



St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church

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Very Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis, Pastor
Stephen Sarantis, President, Parish Council
Jackie Sarantis, Office Administrator

Pastoral Message from Fr. George, January 14, 2026

A Joyful Celebration of Vasilopita and Philanthropy



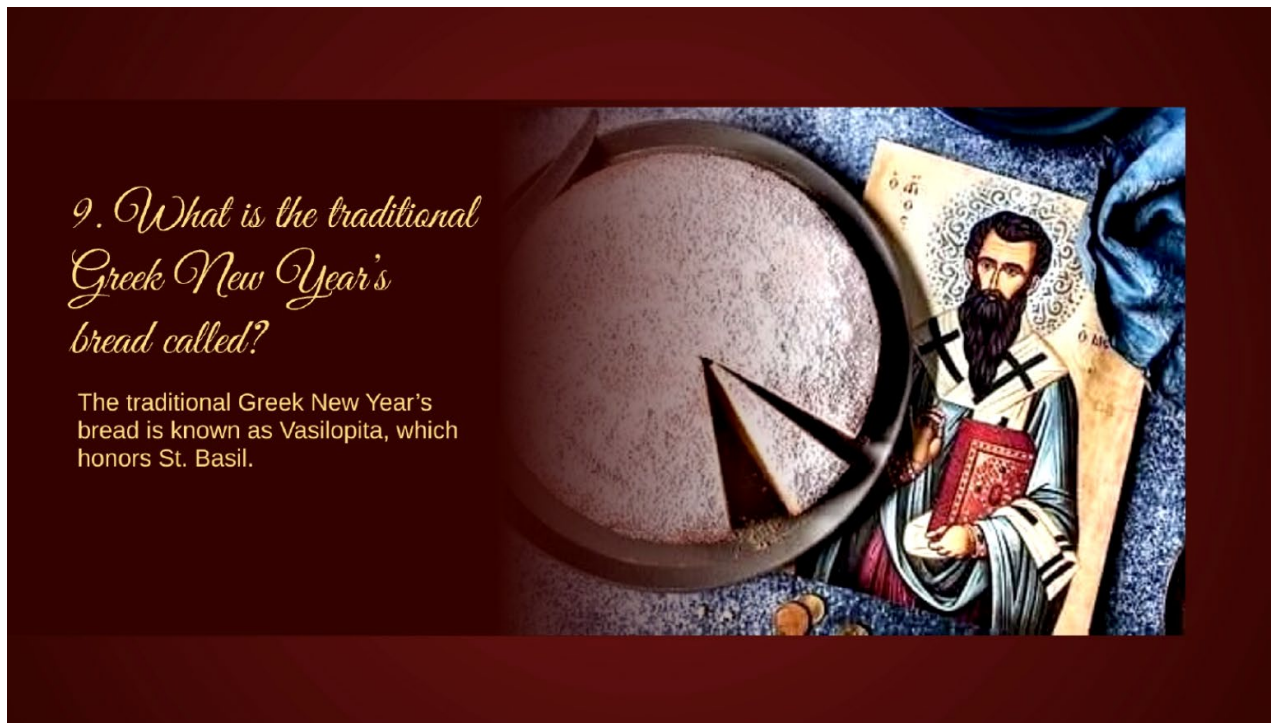
This past Saturday, our Philoptochos Vasilopita Dinner and Fundraiser was nothing short of extraordinary. Together, we raised over \$16,500 to support three vital ministries:

- Local: *Bloom Our Youth*
- National: *St. Basil's Academy*
- International: *Paradise4Kids in Western Africa*

What a blessing to see our parish family come together in such a meaningful way! The evening was exquisite—beautifully decorated tables, an elegant atmosphere, and delicious homemade dishes that complemented the entrees served by Philoptochos. The lively bidding by Charlie Lungaro added excitement and joy, and the number and variety of Vasilopitas were truly impressive—creative, eye-catching, and made full of love.

The photos that follow from the evening tell the story even better than words: smiling faces gathered around tables, friends and families laughing as they shared

parea and bantered with the auctioneer, and the vibrant display of cakes—each one unique, reflecting the heritage and creativity of its baker. You can feel the warmth of fellowship in every image, from the spirited auction to the quiet moments of blessing before the meal.



