of us has a gift to offer, a role to play, and a way to serve. When we bring those gifts together in love and humility, God can accomplish far more through us than we could ever accomplish alone.

That same love calls us to be good stewards of the beautiful home God has entrusted to us. Loving the beauty of God's house means not only worshipping within it, but also caring for it, maintaining it, and preparing it for the generations who will come after us. As we look toward the future and consider the needs of our parish and the possibility of upcoming capital projects, I hope we will see these efforts not simply as financial obligations, but as an opportunity to participate in something greater than ourselves.

Stewardship is ultimately an expression of gratitude. We each have different gifts, abilities, and circumstances, but each of us can ask, "What can I offer to my Church?" My hope is that together we can grow not only as generous stewards, but as better stewards of our time, our talents, our resources, and the sacred home that has been entrusted to us.

The generations before us sacrificed to build and preserve Saint Sophia. It is now our responsibility and our privilege to care for what they entrusted to us and, God willing, to leave an even stronger spiritual home for those who will come after us.

As we enter this new season, let us continue to build upon the strong foundation established by the generations who came before us. Let us honor their sacrifices by passing our Orthodox faith on to the next generation and by making Saint Sophia a place where the presence and love of Christ can be experienced by all.

Thank you for welcoming us into your family. Thank you for your patience as I continue to learn. Thank you for your prayers, your encouragement, and your service to our beloved parish. May the Lord bless our Saint Sophia community, our families, our ministries, and all those who call this parish home. May He unite us in faith, strengthen us in hope, and teach us always to walk together in love.

I look forward to all that God has in store for us.

With paternal love in the Lord,

+ Rev. Presbyter Neofitos Sarigiannis
Proistamenos
Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Church



Did you know?

The “Green Patriarch”



Did you know that Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I was named one of TIME Magazine’s 100 Most Influential People in the World in 2008?

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is widely known for his leadership of the Orthodox Church, but he is also internationally recognized for his concern for God’s creation. Because of his commitment to environmental protection, he has become known as the “Green Patriarch.”

For Patriarch Bartholomew, caring for the environment is not simply a political or scientific issue—it is a spiritual responsibility. He has taught that the natural world is God’s creation and that humanity has a responsibility to care for it rather than destroy it. He once explained this responsibility by saying:

“In former centuries the Church prayed for the protection of all people against natural disasters. We now face the need to pray for the protection of nature against human destruction.”

These words remind us that while we have always prayed for God’s protection from the forces of nature, we must also recognize the ways in which human beings can harm the world God has entrusted to us.

In 1995, Patriarch Bartholomew established the **Religion, Science and the Environment (RSE)** initiative, bringing together religious leaders, scientists, and political leaders to study environmental problems and seek solutions. His work has particularly focused on the importance of protecting water, which has both tremendous importance for human life and deep spiritual significance in our Christian faith.

As Orthodox Christians, we are called to be **stewards of God’s creation**. Caring for the world around us can be an expression of gratitude to God for the gift of His creation.

A thought for us: The next time we see the beauty of nature, let us remember that protecting God’s creation is not only about the environment—it is also about how we live out our faith.



Welcome Back BBQ

FOOD • FELLOWSHIP • FAMILY



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20
FOLLOWING DIVINE LITURGY

Please join us as we
FORMALLY WELCOME
FR. NEOFITOS, PRESVYTERA CATHERINE,
GEORGE AND ELEN!
to the St. Sophia family!



YOUTH MINISTRY REGISTRATION
for the year ahead!

Registration and information for our youth ministries and programs will be available at the BBQ. Bring your children. Get involved. Let's make it a great year!



Let's come together as one parish family to celebrate, connect, and start this new chapter together!

SAVE THE DATES!



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1
FALL GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING
We will be seeking nominations for Parish Council.
Please prayerfully consider running!



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21
HARVEST DANCE
Pre-sale tickets will be available at the Welcome Back BBQ on September 20!

We can't wait to see you there! ♥

From the Parish Council

Dear St. Sophia Family,

As summer winds down and we look toward the fall, there is much to be excited about at St. Sophia.

Throughout his first weeks with us, Fr. Neofitos has reminded us of the words of the Psalmist: *“O Lord, I have loved the beauty of Your house.”* Those words offer an invitation to each of us. To love the beauty of our church is to cherish our Orthodox faith and traditions, but also to care for the community that gathers here — our children and families, our ministries, our fellowship, and one another.



That spirit will be at the heart of our Welcome Back Fellowship BBQ on Sunday, September 20, following Divine Liturgy, when we will formally welcome Fr. Neofitos, Presvytera Catherine, George and Eleni to the St. Sophia family. I hope you'll join us for food, fellowship, and an opportunity to celebrate this new chapter together.

September 20 will also kick off another year of youth ministry, with registration and information available during the BBQ. I especially encourage our families to get involved. Helping our young people grow in their faith, build friendships, serve others, and know St. Sophia as their spiritual home is essential to the future of our parish.

Please also save two important dates this fall:

Sunday, November 1 — Fall General Assembly Meeting

We will be accepting nominations for Parish Council, and I invite you to prayerfully consider serving. Parish Council members help steward our resources, support our clergy and ministries, and make decisions that shape the life and future of St. Sophia. Our parish is strongest when people are willing to share their time, talents, ideas, and energy in its service.

