

# The Light To Φως



Holy Apostles Greek  
Orthodox Church  
Loudoun County, VA

2020, Issue 1  
Jan-Feb

*The bi-monthly newsletter of the Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church*

## A Message from Father George Alexson

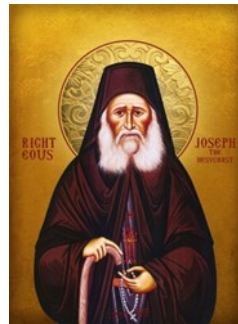
My Beloved Parishioners and Friends,

I pray the New Year is off to a good start for all of you, and that your life continues to be filled with “every good and perfect gift from above.”

In Orthodoxy, the seasons of life are defined, spiritually speaking, by the commemorations of great events in salvation history, as well as the daily remembrance of many martyrs and saints. We move, as it were, from one historical moment to the next, “remembering” events that recapitulate in the here and now, all those things done by God “for us and for our salvation.” January, for example, begins with the commemoration of the Circumcision of the Lord, as well as devotion to an outstanding Church Father, St. Basil of Caesarea. Next, Theophany follows, commemorating the Baptism of our Lord and the beginning of His earthly ministry. While it might seem early—how quickly time passes!—on March 2, we will be summoned, to begin our Great Lenten journey. For that reason, I am sharing with you now an extraordinary letter written by St. Joseph the Hesychast, a newly canonized Athonite monk whose spiritual life an journey has had a tremendous influence on the Holy Mountain and throughout the Orthodox world. In this letter, St. Joseph addresses the challenges of the spiritual life, its joys and sorrows, and provides methods helpful when confronting evil and the evil one.

I pray you will study it carefully. Keep it close by as food for thought, and as a source of spiritual munitions in your own spiritual struggles. God has blessed us abundantly through the writings of Scripture and the holy Fathers. Let us take care not to ignore the wisdom of these great saints, who through their own spiritual struggles and heroic efforts, point us, their fellow human beings and co-combatants in the spiritual arena, towards the path to salvation and theosis. May the blessing of the Lord be with us in our journey to His Kingdom.

### *Letter about falling down and getting up*



“I received your letter, my child, and I saw your anxiety. But don’t be sad, my child. Don’t worry so much. Even though you have fallen again, get up again. You have been called to a heavenly road. It is not surprising for

someone running to stumble. It just takes patience and repentance at every moment. Therefore, always do a metanoia (repent) when you are wrong and don’t lose time, because the longer you wait to seek forgiveness, the more you allow the evil one to spread his roots within you. Don’t let him make roots to your detriment. Therefore, don’t despair when you fall, but get up eagerly and do a metanoia saying, “Forgive me, my dear Christ. I am human and weak.” The Lord has not abandoned you. But since you still have a great deal of worldly pride, a great deal of vainglory, our Christ lets you make mistakes and fall, so that you perceive and come to know your weakness every day, so that you become patient with others who make mistakes, and so that you do not judge the brethren when they make mistakes, but rather put up with them.

So every time you fall, get up again and at once seek forgiveness. Don’t hide sorrow in your heart, because sorrow and despondency are the joy of the evil one. They fill one’s soul with bitterness and give birth to many evils. Whereas the frame of mind of someone who repents says, “I have sinned! Forgive me Father!” and he expels the sorrow. He says, “Am I not a weak human? So what do I expect?” Truly, my child this is how it is. So take courage.

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### Highlights:

♥ **Taste of Greece**  
February 14-16 at the  
Ashburn Firehouse

♥ **JOY Ice Skating and  
Pizza Event, Feb. 22**  
at Ashburn Ice House RSVP  
to markamaria@yahoo.com

♥ **GOYA’s Got Talent  
and Luncheon re-  
scheduled to Feb. 23 at  
church. RSVP to  
liaecon@comcast.net**

*Join Us!*





Metropolis of New Jersey

# Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church



## A Message from Father George Alexson cont..

Only when the grace of God comes does a person stand on his feet. Otherwise, without grace, he always changes and always falls. So be a man and don't be afraid at all.

