



ANNUNCIATION CATHEDRAL HERALD



245 VALENCIA STREET, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103 · 415 864-8000 · FAX 415 431-5860 · WWW.ANNUNCIATION.ORG

JANUARY 2017



Happy New Year: A Year of our Future; a Year for our Youth

Pictures are worth 1000 words, the saying goes. The pictures on the cover page of this issue of the *Herald*, therefore, speak many thousands of words. As we begin the year, we see our Cathedral nearing completion (as far as the outside is concerned). We also see our youth becoming stronger, more actively involved, more visibly a part of our community, as evidenced by the largest dance group program in years, the addition of two young people to the Parish Council, the growing involvement of our Young Adults, the growth of our GOYA. Rejoice!





Building Update

We're almost there, with respect to the outside of the Cathedral. Now that the scaffolding is down, one can see this magnificent landmark which you are creating--the center of our Greek Orthodox faith in the heart of the City. You should be very proud of your accomplishments. You should share the good news with your friends, relatives and neighbors. Invite them to come and see what you are doing to respond to the invitation, *"Build me a Sanctuary, and I will appear among you."* (Translated from the Septuagint: *Καὶ ποιήσεις μοι ἅγίασμα, καὶ ὀφθήσομαι ἐν ὑμῖν*). (Exodus 25:8). Meanwhile, the contractor is completing waterproofing of the exterior, especially around the garage. He is also building the entrenchment drain, the housing for the garage exhaust ducts, and building and restoring the archways. Connection to the sewers, on the Stevenson Street side, took place on December 17. On the Valencia Street side, they will take place on January 11.

As for the interior, we hope to complete much of it by the end of 2017, as your generosity permits. We need your prayers and your continued financial support. Now would be a good time to make that end-of-the year gift, resulting in a tax deduction for you and enabling the Cathedral to continue building. We hope to be done with the outside by March and to start using the garage by April, as work begins on the interior. We hope to consecrate the new Cathedral to

the glory of God to coincide with our 100th anniversary, in 2021. God will bless us, indeed, if it is His Will that His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who laid the cornerstone back in 1997, also consecrates it to God's glory in 2021! Again, you all should take great pride in rebuilding the Cathedral: It is your legacy to future generations. Now, let's move full-speed ahead to complete what we've begun.



The Sign of the Cross

This is the title of a book by Andreas Andreopoulos, printed in 2006. The subtitle of the book is The Gesture, The Mystery, the History. It's an intriguing book of 152 pages. Just short enough to make for a good read on an afternoon, just long enough to say something meaningful about the Cross: What does it mean when we make the sign of the cross? What does it represent? How did making the sign of the cross come about?

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WHAT DOES MY GIFT TO THE BUILDING FUND REALLY AMOUNT TO OVER A FIVE YEAR PERIOD?

We've been hearing a lot about pledging to the Building Fund over a five-year period. What does that really mean? The chart below shows how, by thinking in terms of a per person/per day gift of a few dollars and cents, one can make a meaningful gift over a 5-year period. Please keep in mind that every cent given to the Building Fund is fully tax-deductible. And, every gift of \$1,000 and more will be acknowledged on the donor wall which will be placed in the new Cathedral. Meanwhile, if you would like to discuss donating something other than cash, something like stocks or bonds, or if you would like to learn about other donor opportunities, you may contact the Cathedral, office@annunciation.org, or speak with Father Stephen or Tom Nuris.

AMOUNT	PER YEAR OVER 5 YEARS	PER MONTH OVER 5 YEARS	PER DAY OVER 5 YEARS	2 PERSON FAMILY-PER DAY (EACH)	3 PERSON FAMILY-PER DAY (EACH)	4 PERSON FAMILY-PER DAY (EACH)
\$100,000	\$20,000	\$1,666.00	\$54.80	\$27.40	\$18.26	\$13.70
\$50,000	\$10,000	\$833.00	\$27.40	\$13.70	\$9.13	\$6.85
\$30,000	\$6,000	\$500.00	\$16.43	\$8.22	\$5.48	\$4.10
\$25,000	\$5,000	\$416.00	\$13.70	\$6.85	\$4.56	\$3.42
\$20,000	\$4,000	\$333.33	\$10.95	\$5.49	\$3.65	\$2.74
\$15,000	\$3,000	\$250.00	\$8.22	\$4.11	\$2.74	\$2.05
\$10,000	\$2,000	\$166.66	\$5.47	\$2.75	\$1.82	\$1.36

Gift Giving to the Capital Campaign

For those parishioners or friends of the Cathedral who wish to make a donation, you may consider donating funds from your stock portfolio. If you were to sell this stock on the open market most likely you will pay capital gain taxes. To avoid paying capital gain taxes, you simply donate the stock to the Annunciation Cathedral, a non-profit 501(c)3 religious corporation.