Saturday, November 21 — Harvest Dance

Pre-sale tickets will be available at the Welcome Back BBQ on September 20.

There is much ahead for St. Sophia this fall. Perhaps that, too, is part of what it means to “love the beauty of Your house.” We participate in it. We care for it. We strengthen it. And together, we ensure that St. Sophia remains a vibrant spiritual home for generations to come.

I hope you and your family will join us on September 20.

See you soon!

Michael N. Christakis
President, Parish Council
pcpresident@stsophiaalbany.org

Stewardship: Our Shared Commitment

Dear St. Sophia Family,

As summer comes to a close and we begin a new church year, we hope you and your loved ones return refreshed and renewed. We look forward to gathering again in prayer and sharing in the life of our parish family. At St. Sophia, stewardship is more than a contribution of our time, talents, and treasure. It is an expression of faith, gratitude, and love for our church and one another. Through our stewardship, we help ensure that St. Sophia remains a welcoming home where we worship, nurture our children, preserve our Orthodox faith and traditions, serve our community, and grow together in Christ.

For the Coming Year

As we look ahead to the new church year, we invite each family to prayerfully consider making or renewing your annual stewardship commitment.

Your stewardship helps us:

- Care for and improve our church and parish facilities.
- Strengthen ministries and programs for children, youth, and adults.
- Support our clergy and daily parish needs.
- Provide opportunities for spiritual growth, fellowship, and service.
- Expand charitable and community outreach.
- Preserve our Greek Orthodox faith, traditions, and heritage for future generations.
- Collaborate with and support our sister Orthodox parishes.



Generations before us gave their time, talents, prayers, and resources to build the church we enjoy today. With gratitude for their example, it is now our turn to strengthen St. Sophia for those who will come after us.

Below is a list of pledged members and families for 2026. We are deeply grateful for all our stewards and encourage you to remain steadfast in the mission of our Church. If you are not yet a steward of St. Sophia, we warmly invite you to consider making a commitment during these first months of the new Ecclesiastical and School Year. You may give online or complete a stewardship card and submit it to the parish office.

Online Stewardship: <https://onrealm.org/SaintSophiaGOC/-/form/pledge/stewardship26> or scan the QR code.

Thank you for your continued love, prayers, generosity, and commitment to St. Sophia. Together, with God's blessing, we can ensure that our parish remains a vibrant and welcoming home for generations to come.

May God bless you and your families as we begin another year together in faith!

With gratitude and warmest wishes for a blessed new church year,

The St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church Stewardship Committee

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." — Acts 20:35

Contact Anastasia Vasilakos for any questions 518-269-9935 or avasilakos617@gmail.com.

Stewardship

2026 Stewardship as of August

Demetra & Thomas Alund
David & Eugenia Alven
Wael Alzawahra
George Amanatides
Paul Amanatides
Danny & Panagiota Anagnost
Vasilis & Christina Anagnostopoulos
Anastassios Anastahas
Tommy & Helene Annas
Michael Anton
Nick & Joanne Antoniadis
Danny Bahlatzis
Nicholas & Effie Balahtsis
Glykeria Baltis
Peter & Kathy Baltis
Barbara Beckos McDonald
Marie Beiniks
Robert Bladel & Niki Ziamandanis Bladel
Theodorian & Diana-Andra Borca-Tasciuc
Athena Bouloukos
Peter & Kathleen Bouloukos
Konstantinos & Christina Brotsis
Barbara Burke
Catherine Caladim
Marietta Caladim
John & Penny Caracandas
George Chakmakas
John Chakmakas
Anastasia Cholakis
George & Maria Cholakis
Joanne Cholakis
Michael & Christa Christakis
Euripides Christou & Lainie Damaskos-Christou
Jeffrey & Diane Cohen
Niki Colydas
Eugenia & Daniel Condon
Assemina & Timothy Conlin
Christine Costopoulos
John & Katerina Dallas
Norma Damascos
Theodora D'amico
Robert & Alexandra Davis
Lauren Dean
Nicholas & Marianna Diamantatos
James & Chrisanthi Diamantopoulos
Stephani Dimopoulos
Frederick Docous
Nicholas & Fotini Docyk
Mick & Lea Doemel

Pauline Duke
Haralabos & Eleni Efstathiadis
Harry Efstathiadis
Michael Ermides
Gari Fentekes
Donald & Dina Fisher
Gregory & Nina Floyd
Diane Forkeutis
Joanna Foti
Janet Gallas
Anthony & Amy George
Alexander Georgeadis
William & Jamie Georges
Maria Gezerlis
Arthur & Christine Gianakos
Andrea Googas & Robert Hahn
James & Mary Googas
John & Sia Googas
Mary Pat Googas
Anastasia Gouvitsas
Elisavet & Victoria Guarneri
David Hadjichristodoulou
Charalambos & Anne Hadjioannou
Lukes Hadjioannou
Christine Harvey
Mr & Mrs Anthony Hazapis
Maria Hazapis
Matthew & Chloe Hickey
John & Mary Hormovitis
Robert Hotaling
Nicholas & Lisa Hrimatopoulos
Vasiliki Hrimatopoulos
Alex Jefferson
Nadia Jefferson
Rita Jeoney
George Kalamaras
Stanley & Irene Karamanol
John & Theo Karatzou
Constantine & Constance Karlaftis
Theodore & Francesca Kendris
Debbie Kennealy
Elyssa Kirby
Valerie Kirby
Kostas Klementzos
Stella Koleci
Vasil Koleci
Theodore Kondoprias
Angelo Kontis
Constantine & Leanne Kontogiannis
Nickolas Koulos
Angeline Koutelis

