

The Promise

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

WESTFIELD ✦ NEW JERSEY



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The Synaxis of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel And all the Heavenly Bodiless Powers

On November 8, the Church commemorates the Synaxis of the Heavenly Bodiless Powers. Michael, the most glorious and splendid Chief Commander of the bodiless Powers, has shown much beneficence and grace to the human race. Archangels Michael first appeared to Patriarch Abraham, then to Lot when he rescued him with his daughters from the fire sent by God, and the destruction of Sodom. After this, he appeared to Patriarch Jacob when he rescued him from the murderous hands of his brother Esau. He went before the encampment of the children of Israel when they were liberated from bondage in Egypt, and together with the pillar of fire and of cloud, he made easier the difficulty of their journey.

Also with the coming of the Gospel of Christ during this time of new grace, Archangel Michael brought together the rivers which once were released by the impious against the holy spring of Chonae and against its divine Church. And many other things are recorded about him in the divinely inspired Scriptures. For this reason, we have him as a protector and guardian of our lives for our defense, and we celebrate today his all-revered festival, for which reason it is called a Synaxis.

Satan was an angel of divine rank. Out of supreme pride, he exalted himself against the Creator and Master of all. He boasted of placing his throne in the clouds of heaven to become like the Highest. As a



usurper, he put his mind to evilness saying, "I will ascend into heaven; I will place my throne above the stars of heaven and be like the Most High!" – Isa. 12:13 But no one can outshine the Sun of Righteousness and because Lucifer tried to take the place of the One True God he fell from heavenly glory and his archangelic office. For this reason the Lord said, "I saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven." (Lk. 10:18). Together with him an order of Angels fell, who sprung away from God due to their pride, and fell with their leader the devil. And they were all darkened instead of illumined, becoming demons rather than Angels. Therefore, it is said at that

time the Chief Commander Michael, beholding the pitiful fall of the angels, understood the cause of their fall. And through subjection and humility, which he showed as a grateful servant and faithful housekeeper towards his Master, he carefully guarded his own glory and brilliance granted to him by God, as well as the glory of the other Angelic orders. Therefore by his humbleness and worship of God, it was determined by God Almighty that Michael should be the first among the Angelic orders.

Michael gathers together the choirs of Angels crying out: "Let us be attentive!" By this, we are to learn what happened with the fallen demons. They were once like the Angels but through pride lost everything and fell into the dark abyss. We must take care never to repeat their pride so that a similar fate may not befall us.

Michael teaches us to worship God and to praise His highly exalted name. He has shared with us the never ending angelic hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of Your glory." (Isa. 6:3 & Revelation 4:8)

Together with the Archangel Michael, the Synaxis commemorates the most beautiful and graceful Archangel Gabriel. He also showed much beneficence to the human race, as much in the Old as in the New Testament. The prophecy of Daniel gives us his name, when Daniel explained

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Dates in the Life of Our Church

October–November 2023

Archangel Michael

↔ *Continued from page 1*

NOVEMBER

2	Nameday of Archbishop Elpidophoros
	2:00 PM Wedding
	4:00 PM Greek School
8	Holy Archangels
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
9	St. Nektarios
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	4:00 PM Greek School
11	Sts. Victor, Vikenzios, and Menas
	Nameday of Presvytera Victoria
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
12	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
13	St. John Chrysostom
	9:00 AM @ Metropolis
14	7:30 PM Parish Council
	4:00 PM Greek School
15	9:30 AM TOTS
16	10:00 AM Trinity Circle Trip
	4:00 PM Greek School
18	2:00 PM Wedding
19	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	12:00 PM Parish Assembly
20	8:00 PM NNJYC
21	Entrance of the Theotokos
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	4:00 PM Greek School
23	Office Closed - Thanksgiving Day
24	Office Closed
26	8:15 AM Orthros

