



The Voice of Holy Apostles
Greek Orthodox Church of Indianapolis
Αγιοι Αποστολοι Ελληνορθοδοξη Εκκλησια Ινδιαναπολεως
+Metropolis of Detroit

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I hope and pray this finds all of you well, in all ways. Hopefully, everyone had a happy and blessed Thanksgiving. Let us always be thankful for the abundance of God's blessings.

First of all, Holy Apostles will be joining Holy Trinity for the Christmas Eve Liturgy. That service will start at 6:00 P.M., at Holy Trinity, on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2015. If at all possible, I would like to see many of you fine folks attending there with me. Rev. Fr. Bill Bartz, Fr. Jarrod Russell, and I will be co-celebrating the service. They have gone out of their way to make us very, very welcome. It would be good, and appropriate, for our presence there this year to be larger than last year. I am looking forward to seeing you all there, as it will be a very warm and blessed event!

As there are very difficult and disturbing events occurring in many places on this earth, it is all the more important for us to deeply and honestly honor our Lord's Nativity this year. We may look around at all the crazy and sad things that are going on, and wonder, where is God, where is Christ in all this? Or even, as some say, how can a merciful, loving, benevolent God allow all this to happen? Or, maybe, what difference did Christ's birth make on this planet? I honestly cannot explain the why's of everything that goes on. To pretend to would be incredibly naive, superficial, and ignorant.

I do know, despite all outward appearances, that God is in charge, and will prevail. Christ's birth changed everything. If He had never come, this planet and its many peoples would, I strongly believe, be in far worse shape. Christ did not promise perfection on earth, or no troubles, trials or tribulations. He stated emphatically that He had overcome the world, and that His kingdom is not of this world. He said He would one day return, and everything would be changed, renewed, transformed; that there would be a New Heaven and a New Earth. Many look at our present time as being in some ways the Last Days, with the final battles between Good and Evil, between Light and Dark being fought, before the inevitable and final triumph of Christ and the forces of Good and Light. Even if it is a stretch, even if it is sometimes difficult, without faith and belief in things higher and better, then it quickly becomes difficult or impossible to function, and to go on.

At Christmas, the Light is again born. Hope is born anew. Transcendent Love, Beauty and Goodness are re-affirmed. In our innermost person, most everyone somehow knows this to be true. So, let us keep this faith, this hope, and this affirmation of Light, Life and Love. The opposite of this is untenable, unworkable, and impossible. Let us prepare for and celebrate this coming Christmas in profound thankfulness for the great gift that God gave us in the birth of His Son. Despite all words or actions to the contrary, great change for good, for better, has already taken place, continues to take place, and will continue to take place. Let us pray for our spiritual perceptions to improve and increase. Let us affirm the Light in all that we think, feel, say and do. In this lies hope and life, and a positive way forward. "For it is better to light one small candle than to curse the darkness." A truly Merry, Light and Blessed Christmas to one and all! God bless!

In Christ,
Fr. John

NOTED DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR:

December 20: Benevolent Basket passed

December 24: Christmas Eve service at Holy Trinity

December 25: Holy Nativity

January 3: Vasilopita Luncheon sponsored by Alexandra and Tom Kocoshis and Vasilopita bread for the church cutting made by Michael Pappas

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

REMINDER: Starting with the new church year, the time for Sunday school will begin after Father John's sermon and will end in time to bring the children in for communion.

Lessons for December:

December 6: Healing Comes from God; Sunday of St. Nicholas

December 13: God invites each of us to a banquet every Sunday

December 20: Jesus is born: Sunday before the Nativity of Christ

December 27: Escape to Egypt: Sunday after the Nativity of Christ

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:

This year we will be again celebrating our Christmas Eve Vespertal Liturgy at our sister church, Holy Trinity, in Carmel. The service will start at 6:00 PM.

STEWARDSHIP FORMS:

Enclosed you will find the new 2016 Stewardship Form. It is easy to fill out if you have not had any changes regarding your information. Under **NOTE**, there is a box you need to check if this is the case. Just fill out your name and your financial pledge, along with how it will be paid. Remember it is important paperwork for the Parish Council. The longer you put it off, the more chance you will forget to fill it out.

Also, if you have not finished paying your pledge for 2015, please make sure you do so before the end of year. Your statement for tax purposes will be sent to you in January 2016.

HOUSE BLESSINGS-ΑΓΙΑΣΜΟΣ: Father John will be conducting House Blessings in early January. This is an ancient custom where the priest blesses people's homes, schools and businesses. You will need to call Father to make an appointment to visit your home or business. (To reach Father John via phone @317-908-8511, or via email: FrJohnKoen@hotmail.com).