Do you see how that brother you wrote about endured the temptation? You, too, should do likewise. Acquire a brave spirit against the temptations that come. In any case, they will come. Forget about what your despondency and indolence tell you. Don't be afraid of them. Just as the previous temptations passed by the grace of God, these, too, will pass once they do their job.

Temptations are medicines and healing herbs that heal our visible passions and our invisible wounds. So have patience in order to profit every day, to store up wages, rest, and joy in the heavenly kingdom. For the night of death is coming when no one will be able to work anymore. Therefore, hurry. Time is short. You should know this too: a victorious life lasting only one day with trophies and crowns is better than a negligent life lasting many years. Because one man's struggle, with knowledge and spiritual perception that lasts one day, has the same value as another man's struggle, who struggles negligently without knowledge for fifty years.

Without a struggle and shedding your blood, don't expect freedom from the passions. Our earth produces thorns and thistles after the Fall. We have been ordered to clean it, but only with much pain, bloody hands, and many sighs are the thorns and thistles uprooted. So weep, shed streams of tears, and soften the earth of your heart. Once the ground is wet, you can easily uproot the thorns." (Elder Joseph the Hesychast)

With love in Christ our Lord,

Fr. George A. Alexson

## Weekday Liturgical Schedule for February and March 2020

February 22	8:30 AM, Orthros. 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy
Saturday of Souls	
February 29	8:30 AM, Orthros. 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy
Saturday of Souls	
March 2	7:00 PM. Great Compline
Great Lent Begins	
March 6	7:00 PM. Salutations to the Theotokos I
March 13	7:00 PM. Salutations to the Theotokos II
March 20	7:00 PM. Salutations to the Theotokos III
March 25	8:30 AM, Orthros. 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy
Annunciation	
March 27	7:00 PM. Salutations to the Theotokos IV



Cutting of the Vasilopita on January 12, 2020. Congratulations to our Chanters who got the coin as received by Nick Grivas!



## *Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church*



### **Message from the Parish Council President**

It's hard to believe that it is already 2020! I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas holiday and are having a great start to the new year.

The past few months have been busy ones and I expect that trend to continue into the new year. Before Christmas, we held a General Assembly meeting to approve the sale of 1.7 acres of our land to Rooney properties. This sale will allow us to pay down the vast majority of our debt and move to land prep and phase one construction quicker. I am pleased to announce that we officially received His Eminence's blessing and are proceeding to close. I would like to thank the Future Planning Committee for all of their efforts to make this happen. We will now pivot to finalizing our site plans and the selection of our general contractor.

I also want to thank AHEPA for hosting such a wonderful Christmas Party and the Sunday School, led by Denise Lansdell, for a lovely Christmas Pageant. All of our ministries continue to be very active and I would like to thank them for all they do for our church. It is never too late to join a ministry so I would encourage all of you to consider joining one today.

As we move further into 2020, we have several important events coming up that we need your help with. The first is our annual Taste of Greece which will once again be held Valentine's Day weekend. Please consider volunteering your time to work the event or selling an ad in our journal. Additionally, we have our first annual golf tournament coming up at 1757 golf club the Friday after Pascha. For this inaugural event, we need your help getting the word out to sell sponsorships and sign up golfers. Please consider signing up you and your friends for what promises to be a fun-filled day of golf and fellowship. Like most Greek Orthodox communities, we rely on fundraisers such as these to reduce the financial burden of running a church on our stewards. Therefore, it is everyone's responsibility to do what they can to make these events a success.

Finally, since this will likely be my final article as Parrish Council President, I wanted to thank everyone for your support over the years. The many kind words I have received from you all really touched my heart and helped make the experience a rewarding one. Even as I step aside from the Parish Council, I will continue to support the Future Planning Committee and help out in any way I can.

Greg Joiner  
Parish Council President  
Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church  
[gregjoiner@gmail.com](mailto:gregjoiner@gmail.com)



# TASTE OF GREECE

— FEBRUARY 14–16, 2020 —

## OPA!



Authentic Greek food and pastries, dancing, and more. Dine in or take out!

at the **ASHBURN FIREHOUSE** 20688 Ashburn Rd, Ashburn, VA 20147

**FRIDAY**

**FEB 14, 2020**

4 p.m. – 9 p.m.

**SATURDAY**

**FEB 15, 2020**

11 a.m. – 9 p.m.