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

1:00 PM Baptism

28 4:00 PM Greek School

29 9:30 AM TOTS

1:00 PM Y2AM

30 St. Andrew the Apostle

8:30 AM Orthros

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

4:00 PM Greek School

DECEMBER

2	11:00 AM Baptism
3	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	11:45 AM Parish Elections
4	St. Barbara the Great Martyr
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
5	11:30 AM Trinity Circle Christmas Luncheon
	4:00 PM Greek School
6	St. Nicholas of Myra
	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
7	4:00 PM Greek School
	6:00 PM Philoptochos Dinner Party and General Meeting
9	11:00 AM Baptism
10	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	12:00 PM Religious Education Christmas Program
12	St. Spyridon
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	4:00 PM Greek School
	7:30 PM Parish Council
13	9:30 AM TOTS
14	4:00 PM Greek School

the vision of the King of the Medes and Persians and Greeks: “Gabriel, tell this man [Daniel] the meaning of the vision” (Dan. 8:16). Gabriel also revealed to Daniel that after four hundred and ninety-seven years, Christ would come, as it says: “While I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice...” (Dan. 9:21). It is he who proclaimed the good news to the wife of Manoah, that she would give birth to Samson. And he also proclaimed the good news to Joachim and Anna that they would give birth to the maiden and Lady Theotokos.

In the New Testament, Archangel Gabriel proclaimed the good news to Zechariah, standing to the right of the altar of incense, that he would give birth to the great John the Forerunner. He fed the Ever-Virgin Mariam for twelve years in the Holy of Holies with heavenly food. No one would dispute that it was he who proclaimed the good news to the Theotokos, that she would give birth by the Holy Spirit to the Son and Word of God. He appeared in a vision to Joseph, and told him to not be afraid, but to take Mariam as his wife, for that which will be born from her is from the Holy Spirit. He also appeared and evangelized to the shepherds, that Christ the Savior of the world was born. And in a vision he told Joseph to take the Child and His Mother and flee to Egypt. Then, told them to return to the land of Israel.

Many sacred teachers and hymnographers think that it was the divine Gabriel who was the Angel clad in white that came down from heaven and moved the stone from the door of the tomb of the life-giver Jesus and sat upon it. And he evangelized the Myrrh-bearers regarding the Resurrection of the Lord. We will say in general, that the most divine Gabriel served in the mystery of the incarnate economy of God the Word from beginning to end. For this reason, the Church of Christ has received to celebrate him together with the Archangel Michael, and to call upon him for grace and help. ❖

The Modern Day Saint

St. Nektarios of Pentapolis

November

9

Saint Nektarios, the great wonder-worker of modern times, was born Anastasios Kephalas in Selyvria, Thrace on October 1, 1846.

Since his family was poor, Anastasios went to Constantinople when he was only fourteen year of age in order to find work. Although he had no money for the voyage, he asked the captain of a boat to take him. The captain refused him and asked the boy to leave. Anastasios sadly walked away.

The captain gave the order to start the engines, but nothing happened. After several unsuccessful attempts, he looked up into the eyes of Anastasios who stood on the dock. Taking pity on the boy, the captain told him to come aboard. Immediately, the engines started and the boat began to move.

Anastasios found a job with a tobacco merchant in Constantinople, who did not pay him very much. In his desire to share useful information with others, Anastasios wrote down short maxims from spiritual books on the paper bags and packages of the tobacco shop. The customers would read them out of curiosity and might perhaps derive some benefit from them.

The boy went about barefoot and in ragged clothing, but he trusted in God. Seeing that the merchant received many letters, Anastasios also wanted to write a letter. To whom could he write? Not to his parents, because there were no mail deliveries to his village. Not to his friends, because he had none. Therefore, he decided to write to Christ to tell Him of his needs.

“My little Christ,” he wrote. “I do not have an apron or shoes. Would you send them to me? You know how much I love you.”

Anastasios sealed the letter and wrote on the outside: “To the Lord Jesus Christ

in Heaven.” On his way to mail the letter, he ran into the man who owned a shop opposite the one in which he worked. The man asked him where he was going, and Anastasios whispered something in reply. Seeing the letter in his hands, the man offered to mail it for him, since he was on his way to the post office.

