



METROPOLIS
OF BOSTON

REJOICE!

The Monthly Publication of the

ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

Web: www.annunciationdover.org E-mail for church office : annunciationdover@gmail.com

Beloved in Christ,

Whenever we read Orthodox sources on the topic of Great Lent, we are constantly reminded that Lent is a multi-faceted, spiritual season that we *live* and *experience*. In our readings, it is typically pointed out that the Fast is not meant to be a time of mere legalistic compliance, but rather, a temporary change of lifestyle and attitude, so that our primary focus will be on God and our relationship with Him. Our Holy Tradition has given us this gift of Great Lent so that we may be spiritually cleansed and renewed in preparation for Holy Pascha. In order to truly celebrate a pure and holy Pascha, we must preface it with a sincere and fruitful Lenten experience.

Over the years, I have seen a variety of approaches to Great Lent. Some of our brethren overly focus on attempting to comply with the various dietary accommodations, especially during the first week and Holy Week. Others shun the practice of fasting, thinking that it is an archaic and impractical burden. Some are inspired by certain Lenten services, and begin coming to church regularly for one or more of these services. A great number of Orthodox Christians only attend church on the Sundays of Great Lent, thus “experiencing” Lent in the context of the Sunday morning services alone. (Ironically, there is hardly anything “Lenten” about the Sunday mornings of Lent, so this group never really experiences Great Lent, liturgically speaking.) Now here, a question must be asked: *In our own case, do we attempt to make Great Lent a daily and life-transforming experience?*

In reality, a truly thorough Lenten experience would incorporate much more than changing one’s diet and attending church periodically. To take Lent seriously, one would need to have prepared for the coming fast during the three preparatory weeks prior to the commencement of Great Lent. As we have mentioned many times, this three-week period presents the basic Lenten themes through the appointed Gospel lessons, and through the hymnody of the Church. If we have taken these themes to heart, by the time Clean Monday arrives we should be in the right mind-set for the ascetic struggle

ahead.

Those who take Great Lent seriously know that it is necessary to alter one’s daily routine. A “Lenten lifestyle” must include ample time for quality prayer opportunities. Prayer is definitely the starting point, because without God’s help we are setting ourselves up for failure and frustration, before even getting close to Holy Week. Let us remember that sincere prayer is *communion* with God. During Lent, we curb entertainment and other worldly distractions in order to rediscover and accentuate this inborn need for communion with the Creator. Besides our private prayer routine, we must remember that prayer *par excellence*, occurs in the divine services of the Church. For Lent to be a truly prayerful and spiritually rewarding experience, we must find it in ourselves to strive for greater liturgical participation during the various weekday Lenten services.

During our Lenten journey, the venerable practice of fasting must co-exist with our prayer life. If we consistently approach the Lenten fast with negativity each year, this proves that we have not yet found within ourselves, how to prayerfully and joyfully prepare for Great Lent. Through proper, prayerful preparation, we can begin to understand the immense spiritual benefits of fasting. It must be emphasized that appropriate guidance and direction should be sought from our spiritual father, especially when we are inexperienced with fasting.

Another important aspect of our Lenten experience is charitable giving and through doing good works. If we are to *grow* in Christ during this holy season, we must *see* Christ in our fellow man. Great Lent (or any time of the year, for that matter) is not a time for us to curl up into our own private cocoon. The ascetic struggle of Lent must include good works along with all other aspects of the Fast. We were reminded of this very clearly through the Gospel reading on the Sunday of the Last Judgment: *Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?*

... *Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.* (Mt 25:44-45)

Lastly, beloved in Christ, there can be no fruitful result from our Lenten experience without *repentance and forgiveness*. The last Sunday before entering Lent is known as the *Sunday of Forgiveness*, in order to remind us of the need to forgive others and ask for forgiveness prior to entering the Fast. If we do not enter Great Lent with the humbled and repentant heart of both the Publican and the Prodigal Son, nor seek reconciliation with God during the Fast through Holy Confession, then any effort we put into Great Lent will be for naught. The entire Lenten struggle is meant to cleanse the soul in order to regain Paradise through the Crucified and Risen Christ. Everything mentioned above will aid in bringing about this spiritual cleansing, eventually being sealed through the Holy Mystery of Confession. Unfortunately, the great majority of us are completely remiss in participating in this saving act, which should be the goal of a sincere Lenten journey.

