NEPSIS Spiritual watchfulness and alertness. "Watch, there-fore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming" (Matthew 24:42)

Saint Sophia's Greek Orthodox Church 325 Waring Road Syracuse, New York 13224

> Phone (315) 446-5222 (315) 251-1654

> > ସର୍ଭରାରାରାର୍ଭରାନ୍ତର୍ଭରାନ୍ତର୍ଭରାନ୍ତର୍ଭରାନ୍ତର୍ଭରାନ୍ତର୍ଭ

From Thanksgiving to Christmas

Back on November 12, 2011, a Saturday morning, our Holy Land group went to the Divine Liturgy at the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. I was hoping to serve, or at least to stand in the altar, but it was not to be: we arrived just a little late, and the monk who was supervising directed that we (the three priests in our group) should stand with the laity. I was a little disappointed, but I tried to enter into the worship of the Holy and Divine Liturgy over against my annoyance - thoughts that kept assailing my mind as to why our pilgrimage leaders did not take us earlier from the hotel. You know how I feel about coming late to church! It was a struggle.

There were not many people present, and the chanters chanted the Liturgy in a matterof-fact manner. One was dressed in blue jeans. There was a man helping to organize the service who kept coming out of the altar for no reason – it seemed that he was bored. Several times, he stood in the front, leaning against the iconostasis, looking at the people as if judging that the crowd looked small and poor that day. I took a picture of him doing this. I had to close my eyes in order to worship, in order to pray. It was a struggle.

Suddenly, one of our pilgrimage leaders came through a door at the side of the church and said that we should all go down a flight of stairs immediately. I was first. We were hustled down to the place of the manger and the place of our Lord's birth. There, before me, was the silver star that marked the place, the silver star I had seen so many times in photographs. There was another group in the grotto, and we came down the stairs right next to them. A nun yelled at me to take my group to the back. We hurried through the grotto of the manger (near, but not the same as, the place of Christ's birth) and went around behind the other group. Monks were quickly cleaning the altar in the grotto and removing the icons. I learned later that Catholics were to serve there next, according to a strict schedule. We hurried to reverence the place, and made our way back upstairs to the main church. It was a struggle.

We came up the stairs just in time for communion, and since I had prepared, I went forward. At the moment the body of Christ touched my mouth, I felt a sense of peace and thanksgiving. "Just under my feet," I said to myself, "the body of Christ, of which I have just partaken, came into this world."

Brothers and sisters, we are at the time now between the civil holiday of Thanksgiving and the Holy Day of the Nativity of Christ. This is a time of great spiritual struggle. As I write this, in mid-November, some radio stations are already playing Christmas music which will continue right through to the end of December. Presbytera and I are starting to discuss gifts, cards, food. Soon, many of us will be invited to parties that violate the fast and do not respect the church's attitude toward the Advent season - the time of reflection and repentance before the celebration of our Lord's birth.

This is a time of great spiritual struggle. Just as I stood not that long ago in Bethlehem, in the second oldest church in Christianity, with my feet just over the place of our Lord's birth – and *still* struggled to maintain a sense of holiness and peace – now we all stand in a time and place which has made the birth of Christ a worldly thing, a materialistic thing, sometimes a silly, childish thing.

But, brothers and sisters, it's possible to redeem the season. It's a struggle, but it's possible. Come to church. Come and renew your spirit, and strengthen it for the struggle. Seek God, and His righteousness. Prepare your heart for the coming of the Savior, Christ the Lord!

Your affectionate servant, Father David



2024 Parish Council

DECEMBER

MMMMM

Peter Manolakos President

Thomas Anthis Jr. Vice President

Joy Weatherup Anthis **Secretary**

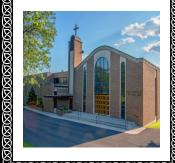
> Michael Copanas Treasurer

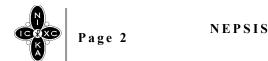
Robert Allen Dimitrios Giaprakis Eleni Kosmas, MD Martha Lemondes George Nardone Marianna Politis-Tacea Christopher Shiomos, OD Jeanette Capousis Vigliotti

> **Honorary Board Member** James Sakezles



VISIT THE PARISH **WEBSITE** stsophias.org



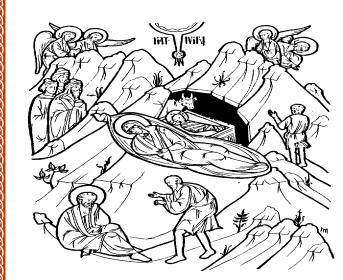




<u>CHRISTMAS EVE ~ TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24TH</u> 9:00 AM ROYAL HOURS FOR NATIVITY

6:00 PM VESPERAL LITURGY FOR NATIVITY FOLLOWED BY CHRISTMAS CAROLS

<u>CHRISTMAS DAY ~ WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25TH</u> 9:00 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY NATIVITY OF JESUS CHRIST



Christ

is Born!

