

The Promise

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

WESTFIELD ✦ NEW JERSEY



November 2025 ✦ Volume 49, Issue 7

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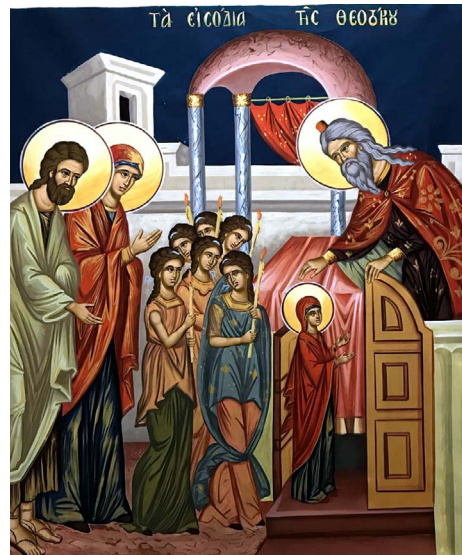
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The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

NOVEMBER 21

The Feast of the Entrance of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary into the Temple is celebrated on November 21. The Feast commemorates when the Virgin Mary, as a young child, entered the Temple in Jerusalem to become dedicated to God. She thus becomes the embodiment of what the Temple symbolizes.

The birth and early life of the Virgin Mary are not recorded in the Gospels or other books of the New Testament; however, this information can be found in a work dating from the second century known as the Book of James or Protevangelion. When Mary was three years old, Joachim and Anna decided that the time had come to fulfill their promise and to offer her to the Lord. Joachim gathered the young girls of the neighborhood to form an escort, and he directed them to go in front of Mary carrying torches. Captivated by the torches, the young child followed joyfully to the Temple, not once looking back at her parents nor weeping as she was parted from them.



The Holy Virgin ran toward the Temple overtaking her attendant maidens and threw herself into the arms of the High Priest Zacharias who was waiting for her at the gate of the Temple with the elders. Zacharias blessed her saying, *"It is in you that He has glorified your name in every generation. It is in you that He will reveal the Redemption that He has prepared for His people in the last days."*

Then Zacharias brought the child into the Holy of Holies - a place where

Continued on page 2 ⇨



Facing East

"O Jerusalem, look eastward, and see the joy that is coming to you from God."

– Baruch 4:36

Did you know that every altar of the Orthodox Church is situated facing the East? If you are ever lost on a hiking trail in Greece, when you come upon a church in the hills, you can find your orientation (physically and spiritually) by looking at the church. The church will always direct you to the right path.

Did you know that it is customary to pray facing the East? In church, we always pray facing the East. Even the priest faces East while praying. He doesn't face the congregation but prays to God together with the people.

Continued on page 5 ⇨

Wait for the promise of the Father



Dates in the Life of Our Church

November–December 2025

NOVEMBER

2	Daylight Savings Ends	8:15 AM Orthros
	8:15 AM Orthros	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	
5	7:00 PM Bible Study	19 7:00 PM Bible Study
8	Synaxis of the Archangels	21 Entry of the Theotokos
	8:30 AM Orthros	8:30 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	3:00 PM Wedding	23 8:15 AM Orthros
		9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
9	St. Nektarios	1:30 PM Baptism
	8:15 AM Orthros	25 St. Katherine the Great Martyr
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy	8:30 AM Orthros
	12:00 PM Parish Assembly	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
11	7:00 PM Wedding	27 Thanksgiving Day
	7:30 PM Parish Council	30 St. Andrew the First-Called
		8:15 AM Orthros
12	7:00 PM Bible Study	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
14-16	Christ Encounter Retreat	1:00 PM Baptism
16	St. Matthew the Evangelist	

DECEMBER

2	12:00 pm Trinity Circle Christmas Party
4	St. Barbara the Great Martyr
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
6	St. Nicholas of Myra
	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
7	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
	11:45 AM Parish Council Elections
9	7:30 PM Parish Council
12	St. Spyridon
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
14	8:15 AM Orthros
	9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

↪ *Continued from page 1*

only the High Priest was permitted to enter once a year on the Day of Atonement. He placed her on the steps of the altar and the grace of the Lord descended upon her. She arose and expressed her joy in a dance, as wonder seized all who saw this happen. The Virgin Mary dwelt in the Temple for nine years until she reached an age for marriage. She was taken from the Temple by the priests and elders and entrusted to Joseph as the guardian of her virginity.

