



REJOICE!

The Monthly Publication of

ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

93 Locust St. Dover, NH 03820 · Tel: (603) 742-7667

December 2022

Beloved in Christ,

As we approach the joyful feast of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, let us ponder upon this holy season from an Orthodox perspective. We all know how secularized the entire Christmas experience, popularly known as the “holiday season,” has become. As Orthodox Christians living in the midst of secularization and extreme materialism, we are constantly challenged on how to remain on the straight and narrow path of Christ, especially during the Christmas season. The question is, how do we regain an Orthodox perspective of this holy period?

First of all, a bit of church history can assist us in finding the answer. Many centuries ago, the Church celebrated the nativity of Christ in the flesh, the visitation of the Magi, and the baptism of Christ all on January 6th. Each of these events is considered a manifestation of Jesus Christ as God: His supernatural and miraculous birth from the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit; the visitation of the Magi who came to worship Him as the Son of God; His epiphany, or *theophany*, when the Holy Trinity was revealed to St. John the Forerunner at the baptism of Christ. Basically, January 6th was a great feast that celebrated the appearance of God in the flesh to the world, through the person of Jesus Christ.

In the early years of the Church, society, as it does today, constantly influenced many of the faithful Christians. The pagan Roman world celebrated the god of the sun on December 25th, the winter solstice. This was a feast with much revelry and debauchery, most likely similar to the modern celebration of New Year’s Eve. The Church in her wisdom, sought to redirect the misguided Christians who continued to participate in this godless, pagan celebration. Little

by little, throughout all regions of the Church, the celebration of the Nativity of Christ and the visitation of the Magi was transferred to December 25th, in order to superimpose upon the pagan feast the proper worship of the true God – the “*Sun of Righteousness*,” as Christ is referred to in the festal hymn. The celebration of the baptism and epiphany of Christ was retained on January 6th.

Since the events commemorated on these two feasts were of great magnitude and theological significance, it became the tradition of the Church to encourage proper spiritual preparation for the feast of the Nativity through a 40-day fast, similar to Great Lent, but generally less strict in nature. In contrast to the Nativity fast, the days following the Nativity leading up to Theophany are considered joyous days of celebration, during which the usual Wednesday and Friday fast is prohibited. This understanding of the pre- and post-Nativity period is key to the proper Orthodox observance of this holy season.

If, therefore, the period of fasting prior to the Nativity of Christ is understood as a *spiritual vigil*, then we should clearly see how the idea of “Christmas parties” that have become common during the month of December, are quite contrary to Orthodox Church tradition. Having said this, it must be clarified that it is not considered sinful or spiritually harmful to attend such gatherings, which are inevitably encountered through one’s workplace, or through neighbors, friends, and family. If we are keeping the fast, we should not bring attention to ourselves in these situations, since humility is such a major part of Orthodox spirituality. We can still maintain a sense of *solemn vigil* within our hearts and souls, and thereby not lose

the *spirit* of the fast.

For Orthodox Christians, the true period of celebration is between Christmas and Theophany. *This* is the time for joyful celebrations with no restrictions on any type of food and drink, including Wednesdays and Fridays. Wouldn’t it be a great blessing to see our families, starting with our church family, hosting *true* Christmas parties in their proper context? Imagine how meaningful Christmas parties would be in the days following Christmas. All the wonderful traditions that we have incorporated from western Europe, from Christmas carols to eggnog, would fit in beautifully and have much more significance *after the fact*.

In order to make our observance of the Christmas season more Orthodox, we would have to go to great lengths to avoid the materialistic, *de-Christianized* spirit that society, and especially the retail world, has forced upon us. The place to commence such a change of heart would be found in the *Church*. By following her Holy Tradition, both liturgically and at home, we could again make *Christ* the central focus of this holy season, which many pious Christians – both Orthodox and others – yearn for so deeply. May the Holy Spirit guide all of us to a holier and more spiritual observance of this beautiful and meaningful time of year!

In Christ,

+Fr. Anthony



Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church

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Emergency Contact: (401) 662-5259

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603-742-7667**

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Vice President: Michael Frudakis

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Assistant Treasurer: Heidi Atkinson

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Litsa Maskwa, Shana Mitropoulos, Toby Weir

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Chanter	(open)	
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	Robert Mitropoulos	
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	Lea Macheras	lmacheras@yahoo.com
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Please send submissions to: annunciationdover@gmail.com,
and put "Newsletter Submission" in the subject line.