Glorify Him!

Sunday School Christmas Play Sunday, December 15 Following Divine Liturgy







PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Parish,

Page 3

Do you still make New Year's resolutions? I for one do not. New Year's resolutions, for me, are examples of hope over experience. The notion that January first each year is a magical day that offers us a fresh start, a new beginning that allows for a better narrative to our own lives was for me, at best, an exercise in self delusion.

I think it is safe to say that it is not the calendar that provides the impetus for any of us to "change our ways", to modify, alter, eliminate, or add behaviors to our daily lives. We make these alterations because we want to, we have a goal or purpose that we have chosen to aim at. We do not need to wait for the New Year to make these choices.

Indeed, if your doctor tells you that, given your health (or lack thereof), you must lose twenty pounds, begin an exercise regimen, eat your vegetables, many of us will comply. But we all know people, often those we love, who ignore their doctors and continue their harmful habits. We also know this first hand because many of us do it ourselves.

We understand the connection between certain behaviors and terrible health consequences. Witness the significant drop in cigarette smoking. The fear overcomes the intense power of nicotine. Quitting smoking, I have read, is one of the most difficult.habits "to break". Yet many, to their credit, do it.

Becoming a better Orthodox Christian, I submit, is harder still. Why so you ask? I would say it comes down to the prescription that we must do God's will. The Lord's Prayer says"...thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven". The first step here is the greatest commandment "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." The love of God must take over our lives and become the ground for all we do and say and think. Living a life that pleases God, well that is not easy. It is, however, the very most important goal we should have. Failure, it must be said, has consequences.

But if we try hard enough, if we pray hard enough, we can hope that God's mercy, love, and grace will provide us with a healthy outcome. We cannot do it alone. Asking Him for help to overcome our own willfulness, well that is the beginning of humility, an important step on the road to salvation.

As we close out the year, on behalf of the Parish Council, I thank all parishioners who have supported St Sophia's. You have, by your financial donations and your volunteer efforts, contributed to our successes. All the dollars and all the work serve the purpose of providing a house where we can come together to worship the Lord and to partake of the Sacraments. The greatest success we can hope for is for many more parishioners to participate in the joy and glory of our sacred liturgy.

Looking forward to a blessed 2025, the Parish Council wishes all Happy New Year .

Yours in Christ. Peter Manolakos

Parish Council President





STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

Dear Parish,

As we come to the end of 2024, we ask those of you who have not fulfilled your 2024 pledge to do that now. You can pay your stewardship commitments online or the old fashioned ways, by check or cash. You can pay them all at once or in weekly installments. We thank you for your support. We thank all our stewards for their support.

Yours In Christ, The Parish Council



<u>MANNANNANNANNANNANNANNANNANNA</u>

2025 STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT CARD

St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Church ~ 325 Waring Road Syracuse, NY 13224 ~ (315) 446-5222

In gratitude for God's blessing I/we pledge to contribute, for Christ's work at St. Sophia's Church, for 2025 a total amount of \$_____

> If you are interested in paying by Credit/Debit Card do so Online via the Church website stsophias.org

> > <u>Please Print</u>:

Name Address City Telephone

State Email Address Zip Code_

Signature

Date

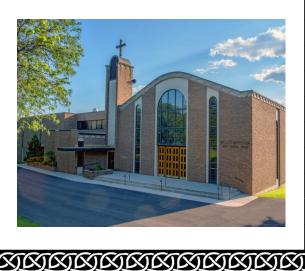
THE COMPLETION OF THIS CARD IS A REQUIREMENT TO BE A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING

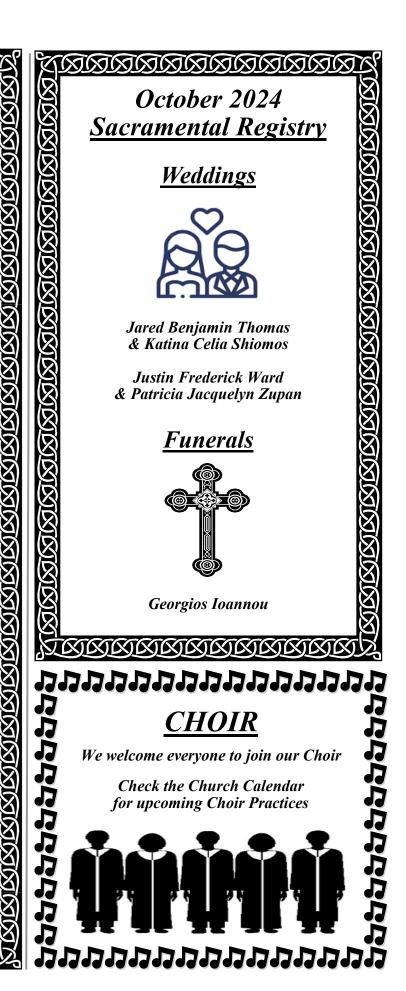
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<u>St. Sophia's</u> Website & Mailing List

Visit the St. Sophia's website at <u>www.stsophias.org</u>. There is a wealth of information on the website with the most up to date calendar on services and events, color photographs from recent functions, electronic sacrament forms to easily fill out and submit, and an online chapel highlighting the days readings and hymns.

Please subscribe to our mailing list to receive the latest information By instantly. subscribing to the mailing list you will be able to receive the electronic form of the Nepsis, the weekly bulletin, parish obituary announcements, and any other pertinent information. You may sign up by going to the website and clicking the tab titled "Subscribe to our Mailing List" or via this link: https:// www.stsophias.org/join-ourmail-list It's that easy!







December 2024 Ladies Volunteering To Serve Coffee Hour

A special thank you to the following ladies of our community who have volunteered to donate their time to serve coffee:

> <u>December 1, 2024</u> Nikki Stamoulacatos Diane Peters

<u>December 8, 2024</u> Thalia Tonas Sofia Vasiliou

<u>December 15, 2024</u> Jeanette Vigliotti Artemis Voudouris

<u>December 22, 2024</u> Effie Weismore Anthoula Malelis

<u>December 29, 2024</u> Zoe Malelis Tina Lemon

~ Also, first two weeks of January 2025 ~

January 5, 2025 Sophia Wales Chrisoula Anastasiou

January 12, 2025 Helen Aravantinos Katina Baikos

If you are not currently on our list of volunteers for coffee hours, a sign up sheet is in the gymnasium. All are welcome.



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Philoptochos provides the coffee service during Coffee Hour on Sundays from September through May. During these months, please call the Church Office to schedule a sponsored coffee hour for a memorial.

Procedure to Schedule a Memorial Sponsored Coffee Hour Service:

- 1. Call the church office 315-446-5222 and schedule the memorial and sponsored coffee hour with Katina Luvadis (Church Administrative Assistant).
- Choose one of the levels of Coffee Service below. Coffee Hour Service Fees to be paid ONLY by check made payable to Philoptochos (Memo line: include date of service & name of honored loved one.)
 Mail about to: Attm: Philoptochos 225 Waring Boad Surgeouse NY 12224

Mail check to: Attn: Philoptochos 325 Waring Road – Syracuse, NY 13224

Sponsored Coffee Service Options

=>Basic Coffee Service - \$50 includes the following:

Philoptochos provides and serves the coffee, milk, sugar, and juice. Parishioner provides the pastries.

=>Super Plus Coffee Service - \$150 includes the following:

Philoptochos provides and serves the Pastries, coffee, milk, sugar, and juice.

Reminder: Dates not available to sponsor Coffee Hour service include; Stewardship Sunday, Godparents Sunday, and Cheese Fare Sunday. Please refer to the Church calendar for these dates.

*Summary Months of June, July and August:

To sponsor a coffee hour during these summer months only Basic Coffee Service (\$50) is available. Philoptochos provides coffee, cups, sweetener, creamer, stirrers and set up the serving table. Parishioner provides: Pastries, set up the serving station and tables, serve the coffee hour and clean up service immediately following coffee service. During these summer months, please call either Coffee Coordinators of Coffee Service - Vivian Alexander 315-673-2880 or 315-430-6162 or Maria Allis.







