I’m sure all of us at times, as we were growing up, looked upon our own lives with the hopes and aspirations for success. And I’m sure we prayed and pushed for that for ourselves and for our family as well! It is often said that “the door to successful living is a narrow one”. I would like for you to consider that thought for a moment, and you will come to see it and know it to be very true. We see over and over again, that many people come to life’s open doors, but only a few make it through. For example:

- Thousands upon thousands of young boys grow up bouncing basketballs and dreaming of a life in the National Basketball Association, the professional ranks. But only a handful are chosen each year. We hear countless stories of high school and college athletes who are very talented at sports, but who neglected their education because they held that thought to make it a professional athlete.

- Thousands upon thousands of new businesses are started each year, but only a small number of people in our society become super successful in material terms. And the higher you go up the scale, the smaller the numbers become.

- Thousands upon thousands of young couples each year stand at the Altars of our Churches, and pledge their love and commitment to one another, but sadly, statistics show that half of all marriages will end in divorce. And just as sadly, statistics show many more will stay together for convenience, or appearance, or for the children. And finally, believe it or not, only an estimated 10% will find true fulfillment in their marriages.

So, I say it again, ‘the door to successful living is a narrow one’. Life is a continual challenge. Why then should we be surprised that Jesus, when He is asked one day by someone, “Lord, will those who are saved be only a few?”, answered this way, “Strive to enter by the narrow door, for many I tell you, will seek to enter, but will not be able.”

Successful living requires making hard choices. It requires dedication and sacrifice. How can the Christian Faith ever demand any less? Most all of us have heard of Arnold Palmer, who for many years, was one of America’s finest golfers. I’m sure anyone who is a golfer has probably said to himself at least once, “gee, wouldn’t it be great to be a “natural” athlete like Arnold Palmer”? Except, usually we forget one thing…Arnold Palmer practiced golf eight hours a day, day after day after day. Being a great golfer requires commitment. Some of you who play the game are thinking to yourself that even being a poor golfer requires commitment. And that’s probably true too, but the point here is, you don’t excel in athletics, or anything else, unless you are willing to pay the price.

Larry Bird, who played for the Boston Celtics, won the Most Valuable Player award in the National Basketball League for three years in a row. How did he achieve such excellence? Well, Larry Bird is legendary for his dedication to the game of basketball. There is a true story that an opposing player tells of arriving at Boston Garden with his teammates to play the Boston Celtics several hours before an important game. The opposing player entered the stadium, and there was the great Larry Bird standing at the foul line of the dark, deserted Boston Garden, practicing free throws over and over again. The coach of the opposing team saw that and preached a little sermon about dedication to the game using Larry Bird as the prime example.

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Sometime later, that same team returned to Boston to play the Celtics again. This time they arrived a day early and went immediately to Boston Garden to practice. The Garden was cold and empty. Larry Bird was not at the free throw line. O.K. Coach,' one of the players sarcastically asked, Where's Larry Bird?" The other players decided this was a good time to give their coach a good ribbing. Yeah, Coach, where is he? Where's the super dedicated Larry Bird?"

The coach took the ribbing good naturally. Then one of the players said, Hold it, guys, I think I hear something." Everyone got real quiet. It was then they noticed a solitary figure running laps on the catwalk in the top of Boston Garden. It was Larry Bird doing his exercise running. Now that is commitment!

Successful living requires commitment. It requires dedication. That is true in athletics, and it is also true in business. The philosopher Goethe once said, Everyone wants to be somebody; but nobody wants to grow." And in many ways he is right. We want gain without the pain, without any inconvenience! We demand triumph without really trying. But life does not work that way. The door is narrow. That is true in sports, it is true in business, and it is true in family life. So, why should it not also be true also in our relationship with God? It appears to me that there is a great temptation today to settle for a sentimental, sloppy religion that soothes us, caresses us, and requires nothing of us. We forget that the symbol of Christian Faith is not a cushioned pew, but a Cross, the Cross which Jesus Christ was sacrificed on for our sins. We must understand that our Orthodox Christian Faith is not a series of rules that are made and bent and changed by its parishioners because it suits their needs and whims.