FROM FR. ANTHONY

Nativity Fast Continues

The Orthodox Church's preparation for the Nativity of Christ is very different from other Christian traditions, and totally opposite of the worldly, secular observance during the weeks prior to the Nativity. Ours is a quiet, spiritual preparation through a 40-day fast. We remind all our brethren of this very ancient fast period of the Church, in order that we all spiritually prepare for the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh. The majority of this period is considered a *relaxed* fast, and not particularly strict until the final 12 days. Following are the generally accepted guidelines as a starting point, for those who wish to follow the fast to the full extent.

From 11/15 to 12/12:

- Fasting from all animal products.
- Fish, wine (all alcoholic beverages), and olive oil may be consumed every day except for Wednesdays and Fridays.* Shellfish may be consumed daily.

From 12/13 to 12/24:

- Strict fast – no animal products or fish. Shellfish may be consumed daily.
- Fasting from wine and olive oil, except for Saturdays and Sundays.*

*There are exceptions for certain weekday feasts. Please see your Archdiocesan calendar.

Remember that fasting should be relaxed for health reasons, and for growing children. Your spiritual father is always available to guide you accordingly. Even if we cannot keep the fast entirely, we can still keep the *spirit* of the fast as much as possible, especially by incorporating regular church attendance, increased prayer, and charitable works.

Confession During Nativity Fast

Fr. Anthony will be available for confession per the usual schedule as follows:

- Each Saturday evening after Great Vespers (no need to make an appointment)
- During office hours by appointment

In the tradition of our Orthodox Church, confession is recommended and encouraged during each major fast period, both for spiritual health, and as proper preparation for receiving Holy Communion. Obviously, one should also confess outside of fast periods when there is need.

Dear Annunciation Parishioners,

Christmas is fast approaching and once again it is time to open our hearts and share the joy of the season with those less fortunate.

Please select an "Angel" of your choice from the **ANGEL TREE** located in the Narthex. Return your wrapped gift to the Annunciation library with its original tag request by **Wednesday, December 14th**. Your donations will be distributed to local children ages 3 months to 11 years.

The Outreach ministry and Sunday School thank you for your generosity and kindness in this joint venture.

Merry Christmas and may God bless you always!



Reflections on the Nativity

The following is taken from *The Year of Grace of the Lord*, by a monk of the Eastern Church, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992.

Meditation for Christmas

'The shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.' Let us, too, go even to Bethlehem. In spirit, let us climb that hill 'unto the hills, from whence cometh my help'. Climbing up to Bethlehem implies an effort; but shall we let such a great occasion slip by? ***'Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem...to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child...'***

The birth of Jesus at Bethlehem is not a far-distant historical event which is of no concern to me. And, if it does concern me, it is not merely because I am a member of the great human collectivity. The message of Christmas is not addressed to humanity in general, it is addressed to each person in particular. It reaches each soul in a way that is unique and exceptional. This joy is announced to me in a different way than to any one else; it is to me and for me that a Saviour is born. Let us recognize the Nativity of Christ as a very personal gift. Let us receive this gift with faith and thankfulness.

'And lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.' The Magi followed the light which was given to them faithfully: being obedient to this light, they were led by it to the child. If I try to be faithful to the full measure of light that God has given me, if I have the courage to leave all to follow the star, if I decide to be true and obedient to my conscience (whatever may happen), and ready to 'bear witness of the Light...that was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world', the divine light will not fail, despite my ignorance, to lead me...right up to the Child in whom I have placed all my hope.

'And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.' The birth in a manger declares that Jesus wants to be counted among the poorest, and the most humble; he will be found among the disinherited, the sick, the prisoner, the sinners. I would rather be poor with Jesus than be rich without Jesus... Then, too, we must accept the fact that, for those who love Jesus, there is no place in this world...

'They (the Magi) saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.' Like the Magi, we offer our treasures and we offer the little child the precious things we have. In spirit we offer gold, the sign of Jesus's sovereignty over all riches and all created things, a sign also of our own detachment from earthly goods. In spirit we offer incense, the sign of adoration, for Jesus is not only the king of the universe, he is our God. We offer in spirit myrrh, the spice with which we honour in advance the death and burial of Jesus and through which too, is represented our own renunciation of bodily pleasures...

'And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen...' Lord Jesus, before we leave Bethlehem, or come to the end of this feast of the Nativity, allow us to see something of what the shepherds saw, to hear something of what they heard, and to receive in our hearts the message which is preached to us from the manger...

