Christ is Born! Glorify Him! Χριστὸς Γεννᾶται! Δοξάσατε!

Metropolitan Nicholas’ Message

Beloved in the Lord,

The Season of the Search is here! Without fail, as soon as the skies begin to gray and the weather turns cold, the game of “search and find” begins.

Some years the game begins when we think of the things we want to get at Christmas — and how we can drop enough hints to let people know what we want and ‘need.’

Other years, the game is played by the brightly lit and fully stocked stores explaining why what we bought or received last year at Christmas is no longer ‘top of the line,’ and why something new would be better.

But if this is truly the Season of the Search, then perhaps we need to remember the real reason for Christmas. Yes, there is a search going on—but it is really God searching for his lost people, who like wandering sheep have gone astray.

This is the time when the Church remembers the depth of God’s love: He loves us so much that God became a human being in order to find us and bring us back to Him.

My friends, this is truly the Season of the Search. Sit back, reflect and pray, and let the God of all Love and Peace enter our hearts and homes, just as he entered the manger in Bethlehem. My beloved family in God, this year — instead of searching for the perfect gift — let the Perfect God find us in His home and His Kingdom.

Merry Christmas!

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

With every blessing,

Metropolitan Nicholas
On behalf of the Mid-Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians, we wish to all of you Καλά Χριστούγεννα και Ευτυχές το Νέο Ετος, Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year, and to His Eminence, Metropolitan Nicholas, Χρόνια Πολλά, Many Years on the celebration of his name day!

For all of our Church Musicians who receive The Shepherd’s Staff, I wanted to refer you to a web site where you might find excellent arrangements of Greek carols: www.newbyz.org. There, you can scroll down to the section entitled “Christmas and New Year Carols”. Nancy and Stan Takis have provided unison and four-part arrangements of the Christmas Kalanda, an arrangement of the New Year’s Kalanda and arrangements of several other traditional carols.

(Continued on page 5)
Youth News

39TH ANNUAL DAYTON GOYA BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

The Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church of Dayton, Ohio is proud to host the 39th Annual GOYA Basketball Tournament on President’s Day Weekend, February 15th, 16th and 17th, 2013.

All GOYA members, families, and advisors are invited for a weekend full of Fellowship, Sportsmanship, and Fun! Furthermore, non-basketball players, friends and family from your community are welcome too.

The 39th Annual Dayton GOYA Basketball Tournament information and registration will ONLY be ONLINE this year.

Please go to daytonannunciation.org where you will be able to register online, as well as download team/advisor rosters and hotel rooming list.

Please direct questions or requests for more information, such as the Tournament Informational Letter and Tournament Flyer, please contact:

Tessy Smith
smithplus3@earthlink.net

Joanne Karras
jochanna@earthlink.net

ST. NICHOLAS SUMMER CAMP REUNION AND YOUTH WINTER RETREAT

JANUARY 18-20, 2013

Join us in the historic city of Memphis to celebrate 12 years of faith, fellowship, and fun at the Annual St. Nicholas Summer Camp Reunion and Winter Retreat.

The Winter Retreat/Reunion will be hosted by Annunciation Church in Memphis, TN January 18-20, 2013.

All youth ages 8-18 are invited to attend. We also encourage all St. Nicholas Summer Camp Alumni to join us!

Details regarding registration, cost, accommodations and activities will be posted on the official SNC camp website and on Facebook.

www.southerncamp.com or www.facebook.com/StNicholasSummerCamp

NEWS ABOUT OCF (ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP)

New Chapter /Central Michigan University

An OCF Chapter has been formed on the campus of Central Michigan University. Spread the word. Email ocfcmu@gmail.com for more information!

2012 OCF College Conference

Conferences are currently held at the Antiochian Village in Pennsylvania and St. Nicholas Ranch in California. To register, visit: http://www.ocf.net/wikis/programs/college-conference.aspx

2013 OCF Real Break

OCF organizes both domestic and international trips to give College students the opportunity to serve those less fortunate and to do something “real” for themselves and for God. To register, visit: http://www.ocf.net/wikis/programs/real-break-program.aspx

“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”
- Matthew 18:20
Congratulations to Alexander Burke, Marko Iordanis and Elena Zois, three of the ten finalists in the “Make a Difference with Loukoumi” National Contest. These youngsters from Dayton, OH, drew pictures of how they could make a difference in the lives of others and were posted on Facebook. The contest winners will win a box of Loukoumi books for their school or favorite charity. The Philoptochos chapter in Carmel, IN also participated in the “Make a Difference with Loukoumi” program by raising funds for literacy awareness. One book per Loukoumi book sold was also donated to kids in need of books.