For me personally, this tradition is one of my favorites because it brings us together as a parish family to share our ethnic and cultural heritage while honoring the sacred intention of the Vasilopita—the bread of St. Basil. Each slice of every cake reminds us of generosity and

care for those in need, as our donations assist ministries that nurture and protect youth.

The coin hidden inside the Vasilopita carries deep symbolism. It represents the blessings of God for the year ahead and reminds us of St. Basil's legacy of compassion and care for the poor. In the original tradition, St. Basil distributed bread with coins hidden inside to help those in need without causing embarrassment. Today, when we search for the coin, we are reminded that true treasure lies in faith, charity, and the joy of giving. *For all who donated, you made a substantial difference. We appreciate your generosity and creativity.*



This year, I had the joy of purchasing Anna Neydanova's Vasilopita, a cake that reflected her Bulgarian heritage in a truly beautiful way.

In her note, Anna explained that the coin inside was one Bulgarian Lev, featuring St. John of Rila the Wonderworker—the founder of the Rila Monastery and a saint revered for his holiness and miracles. She even shared the ingredients: orange zest, walnuts, cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, and a touch of cognac. Her attention to detail and care for others—even noting possible allergens—showed the love behind her baking.

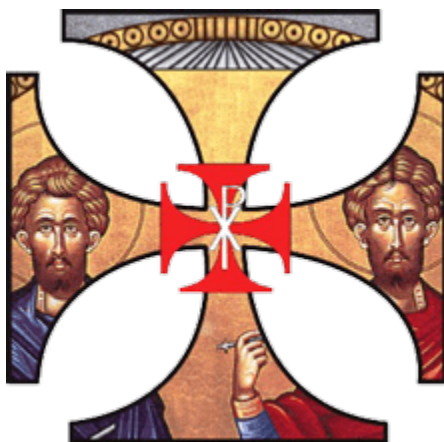
Anna also reminded me that this coin might hold numismatic value in the future since Bulgaria entered the Eurozone on January 1, 2026, making the Euro its official currency. What a fascinating connection between faith, culture, and history—all wrapped in a single slice of cake!

When I tasted her Vasilopita, I could only echo what I shared with her later: the crumb and coloring were exquisite, and the



cognac added just the right touch. Her storytelling about the coin and its symbolism enriched the experience for everyone at the Metropolis Office with whom I shared her Vasilopita. These moments remind us that our parish is a tapestry of traditions, woven together in Christ's love.

To my surprise, late Monday night Presbytera Marinda served me a slice of Anna's cake—and in my piece, I discovered the coin! It is beautiful, and I share photos with joy. Having received this blessing, I am reminded that God is calling me to share my gifts with others, and I look forward to the opportunities ahead in 2026 to do so with each of you as my faithful co-workers in Christ.



**About the Charities
We Support with the
Proceeds of our
Vasilopita Fundraiser**

Bloom Our Youth (Fayetteville, GA)

Bloom is a nationally recognized foster care agency serving children and families across Georgia. Its mission is to empower communities to transform the lives of children affected by foster care through programs like foster parent training, The Bloom Closet (providing free clothing and essentials), and medical foster care support. Bloom serves over 1,500 foster children annually, with nearly 85% of funds directed to programs.



St. Basil's Academy (Garrison, NY)

Founded in 1944, St. Basil's Academy provides a safe, loving environment for children and young adults from broken homes or families in crisis. Located on a 150-acre campus overlooking the Hudson River, the



Academy offers full-time care, education, and spiritual guidance, preparing youth to become productive members of society and faithful Orthodox Christians.

Paradise4Kids (Sierra Leone, Africa)

Paradise4Kids is a volunteer-run nonprofit serving children and families in extreme poverty. In Sierra Leone, under the leadership of Bishop Themí, P4K has built schools, clinics, orphanages, and feeding halls since 2008. Over 95% of donations go directly to projects, providing food, clean water, education, and medical care to those most in need.



As St. Basil teaches:

"Let the poor man be the recipient of your humility, the needy man of your mercy; do not turn away from those who beg of you, for it is Christ who asks."