The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple signifies her total dedication to God and her readiness for her future vocation as the mother of the Incarnate Lord. This is a feast of anticipation. As

honor is shown to Mary, the faithful are called to look forward to the Incarnation of Christ, celebrated by the Feast of the Nativity on December 25. ❖



MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS,
SAVE US



Prayer of Thanksgiving

“O Lord my Savior and my Master, I, Thine unprofitable servant, with fear and trembling give thanks unto Thy loving goodness for all Thy benefits which Thou hast poured so abundantly upon me. I fall down in adoration before Thee and offer Thee, O God, my praises; with fervor I cry to Thee: O God, deliver me from all adversities and mercifully fulfill in me such of my desires as may be expedient for me. Hear me, I entreat Thee, and have mercy, for Thou art the Hope of all the ends of the earth, and unto Thee, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed glory, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.”

St. Iakovos of Evia

November 22

Patron Saint of the Metropolis of New Jersey



The Holy Elder Iakovos was born in 1920 in Asia Minor to a pious Greek Orthodox family. He grew up in a world in which the Orthodox people lived under the oppression of the Turkish government. The family later settled on the Greek island of Evia. From an early age, Iakovos' life was centered on his village church. It was said that by the time he was seven years old he knew the Divine Liturgy from memory. At the age of thirteen, he completed elementary school but due to the family's poverty he was unable to continue his studies and joined his father at work. His mother died in 1942. He was drafted into the army in 1947. Upon his return from the army in 1949, his father died leaving him to

sonally with saints such as St. Paraskevi, St. John the Russian, and St. David of Evia, the patron saint of the monastery. The Elder did not live for himself but from the fruit of his prayer and fasting he gave counsel and help to the people who began flocking to him. Despite many illnesses he always made time for the faithful who came to the monastery; not only simple village people but patriarchs, bishops, priests, monks, political leaders, and university professors. He said: *"The world is not in need of something to eat or something to drink – it is in need of our love. If we give as much as we can, then we will blossom as monks in this life."*

Beginning in 1990 his health began to decline and on November 21, 1991, he attended the Divine Liturgy, received Holy Communion, and heard the confessions of several people. He died peacefully later that same day. The thousands of people attending his funeral began shouting "A saint! A saint!" The Monastery of St. David on Evia as a novice and was ordained to the priesthood in 1952. He devoted himself to quiet prayer, fasting and manual labor. This monastery was quite dilapidated on his arrival and Father Iakovos lived in great poverty, which affected his health. It was reported that he conversed per-

sonally with saints such as St. Paraskevi, St. John the Russian, and St. David of Evia, the patron saint of the monastery.

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On Monday, November 27, 2017, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, along with the Holy Synod of Bishops, added to the calendar of saints the Elder Iakovos Tsalikis who fell asleep in the Lord in 1991. His feastday is November 22. Elder Iakovos, from his relationship with God, became a source of help and healing to the people who came to him during his life, and which continue now after his falling asleep in the Lord! ❖



His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey

Invites All the Faithful to the
Celebration of the Feast of St. Iakovos of Evia
Patron Saint of the Metropolis of New Jersey



It is an enormous
blessing to have, for the
first time, the
Epitrachelion (vestment)
of St. Iakovos presented
for veneration

Hierarchical Great Vespers,
Acolyte Blessing,
and Dinner Reception

Friday, November 21, 2025
6:00 P.M.