Beloved, hopefully, we have come to realize that Great Lent is comprised of various labors, none of which is overly difficult or impossible to accomplish. The goal of Lent is achievable through our personal commitment to Christ and our salvation. We were created with a free will, having been granted the ability to choose good or evil, right or wrong. If we are truly seeking salvation and the Kingdom of Heaven, then let us all pick up our cross and embark on the true Lenten journey offered by our Church, and not some alternate journey of our own creation.

Wishing a blessed Lent to all,

+Fr. Anthony



Rejoice – March 2025

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church

Proistamenos: Rev. Fr. Anthony Evangelatos

Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Office Telephone: (603) 742-7667

Fr. Anthony’s Email: franthony@annunciationdover.org

Emergency Contact: (401) 662-5259

Office Administrator: Nancy Lipitaki

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Office Email: annunciationdover@gmail.com; Website: www.annunciationdover.org

Parish Council Ministry Team

President: Shana Mitropoulos

Vice President: Michael Frudakis

Secretary: Robin Schumaker

Treasurer: Connor Haywood

Assistant Treasurer: Nils Elde

Members: Mark Canney, Cyprian Fresh, Kulin Krishnan, Kimon Lalas, Lea Macheras,

Parish Ministries and Services Contacts

Alkistis Ladies Society	Vula Lalas	vulaz55@gmail.com
Altar Servers	Fr. Anthony	
Annunciation Young Adults	Cyprian Fresh	hydntfresh@yahoo.com
Bookstore	Cyprian Fresh	hydntfresh@yahoo.com
Cemetery	(open)	
Chanters	Fr. Anthony	
Church School Director	Jessica Quigley	raisingnarnians@gmail.com
Festival Committee	Rebecca MacNamee & Robert Mitropoulos	greekfestivaldover@gmail.com
Flowers	Deborah Sousane	(603) 742-2691
GOYA	Mark Canney	mrcanney@gmail.com
Hellenic Center Rentals	Paul Karoutas	(603) 969-7376
HOPE/JOY	Laura Blagojevic	191lb88@gmail.com
Kali Parea	George & Althea Coussoule	(603) 923-1349
Maintenance Coordinator	Peter Lampesis II	(603) 833-7553
Outreach Committee	Sharon Lampros	(603) 742-0611, lamprosfamily@comcast.net
Parish Council President	Shana Mitropoulos	shanamitropoulos@gmail.com
Parish Youth Safety Administrator	George Coussoule	(603) 923-1349
Prophoron Bakers	Anthi Delintsiotis, Christina Elios, Paraskevi Stamelos	
Scholarship Committee	Casey Gemas	(603) 978-2922
Soup Kitchen Coordinators	Robin & Judy Schumaker	rob_the_np@yahoo.com
Stewardship Committee	Steven Poole	mywebbusiness6180@gmail.com
Technology Team	Jameson Savage (office)	church office
	Dexter Tarbox (website)	church office

Affiliated Organizations

Daughters of Penelope	Maryann Charos &	Mcharos@comcast.net , 603-674-6678
	Melanie Nelson	Melanie_Charos@yahoo.com

Editorial Board: Fr. Anthony Evangelatos, Nancy Lipitaki
Please send submissions to: annunciationdover@gmail.com,
and state “Newsletter Submission” in the subject line.

FROM FR. ANTHONY

Lenten Fasting Guidelines

Following are the traditional fasting guidelines in their full form as a starting point. Obviously, many will need to follow a reduced manner of fasting due to health, pregnancy, nursing, or other hardships, as well as for growing children. In addition, consideration should be applied in the case of interfaith marriages. As your spiritual father, I am always available for guidance.

Weekdays of Lent

- Strict fast from all animal products including fish (shellfish permitted), wine (all alcoholic beverages), and olive oil (vegetable/seed oil permitted).*

*On the feast of the Annunciation, 3/25, fish, wine, and olive oil are permitted. The following day, 3/26, the Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel, wine and olive oil are permitted.

Weekends of Lent

- Relaxed fast – olive oil, wine (all alcoholic beverages), and shellfish permitted (not fish).

Note: On weekdays we attempt to reduce the quantity of food consumed. On weekends there is no limit on food consumed.

Please remember that Lent is **not only** about abstaining from certain foods and drink. **A true fast pleasing to God includes prayer and charitable works, as well as abstinence.** It goes without saying that **increased participation in worship** should also be part of our Lenten journey. The Lenten fast also aids us in fasting from sin and in seeking repentance, through this sacred exercise in self-control and spiritual growth.