**SUNDAY**

**FEB 16, 2020**

11 a.m. – 7 p.m.

presented by Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church  
for more information visit [GreekFestivalLoudoun.org](http://GreekFestivalLoudoun.org)

**How can you help?** Share the flyer with family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and your children's schools and activity venues. **Like us on Facebook.** Sign up to **volunteer.** Can't attend? **Donate** to our Building Fund.



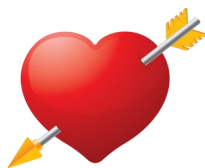


## Stewardship

My Fellow Parishioners

Happy New Year! We hope that you had a blessed Christmas season and that 2020 is a glorious and blessed year. We ended 2019 with a very healthy Stewardship bottom line - thanks to YOUR generous contributions. We had an excellent Stewardship weekend in November. Our social gathering at Vanish Farmwoods Brewery was a hit (see pics below) and it is always fun to see people outside the church. We thank Alissa Iatridis and her husband Philip for giving such a wonderful personal testimony about what stewardship means to them during our Stewardship Sunday event. They have really stepped up and made themselves a valuable part of this church. They also are an excellent example in how they give the gift of time to our church by their various volunteer activities. The 2020 theme for Stewardship is "A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven" (Ecc 3). The theme is about the gift of time that God gives us and how we use that time. The time we give to others and the time we give to the Church is precious and priceless. Please think about how you can use your time and talents to help the church in 2020. On a final note, please check out the Stewardship board in the Church hall, we will be posting an end of year Stewardship report for 2019.

In God's service,  
Ron Baldinger, Stewardship Chair  
Mina Baldinger Co-Chair



### Stewardship Sunday Testimonial

by Alissa Iatridis, November 24, 2019

I've been coming to Holy Apostles for 4 years now since I moved to Sterling. My husband Philip has been coming here with me for a year and a half and has now decided to convert to being Greek Orthodox from Catholicism. The reason we love this church so much is because of the community. Ever since my first day in this church I have been welcomed with open arms by so many members of the community. It is so easy to feel included and loved here, something that is surprisingly difficult in many other church communities. I even remember the first several times I came to church here, on the way out of the church one of the parish council members stood at the exit to hug everyone who came to church that day. I remember calling my parents after church each time to tell them how wonderful it was and how nice the people were to me as a new parishioner. I have since become not only a steward, but an oratorical judge, and a kindergarten, first, second, and third grade Sunday school teacher, a substitute children's Greek dance teacher, a Greek festival volunteer, and the adult Greek dance instructor. We truly love this church and cannot wait to see it grow into the new building on the new property with actual spaces to hold all of our liturgical and fellowship activities. Thank you all for being the most amazing Orthodox parish I've ever met, and I hope we can all keep up the tradition of welcoming everyone that walks through those doors with the same open arms that you all had for us when we joined this community. Thank you.



Circle areas of expertise or interest:

#### Youth Groups and Classes

Hope & Joy

GOYA

Greek Dance Instruction

Greek School

Sunday School

#### Groups and Ministries

AHEPA

Altar Service

Choir

Ladies Philoptochos

Orthodox Book Club

PAREA lunch group

Parish Newsletter

Social Events

Stewardship Committee

Visiting Elderly

### STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE (PLEDGE FOR JAN-DEC) HOLY APOSTLES GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

In faith, prayer and sacrifice, my family and I wish to share in the support and work of the Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church. We would like to pledge the amount of

\$\_\_\_\_\_ for the year \_\_\_\_\_ (through December)

You may pay via cash, check or online at [www.holyapostlesgreekorthodox.org](http://www.holyapostlesgreekorthodox.org).

This amount will be paid as follows:

☐ Annually ☐ Semi-annually ☐ Quarterly ☐ Monthly ☐ Weekly

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Your pledge is strictly confidential.

