

THE EPISTLE

St. Luke Greek Orthodox Church

35 North Malin Road

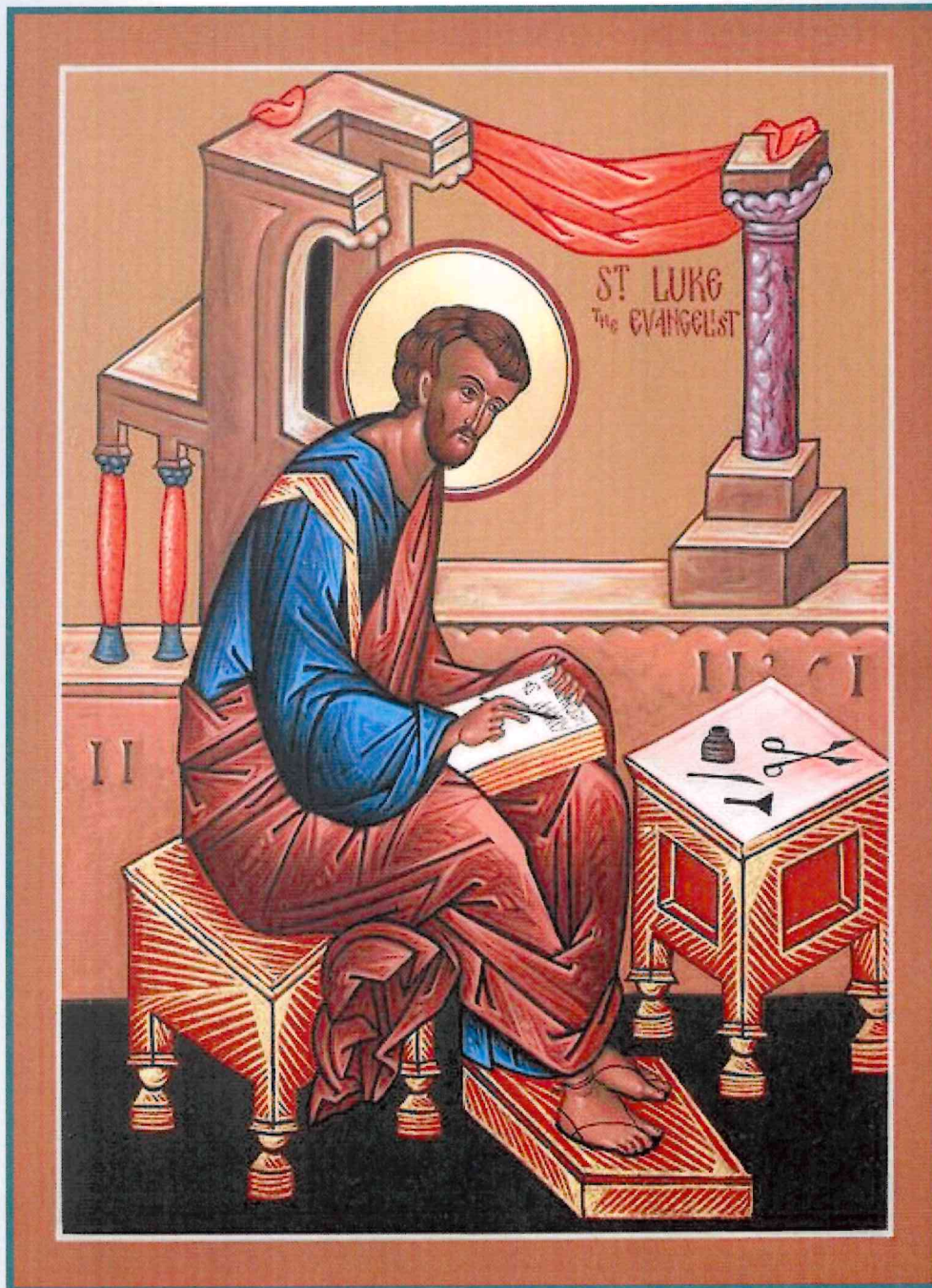
Broomall, PA 19008

Rev. Father Christ Kontos, Protopresbyter

(610) 353-1592

www.st-luke.org

JULY / AUGUST 2026



SUMMER PASTORAL MESSAGE

Beloved,

What a glorious time of year! As we begin the month of July, we are blessed with beautiful summer days and the opportunity to celebrate the 250th birthday of our great nation on the Fourth of July. At the same time, the good work of our Church on a national level continues as delegates from our Parish and Philoptochos represent us at the National Clergy-Laity Congress and Philoptochos Convention in Cleveland from June 30 through July 2.