Making Lent Meaningful at Home

Great Lent is the most significant time of the year in the spiritual life of Orthodox Christians. During Lent, parents have an opportunity to teach and reinforce its importance and significance to their children, so that they may always love and appreciate this holy period. Here are some things to consider:

- Purchase an Orthodox prayer book if you don't have one, and use it together as a family.
- Plan on which weekday services your family can realistically attend each week (try for at least one).
- Parents, read a book or on-line resource on Great Lent to understand it better (see Fr. Anthony for suggestions).
- Try as much as possible to keep the fast in an appropriate way for your family. Perhaps try keeping a strict fast on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays if you can't do more. Of course, consideration should be applied with inter-faith marriages.
- Curb television, movies, and entertainment. Perhaps replace with films and programs containing edifying messages, or that are biblically themed.
- Periodically light incense, and keep a lit candle or vigil lamp in front of the holy icons to create a spiritual atmosphere in the home. Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays after church are appropriate days to light incense.

FROM FR. ANTHONY

- Plan on going to confession as a family during Lent. Parents are the example in everything to their children, so introduce them to this spiritually beneficial opportunity.
- If properly prepared, receive Holy Communion more frequently as a family during Lent.
- Choose one or more charities that the family would like to support financially or otherwise. Involve children as much as possible with this process.

Beloved in Christ, I have included this entry for years in parish bulletins. Hopefully, parents can make an effort to incorporate as much of these suggestions as possible at home. In all aspects of family life, it is the parents who set the example, especially when the *father* takes the lead!

Spiritual Wisdom

Fasting is wonderful because it tramples our sins like a dirty weed, while it cultivates and raises truth like a flower. (St. Basil the Great)

If you want to be freed from all the vices simultaneously, renounce self-love, the mother of evils. (St. Thallasios the Libyan)

God rests in the saints and even in their very names, in their very images. (St. John of Kronstadt)

Grace does not compel anyone. Men have the God-given freedom to accept it, and to work with it or to reject it. Those who embrace it are saved and those who withdraw from it are lost. (+Elder Cleopa of Romania)

What we gain by fasting is not so great as the damage done by anger; nor is the profit from reading (spiritual texts/scripture) as great as the harm done when we scorn or grieve a brother. (St. John Cassian)

Preparation for Holy Communion at Presanctified Liturgies

To receive Holy Communion on Wednesday evenings, it is permissible to have both breakfast and a light lunch (*strict Lenten fasting for both*), and then refrain from food and drink – barring no health issues – until the liturgy. Continual drinking of water is permissible for those who easily dehydrate.

Holy Confession During Great Lent

- After all weekday evening services, except Wednesday Presanctified Liturgies
- After Great Vespers on Saturday evenings (all year)
- During office hours by appointment (all year)

Great Lent is the season of the liturgical year that is focused on *repentance*. Besides our fasting, charitable works, and church attendance, let us reap the benefits of the Fast by being cleansed through the holy sacrament of Confession. This way, we can fully celebrate Holy Pascha with a clean and pure heart and soul!

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10)

PARISH NEWS AND EVENTS

Parish Chronicle

Funerals

2/19 – Diana Skaltsis
2/21 – James Strangas
2/27 – James Melitus

Memorials

3/16 - Diana Skaltsis, 40 days
3/16 - Nicholas Gemas, 1 year
3/30 - James Strangas, 40 days

May their memory be eternal!

Parish Prayer List

Please pray for our brothers and sisters:
Elizabeth, Deborah, Demetrios, Ray, Marc, Peter

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:

annunciationover@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 Annunciation (for icon stand) – John and Ora Mitchell
- Long entry runner for back entrance - the Elde family

Wednesday Lenten Suppers

As we do each Great Lent, there will be a Lenten supper after each Wednesday's Presanctified Liturgy. The suppers will end with a short video presentation on various Orthodox themes. For everyone's convenience, the Liturgies will be from 5:30 pm to approximately 7:00 pm, followed by the supper and presentation, and ending by 8:00 pm. This is a reasonable schedule for everyone, especially families with children.

We would like to invite all parish ministries to host one of the suppers (the first one on 3/5, will be hosted by our parish council). **We also encourage potluck offerings at each supper, since we anticipate more participation than in the past.** To sponsor a supper, please coordinate this through the church office. We look forward to everyone's participation in this beautiful, weekly Lenten event!