St. Thomas
Greek Orthodox Church
615 Mercer Street
Cherry Hill, NJ 08002

Orthros,
Hierarchical Divine Liturgy,
and Reception

Saturday, November 22, 2025
9:00 A.M.

St. Thomas
Greek Orthodox Church
615 Mercer Street
Cherry Hill, NJ 08002

National Church Musician Sunday

Celebrating Kathryn Athanasoulas

OCTOBER 5



On Sunday, October 5, National Church Musician Sunday was held across the Archdiocese honoring the gifts and stewardship of church musicians. This is a day to celebrate our clergy, choirs, chanters, and those who teach the hymns of our Church to the youth. Those who sing to the Lord enhance our worship and liturgical expression ensuring that the glorious treasury of our hymnography continues to edify us and future generations.

This year's Church Musician Sunday was uniquely special as we honored Kathryn Athanasoulas and her 38 years of dedicated and faithful service as Holy Trinity Choir Director. Having retired earlier this year, the parish wanted a special day to celebrate her many accomplishments. Special recognition and gifts were offered in the church and well as a special fellowship hour in her name. Afterwards, the choir, friends, and family of Kathryn continued the celebration at a retirement luncheon at Echo Lake Country Club.

The choir continues its long held tradition at Holy Trinity with Anne Kernoski being appointed by Fr. Peter as Holy Trinity's new choir director.

Let us give thanks to our choir members and their service to Holy Trinity. ❖



Holy Trinity Choir Members and Years of Ministry

Kathryn Athanasoulas, Choir Director, Emeritus (38)



fotis (15), Joy Danilides (20), Kathy Genakos (3), Susan Karcanes (27), Miriam Kotsonis (27), Marina LoAlbo (25), Marigo Markos (3), Alix Martin (29), Despina O'Neil (3), Richard Roscoe (2), Steven Xenakis (14).

Anne Kernoski, Choir Director (2)
Phyllis Verenes, Organist (35)
Angela Aspromatis (35), Gioula Assad (40),
Connie Baboukas (27), Diane Honeker Belina (15), Andrea Blasi (24), Gregory Carey (2), Anastasia Carumpalos (34), Karen Coulis (14), Christopher Dai-

Holy Trinity Psaltes - Pascalis Kuvalakis (20); Anthony Pantagis (12)

The Adult Choir rehearses on Thursday evenings at 7:15pm. New members are welcome at any time of the year. ❖



Facing East

↳ Continued from page 1

Why does the East have such significance in the Church?

Perhaps it is because Christ is called “the East” or the “Dayspring from on high” in Luke 1:78 and the “Sun that rises in the early morning” in 2 Kingdoms 23:4. We are told that Christ’s Second Coming is from the East, “For as the lightning comes from the East and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” Matthew 24:27

Origen, a second century Christian theologian, says that we ought to pray Eastward to show that our whole life is oriented towards the dawn of Light of the World: Jesus.

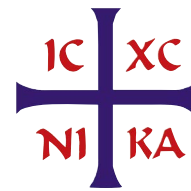
St. Basil the Great writes that in facing the East to pray, we show that we are seeking the ancient homeland, the Paradise of God, that God planted in Eden, toward the East. Genesis 2:8



So it is that our bodies are traditionally buried facing east and not west, the sunrise and not the sunset, the morning and not the night. They are like a vast army looking out for Him, Who was risen, and waiting His call to summon us to the Resurrection.

Thus originated the custom of praying facing the East, the place of the rising sun, the direction from which our Lord will finally come again. Each time we collect in church and face the East to pray, we are standing and waiting for the Parousia, the Coming of Christ, ready to do His work, and joyfully receive His Second Coming. The stand in expectation of this great event that will consummate the union with Him already experienced in prayer and the Eucharist.

November 15 begins the Christmas Fast. This is the time for the first Parousia, or coming of Christ in the world. And as the Magi saw the star in the East as they journeyed, let us also see the Daystar in the East coming to us to grant us His tender mercy and abundant blessings. ❖



What is Christian Stewardship?