Preparations for our 49th Annual Greek Affair are already well underway. The rigorous schedule of baking and food preparation has been filled with enthusiasm and love. This year's Greek Affair, however, will certainly feel different. For nearly fifty years, John Solomon was the maestro and master chef who orchestrated every aspect of the delicious food that graced your plate. Having returned to our Lord, his presence will be deeply missed. Yet we know that nothing can keep his Cypriot passion away, and his spirit will surely grace this year's event. May his memory be eternal.

Our Greek Affair Chair, Alexi Sioutis, and his dedicated team are diligently coordinating the many committees that make this wonderful ministry possible. If you can help with preparations or wish to offer your time, talent, or treasure in another capacity, please reach out to Alexi at alexander.sioutis@gmail.com. I have been deeply moved by the many men and women who have come together over these past months, especially in assisting our Philoptochos with the preparation of sweets. Their love and sacrifice are a beautiful witness to the spirit of our parish family.

Following a busy July, we are given a blessed pause with the fifteen-day Fast of the Dormition as we prepare to commemorate the Koimisis (Falling Asleep) of the Most Holy Theotokos. During these sacred days of August, we are invited to pray, listen, and worship through the beautiful Supplication Services (Paraklesis), offered for our spiritual edification. I encourage you to follow the ecclesiastical calendar and join us for these most beautiful services. Though only about forty-five minutes in length, they are among the most melodic, uplifting, and heartfelt worship experiences of our Orthodox faith, allowing us to feel the loving protection and blessings of the Panagia.

As I wish each of you a blessed and restful summer, I also encourage you to remember God on Sundays. Wherever your travels may take you, seek out a local Orthodox church and give thanks to God for His many blessings.

Happy Birthday, America! With brotherly love and paternal blessings,



Rev. Father Christ Kontos, Protopresbyter

PARISH LIFE

Forty-Day Blessing



On June 14, 2026, Father Christ offered the Forty Day Blessing for **Naomi Francesca Stearns**. Congratulations to **Brandon Stearns & Christina Neroni** as we anticipate the Baptism!

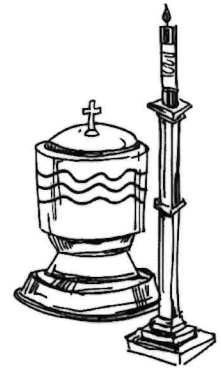
On June 28, 2026, Father Christ offered the Forty Day Blessing for **Goldie Persephone Franzone**. Congratulations to **Roman Franzone & Alexis**

Vastardis as we anticipate the Baptism!

Baptisms & Chrismations

The daughter of **Konstantinos & Auburn Nikolos** was baptized on June 7, 2026. Her sponsor, **Peter & Abigail Pappas**, baptized her with the name *Kyra*. May Our Lord continue to bless you, **Kyra Iris Nikolos**.

The twin sons of **Nicholas Boeckx & Katerina Brennan** were baptized on June 7, 2026. Their sponsors, Katina Galante, Justine Brennan & Kyria Brennan, baptized them with the name *Thomas & Luka*. May Our Lord continue to bless you, **Jaxson Thomas Boeckx & Luka James Boeckx**.



Michael Daniel Romolini Jr. was chrismated on June 28, 2026. His sponsor, **Noel Francis Kelly**, chrismated him with the name *Michael*. May Our Lord continue to bless you, **Michael Daniel Romolini Jr.**

Funerals



Anthony J. Vraim fell asleep in the Lord on May 20, 2026. His funeral service was held on May 28, 2026.

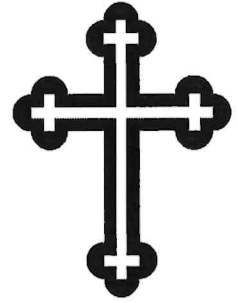
Mary Zafiropoulos fell asleep in the Lord on June 2, 2026. Her funeral service was held on June 15, 2026.

