

# THE MESSENGER

FEBRUARY 2026

SAINTS PETER & PAUL

p.1

## A Message from Father Rick Father Richard Demetrius Andrews

Greetings Brothers and Sisters:

Our sympathies and condolences to the family of **Fr. Joseph Tzougros** who fell asleep in the Lord on *January 9*. Funeral service was *Jan.16* at Sts Constantine & Helen Church in Wauwautosa. Fr. Joseph served our sacred Metropolis as a deacon and priest since 1975. He pastored the Assumption Church in Madison from 1982 to 2008 and served for several years as treasurer of our clergy syndesmos. May God remember his holy priesthood in His Kingdom forever!

We welcome Very Reverend **Fr. Nephon Tsimalis** as the newly assigned priest to the Annunciation Cathedral in Chicago. **Fr. Stamati Sfikas** is now serving St Demetrios Church in Elmhurst. The Very Rev. **Fr Dionyios Anagnostopoulos** officially assumed the chancellor duties on *January 1*. Axios to all of them!

**Parish Council Officer elections** took place on *January 11*. We congratulate the following who were elected to serve in 2026: **George Seletos**- president, **Nick Colis**- vice president, **John Mackris**-treasurer, **Dino Tsitsis**- assistant treasurer, **Angie Katsimakis**- recording secretary, and **Christy Gouletas**- corresponding secretary. We thanks **Steve Koulogeorge** for his four years of service as president.

**Theophany/Epiphany** Feast was celebrated *January 5-6*. I was heartened to witness our highschool boys basketball

team and coaches participate in the Vespereal Liturgy and Agiasmos. I hope more youth and families will be with us in the future for this beautiful and inspiring feast.

**Catechism classes** began on *January 12* and will continue on Monday evenings through *March 30*. The course is open to all—inquirers, seekers, catechumens and life-long Orthodox Christians. One can register at any time. Missed classes can be completed during the following semester.

We held our third annual **Outdoor Water Blessing Services** (Agiasmos) on *January 10*. at *Gilson Beach* in Wilmette and *Gallery Park* in Glenview. Thank you to those who came and celebrated together!

Following the feast of St Basil the Great (Jan.1) we celebrated our **Parish Vasilopita** on *January 11*. We remember how St Basil anonymously helped the poor and needy by placing coins inside bread loaves (pita). The Philoptochos ladies hosted the celebration. The vasilopita was cut and distributed to the chairpersons and representatives of our many ministries. The **Metropolis of Chicago Vasilopita** was nicely hosted by *St Andrew Church* on *January 7* with many people in attendance. A table of our parishioners represented our community at the event.

We hosted the **Glenview Clergy Association** on *January 14* for their monthly meeting. A lunch was donated and served and I made a presentation

titled *“Fostering Clergy Wellness: How Parishes and Parish Councils Can Help.”* This is a third in a series of presentations. The first two are titled: *“Clergy Stress and Burnout”* and *“Emotional Survival for Clergy and Their Spouses.”*

The Pan-Orthodox **Sanctity of Life service** took place at St Luke OCA Church in Palos Hills on *January 25*. Fr. Nick Greanias was the key-note speaker.

The *Agape Academy* hosted the community-wide **Apokreatiko Glendi** on *January 31<sup>st</sup>* at the Concorde Banquet Center in Kilder. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the event. Proceeds support the Agape Academy programs.

Coming this month is our annual **Godparent/Godchild Sunday February 1<sup>st</sup>**, the same day as **Meeting of our Lord Feast**. The feast commemorates Jesus Christ being dedicated to God in the Temple at 40 days of age. Two important persons become prototypical godparents: 1) the Elder Symeon who, according to Tradition was 270 years old, and was *“just and devout”* (Lk.2:25) who came by the Spirit into the Temple (v.27) and was blessed to receive the baby Jesus into his arms (v.28). He then prophesied about the future of Jesus’ life (vv.34-35); 2) the Prophetess Anna, who, even at 84 years of age, did not depart from the temple and served God with fasting and prayer night and day (v.37).

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# FOLLOW US!