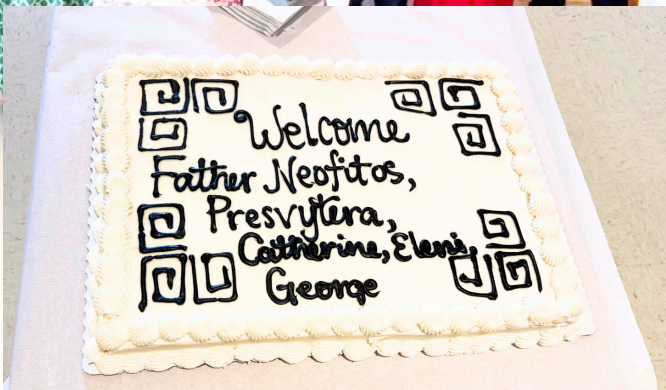
Diane Koutelis
Michael Koutelis & Maryellen Koutellis
Michael & Jewelie Koutelis
Nicholas Koutelis
Jeanne Koutoufaris
George & Paula Koutsakis
Michael & Karen Koutsourades
Helen Laines
Joanna Laines
Peter & Sula Landi
Spiros Lanides
Sofeya Lascaris
Steven & Christina Lasher
Michel-Gabrielle Legato
Fr. Patric & Pres. Evangeline Legato
William Lembesis
Sisay Lemma
Konstantine & Holly Liapis
Andreas & Theodora Lois
Peter & Irene Mafilios
Bessie Malamas
Freda Manuel
Peter & Tina Marathakis
Dimitrios Marinakos
George Marinopoulos
Jeffrey & Marie McCullough
Peter & Georgia Melas
Jaimee & Matthew Meyer
Demetrios Michael
Roger Mike
Constantinos & Diane Minas
Casia Mirones
Nicholas & Diane Mitsios
Jordan Moises
Panagiotis & Vasiliki Moisis
Theodora Mokhiber
James Morrill & Michelle Su-Morrill
Christos Moutopoulos
Konstantinos & Euthimia Moutopoulos
Stavros & Sheila Moutopoulos
Richard & Sylvia Mouzakes
Fr. Dennis & Candice Nagi
Jackie Orfanos, M.D.
Violet & Dana Palombo
Katherine Papa
Keather Papa
Peter & Maria Pappas
Christopher Pappis
George Pappis
Mary Patelos
Tina Perlegis
Donald & Vanessa Perry

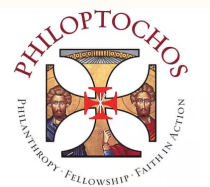
Stewardship

Paul Petalas
Michael & Thecla Philip
Mignonne & David Philips
Maria & Gregg Pidgeon
Anastasia Pilarinos
Haralambros Pilarinos
Margaret Poole
Nikoleta Prifti
Fr. Neofitos & Pres. Catherine
Christine & Stephen Prudente
Besnik & Penelope Qaja
Evangelos & Alexandra Rantzaklis
Frank & Theodora Rantzaklis
Dennis & Irene Rassias
Mariam Rmeily
Terrell & Ann Roe
Bogdan Sandu
Fr. Neofitos & Pres. Catherine Sarigiannis
Charles Sarris
Legrande Serras
Michaela Serseludi
Skeva Shurdhi
Jason & Kaitlyn Sideris
John & Joanna Sideris

Christos & Erin Sikopoulos
Spyridon Skordas & Elaine Hasapis
George & Debbie Sokaris
Elaine Sokaris
Gerasimos & Kathryn Sokaris
Gregory & Bessie Sokaris
Gregory J. Sokaris
Gregory C. Sokaris
Laura Sokaris & William Farrelll
Mary Sokaris
Nora Sokaris
Stratton & Roxanne Sokaris
Dan & Anabela-Mihaela Stan
Christos & Delores Stavrou
Lea & Mark Stevens
James & Frosine Stolis
Cataldo & Cassandra Strippoli
Nicole Strippoli
Faith Takes & Joseph Moltzen
Amal Tlaige
Anthony Thanopoulos
Anna & Pasquale Tirino
Helen & Marco Tomaso
Larry Treen & Nicole Gianakos-Treen
John & Lenore Tsamis

Vasiliki Tsamis
Diane Tseckares
Anastasia Tunny
Athanasios & Katerina Tyrnas
Layne Underwood
Leigh Underwood-Brockmann
& David Brockmann
Alexandra & Jason VanWie
Sultana Varvarousis
Maria Vasilakos
Anastasia Vasilakos & John Rojas
Betty Vasilakos
Dimitra Vasilakos
Helen Vasilakos
Teri Velis
John Ventsias
Ykelemework Wondimu
Maria Xythalis
Nicole Xythalis
William Yager & Cassandra Stricos
Matina Ziamandanis
Michael Ziamandanis
Peter & Maria Ziamandanis
Stephen & Claire Ziamandanis





Philoptochos

Dear Friends and Members of Our Community,

I hope everyone has enjoyed a wonderful summer and had the opportunity to relax, spend time with family and friends, and enjoy these beautiful summer months. As we begin a new Philoptochos year, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for your continued support and generosity. Your kindness allows us to continue our mission of helping those in need and making a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

We are looking forward to another wonderful year of giving, serving, and coming together as a community. We will kick off our year with our September meeting, and we would love to see both our returning members and new faces join us!