Mary George (Costalas) Mallas fell asleep in the Lord on June 12, 2026. Her funeral service was held on June 19, 2026.

We extend our condolences and prayers to their family.

MAY THEIR MEMORY BE ETERNAL.

JULY 2026 ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR



Sunday, July 5th **5th Sunday of Matthew**
Athanasios of Mount Athos; Lampadus the Wonderworker
8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, July 7th **St Kyriaki the Great Martyr**
8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy

Sunday, July 12th **6th Sunday of Matthew**
Proclus & Hilarios of Ancyra; Michael Maleinus; Paisios the Athonite
8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy

Friday, July 17th **St Marina the Great Martyr**
8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy

Sunday, July 19th **Sunday of the Holy Fathers**
Macrina, sister of St. Basil; Dios, Abbot of Antioch
8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, July 22nd **St Mary Magdalene, the Myrrhbearer**
8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy

Sunday, July 26th **8th Sunday of Matthew**
Paraskevi of Rome; Hermolaos & his companions
8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy

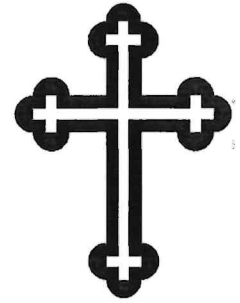
Monday, July 27th **St Panteleimon the Great Martyr & Healer**
8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy

JULY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 7pm Boys Basketball	2 10am Senior Men	3 	4 
5	6	7 10am Senior Men 7pm Parish Council	8 7pm Boys Basketball	9 10am Senior Men	10 10am Senior Men	11
12	13 4:30pm FTIN Cooking	14 10am Senior Men	15 7pm Boys Basketball	16 10am Senior Men	17 10am Senior Men	18
19	20	21 10am Senior Men	22  7pm Boys Basketball	23  10am Senior Men	24  10am Senior Men	25
26	27 	28  10am Senior Men	29  7pm Boys Basketball	30  10am Senior Men	31  10am Senior Men	

AUGUST 2026 ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR

Koimisis/Falling Asleep of the Theotokos Fast Begins August 1st and Ends with Divine Liturgy on August 15th



Saturday, August 1st	Supplications/Paraklesis at 10:00am
Sunday, August 2nd Relics of Stephen the Protomartyr; Theodore of Dardanellas 8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy	9th Sunday of Matthew
Monday, August 3rd	Supplications/Paraklesis at 6:00pm
Tuesday, August 4th	Supplications/Paraklesis at 10:00am
Wednesday, August 5th	Transfiguration Great Vespers at 6:00pm
Thursday, August 6th 8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy	Transfiguration of Jesus Christ
Friday, August 7th	Supplications/Paraklesis at 10:00am
Sunday, August 9th The Holy Apostle Mathhias; Anthony of Alexandria 8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy	10th Sunday of Matthew
Monday, August 10th	Supplications/Paraklesis at 10:00am
Tuesday, August 11th	Supplications/Paraklesis at 6:00pm
Wednesday, August 12th	Supplications/Paraklesis at 10:00am
Thursday, August 13th	Supplications/Paraklesis at 6:00pm
Friday, August 14th	Great Vespers for Dormition/Koimisis 6:00pm
Saturday, August 15th 8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy	Dormition/Koimisis of the Theotokos
Sunday, August 16th Translation of the Image of Christ; Diomedes of Tarsus 8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy	11th Sunday of Matthew
Sunday, August 23rd Apodosis of the Dormition; Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons 8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy	12th Sunday of Matthew
Sunday, August 30th Alexander, John, & Paul, New Patriarchs of Constantinople 8:50am Orthros and 10:00am Divine Liturgy	13th Sunday of Matthew

AUGUST 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4 10am Senior Men 7pm Parish Council	5 7pm Boys Basketball	6 10am Senior Men	7 10am Senior Men	8
9	10 4:30pm FTIN Cooking	11 10am Senior Men	12 7pm Boys Basketball	13 10am Senior Men	14 10am Senior Men	15
16	17	18 10am Senior Men	19 7pm Boys Basketball	20 10am Senior Men	21 10am Senior Men	22
23	24	25 10am Senior Men	26 7pm Boys Basketball	27 10am Senior Men	28 10am Senior Men	29
30	31					



HOSPITAL VISITATIONS

are Father Christ's priority.