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# CONTACTS

1401 Wagner Road Glenview, IL 60025

**Phone:** (847) 729-2235

**Email:** office@ssppglenview.org

**Website:** ssppglenview.org

**Rev. Dr. Fr. Richard Demetrius Andrews,  
Protopresbyter,** frick@ssppglenview.org

**Rev. Fr. Peter Sarolas, Economos,  
Associate Priest** frpeter@ssppglenview.org

**Rev. Dn. Theodore Saclarides, M.D.**

**Summer Sunday Hours:**

Matins 7:45am & Divine Liturgy 9am

**Sunday & Weekly Services**

Matins 8:15 am

Divine Liturgy 9:30 am

**Church Office Hours:**

Mon.-Thurs. 9:00am-5:00pm

Friday: 9:00am-3:00pm

**Parish Administrator:** Elea Bentley  
parishadmin@ssppglenview.org

**Administrative Assistant:** Tina O'Donnell  
office@ssppglenview.org

**Youth Director:** Steven Thell  
youthdirector@ssppglenview.org

**Communications Coordinator:** Amanda Sideris  
amanda@ssppglenview.org

**Bookkeeper:** Diane Bravos  
diane@ssppglenview.org

**2026 Parish Council:**

**President-** George Seletos

**VP-** Nick Colis

**Treasurer -** John Mackris

**Asst Treasurer -** Dino Tsitsis

**Recording Sec -** Angie Katsamakis

**Asst Recording Sec -** Christy Gouletas

Vanessa Adinamis

Mary Alukos

Keith Anderson

Frank Andreou

Christine Cotromanes

George Karagiannis

Steve Koulogeorge

Dean Maragos

Dean Matsas

Marann Rasmussen

Tracy Ronstadt

Jim Santos

## PARISH MINISTRIES

**Agape Preschool:** Julie Mantice, agape@ssppglenview.org

**Acolytes:** Steven Thell, acolytes@ssppglenview.org

**Athletics:** Steve Conway & Chris Batrich, athletics@ssppglenview.org

**Bible Study:** Dr. Helen Theodoropoulos, biblestudy@ssppglenview.org

**Book & Icon Store:** Tina O'Donnell, bookstore@ssppglenview.org

**Building Maintenance:** John Vranas, john@vranas.com

**Care for Creation:** John Kiriklakis, careforcreation@ssppglenview.org

**Catechism:** Fr. Richard Andrews, catechism@ssppglenview.org

**Chanters:** Chris Atsaves, chanters@ssppglenview.org

**Choir Director:** Therese Speropoulos

choir@ssppglenview.org

**Church School:** Nick and Kery Obradovich, Elaine Carrozza

churchschool@ssppglenview.org

**Coffee Connection:** Doreen DeSent,

coffeeconnection@ssppglenview.org

**Divorce Rebuilders:** Maria Boyle

divorcerebuilders@ssppglenview.org

**Dynamis Group:** Joanne Trahanas, dynamis@ssppglenview.org

**Georgia Photopulos Cancer Support Group:**

Bud Photopulos and Phyllis Perivolidis

cancersupport@ssppglenview.org

**GOYAlumni:** Marina Alexis, goyalumni@ssppglenview.org

**Greek Dance:** Anna Andrews, dance@ssppglenview.org

**Greek School:** Stella Theoharopoulos,

greeksschool@ssppglenview.org

**Grief Support:** Tracy Ronstadt, griefsupport@ssppglenview.org

**Myrrhbearers:** Anna Kallis, myrrhbearers@ssppglenview.org

**Orthodox Couples Club:** parishadmin@ssppglenview.org

**Philoptochos:** Julie Anastos, philoptochos@ssppglenview.org

**Prison Outreach:** Brad DeSent

prisonoutreach@ssppglenview.org

**Prospora:** Tracy Ronstadt, prospora@ssppglenview.org

**Readers:** Sophia Castleberry, readers@ssppglenview.org

**Saint Basil's Philanthropy:** Christy Gouletas

philanthropy@ssppglenview.org

**Saint Stephen Men's Group:** Brad DeSent

mensgroup@ssppglenview.org

**Stewardship:** George Karagianis, stewardship@ssppglenview.org

**Sunday Coffee Fellowship:** Carolyn Kolbaba

fellowship@ssppglenview.org

**Ushers/Greeters:** Bo LaMotte, ushers@ssppglenview.org

**Welcome:** Keith Anderson, Sylvia Creatura, welcome@ssppglenview.org

**Young Adult League (YAL):** Maria Mantice,

yal@ssppglenview.org

***For Emergencies Only: Please call the main office number and access Fr. Rick's voicemail. Leave a message stating your emergency. If you do not receive a call back within 15 minutes, call again and leave a brief message.***

# PASTORAL MESSAGE

Because Pascha is early this year (April 12), **Triodion begins on Sunday February 1**. This is the three-week period prior to *and including* **Great and Holy Lent**. The first week is fast-free, no fasting. The second week is normal with fasting on Wednesday and Friday. The third week is after Sunday of **Meatfare** (Feb.15). Thus, we begin fasting from all meat products (from animal flesh/fats). The fourth week is after **Cheesefare** (Feb.22) when the strict fast begins and we abstain from meat and cheese/dairy products. We also reduce our consumption including skipping meals and we try to pray, worship, give alms and repent even more. The strictest fasting is called ‘*xerophagia*’ which includes fasting on weekdays (M-F) from olive oil and similar oil-based products, as well as alcohol products. Great Lent is like a training camp for Christians. Use the Triodion to plan and prepare so Lent does not catch you by surprise.

The beginning of Triodion also includes three **Saturday of Souls** on which we celebrate Orthros and Divine Liturgy and memorial prayers for our loved ones who have fallen asleep in

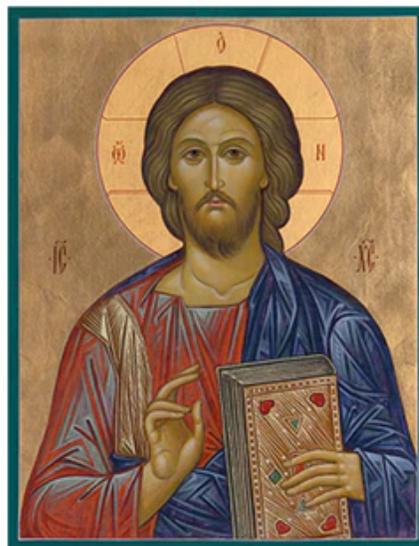
the Lord. On the first Saturday (Feb.14) we commemorate all those who died in the true Faith and hope of the Resurrection. On the second Saturday (Feb.21) we commemorate all ascetic/monastic saints. On the third Saturday (first Saturday of Lent, Feb.28) on which we celebrate the **miracle of the coliva/sitari** by St Theodore of Tyro (Feb.17). Please bring names of the dead/reposed with you to the liturgy. You don’t need to resubmit names for each week.

Watch for news about our upcoming **Lenten Lectures** (on Wednesdays) and our **Lenten Retreat** on *March 6-8* with *Fr. Sergius Halvorsen* who will speak on “Faith-Based Storytelling.”

Our 2026 Archdiocese **Stewardship Theme: “Rise Up and Build: Building Up the Body of Christ.”** The words of the prophet Nehemiah to the Jewish people when he saw the crumbling walls of Jerusalem “Rise up and build” (Neh.2:19), apply to us today. We must continually rise up and build up the Body of Christ. We the people together form the Body of Christ—to care out His ministry in our modern time. We are called to build up the walls of our

parish temples, and at the same time, tear down the walls/barriers in and around our parish that prevent people from experience the love, mercy and forgiveness of Christ. We do this by building up our worship and ministries. Receiving the Body of Christ in the Eucharist means little if we are not building up each other, carrying one another’s burdens and fulfilling the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

God’s guideline for giving is the tithe (10%). He gives us everything but only asks for ten percent in return. That’s a pretty good deal. With a total (operations & capital) annual parish budget of \$2.2M we encourage everyone to strive towards tithing (10%) but **suggest a minimum of five percent (5%) annual giving** as we move into 2026. We appreciate monthly gifts. <https://onrealm.org/sppglenview/-/form/give/now>  
Blessed New Year & Theophany!  
+Fr. Rick



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# LOCAL EUCHARIST COMMUNITIES

## FROM FATHER RICK

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I am sharing excerpts from the Dr. Nathan Hoppe's book titled "*Fostering Local Eucharistic Communities*" (LEC): *A Biblical, Historical and Theological Reflection Inspired by Missionary Service in Albania.*" (2023, Aschendorff Verlag)

This will be a multi-part series over the next several months.