Successful living requires commitment. Successful living requires making hard choices. We know that we cannot abuse our body with tobacco, or alcohol, or too much sugar, or too little exercise, and still be in great shape. We know that we have to choose. We know that we cannot be an effective salesman, and then sit in McDonald's sipping coffee all morning. We cannot build a lasting relationship with our spouse, and then decide to cheat on her/him, thereby compromising our wedding vows.

Successful living requires making hard choices. But as we see all around us, many of us do not want to make the hard choices that life requires of us. Psychologists tell us that is why so many of us procrastinate. We want to put off facing the pain of making choices, and that is a sure formula for failure.

Successful people recognize that making hard choices is a key to successful living. Even Jesus had to make a hard choice. Didn’t Jesus even try to persuade God to help Him out when He said these words shortly before His capture; Father, if it be Thy will, let this cup pass from Me, but nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done." We can look at the Icon of the Crucifixion and see the sweat rolled off of His body like great drops of blood. Jesus had that same opportunity as we do today. He could have turned his back at that moment and we would never have heard of Him again. He could have gone back to His father's shop and spent His life as a simple carpenter. But if He was going to save the world, He was going to have to give His blood and His life. No pain…No gain!

Finally, several years ago, an editorial in the "U.S News and World Report" magazine many years ago put it like this: A loose wire on an instrument gives out no musical note; but fasten the ends, and the piano, the harp, or the violin is born. Free steam drives no machine, but hamper and confine it with piston and turbine, and you have the great world of machinery made possible. The unhampered river drives no dynamos, but dam it up, and we get power sufficient to light a great city. So it is with our lives. We must be disciplined if we are to be of any real service in this world."

Some people try to live in two worlds. Saint Paul called them the world of flesh and the world of the spirit. But you need to heed the words of Jesus…the door is not wide enough for us to get through carting two worlds. We must choose if we are going to walk with Jesus. And if we do choose the path of Jesus, there are some things we will need to leave behind.

Successful living for Christians: it requires commitment, and it requires making hard choices. But listen to a paradox: Jesus says, "the door is narrow", but He also says, "it is wide enough for all who truly do want to enter". It makes no difference what your past has been. It makes no difference who you are, or what you have or have not accomplished. Jesus says that His door is big enough when we commit by faith to Him.

So my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, successful living requires commitment. It requires hard choices, choices that are not always popular and may cramp our styles. Our Orthodox Church is timeless, it is ageless, and it neither conforms to man, nor does it mold
THE NARROW DOOR Continued

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itself to the whim of the moment. Rather, our Orthodox Christian Church sets the standard, and it falls on each of us to assure that that goal that is achieved.

Remember, Jesus Christ did not come into the world to make bad people good. Instead, our Lord and Savior came to give dead people life. And that is the beautiful possibility He offers us. The door is narrow…..don’t be left outside looking in!

+ A M E N

Parish Council President…

President’s Report
By Dean Sarantos

Autumn greetings! It was great to see such an excellent turnout as we celebrated Great Vespers on August 14th and the morning Divine Liturgies for the August 15th Dormition of the Theotokos feast day of our church. There were overflow crowds during August 14th vespers, as the main church’s nave and choir loft as well as St. Catherine’s were all full. On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank all who helped prepare, cook, clean, organize, host and usher for the parishioners and our many guests. Thank you also to the Philoptochos for preparing a nice reception for our guests on both of these days. We represented our community well – congratulations!

Thanks to the generosity of our stewards and the receipt of some bequests, we have had the capital to invest in some improvements to our facilities this year. The most significant item was the springtime completion of the elevator on the northeast entrance of the main church. This was accompanied by renovation and disabled access to the restrooms downstairs near St. Catherine’s chapel. We are also in the process of implementing a needed security system upgrade, which will include multiple cameras, modern video monitoring tools and door access. Thank you to Mr. John Vassilades for leading the effort to provide better security for our facility and employees.

You may also notice that the former tire store located on one of our parcels of land has been demolished. This building was located on one of three lots we own on the north side of Harrison Street. Its demolition removes a safety hazard, as the building had deteriorated, and will also position us to be that much readier to participate in any development that may occur in our immediate neighborhood. The lots we own north of the church also provide parking for Holy Week, the August 15th Dormition holiday, and Festival, as well as other church events from time to time.