Our first fundraiser of the year will be hosting a Café at the Annual Doll Show on September 26th. We are looking for both donations and volunteers to help make the event a success. If you are interested in helping, please see Shalyn Docus.

As we begin this new year, we would also love to see our Philoptochos membership grow.

Philoptochos offers so many wonderful opportunities—not only to serve and make an impact in our community, but also to build friendships, grow personally and spiritually, share your talents, and be part of something meaningful.

Please consider joining us at our first September meeting and learning more about all that Philoptochos has to offer. Whether you can give your time, talents, or simply your support, there is a place for everyone in Philoptochos. I look forward to seeing you and working together for another year of love, compassion, fellowship, and service.

With gratitude,

Demetra Xythalis Vann

ST. SOPHIA *Goes to* Boston!

JOIN US
for a fun-filled
parish
day trip!



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2026

Spend the day in Boston with our **St. Sophia** family
as we enjoy fellowship, sightseeing,
and two special destinations!



NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM

Explore one of
Boston's most
popular attractions,
featuring incredible
marine life from
around the world.



HELLENIC COLLEGE/ HOLY CROSS

Visit the beautiful
campus that serves
as an important
center of Greek
Orthodox education
and faith in America.

• TRIP DETAILS •



DEPARTURE:
7:30 a.m.

from
St. Sophia
Greek Orthodox Church



ADULTS
\$50



CHILDREN
(17 & UNDER)
\$25



INCLUDES:

- Round-trip transportation
- Admission to the
New England Aquarium
- Visit to Hellenic College/
Holy Cross



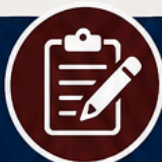
BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY!

*Enjoy a wonderful day of
faith, fellowship, and fun
in Boston!*



LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

We'll take breaks so you have time
to enjoy lunch at the Aquarium
or nearby in Boston.