The stock needs to be publicly traded on one of the exchanges (NY, NASDAQ, etc.) then you simply report it on your tax return as a noncash charitable contribution. You get the appreciated value for the donation and do not pay tax on the capital gain. Then all you will need for taxes is a letter of acknowledgment from the Cathedral, with the name of the stock, date of donation and number of shares received. For additional information regarding the transfer of stock to the Cathedral, please contact Father Stephen at fatherstephen@annunciation.org or Angie Leventis at aleventis3@comcast.net.

Parking during Construction (for a few more months-thankfully)

Parking for up to 70 cars is available in the lot behind the Cathedral, at 334 14th Street and on the street. Stewards of the Cathedral are charged only \$5 to park, by showing their discount card; the Cathedral will pay \$7 of the parking cost for Stewards. To pick up a parking pass or to discuss your stewardship, please see Gus Vouchilas, our Stewardship Chairman. If you are a supporting member of the Cathedral, in other words a Steward, you get the card. Street parking is also available on Sundays, especially along the 217' construction zone in front of the Cathedral. For your convenience, an attendant is on hand each Sunday to monitor the drop off zone and direct parking to the parking lot behind the Cathedral. We kindly ask our parishioners to be considerate of those with disabilities, giving them parking preference in the spaces on Valencia Street. This relationship with the lot behind the Cathedral will end as soon as our own parking structure is up and running.



The celebration of St. Nicholas Day in 2016.

For a number of years, Cathedral parishioners have been celebrating the Feast together with our Antiochian brothers and sisters, at their church of St. Nicholas on Diamond Heights. However, for the first time, Father Stephen was extended an invitation to concelebrate the feast at the St. Nicholas (OCA) parish in San Anselmo. The pastor of that parish, Father Stefan Meholick, served in Rhode Island in the 1970s, when Father Stephen was pastor of the Annunciation Church there. Above, Father Stephen with Father Stefan and other clergy at the St. Anselmo parish of St. Nicholas on the Feast of St. Nicholas. Among other things, Father Stephen was impressed with the attendance at this weekday Divine Liturgy. There were approximately 150 parishioners, about half of them children! Afterwards, the parish hosted a luncheon and, of course, a visit by St. Nick.

OIKOS Lecture Series Continues: Professor Klironomos, to speak

As announced in the Herald, as well as our weekly Sunday bulletins, OIKOS (Orthodox in Koinonia Outreach Services), under the direction of Dr. Katina Kostoulas, Ph.D., and the assistance of Dr. Tony Elite, sponsors a series of talks aimed at informing, engaging, and edifying our parishioners in any number of areas involving individual and communal spiritual growth, family dynamics, and parish life. The lectures take place the first Sunday of each month, during the coffee hour.

Future speakers include Martha Klironomos, Ph.D. Dr. Katina Kostoulas, Dr. Anthony Elite, and Janine Economides, wife of Professor Nicholas Economides. Our talk by Professor Martha Klironomos is now scheduled for Sunday, February 12, 2017, immediately following the Divine Liturgy, during the coffee hour. Professor Klironomos will speak on the Bloomsbury Group and how their travels to Greece and Italy inspired the integration of Byzantine motifs into their art. Professor Martha Klironomos has served as Director of the Center for Modern Greek Studies, the Nikos Kazantzakis Chair, at S.F. State University. She has been teaching courses in Modern Greek language and literature and Comparative and English literature, at S.F. State University, since 1996.

Introduction to Orthodoxy

“Introduction to Orthodoxy” Class Welcomes New Members to the Faith

The new Annunciation Cathedral recalls the beauty and majesty of other churches more than a millennium old, such as Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. Those who have been fortunate enough to witness its construction know that, like those older churches, it is being built to last, and one can imagine it serving the needs of the faithful, God willing, centuries from now. The building is an impressive, outward sign of our community’s conscious outreach to the city and the world. By building a sanctuary for God, we are simultaneously expressing a gesture of welcome to all future generations of Orthodox Christians.

