

# MOSAIC

Coming together, we form an icon of God's Kingdom

Vol. 15, No. 7

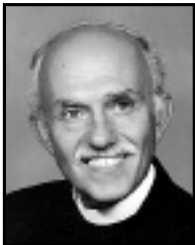
Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church 2501 S. Wolf Rd. Westchester, IL

December 2010

(708) 562-2744

www.holyapostleschurch.com

## From Father Bill



## Your Guardian Angel

On November 8, the Orthodox Church observes the Feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Archangels. Angels are highly honored by the Orthodox Church as spirits in beatitude, ministering to the glory of God. The honor ascribed to them is the same as that offered to Saints.

During the first centuries, the Fathers did not stress this honor due to angels from the fear that the purity of the new faith could be blemished by a worshipping practice for persons other than the Person of Jesus Christ. Later on, however, liturgical honor to angels was allowed and in a way embellished by iconography and other liturgical acts.

We think about angels in many different ways. We look at a child's countenance and comment how it resembles the face of an angel. We describe the behavior of a young child and conclude how angelic it is. A parent holds a newborn with much pride and admires the gift from God as one of an angel.

Since the mission of angels is primarily to glorify God, and since the struggle of man on earth is to become a participant in the kingdom of God, the concept of angels helping men to please God is well within the understanding of Divine Providence, relating to the purpose and being of the entire universe.

The concept of the Guardian Angel is found in both the Old and New Testaments and it extends to individuals, nations, and the Church itself. The idea of the guardian angel found acceptance in the Church in the form of a protecting relationship between the faithful and the angel. Belief in the guardian angel was expressed by hymns and religious art and also by secular literature, especially from the 5th century onwards. In the religious culture of the Orthodox, the guardian angel has been



Presvytera Michelle helps TOTS kids look for angels in the church at a recent TOTS meeting.

accorded a prominent place and has generated many folk concepts and traditions. Since each individual is believed to have his own personal guardian angel, personal stories of extraordinary happenings pertaining to this relationship continue to be remembered and passed on among families.

At the next Greek Orthodox wedding you bear witness at, listen carefully to the celebrant who pronounces these words at the conclusion of the betrothal or engagement ceremony. "Do you now, O Master, bless this putting on of rings with a heavenly blessing and may an Angel of the Lord go before them all the days of their lives." These are certainly reassuring words for the couple as they stand before God and prepare for the days ahead. Also, at every Liturgy, we call out these words during the Petitions of Oblation: "For an Angel of Peace, a faithful Guide, a Guardian of our souls and

bodies, let us entreat the Lord."

We are not to only remember the angels when we place an angel ornament atop our Christmas trees, but especially during the Christmas Season. Listen for the bell rung by the Angel in heaven when ZuZu, the young child in *It's A Wonderful Life*, called to her father, George Bailey, "Daddy, Daddy, did you hear the angel?" It's such a tender moment that rings with much love and tenderness.

Why then, I wonder, is it so difficult to embrace the concept of guardian angels? Why is this ignored completely, often consigned to the dustbin of childish tales and ideas, together with fairies and Santa Claus? Scripture displays, in all periods, an unbroken belief, a taking for granted, of the existence of a spirit being who can and does communicate with

See Fr. Bill on P. 6

From Father Nicholas



## Getting Ready For Christmas

A few weeks ago I rushed to Home Depot to pick up a few landscaping supplies. After finding the lawn fertilizer, I walked to the seasonal section, expecting to see some summer clearance items. What did I find instead? Christmas decorations! Trees, ornaments, tinsel, gift wrap, and stockings were already on the store shelves.

The Christmas season seems to begin earlier and earlier, practically squeezing out Thanksgiving. As soon as Halloween is over, Christmas decorations flood the stores. Pretty soon stores will be packed with people buying gifts. 'Black Friday', the day after Thanksgiving, has become a huge shopping day. People stand in line all night to secure the latest and greatest Christmas gift. Boxes in our basements will be brought upstairs. Lovely Christmas decorations will be unpacked. They will be displayed all over the house. We will spend many hours hanging Christmas lights, preparing the tree, and decorating the outside of our homes. Families will be baking and planning menus for Christmas dinners. So much time is spent preparing externally for Christmas. How much time do we spend preparing internally (our hearts and souls) for the coming birth and incarnation of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ?