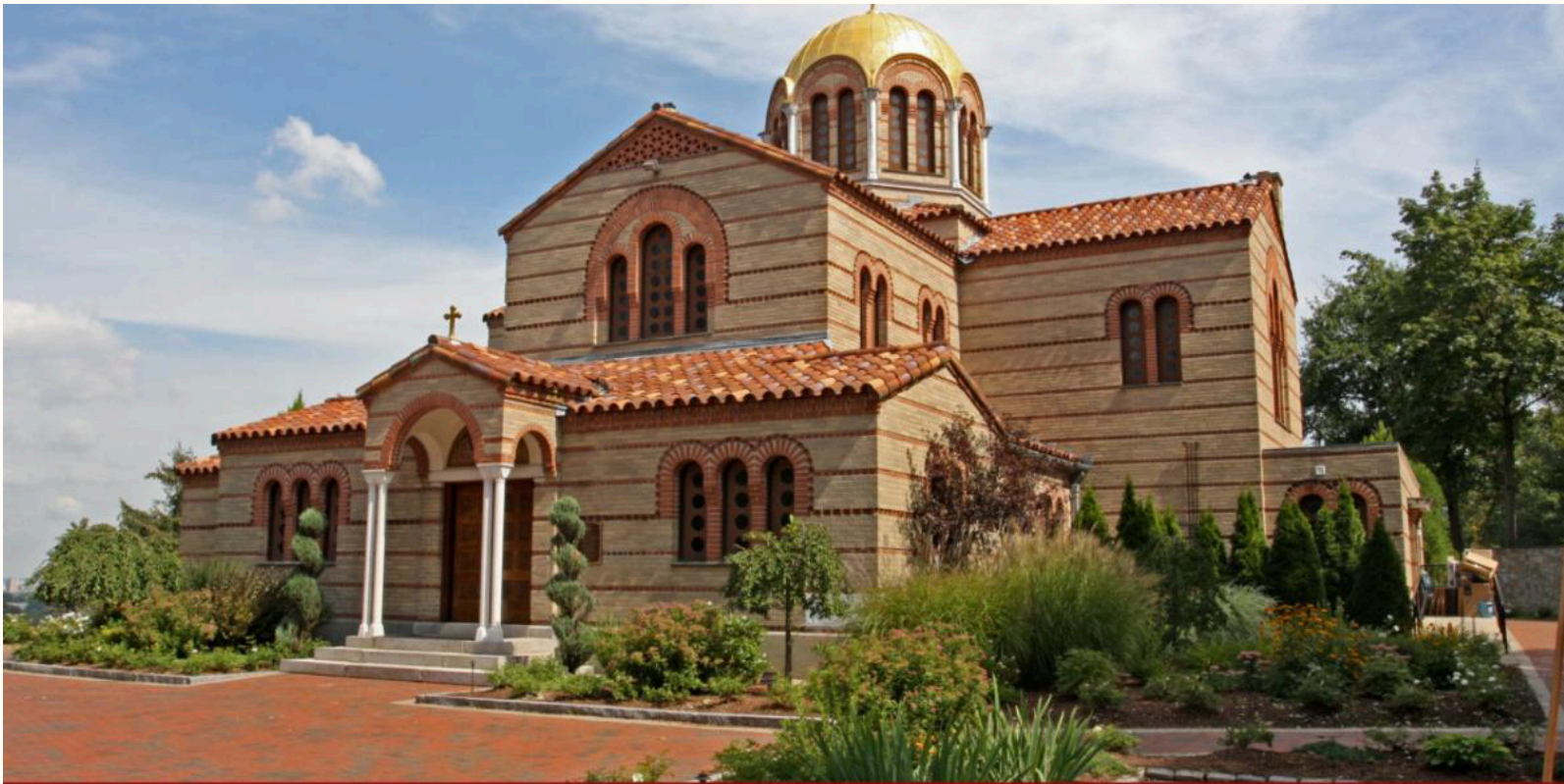


RESERVE YOUR SEAT TODAY!

Space is limited.

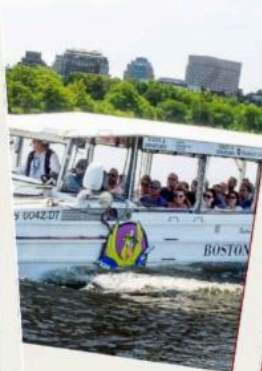
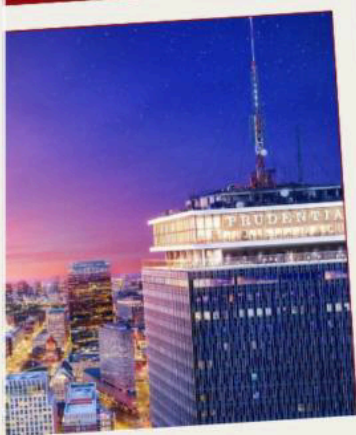
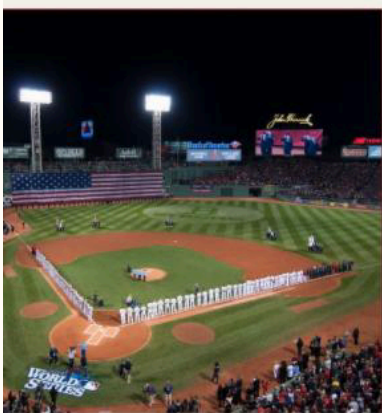


PLEASE SIGN UP AT: <https://bit.ly/BostonBus26>



NOVEMBER
13-15
AGES: 13-18

GOYA TRIP TO BOSTON



TRIP

INCLUDES:

- 3 Days and 2 Nights Hotel
- Coach Bus
- Meals for the Weekend
- Duck Boat Tour
- Tour of Fenway Park
- View Boston from the Prudential Center
- Visit to Hellenic College Holy Cross

REGISTRATION OPENS: AUGUST 17
CHAPERONES REQUESTED



Direct Archdiocesan District
 Youth & Young Adults
 Ministry

Saint Sophia Sunday School

A NEW & EXCITING CURRICULUM IS HERE!

Something new and exciting is coming to Saint Sophia Sunday School!

We are excited to introduce The National Sunday School Curriculum created by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America to help our children grow in their knowledge, love, and experience of the Orthodox Christian faith.

MORE THAN A CURRICULUM — A CALL TO MINISTRY

This new program offers engaging resources designed to help children:

- Learn and understand the Orthodox Christian faith
- Deepen their relationship with Christ
- Grow in their love for the Church
- Connect what they learn with the life of the Church
- Develop a faith that grows with them throughout their lives

A JOURNEY WE BEGIN TOGETHER

Clergy, teachers, parents, and families are all part of this exciting journey.

With prayer, enthusiasm, and creativity, we will guide the next generation toward the fullness of life in Christ and His Church.

OUR DIRECTOR

We are overjoyed to welcome back Maria Sokaris as our Sunday School Director.

Maria brings a wealth of experience, dedication, and enthusiasm to our Sunday School and is excited to help take our program to the next level. She has been working diligently throughout the summer to prepare the new curriculum for our teachers and students.

OUR TEACHERS & ASSISTANTS

A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful teachers for their continued dedication, commitment, and love for our students. We are grateful that they have enthusiastically committed to another year of teaching and are excited to bring this new curriculum to life, helping our children grow in their faith and love for Christ.

Pre-K / Kindergarten - Maria Neaton • Anne Hadjioannou • Ryleigh O'Sullivan

1st & 2nd Grade - Maria Pidgeon • Angelina Pidgeon • Katerina Christakis

3rd & 4th Grade - Sia Googas • Leigh Brockmann

5th Grade - Maria Ziamandanis

6th & 7th Grade - Evangelia Misko

Teen Class — 8th–12th Grade - Stratton Sokaris

To learn more about the new curriculum please visit:

<https://www.goarch.org/sundayschool>

COME & GROW WITH US!

SAINT SOPHIA SUNDAY SCHOOL

Beginning September 20, 2026

We can't wait to begin this journey together!