### Introduction, pp.7-28

A local eucharist community (LEC) can be thought of as the group of people who are bound together by weekly participation in the Divine Eucharist around the same altar, in which they are united in Christ and one another, and who choose to live in deep intentional community, growing in the life of Christ together, caring for one another, and witnessing to the world.

This is a distinct intentional definition rather than 'parish' or 'local church' which are used in differently in varying contexts. (p.7)

The purpose of this book is threefold:

- 1) To argue that fostering healthy LECs is the mission-critical task of the church.
- 2) To provide an in-depth reflection on what a healthy LEC should be like.
- 3) To propose strategies for fostering healthy LECs.

Fostering healthy LECs needs to be the primary focus of Christian ministry. This not a romanticized nor idealized view of the Church. Of course, every church community is comprised of broken, sinful people working their way towards transformation in Christ. No community is without challenges. But this is precisely where we must minister to one another and receive ministry from one another to help each other grow into the likeness of Christ.

LECs are the fundamental unit in the life of the Orthodox Church. (p.8)  
Every smaller unit is a component of an LEC, and every larger unit is multiple of LECs or a cooperative effort of LECs.

The most obvious subunit of an LEC is the family, which is often called 'the little church,' but it is only made complete when it comes together with the rest of the LEC around the altar to celebrate the Eucharist.

The Archdiocese, metropolis and autocephalous Churches are structures that organized relationships between LECs. Every bishop, archbishop and patriarch is fundamentally the president of a LEC. The introduction of one bishop overseeing many LECs created a rupture in Orthodox ecclesiology by dividing the bishop from each LEC. An archdiocese or diocese is essentially an administrative unit, but it is not a LEC. (p.9)

In the first century church diocese and parishes did not exist as we know them today. Nevertheless, each LEC manifests the fullness of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church in a given place but does this in communion with other LECs. An LEC isolated from the other LECs is not healthy.

A common problem in Orthodox parishes in North America is a tendency towards being isolated and internally focused, seeming to exist only for themselves and their own members. The often lack an understanding of, or interest in, the broader Church or the world around them. The mission of the community sometimes seems to be only self-preservation and service of its members. (p.10)

At the beginning of the New Testament era there were no LECs anywhere in the world. But by the end of the first century numerous LECs were established around the Mediterranean Sea.

Jesus gathered a community of His disciples and celebrated the first Eucharist on the night before His betrayal, crucifixion and resurrection. Thus, Jesus formed the first LEC.

Jesus commissioned the Apostles (see Mt.28) to go out and establish other LECs throughout the world. The life of these LECs is visible throughout the Book of Acts and the Epistles of the NT. However, the life and structure of LECs is nowhere systematically treated within them. (p.12)

'Ekklesia' is the Greek word of the NT translated into English as 'Church' and usually refers to a specific local community. The Church as a community of communities, as a national or universal entity was not used in the NT.

In the early centuries, Christians were not received into communion not based on their generic identity as Christians but by their specific membership in a LEC. This usually required a special letter from their bishop confirming such membership.

The importance of this practice is often obscured by contemporary practice in which baptisms are performed as a private religious ceremony. Baptism and other sacraments are often treated like a commodity which is bought and paid for. (p.13)

Even clergy are ordained to a specific LEC and not 'at large' to serve the Church. This is why priests must have permission letters from their bishop to celebrate liturgy and sacraments in LECs outside the diocese. This is why parishioners must have letters of good-standing to participate in sacraments outside their own LEC, especially to serve as godparents and wedding sponsors.



**agape** ♥  
christian academy

# 2026-27 ENROLLMENT

## PROGRAM FEATURES :

- ✓ Flexible programming for ages 2 through Kindergarten
- ✓ Play-based learning
- ✓ Outdoor play
- ✓ Orthodox Christian Teachings
- ✓ Greek School

**ENROLLMENT OPENS JAN 2026**

✉ [agape@ssppglenview.org](mailto:agape@ssppglenview.org)

🌐 <https://ssppglenview.org/agape-preschool/>



# PASTORAL MESSAGE

## FROM FATHER PETER

### A Message from Father Peter Confession

The other day my youngest son was asking this question; how does confession work. I thought for a moment. Then I remembered a project that I did back in 1995 at St. Basil's Academy in Garison NY. I was the sixth to eighth grade Religious Education Instructor and as well as the Student Life Coordinator for the K-eighth grade. I have to give the backstory of how this entire idea came to fruition. I was driving back to St. Basil's Academy from Astoria, New York. I was thinking about how to explain to the seventh and eighth graders about confession which is one of the seven sacraments. The sacraments were part of their Religious Education Curriculum.

As my mind was spinning driving along the scenic view of the Palisades Parkway, I had an "AHA" moment. As I was thinking about how to relate confession to them, I came up with this: Confession is something that you see on the inside. You really do not see it, but it weighs on your heart and soul. The lesson was called the "Sin/Backpack Project". The students had to choose one of several books to carry with them to their after-school activities. Let me explain how this worked. The seventh and eighth graders had to carry in their backpacks at least two if not three of their books to their after-school activities. Their after-school activities varied from day to day. The after-school activities were volleyball, basketball, indoor soccer, floor/roller hockey, swimming, etc. During the activities they had to place their backpacks on the side of the gym floor or in the locker room of the swimming pool and they had to take part in the activity. Once the activity was over, they had to wear their backpack back to their dorms. Once they were inside their dorm, they had the option of keeping their backpack on or not.....it was up to them. During the Saturday and Sunday, the school schedule was a bit different but the seventh and eighth grade students had to wear their backpacks for a duration of the time. Sunday, it was a must.... they had to wear their backpacks to church/Divine Liturgy. Since Sunday was family time, it was optional to wear their backpacks.