Labor Day Weekend marked the annual Greek festival. Our attendance was quite good, at approximately 1,175 paid admissions, the food delicious as usual (the souvlaki in particular, in my opinion), music, dancing, church tours and of course a nice opportunity to catch up with friends and family. We tried a few new things this year with respect to the grounds layout and kids’ rides to change things up, and the organizing committee met afterwards to discuss the results and begin making plans for next year. Thank you to the committee sponsors and over 100 volunteers who committed time to the event during their holiday weekend.

We welcome new volunteers to help organize the 2014 festival, which is set for new dates: Saturday, July 26 and Sunday, July 27. One of the major reasons for the change in the date is that a number of the festival volunteers were interested in having the holiday weekend open. Also, school has already started for many of our children before Labor Day, which is different than how things were in the days when the Labor Day event originated. Please help us communicate the date change in the coming year to your friends and family, to help complement the other means we will use to do so.

Enjoy the autumn leaves, and I hope to see you at the Harvest Day event on Saturday, October 19.
Philoptochos

Philoptochos News
By Valerie Green and Ann Dervis

August 14-15
After Panagia Vespers our sisterhood hosted a reception and served refreshments to approximately 500 guests. Following Divine Liturgy on the August 15 Feast Day we served luncheon to approximately 350 guests. We thank all those who attended and all who helped with these events.

Assumption Philoptochos: Two Fall Events
Once again, the Assumption ladies gathered to bake for the Annual Labor Day Festival, celebrated on Sunday and Monday, September 1 and 2. On Saturday, August 17, the first round of baking yielded copious amounts of Melomakarona (600) and Kourambiethese (400). The following Saturday, August 24, the ladies lovingly and painstakingly made 700 Dples, everyone’s favorite! The recipe always includes the most important ingredients – generous helpings of fellowship, teamwork and laughter.

Sunday School and Philoptochos Collaborate
The following day, Sunday, August 25, one of our new Board members, Evie Maggos, lead the invitation assembling effort for our upcoming Fifty Fifties and Sixties fundraiser, “I Love Rock and Roll”. During the fellowship hour and beyond, our Sunday School Moms and assumption Philoptochos pitched in and assembled 750 invitations for mailing in record time of 1 ½ hours! Heartfelt thanks to our Sunday School Moms for your assistance with this task! Please plan to join us for dinner and a throwback to the Rock and Roll era, featuring the Legacy Girls, on Thursday, October 10, 6 p.m., Rosewood Restaurant and Banquets.
Also, in conjunction with our Sunday School, we launched a children’s book drive on Sunday, September 8, which continued through September, in commemoration of International Literacy Day. This observance was proclaimed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1965. Jeanne Jurasek will deliver the books to a central location that will be distributed to children in disadvantaged locations.

Labor Day Festival
Our sweets booth sold delicious loukoumades, breads, pastries and coffee. We received rave reviews and almost everything was sold. Thank you to all how helped with the preparation, set-up, packaging, selling and clean-up. You are wonderful!

Aid for Greece and Cyprus
On Sunday, September 22, after Divine Liturgy Philoptochose provided refreshments for coffee hour and collected money for the Greece/Cyprus Relief Campaign. Chairperson for this event was Evie Maggos.

Membership Tea
Saturday, November 2, is the Philoptochos Membership Tea. Valerie Green is the Chairperson, more information to follow.

Upcoming Events
November 2, Membership Tea

November 3, Artoclasia Sts. Cosmas and Diamanos, Philoptochos patron saints

November 24-25, Vespers and Feast of St. Catherine

December 7, Christmas Party – Greek Islands, Lombard

December 10, Feed the Hungry

December 14, Christmas Baking 10:00

December 15, Christmas Bake Sale
Parish Happenings...

Assumption Church of Chicago Announces Establishment of Annual Scholarship Awards

Through the generosity of a bequest, the Very Rev. Timothy G. Bakakos and Parish Council recently established ‘The Assumption Scholarship,’ which will be made available and awarded to worthy and qualified college students, and also to a seminarian attending our Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary. All students who are children of stewards of Panagia are eligible for these scholarships.