Every Christmas season, our home undergoes massive cleaning and reorganizing. Everything must be cleaned before it is moved. The living room furniture gets moved to accommodate the tree. Knickknacks on the fireplace mantle are relocated to make room for the Christmas decorations. The family and dining rooms are reconfigured to make room for Santa's village and the Nativity scene. Just like we clean our homes, cleansing our hearts will prepare us for Christmas. The Gospel of Matthew's Beatitudes reminds us: "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The Church gives us some wonderful heart-purifying tools that can be utilized during the Advent season. Praying, fasting, reading the Holy Scriptures, and consistently participating in the beautiful church services are tools that will aid us in cleansing our hearts. We can pray daily, as we pray every Divine Liturgy, right before the Great Entrance: "create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." (Psalm 50)



# Gavel to Gavel



BY GEORGE CHECHOPOULOS, SECRETARY

Parish Council meeting of October 27

### Financial Report

- ✦ The comparative financial reports dated September 30, 2009 & 2010 were reviewed. Sandy Fiascone moved to approve the financial statements, subject to year-end review. The motion passed unanimously.

### Stewardship

- ✦ The church received 775 pledges, 5 fewer pledges for the same period last year, totaling \$35,843.50, paid in September, favorable \$9,411.50, for the same period last year, for an average pledge of \$845.18. Amount paid in September 2010 was \$556,379.45.

### Correspondence

- ✦ The Alumni Board of Hellenic College / Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology sent a letter regarding the creation of an Alumni Wall to honor and remember alumni who have fallen asleep in the Lord. The wall will be located to the south of the chapel. Jim Fotopoulos made a motion to donate \$500. The motion passed unanimously.
- ✦ Assumption of Orland Park sent a letter announcing its 94th anniversary celebration on Sunday, November 7 at Condesa Del Mar Banquets in Alsip.

### Meditation

- ✦ Fr. Bill focused on Stewardship Sunday to be held November 21. Our 2009 stewardship was surpassed due to the number of people having various sacraments at the church as well as many from near and far communities, including Florida, giving substantial amounts for their pledges. Stewardship envelopes will be collected in a basket in front of the Icon of Christ in the nave. Stewardship should be an ongoing education for our families and children. Fr. Bill closed by saying, "Prayer is the solid foundation of our stewardship program."

### Building & Grounds

- ✦ George Alex and Jim Fotopoulos reported that the copy machine has been installed in the office. The computer must now be hooked up to it.
- ✦ A bid for an external generator system to support the sump pumps was received.

The generator will work off the natural gas line and has a low noise level.

- ✦ New lighting was installed on the roof over the south end of the building.
- ✦ Access for the disabled parking will be worked on.
- ✦ A seating bench for the baptistry was anonymously donated. The new bench will be wrapped in leather and have the same stain color as the existing pews.

### Technical Committee

- ✦ Paul Kallis indicated that the sound system is complete. Council members will be trained on its use on an upcoming Saturday.
- ✦ The beta website that the Archdiocese set up for us is on hold. Our current website is being updated.

### Stewardship Sunday

- ✦ Stephen Melonides suggested improvements to the stewardship pamphlet, such as updating the Time and Talent portions. President Peter Poteres mentioned that we need parishioners to go to <http://www.holyapostleschurch.com/> to sign up for e-mail correspondence. To remind parishioners of Stewardship Sunday, we will have announcements in the weekly bulletin, from Fr. Bill at the pulpit, and through e-mail.

### New Business

- ✦ Elections for the 2010-2012 Council will be held on Sunday, December 12.
- ✦ President Peter Poteres led the discussion on the job description of a youth director. He instructed the committee to establish and report on all the specifics for the position prior to the Council budget meeting.
- ✦ Once the paver blocks for the disabled parking spaces have been installed, the State of Illinois will be contacted to conduct its re-inspection.
- ✦ Pathways recognized Holy Apostles and St. Haralambos for their work in regard to disabled persons within their respective churches.
- ✦ Internet notifications to parishioners must go through the proper channels for mass e-mails.