The merchant put the letter in his pocket and assured Anastasios that he would mail it with his own letters. The boy returned to the tobacco shop, filled with happiness. When he took the letter from his pocket to mail it, the merchant happened to notice the address. Astonished and curious, the man could not resist opening the letter to read it. Touched by the boy’s simple faith, the merchant placed some money in an envelope and sent it to him anonymously. Anastasios was filled with joy, and he gave thanks to God.

A few days later, seeing Anastasios dressed somewhat better than usual, his employer thought he had stolen money from him and began to beat him. Anastasios cried out, “I have never stolen anything. My little-Christ sent me the money.”

Hearing the commotion, the other merchant came and took the tobacco seller aside and explained the situation to him.

When he was still a young man, Anastasios made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. During the voyage, the ship was in danger of sinking in a storm. Anastasios looked at the raging sea, and then at the captain. He went and stood beside the captain and took the helm, praying for God to save them. Then he took off the Cross his grandmother had given him (containing a piece of the Cross of Christ) and tied it to his belt. Leaning over the side, he dipped the cross into the water three times and commanded the sea, “Silence! Be still.” At once, the wind died down and the sea became calm.



On November 7, 1875, Anastasios received monastic tonsure at the Nea Moni Monastery on Chios, with the new name Lazarus. Two years later, he was ordained a deacon. On that occasion, his name was changed to Nektarios.

Later, when he was a priest, Father Nektarios left Chios and went to Egypt. There he was elected Metropolitan of Pentapolis. Some of his colleagues became jealous of him because of his great virtues, because of his inspiring sermons, and because of everything else which distinguished Saint

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Saint Nektarios

↳ Continued from page 1

Nektarios from them.

Other Metropolitans and bishops of the Patriarchate of Alexandria became filled with malice toward the saint, so they told Patriarch Sophronius that Nektarios was plotting to become patriarch himself. They told the patriarch that the Metropolitan of Pentapolis merely made an outward show of piety so as to win favor with the people. Being angered, the patriarch and his synod removed Saint Nektarios from the See of Alexandria. Patriarch Sophronius wrote an ambiguous letter of suspension which provoked scandal and speculation about the true reasons for the saint's removal from his position.

Saint Nektarios was not deposed from his rank, however. He was still allowed to function as a bishop. If anyone invited him to perform a wedding or a baptism he could do so, as long as he obtained permission from the local bishop.

Saint Nektarios bore his trials with great patience, but those who loved him began to demand to know why he had been removed. Seeing that this was causing a disturbance in the Church of Alexandria, he decided to go to Greece. He arrived in Athens to find that false rumors about him had already reached that city. His letter of suspension said only that he had been removed "for reasons known to the Patriarchate," and so all the slander about him was believed.

Since the state and ecclesiastical authorities would not give him a position, the former Metropolitan was left with no means of support, and no place to live. Every day he went to the Minister of Religion asking for assistance. They soon tired of him and began to mistreat him.

One day, as he was leaving the Minister's office, Saint Nektarios met a friend whom he had known in Egypt. Surprised to find the beloved bishop in such a condition, the man spoke to the Minister of Religion and Education and asked that something be found for him. So, Saint Nektarios was appointed to be a humble preacher in the diocese of Vitinea and Euboea. The saint did not regard this as humiliating for him, even though a simple

monk could have filled that position. He went to Euboea to preach in the churches, eagerly embracing his duties.

Yet even here, the rumors of scandal followed him. Sometimes, while he was preaching, people began to laugh and whisper. Therefore, the blameless one resigned his position and returned to Athens. By then, some people had begun to realize that the rumors were untrue, because they saw nothing in his life or conversation to suggest that he was guilty of anything. With their help and influence, Saint Nektarios was appointed Director of the Rizarios Seminary in Athens on March 8, 1894. He was to remain in that position until December of 1908.

The saint celebrated the services in the seminary church, taught the students, and wrote several edifying and useful books. Since he was a quiet man, Saint Nektarios did not care for the noise and bustle of Athens. He wanted to retire somewhere where he could pray. On the island of Aegina, he found an abandoned monastery dedicated to the Holy Trinity, which he began to repair with his own hands.