SAINT SOPHIA Sunday School

2026-2027

SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR



SEPTEMBER 2026

9/20

Blessing of the School Year
After Divine Liturgy,
Ministry registrations &
Church Picnic

9/27

First day of Sunday School



OCTOBER 2026

10/4

Classes in Session

10/11

Family Worship Sunday
No Classes

10/18

Classes in Session

10/25

Classes in Session

NOVEMBER 2026



11/1

Classes in Session
Greek School OXI Day

11/8

Classes in Session

11/15

Classes in Session

11/22

Classes in Session

11/29

Family Worship Sunday
No Classes

DECEMBER 2026



12/6

Classes in Session

12/13

Classes in Session

12/20

Christmas Pageant

12/27

Family Worship Sunday
No Classes

JANUARY 2027



1/3

Classes in Session

1/10

Classes in Session

1/17

Family Worship Sunday
No Classes

1/24

Classes in Session

1/31

Classes in Session

FEBRUARY 2027



2/7

Classes in Session
Godparent Sunday

2/14

Family Worship Sunday
No Classes

2/21

Classes in Session

2/28

Classes in Session

MARCH 2027



3/7

Classes in Session

3/14

Classes in Session

3/21

Classes in Session
Sunday of Orthodoxy

3/28

Classes in Session
Greek School March 25 Celebration



APRIL 2027



4/4

Classes in Session
Sunday of the Holy Cross

4/11

Classes in Session

4/18

Classes in Session

4/24

Saturday of Lazarus
9:30 AM Youth Divine Liturgy,
Palm Cross Making &
Youth Sponsored Breakfast



4/25

Palm Sunday
Family Worship Sunday - No Classes



MAY 2027



5/2

Pascha
Family Worship Sunday - No Classes
10:30 AM-12:00 PM
Agape Service & Easter Egg Hunt

5/9

Classes in Session

5/16

Family Worship Sunday - *No Classes*
Greek Festival

5/23

Last Day of Sunday School Classes

5/30

Family Worship Sunday - *No Classes*
Memorial Day Weekend

JUNE 2027



6/6

Certificates at the end
of Divine Liturgy -
Church Picnic



"Let the little children come to Me,
and do not hinder them,
for to such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven."

Matthew 19:14

St. Sophia Dance Group

Information & Sign Ups 2026-2027

The Dance Group is so excited to get back to enriching our youth to the beautiful culture of Greek dancing. Sign ups are now up and running. Please sign your child/ren up using the link on the church website (first, click on Ministries, then, click on Youth Ministries). Be sure to read the agreement with your children. The contract contains important information for all dancers and parents to know. The sign up link is also at the bottom of the contract. **The deadline to sign up your child/ren is September 15.** **Please do so asap so we can organize groups as quickly as possible.** Students must be in grades 1-12 to be eligible to dance and families must be a member of our church. Dance group dues are \$30 per child. All payments will be made on Realm this year. The link is attached to the Google Sign Up Form at the end of the Dance Group Agreement.

We will be using the Remind App again this year as our main tool of communication. We are using the same class as last year. So, if you joined last year, you are all set. If you are new to the dance group this year, please join our class. Just download the Remind app. Our class code is @dkd4khe.

The attendance policy remains in effect and includes the mandatory participation and attendance in our Sunday School, Choir or Altar. Church attendance on Sunday is the most important facet of our religious welfare and life. We realize how hectic our lives are during the week, and in an effort to allow for a positive Christian Orthodox education, we are asking for your child(ren) to enroll and become a part of this religious experience. Our goal is to not only embrace our culture, but our Christian faith as a community.

Here are the tentative rehearsal schedules for this season:

Senior Group: Saturdays at 11:30 in the gym - begin on 9/26

Junior Group: Sundays at 11:45 (after Sunday School) in the gym - begin 9/27

Sophomore Group: Sundays at 11:45 (after Sunday School) in the preschool room - begin on 9/27

Freshmen Group: Sundays at 11:45 (after Sunday School) in the cultural room - begin on 9/27

Dancers will be notified on Remind of their group placement once all sign ups are completed. We are looking forward to a fabulous season. If you have any further questions, please email us at stsophiadancers@gmail.com.

Thank you,
Diane Cohen and Maria Pidgeon



Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Church

Awards 2026 Scholarships

ALBANY, NY – The members of the St. Sophia Scholarship Committee were honored to present the St. Sophia Scholarship awards for the 2026-2027 academic year to 12 award recipients following the Divine Liturgy in Albany, NY, on August 9.

These awards were based on several factors, including participation in various activities at St. Sophia, the student's academic record, and their student essay.

Two students received the Felia Kondoprias Memorial Scholarship. This will be an annual scholarship created by Felia's family in her memory.

The 2026 award designees are Aphroditi Anagnostopoulos – University of Miami; Dimitris Anagnostopoulos – Siena University; Elliana Lasher – Utica University; Calla Meyer – SUNY Binghamton; Evangelia Misko – SUNY Albany; Constantine Palas – Siena University; Thomas Pallone – Florida Institute of Technology; Sophia Quackenbush – Coastal Carolina University; Alexandra Roe – Fairfield University; Felia Kondoprias scholarship recipient; Christopher Soler – SUNY Albany; Demetrios Skordas – RPI; Felia Kondoprias scholarship recipient; Xrysanthi Sokaris – Long Island University.

"We extend our congratulations to all our recipients," the Scholarship Committee said. "It is the wish of this committee, and every member of St. Sophia that they will continue their adult lives at St. Sophia and encourage others who follow them to build on their achievements. We believe that investing in our children and our students is an investment in our future."