Meetings During Lent

During Great Lent, let us all plan accordingly for ministry meetings as follows:

- The first week of Lent is on par with Holy Week in terms of solemnity and spiritual focus. **Therefore, there should be no meetings scheduled on the evenings of the first week, as there will be daily services.**
- For the remaining weeks of Lent, **there should be no meetings scheduled on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings due to Lenten services.**

We truly appreciate everyone's cooperation with this request. May you all have a most blessed Lenten journey, and we hope to see as many as possible at our various Lenten services!

Chandelier Project

Unfortunately, we are still waiting on two electrical contractors for their estimates. Hopefully, some of you are already motivated to become donors toward this project. We will keep you posted.

PARISH NEWS AND EVENTS

Items Needed for Lent and Holy Week

Following are items needed for Lenten and Holy Week services, and throughout the year. We are grateful for your anticipated generosity; may your gift be a blessing to you and your families!

- **Decoration of icon for the Salutations (5 Fridays) – \$50 each**
- **Flowers for the Veneration of the Holy Cross (3/23) – \$200**
- **Large floral arrangement for iconostasis icon of the Annunciation (3/25) – \$85**
- **Palm strips for Palm Sunday crosses – \$50**
- **Decorative palm branches for Royal Gate – \$125**
- **Bay laurel for Palm Sunday & Holy Saturday – \$100**
- **Decoration of icon of the Bridegroom (Nymphios) - \$50 (taken)**
- **Decoration of Icon of the Mystical Supper – \$50**
- **Wreath for Cross – \$50**
- **Beeswax candles for Cross, 12 Gospels, & Epitaphios – \$50**
- **Decoration of wooden banner of the Resurrection – \$50**
- **Decoration of icon of the Resurrection - \$50 (taken)**
- **Lilies for Holy Pascha – (to be determined)**
- **Flowers for the Epitaphios (our greatest expense) – please give generously**

The following items are needed throughout the year:

- **Communion wine – \$20 per bottle**
- **Beeswax candles for altar table & Soleas candle stands – \$12 per lb.**
- **Incense – all monetary donations accepted**
- **Charcoal – \$100**

For tracking purposes, we kindly ask that your donation requests be made through the church office. If an item you wish to donate has already been sponsored, please consider another available item, or donate toward the Epitaphios flowers, or for the listed items needed throughout the year.

Coffee Hours for March

At the time of publication of this issue, following is the status of March coffee hours:

3/2 – Canney family
3/9 – No host
3/16 – Gemas family

3/23 – No host
3/30 – Elde family

Note: The entire month of March is within Great Lent; therefore, all coffee hour hosts should follow the Lenten guidelines for weekends, as described in the above Lenten fasting entry.

2025 PARISH COUNCIL



STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Greetings, All!

As we are about to begin our Lenten journey together, your Stewardship Team wants to share some important information with you,

Time and Talent Surveys

We will soon distribute our community “Time and Talent” survey, designed to help connect us all to volunteer opportunities which are best suited to our personal abilities and interests.

Simple and Easy. A collection box will be available in the narthex on Sunday and in the fellowship hall after liturgy.

Please Participate! We are looking for 100 % participation so please take a few minutes to fill out and return one of the forms. *Thank you!*

Financial Pledge Forms?

Several people have asked about the annual financial stewardship forms. Where are they? We have not forgotten! We will be distributing the pledge forms in a few weeks. In the mean time, we know you will continue your faithful giving as always.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the church and for your faithful participation in our various ministries. Together, we are the body of Christ, and every individual member plays a vital role in our witness and community life.

In closing, a stewardship quote from our Father among the Saints, St. John Chrysostom:

“Almsgiving soars over everything—it journeys through the air, across the moon, over the sun, reaches to Heaven itself; but it does not stop there—it stretches over Heaven too—soaring over the Angels and Archangels, over all Heavenly Powers and presents herself before the very Throne of the King of Kings!”

May God give us all great grace for the Lenten Journey.

Ευλογημένο αγώνα!

Steve Poole

For your Stewardship Committee



HOPE/JOY

Hello Annunciation families,

HOPE & JOY is a combined ministry separate from the Church School, that brings together the missions of Holy Orthodox Primary Education (HOPE) and Junior Orthodox Youth (JOY), to foster faith, fellowship, and spiritual growth among young Orthodox Christians up to age 12.

I hope to host a few different events, activities or outings throughout the year, that will allow our younger parishioners the opportunity to make new friends, have fun, and allow our families to get to know one another. I am targeting this spring for our first event, so please stay tuned for more details!

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at: 191lb88@gmail.com

Thank you,
Laura Blagojević

ANNUNCIATION YOUNG ADULTS

Blessed Lent!