Some of them will be born into our families, while others will marry into the faith. Still others will come to us simply because they are astounded by the beauty of our worship, the richness of our theological traditions, and our special emphasis on the mystery of our intimate encounter with God. Whether future parishioners are drawn into the fold by love for its members, for their resilient, ancient faith, or by a mixture of the two, we must continue to be prepared to accommodate incoming Orthodox Christians of every background.

The Cathedral’s weekly “Introduction to Orthodoxy” class aims to facilitate the spiritual journey of those considering joining our Church. We prepare adult inquirers for their

The Sign of the Cross *continued*

First, a word about the author. Andreas Andreopoulos was born in Greece in 1966 and, we are told, is recognized throughout the world as one of the most eloquent young scholars of Christianity. He earned his Ph.D. in theology at the University of Durham and has taught in Toronto, Montreal and Philadelphia. He is currently Lecturer of Christian Theology at the University of Wales.

*Next, a review of the table of contents. The book is divided into five chapters. They are titled: 1. Experiencing the Sign of the Cross, 2. The Sign of the Cross: Its History, 3. The Need for Symbols and Signs, 4. A Prayer to Christ, and 5. The Cosmic Cross. While all five chapters deserve a careful reading, we are quoting, *passim*, from the first chapter. Here goes:*

The sign of the cross is one of the most fascinating elements of ritual symbolism...Where did this symbol and practice begin?...We see traces of the symbol appearing in the second century, in the writings of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Irenaeus of Lyons...Perhaps the aspect of Christianity that more than others transmitted the

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The Sign of the Cross *continued*

significance of the cross to common people was the ritual tradition. The Church provided Christians with a systematic method to transform the secular world into a spiritual world, via liturgical practice and signs and symbols within tradition...The sign of the cross developed alongside the cruciform sign of blessing with which most Christians are familiar. Both liturgical life and icons point to the cross. This sign, made as a gesture, acquired several meanings as it developed and was performed by bishops and priests. However, lay people use the sign of the cross as their own gesture of blessing when they bless food or when they bless each other...Tertullian (2nd century) writes: At every forward step and movement, at every going in and out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when we sit at table when we light the lamps, on the couch, on the seat, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, we trace upon the forehead the sign [of the cross]...Like Tertullian, who wrote about the sign over the forehead, St. Cyril of Jerusalem wrote about the sign of the cross in the fourth century:...Let the cross as our seal, be boldly made with our fingers upon our brow and on all occasions; over the bread we eat, over the cups we drink...The mark on the forehead as we see it in the Old Testament and in the Book of Revelation reveals something spiritually significant about the person who bears that mark...Peter of Damascus provides the first clear report on the details of performing the sign of the cross...the shift from the sign on the forehead to the sign over the body would have occurred after the 8th century...

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baptisms and chrismations, and we explore the richness of our faith through discussion of Holy Scripture, the theology of the Church Fathers, and the lives of the Saints. The goal of the course is to provide people with acculturation in the Church prior to their becoming full members in it.

I invite all of you to encourage spouses and relatives to visit our class if you think they might want to join the Orthodox Church. But just as importantly, please try to identify new visitors who show an interest in our faith and encourage them to be a part of "Introduction to Orthodoxy." I know from personal experience that Annunciation Cathedral is uncommonly welcoming to outside visitors, and we must all do our part to help people interested in joining us.

"Introduction to Orthodoxy" meets in the upstairs conference room (near Fr. Stephen's office) on Sundays from 9 a.m. until the beginning of the Liturgy. We are on a short hiatus due to winter holidays; classes resume January 8. Please direct any questions about the class to me at orthodoxy-agkozak@sneakemail.com.

Social Justice Committee

Recently we received a question from a parishioner, asking whether the Church ever takes public stands on social justice issues and whether there has ever been a thought to forming a social justice committee. Notice, here, the word "Church" is capitalized, meaning it has to do with the entire Body of Christ, including the church at the parish level.

The answer to the first part of the question is a resounding yes. One may recall Archbishop Iakovos marching with Dr. Martin Luther King, or the stand the Archdiocese has taken on Cyprus and other issues, especially the recent plight of refugees and the persecution of Christians in the Middle East. The Church, through the World Council of Churches and other agencies, has often addressed issues of world hunger and other issues which may be considered "social justice" issues, although, to be perfectly clear, the Gospel itself is not separate from addressing social justice issues. The foundational "for so God loved the world" (John 3:16) encompasses what is often called social justice. The caveat is that the Church [the Orthodox Church] never separates social justice concerns from theology, and takes a dim view of movements that claim to be concerned with social justice without a firm grounding in the Gospel. This said; let's go to the second part of the question. The part about forming a social justice committee. The Annunciation Cathedral is open to exploring this. In doing so, it extends an invitation to parishioners who might be interested in meeting and doing just this. The committee will do well to look at the Metropolis Strategic Plan, especially its singular outreach ministry program. Please feel free, initially, to communicate with Father Stephen, fatherstephen@annunciation.org, and, then, with the committee chair.