Orthodox Life Sessions

The last Orthodox Life session for the fall will be on Thursday, 12/15. We will be taking a recess over the Christmas/Theophany season.

**PLEASE ACCEPT MY BEST WISHES FOR A MOST BLESSED NATIVITY
OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST,
AS WELL AS A MOST BLESSED HOLY THEOPHANY
AND A HEALTHY NEW YEAR TO ALL!**

**IN THE NEWBORN CHRIST,
+Fr. Anthony**

PARISH NEWS AND EVENTS



Parish Chronicle



Funerals

12/1 - George Polychronopoulos

Memorials

11/13 – Ethel (Athanasia) Morikis
11/20 – Roula (Zaharoula) Kottaridis

May their memory be eternal!

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Please pray for our brothers and sisters:

**Elizabeth, Deborah, Jim, Logan, Kali, Alexandros,
Anna, Abigail, Shannon, Maryanne, Philip.**

In keeping with a common Church tradition, we will keep names on the parish prayer list for **40 days**. If you wish to offer names for prayer, please send those via e-mail to the church office at:

annunciationdover@gmail.com,
or call the office at 742-7667.

Please give first names only, and preferably full names, not nicknames.

Donations

- Decoration of Icon of the Entrance of the Theotokos, 11/21 – Peter and Rea Lampesis

Upcoming Festal Icon Decorations

- Icon of the Nativity of Christ, 12/25
- Icon of Holy Theophany, 1/6

Anyone interested in sponsoring these icons, please contact the church office by phone or e-mail. The cost is \$50 each.

Special Event for His Eminence

On Sunday, November 13, there was a banquet in honor of His Eminence, Metropolitan Methodios. It was held at St. Nicholas Church in Portsmouth. This year marks the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the holy episcopacy. The parishes of our local region honored His Eminence for his fatherly guidance and oversight over his years as our shepherd in Christ.

Our own George Coussoule, along with lay representatives from the other churches, offered a few remarks on behalf of our parish.



ALKISTIS NEWS

There were many women who volunteered to donate to the Fellowship table for the Remembrance Sunday coffee hour to honor our veterans. The camaraderie of working together and cleaning up together is always a plus to sponsoring an event. The following women are always supportive & generous with their donations & their time. They come through time & time again to make an event successful.

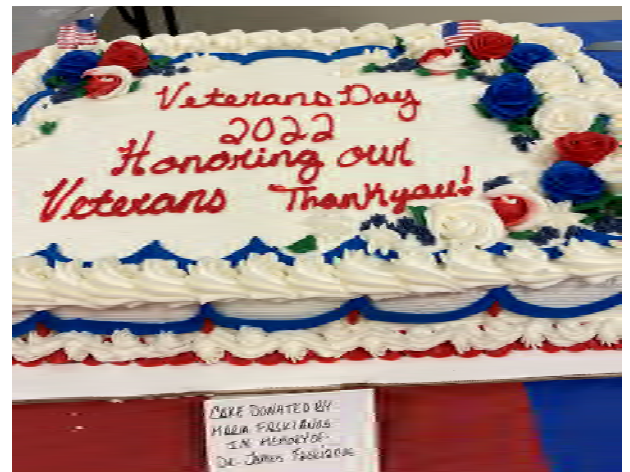
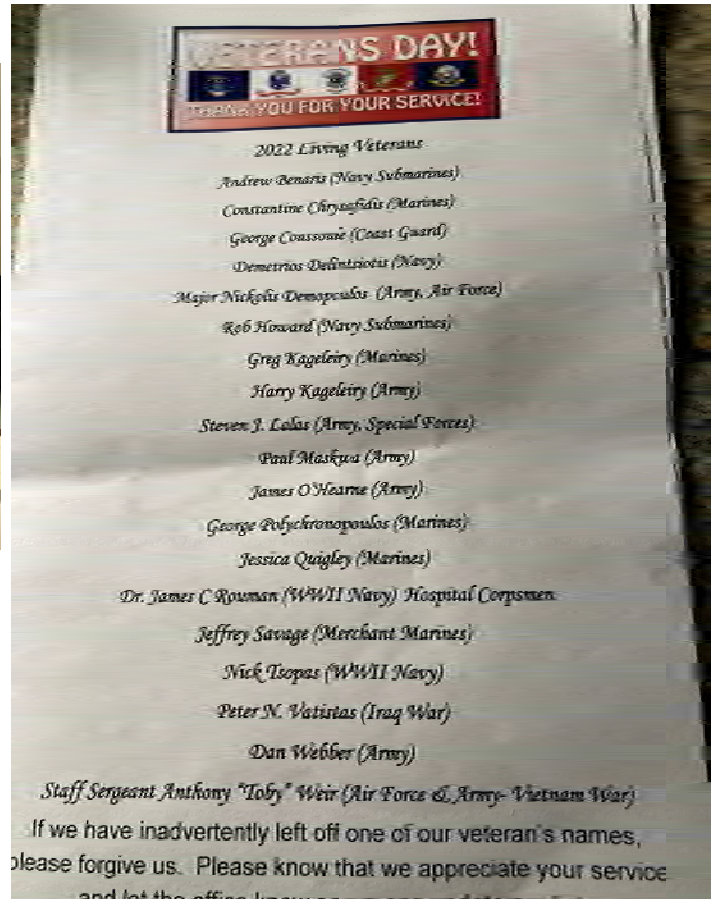
Althea, Betsy, Bea, Cynthia, Deborah, Evelyn, Georgette, Georgia, Maria, Presbyteria Themmi, Rosie, Vula, and Zeff.