If a loved one or family member is hospitalized, please notify the Church Office at (610) 353-1592. All hospitals do not notify parishes of hospitalized parishioners.

ST. LUKE PRAYER GROUP

There is nothing more powerful than the power of prayer. The Prayer Chain email list is up and running. This prayer chain allows us to communicate with anyone who wishes to be on it. Once a person in need comes to our attention, each member on that list will be contacted and asked to pray for the one in need.

Imagine someone suffering and 10, 50, 100, 200 or 500 people praying for them that same evening. Truly friends, there is nothing more powerful than prayer.



How do I register? Email Presbytera Michele at SaintLukePrayer@gmail.com

MEAL TRAIN MINISTRY INVITATION

In an ongoing effort to care for and support our St. Luke family, I am inviting parishioners to join a Meal Train ministry. This ministry provides meals to individuals and families in times of need, due to illness, recovery, or other difficult circumstances. Participants will receive occasional notifications by email or text with the opportunity to sign up to prepare or order a meal for delivery. To make the process simple and respectful, a cooler will be placed outside the home, allowing for easy, non-intrusive drop-off.

If you feel called to offer this small act of love and service, I welcome you to join us. Please see Presvytera Michele or email her at micheleakontos@gmail.com to be added to the list. Thank you for your consideration and for helping us live out our faith through care for one another. Sincere gratitude to those who have already helped, God bless your kindness and care.



REGISTER YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

Register your email address online at st-luke.org/register-contact to receive timely emails from Fr. Christ on Church and Parish Life. You can also use your QR/Barcode scanner from your mobile device by scanning the code below.



SCHEDULE

Date	On Duty	On Duty
July 5	Sue Clark	Martha DiCamillo
July 12	Anna Hadgis	Alexis Limberakis
July 19	Linda Lemperes	Maria Scavitto
July 26	Alexis Limberakis	Diane Sioutis
August 2	Barbara Papageorge	Kathy Fisfis
August 9	Anna Trantas	Diane Sioutis
August 16	Maria Scavitto	Angelina Scavitto
August 23	Vasie Marinakos	Sue Clark
August 30	Joyce Vlassopoulos	Alexis Limberakis
September 6	Maria Carafides	Martha DiCamillo
September 13	Maria Scavitto	Soula Arcidiacono
September 20	Stephanie Carroll	Barbara Papageorge
September 27	Ellena Vaganos	Marta Laynas

Contact Tom Trantas at tomisgreek@yahoo.com or 610.203.1132

DUTIES

- On Sundays, arrive by 9:45 am
- Greet parishioners as they arrive
- Respond to parishioners' questions
- Stock candles and red glass candles
- Pass out Sunday bulletins
- Extinguish burning candles that are low
- Pass trays (coordinate location with Parish Council)
- Diakonia duties are finished after trays are passed
- If you cannot serve on your scheduled day, please switch with another member (no need to inform me)

St. Luke Greek Orthodox Church
Presents



Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Vacation Bible School



When: Aug 3rd – 5th, 2026

From: 9am - 1pm

Where: St. Luke Greek Orthodox Church

Grades: Kindergarten - Entering 6th

Cost: \$35 Per Child

Register Here



Lunch and Snacks will be provided!

(GOYA and Parent Volunteers Needed)



Questions? Reach out to Nikos Schwarz or Alexa Angelakos at
saintlukevbs@gmail.com

FESTIVAL OF MINISTRIES

When: Sunday September 13, 2026 after divine liturgy

Where: Community Center

It is an exciting time for us at St Luke as we are ramping up our activities for the Fall. September 13th is Registration Sunday for all Youth and Adult Ministries and the beginning of Sunday School.

Please join us at the conclusion of liturgy for the 5th Annual **St Luke Festival of Ministries Pizza Party**.