The AYA just enjoyed their third trip to St Nektarios Monastery in New York, and had a wonderful and fruitful time. We made several new friends and received many good words from the monks there. A great way to enter into Great Lent with zeal. Have a grace filled Lenten season!

GOYA

Greetings GOYANS and friends!

Our GOYA meetings will change for the months of March and April, so as to make accommodations for Great Lent. The first Friday of Lent, 3/7, will be the first Salutations to the Theotokos service, from 7-8 pm. We would like to have Goyans participate in the various readings during the service. We also encourage them to stay for some light snacks, and socialize with each other after the service. I imagine we'll wrap up by 8:30.

We are also planning a GOYA outing Saturday afternoon, March 22. In addition, we will start planning a service project to complete this Lenten season. Details to follow soon.

God bless,
Mark



CHURCH SCHOOL

Kali Sarakosti! Blessed Lent to our Church School families!

It's hard to believe that Great Lent is upon us, and what an exciting time of year it is! The children will be pulling out the Prayer of St Ephraim during this time, so be sure to help them practice it at home as well. Memorizing this prayer will help them to always remember some of the important things that we work on during this period (and that we should strive to continue working on all year long). It is also the perfect prayer for us to begin learning about prostrations: why we do them, how we do them, and when we do them!

Reminder that on Sunday, March 9th & March 23rd, we will not have Church School classes. These Sundays are meant to be family worship days, so that the children may participate in the special rituals at the end of Liturgy. There are so many special services during Great Lent, and I would encourage you to bring the children to as many as you are able to attend. We love hearing about what they saw, heard, and experienced when we see them again on Sundays. Services other than Sunday Liturgies have a different ebb & flow, and the children see them through "new eyes". It is exciting to share in their joyous moments of "Did you know...?"

And as always - many thanks to our Church School teachers, subs, and volunteers! Winter has been difficult with delays, cancellations, and sickness all around. Thank you all for being here to help educate our children in the way that truly matters the most.

"When your children are still small, you have to help them understand what is good. That is the deepest meaning of life." ~ St. Paisios

2025 DOVER GREEK FESTIVAL

Hello Parishioners!

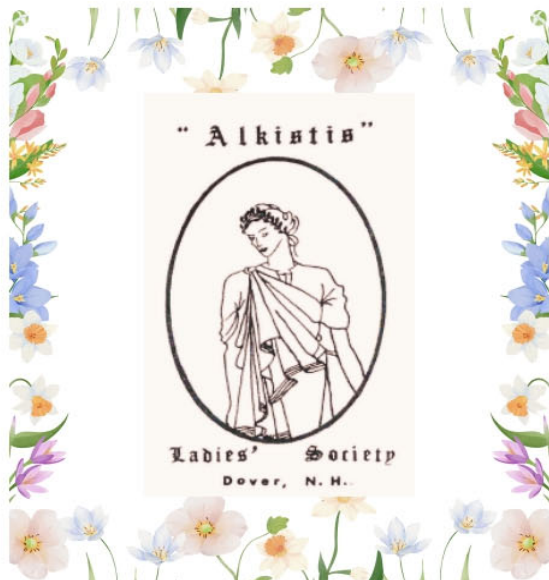


It is that time of year! The start of the 2025 Greek Festival preparations have begun! Last year was an amazing success, and we couldn't have done it without all of our volunteers on the committee, and those who participated during the festival! Thank you all!

Robert and I are excited to be co-chairing again this year, but we are looking for additional help. We have co-chaired the festival since 2018, and **are looking for a new co-chair to join us**, and to help pass on information regarding the general planning process, and take on some additional responsibilities in July and August. If you have any interest in joining Robert and me, please reach out!

Our first festival meeting of the year will take place on **Thursday, March 20th in the church library, at 6:30 pm**. Looking forward to seeing familiar faces and (hopefully) new faces as well!

Best,
Robert Eagle-Mitropoulos
Rebecca MacNamee



Alkistis Upcoming Events

March

Wednesday Evening
March 26, 2025

Alkistis Hosting the
Lenten Supper
Following Evening Services

April

Pastry Sale
Saturday, April 12, 2025

Tsourekia Sale

More information to follow on the
availability of the Tsourekia.

If you have any questions relative to the
upcoming events listed, please contact
Vula Lalas at vulaz55@gmail.com.
Thank you.