The Sign of the Cross *continued*

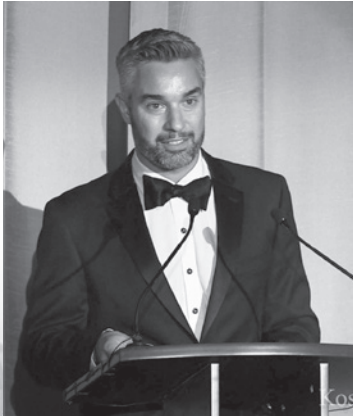
The next change the sign of the cross underwent had to do with the number of fingers with which it was performed. For several centuries the sign was formed by the motion of two fingers. Yet in later centuries the sign was made by tracing three extended fingers (the thumb, the index and the middle finger), with the remaining two fingers folded against the palm. This began to be the norm in the West, and is still the gesture practiced by most Eastern Christians...By the middle of the 9th century, the emergence of the three-finger sign is already described in the instructions of Pope Leo IV to his clergy: Sign the chalice and host with a proper cross...with two fingers outstretched and the thumb hidden within them, by which the Trinity is symbolized...The sign of the cross is made with three fingers, because the signing is done together with the invocation of the Trinity. This is how it is done: from above to below, and from the right

see next box



The Cathedral's Gala continues to Inspire

Thank you to everyone who came to celebrate the 95th Anniversary of the Cathedral on November 5. It was truly a historic and magical evening. Below are some additional photos from this memorable event. To see the photo montage compiled especially for the Gala, all the photos from the evening, as well as a 2 hour condensed video of the event, compiled by Kosta Petrakos, please go to the following link: www.kostasphotography.com/Gala2016



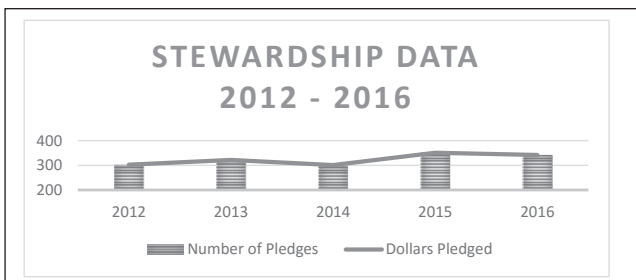
A Word About Stewardship: Good News!

We are pleased to share with you that financial Stewardship pledge income received in 2016 was the highest in recent history. Hopefully, this trend continues in 2017. Currently, we list 339 Stewardship units (families, for the most part), pledging a total of \$288,947 for the support of the Cathedral's ministries. While this amount is essentially only about half of what it takes to keep the Cathedral operating, the level of support is promising. The average pledge amount has increased over recent years and that is a testimony to your commitment. The average pledge amount for 2016 was \$852 (as opposed to \$782 in 2013). With a little more effort, we can easily reach a \$1,000.00 annual pledge average. Our annual Stewardship pledge goal for 2017 is to make it to \$300,000. With your continued support, love for the Lord and His people, and willingness, we can easily attain this goal in 2017.

Stewardship Growth Speaks for Itself

Below is the most recent report submitted by the Stewardship Committee to the Parish Council. It is self-explanatory. It shows that stewardship (that is, the support of the Cathedral and its ministries by means of an annual pledge) is continuing to grow. The term "unique 2016 pledges," meanwhile, indicates that a number of individuals who are pledging in 2016 had either pledged to the Cathedral prior to 2012 or, in most cases, are new to the Cathedral. We welcome them and thank them for their support.

STEWARDSHIP DATA	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2016
						Last Month / This Month
Number of Pledges	303	322	301	351	342	339 / 342
Pledged Dollars	\$253,844	\$251,670	\$234,092	\$299,637	291,375	288,947 / 291,375
Outstanding Balances 2016					30,709	38,488 / 30,709
Average Pledge	\$838.00	\$782.00	\$778.00	\$854.00	\$ 852.00	864 / 852
Number of pledges at 1000.00 or above					113	113 / 113
Number of pledges between 601 and 999					33	30 / 33
Number of pledges at 600.00 and below					195	193 / 195
Number of individual 2015 pledges that have not pledged for 2016					76	78 / 76



Report:

Need 9 pledges to meet LY (8k to meet LY)

Stewardship mailings sent

Working on online stewardship pledging with Nick Rally (?)