Philoptochos News: December 2024

An Enormous Thank You!!! Pasta Luncheon - Farm-to-Table Event– held Sunday, November 3, 2024

This fundraiser provided support to The Jamesville-DeWitt Ecumenical Food Pantry. A big thank you to the extremely engaged and committed team led by Presbytera Donna, Maria & John Allis, and master chef Zack Papaleoni, GOYA members Demosthenes Mantalios Stephania Tonas, Niko Tonas, John Tonas, and Eva Vastakis, and Jr. GOYA members, Joey and Alex Carkey. Parishioners that donated their time contributing to the preparations, serving the meal, and additional support from Philoptochos Officers resulted in a successful event. <u>All expenses were absorbed by donations, and therefore ALL proceeds in the amount of \$1,000 will be forwarded to the Jamesville-DeWitt Ecumenical Food Pantry.</u>

BAKLAVA HOLIDAY SALE 2024

A big Ευχαριστω!!! to the Baklava Baking team led by Frieda Meskos for a successful Baklava Holiday Pan Sale that is slated to support our local community. Thank you to everyone that volunteered their time and expertise to prepare the baklava. The success of this event is a direct result of your efforts. Thank you!

Membership information:

Consider becoming a Member of Philoptochos at Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Church. We serve our community in need in so many ways. *Consider sharing your gift of service to the community by bringing light and love to those in need*. Reach out to any one of the Board Officers listed below to learn how you can engage your time, effort and gifts to serve our community.

President:Theone KalkinisVice-President (1st):Vickie MihouVice President (2nd):Patty Donohue-CareyTreasurer:Tina CarkeyAssistant Treasurer:Frieda MeskosSecretary (Corr):Cara PotamianosSecretary (Rec):Chryssanthi Intze

Next Philoptochos Meeting: Sunday, after church services—December 1, 2024.

With the Spirit of Philanthropy, Theone Kalkinis Philoptochos President



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Syracuse AHEPA Chapter 37 ~ ~ December 2024 News ~ ~

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NEPSIS

Our 100th anniversary Gala Event went well it was a great success. We want to thank our community for supporting us. A slide narrative is available on YouTube. The narrative describes the history of AHEPA Chapter 37's first hundred years. Our chapter was established in 1924.

On Saturday, December 21st at 2 PM we will hold our initiation event for new members and also honor our veterans. Refreshments will be served.

We are honored to co-sponsor a dinner dance on January 11 with Philoptochos and the Parish Council. The Aegeans will be providing entertainment.

Once again this year, we are gathering money for Toys for Tots. It's a great organization that helps young children get their wishes for Christmas. Please support us in this great effort.

Thank you,

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James Telonis, MD, President Syracuse AHEPA Chapter #37



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AHEPA is once again collecting monetary donations to support the annual Christmas drive of Toys For Tots

Look for the AHEPA collection basket in the Narthex



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Save The Date Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Church, AHEPA & Philoptochos







JOINTLY SPONSOR Winter Wonderland 2025

HELLENIC DANCE Live Music provided by The Aegeans Saturday—January 11, 2025 6:00 pm to 11:00 pm Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Church 325 Waring Road Syracuse, New York 13224

Tickets may be purchased <u>online</u> with credit card or Cash & Check (payable to Philoptochos)

ATTIRE IS BUSINESS CASUAL

Adults 21 and older—\$65.00 /Person Ages 13-20 years—\$25.00 /Person 12 years and under—Free

All-inclusive Ticket Prices include: Hors d'oeuvres, Full Greek Style Buffet, Open Bar (Beer, Wine, Soda), Dessert, Coffee & Tea Catered by the Garden View Diner





PHILO-SOPHIA BOOKSTORE

Consider shopping at our bookstore for your Christmas Gift giving

We offer an assortment of Icons, Books and Religious Items

The Bookstore is open on Sundays after Church Services

ST. SOPHIA'S

Available in the Bookstore!

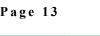
A One Hundred Year History of St. Sophia's Church

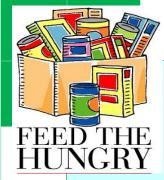
Over 200 pages of history and pictures!

