

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Announces the Launch of the Greek Fire Relief Fund



Under the leadership of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America announces the launch of the Greek Fire Relief Fund to aid the communities in the Attica region affected by the devastating fires that took place earlier this month. The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society will be partnering in this effort as well and has committed a contribution of \$50,000 towards this effort.

To commence, a delegation consisting of His Grace Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos, Chief Secretary of the Holy Eparhial Synod; Elaine Allen, Treasurer of the Archdiocese; and Philoptochos First Vice President Anita Kartalopoulos will visit affected areas from Monday, August 26-Thursday, August 29, 2024. Allen and Kartalopoulos were also members of a delegation which visited Evia, an island severely impacted by 2021 wildfires, inspected the devastation, met with impacted individuals, and assessed unmet needs.

In response to the 2021 Evia fires, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in conjunction with the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society launched a nationwide fundraising campaign that provided immediate and extended support to the fire-affected population on Evia.

The present delegation will meet with His Beatitude the Archbishop of Athens Ieronymos to understand the impact on the region under his jurisdiction, perform a needs assessment, identify gaps in funding, and develop an

assistance plan. They will also view firsthand the Monastery of Panagia Axion Esti, which was engulfed by fire; this monastery is a place of historic importance to the Archdiocese of Athens, housing valuable ecclesiastical relics. Following the precedent set by previous wildfire response efforts, the Archdiocese will minimize administrative costs in order that funds raised will directly benefit the region affected by the fires.

In announcing the Fund, Archbishop Elpidophoros stated, “We once again call upon our faithful, our parishes, and our institutions, to help ease to suffering of our brothers and sisters in Greece. As we wait for a full assessment of the needs in Greece, our Archdiocese will fund the restoration of the Monastery of Panagia Axion Esti in Varnava Attica ensuring that this historic and beloved Monastery of the Archdiocese of Athens will continue to serve the community for many years.”

During their time in Greece, the delegation will also visit northern Evia to visit the health centers in Mantoudi and Istiaia, where the 2021 fundraising campaign purchased medical equipment and two ambulances. The delegation will also view the Agios Nicolaos Galataki Monastery water restoration project financed by the previous campaign. The 2021 fundraising campaign raised more than \$1.1 million, which has been distributed to affected individuals, businesses, healthcare providers, and the Agios Nicolaos Galataki Monastery.