Front row (left to right): Christina Lasher, Maria Sokaris, Sophia Pallone, Eleni Efstathiadis, Rev. Fr. Neofitos Sarigiannis, Ted Kondoprias, Frosine Stolis, Helen Tomaso, Jim Stolis, Frank Rantzaklis, and Georgia Melas. Back row: Jaimee Meyer, Dimitris Anagnostopoulos, and Christopher Soler. Photo: Chris Pappis

St Sophia Greek Language and Culture Academy



440 Whitehall Road

Albany, N.Y. 12208

(518) 489-4442

www.stsophiagreekschool.org

email: greeklanguageacademy@stsophiaalbany.org



Welcome to the **2026-2027** school year! It is a great pleasure to welcome both our returning families and those who are new to our Greek Academy. As projected, our enrollment continues to grow as we expect many more students in our classes beginning at 3 years old.

Fortunately, a lot of work has gone into providing additional classes at all levels to accommodate our growing enrollment. Our teachers have spent time during the summer preparing for the upcoming year as this enriches their knowledge base and our school. This contributes to what we know will be a smooth opening. I am consistently working on different ways to support our new staff's transition and their growth as educators throughout the year.

Goals this year highlight both academic and social and emotional learning. While improving student achievement is an important part of our mission, we know it is essential to focus on the social and emotional needs of our students as well.

One of the most important parts of our job is to be in the school and community connecting with the parents and students. Our teachers: Ioanna Loula, Nicole Xythalis, Nikos Sarilakis and myself welcome the chance to share our opportunities and challenges and to address any questions or concerns that you may have. Upon enrollment you will be in constant communication with our school via our hard copy and electronic newsletters to ensure you never miss a thing! We are rolling out new vibrant lessons, projects and group activities in each class level that are bursting with fun language and culture acquisition. These have been proven to be an effective learning resources throughout our program last year.

These new resources together with our passionate teaching staff will ensure that your child is learning the Greek language and culture in no time. A few minutes is all it takes to enroll your child online from our website: www.stsophiagreekschool.org or church website: <https://www.stsophiaalbany.org/greek-school> with the hardcopy registration available at the church or by contacting us at church.

With your continued support, we will ensure the Greek language is kept alive for generations to come! On behalf of the teachers and myself, we look forward to seeing you all on September 19, 2026 at 9:00 am for a special first day of classes for all during the same time slot. On this day we will welcome our new priest Father Neofitos Sarigiannis with a beautiful Agiasmos blessing and his special words. As we begin again, please accept my best wishes for a wonderful school year.

With my sincere appreciation and enthusiasm
Lainie (Ελένη) Damaskos-Christou, Director
St. Sophia Greek Language and Culture Academy

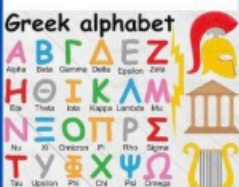


At the St. Sophia Greek Language and Culture Academy we strive to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment in which our students can explore and experience the roots of their cultural heritage or learn a new culture!



Holiday programs,
baking, costumes,
movies, arts and
crafts.

March in Greek
Independence
Parade!



St Sophia Greek Language and Culture Academy

440 Whitehall Road

Albany, N.Y. 12208

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email: greeklanguageacademy@stsophiaalbany.org



ENROLL NOW!

**CLASSES MEET ON
SATURDAYS FROM
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM OR
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
DEPENDING ON AGE & LEVEL**

About our school

We strive to provide a learning environment enriched by the teaching of the Greek Language, History, Culture, Faith where each student develops his or her own talents and potential to the fullest through speaking, reading, writing and listening in the target language. We create a school community with students, teachers and parents who value our Academy and value the importance of our educational goals.

OUR CURRICULUM:

Learning the Greek language through fun activities, projects, songs dances, puppets, games and interactions with children of all ages from Pre-K thru High School

JOIN US TODAY! TUITION ONLY \$350 PER STUDENT ANNUALLY, INCLUDES ALL BOOKS AND ACTIVITY FEES. REGISTRATION AT ANYTIME ONLINE OR CALL CHURCH OFFICE

23

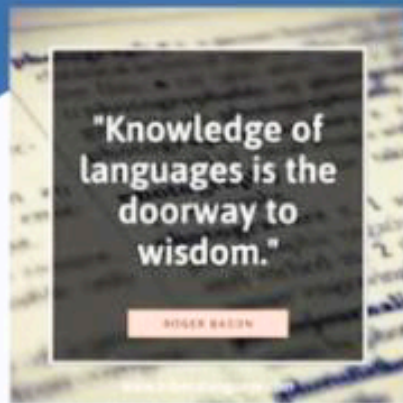


Greek School Academic Calendar 2026–2027

September First Class September 19th Classes in Session September 26th	October Classes in Session October 3rd October 17th October 24th No classes on October 10th	November Classes in Session November 7th November 14th November 21st No classes on November 28th	December Classes in Session December 5th December 12th December 19th No classes on December 26th	January Classes in Session January 9th January 23rd January 30th No classes on January 2nd January 16th	February Classes in Session February 6th February 20th February 27th No classes on February 13th
March Classes in Session March 6th March 13th March 20th No classes on March 27th	April Classes in Session April 3rd April 10th April 17th No Classes on April 24th	May Classes in Session May 8th May 22nd No Classes on May 1st May 15th	Celebration & Last Class for all students 11am to 1pm May 29th	Special Events OXI Day: November 1, 2026 after church services Greek Independence Day Celebration in the church hall: March 21, 2027	

**St. Sophia Greek Language &
Culture Academy**
Classes held on Saturdays





**15 TWO-HOUR
IN PERSON ONLY
CLASS SESSIONS
FOR \$350**

A BARGAIN \$23 PER CLASS!