May his words inspire us to continue serving others with love and generosity throughout the year.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our Philoptochos members, donors, and volunteers for making this evening truly unforgettable. We especially commend our Co-Chairs, Presbytera Marinda and Angelique Soulakos, along with everyone who contributed their time and talents. A special thank you to All Saints Anglican Church for graciously sharing their beautiful facilities with us.













These images are thumbnails. Each of them is much larger and more expansive when you view them individually. Click here to view: <https://saintchristopherhoc.org/photoalbums/2026-vasilopita-dinner-auction>.



Thank You to our 2026 Parish Council for its Commitment



On Sunday, January 11th, our 2026 Parish Council Members received the Oath of Office from Fr. George after the Divine Liturgy and during their ensuing meeting they elected new officers. Congratulations and thank you to them for their committed service to our parish of St. Christopher Church.*

Likewise, we thank our outgoing members, Tammy Soulakos & Bill Wiley, for their years of dedication and sacrificial service and support while serving on the Parish Council. May God bless our parish family with a healthy and joyous new year filled with opportunities to serve His will.

2026 members include Stephen Sarantis, President, Julie Skouteris, Vice President, Jim Sliwinski, Treasurer, George

Psihountas, Assistant Treasurer, Tom Farmakis, Secretary, Maria Cahill, Lydia McGee, Kirk Panayis, & Fr. George Tsahakis.

**There exists one vacancy on this year's council. When the candidate receives online training, completes background check and candidate oath of office pledge form, the PC will request ratification from our Hierarch, His Eminence Metropolitan Sevastianos. Once received, Fr. George can administer oath of office so the candidate can complete the remainder of this year's term of office that is being replaced.*

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church

Parish Council Expectation Guidelines

As Parish Council members, each of us will express and model our mission of sharing the

1. Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ in all of our ministries.
2. Individually and as a group, we will evaluate our activities as well as the activities of our community to ensure they bring our faithful closer to God and to show the love of our Lord, Jesus Christ. This is a primary goal of all of St. Christopher's ministries and any activities or projects conducted as a part of these ministries.
3. We as a parish council commit to meeting once every month.

4. Every Parish Council member agrees to participate as fully as possible in the life of God's Holy Church.
5. We strive to set and meet goals based on predetermined benchmarks.
6. We agree to start and end meetings at specified times, even if some participants are delayed. We also agree that the meeting will not stop to catch up those who are late in joining the meeting, unless there is a compelling reason to do so. This determination will be at the discretion of the Parish Council President (or meeting chair).
7. We commit to use our talents and to welcome and encourage others to assist and grow God's Holy Church and the community.
8. We will strive to be responsible stewards of the treasure and talents of God's Holy Church as we minister in His behalf.
9. We recognize the value of a team-centered approach to ministry and shall undertake our teamwork as a celebration of the Lord's fellowship in our midst. We are committed to mutual respect, to serve harmoniously and cooperatively, to continually grow and reevaluate our teamwork and fellowship.

10. We commit to mutual respect and to honor other's contributions and views by making space for everyone's input. This includes no side conversations, respectfully listening, keeping remarks on point, no interruptions, and only one person speaking at a time as recognized by the chair of the meeting.
11. To make the most efficient use of time, each member will request at least one week in advance from the Parish Council President any agenda items and/or invitations to guest participants.
12. Each member will commit to meet at scheduled meeting times and take responsibility for managing our own schedules as well as our responsibilities to the group. We will respect each other's time.
13. We will keep each other and the members of the General Parish Assembly well informed about our activities and decisions in a timely manner.
14. We will exercise discretion with confidential information and discussions within the Parish Council. Our goal is to seek consensus and not make decisions or commitments without authorization.
15. As Parish Council members, we each commit to encourage others to share in the Lord's work, and we will strive to empower others to contribute.

Giving Thanks **Eucharistic Stewardship**



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As true stewards of the Body of Christ, we understand the power of our Stewardship to revitalize the Church.