This "Project" was for a month. After the month was over, they had to write a reflection on what they learned about sin and confession. To give you a bit of what was taking place during this time or rather the "buzz". I still remember that entire month as it happened yesterday. The other two student life coordinators as well as the Student Life Director and I would have random check in's. The students did have several eyes and ears out for us. When we would walk in either the boys and/or the girls dorm it was the sixth grades that would yell Mr. Peter or Ms. Electra, or Ms. Christina, or Ms. Eleni.....at the top of their voices and then we would see the seventh and eighth grade students run to get their backpacks on from wherever they were. The end result is the students learned that sin is something that you do not see however it is something that is wearing on your conscious. For these kids their backpacks were worn during specific times of the day and night. They learned about how confession takes away that heavy burden that weighs so heavy on your soul. And once that is lifted you feel this sense of relief. To these kids it was more than a "project" that they had to do for school. To them it taught them that sin is real and to erase it from your conscious, you had to confess. You see, the backpacks that the kids wore was symbolic of "sin". The students commented that even though you cannot see sin, they were reminded that their sins were carried around with them for a month and that it changed how they viewed confession and how important it is in their life.

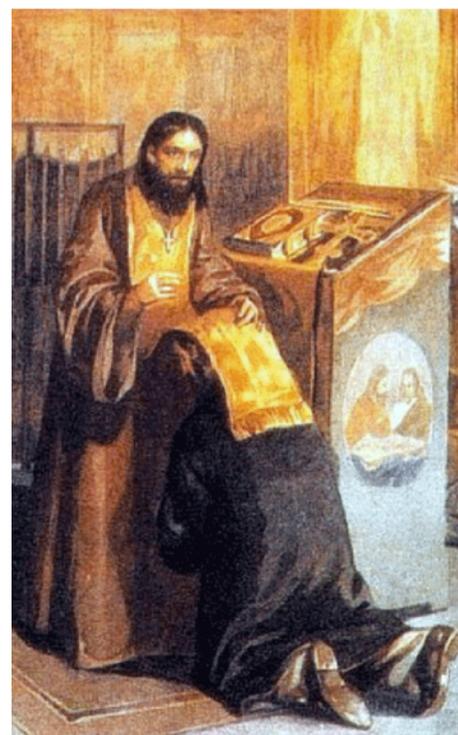
The best way that I can explain confession is by this; Just as you make an appointment to see your primary physician for whatever ailment you have, you would do the same when there is something bothering you spiritually. There are many different spiritual ailments that might be bothering us BUT we must first see the priest. The priest is there to offer you the proper spiritual medicine. He is there to guide you.

The sacrament of Confession is a place for one to be healed from whatever is bothering you. One should realize that

confession is not a place where you are on trial and/or under scrutiny for what you are doing. We need to be honest with the priest. Some faithful go to confession four times a year: before the Christmas, before Great and Holy Lent/Pascha (Orthodox Easter), the fast of the Apostles, and the Dormition of the Theotokos. Others go two times a year (before Christmas and before Pascha) others go yearly. These are just some suggested times one can go to confession. Confession can be done at any time someone feels they need it.

All you need to do is to take the first step and allow to be healed. Confession is available for us at any time of the year. Since Great and Holy Lent is literally around the corner, Clean Monday is February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Like the backpacks in the project, our sins weight us down and the way to be free of our weight is through the sacrament of confession. May our journey to Great and Holy Lent be one of spiritual healing.

Submitted by  
Fr. Peter Sarolas, Ecomonos



# OUR LIFE TOGETHER

**Welcome our newest member to our beautiful parish: *Angela Avgerino, George and Anastasia Samiotakis, and Harry Saunders***



40 Day Churching Jan. 18th for Christina Vercillo & baby Nicholas (father is Kevin Topolewski), and Danielle Tasiopoulos & baby Olivia (father Philip Nardi).



The newly baptized and chrismated servant of God Constandinos! Godparents Aristithis & Panayiota Loukas and parents Angelo & Bethany Poulos!



Picture 1: Agiasmos at Lake Michigan (Gilson Beach, Wilmette) and Gallery Park (Glenview) on January 10th.



Picture 2: Agiasmos at Lake Michigan (Gilson Beach, Wilmette) and Gallery Park (Glenview) on January 10th.

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# OUR LIFE TOGETHER

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*Thank you to our church school staff, children and parents for our annual St. Nicholas project to provide Christmas gifts to children and families in need.*



*HS boys basketball team and coaches came to the Vesperal Liturgy of Theophany Jan. 5th*



*Introducing our 2026 Parish Council--Please keep them in your prayers as they help lead our community!*

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# OUR LIFE TOGETHER

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*SSPP HS Boys Basketball team road trip*



*SSPP at Metropolis Vasilopita celebration hosted by St Andrew Greek Orthodox Church.*

# OUR LIFE TOGETHER



*Metropolitan Nathanael with children and families at Clergy Family Christmas, Dec 30th*

# SSPP LENTEN RETREAT



**Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church**

**Lenten Retreat March 6-8, 2026**

## **Faith Based Storytelling**

*Sharing the Good News through the Sacred Art of Narrative*

**Guest Speaker: Fr. Sergius Halvorsen**

*Sponsored by the Saints Peter and Paul Creticos Memorial Lectures*

### **Friday, March 6**

6:00pm Akathistos/Salutations Service | 7:30 PM Lenten Meal (RSVP by February 27)

#### **8:00pm Story and Communion**

How does story bring us into communion with God and with one another? What role do stories have in our Orthodox Christian faith? How can stories share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others?

### **Saturday, March 7**

10:00am Coffee and Fellowship

#### **10:30am Faith Made Perfect in Weakness**

How does the Crucified Messiah reveal God's power through vulnerability? What kinds of stories invite people into relationship with God?

12:00pm Lenten Luncheon (RSVP by February 27)

#### **1:00pm Sharing Your Story**

What are your stories of faith? How can our stories strengthen our faith and strengthen our communities? What are the opportunities for evangelization with faith-based storytelling?