Ο Πατερ Ιωαννης θα κανη αγιασμο στα σπιτια αρχας Ιανουαριου. Αν θελετε να επισκε- φθη το σπιτι σας, επικοινωνησατε μαζυ του στο τηλεφωνο 317/908-8511.

YOUR NEW PARISH COUNCIL FOR 2016: At the General Assembly held on October, the following four were elected to the Parish Council:

**** George Chimples, Nearhos and Xanthippi Darzentas, Phyllis Kriner, ****

They will join Angelus Kocoshis, Debbie O'Reilley, and George Pappas on the council. The installation of the new Parish Council for 2016 was held on November 29th following the Divine Liturgy.

President Angelus Kocoshis and the rest of the Parish Council want to thank outgoing member Ann Barnhart for serving faithfully on the Parish Council. Your church appreciates your time and effort. Also, thank you to the 23 stewards who attended the meeting in support of their church, and Tom and Alexandra Kocoshis for providing the lovely luncheon spread prior to the meeting.

CHAPEL CHRISTMAS TREE:

Holy Apostles decorated the tree this year, and we are pleased to have 22 angels adorning it in memory of a dear loved one. Thank you to Xanthippi and Nearhos Darzentas and Debbie O'Reilley for doing this.

OUR BAKE SALE: Cochairs Elizabeth Sendelweck and Debbie O'Reilley would like to give special thanks to Xanthippi and Nearhos Darzentas for again helping with the assembly of the sweets, and Georgia Stevens and Debbie O'Reilley for being the top sellers this year. We must remember that everyone needs to help in getting their friends and neighbors to buy during this fund raiser. Two people cannot just be the only ones who are helping to promote it. If this is the case, we may need to think of another fund raiser in the future to get more of our members involved to help fund our church.

WINTER WEATHER: We never seem to know what the weather will be in Indy from day to day. We may have to consider cancelling the liturgy for safety reasons. We will try to post our closing on Channel 13 and/or Channel 8, as well as our Facebook page, and send out an email. Also, a Parish Council member will attempt to call as many people as possible regarding the cancellation if they do not have email.

VASILOPITA LUNCH JANUARY 3rd:

Alexandra Kocoshis is chairing the luncheon this year and would like your reservations by **December 22nd**. Call her at 762-286-7242 or email her at akocoshi@bsu.edu.

The menu is the following: Olives and feta on the table; Main Course: pork loin with raspberry sauce, orzo salad served at the Olympic village to athletes, salad, and crusty bread; Dessert: Vasilopita and fruit; Beverages: coffee, tea, and water.

LETTER FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we approach the Nativity of Our Lord and the close of the secular year, I would like to share some thoughts with all of you. Since St. Basil's day, our community has been through many ups and downs. We successfully hosted our Metropolitan and received our parish charter--the culmination of the efforts of all past presidents and parish councils as well as many dedicated parishioners. We also came together and put on a fantastic fundraising and outreach event, our "Opa House." It is my sincere wish that we continue this for many years to come. Once word gets out around town that authentic homemade Greek pastries, made according to ancient family recipes, are to be had, we'll have a line around the block. We've also had several baptisms and several funerals. I wish Χρόνια Πολλά to those baptized and Αιώνια ή Μνήμη to those who have gone on to the Lord. May our youth (and indeed all of us) heed the example of those who have gone before us.

We also have some new faces that have joined us, and Πρώτα ο Θεός, they will be joined by others. From my observation, we are becoming an ever closer community, and as we grow in brotherhood and the fellowship of Christ, we will also grow in numbers. I would encourage everyone to spread the word about our parish to any Greeks in the Indianapolis area who don't come to church. I think that if they see what we have to offer--tradition, community, service to Our Lord Jesus Christ, many will chose to join us. Orthodoxy is by no means just for Greeks, there are many people who desire to be a part of authentic Christianity, which is precisely what we offer. Our parish has many people knowledgeable in the faith who are more than happy to discuss Orthodoxy with anyone who might inquire.

In closing, it has been an honor to serve you this year. I hope that I have in some small way contributed to the progress of Holy Apostles. I am grateful for your support and your prayers, and indeed I ask that you continue to pray for me, as nothing is possible without the aid of God. I would also like to thank Father John, the Parish Council, my family, and the many parishioners who have assisted me along the way and who keep the parish running week in and week out. I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas/Καλά Χριστούγεννα and a blessed and joyful New Year.

In His Service,
Angelus Kocoshis
2015 AD