In 2011, the Metropolis of Detroit became one of the first to sponsor a luncheon benefiting the proposed Philoptochos Center of Philanthropy. Since that time, “Open the Door” events have taken place throughout the country. As reported in the last issue of the Shepherd’s Staff, the gold leaf initiative was introduced at the Philoptochos conference in Phoenix and begun in earnest in September. The goal was to have each active chapter in the country represented on the Tree of Giving that will greet visitors when they visit the PCOP. Amazingly, this goal has been reached. The final papers were signed on Tuesday, November 27 for a property in Manhattan with a minimal mortgage because every Metropolis in the country achieved 100 per cent participation. The Jaharis Foundation matched each $1,000 pledged.

Several smaller chapters were helped by individual donations, large chapter donations, and Metropolis Boards.

THERE WILL BE NO MORE FUNDRAISING!!

“Fashion Across the Decades” was the theme of the charity fundraising event for the Children’s Hospital of Michigan Foundation co-sponsored by St. John in Sterling Heights and Assumption in St. Clair Shores on October 28. This elegant affair, held at the Athenaeum Hotel in Detroit and attended by over 300 men and women, featured a silent auction, “strolling appetizers”, dinner and a fashion show featuring clothing from different decades. An incredible amount of money was raised by these Philoptochos chapters. Congratulations!

A benefit luncheon for the Karmanos Cancer Institute and other Philoptochos charities was held at the St. Nicholas Church in Troy, MI in early November. Guests were greeted by an amazing display of beautifully decorated tables. What a wonderful way to usher in the holiday season as well as help this world-renowned cancer treatment and research center.

Philoptochos members (and friends) across the Metropolises have been busy preparing for holiday bake sales as a means to earn funds for philanthropy. Please support them. Many chapters have already sent funds to assist those devastated by Hurricane Sandy. Several Orthodox families in the Metropolises of New York and New Jersey have lost their homes and need our assistance. Funds can be sent to the National Philoptochos office for distribution.

We will be hosting an Open House on Sunday, December 9 at the Metropolis Home in Troy in celebration of Metropolitan Nicholas’ Name Day. We will also be hosting a reception following St. Spyridon Vespers on December 11 and again on December 12 following the Divine Liturgy for St. Spyridon.

On behalf of the Metropolis Board, I wish everyone a blessed Christmas, a happy and healthy New Year and a hope that the joys of the season remain with you throughout the coming year.
The Mystery of Christmas

“A strange and most wonderful mystery do I see: the cave is heaven; the Virgin the throne of the Cherubim; the manger a room, in which Christ, the God whom nothing can contain, is laid.”

“Indeed, isn’t it strange that the God, Who created the universe and all that is in it, is born as a man in a manger in a cave? Isn’t it peculiar, that the dwelling place of God, heaven, is now a cave in the earth, and that the throne of God, the cherubim, is now the Virgin mother? Isn’t it strange, that the God Who is beyond all comprehension is wrapped tightly and contained in swaddling?

This image of Christ, the God Who became Man, is paradoxical. As the creative instrument of the universe, the very stars of heaven were forged by the Word of God, Jesus Christ. Yet, He is now born quietly in a cave next to the animals.

St. Athanasios says that the Son of God became man so that man could become like God. However, this requires great action on our part. As God descended and humbled Himself to take our form as a babe in swaddling clothes, conversely, we are to tear off the swaddling clothes which confine our progress and growth to-ward the goal of becoming like God. When we lie, we mock the image of Christ which is in our neighbor, and wrap ourselves tightly in the dirty linens of deceit. When we gossip, we mock the image of Christ and adorn ourselves in the dirty laundry of pride, arrogance, and slander. When we ignore the poor, the oppressed, and the needy, we mock the image of Christ and cloth ourselves with the soiled garments of sloth, self-righteousness, and avarice.