He gathered a community of nuns, appointing the blind nun Xenia as abbess, while he himself served as Father Confessor. Since he had a gift for spiritual direction, many people came to Aegina to confess to him. Eventually, the community grew to thirty nuns. He used to tell them, "I am building a lighthouse for you, and God shall put a light in it that will shine forth to the world. Many will see this light and come to Aegina." They did not understand what he was telling them, that he himself would be that beacon, and that people would come there to venerate his holy relics.

On September 20, 1920 the nun Euphemia brought an old man in black robes, who was obviously in pain, to the Aretaieion Hospital in Athens in the Pangrati area. This was a state-run hospital for the poor. The intern asked the nun for information about the patient.

"Is he a monk?" he asked.

"No, he is a bishop."

The intern laughed and said, "Stop joking and tell me his name, Mother, so that I can enter it in the register."

"He is indeed a bishop, my child. He is the Most Reverend Metropolitan of

Pentapolis."

The intern muttered, "For the first time in my life I see a bishop without a panagia or cross, and more significantly, without money."

Then the nun showed the saint's credentials to the astonished intern who then admitted him. For two months Saint Nektarios suffered from a disease of the bladder. At 10:30 on the evening of November 8, 1920, he surrendered his holy soul to God. He died in peace at the age of seventy-four.

In the bed next to Saint Nektarios was a man who was paralyzed. As soon as the saint had breathed his last, the nurse and the nun who sat with him began to dress him in clean clothing to prepare him for burial at Aegina. They removed his sweater and placed it on the paralyzed man's bed. Immediately, the paralytic got up from his bed, glorifying God.

Saint Nektarios was buried at the Holy Trinity Monastery on Aegina. Several years later, his grave was opened to remove his bones (as is the custom in Greece). His body was found whole and incorrupt, as if he had been buried that very day.

Word was sent to the Archbishop of Athens, who came to see the relics for himself. Archbishop Chrysostomos told the nuns to leave them out in the sun for a few days, then to rebury them so that they would decay. A month or two after this, they opened the grave again and found the saint incorrupt. Then the relics were placed in a marble sarcophagus.

Several years later, the holy relics dissolved, leaving only the bones. The saint's head was placed in a bishop's mitre, and the top was opened and sealed with glass to allow people to kiss his head.

Saint Nektarios was glorified by God, since his whole life was a continuous doxology to the Lord. Both during his life and after his death, Saint Nektarios has performed thousands of miracles, especially for those suffering from cancer. There are more churches dedicated to Saint Nektarios than to any other modern Orthodox saint. ❖



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PHILOPTOCHOS

This Thanksgiving, Philoptochos takes this opportunity to give thanks for the generosity and support of our Holy Trinity family and benefactors in order to make a difference in our church and community at large. We remember that Thanksgiving is not just a holiday, but a time of year to deepen our faith and enrich our relationship with God and those closest to us.

This November, we are accepting donations to support Market Street Mission's 2023 Thanksgiving Dinner Campaign. Every \$3.00 you give provides one hungry person with a traditional Thanksgiving meal. A meal often opens the door to safe shelter, Christ-centered counseling and recovery programs that help people embrace a new life with hope and promise. For further information, please Debra Vlahakis at debvlahakis@gmail.com

*Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed,
for he shares his bread with the poor.
~ Proverbs 22:9*

Furthermore, we invite you to participate in our annual Community Christmas Card as a community expression of joy over our Lord's birth. This year we will donate the proceeds to St. Jude's Research Hospital (ASLAC) and Community Hope, Inc. Please join your fellow parishioners by donating to our annual Christmas Card. Contact Sandy Boutsikaris 908/578-3341 or Christina Colonias 917/825-5986 for more information.

With the love and blessings of God, we can lessen the pain, loss and suffering of our brothers and sisters wherever they may be. This is the work of Philoptochos.