F

## Stewardship cont...

Pledge List as of January 10, 2020

Rev. Father George and Presvytera Joanna Alexson
Ronald and Mina Baldinger
Christopher and Maria Billis
Chad and Julie Burke
Edward and Alexis Cleveland
Dean and Maria Couloupoulos
Aristos and Anna Dimitriou
Vasilios and Joan Fotopoulos
Alissa Iatridis
Greg and Ashley Joiner
George Kaladze
Aspacia Karageorge
Pete Kayafas
Hal and Alexandra Lampros
Nikoleta Lelis
Angelike Maoury
Marilena Mavrodopoulou
George and Louise Mikedes
George and Debra Mokhiber
Marios and Sophia Orfanides
Paul and Lisa Orphanides
Maria Plevrakis
Jerry and Helen Pollatos
Rebecca Rallis
Constantine Sofologis
Ben and Vera Stewart
Angelo and Anna Tjoumas
Doug and Stefania Whittington
Maria Zangos

*“Giving is not just about making a donation. It is about making a difference”*

*Kathy Calvin*



Stewardship event at Vanish Farmwoods Brewery in Leesburg.  
November, 2019





## EXCITING NEWS!

His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos has approved the purchase contract by Rooney Properties for up to 2 acres of our property, at approximately \$500,000 an acre, to build a parking lot that they will share with us. With this approval, we can now move forward with the closing of the contract and submit our construction plans for approval to Loudoun County.

But wait, there's more! Our Capital Campaign has reached a new milestone, \$1.5 million! Thank you to all the generous parishioners who made contributions and donated stock to our campaign. For those who have not contributed or want to donate more, stay tuned for news of Phase II of our Capital Campaign in which you can make history by supporting our ground breaking.

*How can you help?*

*Make a donation so we can begin building!*

*Consider donating stock and giving yourself and your future home a tax-deductible gift!*

*Together, we can do this!*



Donate

<https://www.holyapostlesgreekorthodox.org/capitalcampaign>



## GOYA

Happy new year! GOYA finished 2019 with a great discussion by Father George about the Nativity icon. We all learned a lot about the significance of each part of the icon. Afterward the GOYAns had hot chocolate and snacks and decorated the church hall for Christmas. This has been a fun annual GOYA tradition for years! We thank Father George and the GOYAns who participated that day.

In January we had a New Year's party at the home of GOYAns Georgia and Katie Drapas. The GOYAns had dinner, cut the Vasilopita, and had fun together. A special thank you to the Drapas family for hosting this event.

There's much more to come in 2020! In February we will have our "GOYA's Got Talent" Show and Luncheon at church. We look forward to sharing our GOYAn's talents with our parishioners. Our GOYAns will also be volunteering and dancing at our church's Taste of Greece on President's Day Weekend.

In March several GOYAns will participate in the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival at our parish. We wish them all the best! Also in March, GOYA will participate in our largest fundraiser of the year, a consignment sale held at St. Theresa's school in Ashburn. We thank all the parishioners who donate their gently used children's clothing and toys for this sale.

If your teenager is interested in joining GOYA (Greek Orthodox Youth of America), please email me. All are welcome!

In God's service,  
Lia Economou  
GOYA Advisor  
[liaecon@comcast.net](mailto:liaecon@comcast.net)



GOYA Nativity icon discussion and gathering with Father George Alexson.





## Sunday School

### St. John Chrysostom Parish Level Oratorical Festival is March 1<sup>st</sup>

Our Holy Apostles Sunday School is preparing to host the Parish Oratorical Festival on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. All Sunday School students are encouraged to make a selection from the list of Junior and Senior Division Topics provided by the National program. <https://www.goarch.org/oratorical> A panel of 3 Judges will review and grade each speaker. Speakers from the Elementary Division (4<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> grades) are not judged. Contact Denise Lansdell if your Elementary student is interested. [deniseinvirginia@gmail.com](mailto:deniseinvirginia@gmail.com)

On Saturday, January 11, Mr. Margetis conducted a discussion session for all participating students to help choose their topic. We will also be hearing live rehearsals and providing feedback to students to help with their presentations from 2 – 4 pm on Saturday, February 15th. The Elementary Division students are welcome to attend, if they would like feedback as well. The final draft for your speech is due by emailing Mr. John (Giannis) Margetis by February 20<sup>th</sup> at: [gerakas2@yahoo.com](mailto:gerakas2@yahoo.com)

Please, make sure you stay after Divine Liturgy on March 1<sup>st</sup> to attend the Oratorical Festival. Invite your friends and family! It truly is a beautiful thing to witness this event, hearing our youth speak out about their faith!