2026 St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Confidential Stewardship Commitment Form

Family Name: _____

Existing stewards need only indicate changes to the following information:

Address: _____ City: _____

State ____ Zip _____

Telephone: _____ Preferred Email Address: _____

In gratitude for God's blessings, I/we make the following commitment for 2026 to the ministries of St. Christopher Church:

Total Pledge: _____ In payments of: _____

To Be Paid: ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Annually

☐ Yes, I/we would like to use a Credit Card for my Financial Stewardship

☐ Credit Card Agreement attached (Available at church)

☐ I/we will set up via Online Giving at saintchristopherhoc.org

☐ Have you remembered St. Christopher's in your will or estate planning?

☐ Yes

☐ Please send me information

Signature(s)

Date



Please Join Us!

St. Christopher Hellenic
Orthodox Church

Cordially Invites You To

*Our Parish
Groundbreaking Ceremony*

Sunday, February 22, 2026

Please refer to the second page for complete schedule





Please Join Us!

Schedule of the Day

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church
313 Dividend Drive, Peachtree City, GA

9:00 AM - Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
Lunch - immediately after the Divine Liturgy

2:00 PM - Service of Blessing of the Foundation of our
New Church & Ground Breaking
At our Property adjacent to 716 Ebenezer Road,
Fayetteville, GA

Kindly Scan to Rsvp
By February 18, 2026



Saint Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Presents

Lenten Retreat The Sublime Mystery of Christ's Passion

All Christians in our community are warmly invited to join us for this Lenten Retreat as we reflect together on the mystery of Christ's Passion.

Speaker:

Dr. Eugenia Constantinou

Professor, Author, Speaker, Podcaster

Saturday March 28, 2026

9:00 AM – 2:30 PM

Venue: All Saints Anglican Church
149 Ebenezer Road
Fayetteville, GA 30215

We are inviting our sister Christian parishes in Fayette and Coweta Counties as an opportunity for shared prayer, learning, and fellowship during the Lenten season.

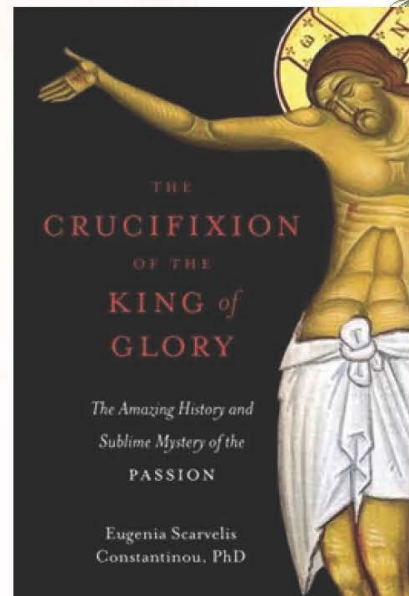
To register go to:

<https://forms.gle/nd8lgGH14wChNRxs6>

Or Scan the QR Code:



Contact: StChristopher.Retreat@gmail.com
or 770-347-7729.



Price/person \$25
Lenten Breakfast and
Lunch Included



Presvytera Jeannie Constantinou, Ph.D. will lead us through a first century exploration of the historical and religious context in which the Crucifixion of Christ took place.

Dr. Constantinou taught biblical studies and early Christianity extensively at Orthodox and non-Orthodox universities and graduate schools of theology, including Hellenic College/Holy Cross.

She is the host of Search the Scriptures LIVE on Ancient Faith Radio.

<https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/searchthescriptureslive/>

We are grateful to All Saints Anglican Church for hosting and to our sister Christian parishes for joining us in this journey of faith.

Together in Christ's love and sacrifice.

Join Us Often with Your Family

**Sunday, January 18, 12th Sunday
of St. Luke**

8:00 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy, Memorial Service -

George & Penelope Spetsios & Memorial Reception

11:00 Religious Education Classes

11:45 Philoptochos Board Meeting

4:00 Sacrament of Marriage – John Morris & Kat Towne
(Archangel Michael Chapel)



Sunday, January 25, 15th Sunday of St. Luke

8:00 Orthros

9:00 Sacrament of Chrismation - Dele Tuboku-Metzger and
Divine Liturgy

11:00 Religious Education Classes

12:00 Let's EAT! at Broadway Diner

Wednesday, January 28, St. Ephraim the Syrian

8:00 Orthros & Divine Liturgy at Archangel Michael Chapel
(Metropolis Office)