When we seek to express the truth, we make known the image of Christ in humanity through faith and are unfettered by the chains of falsehood. When we say good things about people and refrain from gossip, we uplift our brothers and sisters in Christ, and cut loose the ropes of self-righteousness and malice. When we help the poor and those in need, we execute the will of God and express our love to our fellow man, and break the bonds of hate and selfishness.

As we celebrate this joyful and blessed season, we must continually strive to rid ourselves of the swaddling cloths that confine us and limit our abilities to reach the heavenly heights. In so doing, we will free ourselves to God’s limitless love, which is made incarnate through His birth from the Virgin Mary.

*Fr. Nicolaos Kotsis is the Presiding Priest at the St. Nicholas Church in Ann Arbor, MI.*

MEFGOX News Continued...

For most of its existence, MEFGOX has published its printed newsletter, the Byzantine Echo, two to three times each year, and mailed it to Church Musicians throughout our Federation. Last spring, the Federation Council decided that beginning with the forthcoming issue, all future Echos would be sent in electronic form by email to all those on our email list. The reasons for the change were both economic and practical. Since all except a very few of our MEFGOX members had email, and with increased mailing costs, it made more sense to use electronic publication of the Echo. We also could be more flexible with the size and content of each issue. Not forgetting members without email, we ask those in each parish to download each issue and provide copies. For those Church Musicians not already receiving the Echo, please send a message with your email address to MEFGOX Secretary Vicki Pappas: pappas@indiana.edu.

As we come to the joyous celebration of the Lord’s birth at our churches and with our families, we also hope you enjoy it with the wonderful music of our Greek Orthodox faith and with the traditional carols we hear, both Greek and those of our American heritage.
**Friends of the Metropolis (as of 11-30-12)**

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<td>Belous, Alexandra Eaton, Joseph and Florie Karas, Gus and Maritsa Kazmierski, Maria Hristova Kournoulis, Mario and Karen Pappas, Vicki Turner, Glenn Torney, Harry and Helen</td>
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<td><strong>Chattanooga, TN - Annunciation</strong></td>
<td>Annunciation Parish Annunciation Choir Ballas, Fr. Stavros and Presbytera Thea Andros, George and Maria Ballas, Aspasia Bouloukos, Dino and Maria Campa, Pedro Corne, Paul and Ana Dimopoulos, Dennis and Barbara Dimopoulos, George and Brigitte Etherton, Wayne and Yolanda Fairbanks, Bobby and Voula Fotiadis, Nicky Gulas, Marion Gulas, Venetia Hopper, Richard and Chrisi Justice, Christine Kalanxis, Angela Kouris, George Martin, Martin Moore, James and Fannie Mousoarakis, John and Donna Petros, Voula Ramsey, Karen Tigiros, Elias and Sharon Trohanis, J.A. Tsiboukas, Eugenia</td>
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<td><strong>Cincinnati, OH</strong></td>
<td>Holy Trinity/St. Nicholas HTSN Parish HTSN Philoptochos Andreadis, Sophie Apostolides, Vasso Assaley, Lewis and Patricia Beltsos, Sam Brown, William R. Caneris, Anthony and Antoinette Carumpos, Constantine Christoforidis, Alexander Galanes, George Kapourales, Louis Landers, Lauren Misali, Akila Perdikakis, Gus Polychroniou, Constantine Raptis, James and Maria Spanorigas, Nicholas and Becky Stringas, Emanuel Zaferes, Patricia Zaferes, Tom and Eleni</td>
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<td><strong>Detroit, MI</strong></td>
<td>Annunciation Cathedral Annunciation Cathedral Philoptochos Gaggos, Jim and Mary Glikas, Marie Karathanasis, Helen Lianos, Ethel Papas, John G. Tapazoglou, Nikolaos and Christine Vlamis, George and Denise</td>
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Niforos, Theodore and Anna
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Raphitis, Mike and Betty
Salonikas, Georgios and Nicoleta
Tangalos, John and Mary
Vekos, Gloria

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Stark, Michael
Sterio, Dimitrius and Krystyna
Theodore, Dorothea
Theodore, Eleanor

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**Holy Trinity Cathedral**
Holy Trinity Cathedral Philoptochos
Damaskos, Fr. Aristotele and Presbytera Debbie

Biernacki, Gerald and Pauline
Gangas, Angelo
Kanios, Nicholas and Maria
Manton, Thomas and Sandra
Papadimos, Peter
Papadimos, Steven J.
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Proestou, Maria
Tzanakis, Maria
Zervos, Chris G. and Kalliope

**Traverse City, MI**
**Archangel Gabriel**
Archangel Gabriel Philoptochos
Streza, Fr. Ciprian and Presbytera Sinziana
Kaly, Anthony and Barbara
Knapp, Helen Kontos
Psaros, John and Donna
Sobkowsky, Nikoletta
Stamos-Underwood, Theresa
Weston, Judith

**Troy, MI - St. Nicholas**
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Corombos, Mark and Molly
Crosson, Patrick and Cynthia
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Demery, Beck
Feles, Andrea
Feles, Gust and Anne
Feles, Paul
Gangadharan, Velappillil and Constance
Gettes, Soteria
Kalkanis, Steven and Laurel
Karmanos, Peter and Daniale
Karras, Betty
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Lavrakas, John
Papp, Gregory and Martha
Simon, Basil and Evey
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Zotos, Gregory

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Katsarelas, Sophie
Keker, Joan
Simakas, Pete
Tolios, Kostas and Ioanna
Vasilides, Lynne
Zannis, Angello and A. Sylvia

**Other Friends**
A Friend in Christ
Bartz, Fr. William and Presbytera Emily
Bartz, Presbytera Zafera
Canada, William and Diane Cross
Cavalaris, Harry Thomas
Danas Family and Hanos Family
Demetris, Olga (Dolly)
In Memory of Iakovos (Jack) Demetris
In Memory of Tess Gakis
In Memory of Sophia Karipides
Koumarelos, Bill
Pappas, Peter A. – Pappas Properties
Radulescu, Alexandru and Silvana
Vrettos, Constantine – One on One Design
Walsh, Andrew and Catherine

**Thank You!**
Dear Friends of the Metropolis:

God has called us to do mighty deeds for the glory of His name and for the love of His people.

You are called upon to join in this reality of “faith working through love” as we continue to manifest the love of God for His Church and His people.

When you support the Friends of the Metropolis campaign, you are part of a greater outreach that proclaims with one universal voice that God is truly our hope and our rock of salvation.

Because of your devotion and help to the Friends program, ministries and programs are implemented on a Metropolis-wide basis which strengthen and enhance our faith and our joint ministry of service.

If you have not yet become part of the Metropolis-wide effort, I would like to invite you to join forces with the faithful throughout our Metropolis in support of the ministries which are part of the Office of the Metropolitan.

Thanking you for your kind and generous response, I remain, with paternal blessing and prayers,  

*NICHOLAS  
Metropolitan of Detroit

I am pleased to support the work of Metropolitan Nicholas and the Metropolis through the Annual Metropolis Stewardship “Friends” Program

☐ $25  ☐ $50  ☐ $100  ☐ $250  ☐ $500  ☐ $1000  ☐ Other

☐ Check Enclosed (payable to the Metropolis of Detroit)  ☐ Please Charge My Credit Card  ☐ Visa  ☐ MasterCard

Account # Exp. Signature Date

Send this card in an envelope to:  
The Metropolis of Detroit  
2560 Crooks Road, Troy, MI 48084

General: Fully fund the expenses of the Metropolis offices, programs and travels.

Education: Enhance scholarships and adult education programs, as well as support the Metropolis students at Hellenic College/Holy Cross.

Support: Develop and provide educational and instructional seminars and services to clergy and parishes.

Youth: Maintain and support the youth office and activities of a full-time Youth and Young Adult Ministries Director.

Outreach/Missions: Create opportunities to introduce our faith to society, participate in inter-Christian and inter-faith activities as well as provide quick responses to national disasters.

Hellenism: Develop programs for Hellenic Cultural Outreach, including language, history and arts.

Leadership: Organize Metropolis Clergy-Laity Conferences, Oratorical Festivals, Christmas Pageants and Adult Education Programs.

Special Programs: Website development, hospitality to visiting dignitaries and guests, Charity and Philanthropy.