**February 2<sup>nd</sup> is Godparent Sunday.** We welcome all Godparents and their Godchildren to prepare and receive Holy Communion together on this day, reconnecting them as a Spiritual family within the Church!

**Please join us on February 9th for 'Scout Sunday,' as we recognize the contributions of the Scouts of our Holy Apostles parish.**

Those Scouts who would like to participate in the ceremony, please email Mike Hadjimichael [mike.hadjimichael@gmail.com](mailto:mike.hadjimichael@gmail.com).

Those who would like to earn a religious award for their spiritual participation can find more information and requirements at [https://13057b12-74e2-4bed-f939-529c1f9a0154.filesusr.com/ugd/f3251d\\_4397fbb90c644e499a46cffd95022fb3.pdf](https://13057b12-74e2-4bed-f939-529c1f9a0154.filesusr.com/ugd/f3251d_4397fbb90c644e499a46cffd95022fb3.pdf) and can contact Denise Lansdell.

Denise Lansdell  
[deniseinvirginia@gmail.com](mailto:deniseinvirginia@gmail.com)



## Hope and Joy

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ:

HOPE & JOY have enjoyed some memorable activities this winter. HOPE age children (age 5-8) and JOY age children (age 9-12) met together in November at church. They made an edible treat that represents the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross: they frosted a graham cracker, placed licorice on top in a cross shape, and then decorated with Skittles candy and Cheerios cereal. The Skittles and Cheerios represented the many blessings in each child's life, and the children shared about people and things they are thankful for.

- ♦ Kristine Lorentz hosted the HOPE meeting in December. At church, the children learned about St. Nicholas and what you can do to remember and honor his feast day; did a Christmas craft related to St. Nicholas; and discussed & shared ideas for how you can be more like St. Nicholas (e.g., pray for others, make Christmas cards for shut-ins or children at the hospital, earn money to donate to the needy, etc.) Thank you, Kristine, for organizing such a thoughtful, meaningful activity!



Hope and Joy November's Activity

Also, across the month of December, we as a ministry hosted the post liturgy coffee hour. Thank you to all the families who contributed goodies and/or assisted with cleanup afterward.

In January, HOPE & JOY together attended the annual Loudoun County Special Olympics Basketball Tournament at Independence High School in Ashburn. The ministry also attended the 2019 tournament, and our job is simple: cheer on the extraordinary athletes who are competing!

With questions about the HOPE and JOY ministry, or to sign your children up for an upcoming activity, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

In Him,  
Ashley Joiner  
Director, Hope & Joy  
[ashleydjowner@gmail.com](mailto:ashleydjowner@gmail.com)



Loudoun County Special Olympics Basketball Tournament





## Philoptochos

Closing out Fall 2019 I would like to thank for their love and support:

- Our ladies who gave their time by volunteering at Women Giving Back in November and for sponsoring two families in December to help make Christmas a bit brighter at the Good Shepard Alliance.
- Heartfelt thanks to Christy Lisciandro for taking this project under her wing and minding each detail. We were able to come together with our collection of gifts for dinner and share a special night of fellowship.
- Our parishioners for donating 150 pounds of cereal during our fall cereal drive to Loudoun Hunger Relief. Did you know they go through 300 pounds of cereal per week? We look forward to our spring cereal donation drive!

True happiness is found in doing things for others and I thank everyone for helping us in all our endeavors.

As the new year begins so does our membership drive. Please remember to renew your membership. We welcome women of all ages to join our sisterhood. Membership forms can be found on our website or at our bookstore.

A very happy, healthy and prosperous new year to all.

With my deepest gratitude,  
Alexis Cleveland  
[apcphiloptochos@gmail.com](mailto:apcphiloptochos@gmail.com)



### Authentic Greek Food in the Heart of Great Falls!

Chef Eugenia & her family bring Greek home cooking to Northern Virginia. Open Tuesday to Sunday for lunch & dinner. Catering & take-out available.