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY IS NOVEMBER 23

Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a way of life, which acknowledges accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God. The primary goal of Stewardship is to promote spiritual growth and strengthen faith. Becoming a Steward begins when we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty and trust and act according to those beliefs. As Stewards, we affirm that every aspect of our lives comes as a gift from Him. Stewardship calls on the faithful to cheerfully offer back to God a portion of the gifts with which they have been blessed. The concept of Stewardship is based on the Greek word *Philotimo* (grateful indebtedness), and is understood through the words of Jesus Christ, “freely you have received, freely give” (Mt. 10:8).

Have you ever gazed at the moon with wonder, especially when it hangs huge in the night sky and is lit up with brilliant light? But if you think about it, the moon has no light of its own. The only light it has comes from another source. It receives the sun’s light and then reflects to us that which it has gained.

Just like the moon, we have no light of our own. The only light we have comes to us from another source, from the One who says, “I AM the Light of the world.” – John 8:12. The light of Christ always shines upon us. We receive it freely and with joy. So therefore, let us bask in this light but also reflect this light to others, for this is the purpose of light for others to enjoy.

Stewardship is recognizing that I am the moon and Christ is the Sun. Every gift we have been given is from Him, the Sun of Righteousness. Stewardship is the way by which we reflect this light. We return a portion of what has been given to us for the working of the Church, for doing good in the world, for helping the poor, for teaching the faith, for being a witness to the eternal kingdom, and finally to glorify God. ❖



Philoptochos

■ KATHY MAGLARAS, PRESIDENT

Entering November, we reflect on this season of giving and thankfulness. We first give thanks for all of God's blessings in our lives and His love, grace, and strength He provides each day. The Ladies of Philoptochos each month focus on giving themselves through their action and service.

In October, as part of Breast Cancer Awareness month, pink ribbons were tied around the trees of the

church in remembrance and support. We also participated in "Mary's Place By the Sea Walkathon" that was held on October 18. We were honored to walk together representing the Ladies Philoptochos and proud to share that together we raised nearly \$1900 for this incredible wellness retreat. This organization holds a special place in the hearts of Holy Trinity community as a few of our own women have personally experienced the comfort

that it provides. We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who supported us!

As we wrap up a beautiful fall season, our hearts turn towards the Christmas holidays - a time of giving, gratitude and joy. The Ladies Philoptochos is already busy preparing for our annual outreach projects and together making the holidays shine even brighter for everyone we serve. ❖



Athens Night With Author Diane Kochilas



What a beautiful Athens Night it was with Diane Kochilas! On October 23, the Bouras Center at Holy Trinity was beautifully decorated and filled with nearly 140 parishioners, friends and Philoptochos sisters from neighboring chapters gathered for an evening of food, fellowship and fun with chef and author Diane Kochilas. Diane brought her stories from Athens and how the city has evolved from the traditional Athens that many of us know and love to the vibrant modern capital it is today. Every-

one enjoyed her presentation, and book signing of her newest release, "Athens: Food Stories Love". All proceeds from the night will go toward our Philoptochos initiatives. Thank you to everyone who came to support this evening! A big thank you to Diane for saying yes, and to our amazing committee (Ellen MA, Mary C, Elise, Yiana, Maria K. Kristen, Mary S. Maria S, Anthe, Kathy M, Ron), Board and Donor (Vardas Family) who made everything run so smoothly. ❖

UPCOMING EVENTS:

All are welcome and please stop by the fellowship hour for more information.

- December 4th
Philoptochos Christmas Party & General Meeting
- December 11th
Vasilopita Bread Sale
- January 25, 2026
Vasilopita Luncheon and Stewardship Kick-off



GOYA

Update

■ BY SOPHIA SKALKOTOS, GOYA PRESIDENT

To start off the year, the Greek Orthodox Youth of Holy Trinity had an amazing kick off with an open house in September. It was extremely successful as we welcomed many new members and friends! Thank you to our advisors, Sophia Saketos, Christine Skalkotos, Catherine Kelly, Kathy Paone, Lexi Kiriakatis, and Andy Zotos for their time, dedication, and endless support to our GOYA.