Many thanks to Cynthia, Bill, Bea and Rob for spending Saturday afternoon cleaning, mopping water on the floor from the rain, and setting up for Sunday's Fellowship Hour. We have learned from our past events and projects we cannot get through without the men who help us along the way.


















You can see from the list of veterans there were many not in attendance on Sunday. We thank them all for their service!



Luncheon in honor of Veterans 2022



December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Orthodox Life Session 10 am 	2	3  Great Vespers 6 pm
NATIVITY FAST						
4  <i>Orthros, 8:45 am</i> <i>Liturgy, 10 am</i>	5  Great Vespers of St. Nicholas in Portsmouth <u>6:30 pm</u>	6  St. Nicholas the Wonderworker <i>Orthros, 8:45 am</i> <i>Liturgy, 10 am, <u>here</u></i>	7	8 Orthodox Life Session 7 pm 	9  Conception of the Theotokos by St. Anna <i>Orthros, 8:45 am</i> <i>Liturgy, 10 am</i>	10  Great Vespers 6 pm
NATIVITY FAST						
11  <i>Orthros, 8:45 am</i> <i>Liturgy, 10 am</i>	12  St. Spyridon the Wonderworker <i>Orthros, 8:45 am</i> <i>Liturgy, 10 am</i>	13 strict fast through 12/24 <i>(see bulletin entry)</i>	14 Parish Council 6 pm	15 Orthodox Life Session 10 am 	16	17  Great Vespers 6 pm
NATIVITY FAST						
18  <i>Orthros, 8:45 am</i> <i>Liturgy, 10 am</i>	19 Fr. Anthony at monastery for confession through 12/20	20	21	22	23  Great Hours of the Nativity of Christ 10 am	24  Eve of the Nativity of Christ <i>Orthros, 8:45 am</i> <i>Liturgy, 10 am</i> Great Vespers <u>5 pm</u> <i>(no Communion)</i>
NATIVITY FAST						
25  <i>8:45am, Orthros</i> <i>10 am, Liturgy</i>	26 Fr. Anthony away through 12/30	27	28	29	30	31  Great Vespers of the Circumcision of Christ & St. Basil 6 pm
NO FASTING THROUGH 1/4						

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship – December 2022

“Our Spiritual Church – Our Spiritual Home”

As we look forward to the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, we have much to be thankful for. We are now able to come together as a church family to worship and pray together. With COVID still a presence in our lives, we have many parishioners still fearful to return to church. We pray that these Stewards will soon feel comfortable to return to worship with us.

It has been challenging, but we are so grateful for those Stewards who have been working hard to continue to keep our important ministries running successfully. Recently a Pastichio/Pastry Fundraiser and the International Tasting Fundraiser were able to earn almost \$2,000 to go the Outreach Ministry which helps assist those in need.

Please take a few minutes to review your Stewardship Commitment for 2022 to insure the continued success of these important Parish Ministries. These programs are undertaken for the spiritual needs of the families entrusted to our care.

For those who have completed their Commitment we are truly thankful. As you can see from the church 2022 Stewardship Graph, your generosity has enabled us to reach 86% of our projected Stewardship goal of \$90,000 for this year. However, this Stewardship Goal covers only 37% of our Total Operating Expenses.