The Sign of the Cross *continued*

to the left, because Christ descended from the heavens to the earth, and from the Jews (right) He passed to the Gentiles (left)... The Russians continued to use only two fingers until the 17th century, which Patriarch Nikon instituted a series of liturgical changes aimed to make Russian practices consistent with contemporary Greek practices... The West, however, introduced an additional change, applied after the decision of the three-finger placement of the left-to-right horizontal bar. The sign of the three fingers gave way to the new sign of the open hand, or five fingers outstretched, with which most Western Christians are familiar today. The change to the open hand likely reflects or rather imitates the blessing of the priest, which in the West is performed

see next box



THE ANNUNCIATION CATHEDRAL LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY
INVITES YOU TO JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL

VASILOPITA & CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 2017

FOLLOWING CHURCH SERVICES

ANNUNCIATION CATHEDRAL KORINTHIAS COMMUNITY HALL

FOR QUESTIONS OR TO RESERVE:

CALL THE CATHEDRAL AT 415-864-8000

OR EMAIL PAT ALECK P_ALECO@SBCGLOBAL.NET

PHILOPTOCHOS



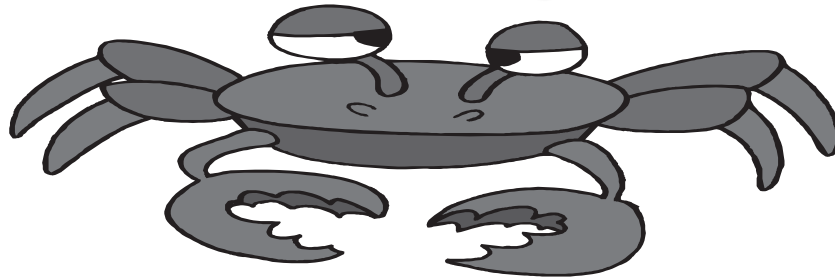
The Annunciation Cathedral Ladies Philoptochos Society
presents its:

35th Annual Crab Feed

Friday January 27, 2017

Cocktail Reception: 6:00 pm

Dinner: 7:30 pm



Scrumptious Fresh Dungeness Crab

\$60 per person

Reservations will be secured only by receipt of payment

Attended Parking Available

344 14th Street, SF

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Please reserve _____ ticket(s) and/or _____ table(s)

(Maximum 10 people per table. Include the names of all guests to
be seated at the table)

Total Amount Enclosed _____

For Reservations e mail Foula Vasilogiorgis: annunciation2017crabfeed@gmail.com

or

Call 415-378-7200

Make checks payable to: Annunciation Philoptochos, Attn: Crab Feed
Please mail completed reservation form and check by January 15th, 2017 to:
Annunciation Cathedral: 245 Valencia Street San Francisco, CA 94103

7 Elected to Parish Council; 2 of these are Young Adults

The Cathedral held Parish Council elections on December 11. Seven individuals were candidates for election to a two-year term, beginning January 1, 2017. They are: George Ambadiotakis Ambus, S. Christopher Kyriacou, Vassiliki Moulas, Dean Nicolakakis, Manoli Nuris, Nick Rally, and Christopher Ramos. Together with Father Stephen and the eight who were elected last year, they compose the Parish Council for 2017. The eight who were elected last year are: Philippos Athanasiades, George Gavros, Deno C. Konstantinidis, Katina Kostoulas, Ph.D., Thomas A. Nuris, Paul P. Sogotis, Nicholas Svetcoff, and James D. Vorrises. The oath of office will be administered on Sunday, January 8, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. Immediately thereafter, they will convene to elect officers for 2017. The Parish will also celebrate its Vasilopita on January 8, sponsored by the Cathedral Ladies Philoptochos. We must point out that two of the seven elected, namely, Manoli Nuris and Christopher Ramos, are members of the Cathedral's Young Adults. We especially welcome this participation by our youth in the administrative ministry of the church.