The Lord's desire is for us to make more room for Him in our hearts. We are challenged in the Gospel of Matthew: "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Sometimes we are so busy celebrating the holidays that we forget 'the reason for the season'. We get so caught up in finding the best gifts that we forget the Lord's greatest gift –

...See Fr. Nicholas on P. 5

## Fashion show benefits two worthy organizations

"We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give."

This year's Fashion Show, held on Saturday, October 16, was a huge success! There were over 500 people in attendance. Everything was exquisite! The room was decorated beautifully and the raffle/auction prizes were phenomenal!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the co-chairs: Elaine Paloumpis, Susie Regos, and Cynthia Stathopoulos, as well as the entire Fashion Show Committee. Thanks so much to each committee member for donating their time and making this event such a success.

Special thanks goes out to our Sponsors and Patrons:

### Gold

John & Lily Mathews & Families  
Dr. Pat, Lara, Steven and Clara Pappas

### Silver

Helene Zarcone

### Bronze

A Friend

Juicy-O

Athletico

Ernest & Marion Karras

Don Alexander Investments, Inc.

Mr. & Mrs. Daniel C. McKay

Penelope Maduros Egarter

Steven & Elaine Pappas

Mr. & Mrs. James Fotopoulos

Alyssa Petropoulos/Verizon Wireless

Nicholas S. Gouletas

Kathy Stratton

Most importantly, portions of the proceeds will benefit two organizations: The Greek American Rehabilitation and Care Centre and the Batten Disease Support and Research Association (BDSRA).

Our \$10,000 donation will help fund the innovative remodeling of the Memory Care Unit at the Greek American Rehabilitation and Care Centre. The goal of this project is to provide a warm and homelike environment which will promote wellness, dignity and a sense of belonging to those seniors who have given us so much over the years.

Our donation will also help fund the Equipment Exchange Program of the Batten Disease Support and Research Association (BDSRA) which provides otherwise unavailable feeding, personal care and medical equipment to overwhelmed families caring for children with Batten Disease – a devastating neurological disorder.

We thank you all again from the bottom of our hearts for yet another very successful Fall Fashion Show!



Modeling boys outfits are Peter Alex, left above, and Christopher Petropoulos, right above. Below in the back row, are committee members Elaine Paloumpis, Marita Urban, Sundy Urban, and Amelia Lozano. In the front row are, Elaine Davis, Beth Fotos, Elaine Katziaris, Sophia Natiello, Angela DeFeo, and Marissa Lorisso.



Photos  
courtesy of  
Philoptochos

## Philoptochos December Events

There will be a **General Meeting** and Christmas Party on Thursday, December 9, at 7 p.m. The Hinsdale South Madrigals will present a lovely Christmas concert to get everyone in the holiday spirit.

A **Communion Breakfast** will be held on Saturday, December 11 immediately following Divine Liturgy at 9 am. Breakfast will be followed by a visit from Santa. The breakfast is

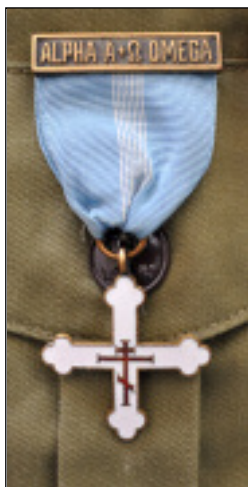
free of charge, but each child attending is asked to bring a new, unwrapped toy for the shelter. For reservations, please contact: Tina Dillon at 630.832.5652 or Anthoula Pomrening at 708.588.0258.

Philoptochos will host its annual **Christmas Bake Sale** on Saturday, December 11 from 11 am to 1 pm and after Liturgy on Sunday, December 12.



Father Bill honors Nicholas Trivelas and four other parish scouts during a ceremony on October 3.