For those who haven't completed their Commitment for 2022, please kindly consider doing so before the end of the year. Remember that your Stewardship provides the foundation for our Parish Ministries and our efforts in meeting the challenge of spreading Christ's word and our Orthodox Faith.

With sincere gratitude and appreciation,

Althea Coussoule and the Stewardship Committee



CHURCH BOOKSTORE / GIFT SHOP

Please check out our new items:

- **Icons**
- **Prayer rope bracelets**
- **Charcoal**
- **Incense burner**

Be on the lookout for more new items!

If there is something you would like, but don't see it, be sure to let Hope Frudakis or Vula Lalas know. They will try to order it for you!

2022 Christmas Card Fundraiser

As the Christmas season is drawing near, we are once again inviting you to participate to our parish family Christmas Card, which will go out to all of our members.

We are asking you to be generous and support this initiative. We leave the amount of the offering up to you, because we would really like to encourage participation.

Please return the form with your donation **by Sunday, December 4th** in order to ensure timely delivery of the card.

Names of your family members as you would like to see them on the card: (Print legibly please) **Thank you!**

Names: _____

2022 CHRISTMAS POINTSETTIAS

Contributions of \$25.00 (or more) are being accepted for the purchase of Christmas flowers for our church.

The donation is made with the following intentions:

Health of: _____

Memory of: _____

From: _____

Please return to the church office by **Sunday, December 4th & Thank You!**

GOYA

Greetings Goyans! Winter has officially begun and Christmas will be here before we know it. Here's what we have planned for the month of December:

We will be conducting a food drive for Cross Roads House in Portsmouth. There will be boxes located both in the Narthex, and downstairs in the entry of the hall for your donations. **Please remember that food items need to be non-perishable and not expired!**

The following is a statement from the website of Cross Roads House:

Cross Roads House provides emergency and transitional shelter to homeless men, women, and children in the Seacoast Area. We provide homeless families and individuals with basic necessities, as well as the tools and guidance they need to return to permanent housing.