Community Link Continues Ministering to Those in Need

Community Link, going on its 10th year of existence, is a group of Annunciation parishioners who meet once a month on a drop-in basis to visit members of our community who may be confined due to illness or age. We travel to hospitals, nursing homes and private residences. Many of those we visit no longer have family or friends to support them and just need to know there is someone who cares. A short visit or phone call can lift one's spirits a great deal. If anyone in the community knows of any other home bound parishioners to add to our list or would like to join us for a visit, please contact Pauline Oetzel at poetzel@hotmail.com. Please keep Community Link and our home-bound brothers and sisters in your prayers! Meanwhile, the Cathedral takes this opportunity to extend its gratitude to Pauline Oetzel for heading Community Link since its inception. Under her leadership, Community Link has "linked" the church community with our home-bound parishioners, offering hope and the message of God's love. We urge more parishioners to get involved with Community Link, as we plan for its future in the service of our fellow parishioners.

Share this Link

Share this link: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-2702215> and ask your donors, volunteers, employees, and friends to bookmark this link so all their eligible shopping will benefit Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral.

Copy and paste this message in a Facebook post: When you shop at AmazonSmile, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Bookmark the link <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-2702215> and support us every time you shop.

Copy and paste this message in a Tweet: Amazon donates to Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral when you shop @AmazonSmile. <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-2702215> #YouShopAmazonGives



Meet Mike Hana. He is the new head of the Friends School, located directly across from the Cathedral. Mike and his wife live nearby, and observe the construction of the Cathedral. Recently, Mike met with Father Stephen. They discussed matters of common concern and Mike had the opportunity to view the interior of the church. Astounding. Welcome, Mike.

The Sign of the Cross *continued*

similarly, with the entire hand. It is strange, then, that the East maintained the traditional three-finger gesture for the sign of the cross, while the faithful accept the blessing of the priest with a different sign, the sign of the name of Jesus Christ.

In the historical examination of the evolution of the sign of the cross, nothing suggests that at any given time it had been performed in the same way throughout the Christian world. The varying accounts of Cyril of Jerusalem, Leo IV, Peter of

see next box

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Happy New Year and Greetings to our Annunciation family from Philoptochos! We hope the Christmas season brought you joyful and warm memories. May the abundance of His love will transform us to be agents of mercy to help us meet the challenges we face in our lives.

A big and overwhelming thank you to the Annunciation Philoptochos Members and Parishioners for all the support you gave to our year end charities we supported during the Christmas season. According to Vivian Curd and Mariam Arsinoos the **Angel Tree Project** was one of the most successful ever. Everyone brought multiple sets of pajamas for the foster children in need. They were delivered to the Boys and Girls Club. Also, the **One Warm Coat National Philoptochos project** was a success. This was an initiative that all chapters across the United States participated in. In a three week period our parishioners again brought many outerwear warm coats that were delivered to General Hospital vocational officer for the homeless and needy in our community. Our Church alone brought in close to forty coats. Your support is amazing and your generosity without parallel. You are to be commended.

Our Philoptochos Christmas coffee hour started the season with a bang. Thanks to all our members who brought deserts and sweets to complement the food provided by Stella Catering. Everything was delicious! Thank you for always stepping up and making each of our events special.

Our members look forward to you joining us for our **Vasilopita and Brunch on Sunday, January 8, 2017** following Church service. Our ladies under the direction of Anastasia Dekaristos and Vicky Moulas will be making the most delicious breads for your enjoyment. In addition the **35th Annual Crab Feed** takes place on Friday, January 27, 2017. Make sure to get your reservations in so that chairs Rose Sogotis and Annamarie Balian can order the appropriate amount of Crab. Our members look forward to seeing you there and eating the most delicious crab of the season. Check the flyers in the Herald and make sure you are there!

As we look forward to the New Year we hope that you will reflect on the value of helping others and offer whatever support you can. Our **membership drive takes place January through March**. Your participation is a very important part of our success. We hope you will join us so that we can work together to grow our ministries and programs that will inspire the future of our Cathedral and future generations.

Community Kitchen: thank you for volunteering!

The Community Kitchen, which began under the name Soup Kitchen, operates the third Tuesday of every month. The volunteer work involves food prep, cooking, hall setup, serving the meal and—so important!—cleanup. We also have a food pantry, so a few awesome volunteers come early to bag up canned/non-perishable goods for our guests to take with them. Some volunteers arrive earlier, but the typical timeframe is 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Won't you consider volunteering once in a while? All you have to do is show up. By the way, there's no age limit. We have teenagers volunteering and we have people "forever young" volunteering. It would be truly wonderful to expand our volunteer base, so we can do more. Please communicate your willingness to Father Stephen, fatherstephen@annunciation.org. He will put you in touch to those who've taken the lead and are coordinating this important ministry. Thank you.