The Scholarship Award was based upon the following criteria established by the Assumption Scholarship Fund Committee::
(1) applicant’s academic record, (2) applicant’s community service record (ecclesiastical and secular), and (3) applicant’s essay on a theme of Orthodoxy and Hellenism. In this first year, the Scholarship made available two awards: a scholarship in the amount of $2,000.00, and if applicable, a scholarship awarded to a seminarian student in the amount of $3,500.00.

We are pleased to announce that on Sunday, July 7th, this year’s recipient was awarded to Gerasimos (Phillip) Gilroy, son of Dr. and Mrs. Phillip Gilroy. Gerasimos will be attending Notre Dame University in South Bend Indiana this fall. His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos was present on this day and also took part in the presentation. Fr. Timothy and the members of the Parish thank all who have contributed toward the establishment of this Scholarship Program.

We congratulate Gerasimos and wish him well in his studies at Notre Dame.

Labor Day Festival, 2014

Thanks so much to all the volunteers who helped make this year’s Labor Day Festival a success. Some pictures from the weekend are below. It looks like everyone enjoyed themselves!
Meeting Our Children’s Needs in the New School Year
By Fr. Athanasios Papagiannis

The education of children is always on the mind of parents, especially this time of year. We spend the days that proceed the start of school looking over lists, buying notebooks and materials and preparing them in other ways to transition to the new grade.

We all want our children to learn, and rightfully so. There is little doubt that a good education can lead to a bright future for our children.

As we begin the new ecclesiastical year we would do good to evaluate how our child is learning, not math or history but Orthodoxy. Just as we prepare them to be successful in the academic year, we need to prepare them by being successful for the ecclesiastical year, too.

Being a former educator myself, I think it’s important to understand that learning about Orthodoxy is not solely identical to learning about how to add or multiply or how to put together a sentence. In other words, learning about Orthodoxy isn’t something that should just take place in the Sunday school classroom.

That’s because Orthodoxy isn’t a subject but particular way of living. When I try to convey this point, I often quote my former professor, a former teacher himself, who said that Orthodoxy is caught just as much as it is taught. In other words, the classroom moves from the Church to the home, and because it does, the teacher changes, too.

Every parent becomes a teacher of the Christian faith. We teach our children how to pray, how we process life events and how to cope with problems in the Christian way. All these things take place within the home.

But to be teachers, we too need to have knowledge in the field of Orthodoxy. This means that we need to be active in the faith. We need to worship, pray, partake in the sacraments and read about the Orthodox faith.

So it’s great that we do our best to make our children the smartest they can be. Academics are important. But we need to remember that knowledge without the wisdom provided by our faith is really limited. God doesn’t want us to be smart but wise. He’s not looking for parents to raise the next Albert Einstein but the next great faithful steward.

There’s a great story about St. Anthony that I think reveals a lot about what God looks for in his children. St. Anthony, as many know, is one of the biggest saints of our Church. Many miracles are attributed to him. One day he wondered if there might be someone more advanced than he was in the spiritual life. Was anyone closer to God than him? The tradition says that God led St. Anthony to the city of Alexandria where he was shown a simple shoemaker. And so it was revealed to the saint, that this simple shoemaker was closer to God than he was. He was close to God because he always thought highly of others, while he himself thought the lowest of himself. It was also revealed to St. Anthony that this shoemaker lived a simple lifestyle, giving a third of his income to the Church and another third to the poor.

This is the person God values. This is the person our children need to be. Our parenting is only successful if our children become simple people who love others unconditionally. Yes, it’s important for our children to develop their brains and to acquire knowledge but knowledge without faith often leads to disappointment in God’s eyes.

So let us start the new school year on the right foot. Let us keep an eye on our child’s academic development by making sure homework gets completed and test scores are acceptable. But let us also make sure we’re doing our part as Orthodox parents. Let us make sure we develop their spiritual life, too by praying with them, coming to Church with them, reading scripture with them and by loving them unconditionally. For if God values the qualities of that simple shoemaker, then let us please this most magnificent teacher by raising those qualities in our children.