1025 Seneca Road (off Georgetown Pike) in Great Falls, VA 22066  
(703) 870 7807 - Visit us on the web: [www.ourmomeugenia.com](http://www.ourmomeugenia.com)





## Do you shop at Amazon.com?



If so, you can help our Church receive donations, just by shopping! Amazon Smile will donate 0.5% of orders to a selected charity.

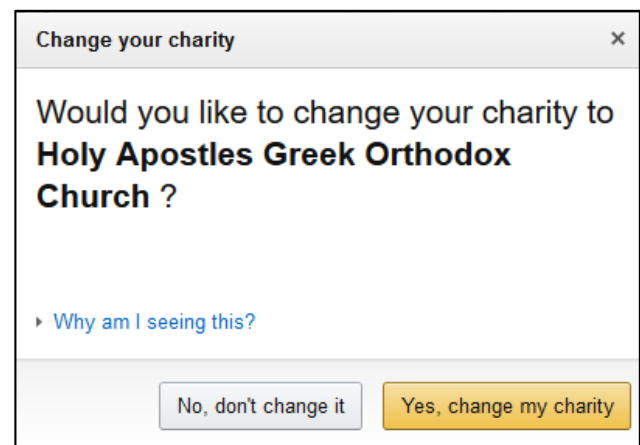
The Fundraising Committee has added our Church as one of the available charities on Amazon Smile.

**Step 1:** To get started, go to our website [www.holyapostlesgreekorthodox.org](http://www.holyapostlesgreekorthodox.org) and click on the **Go to smile.amazon.com** button on our website to select our Church or go to this link directly:

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/20-5712523>

**Step 2:** Sign in using your Amazon credentials

**Step 3:** Click on the **Yes, change my charity button**



You will now see, as shown below, that you have selected our Church as your charity.



You will receive a confirmation email that you have selected our Church.

**Important:** Always remember when you shop at Amazon to go use the <https://smile.amazon.com> link and confirm that the charity you are supporting is our Church.



## Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church

21580 Atlantic Blvd., Building D, Unit 160

Dulles, VA 20166

[www.holyapostlesgreekorthodox.org](http://www.holyapostlesgreekorthodox.org)



### CLERGY

Rev. Father George Alexson		703-314-6421 (cell)	frgeorgeandrew@gmail.com
Deacon	Deacon Harry Chelpon		deaconhc@gmail.com

### STAFF

Office Manager	Lia Economou	703-421-3812	liaecon@comcast.net
Protopsalti	Nick Grivas		papounico3@aim.com

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President	Greg Joiner		gregjoiner@gmail.com
Vice President	Lisa Orphanides		lisa.branner@marriott.com
Secretary	Niki Lelis		nlelisi@gmail.com
Treasurer	Maria Zangos		miliandra@comcast.net
Additional Members			
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Greg Cherpes	gcherpes@yahoo.com	Irene Thomas	irene.thomas1@verizon.net
Kathy Kendrat	kmkendrat@aol.com	Nick Zangos	achsah1@cox.net
Rebecca Rallis	ralliser@aol.com		

### SCHOOLS

Ellinomatheia Program	Athanasia Dacey		sdacey@comcast.net
Greek School	Maria Zangos		miliandra@comcast.net
Sunday School	Denise Lansdell		deniseinvirginia@gmail.com

### MINISTRIES, COMMITTEES, AND ASSOCIATIONS

AHEPA Μόλον Λαβέ Chapter 542	Chad Burke		info@ahepa542.org
Altar Boys	Deacon Harry Chelpon		deaconhc@gmail.com
Altar Fund	Fr. George Alexson		frgeorgeandrew@gmail.com
Church Choir	Bret Lansdell		deniseinvirginia@gmail.com
Epitaphio/Flowers Committee	Mariana Korulaki		k.mariana@hotmail.com
	Presvytera Joanna		frgeorgeandrew@gmail.com
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Future Planning Committee	Nick Spyros		nls Spyros@yahoo.com
Gala Committee	Kristina Ayoub		ktsiakos@yahoo.com
	Asha Ioanou		nicholas.asha@gmail.com
GOYA	Lia Economou		liaecon@comcast.net
Greek Dance Troupe	Maria Plevrakis		maroudi@hotmail.com
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Stewardship Committee	Ron Baldinger		ron.baldinger@gmail.com
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