Even without advertising (i.e. without passing out flyers) we have between 30 and 60 guests on any given third Tuesday. It's just become known that this Community Kitchen operates every third Tuesday of every Month, beginning at 6:30 p.m. We are morally obligated to continue this vital ministry, under the leadership of our Young Adults. In addition to the hard work of our young adults, we would like to thank Joseph Stevens for his efforts. On more than one occasion, Joseph has cooked the meal for the Community Kitchen.

The Sign of the Cross *continued*

Damascus, John of Damascus and Innocent III, and all the other sources we examined, show us how the sign of the cross developed from a simple gesture on the forehead to the three and five-finger large signs currently in use...In addition, the information we have

see next box

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON



YOUNG ADULTS CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON



GREEK SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



YOUTH NEWS



GOYA News

Again, pictures are worth thousands of words. Which is why we put up pictures this time. The pictures show our youngsters enjoying an afternoon with Matia and, in many cases, their parents, at the ice skating rink at the Embarcadero. In addition to meeting and enjoying ice skating, our young people are involved in charitable work (some, by participating in the community kitchen or soup kitchen, the third Tuesday of every month). Future events include an evening at AT&T Park, to watch the Giants play, field trips, and, of course, summer camp. To learn more about our GOYA or to join, please contact our GOYA advisor, Matia Kostakis, matiak23@gmail.com.

Dance Group News

Our dance program is in full swing! We have 4 groups and 65 dancers preparing for this year's Folk Dance Festival (FDF) held over Presidents' weekend! This year's FDF will take place in San Diego, CA. Our directors are very busy teaching dance material to their respective groups, while our dancers are feverishly learning their songs and dances. The Cathedral's award-winning dance program consists of experienced and dedicated directors, talented dancers, and supportive families and community. All groups are currently closed in preparation for FDF however, will be open to new dancers starting in March of 2017. Our program encompasses everyone from four years old to young adult. Please contact Lea Lyberopoulos at karthia808@yahoo.com for more information.

To Mellon: Pre-K-K (must be at least 4 years old in Fall 2016) Directed by Irene Kyriacou and Katerina Sarikakis

Revmata: 1st-3rd grade in Fall 2016 Directed by Katerina Sarikakis, Eleni Taptelis, and Trina Mithos

Thisavri: 4th-6th grade in Fall 2016 Directed by Irene Kyriacou, Lea Lyberopoulos, and Lea Papavasiliou

Spithes: 7th-11th grade in Fall 2016 Directed by Irene Kyriacou, Lea Lyberopoulos, and Lea Papavasiliou

Megalopolis: 18 and up Directed by Michael and Nicole Garibaldi

Sunday School News

*"Of all holy works, the education of children is the most holy."
~Saint Theophan the Recluse*

Our Sunday School Christmas Program took place on December 18th. Through music and readings, the students brought to life the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Christmas Program concluded with a beautiful duet by Brittany Dhawan and Evan Boukidis of Agia Nechta (Silent Night). A wonderful Christmas Brunch followed and was shared by all. Many thanks to all the Sunday School Parents and Teachers for their help and support.

In the spirit of the season, Sunday School also participated in the San Francisco Fire Department's Holiday Toy Drive. Several toys were brought by our students and what a special treat it was to have a SFFD Fire Truck come to collect them all! Thank you to the Novo Family for coordinating this activity!

Thanks to the efforts of our 7th-8th grade teacher Mrs. Tina Kontonis, our Sunday School students also made special angel ornaments for the Metropolis House.

Please Note: There will be no Sunday School on **January 1**. Sunday School resumes Sunday, January 8.

January 1st	New Year's Day - No Sunday School
January 8th	Sunday School Resumes

The Annunciation Sunday School wishes everyone a peaceful New Year, rich in blessings.

Sunday School affirms the home as the center of our faith. Parents are the most important people in a child's life, and learning about our Orthodox faith starts in the home. Teaching children about God is a seven-day-a-week effort, not something that can be done just an hour on Sunday morning. We pledge to do our best to support you in your child's spiritual education but it is only with your active participation that we are able to share the importance and value of our Orthodox faith with your children.

"Please make every effort this year to get Sunday School and the children off to a good start by coming on time at 10:30 am."

'Like'
Annunciation
Cathedral Sunday
School!



Serving in the Altar

Serving in the altar is a wonderful way for our young people to participate in the worship of our church, and learn more about our faith. For the present school year, we are very pleased to announce the altar leaders program! This year, three of the older altar servers have taken on the responsibility of coordinating the groups during services each week. We hope to add several more to their ranks in the coming years!