March

Monday Evening
March 24, 2025

Parish Council / Alkistis Hosting the
Parish Dinner following
Great Vespers of the Annunciation

March

March 29, 2025

**Dover / Portsmouth Combined
Ladies Association Meeting**

We plan to review our calendar of
events to ensure they don't overlap,
enabling us to better support and
collaborate with each other.

April

Friday, April 18, 2025 @ 8:30 am.

**Floral Decorating of the
Kouvouklion**



March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>Please note that all Sunday Orthros & Liturgies are at 8:45 & 10:00 am.</i>		<i>Strict Lenten fast begins on Clean Monday, 3/3. Please see bulletin entry for guidelines.</i>				1 Great Vespers 6:00 pm
2 Sunday of Forgiveness (Cheesefare) Orthros & Lit. Vespers of Forgiveness 5:00 pm	3 Clean Monday LENT BEGINS Lenten Orthros, 10 am Great Compline w/1st part of Great Canon 7:00 pm	4 Clean Tuesday Great Compline w/2nd part of Great Canon 7:00 pm	5 Clean Wed. 3rd Part of Great Canon 10:00 am 9th Hr, 5:10 pm Presanct. Lit. 5:30 pm, followed by Lenten supper	6 Clean Thursday Great Compline w/4th part of Great Canon 7:00 pm	7 Clean Friday 1st Salutations to the Theotokos 7:00 pm <i>(Goyans will participate)</i>	8 Clean Saturday St. Theodore the Teron (miracle of kollyva) Orthros & Lit. Great Vespers 6:00 pm
9 Sunday of Orthodoxy Orthros & Liturgy	10 Great Compline 7:00 pm	11 <i>(Fr. Anthony at clergy Lenten retreat through Wednesday afternoon)</i>	12 9th Hr, 5:10 pm Presanct. Lit. 5:30 pm, followed by Lenten supper	13 Parish Council 6:00 pm	14 2nd Salutations to the Theotokos 7:00 pm	15 Great Vespers 6:00 pm
16 St. Gregory Palamas Orthros & Liturgy	17 Great Compline 7:00 pm	18	19 9th Hr, 5:10 pm Presanct. Lit. 5:30 pm, followed by Lenten supper	20 1st Greek Festival Meeting 6:30 pm, in library	21 3rd Salutations to the Theotokos 7:00 pm	22 Great Vespers 6:00 pm
23 Veneration of the Holy Cross Orthros & Liturgy	24 Great Vespers of the Annunciation 6:30 pm, followed by Lenten reception	25 The Annunciation of the Theotokos Orthros & Liturgy <i>(Parish Feast Day)</i>	26 9th Hr, 5:10 pm Presanct. Lit. 5:30 pm, followed by Lenten supper	27	28 4th Salutations to the Theotokos 7:00 pm	29 Great Vespers 6:00 pm
30 St. John Climacus Orthros & Liturgy	31					

2025 CONFIDENTIAL STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE

How Can I Pay My Pledge?

There are many convenient ways to pay your stewardship including:

- Online bill payment through your bank
- Check by mail
- Online through PayPal
- Cash

We highly recommend paying through your online bank bill payment service:

Payments can be made on a recurring monthly or quarterly basis, or in one complete payment.

- It is the easiest method to use (write “stewardship” in the memo line)
- It allows you to budget your stewardship payments to your preference
- It maintains a record for you and it affords you complete control
- Plus, there are NO FEES!
- You may also use your online bank service to make an extra donation

If paying by check:

Please payable to: “Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church”, write stewardship on the memo line, and mail to:

93 Locust St, Dover, NH 03820

Attn: Stewardship

If paying by PayPal:

PayPal accepts credit and debit card payments. If you have a personal PayPal account, payments can be linked directly to your bank account to make a credit/debit card payment through PayPal, a 2.9% fee applies, (that we ask you to please cover, above your actual donation, in order to help the church defray that cost)

- To use PayPal go to: www.annunciationdover.org
- Click on to the “Donations” link and follow the prompts.

2025 PARISH STEWARDS - AS FEBRUARY 2025

Evangelatos, Rev. Anthony &
Presvytera Themmi
Boudreau, David & Elene
Fresh, Cyprian
Frudakis, Hope
Frudakis, Michael
Danie, Kyle & Kiki
Karabelas, Argeris & Eloise
Karabelas, Arthur & Donna
Kastrisios, Christos & Nancy
Kostis, John & Stacey
Lampros, John & Sharon
Melitus, James & Kathleen
Polychronopoulos, George
Polychronopoulos, Zoe
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