Groups/Committees represented:

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Little Angels Playgroup

Basketball

Greek School

JOY/HOPE

Dance Troup

Altar Boys

GOYA

Sunday School

ADULT MINISTRIES

Parish Council

Choir

Stewardship

Philoptochos

Diakonia

Book Club

For Those In Need (FTIN)

Senior Men's Group

*Bible Study/Elements of
Orthodoxy*

Book Club

Golf Classic

Prayer Group

Greek Affair

Young Adult League (YAL)

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS — SUMMER UPDATE

Dear Sunday School Families,

God bless you for trusting the Religious Education of your children to our devoted Sunday School staff this past year. It is our great honor and blessing to raise your young ones in our Orthodox Faith. We will never stop trying to fulfill our mission to make our Sunday School program the most spiritually fulfilling, enlightening, and enjoyable one we can. Also, we hope that you will always feel welcome to give us constructive feedback on every aspect of each Sunday School class- we are always open to suggestions! Therefore, to build upon the spiritual foundation we constructed for your family in 2025-2026, we encourage you, wherever and whenever possible, to attend the Divine Liturgy this summer, pray with your children at home and on the road, and give thanks to God for His many blessings. And, of course, we look forward to seeing you back at St. Luke's whenever you are home!

Although summer is a time for rest and relaxation, please keep in mind these few important updates and opportunities:

1. FOCUS Back-to-School Backpack Fundraiser

Our annual backpack fundraiser is right around the corner! In addition to fundraising, we plan to have a pizza party and backpack filling event after the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Dormition, Saturday, August 15, 2026. Stay tuned for more details arriving soon via email and the Sunday Bulletin

2. Sunday School Volunteers Needed

We are currently seeking assistant teachers as well as both short-term and long-term substitutes for Sunday School. We have several openings that need to be filled before the new school year begins. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact our Directors at stlukesundayschool@gmail.com.

3. 2026-2027 Registration Coming Soon

Registration for the upcoming Sunday School year will open soon. Online registration forms will be sent by email and be available on our website at: <https://www.ss.st-luke.org>.

Looking ahead — Save these September dates:

- **September 13:** First day of classes, Agiasmos blessing, Open House, and Registration Sunday for all youth activities.
- **September 20:** No classes (Greek Affair weekend).
- **September 27:** Worship and Sunday School classes resume.

Father s Day Celebration

On Sunday, June 21, two of our students, Panos Grinias and Vincent Lowe, beautifully honored the fathers of our community by reading Father s Day poems following Divine Liturgy. We are so proud of them for representing our Sunday School and sharing their love and gratitude with our parish fathers, grandfathers, godfathers, and uncles.

Faith at Home — Summer Resources

Looking for ways to help your children continue learning about their faith during the summer? The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and other online Orthodox sites, offer wonderful resources for home study:

- **Kids Sunday Sermon Series:** [GOARCH Kids Sermon Series](#)
(Example: [Father's Day Lesson](#))
- **Orthodox Children's Books:**
[Ancient Faith Store - Children s Books](#)
[Ancient Faith Store - Young Adult Books](#)
[Draw Near Designs](#)
[Potamitis Publishing](#)

Readers for Divine Liturgy

We encourage our students to stay connected to worship by volunteering to read the Epistle or Communion Prayer during Divine Liturgy, even in the summer months. We will provide the readings ahead of time for practice. If your child is interested, please email stlukesundayschool@gmail.com.

If you have any questions or need further information, don t hesitate to contact us at stlukesundayschool@gmail.com or visit our website: <https://www.ss.st-luke.org>.

Wishing you a blessed and safe summer!

Your St. Luke s Sunday School Team

Saint Luke Greek Folk Dance Groups

Our St. Luke Greek Folk Dance Troupes have had a busy and successful dance year!