If any families are interested in their boys joining an altar group, who are above the age of 10, feel free to contact **Father Stephen** at fatherstephen@annunciation.org. Thank you also to **Nektarios McKnight** for guiding and instructing our altar servers each Sunday. As always, if anyone has any questions or suggestions, feel free to let us know. Thanks!

Our altar schedule for January is as follows:

January 1	–	Group 2
January 8	–	Group 3
January 15	–	Group 4
January 22	–	Group 1
January 29	–	Group 2

Our altar groups are as follow:

Group 1- Stelios Kyriacou, Kosta Lyberopoulos, Andrew Vellis, George Tsokas, Victor Nicolacakis, Justin Perez, Christian Kleinekorte (Dimitri Kontonis- Group Leader)

Group 2- Christopher Apostolos Percia, Panagiotis Sogotis, Yianni Sogotis, Steven Monolakis, (Niko Manetas- Group Leader)

Group 3- Niko Pezo, Demetri Rally, Steven Chiappari, Gianni Kefalas, Nicholas Shatara (Demetri Kontonis- Group Leader)

Group 4- Nathan Tesfai, Bobby Kontonis, Hari Manetas, Alexander Kasolas, Matthew Nuris (Jonas Tesfai- Group Leader)

Don't see your name here? Would you like to join us? We would like you to. Report for altar duty any Sunday morning, prior to 10:30 a.m., and Nektarios will make the appropriate arrangements. Meanwhile, it is also imperative that you attend Sunday School.



Greek School News

Greek school held its annual Christmas celebration on Saturday, December 17. The students recited Christmas poems and sang Christmas songs, thereby extending our school wishes everyone for a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year. Classes resume January 7, 2017.

If you would like more information about our school or would like to enroll your child for next year, please contact Anthi Janssen at anthigj@gmail.com or 415-254-5458. We look forward to welcoming you.

Sacraments

Chrismation

Maria Fuentes Bissas, daughter of Abbin Dalhani and Blessie Fuentes, and wife of Pete Bissas, was received into the Church through the Sacrament of Chrismation on December 11. Her sponsor is Chrisoula Novo.

Na Mas Zisi! Long Life!

The Sign of the Cross *continued*

bears witness to practices known in certain parts of the world, such as Rome, Damascus, Constantinople, and Russia. But historically there have also been silent pockets regarding the theology and practice of the sign of the cross. We have no information about the sing among African Christians, Copts, Franks,

see next box

J A N U A R Y C A L E N D A R

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Orthros, 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m. Circumcision, St. Basil's, Liturgy 10 a.m.			Church Basketball, 7 p.m.	Eve of Epiphany, Great Hours, 9 am Vesperal Liturgy 10 am Blessing of the Waters Church Basketball, 7 p.m.	Holy Theophany, Orthros 9 a.m., Blessing of the Waters And Divine Liturgy, 10 am Dance Practice 7 p.m.	St. John, Liturgy 10 am Greek School, 10 a.m. Dance Practice, 12:30 p.m.
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Orthros, 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m. Parish Council Oath of Office, Parish Vasilopita			Church Basketball, 7 p.m.	Church Basketball, 7 p.m.	Dance Practice 7 p.m.	Greek School, 10 a.m. Dance Practice, 12:30 p.m.
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Orthros, 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m. Parish Council, 12:30 p.m.		St. Anthony, Liturgy 10 am Community Kitchen, 6:30 Pm	Church Basketball, 7 p.m.	Church Basketball, 7 p.m.	Dance Practice 7 p.m.	Greek School, 10 a.m. Dance Practice, 12:30 p.m.
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Orthros, 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m.			Church Basketball, 7 p.m.	Church Basketball, 7 p.m.	Crab Feed, 6 p.m.	Greek School, 10 a.m. Dance Practice, 12:30 p.m.
29	30	31				
Orthros, 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m.						

The Sign of the Cross *continued*

Spaniards, Irish, Goths, or Britons in their early history. Nevertheless, despite the relative lack of descriptions, despite the different symbolic meanings occasionally attached to it, the spiritual weight of the sign [of the cross] has always been the same: In texts from Tertullian to Origen to Kosmas Aitolos, it is a blessing, a prayer, a proclamation of the Christian identity, a living mystery, and an acceptance of the role that God has given us.

UNITED GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF
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“Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven...”