## Five scouts honored



*Photos  
by  
Peter Bell*

All the major religious groups in the U.S. give scouts, boy and girl, of their particular faiths an opportunity to earn a religious scouting award. The Alpha Omega Award is for scouts of Eastern Orthodox churches. To earn the award the scout needs to know and understand the fundamental tenets of the faith, and be an active member of their church community. The former is accomplished through book study and discussion with, and then examination by, a religious leader. Being active in the community requires not only involvement in their church's activities, but planning and performing an individual service project. Some of these kids crawled through the church cleaning the pews



Following the ceremony, the award recipients posed for a photo with their troop flags. Left to right, they are Stephen Berg, Ethan Parafink, Katie Berg, Stefan Parafink, and Nicholas Trivelas.

and kneelers for their projects. They all showed a great deal of commitment.

- Katie Berg - Ambassador Scout in the Juliette Scouts
- Stephen Berg - Life Scout in Troop 216, La Grange Highlands
- Ethan Parafink - Star Scout in Troop 49, Lemont
- Stefan Parafink - Eagle Scout in Troop 49, Lemont
- Nicholas Trivelas - Life Scout in Troop 65, River Forest



## Fanari reunion

Above and right, Fanari campers enjoy each others' company at a recent reunion dance.



## Adventure Theater Halloween Party

At left, Marina Dimas finishes wrapping up Grace Govostis to make a mummy. Below, Demetra Fotopoulos, Martha Madden, and Alex Patt play a game of passing jello at the Adventure Theater Halloween party.



Fr. Nicholas from P. 2

# Christ was born to fill rich, but empty lives

Himself. We forget that the Lord offers us all help in our present situation. Think of the shepherds sitting on the hillsides all night while watching their sheep. They were poor people and did not have much hope of improving their lives. Then, one glorious night, the angels appeared and exclaimed: "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord."

Suddenly, everything changed! God became real to them. God came to help them and bring "peace on earth" and "good will to men." The other people, at the birth of Christ, were the wise men or the Magi. Although they were wealthy and powerful people, their lives were empty. When they saw the star, they came because they needed something else. Whether we are rich or poor, powerful or weak, we need God's help.

Our Lord promised and commanded us to "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) When we allow the Lord to enter our minds, hearts and souls, we will receive the grace that only He can give.

The Scriptures remind us that the "peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7) We have help in our present situation and hope for the future! Hope kept the shepherds going. God made a promise to His people. He would send a Messiah that would save them. Hope burned in their hearts and lives.

The Wise Men were motivated by hope. Every night they would search the heavens, looking for that star of promise. They knew they must follow that star wherever it led. It was a sign from God that promised the birth of a King. Hope kept them going and can keep us going this Christmas season!

Preparing for Christmas involves becoming an heir of God. Our Lord took on human flesh to reunite us with our Heavenly Father while offering us hope and eternal peace of soul and spirit. Our greatest gift is found in a tiny manger in Bethlehem.

"Christ is born, glorify Him! Christ comes from heaven, meet Him! Christ is on earth, be exalted! O all the earth, sing to the Lord, and all people, sing praises in gladness, for He has been glorified." (Christmas hymn)

# Jr. Goyans support our troops this Christmas

Our Jr. Goyans experienced firsthand the joy of giving and supporting our military personnel. At the October meeting, they completed their first service project for a wonderful local organization called Operation Support Our Troops – Illinois (OSOT-IL). Parish members contributed items for the troops, which were collected over the course of several weeks. Our Jr. Goyans worked hard to sort all the donated items, including magazines, packaged treats, toiletries, soup, vitamins and other items not easily obtained overseas. To accompany all the items, they also created hand-made cards with personalized messages for the holiday season. The colorful cards were embellished with stickers and beautiful drawings. Many expressed their thanks for the service of the military personnel in defending our country and others wished them a safe return. There are 159,000 American servicemen and women deployed overseas. Operation Support Our Troops – Illinois, with its many drop off sites in the Chicagoland area, ships over 100 boxes weekly to Iraq and Afghanistan. Check out [www.osotil.org](http://www.osotil.org) for more information.