Congratulations to Kalliope Koutzoulis, Noah Kiprotich, and Dylan West for participating in and representing our parish at the Diving for the Cross on September 28!

On October 3, our GOYAnS had a great time at the Harvest Dance hosted by St. Andrew in Randolph. We

enjoyed our time with the food, music, and some board games. We appreciate and thank Randolph for hosting on such short notice. On November 1, we attended the Fairview Bowling and Dance event. It was a lot of fun!

The Mr/Miss GOYA event took place on Sunday, October 18. Juliana Pangas, Ms. Westfield and Harrison Manousos, Mr. Westfield did an amazing job representing Holy Trinity. We are so proud of both of them!

The Annual Christ Encounter Retreat will be held from Nov. 14 - 16. This year, our retreat will be at a different location. Instead of a YMCA camp, will be visiting the Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts!

We are all so excited and looking forward to it as it will be something new for us to grow as a community alongside our Christian faith.

For Outreach, special thanks to Zoe Drivas and Kathy Drivas, we supported Bagged with Love at Jewish Community Center (JCC), held our Annual Fall Clothing Drive, and supported the Sock It to 'Em Drive where we donated socks for adults and children.

A very positive start to the year and a hopeful future! We are so excited to begin the year and grow closer as a GOYA community. Just a reminder that all are welcome and we can't wait to journey through the year as a Church Family offering our philxenia. ❖



Holy Trinity Youth



Mr. Westfield Harrison Manousos & Ms. Westfield Juliana Pangas



Fr. Peter, Pres. Victoria, Sophia Saketos with Mr/Ms. Westfield

HOLY TRINITY

2025 *Community Christmas Card*



Our dear Holy Trinity Parishioners, we invite you to participate in this community expression of joy over our Lord's birth. Philoptochos continues its philanthropic work to assist those in need, and we are counting on your kindness, support, and generosity to help us make a difference together! Please join your fellow parishioners by donating to our annual Christmas Card to benefit *Alzheimer's of New Jersey* as well as *Community Personnel Services (a division of ECLC)* that assists the special needs community through education, employment assistance, and life skills development.

- COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW AND SEND IT IN WITH YOUR DONATION.
- ALL DONATIONS ARE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED. WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!



THE LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY
 HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
 250 Gallows Hill Road Westfield, NJ 07090-1109

I/We wish to add my/our name(s) to the Community Christmas Card.

- _____ PLEASE USE THE SAME WORDING AS LAST YEAR.
- _____ PLEASE CHANGE THE WORDING TO THE FOLLOWING:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Donation Amount: _____

Online: _____ Cash: _____ Check #: _____

RETURN THIS FORM NO LATER THAN SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2025

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
**LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS
 SOCIETY HTGOC**



For convenience in handling, you can make your payment by check, credit card, Apple Pay, Google or PayPal.

Include your information with the payment and how your family name(s) should appear.
 Contact
Sandy Boutsikaris 908/578-3341 or
Christina Colonias 917/825-5986 for more information.

The Ladies Philoptochos Society – HTGOC is a registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

The Athenagoras Human Rights Award



His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, together with Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis, National Commander of the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (AEP), on Saturday, October 18, 2025 presented the Athenagoras Human Rights Award to the Hon. Michael R. Pompeo, the 70th Secretary of State of the United States of America. The Award was presented at the AEP's annual Athenagoras Human Rights Award Banquet.