INSTRUCTOR:

Lainie (Eleni) Damaskos-Christou is a Master Teacher and National Board-Certified Teacher of Greek and Spanish. She has been a career high school teacher, Greek School teacher pre-k - high school and college professor of Greek and Spanish since 2000. She is an author of bilingual children's books and is passionate about world language education.



JOIN US

**FOR THE
FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS
2026-2027!!
NEW FORMAT, NEW APPROACH**

MODERN GREEK 101 LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CLASSES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO ADULTS OF ALL AGES.

**BEGINNING THURSDAY
EVENINGS AT 6:00PM**

FALL SEMESTER:

SEP. 24 - DEC. 17 2026

SPRING SEMESTER:

JAN. 14 - MAY 6 2027

**LEARN IN A FUN AND INNOVATIVE MODERN
TEACHING APPROACH THAT INCLUDES:**

- BASIC SOCIALIZING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- LEARNING TO READ IN GREEK
- THE HISTORY OF THE GREEK LANGUAGE
- THE HISTORY OF GREECE AND CYPRUS
- THE CULTURE OF GREEK FOOD, MUSIC AND DANCING.
- HOW TO DANCE SOME BASIC GREEK DANCES.



TO REGISTER CONTACT:

**St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church
440 Whitehall Road
Albany, N.Y.**



CULTURE



**(518) 489-4442 OR
greeklanguageacademy@stsophialbany.org**

Community News

Wedding

We congratulate the servants of God Christos and Emilie Moutopoulos on the occasion of their Sacrament of Holy Marriage. God bless them always!

Baptisms

We congratulate Evangelos and Alexandra Rantzaklis on the baptism of their daughter Kyriaki. Na mas Zeisi!

We congratulate the servant of God Judah Johnson on his baptism.
God Bless!

We congratulate Walid and Mariam Rmeily on the baptism of their daughter Elaina. God bless!

40 Day Blessings

We congratulate Alex and Valarie Keefer on the forty day blessing of their daughter Georgiana.

We congratulate Paul and Maria Neaton on the forty day blessing of their son Declan James.

Memory Eternal

"With the Saints give rest O Christ, to the souls of thy servants, where sickness and sorrow are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting."

Deborah Mokhiber DiBiase,
June 21, 59 years old

Zaharias Karounos,
July 24, 86 years old

Xantheppi "Sandra" Galanis,
July 1, 96 years old

Thomas Koleci,
August 2, 88 years old

Christiana Styliana Ioannou,
July 19, 75 years old

Pithagoras "Peter" Karathanasis,
August 6, 93 years old



LITURGICAL OFFERINGS



ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΙΑ = ΟΡΘΟΠΡΑΞΙΑ
ORTHODOXY = ORTHOPRAXY
(RIGHT FAITH = RIGHT ACTION)

"What shall I render to the Lord for all His gifts He has given to me?"

"τί ανταποδώσω τῷ Κυρίῳ περὶ πάντων, ὧν ἀνταπέδωκέ μοι;"

Our faith is lived through action. Orthodoxy is not only belief—it is a life of offering.

We can give back to God through prayer, time, fasting, service, sacraments, and by offering:



Prosforo – Bread offered for Holy Communion

DONATION: \$20



Communion Wine – Sweet Greek wine

DONATION: \$20



Vigil Lamp Oil – Extra Virgin Olive Oil for the altar lamps

DONATION: \$20
(or bring Extra Virgin Olive Oil)



Incense – A symbol of prayer rising to Heaven

DONATION: \$20 – \$50



Koliva – Wheat offered for memorials

CONTACT THE OFFICE



Artoklasia – Five loaves offered for the living or Saints

CONTACT THE OFFICE

Every offering is blessed by God and returned to us for our spiritual growth.

Let us live our faith through these sacred actions of love and thanksgiving.



LITURGICAL OFFERINGS ORDER FORM



To place an order and make your donation, please fill out the form below.

ITEM	DONATION
Prosforo (Bread)	\$20
Communion Wine	\$20
Vigil Lamp Oil (or bring Extra Virgin Olive Oil)	\$20

ITEM	DONATION
Incense	\$20 – \$50
Koliva (Wheat)	Contact the Office
Artoklasia (Five Loaves)	Contact the Office

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

In Memory of: _____ In Honor of / For Health of: _____



*Thank you for your generous offerings
and faithful support!*



MINISTRY LEADERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, September 10, 2026 • 6:30 PM

St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church

All Ministry Leaders, Parish Council Members, and Staff.

Please join us as we begin this work together.

Your experience, ideas, and commitment are an important part of building a vibrant parish community.

A Time to Connect • Coordinate • Collaborate

“May God guide our next steps, and may His wisdom grace us.”





Icon Classes

WITH EFTHIMIOS ALTIN STOJA

Thursdays 6 pm to 8pm

Saint Sophia's Orthodox Church

440 Whitehall Rd, Albany, NY 12208

Contact Altin for Details (518) 560-2612



SAINT SOPHIA GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
440 WHITEHALL ROAD
ALBANY, NY 12208

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