+Fr. Athanasios
On Sunday, September 8th we kicked up our feet and danced to the beat of a New Church School Year!! We welcomed back our returning students, the “rock stars” of our program and also welcomed several new stars the Delis Family, the Gianakopoulos Family and the Kremidas Family. As always, a great big thank you and welcome to our tremendous teaching staff. Preschool: Mrs. Christine Panos, Kindergarten: Mr. Tom Demos and Dr. Katherine Kouvelis, 1st grade: Mrs. Lynn Voulgarakis and Mrs. Dena Koulouris, 2nd: Mrs. Christina Gilroy and Mrs. Elisabeth Koulouris, 3rd: Mrs. Demetra Spyropoulos and new team member, Ms. Jenny Panos, 4th: Mrs. Erin Godellas and Dr. Dean Godellas, 5th: Mrs. Georgia Tsaganos, 7th/8th: Mrs. Tina Sarantos and High School: Mrs. Catherine Karabas. We look forward to the 2013-2014 Church School year and pray that our Dear Lord guides us and inspires us as we learn about our Orthodox Faith together!

Christ told the story of a fig tree that was in danger of being cut down because for several years it bore no fruit at all. The servant with one talent was denounced because he did nothing with it. The five foolish virgins were not admitted to the wedding celebration because they had no oil. On Judgment Day Jesus will say to those on His left, "Whatsoever you have not done unto the least of my brethren, you have not done it unto Me." What have you rendered to the Lord for all His benefits to you? What kind of a sacrifice do you bring to Christ every Sunday because you love Him?
Stewardship List... June through September 2013

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MS CONSTANCE ANDREWS
MS DEMETRA ANDREWS
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MRS HELEN RAPTIS
MR ALEXANDER RASSOGIANIS
MR JOHN RASSOGIANIS
MR & MRS ANTHONY REBAPIS
MR & MRS JAMES REGAS
MR AND MRS RAYMOND RIHA, JR
MR AND MRS RAYMOND RIHA, SR
MR & MRS JEFFREY ROBERTS
MR DIMITRIS RODITIS
MR SPYROS RODITIS
MR AND MRS PETER ROMAS
MR. & MRS. SAM ROMAS
MRS SOPHIE ROMAS
MRS IRENE ROMBAKIS
MR SOSTI ROPAITIS & MRS CONNIE
DR & MRS WILLIAM ROUMAN
MR & MRS EVANGELOS ROZOS
MR & MRS KEN RUBENSTEIN
MR JOHN SANDORS
MR & MRS DEAN SARANTOS
MS MARIA SCHMIDT
MR & MRS NICK SCOURLETOS
MR GEORGE SEFER
MR ROBERT SEFER
MR CHRIS SELIMOS
MS TESSIE SELIMOS
MR & MRS GEORGE SIOMOS
MR & MRS KOSTA SKOULIKARIS
MRS POPE SKOULIKARIS
MR & MRS KOSTAS SKOULIKAS
MS IRENE SKUTERIS
MRS VIOLET SKUTERIS
MR & MRS DEMETRIOS SOSOLIS
MR & MRS GEORGE SOULELES
MRS ATHENA SOULIDES
MR & MRS HARRY SOUMAKIS
MR GEORGIOS SOURBIS
MR & MRS NICK SPYRIDAKOS
DR & MRS BASIL SPYROPOULOS
MR & MRS PETER SPYROPOULOS
DR STAVROULA SPYROPOULOS
MRS LILLIAN STAMAS
MR & MRS ERNEST STAVROPOULOS
MS JOANN STAVROPOULOS
MR & MRS PAUL STAVROPOULOS
MS KONSTANTIINA STAVROU
MR & MRS JOHN STEC
MR. & MRS. BRIAN STEINHAGEN
MRS ROSE MARIE STEWART
MRS JANICE STRATIS
MS JOANNE STRATTON
MR & MRS DIMITRIOS STRAVOLE-MAKOS
MR JOHN STROLOGAS
MR & MRS MATHEIU SUSSMAN
MR & MRS PETER SUTTERLIN
MRS MARY T SZCZESNIK
MR & MRS JOHN SZUBERT
MRS SEVASTI TAGARIS
DR CHRISTOS TAKOUDIS & DR MARIA FOUSTALIERAKI
MR SEAN TANSEY
MS ANASTASIA TEROVOLAS
MR & MRS ANGELO TEROVOLAS
MISS CRISTELLA TEROVOLAS
MS EFFIE THEODOSOPOULOS
MR & MRS GEORGE THEODOSOPOULOS
MR & MRS SCOTT THOMAS
DRS. NICK & ELAINE THOMOPOULOS
MR. AND MRS. MICHAEL TIERNEY
MR & MRS YANNI TOLE
MR & MRS ANGELO TOLIOS
MR & MRS CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA
MRS HELEN TOULIOS
MRS APHRODITE TRAGOS
MR JOHN TRAHANAS
MR GEORGE TRAMBAS
MRS BESSIE TRIHAS
MR & MRS VASILILOS TSAGANOS
MR & MRS JOHN G. TSIGOLIS
MR & MRS JAMES TSIOLOS
MR & MRS DIMITRIOS TSIRIBAS
MS ANNA TSIRIONIS
MRS VASILIKI TSIRIONIS
MRS KATHERINE TZOUIMIS
MS DEMETRA VAGIAS
MRS ARITA VALESSARES
MR & MRS PETER VALESSARES
MR Gerasimos Vasilatos
MR & MRS JOHN VASSILIADES
PAULINE VAVASIS
MRS JAYNE VELIS
MRS STAMATA VERVENIOTIS
MR & MRS ALEX VICKAS
MS CHRISTINE VIVADO
MR & MRS PETER VLagos
MS CATHERINE VLAHOGIANNIS
MR & MRS CONSTANTINE VLAHOS
MR & MRS GEORGE VLAHOS
MR AND MRS JOHN VLAHOS
MR & MRS PETER VLAHOS
DR & MRS PERRY VOORNAS
MRS MARIA VOULGARAKIS
MR & MRS PETER VOULGARAKIS
MR & MRS BILL VRANAS
MS FRANCES WAHBY
MRS ALKISTIS WONAIS
MR & MRS JACK WOODS
MS MARY ELLEN WOODS
MR WILLIAM WOODS
MRS MARIKA XINOS
MR & MRS CONSTANTINE YANNIAS
MS DONNA YANNIAS
MRS ELAINE YANNIAS
MRS MARY YANNIAS
MS TRACY YANNIAS
MR & MRS DIMITRIOS ZOGRAFOS
MR & MRS PETER ZOURAS
Parish Registry...