3:00pm Great Vespers Service

### **Sunday, March 8**

9:30am Divine Liturgy – Homilist Fr Sergius Halvorsen

**Fr Sergius Halvorsen, Ph.D.** V. Rev. J. Sergius Halvorsen is Assistant Professor of Homiletics and Rhetoric at St Vladimir's Seminary where he also serves as director of the Doctor of Ministry Program, and director of the Compelling Preaching project. In addition to teaching homiletics and rhetoric, he also teaches courses in Christian education and the sacred art of narrative. He is a priest of the Orthodox Church in America, and is attached to Holy Transfiguration Church in New Haven, CT. He is an accomplished liturgical musician and has contributed to a number of "Archangel Voices" recordings. He lives in New Haven, CT, and serves part-time as a chaplain at Yale New Haven Hospital.



Link for sign up for the Lenten Retreat:  
<https://ssppglenview.org/lentenretreat/>

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# SSPP LENTEN RETREAT

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## BIOGRAPHY - Fr. Sergius Halvorsen, PhD

### Education

B.A. Biology, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1992

M.Div., St Vladimir's Seminary, 1996

Ph.D., Drew University, 2002



### Teaching Interests:

Homiletics, Rhetoric, Faith-based Storytelling, Christian Education, Distance Learning

### Current Projects and Research Interests

During the twenty years that he has taught preaching, his primary focus has been on the art and craft of liturgical preaching; the sacred art of preaching within the context of the Divine Liturgy. Increasingly, his recent research has shifted towards how clergy and laypeople can better share their Orthodox Christian faith beyond the liturgical context. In the fall of 2022, St. Vladimir's Seminary received a grant from the Compelling Preaching Initiative of the Lilly Endowment, and this has provided an opportunity to explore and develop faith-based storytelling as a dynamic, personal approach to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He has incorporated faith-based storytelling into two seminary courses, and the results have vastly exceeded expectations. Not only were the stories compelling and dynamic, but the process of developing stories and sharing them strengthened the faith of the storytellers and built relationships of faith between the storytellers.

### Recent Courses Taught at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary

Homiletics, Faith Based Storytelling, Sacred art of Rhetoric, Christian Education, Peacemaking in Troubled Times

### Recent Publications

- "The Liturgical Homily as Sacred Art" in Essays from St. Vladimir's Symposium on Liturgy and Sacred Arts ed. Grant White and Rossitza Schroeder. (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press) forthcoming.
- "Preaching the Impossible in the Face of the Unthinkable: Nonviolence, Love, and Thanksgiving in a Coptic Easter Sermon." In Religions 2024, 15, 455. <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/15/4/455/pdf>
- "Preaching in the Orthodox Theological Family" in Preaching the Manifold Grace of God, Vol. 1 Theologies of Preaching in Historical Theological Families. ed. Ron Allen (Eugene OR, Cascade Books, 2022) 1-26.

### Recent Presentations

- "Eucharistic Preaching: Thanksgiving and the story of God's presence"
- North American Academy of Homiletics, Richmond VA
- "Creativity as Death and Resurrection: An Eastern Christian Reflection on the Spiritual Life of the Preacher" Marten Preaching Conference, University of Notre Dame
- "Power Made Perfect in Weakness: Ascetical theology as homiletical antidote to rage addiction" North American Academy of Homiletics, Atlanta GA
- "The Creativity of the Humbled Soul: Preaching as an invitation to ascesis for preachers and hearers." Lausanne-Orthodox International Conference: Worship, Liturgy & Discipleship, Södertälje, Stockholm, Sweden

### Other notables about Fr Sergius:

(M.Div. '96; Ph.D., Drew University, 2002) is Assistant Professor of Homiletics and Rhetoric at St Vladimir's Seminary and serves as director of the Doctor of Ministry Program, and Director of the Compelling Preaching project. In addition to teaching homiletics and rhetoric, he also teaches courses in Christian education and the sacred art of narrative. Fr Sergius is a priest of the Orthodox Church in America, he is attached to Holy Transfiguration Church in New Haven, CT, and has contributed to a number of "Archangel Voices" recordings. He currently lives in New Haven, CT, and serves part-time as a chaplain at Yale New Haven Hospital. He loves gardening, hiking, biking, and reading biographies and fiction.

For a full biography of Fr Sergius:

<https://www.svots.edu/people/very-rev-dr-sergius-halvorsen#>

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# GREEK FEST 2026

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Save the Date  
GREEK FEST 2026  
July 25 & 26

If you're interested in participating on the Fest organizing committee, contact Joanne Trahanas, [joannetrahanas@mac.com](mailto:joannetrahanas@mac.com)



A donation of \$13,800, representing a portion of proceeds from our 2025 Greek Fest, was presented to executives of Family Service Center (FSC) on January 11. Pictured, from left, are: *Fr. Rick*; *Anna Andrews*, Greek Fest co-chair; *Chris Northwick* and *Renee Dominguez*, FSC co-executive directors; *Joanne Trahanas*, Fest co-chair; and *Fr. Peter*. Family Service Center, based in Northfield, is a mental health organization whose highly experienced clinicians can be accessed by families and family members in need, while removing barriers to receiving care. Planning is already underway for our 2026 Greek Fest, which will take place July 25 & 26.

# YOUTH UPDATE

## HELLO ALL!

January has been a fun month. The Faith Love Joy had a service filled month. They worked hard filling over 750 Holy Water Bottles for our Epiphany service. They then learned about Jesus' Baptism. The next FLJ they made Blessing Bags for those in need in Downtown Chicago. This month they learned the importance of what it means to give their time for others. Junior GOYA had a fun paint night where they all got to show off their creative artistic skills. They also had a game night with the adults of our church. That was a great turnout and tremendous fun. They got to engage in dialogues with the older generation as they share their wisdom.

The Junior and Senior GOYA Combined forces for 'feed my starving children' this month. They packed 67 boxes for starving children in different countries. We went to Culvers to celebrate right after. The Senior Goya learned about Theophony icon and the significance of the feast day. Looking ahead, The Senior GOYA will host a Coffee hour luncheon on February 22nd-cheesefare sunday, the last sunday before lent starts. It will be free to all parishioners of the church so I hope to see you all there.