Includes 50 pages devoted to the 2017 Centennial Celebration

Available for only \$40 A GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFT !







Jamesville Dewitt Ecumenical Food Pantry begins food donations again!

On the first weekend of each month, a list of needed food items and bags will be given out.

The following weekend, Food Donations may be dropped off at church.

The following Saturday, GOYA will deliver the food to the pantry.

We are excited to renew this practice after suspending it during the Covid years.

Please help out families in need in our own community.

Thank you for 35 bags of groceries received to date for the Jamesville Dewitt Food Pantry! It was greatly appreciated.

Our next monthly bags will be given out on Sunday, December 1st. Please return your bags on Sunday, December 8th.

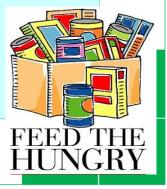
> We will also be collecting gift cards for our families and their children.

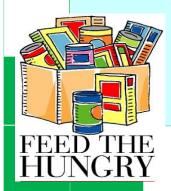
Jesus told us, "Assuredly, I say to you, as you did it to the least of these My brethren, you did it Me."

God bless you all!

Call Ellen Tartakoff with any questions

(315)-447-4701.





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Middle Eastern Foods & Desserts . Handmade Jewelry Signs . Wreaths . Home Decor . Candles . Blankets & So Much More

Saturday—Dec 7th 10am to 6pm Sunday—Dec 8th Noon to 5:00 pm

St. Elias Orthodox Church 4988 Onondaga Rd. Syracuse 13215

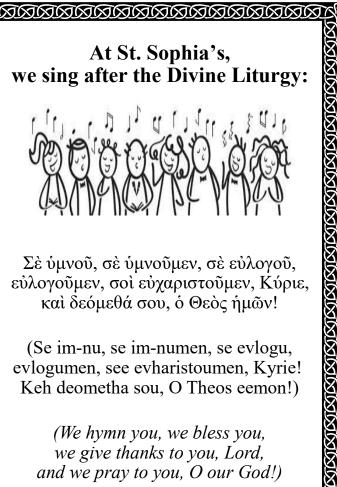


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Community Christmas Cookie Drive

We will be collecting cookies or monetary donations to purchase cookies for the annual Community Christmas Cookie Drive. The cookies will be given to those in need at the Soup Kitchen of the Samaritan Center and the Salvation Army Women's and Children's Center.

If you would like to bake or buy cookies, we will be collecting them on Sunday, December 1 to Sunday, December 15—delivering the cookies on Monday, December 16th. Please drop off your donations to the upper level Church kitchen and please clearly mark the donations "Donation to Cookie Drive". Your generosity is greatly appreciated.



we sing after the Divine Liturgy:

Σὲ ὑμνοῦ, σὲ ὑμνοῦμεν, σὲ εὐλογοῦ, εύλογοῦμεν, σοὶ εὐχαριστοῦμεν, Κύριε, καὶ δεόμεθά σου, ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν!

(Se im-nu, se im-numen, se evlogu, evlogumen, see evharistoumen, Kyrie! Keh deometha sou, O Theos eemon!)

(We hymn you, we bless you, we give thanks to you, Lord, and we pray to you, O our God!)

Church Services & Events

Calendars are provided in the Nepsis or check the website at

stsophias.org

for church services & events





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December 2024



Program Schedule For Cable Television

Sunday Programs at 7:00 pm On Spectrum Channel 98 The series concludes "Creation History in Genesis"

Dec 1—History of The Orthodox Church, part 1

Dec 8—History of The Orthodox Church, part 2

Dec 15—History of The Orthodox Church, part 3

Dec 22—The Icon of the Nativity

Dec 29-St. Seraphim of Sarov



All Programs Air on Spectrum Cable Chanel 98



Monday Programs at 7:00 pm Fr. David's "The Inner Way" series airs every Monday

Dec 2—Hesychasm, part 4

Dec 9—Hesychasm, part 5

Dec 16—St. Isaac the Syrian, part 1

Dec 23—Christmas Program

Dec 30—St. Isaac the Syrian, part 2





St. Sophia's Youth Ministry SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

NEW! FULL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SCAN QR CODE TO DOWNLOAD SIGN-UP GENIUS APP Event specifics announced on Remind



REMIND APP

Stay informed with updates/messages from our team MUST ENTER CLASS CODE (SEE BELOW)



GOYA (9th-12th Grade): Enter # 81010 & text @goyagro Jr. GOYA (5th-8th Grade): Enter # 81010 & text @jrgoyay JOY (2nd-4th Grade): Enter # 81010 & text @ 3kch9d HOPE (PreK-1st Grade): Enter # 81010 & text @ 8ce7dc4

The purpose and mission of the youth ministry:

The mission of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America's Youth Department Ministries is to help young Orthodox Christians <u>strengthen their relationship with Jesus Christ and become</u> <u>active participants in the Church</u>. The ministries are not clubs or organizations, but rather a gathering of the faithful with shared interests and ages.