At the "Pink" October General Meeting, Mary's Place by the Sea Co-Founder and Executive Director, Michele Gannon, thanked our chapter for our generous donation of \$7,500. The donation was made possible from the proceeds of the 2023 Rummage. Mary's Place by the Sea is a respite home for women who have been diagnosed with cancer., at no cost to them. Integrative services, both in-person and virtually, are offered to complement their medical treatment, and provide rest and support during this challenging time in their lives. Since 2009, 14,000 women with cancer have become "guests" of Mary's Place by the Sea.

Much appreciation to Elise Savnik and all the Rummage Sale volunteers for making this possible!



Holy Trinity Choir Sings Liturgical Hymns at a Multi-denominational Concert

A Sharing of Songs, Unity & Peace

BY KATHRYN ATHANASOULA, HOLY TRINITY CHOIR DIRECTOR



We live in very turbulent times. So it was timely and poignant to participate in a concert with a theme of unity and peace. Father Peter asked me a few months ago if our choir can participate in a wonderful musical event to be held at Saint Helen's Roman Catholic Church on October 24. The Holy Trinity Choir was happy to participate.

On that night, seven houses of worship, all located in Westfield, sang their praises to God to a packed church. Over twelve hymns, songs, and even a national anthem were sung.



1. Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
2. Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church
3. Saint Helen's Roman Catholic Church
4. Temple Emanu-El
5. St. Paul's Episcopal
6. Presbyterian Church of Westfield
7. First Congregational Church

Ten members of the Holy Trinity Choir beautifully sang four hymns in Greek. The altos and sopranos sang a cappella, that is, without the accompaniment of an organ or other musical instrument. The voices were angelic and the harmonies perfectly matched the theme of unity and compatibility. Despite the fact that there was no translation of the Greek hymns, the music transported the audience spiritually.

The magic of the evening was capped with a finale of John Rutter's timeless song, Look at the World. All choirs joined together to perform a beautiful rendition, accompanied by flute.

We want to thank the parish of Saint Helen Roman Catholic Church for hosting the concert, Father Peter for his involvement in the Westfield Clergy Association, and our choir members for their generous practice time, talents, and for delivering a memorable performance. ❖



Can you help a Mission Priest?

There are Orthodox mission priests all over the world following in the footsteps of the apostles, spreading the message of Christ's love where people hunger for the peace and truth of the Orthodox Faith. Many are responsible for presenting the Gospel to people for the very first time. Many priests serve several communities. Many are seen as the only source of help in times of need. And, many have families of their own.

The Support a Mission Priest Program (SAMP) of OCMC provides a subsidy to help these priests share the Faith, care for their communities, and provide for their families. For just \$600 (\$50 per month) churches, organizations, and people like you can support a priest serving in the mission field for an entire year by helping to subsidize his income.

Empower a mission priest to share the Gospel and give hierarchs establishing and growing the Orthodox Church in Africa an opportunity to ordain more clergy who will serve their people and preach the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. ❖



His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria and All Africa

Give online at: [OCMC.org/SAMP2023](https://www.ocmc.org/SAMP2023)



Humble Orthodox Church



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GOYA

Update

I would like to begin by wishing a most blessed Thanksgiving Day to all! Several of our Goyan's attended the Harvest Dance at Saint Andrew's in Randolph, and also supported Nicholas Sikellis and Nadia Tarhanidis (me) at the Mr. and Miss GOYA pageant in early October—congratulations to Nicholas for making the top 5! Nicholas and I enjoyed representing Westfield, while also learning and diving deeper into our faith through this experience.

The 47th annual Christ Encounter Retreat was held October 13-15. Each participant had a wonderful time once again at the YMCA Camp Fairview Lakes. We bundled up in sweats

and rain gear to observed the leaves changing. Although it rained all day Saturday, we still enjoyed the weekend. We participated in activities based on the weekend's topic of "My Body/My Temple," where we collaborated with each other, our advisors, and Father Peter. We spent our "Alone Time with God" sitting around the lake reading sections of the Bible, and of course held our banner making competition.