We still have open spots for our Project Mexico pilgrimage. It is scheduled for the upcoming summer of 2026. This initiative provides an incredible opportunity for kids to put their faith into action. Participating in humanitarian efforts not only reflects the principles of charity and compassion but also allows us to make a tangible impact on the lives of others, contributing to spiritual growth. As it says in Hebrews 13:16, "Don't forget to do good and to share what you have, because God is pleased with these kinds of sacrifices."

Steven Thell - Youth Director



*Feed My Starving Children group photo 01/13/26*



*Alex Mastros, Taso Xamplas, and Evan Angelos painting.*



*FLJ filling water bottles for the Theophony service.*

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# BOOK STORE AND MORE

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## BOOK AND ICON STORE

The Lenten Triodion begins in two weeks, and we are ready to help. It is always our hope to give you plenty of time to peruse and decide what works best for you or your family while you prepare for Great Lent. Pretty much the only things you need to have a successful journey through Lent are prayer and repentance, but if you want materials to support you on that journey, we're here! Our bookstore is stocked with tools from small businesses across the U.S. (and Greece and Canada too!) We have cookbooks, books, tools, and resources to help you not feel alone or discouraged on this journey! Several books actually include daily reflections for each day of Lent. We are open every Sunday immediately following Divine Liturgy, and happy to meet anytime by appointment. Contact us with any requests. [bookstore@ssppglenview.org](mailto:bookstore@ssppglenview.org)

## SAINT STEPHEN MEN'S MINISTRY

Men's Fellowship Tuesday February 17th at Northbranch (7PM - 9PM) On Tuesday February 17th at North Branch. These fellowship events are meant to give us a chance to informally get together and make new connections. It will be good to gather before Holy Lent begins. Please Register at: [tiny.cc/t0zx001](https://tiny.cc/t0zx001) Please join our email list to keep up to date with activities. We welcome all adult men from Saints Peter and Paul, Orthodox and Non-Orthodox, and their friends who are interested in participating. Please join the email list at: <https://ssppglenview.org/st-stephens-mens-group/> Let us know if you have any questions. God Bless - Saint Stephen Men's Ministry

## COFFEE CONNECTION

Please join us for 2 - back to back - February Coffee Connection sessions in the youth room! Our theme is "The Creed: Why Does it Still Matter 1700 years Later?"

**February 8th:** We will discuss Jesus "rising on the third day, according to the Scriptures" by asking the questions: How do we know Christ truly arose from the dead? & What are the prophecies that foretell the crucifixion and resurrection?

**February 15th:** We will discuss Jesus "Ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father" by asking the questions: Why did Christ have to ascend? & Why is Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father?

# CHURCH SCHOOL

Church school classes resumed after Christmas break. First order of business, students cut Vasilopita provided by our amazing Philoptochos bakery. They had fun learning about this wonderful tradition. Congratulations to all who found the coin!



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# PARISH HEALTH TEAM

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## **SSPP PARISH HEALTH TEAM - ENGAGE 2026!**

Salutations for a fine February,

In January the PHT introduced the 2025 Parish Health Plan (link and QR code below). Now, the new initiatives are starting up...and you are invited to participate, to join a new or established ministry team, and to find your meaningful contribution to our parish life. The Welcome Ministry team is a great partner for connecting all of us to the initiatives via the new Meet and Greet table in Fellowship Hall at Coffee Hour for visitors and members to check in and Engage 2026!

Initiative 1: We invite you to participate throughout Great Lent as we read together the Book of Psalms! The Welcome Ministry is arranging a traditional Orthodox reading of the Psalter, one Kathisma per day. Find the sign-up and more information at the Meet and Greet table and be ready to start on *Monday, February 23*.

Initiative 2: Looking for some new SSPP 'swag'? A new ministry team is being formed to lead a pilot program that defines a few SSPP branded items for purchase through the bookstore and website. The new team will design items that highlight our purpose and mission in such a way to enhance parish identity and raise awareness in the greater community about Orthodoxy in the world today. The new SSPP Brand ministry will need a few creative members with marketing and procurement experience to lead the way. Contact a parish council member or the Meet and Greet table to learn more.

Initiative 3: The Welcome Ministry is expanding to include more members focused on Inreach. The first initiative is to contact and personally invite new and interfaith members to participate in ministry offerings and events. Help the parish serve the needs of all members through enhanced connection. Check in at the Meet and Greet table to get started!



READY, SET, GROW...

CLOSER TO GOD AND EACHOTHER

<https://ssppglenview.org/parish-health-plan/>

THE PHILOPTOCHOS BAKERY

# Help Us Bake Spanakopites

COME BAKE, MEET, AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS

## DID YOU KNOW...

The SSPP philoptochos donated over \$100,000 to over 25 charities last year. Over 40% of these funds were raised by our bake sales. To keep the momentum, come help us bake!

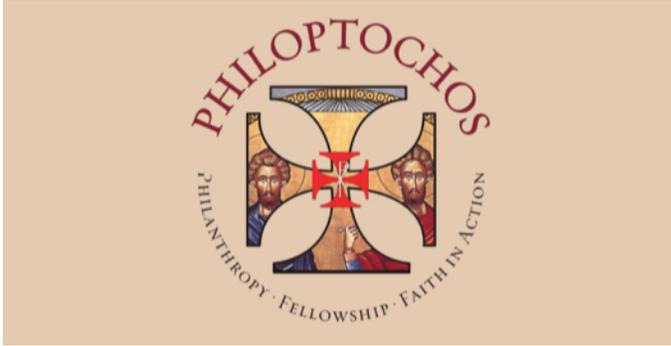
**Feb 19th: 9:30am - 2pm\***

**\* come for as much or as little time you have  
lunch will be served**



# PHILOPTOCHOS

## LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Dear Parish Family,

While winter may still have us bundling up, Philoptochos has been heating things up with meaningful philanthropic activity and heartfelt service to others. Even on the coldest days, the warmth, generosity and faith continue to shine through our work together.

February is American Heart Month, an important reminder that cardiovascular disease remains the number one killer of women. We encourage everyone to help raise awareness by wearing red on Go Red Sunday, *February 1* and again on National Wear Red Day, Friday, *February 6*, as a visible show of support for women's heart health and overall wellness.

