

LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS NEWSLETTER

SAINT SOPHIA GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

DEAR SAINT SOPHIA PARISHIONERS,

WELCOME TO THE LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS NEWSLETTER!

WHO ARE WE? WHAT DO WE DO?

Simply put, Philoptochos, "Friends of the Poor:"

- helps the poor, the destitute, the hungry, the aged, the sick, the unemployed, the orphaned, the imprisoned, the handicapped, victims of disasters... offers assistance to anyone who may need the help of the Church through fundraising efforts; and,
- promotes the Greek Orthodox faith and philanthropic purposes of the Church through programs, presentations, lectures, seminars, and other instructional resources.

We are one "chapter" of a large, national philanthropic organization that includes 438 chapters and 25,000 members and is headquartered in New York City.

What does that mean for Saint Sophia Cathedral? Please see below for our parish's philanthropic initiatives. We welcome your participation in any of these activities and your ideas of other needs, and of how we can better connect with you and with our community.

Contact any of our Board members with questions and/or offers to get involved in a particular project or to join Philoptochos, or email us at philoptochosdc@gmail.com. Also, we will reach out through the Church Bulletin, social media, and other means to announce upcoming activities and opportunities to volunteer.

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COLLECTIONS AND DONATIONS

LA CASA BAG LUNCHES

La Casa is a permanent supportive facility for men who have previously been homeless and is under the auspices of Friendship Place, the largest DC effort to support people who are homeless. Philoptochos recruits volunteers from the various ministries and from our larger parish community to prepare bag lunches one day each month. For some of the residents, this is the only meal they will receive in a day.

FOOD PANTRY

Philoptochos, in collaboration with the Young Adult League (YAL) conducts a monthly food drive which is normally held on the first Sunday of every month. All food and toiletries are distributed to the Food Pantry at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Also, through a generous donor, we are able to make cash donations to the Food Pantry.

SAINT STEPHEN'S TABLE

Sponsored by YAL as an intergenerational project to prepare hot lunches and hygiene kits for the Downtown Daytime Services Center, volunteers meet on the second Saturday of every month in Father John Hall. The Center is another facility that provides donations to those who are homeless. Philoptochos provides financial support for food supplies and is an active participant in these Saturday sessions.

BACKPACK DRIVE AND WINTER WARMTH

In another collaborative effort with YAL and intergenerational initiative, Philoptochos recently completed its most recent annual backpack drive. Backpacks will be distributed to the children of the families assisted by Friendship Place. Later this fall, we will collect donations for Winter Warmth, to provide winter clothing for Friendship Place's various programs for those in need.

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON AND CHRISTMAS CHARITIES

Each year, Philoptochos hosts the Golden Age Luncheon honoring our senior parishioners and to support selected Christmas charities. Starting with the current year, we are moving the Luncheon from a weekday to a Saturday. The community is invited to join in the beautiful community and Christmas Charity spirit at this event.



PARTNERS FOR KIDS IN CARE

In partnership with the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency, Philoptochos collects donations for new clothing for foster children ages 5-12 (kindergarten--8th grade). New clothing provides much-needed dignity to young people who often own little, if nothing, of their own.

COLLECTION OF BABY BLANKETS AND BABY SOCKS

This spring, a little more than a week before Easter, Shady Grove Adventist Hospital's Women's Center identified an urgent need for baby blankets and baby socks. We collaborated with the Daughters of Penelope to collect donations on Palm Sunday. The result of this last-minute request for collections and donations went beyond the current need.

REQUIRED DONATIONS/NATIONAL REQUESTS

In addition to our "hands on" collections and donations, we also provide monetary donations to a number of charities identified at Philoptochos District and National levels. This list is being updated and will be available for our next issue.

Also, we provide monetary donations for unexpected emergencies, such as for Maui Flood Relief and WildFires in Greece.



SPECIAL EVENTS/PROGRAMS

HELEN APOSTOLOS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Established in honor of a remarkable business woman who overcame the social and cultural biases of her time, the Helen Apostolos Scholarship of \$1,000 is awarded each spring to help Greek Orthodox women pursue studies that will lead to, enhance, or extend careers in business. This past May, Philoptochos awarded its fifth scholarship.

KALI PAREA (GOOD COMPANY)

On the Third Thursday of each month, all are invited to enjoy the "good company" of fellow parishioners, including a luncheon and speaker in the Frosene Center. Recent programs included an eye-opening presentation on artificial intelligence, the benefits of yoga, and insights from a film and television producer and television writer.

WORLD THROUGH GOD'S EYES

During a series of After Liturgy discussions, Father Steve presents the Church's views on a wide variety of timeless and often controversial issues. The response to the first three sessions was very positive and we will continue with Part IV early in the fall.

PRINCESS ALICE LECTURE

This past spring, Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, professor emerita of Georgetown University and long-time parishioner, shared her passion for history with this wonderful talk on Princess Alice, mother of Prince Phillip. Diane truly knows how to bring history to life and did just that as she shared with us the life of an individual who was born an aristocrat and overcame her deafness to learn seven languages, save Jewish people from the Nazis, convert to Greek Orthodoxy, become a nun, and who used her wealth to help the needy.

JOINT LENTEN RETREAT WITH SAINTS CONSTANTINE AND HELEN

This collaboration with Saints Constantine and Helen for a mid-Lenten retreat was a great success in terms of the warmth and camaraderie shared between our churches, and of how much we learned from each other. The speaker was Bishop Athenagoras, spiritual advisor of the National Philoptochos. The Bishop's talks were informative and comforting delivered with much love and occasional good humor. Among the topics he covered, the Bishop (spiritual advisor of the National Philoptochos) discussed "How to Teach How to Pray" and shared the five stages of prayer. The Bishop's advice was not to worry about complicated prayers covering many topics. A simple "Lord Have Mercy" says it all.



SATURDAY OF LAZARUS FAMILY COMMUNION AND BREAKFAST

After this annual special Saturday Liturgy for Families, Philoptochos offers a breakfast and an opportunity for the children to learn how to make palms for Palm Sunday (the following day). In collaboration with JOY/Little Angels, Father Steve hears Confession from children who are interested. This past spring, the Greek School students offered beautiful hymns at the end of the Liturgy.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Unknown to many of us, there are parishioners and other individuals who, through no fault of their own, simply fall upon hard times. Philoptochos provides confidential emotional and financial assistance to those in need who reach out to one of the Fathers or to the Church Office. This year we provided support for funeral expenses, payment of utility bills, rent, and food for several individuals.



RECEPTIONS

Each year, Philoptochos hosts two receptions – one to celebrate the nameday of the Philoptochos Patron Saints, Cosmas and Damian (brothers and doctors who treated the needy without cost) and the second to collect funds for Saint Basil’s Academy (the Greek Orthodox orphanage located in New York).

This year, we offered receptions as a farewell for Father Panayiotis and Presbytera Irene and a welcome for then-Deacon Gabriel and soon-to-be Presbytera Samantha. Finally, we hosted a baby shower for Deacon Gabriel and Samantha.



UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

**THE WORLD THROUGH GOD'S EYES -- PART IV --
Sunday, September 22nd, After Liturgy, FJ Hall**

**LOVE 146 BRIEFING ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING --
Sunday, October 6th, After Liturgy, FJ Hall**

**60'S NIGHT PHILOPTOCHOS CHARITY FUNDRAISER --
Saturday, October 12th, 7pm, Frosene Center.**