Another great way our GOYA bonds is through athletics. Our first games were held in October, and are looking forward to the remaining few this next month. We look forward to December where our boys' basketball and girls' vol-

leyball teams seek to thrive in the state championship tournaments. Greek dance practices have recently begun, and we are always looking for additional members to join—no previous experience is needed!

Lastly, our outreach committee hosted a clothing drive on October 28. Thank you to all that donated! We are currently running a food drive to support families for Thanksgiving. We plan on visiting local nursing homes / assisted living facilities and parishioners' homes in December to share Christmas carols. Please contact GOYA@htgocnj.org if you would like us to visit your home. ❖



GOYA supporting Nicholas and Nadia



Mr. and Ms. Westfield with their families.



Nicholas Sikellis and Nadia Tarhanidis



Fr. Peter and Presvytera Victoria with Mr. and Ms. Westfield

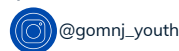
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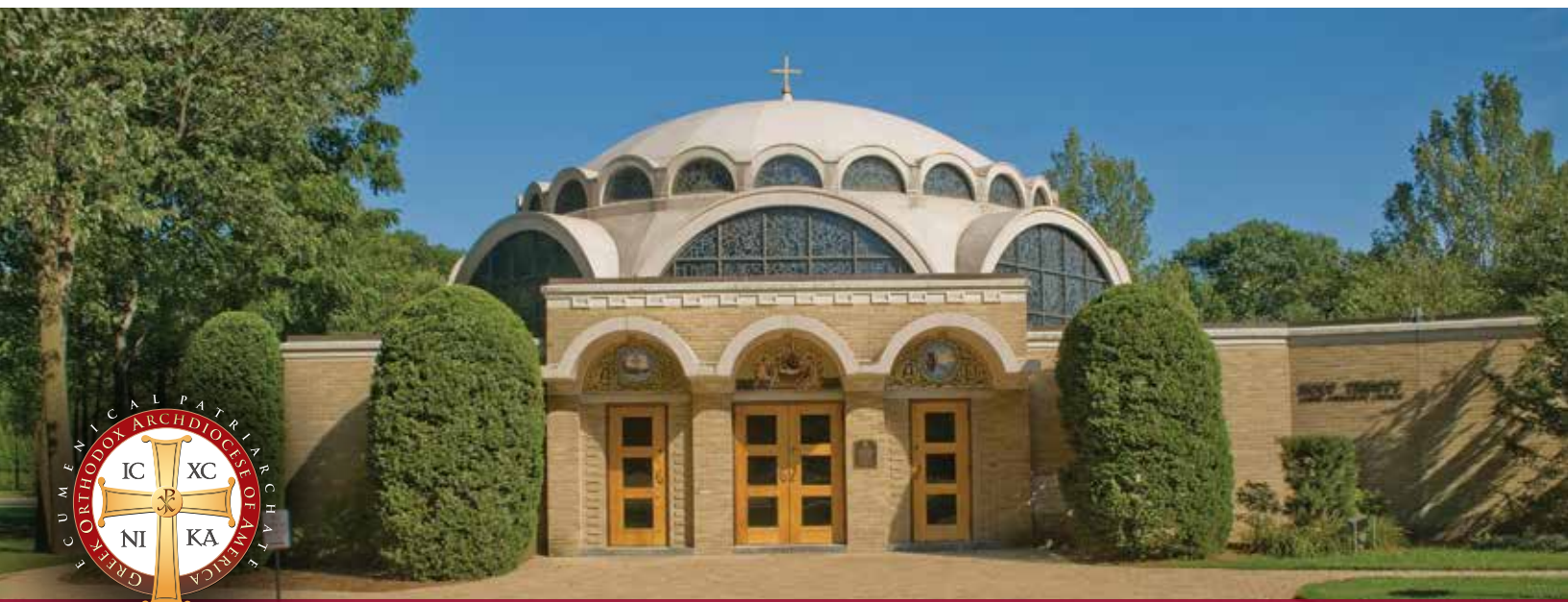
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