As we approach Valentine's Day on *February 14*, we invite the entire church community to truly share the love by participating in our HOPE bagging event following church on Sunday, *February 15*. This hands-on effort is a beautiful way for parishioners of all ages to come together in service and kindness.

Thank you for your continued support, enthusiasm and generosity. Together we make a difference – one loving act at a time.

Love and Warm Wishes,  
Julie Anastos

## THIS MONTH!

### GO RED! - Feb 1st 2026

February is all about having heart! The SSPP Philoptochos wants to raise awareness about heart disease— our nation's number one killer. Join us in Wearing Red on Sunday, February 1.



*Thanks to all the members who wore red in 2025, pictured above.*

### COME BAKE WITH US! Feb 19th 2026

Our fabulous bakers will be making spanakopites on Thursday, *February 19* from 9:30-2:00 in our fellowship hall. A light lunch will be served. Come join the fun! Contact Nancie Poulos for more information [nepoulos@hotmail.com](mailto:nepoulos@hotmail.com).



*Join the fun on February 19, even if you can only come for an hour!*

### SUNDAYS DURING LENT - AFTER CHURCH BAKE SALE

Lent begins on *February 23*. As we prepare for Lent, the Philoptochos Bakery will be selling Lenten pastry options, freshly baked Lagana, bread, as well as some Greek spreads like taramasalata. Come visit us after church on Sundays!

# PHILOPTOCHOS

## MEMBERSHIP! IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

It's not too late to become a Philoptochos Member. We rely on your stewardship, as well as our fundraising efforts, to generate income to make our philanthropic projects a reality. Please visit us at <https://sppglenview.org/philoptochos-stewardship-donation/> or use this QR code to submit your application and donation.



## PREVIOUS MONTH HIGHLIGHTS

### *General Meeting & Program: Sustainability in Fashion – Jan '26*

Following our January Board Meeting, we were pleased to welcome Jill Payne, who presented an eye-opening discussion on sustainability in fashion. Jill shared insights into the environmental and social impact of the clothing industry and offered practical, accessible ways to make more mindful choices as consumers.



*Chair, Annette Vranas with speaker Jill Payne. We are grateful to Jill for an informative and inspiring program that sparked meaningful*

### *Vasilopita Sunday – Jan '26*

The Philoptochos bakery happily donated Vasilopita for Vasilopita Sunday at the church. Below is Philoptochos President, Julie Anastos, along with other leaders of the church, graciously accepted a piece of Vasilopita and wondered if they were the blessed "winner" of the coin.

### *Blankets for Babies – Jan '26*

Over 80 women and children from local Greek Orthodox parishes, along with teens from Glenbrook South High School, gathered at Saints Peter and Paul for a meaningful and beautiful day of fellowship, community, and philanthropy. Together, they created 85 handmade blankets for children in the University of Illinois Pediatric Unit, spreading warmth, love, and compassion to those in need.



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# PHILOPTOCHOS

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## CHARITY SPOTLIGHT

Each month we highlight one of our charity recipients.  
This month's spotlight is:

### ***WINGS Program, Inc. – Chicago and Palatine, IL***

In the United States, a woman experiences domestic violence every few seconds—often in silence. Rooted in compassion for the vulnerable, WINGS Program, Inc. serves women and children impacted by domestic violence with care, protection, and hope.. Based in Chicago and Palatine, Illinois, WINGS provides safe emergency and transitional housing, counseling, legal advocacy, and life-skills support, empowering families to move from crisis to stability and independence.



## SAVE THESE DATES!

***Sunday, February 1*** – GO RED SUNDAY – wear red to church

***Sunday, February 15*** – Project HOPE Sunday

***Sunday, April 5*** – Palm Sunday Bake Sale / Palm Sunday Luncheon

***Sunday, April 12*** – EASTER PASCHA

***Tuesday, April 21*** – General Meeting & Program

***Saturday, May 1*** – Spring Fundraiser “A Night To Amaze”

***Tuesday, May 19*** – General Meeting – Budget and Program

***Sunday, June 28*** – SSPP Vespers – Philoptochos hosts coffee hour

***Monday, June 29*** – SSPP Feast Day – Philoptochos & Parish Council host lunch after service

***Tuesday, June 30 thru Thursday, July 2*** – National Clergy Laity in Cleveland, OH

***Saturday, July 25 & Sunday, July 26*** – SSPP Greek Fest 2026

NOTE: EVERY SUNDAY --

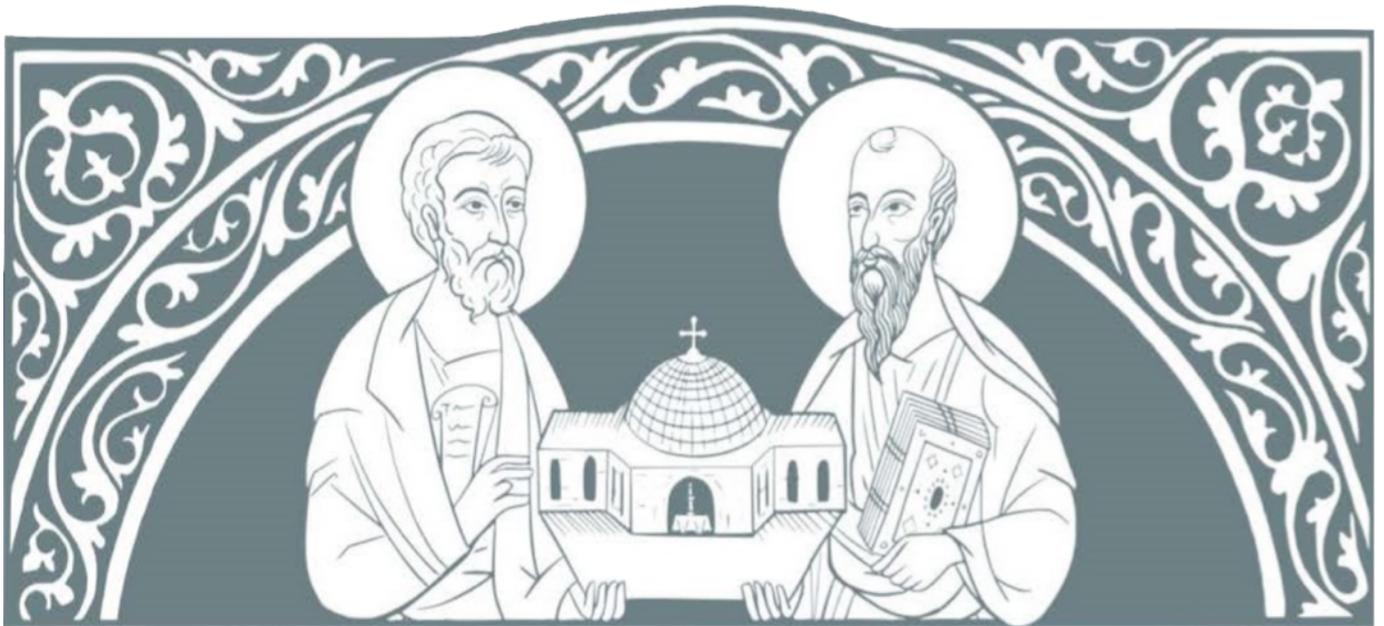
*\*Unless otherwise specified, events will take place at SSPP*

# FEBRUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 +SUN OF PUBLICAN & PHARISEE - TROIDION BEGINS GODPARENT/GODCHILD SUNDAY GO RED SUNDAY - WEAR RED NO SUNDAY SCHOOL 8:15am ORTHROS-MATINS 9:30am DIVINE LITURGY 12pm Greek Dance	2 +MEETING OF OUR LORD <b>FAST-FEBLE WEEK</b> 8:30am ORTHROS-MATINS 9:30am DIVINE LITURGY 6:15pm Bball Practice 1-2 Grade Coed 7pm Catechism Class 7pm Bball Practice HS Boys	3 6:30pm Philoptochos Board Mtg 7pm Divorce Rebuilders 7pm Senior GOYA Gathering	4 10:30am Bible Study 7pm Choir Rehearsal	5 7am Men's Study 10am Dynamis "Kali Parea" Breakfast at George V's in Northbrook 7pm PC Exec Meeting	6 6pm FLJ Gathering	7 1pm Basketball All Star Game at SSPP 5pm VESPERS
8 +ST THEODORE STRATELAGES & PROPHET ZECHARIAH +SUN OF PRODIGAL SON 8:15am ORTHROS-MATINS 9:30am DIVINE LITURGY 11am Coffee Connection	9 7pm Catechism Class 7pm GREAT VESPERS at Saint Haralambos in Niles 7pm Bball Practice HS Boys	10 ++ST HARALAMBOS 9am DIVINE LITURGY at Saint Haralambos in Niles 7pm Divorce Rebuilders 7pm Cancer Support	11 10:30am Bible Study	12 7am Men's Study 10am Dynamis "Kali Parea" Breakfast at George V's in Northbrook	13 6:30pm GOYA Overnighter	14 +SATURDAY OF SOULS 8:30am ORTHROS MATINS 9:30am DIVINE LITURGY 10:30am MEMORIAL 5pm VESPERS
15 +MEATFARE SUNDAY 8:15am ORTHROS-MATINS 9:30am DIVINE LITURGY 10:45am Church School Lenten Project 11am Coffee Connection 11:30am Project Hope Sunday 12pm Greek Dance	16 7pm Catechism Class 8pm Stewardship Meeting	17 +ST THEODORE OF TERON 7pm Divorce Rebuilders 7pm Sn. GOYA Gathering 7pm Men's Dinner at Northbranch	18 10:30am Bible Study 6:30pm FLJ Gathering 7pm Choir Rehearsal	19 7am Men's Study 10am Dynamis "Kali Parea" Breakfast at George V's in Northbrook 6pm AGAPE Daddy and Me event	20 6:30pm Jr. GOYA Gathering- Game Night with Adults	21 +SATURDAY OF SOULS 8:30am ORTHROS MATINS 9:30am DIVINE LITURGY 10:30am MEMORIAL 5pm VESPERS
22 +CHESHEARE SUNDAY 8:15am ORTHROS-MATINS 9:30am DIVINE LITURGY 11am FORGIVENESS VESPERS 12pm Greek Dance 6pm Metropolis Forgiveness Vespers at Holy Trinity in Schiller Park	23 +CLEAN/PURE MONDAY +ST POLYCARP OF SMYRNA <b>+GREAT LENT - STRICT FAST*</b> 6pm HOLY UNCTION 7pm Catechism Class	24 +FINDING OF FORERUNNERS SKULL (1ST & 2ND) 7pm Divorce Rebuilders 7pm Greek Fest Meeting 7:30pm End of Life Project Meeting	25 10:30am Bible Study 5:30pm NINTH HOUR 6pm PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY 7:30pm Lenten Meal & Lecture	26 +ST PHOTINI - SAMARITAN 7am Men's Study 10am Dynamis "Kali Parea" Lunch at Plateia in Des Plaines 5pm Communications Cmte 7pm Parish Council Mtg	27 +ST MATRONA OF THESSALONIKI 6pm AKATHISTOS	28 +SATURDAY OF SOULS 8:30am ORTHROS MATINS 9:30am DIVINE LITURGY 10:30am MEMORIAL 5pm VESPERS
<b>COMING IN MARCH</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY/ICONS</li> <li>4 Lenten Meal/Lectures continue (every Wednesday)</li> <li>6-8 Lenten Retreat with Fr. Sergius Halverson</li> <li>8 2ND SUN LENT - ST GREGORY PALAMAS</li> <li>15 3RD SUN LENT - VENERATION OF THE CROSS</li> <li>19 PENTECOSTAL VICARIATE VESPERS at SSPP</li> <li>19 Orthodox March for Life, Springfield IL</li> <li>22 4TH SUN LENT - ST JOHN CLIMACUS</li> <li>25 ANNUNCIATION FEAST</li> </ul>						

*1401 Wagner Road  
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GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH