



Friends

NEWSLETTER

St. Augustine, FL ~ 2021



Archbishop Iakovos cutting the ribbon to the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine

Devoted Friends of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine,

In April of 1981, Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America appointed Jim Couchell (Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos) to the position of Executive Director of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine with the commission to open the Shrine by the last of week of February 1982.

Within the first ten weeks, Mr. Couchell, Ted Johnson and members of the Shrine Committee were able to incorporate the first Archdiocesan institution established under the omophorion of His Eminence: The St. Photios National Shrine. The dream of a national shrine at the site where the refugees of the New Smyrna Colony were received was fully on its way after 16 years of extreme dedication, many disappointments but far more phenomenal talent and commitment by individuals and the State of Florida.

Preparation for the dedication of the St. Photios Shrine required hundreds of dedicated and talented people for there were many aspects to be considered. Preceding the Dedication, the National

Council of Presbyters convened Tuesday through Thursday; the Holy Synod had a session on Thursday; the Archdiocesan Council had a daylong session on Friday. All here in Jacksonville and St. Augustine.

On Saturday morning, February 27th, the newly appointed St. Photios Trustees met. At 1:00 p.m., a "magnificent procession", which included hierarchs, clergy, and laity of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America headed south on St. George Street toward the National Shrine. Joining the procession were Bishop John Snyder of the Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine, Mayor Ramelle Petroglou, other civic dignitaries, and the public. They continued through the Colonial Quarter to 41 St. George Street, into the Shrine Constantine Sisters Courtyard, where Archbishop Iakovos cut the ribbon with great joy.

The Feast of St. Photios will be celebrated February 5 and 6, 2022. We will gather to celebrate this anniversary milestone, honoring our history while recognizing our present accomplishments.

Faithfully,

Poxeni Maouris Hillier
Executive Director

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Greek Landing Day 2021

On Saturday, June 26th, dozens of people gathered at the St. Augustine marina for the Colonists' Memorial and City of St. Augustine Mayoral Proclamation in remembrance of the 500 Greeks who came to America as indentured servants in 1768, writing the first chapter in Greek immigration history in America.

His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos offered greetings and then presided over the memorial with Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos, V. Rev. Maximos Politis, Rev. Dr. Nicholas Louh, and Father Sebastian Mot in attendance.

City of St. Augustine Mayor Tracy Upchurch read the Greek Landing Day Proclamation marking the 36th annual Greek Landing Day celebration in St. Augustine. He noted the Greek Bicentennial and recognized the courage of Bishop Germanos of Patras in 1821 and the struggle through 1829 when Greece's autonomy was finally recognized with the Treaty of Adrianople.

Then, Anthony Megas solemnly rang the bell as Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos called out the names of the 8 ships one by one: the American Soldier, the Betsy, the Charming Betsy, the Elizabeth, the Friendship, the Henry & Carolina, the Hope, and the New Fortune. At the toll of the bell, designees tossed a wreath into the sea. Great appreciation is given to members of St. John Philoptochos who handcrafted the 8 wreaths.

This event was accessible to a broad audience through the professional livestream services of Spectrum Films and the accommodation afforded by St. Augustine harbormaster, Eric Mauldin.

Special thanks to the benefactors who sponsored the commemoration of the ships: Louis and Helen Nicozisis in memory of Archbishop Iakovos; Lilly Pappas, Anna Chaconas, George B. Demakis, Archon and Mrs. Nicholas Loutsion in memory of Archon George and Kula Loutsion; the Bisbikis and Gregory families, Pauline Sapountzaki in memory of Anna Sapountzaki; Marianne Chaconas and Douglas Charnas, Angie Christou in memory of Andrew, Constantine, and Theodore Katsikas; Dr. Angelo and Sherry Kliossis in memory of their daughter Caroline and their parents, Kleomenis and Georgia Kliossis and Marvin Sikes; Irene Tunanidas in honor of Diakonissa Amelia Pantelis, and John Vasilakos in memory of Ioannis Vasilakos and in honor of Theodoros Maltezos.



Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, Mayor Tracy Upchurch, Rev. Dr. Nicholas G. Louh



Shrine Executive Director, Poxeni Hillier tossing a wreath into the sea.

St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine

St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine is located in the Colonial Quarter of St. Augustine, FL. It is a sacred and historical site built in memory of the 500 Greeks who came to America with the Turnbull expedition in 1768. The chapel has a reliquary with the bone fragments of 18 saints of the early Church in the narthex and the relics of 3 female saints in the altar. The chapel and museum occupy the historic Averro House – a 2-story structure that was built in the 1740's, razed and then reconstructed. In 1982, the Shrine opened with a clear mission to actively witness Orthodox Christianity, share the Hellenic culture and honor the memory of all immigrants who came to America in quest of a new life.

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St. Photios National Shrine Feast Day Services and Celebration of the 39th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Shrine



Fr. Sebastian Mot, Eleftherios Chasanidis, Andrew Furriss, Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, and Andrew Lekos

His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos officiated at the ecclesiastical services held on Friday, February 5, and Saturday, February 6, in the Chapel of St. Photios. Protopsaltis Eleftherios Chasanidis chanted the services. V. Rev. Maximos Politis, Rev. Dr. Nicholas Louh, and Rev. Sebastian Mot assisted.



Gregory Pappas, Pres. Roxanne & Rev. Dr. Nicholas Louh, and Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos

The Pappas Post provided a vibrant platform for authors Rev. Dr. Nicholas and Dr. Roxanne Louh to discuss their book, *Renewing You*, a resource that combines principles of spiritual growth with psychological tools as one continues to draw near to God and realize one's purpose. Gregory Pappas interviewed the couple, while Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos fielded viewers' questions. A beneficial read for anyone, also a great gift, the book is available at stphotios.org.

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COOKING WITH THE BISHOP



His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos

Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos hosted two cooking sessions this past year. His Grace honored the memory of St. Phanourios on August 27, 2020, with the baking of his recipe for Phanouropita. The video has had over 4400 views! You can get the recipe and learn a few techniques by visiting <https://it-it.facebook.com/SaintPhotios/videos/1035622826854643/>.

On March 13, 2021, in anticipation of Kathara Deftera, Clean Monday, His Grace hosted the Livestream Lagana Cooking Lesson. This segment can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mgo5HKqs>

Religious leaders commemorated the walk on Selma while noting those who joined Dr. King when others refused. Archbishop Iakovos of blessed memory joined Dr. King in 1965 during the Selma to Montgomery. "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that". Dr. Martin Luther King

Basile Concert – February 5, 2021

Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos expressed deep appreciation to all who contributed to the success of the Basile Comedy Concert. He recognized the efforts of the event chairperson, Archon Nicholas J. Furriss, and event panelists the V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene Pappas, Nancy Balourdos and Gordana Trbuhovich. He thanked Grand Benefactor of the concert, Dr. Stelios Efstratiadis. Over \$12,000 was raised for the ministry of the Hierarchal Proistamenos.

Christmas Open House

His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos welcomed hundreds of holiday tourists with supporters and friends from throughout the nation during the St. Photios Shrine 2nd Annual Christmas Open House, Sunday afternoon, on December 6, 2020.

The exquisite and generous hospitality was offered, with safety protocols in place, by the members of Saint Barbara's Philoptochos Society of the St. Demetrios Church in Daytona Beach, FL.

The opening prayer and ceremonies were livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube. Four young, talented Greek folk dancers, dressed in traditional Greek costumes, from the St. Demetrios Church in Daytona Beach, FL, enlivened historic St. George Street with several traditional folk dances.



Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, Dr. Constantine Kokkenes, and Eleftherios Chasanidis



Jennifer Trastelis, Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos and Barbara Kosmopoulos

Bishop Demetrios stated that, "Our philoxenia includes the sharing of food and beverages; it continues the age-old Greek tradition of decorating our own 'St. Photios' karavaki (boat), as we share Greek holiday traditions with our guests".

Prior to the Open House, a hierarchal Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the chapel of the Shrine, officiated by Bishop Demetrios and area clergy with chanters Eleftherios Chasanidis and Dr. Constantine Kokkenes, from Atlanta, Georgia.

Special thanks to Christy Xynidis and Denise Brown who donated time, talents, and resources in decorating the Shrine in time for the City of St. Augustine opening night of the Holiday Nights of Lights.



St. Demetrios Folk Dancers of Daytona Beach, Florida, dance on St. George Street

Join us Sunday, December 12, 2021, from 4-7:00 p.m. for the 3rd annual Christmas Open House which will be hosted by the Sts. Anargyroi Philoptochos Society of St. John the Divine Church in Jacksonville, FL.

Make a pilgrimage to St. Photios National Shrine and enjoy St. Augustine, festooned in its holiday glow from the ground to the rooftops. Known as one of the best holiday lighting displays in the world, St. Augustine's Nights of Lights features millions of tiny white lights that create a spectacular atmosphere in the nation's oldest city from dusk to the dawn. This year's display will be November 20 – January 31, 2022.

Vasilopita



Emcee Staci Spanos, Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, and St. Augustine Vice Mayor Nancy Sykes Kline

The Second Annual Cutting of the Vasilopita was livestreamed from the Constantine Sisters Courtyard on Sunday, January 10th. Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos cut a piece for the healing of the United States and then distributed slices to over 25 people including a slice in honor of the Patriarchate (Archon Nicholas Furriss), the Archdiocese (Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos), the Metropolis of Atlanta (Rev. Dr. Nicholas Louh), the Chapel of St. Photios (V. Rev. Maximos Politis), the Consulate of Greece (Hon. Dimitrios Sparos), the City of St. Augustine (Hon. Tracy Upchurch), St. Basil's Academy (Evangeline Mekras Scurtis), National Philoptochos (Joanne Stavrakas), St. Photios Foundation (Anthony Megas) and Shrine Volunteers (Gary Peterson). Father Martin Ritsi of OCMC received the Vasilopita coin in his slice.



Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos receiving the vasilopita from Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos

Lighting a Candle for You on Behalf of Your Loved Ones



St. Photios Chapel

There are many sacred sites in our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. A visit to the cathedrals and churches, shrines and monasteries is an edifying experience for the worshiping pilgrim. Upon arriving at one of these sites, an Orthodox Christian enters the narthex, offers gratitude to God with the sign of the Cross, makes an offering, and lights a candle. At that moment, as the candle pierces the darkness of the world outside, supplicants often focus their prayers to God on behalf of their loved ones.

One of the most difficult aspects of 'sheltering in place' during the current pandemic is being absent from our home parish. Safety protocols necessitated attending services virtually. The opportunity to light a candle virtually

began with many parishes calling this their "Light A Candle" program.

The Light A Candle program at the St. Photios National Shrine began on February 27, 1982, when at the Dedication of the Shrine hundreds of candles were lit, illuminating the entrance to the Shrine Chapel on behalf of those in whose memory the Shrine was dedicated. Hundreds of people continue to participate in this program annually and thousands of prayers have been offered up for our ancestors and our families.

The St. Photios Shrine has been called the "*kandili*" (vigil light) of our Church in America. As the *kandili* stands vigil before the icons of the Saints, so the National Shrine stands in testimony and honor of all immigrants who came to the New World seeking a better life for themselves and their children.

Submit the names of those you wish to honor or be remembered and let us light a candle for you.

The Ministry of the Hierarchal Proistamenos

WEBINARS and ZOOM PROGRAMS

The Feast of the Indiction and the Protection of the Environment were celebrated with a webinar on Tuesday, September 01, 2020. The event, titled "Covid-19 and the Renewal of the Earth" was hosted online by the Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and can be seen by clicking on the link: <https://stphotios.org/covid-19-and-the-renewal-of-the-earth/>.

The speakers reflected on the dual observance as a special remembrance of Creation and for the Protection of the Environment. Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis is an author and theologian serving as Archdeacon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. He is a theological advisor to the Ecumenical Patriarch. He has published over thirty books and numerous articles in several languages including Creation as Sacrament: Reflections on Ecology and Spirituality (Bloomsbury, 2019). Lee Ann J. Clements, PhD is the Chair of the Committee on Integral Ecology for the Roman Catholic Diocese of St Augustine. She earned her BA in Biology from the University of Virginia, and her MS and PhD in Marine Science from the University of South Carolina. She is a Professor of Biology and Marine Science at Jacksonville University, Jacksonville, Florida.

The Saint Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saint Augustine have undertaken a dual observance in celebration of the prolific theologian of the fourth century, Saint Augustine of Hippo. The Feast of St. Augustine is observed on June 15th in the Orthodox Church and on August 28th in the Catholic Church. His legacy is markedly different within each church.

The second annual webinar was hosted online by The Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America on June 15, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos introduced Catholic Bishop of St. Augustine, Bishop Felipe Estevez, and speakers Dr. John Fotopoulos and Fr. Briggs Andrew Hurley. Dr. John Fotopoulos presented "Let Us Exercise In the Field of Scripture: The Correspondence between Augustine and Jerome for Orthodox Biblical Scholarship." Fr. Briggs Andrew Hurley gave the response. A lively discussion ensued with a number of questions Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos put forth from the viewing audience. Bishop Estevez closed the webinar with the benediction. All webinars can be viewed from the archives of the Shrine Facebook page.



Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos at the Vespers of the Catholic Observance of the Feast of St. Augustine



Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos celebrated the feast of St. Augustine of Hippo on June 15 in the Chapel of St. Photios. V. Rev. Maximos Politis and Rev. Dn. Athanasios Kartsonis assisted. Protopsaltis Eleftherios Chasanidis was brought in from Atlanta. Andrew Lekos served as acolyte.



The Annual Commemoration of the Fall of Constantinople

THE CITY LIVES – Η ΠΟΛΗ ΖΕΙ



The City Lives by Glykeria

The Fall of Constantinople, May 29, 1453, is when Constantinople, the capital of the Roman Empire, was captured after a 53-day siege by the Ottomans. The St. Photios Shrine commemorated this pivotal point in history this year by celebrating the musical legacy of Constantinople, through songs inspired by the City, and featured the internationally acclaimed recording artist Glykeria, whose career has spanned over 30 years, along with her band. “THE CITY LIVES – Η ΠΟΛΗ ΖΕΙ – A Musical Tribute to Constantinople” was hosted by Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos and made possible through the generosity of Archon Carl and Cynthia Hollister.

The production of this May 29, 2021 event, which has had 60,000 views on Facebook and 21,618 views on YouTube for a total of 81,618 views, may be enjoyed online at <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=315308533371470>. This project was a collaboration of many, including Gregory Pappas of The Pappas Post, Archon Nicholas Furriss of Spectrum Films and the staff of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

The Drawing Contest

The St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine launched a national Drawing Competition for children 9-12 years of age, of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The artists were asked to submit a 2-dimensional drawing of Hagia Sophia on 8 ½” by 11” paper (landscape/horizontal view). Fifty-nine submissions were received and found so compelling that they were digitized and put on exhibit in the Shrine Special Exhibit area where they will hang through February 2022.

The St. Photios Foundation thanks Bill, Pamela and Michael Toundas of Jacksonville, FL, for underwriting all costs of the contest and subsequent exhibit. Special thanks to judges Michelle Farah of Jacksonville, FL, and Laura Mongiovi and Evgenia Mercado of St. Augustine, FL.

Congratulations to the May 2021 Theme Hagia Sophia winner of the \$250.00 prize, artist Evyia Eftihia-Yeoryia Makrodimitri of St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Washington, D.C.



Become a Friend of the St. Photios National Shrine

Dear Brother and Sisters in Christ,

On behalf of the Friends Ministry of St. Photios Shrine, I invite you to consider your membership to St. Photios National Shrine.

Your gift is a statement of support for this self-sustaining, vibrant institution of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. The world can appreciate St. Photios because we are St. Photios.

We are the ministry of witness of Orthodox Christianity. We are the witness of Hellenic American values and culture. We are the witness of Greek immigration history and the story of the colonists of 1768.

As you update your membership, please encourage others to join too. Thank you for your steadfast stewardship.

Respectfully,



*Joanne Stavrakas, Chairman
Friends of St. Photios Shrine*

Shrine Friends and Events



Kathara Deftera and Kites



**A successful event at
St. Augustine Beach**



**Bust of Ioannis Ioannopolis in
the Garden of Educators at the
Oldest Schoolhouse**



**Fernando and Kathryn
Arango**



**Presentation of City Proclamation
To Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos at
City Council Meeting**



**Flagler College History and Arts Students
Mixed Media in Religion Presentation**



**Tori, daughter of trustee, Ted Johnson
(Jacksonville) and her god sister, Kara
O'Brien from St. Nektarios in Charlotte
NC visit with daughters!**

Shrine Friends



Nick and Patti Hallios; Dino and Chris Sevastos and families visit from Buffalo, NY and Cleveland, OH



Pilgrims from St. George, Knoxville, TN. Marianna, Anna and Grace are parishioners of Fr. Anthony Stratis- And 'graduates' of St. Stephen's Camp, Metropolis of Atlanta



Reed and Niki Chavis Sansbury with children Holland and Brennon of Florence, SC



Alisha Angelopoulos visit with Atlas, Athan, Elia and Aristide



The Rickman family visit from Charleston, SC



Anita Tsilitas of Bonita Springs, FL



Polexeni Hillier and Karen Koloniotis



Katehis family from Tarpon Springs



St. Augustine harbormaster, Eric Mauldin and Family



Father Christian Siskos and Sunday School seniors Michael, Tom, Nick, Stavros, Dorothy and Katerina of Holy Trinity Cathedral, Charlotte NC



Tarpon Springs Visitors



Helen & Becky Pietronuto of Sts. Constantine & Helen, Newport News, VA



George, Amalia, Georgia, Gerasimos, Nicholas Rassias of Wilmington, DE

Commemorating the Bicentennial of the Start of the Greek Revolution in 1821



Cutting the Ribbon of the Greek Revolution Through Their Eyes Special Exhibit

A special exhibit, *The Greek Revolution through American Eyes*, curated by Dr. Tom Papademetriou (Stockton University), Dr. Nicholas Ganson (Hellenic College) and created in partnership between the Maliotis Cultural Center and the Dean C. and Zoe S. Pappas Interdisciplinary Center for Hellenic Studies of Stockton University in New Jersey, is being hosted in part at the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine.



Special Exhibit at the St. Photios National Shrine

This modified physical exhibit is made up of ten-panel displays with information researched by sixteen contributing scholars from the US and Greece. Visitors read

about the significance of specific aspects of the Greek Revolution while witnessing the perspectives and efforts of Americans who supported and fought in the war. Guests hear the documentary "Hail, Oh Hail, Liberty! A Bicentennial Celebration of Greek Independence: 1821-2021" while viewing the exhibit. This documentary was written and narrated by Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos and produced by Spectrum Films.

We thank the parish of Holy Trinity, St. Augustine, for donating the flags and stands, and the Carlos, Petrou and D'Anna families for their generosity in supporting the costs of this exhibit.

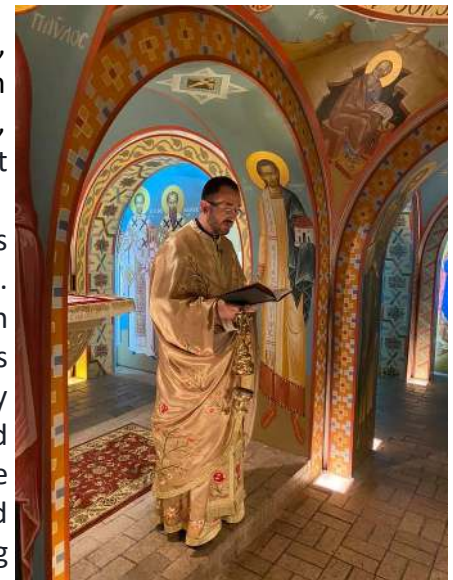
Ecclesiastical Services in the Chapel of St. Photios



Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos celebrating the Feast of St. Demetrios on October 26, 2020

Every third Monday of the month, ecclesiastical services are livestreamed from the chapel of St. Photios at 12:30 p.m., Eastern time, except during the period of Great Lent when Compline is chanted.

In the past year, Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos also celebrated divine services on the Feast of St. Demetrios on October 26; St. Nicholas on December 6; and St. Photios, February 5 & 6. His Grace led a prayer service in honor of all military veterans on Veteran's Day, November 11, and held a special Doxology on March 25, the Annunciation of the Lord. His Grace celebrated the memorials of several people including Archbishop Iakovos of America (April 10), and Archon Dr. Steve Poulos (June 4). May their memory be eternal, God give rest to their souls.



V. Rev. Fr. Joseph Samaan of St. Demetrios Church, Daytona Beach, FL serving Paraklesis

St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine and the Ladies Philoptochos Society

The Foundation could never fully express the gratitude it has for the members of the local Philoptochos chapters who provide time, talent, and resources to Shrine events and programs. This year, members of the Sts. Anargyroi Chapter of St. John the Divine in Jacksonville, FL, began their annual stewardship commitment by hosting the 2021 Greek Landing Day event. Members of the St. Barbara Chapter of St. Demetrios in Daytona Beach hosted the Vasilopita and Christmas Open House, while the members of Koimisis Tis Theotokou Chapter of Holy Trinity, St. Augustine, FL, are called upon throughout the year to hostess events or provide koliva or prosphora for services.



Dean and Joanne Stavrakas, Polly Hillier and Archon John and Evangeline Scurtis

Collectively, the chapter of the National Ladies Philoptochos Society have donated over \$500,000 to St. Photios National Shrine over the years through its annual commitment program. The Philanthropic arm of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America continues to provide financial assistance to the preservation of the National Shrine, while encouraging awareness and involvement in the life and programs of the first National Shrine of our Archdiocese.



Hospitality at the Christmas Open House provided by the St. Barbara Philoptochos of St. Demetrios, Daytona Beach, FL

Shrine trustees Joanne Chronis Stavrakas (Chicago) and Evangeline Mekras Scurtis (ATL) are also lifelong Philoptochos members. Joanne has chaired the Shrine Friends membership committee for 15 years and Evan has chaired the Shrine Light A Candle program for 12 years.

“The St. Photios National Shrine is the first Shrine in our Archdiocese that is dedicated to the generations of immigrants who came to this land for a better life. Philoptochos, on the Chapter, Metropolis and National levels, joins in honoring our ancestors by supporting the Shrine and continuing to share the legacy of those first colonists.

Having chaired the National Philoptochos St. Photios Committee and as a Board member from my Metropolis of Chicago, attending the annual Pilgrimage is always an inspiring and emotional experience for me. In support of the Shrine, we have hosted the Shrine exhibit at our local Clergy-Laity assembly and many parishes, individuals, and Chapters of our Metropolis are on the Wall of Tribute. Our Philoptochos Chapters are always encouraged to support the Shrine by fulfilling their National Commitment.

My personal connection began through the commitment of my father-in-law Sam Stavrakas, of blessed memory, who with others, assisted in the dedication and opening of the Shrine in February 1982. St. Photios Shrine has a special place in my heart and I will always do whatever is necessary to help sustain its legacy”. *Panagia bless and keep us all, me agape, Joanne Stavrakas (Metropolis of Chicago)*

“To me the Saint Photios Shrine is a shining light to all Christians that Orthodoxy is a beacon of agape and respect for our Lord. I feel it is an honor for Philoptochos with a philanthropic heart to support the Shrine.

My personal "relationship" to Saint Photios Shrine is because of my dad, Rev. Demosthenes J. Mekras, of blessed memory, who was part of the grass roots efforts to establish the Shrine.

I love the Shrine and what it stands for. It feels like home whenever I visit. I honor my dad’s dedication to Orthodoxy through my support and agape for Saint Photios. Saint Photios Shrine should always be revered as the first Greek Orthodox National Shrine in our great country, America”. *Evangeline Mekras Scurtis*

Legacy Gifts Contribute to the Financial Stability of St. Photios National Shrine

The St. Photios Endowment totaled \$3.1 million as of December 31, 2021. The interest earned the last few years is about \$90,000.00 per year. Each year, one-third is invested back into the Endowment, one-third is deposited into the general ledger for day-to-day operation of the Shrine, and one-third is contributed to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.

Trustees thank investment chair Nick Stamatogiannakis and fund manager Peter Kotos for their steadfast attention to the opportunities for growth of this account and to the many individuals who included the Shrine in their legacy planning.

Most recently, Margaret Yeager of blessed memory, included St. Photios Shrine as a beneficiary in her will. Miss Margaret did nothing without doing it in prayer and wished for her prayerful efforts to continue after her earthly life. Miss Margaret will be remembered in perpetuity here at St. Photios through that legacy gift.

You too can include the Shrine as a beneficiary through offering a legacy gift to the Shrine. All that is received is placed into the Endowment to insure the long-term economic stability of the first shrine of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. For more information, please consult your professional legal or financial advisors.

Friends and Volunteers of the Shrine who fell asleep in the Lord over the past year

+Memory Eternal+

Metropolitan Maximos, formerly of Pittsburgh, November 2, 2020.

Sylvia Costopoulos of Atlanta, GA, December 25, 2020.

Presvytera Theodora Paleologos of Worcester, MA, February 10, 2021.

V. Rev. Father Demetrios Simeonidis of Orlando, FL, February 14, 2021.

Dimitri Herr of Jacksonville, FL, March 30, 2021.

Constantine Mastrogianakis of Jacksonville, FL, April 27, 2021.

Archon Michael L. Carousis of Manasquan, NJ, May 3, 2020.

Georgia Megas of Jacksonville, FL, August 8, 2021.

WALL OF TRIBUTE

Archon Nicholas J. Furriss, chair of the Wall of Tribute Committee, invites you to visit <https://stphotios.org/wall-of-tribute/> and consider joining hundreds of other major supporters of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine. With a donation of \$2,000.00 for two lines, one can have up to 50 characters inscribed on each line. Each additional line provided requests an additional \$500.00.

The Wall of Tribute 2020 subscriptions were etched on January 26, 2021.

They include the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit; the St. Photios Foundation Executive Board of Trustees in honor of Allan and Polly Hillier; Helen Carlos and Ron Hilliard in loving memory of parents Andrew and Kyriaki (Eula) Carlos; Konstantinos and Evangelia Kazakos of Maratheia, Greece & Clemmons, NC; John Rozos of Poland Spring, ME; Pauline Shiolas Sarantopoulos of Grand Junction, CO; Dr. Marios and Ourania Stephanides of Polis Chrysochou, Cyprus & Tampa, FL; Paul G. and Catherine Vlahakis, the Whelan, D'Onofrio and Zetes Family of Lowell, Lynnfield, Lynn, MA; and George, Joseph, Floyd, Arthur and Emily Margaret Yeager of Jacksonville, FL.

To join the 2021 subscribers please submit your request by January 7, 2022. Already enrolled are: AHEPA Citrus District 2 of Florida, Bahamas, & Puerto Rico; Telis and Kelly Assimenios of Jacksonville, FL; Protopsaltis Fotis, Mary and Theodore Koutras of Roumeli Greece & Milwaukee, WI; Lewis, Rose Marie, Abraham, Sara and Stephen Preddy of St. Johns, FL; Angelo, Joan, Anthony, and Evangelia Karouzios, Angelo and Fotine Papantoniou of Westlake, OH; Nicholas Bardosa of Lorain, OH; Mr. and Mrs. Nikephoros Argeroplos of Dayton, OH; and George, Christine, Sydney and Aiden Stavros of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL.



Shrine Volunteers



Shrine volunteers, Tom Gross and Allan Hillier

There is evidence linking volunteering to positive well-being. To benefit, people need to feel that what they do is likely to make a difference and that it is valued. **Shrine volunteers make a difference. They are valued by thousands of visitors every year.** The Foundation is grateful for our Shrine Volunteers and share here the names of just some who provided in many ways throughout the past twelve months.

Shrine Greeters witness daily to hundreds of visitors from all walks of life. Oriented in basic church history, early Greek immigration history and the history of the Avero House, our volunteers share the Orthodox Christian faith while honoring the memory of the early colonists who came to the New World with Andrew Turnbull to establish the New Smyrna Colony. Thank you Nick Mandalakas and Connie Gaitanis!

Shrine volunteers provide hospitality for a specific event. They may bake, serve, dance or sing. Thank you members, of the Ladies Philoptochos Societies of St. John the Divine, Jacksonville; Holy Trinity, St. Augustine and St. Demetrios, Daytona Beach, FL, St. Demetrios Folk Dancers, GeeGee Angelopoulos, Denise & Rick Brown, Betty and Pete Carantzas, George and Paula Chryssaidis, John Demopoulos, Olga Farhat, Margo Kelley, Vasso Poulos, Teri White, Elaine and Christy Xynidis.

There are volunteers who offer their time to care for the maintenance of the Shrine. Thank you Evgenia Mercado, Archon Ted Pappas, Anthony Megas and Tom Gross.

There are those who respond to a call without question and provide whatever is needed. Thank you Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos, Katherine Bacalis, Meche Farrah, Allan Hillier, Elizabeth Johnson, the Kartsonis family, Stratis Lagoutaris family, Effie and Mark Lasoff, George and Patti Maillis, Laura Mongiovi, Faye and Gary Peterson, Evangeline Mekras Scurtis, the Megas family, the Samaan family, and the Tissura family.

There are volunteers who sponsor events like the brothers from the Order of AHEPA Socrates Chapter 6, Jacksonville FL (Feast Day Raffle), St. Barbara Philoptochos Society (Christmas Open House), Christopher D'Anna (the Vasilopita and Essay Contest), Sts.

Anargyroi Philoptochos Society (Greek Landing Day 2021) and Stella Kokolis (The Greek Language Essay). Thank you!

Our volunteers are our community. They are a priceless resource who witness the mission of St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine. They are individuals who affirm their commitment in word and deed, explicitly and implicitly. As Mary Pappas once said, "being a Shrine volunteer is a wonderful way to get involved with this national treasure".



Shrine Docent for 40 years, Constance Gaitanis, daughter of Shrine Founders, Olga and George Fotiou

St. Photios National Shrine Church Supplies

National Shrine Church Supplies (NSCS) was established to help the St. Photios National Shrine become a self-sustaining institution of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America by accessing high quality ecclesiastical products for churches throughout America, at competitive prices.

NSCS offers a greater selection of candle sizes and types at the best price available. All proceeds from purchases aid in maintaining this sacred and historic National Shrine. Visit our online store at: <https://stphotios.org/shop/>. You can also place an order, with Shrine Manager, Gina Bingman, Monday through Friday, 8:30 – 3:00 at 904-829-8205 or by emailing her at churchsupplies@stphotios.com.

Order your Epiphany Icon holy water bottles today and receive a 5% discount (excludes shipping) on your total order if you do so prior to September 30, 2021. Thank you for your continued support of the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine.

15th Annual St. Photios Shrine Essay Contest



**Essay Contest Winner
Monty Singer**

A total of thirty-two (32) teenagers, the most ever to participate in a single year, submitted essays detailing the work of one of six 19th century American Philhellenes involved in the Greek war for independence effort. Congressman Daniel Webster, Congressman Henry Clay, George Jarvis, Capt. Jonathan Miller, William Townshend Washington, and Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe contributed significantly to American support for Greece's War of Independence.

Monty Singer of Manchester, Vermont, whose essay on Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe achieved the highest ranking, winning the \$1,000 prize provided by the Kathie D'Anna Charitable Trust. Honorable mention was bestowed upon the essays by Andreas Lolis of Westport, CT, and Julius Bourodimos of Somerset, NJ.

Katherine Bacalis, chair of the Saint Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine Essay Program, noted her delight "to have this many people from all over the United States to have participated in the event". Renee Gahagan thanked His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos for "expanding what was possible with the Essay Contest".

Special thanks to the judges of this year's essay contest: Dr. Tim Johnson (Professor, Flagler College, St. Augustine, FL), Dr. Tom Papademetriou (Professor, Stockton University, NJ), and Carmela L. Tardo, M.D. (Professor, Pediatric Neurology, University of Florida Health, Jacksonville, FL).

Greek Essay Contest

The St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine Inaugural Greek Essay Program was held in honor of the bicentennial of Greece's Revolution and War of Independence, providing a perfect opportunity for students of the Greek language to celebrate and honor their Greek heritage.

The theme, mirroring the 2020 Shrine English Essay Contest, called for authors to cite the contributions of one of six 19th century American Philhellenes: Congressmen Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, George Jarvis, Capt. Jonathan Miller, William Townshend Washington, and Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe. These individuals are among those who contributed significantly to America's support for Greece during her long struggle for independence.

The first-place award of \$1,000 was unanimously granted to Emmanuel Lambrakis of Holy Trinity Cathedral in New York, NY. The second-place winner, Andreas Lolis of St. Barbara Church in Orange, CT, was awarded \$500. The third-place winner, Maria Bourodimos of St. George Church in Piscataway, NJ, was awarded \$250. Ava Savvis of St. Demetrios Church in Union, NJ scored an honorable mention and prize of \$100.

Bishop Demetrios noted, "I am so grateful that ten teenagers of the USA chose to participate in this inaugural event, demonstrating their commitment to our Hellenic heritage and the close relationship Americans had, and still have, to the welfare of the Greek nation. I certainly hope this program will gain more attention in the years to come".

Committee members and judges included Chairperson Stella Kokolis, M.Ed., Meropi Kiriakou, Maria Markou, and Sevasti Varitimidou. The awards were provided by the generosity of benefactors including Stella Kokolis, M.Ed. President of the Federation of Hellenic American Educators; the Prometheus Association by Meropi Kiriakou, President; and the Hellenic Paideia Association of America by Vasiliki Filotis, President.



**Greek-language First Place Essay
Contest winner Emmanuel
Lambrakis of New York, NY**

St. Photios Film Productions

In the course of the ministry of the Hierarchal Proistamenos, four videos highlighting the Greek Orthodox faith, Hellenic Heritage and Greek American history have been produced by Spectrum Films of Jacksonville: “The Fall of Constantinople” (May 2020), “Greek Landing Day” (June 2020), “The 80th Anniversary of OXI Day” (October 2020) and “Hail, Oh Hail, Liberty! A Bicentennial Celebration of Greek Independence: 1821-2021” (March 2021). They are available to watch on the Shrine’s social media pages and YouTube channel.

Two awards were bestowed upon the video presentation “Greek Landing Day”. The first is the “2021 Communicator Award of Distinction” presented by the Academy of Interactive & Visual Arts (AIVA) in the category of Film/Video – History/Biography. This was one of nearly 5,000 entries.

The second is a “Silver Zedman” of the prestigious Zedman Awards Competition, presented by the Society for Creative Professionals for online and commercial video content. It was submitted in the category *Educational/Instructional*. Both awards are conferred by judges who are leading professionals of the video and online industries.

As Nicholas Furriss, Senior Producer of Spectrum Films notes, “The St. Photios Shrine deserves to be promoted and highlighted for her historical importance in America. It was indeed an honor for Spectrum Films to work with His Grace Bishop Demetrios on ‘Greek Landing Day’ so that all people, Greeks, philhellenes and history enthusiasts can appreciate the significance and importance of the ‘Jewel on St. George Street’ in St. Augustine”. Mr. Furriss is also a member of the Saint Photios Foundation Board of Trustees.

Bishop Demetrios added, “It has been a concerted effort by many to bring the mission and message of our Saint Photios Shrine to a greater audience than those who are able to visit here in Florida. It is truly an honor to have our videos, with many thanks to Spectrum Films, honored by such recognition not only in these awards, but in the thousands of our viewers. We thank all for their support, including many others involved in our productions”.



Spectrum Films making final edit to the Award Winning Greek Landing Day video

St. Photios Gift Shop and Book Store



Find unique gift items, icons, and books on Orthodox Christianity and Greek American history at the St. Photios Gift Shop and Book Store.

The Saint Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine is a living memorial to the first Greek settlers on the American continent and to all the Greek Orthodox pioneers whose love of freedom and desire for a better life for themselves and their children brought them to this New World.

Called “*The Jewel of St. George Street*,” the St. Photios Chapel should not be missed by any visitor. The St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine is located in historic downtown St. Augustine, Florida.



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