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St. Sophia's Youth Musicians

GOYA & JR. GOYA & "The Greek Program"

Proudly present a Holiday Music Performance during Coffee Hour Sunday, December 22rd

Conducted by Adam Carkey Baldwinsville High School Orchestra Director



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St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church—December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
8:45 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY 14TH SUNDAY OF LUKE PHILOPTOCHOS MEETING	2	3 10:00 AM BIBLE STUDY	5:00 PM ORTHODOXY 101 6:00 PM AKATHIST HYMN	6:00 PM CHOIR PRACTICE	9:00 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY ST. NICHOLAS	7 CHRISTMAS PLAY PRACTICE 5:00 PM GREAT VESPERS
8 8:45 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY 10TH SUNDAY OF LUKE CHRISTMAS PLAY PRACTICE	9	10:00 AM BIBLE STUDY	5:00 PM ORTHODOXY 101 6:00 PM AKATHIST HYMN FOR THE NATIVITY	9:00 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY ST. SPYRIDON 6:00 PM CHOIR PRACTICE	13	10:00 AM ROMANIAN LITURGY 5:00 PM GREAT VESPERS
15 8:45 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY 11TH SUNDAY OF LUKE CHRISTMAS PLAY	16	10:00 AM BIBLE STUDY 6:00 PM AHEPA MEETING	5:00 PM ORTHODOXY 101 6:00 PM AKATHIST HYMN FOR THE NATIVITY	6:00 PM CHOIR PRACTICE	20	2:00 PM GREAT VESPERS 2:00 PM AHEPA MEETING 5:00 PM GREAT VESPERS
22 8:45 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY SUNDAY BEFORE NATIVITY YOUTH ORCHESTRA DURING COFFEE HOUR GOYA MEETING	23	CHRISTMAS 24 EVE 9:00 AM ROYAL HOURS 6:00 PM VESPERAL LITURGY FOR NATIVITY	CHRISTMAS 25 DAY 9:00 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY Merry Christmas	6:00 PM CHOIR PRACTICE	27	28 5:00 PM GREAT VESPERS
29 8:45 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY	30	NEW YEAR'S 31 EVE				

St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church—January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			9:00 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY ST. BASIL (IN GREEK)	2	3	4
				6:00 PM CHOIR PRACTICE		5:00 PM GREAT VESPERS
5 8:45 AM ORTHROS 9:00 AM ROYAL HOURS FOR THEOPHANY 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY 6:00 PM EPIPHANY	6 <u>HOLY EPIPHANY</u> 9:00 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY (IN GREEK)	7 10:00 AM BIBLE STUDY	8	9 6:00 PM CHOIR PRACTICE	10	5:00 PM GREAT VESPERS 6;00 PM to 11:00 PM
VESPERAL LITURGY & BLESSING 12 8:45 AM ORTHROS	13	14	15	16	9:00 AM ORTHROS	HELLENIC DANCE
10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY GOYA MEETING		10:00 AM BIBLE STUDY		6:00 PM CHOIR PRACTICE	10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY ST. ANTHONY FAMILY FUN NIGHT	5:00 PM GREAT VESPERS
19 8:45 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY 12TH SUNDAY OF LUKE	20	21 10:00 AM BIBLE STUDY	22	6:00 PM CHOIR PRACTICE	24	25 9:00 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY ST. GREGORY 5:00 PM GREAT VESPERS
26 8:45 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY 15TH SUNDAY OF LUKE GOYA MEETING	27	28 10:00 AM BIBLE STUDY	29	9:00 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM ORTHROS 10:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY SYNAXIS OF THE THREE HIERARCHS 6:00 PM CHOIR PRACTICE	31	