June 3, 2013 through September 8, 2013

40 DAY BABY BLESSING
Son of Alayna and Peter Vlagos
Son of Diana and Mark Patterson

BAPTISMS
• Daughter of James and Stacy Buonincontro, was Baptized, taking the name Panagiota.
  Godparent: Tess Selimos

• Daughter of Katina and Jeremy Baker, was Baptized, taking the name Victoria.
  Godparent: Connie Varvitsiotis

WEDDINGS
• Athanasia (Soula) Skokos and Chris Manolitsis were joined in Holy Matrimony.
  Sponsor: Tina Stavrou

• Thomas Kott and Natalie Errichiello were joined in Holy Matrimony.
  Sponsor: Joseph Kott

FALLEN ASLEEP IN THE LORD
+ Andriana Vasilatos + Bessie Dakuras + Bessie Dakuras

MEMORIALS

40 Days:
Angela (Angeliki) Paterakis
Diane (Diamanto) Caras
Andriana Vasilatos
Bessie Dakuras
Gloria (Aglayia) Jouris

3 Years:
Penelope Galanapoulos
Elizabeth (Elisaveth) Phillips
Fotini Mansour

4 Years:
Peter (Panagiotis) Karagiannis

5 Years:
Alexandros Kalasountas
Barbara Leakakos

6 Years:
Joan (Gianoula) Ganios

14 Years:
Nicholas Kanelos, Jr.

31 Years:
Aristarchos (Harry) Phillips
Third Issue, 2013

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Important Upcoming Dates:

October 19th
Harvest Day

October 24th
Great Vespers of the Dormition
of the Theotokos

November 1st
Feast Day at St. Cosmas & Damianos

November 2nd
Philoptochos Membership Tea

November 3rd
Philoptochos Artoclasia & Coffee Fellowship

November 3rd
Fall General Assembly Meeting

November 24th
St. Catherine’s Vespers Service

November 25th
Feast Day of St. Catherine

December 7th
Philoptochos Christmas Party

December 15th
Sunday Church School Christmas Pageant

December 15th
Metropolis Open House