It's no coincidence that October was chosen as the month for a service project supporting our troops. The meeting and project were designed to share the life of St. Demetrios,

## Fr. Bill from P. 1

### Your guardian angel can guide your decisions

and influences people, both for good and evil. In fact, from Genesis to Revelation, angels are mentioned about 300 times.

Dear loved ones, celebrate the Birth of Jesus with childlike faith and let us not forget the significant day of Christmas, and the role of the angels in the birth of our Redeemer. Let us open our hearts to the presence of our Guardian Angel to assist in making decisions: all decisions. Just as George Bailey heard the Angel Clarence call to him and then discovered happiness in Bedford Falls, enjoy the magic of the Christmas Season and be a good listener. MERRY CHRISTMAS!

## The HARC CORNER

HARC is ready for Christmas! Stop in after Liturgy and during the week to browse the many wonderful Christmas gift ideas: Advent calendars, books, music, icons, ornaments, angels, as well as Christmas cards. We have many new items for purchase.



Left to right, Ariana Ziogas, Stephanie Spitzer and Anastasia Kasimos are busy making holiday cards for our troops at the October meeting.

whose feastday is celebrated on October 26. A Christian soldier in the Imperial Army of the non-Christian Emperor Maximianus, Demetrios demonstrated his faith and suffered martyrdom for his zeal. Fr. Nicholas beautifully linked the work of the Jr. Goyans with the story of St. Demetrios.

The Jr. Goya thanks the parishioners who

contributed to the drive. Your continued support and generosity is greatly appreciated.

Jr. Goya is comprised of 7th and 8th graders. It's never too late to join Jr. Goya! Check out the weekly bulletin and Mosaic for future meeting dates!

By Pamela Ziogas

## A book Mr. D. recommends to all

How would you react if, at a church function, someone from the parish you respected and even called your friend stood up and announced to everyone that he had been a member of a criminal gang many years ago, and that he decided to confess and pay back the people that the gang stole from? In *Restitution*, by Richard S. Wheeler, Luther Jackson did just that.

Luther Jackson ran a ranch near the town of Cottonwood, Utah for 12 years. He was married with three children; was a respected citizen of Cottonwood; and a member of the church. During a church potluck supper, Luther announced to all that as a boy of 17, he held the horses for a gang, which included an uncle and a couple of cousins. As the gang was attempting to rob a stagecoach, there was a gun battle. Some of the gang members were killed and the rest were captured and put in prison. Luther Jackson, who was known by a different name back then, simply faded into the darkness. He married a childhood sweetheart named Gracie, and they drifted for a year from town to town until they came and settled in Cottonwood.

For 12 years, Luther and Gracie lived as upstanding members of their town and church. During that time, Luther had never

been identified as a member of the gang, and there were no wanted posters seeking his arrest. Nevertheless, it was Luther's desire to come clean about a past no one knew about that made him confess his involvement with the gang and his intention to pay back all those the gang had wronged.

Does Luther's faith in God see him through the ordeal that awaits him following his confession? Who in town and at his church stand by him and who turns against him? This book speaks of family, loyalty, betrayal, and much more. I highly recommend *Restitution*, a book every Christian should read.