2022 PARISH STEWARDS AS OF OCTOBER 2022
 THESE FAMILIES HAVE RETURNED THEIR NEW STEWARDSHIP FORMS

<i>Evangelatos, Rev. Anthony & Presvytera Themmi</i>	<i>Hintz, Alysha & Derek</i>	<i>Rebel, Jesse & Britteny</i>
<i>Athans, Rev. Dr. Arthur & Presvytera Keta</i>	<i>Hoogeveen, Les & Barbara</i>	<i>Rosa, Joanna & Stephen</i>
<i>Abbott, Sophia & Tim</i>	<i>Houreas-Trudeau, Nancy</i>	<i>Rouman, James</i>
<i>Amankwah, Katherine & Nana</i>	<i>Jenkins, Elizabeth & Jon</i>	<i>Rouman, John</i>
<i>Athans, John & Gerriann</i>	<i>Kageleiry, Gregory</i>	<i>Savage, Jeff & Evelyn</i>
<i>Atkinson, Heidi & Shawn</i>	<i>Kageleiry, Harry & Barbara</i>	<i>Savramis, Anastasia</i>
<i>Benaris, Andy</i>	<i>Karabelas, Arthur & Donna</i>	<i>Schumaker, Robin & Judy</i>
<i>Boudreau, Elene & David</i>	<i>Karabelas, Jerry & Eloise</i>	<i>Scontras, Yota</i>
<i>Byers, Pamela & Bill</i>	<i>Karoutas, Abby & Periklis</i>	<i>Servetas, Charlotte</i>
<i>Charos, Evangelos & Maryann</i>	<i>Karoutas, Paul & Eleni</i>	<i>Smith, Marena & Cody</i>
<i>Chrysafidis, Constantine</i>	<i>Kazmierski/Meehan, Christina James</i>	<i>Sousane, Deborah & James</i>
<i>Clairmont, Richard</i>	<i>Koromilas, Johnnie</i>	<i>Stamelos, Paraskevi</i>
<i>Coussoule, George & Althea</i>	<i>Kostis, Dennis & Betsy</i>	<i>Strangas, James</i>
<i>Danie, Kyle & Kiki</i>	<i>Kostis, John & Stacey</i>	<i>Strangas, Peter</i>
<i>Delintsiotis, Anthi</i>	<i>Kottaridis, Kathy</i>	<i>Strangas, William</i>
<i>Delintsiotis, Claire</i>	<i>Kottaridis, Roula</i>	<i>Thomas, George & Denise</i>
<i>Delintsiotis, Demetrios</i>	<i>Labanaris, Nicholas & Fotine</i>	<i>Tsiros, Cathy & William</i>
<i>Demopoulos, Alaina</i>	<i>Lalas, Kimon & Vula</i>	<i>Tsopas Nickolas</i>
<i>Demopoulos, George</i>	<i>Lalas, John</i>	<i>Tsougranis, Ted & Irene</i>
<i>Demopoulos, John & Anita</i>	<i>Lampesis, Peter & Rea</i>	<i>Tsouramanis, Katina</i>
<i>Demopoulos, Ted</i>	<i>Lampros, Sharon & John</i>	<i>Vatistas, Cathy & John</i>
<i>Demopoulos, Vasilike (Zeff)</i>	<i>Lazarus, George & Sandy</i>	<i>Venetos, James & Nanine</i>
<i>Economides Joost, Elaine</i>	<i>MacNamee, Colin & Rebecca</i>	<i>Vezeris, Kosmas & Christina</i>
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<i>Faskianos, Irina</i>	<i>Maskwa, Paul & Paula</i>	<i>Weir, Anthony (Toby)</i>
<i>Faskianos, Maria</i>	<i>Melitus, James & Kathleen</i>	<i>Wozmak, Diane & Richard</i>
<i>Faskianos, Sophia</i>	<i>Mitropoulos, George</i>	<i>Xydias, Bill</i>
<i>Frangos, James & Peggy</i>	<i>Mitropoulos, Nick & Shana</i>	<i>Xydias, Eftimios & Lily</i>
<i>Frangos, Lilly</i>	<i>Mitropoulos, Peter & Michelle</i>	<i>Xydias, Panagiotis & Eleni</i>
<i>Fresh, Hayden</i>	<i>Mitropoulos, Robert & Ryan Eagle</i>	
<i>Frudakis, Hope</i>	<i>Morris-Howrd, Bea & Rob</i>	
<i>Frudakis, Michael</i>	<i>Nemi, Stephanie & Ryan</i>	
<i>Gemas, Casey</i>	<i>O'Hearne, James & Rosanne</i>	
<i>Gemas, Mark & Lorie</i>	<i>Panasis, Charles & Paula</i>	
<i>Gemas, Nicholas & Margaret</i>	<i>Passas, Constance</i>	
<i>Georgakilas, George</i>	<i>Pendergast, Karen & Mark</i>	
<i>George, Demetrious</i>	<i>Polychronopoulos, George I</i>	
<i>Gurney, Sarah & Charlie</i>	<i>Polychronopoulos, George II</i>	
<i>Hannan, Betty & Robert</i>	<i>Polychronopoulos, Zoe</i>	
<i>Happnie, Maria & Joseph</i>	<i>Poolle, Emily</i>	
	<i>Poolle, Steve & Alice</i>	
	<i>Quigley, Jessica & Josh</i>	

If you do not see your name,
perhaps you have not filled out
your 2022 Stewardship form!

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Kostas & Nick Katralis

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*Church
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Forms on Page 9

Due Sunday, December 4

**To access live stream of Services
please look on our Facebook page.**
[https://www.facebook.com/
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REMINDER: Our Facebook page can be accessed regardless of whether you have a Facebook account. If the live feed doesn't show up right away, please refresh and keep checking back.



Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church
 93 Locust St., Dover, NH 03820
 Rev. Anthony Evangelatos
 Fr. Anthony's office hours:
 Nancy Lipitaki (Church Secretary) Office Hours: Tues., Wed., & Fri. 9:30-1:30

Tel. (603) 742-7667
 annunciationdover@gmail.com
 e-mail: FrAnthony@annunciationdover.org
 Tuesday-Friday 10 am-3 pm
 Emergency Contact: (401) 662-5259

DATES TO REMEMBER IN DECEMBER

Saturday, 12/3, 12/10, 12/17, 12/24, 12/31 Vespers

**St. Nicholas The Wonderworker 12/6
(Orthros 8:45am, Divine Liturgy 10:00am)**

**Conception of the Theotokos by St. Anna 12/9
(Orthros 8:45am, Divine Liturgy 10:00am)**

**St. Spyridon the Wonderworker
(Orthros 8:45am, Divine Liturgy 10:00am)**

**Eve of the Nativity of Christ 12/24 (Orthros 8:45am, Divine Liturgy 10:00am)
Great Vespers 5pm (No Communion)**

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