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, in a message commemorating the occasion, observed that Secretary Pompeo is "recognized for his consistent advocacy for religious freedom and his steadfast support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and other religious minorities during his distinguished public service." ❖



Peter Tarhanidis, Fr. Peter, Supreme AHEPA President, Savas Tsivikos; Michael Psaros, Presvytera Victoria, Ted Bozonelis

Holy Trinity Contingency



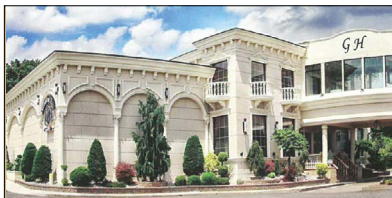
Lea, Justin, & Ted Bozonelis, Presvytera Victoria

Fr. Peter, Presvytera Victoria, Mike Emanel



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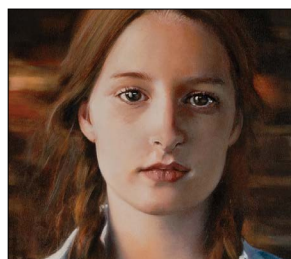
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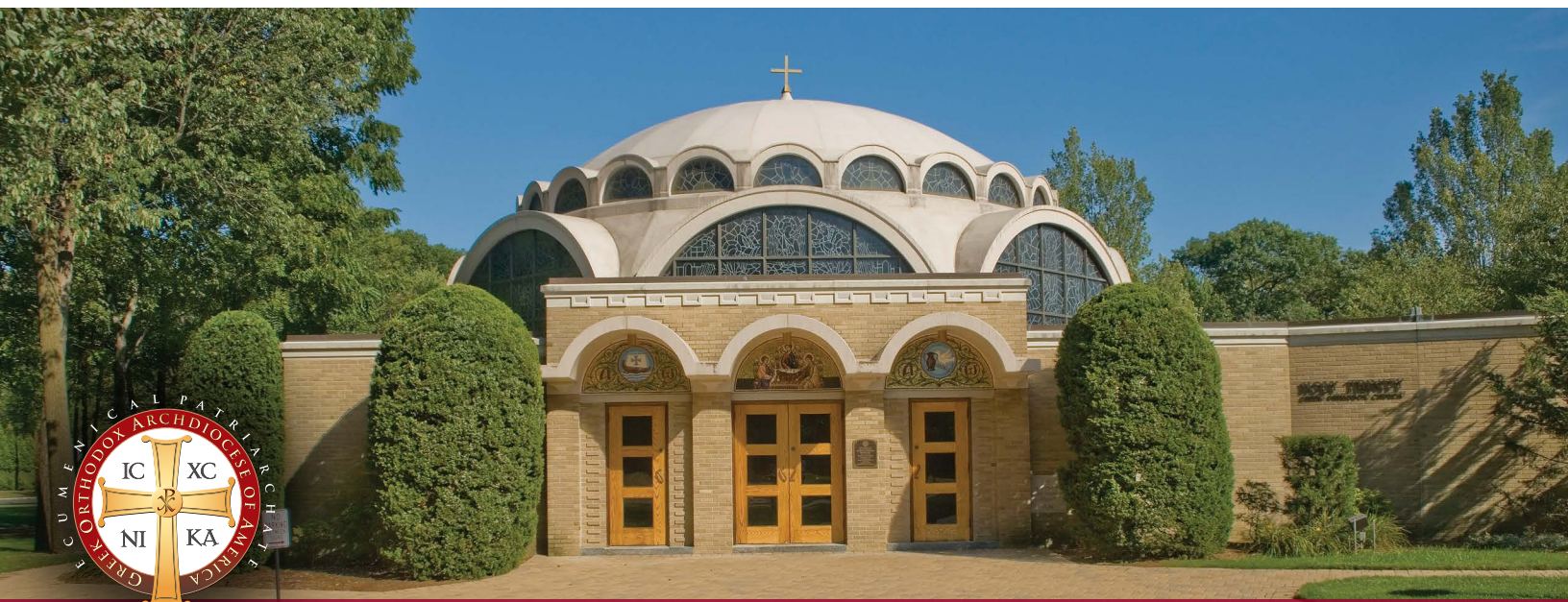
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