By George J. Demetralis

## Successful bake sale for Jr. GOYA

On October 17, our Jr. Goyans hosted a bake sale during Fellowship Hour. They sold an array of delicious, home-made desserts ranging from baklava and brownies to cookies and cupcakes. Thank you to all the parents who prepared these baked goods and to our Jr. Goyans who worked hard to setup and work the bake sale. It was a huge success and all the proceeds will help support future Jr. GOYA events and service projects.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Merry Christmas to all from the Mosaic staff</b>						
<b>8:00am Orthros</b> <b>9:15am Awaken To God</b> <b>9:30am Divine Liturgy</b> Fellowship Hour Adventure Theater Play & Luncheon Greek School Kaitanda	<b>FEAST DAY OF ST. NICHOLAS</b> <b>8:00am Orthros</b> <b>9:00am Divine Liturgy</b> 5:15pm The Way	10:15am TOTS 4:30pm Greek School 7:30pm GOVA Meeting	1:00pm Adult Christian Fellowship And Study Group Choir Rehearsal	4:30pm Greek School 6:30pm Philoptochos Christmas Party	4:30pm Adventure Theater Dress Rehearsal	<b>4</b>
<b>FEAST DAY OF ST. SPYRIDON</b> <b>8:00am Orthros</b> <b>9:15am Awaken To God</b> <b>9:30am Divine Liturgy</b> Philoptochos Bake Sale Parish Council Elections Christmas Pageant 5:00pm Metropolis Open House	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	1:00pm Adult Christian Fellowship And Study Group Choir Rehearsal	4:30pm Greek School 6:30pm Philoptochos Christmas Party	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>FEAST DAY OF ST. STEPHEN</b> <b>8:00am Orthros</b> <b>9:00am Divine Liturgy</b> Fellowship Hour	<b>13</b>	4:30pm Greek School	1:00pm Adult Christian Fellowship And Study Group Christmas Party Choir Rehearsal	4:30pm Greek School Pizza Party 7:30pm Parish Council Meeting	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>8:00am Orthros</b> <b>9:15am Awaken To God</b> <b>9:30am Divine Liturgy</b> Fellowship Hour	5:15pm The Way Christmas Party	NO Greek School 10:15am TOTS Christmas Party 6:00pm GOVA Christmas Party	1:00pm Adult Christian Fellowship And Study Group Christmas Party Choir Rehearsal	NO Greek School	<b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b> <b>9:00am Royal Hours</b> 6:30pm Christmas Choir Concert <b>7:00pm Vespers Liturgy</b> Church Office Closed	<b>25</b>
<b>8:00am Orthros</b> <b>9:15am Awaken To God</b> <b>9:30am Divine Liturgy</b> Fellowship Hour	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>8:00am Orthros</b> <b>9:15am Awaken To God</b> <b>9:30am Divine Liturgy</b> Fellowship Hour	<b>27</b>	NO Greek School	<b>29</b>	NO Greek School	<b>NEW YEARS EVE</b>	<b>FEAST DAY OF ST. BASIL</b> <b>9:00am Orthros</b> <b>10:00am Divine Liturgy</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>		

## Weekday Services

### Feast Day of St. Nicholas

Monday, December 6  
8:00am Orthros  
9:00am Divine Liturgy

### Communion Breakfast

Saturday, December 11  
8:00am Orthros  
9:00am Divine Liturgy

### Vespers

Saturday, December 18  
5:00pm

## Weekday Services

### Christmas Eve

Friday, December 24  
9:00am Royal Hours  
6:30pm Christmas Choir Concert  
7:00pm Vesperal Liturgy

### Christmas Day

Saturday, December 25  
8:00am Orthros  
9:00am Divine Liturgy

### Feast Day of St. Stephen

Monday, December 27  
8:00am Orthros  
9:00am Divine Liturgy

## Memorials

Demitri Vandarakis  
Eftihia Deimer  
Nicholas Sahlas  
Vasiliki Karegianes  
Anastasia Ritas  
Georgia Contos  
Michael Bitsas  
Dionisios Tsoronis  
Efsthathia Tsoronis  
Konstantinos Tsoronis  
Vasilios Bitsas  
Roubini Bitsas  
Helen Sfikas  
Michael Sfikas  
Chris Platon  
Niki Platon  
Jennie Jumes  
Peter Skoubis  
Georgia Ladas  
Christine Burbulis  
Maria Anestos  
Phillip Anestos  
Eftihia Fikaris  
Nicholas Fikaris  
Nick Fikaris

## Funeral

Peter Skoubis

## Mosaic Deadline

The deadline for the January issue of the Mosaic is Tuesday, December 7.

## Stewardship

Please remember to be generous with your 2011 pledges now that you probably won't be needing that extra money for Blackhawk Stanley Cup finals tickets next year...

Postmaster: Please deliver by the 3rd of December

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