- **September:** St Luke Greek Affair for two days of performances by Ellinakia and Olympians
- **October:** Welcomed new members with the start of the 2025-26 dance year
- **December:** Ellinakia and Olympian Christmas performances for family and friends
- **January:** Thanks to fundraising efforts, the support of Andrew Papageorge and the Parish Council along with Father Christ, and generous donations from **Maria Kalisperis, Andreas and Faithe Kalisperis, Peter and Fotini Kathopoulos, Maria Pousatis, and Anatoli Vasiliadis** we were able to purchase 28 new costumes for our Ellinakia group
- **February:** Participating in the Music and Dance Festival held in Philadelphia, Ellinakia received the **Choral and Folk Expression Awards** in addition to earning the **Third Place Silver Award** in the **Primary Division!** The Olympians earned the **Costume Award** and took home the **First Place Platinum Award** in the **Advanced Intermediate Division!**
- **April:** Ellinakia and Olympians marched in the Greek Independence Day Parade in Philadelphia
- **May:** Ellinakia and Olympians performed at the St. Demetrios Festival in Upper Darby and the St. Sophia Festival in Jeffersonville



St. Demetrios Festival



St. Sophia Festival

We are thankful to our instructors who share their time and expertise with our dancers!

Katerina Giovanopoulos is the instructor for the Olympians (grades 7-12)

Marilena Ristas and Christina Flamporis are the instructors for the Ellinakia (grades 2-6)

A huge thank you to our dancers and families for your support and involvement in our Greek Dance Program at St. Luke! We'll see you all again when dance practice resumes on Thursday, August 27th in preparation for our performances at the St. Luke Greek Affair on September 18th and 19th!

We look forward to welcoming new dancers in October! Registration will open in September. Please reach out to our Dance Director Cynthia Costanzo at ckarakantas@gmail.com for more details.

Spread the Word and Join YAL!



If you know someone 18-35 years old, then the St. Luke's Young Adult League (YAL) may be for them! Not only is it a chance to meet young people from other churches, but it can make them closer to those who also go to St. Luke's. The goal is to bring everyone together and share great memories through our faith and almsgiving. Our last event was at Sproul Lanes this past May and we plan to have more!!

To join, please email Nikos Schwarz at nikosicxc@gmail.com. Also, scan our GroupMe below or look up @stlukeyal on Instagram!



For Those in Need...

you may ask, "What are we doing lately?"

JULY-AUGUST, 2026 *Epistle*

For Those In Need (FTIN) helps in St. Luke's outreach to the community, offering basic necessities such as food, school supplies, clothing, shelter, etc. to those in our local area who lack them. FTIN also works with other parish groups to provide discretionary assistance to fellow parishioners and others in need.

During June's Cook FTIN's volunteer Chefs prepared some 165 evening meals for our partners at The Life Center (TLC) and the Salvation; thanks to all those FTIN volunteer Chefs who turned out.

FTIN's **July Cook** will take place on Monday evening, **July 13th** and our **August Cook** on Monday, **August 10th** beginning at 4:30pm.

On Tuesday, AUG 4th FTIN will continue to support the **Salvation Army's food pantry** with a particular emphasis on their **homeless & senior populations' needs**, with deliveries scheduled on a bi-monthly basis (next delivery scheduled for August 5th).

Supporting FTIN – How can I help?

It is your support that is enabling FTIN to make a difference by expanding its outreach during these times of food insecurity and hunger affecting the lives of so many. **Thank you . . .** for your generosity which has continued uninterrupted now over so many years!

We welcome your Stewardship whether offered as helping hands or in financial support. No donation is too small, and your contributions to FTIN remain a meaningful gift "for those who have everything" or in memory of a beloved family member or friend. Checks (payable to "For Those In Need") may be mailed to the parish office.

To learn more about FTIN, how you can volunteer or make a donation, please contact:

Alan Pcsolyar at: apcsolyar@comcast.net or 610-457-6033



St. Luke Graduates Sunday

June 7, 2026

Scholarship Recipients:

Pakuris Scholarship – **Lianna Thompson & Zacharias Costas**

Philoptochos Scholarship – **Andonia Pylaras, Christian O'Donnell & Makella Kevgas**

High School Diplomas

Sophia Angelakos - Radnor High School
Virginia Tech University

Alexia Marie Brennan - Marple Newtown Senior High School
Penn State University – Biology

Zacharias Andre Costas - Conestoga High School
Pennsylvania State University - Mechanical Engineering

Rousos Elias (Eli) Fooskas - Marple Newtown High School

Melina Intzes - The Baldwin School
Cornell University - Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering

Eleni Maria Kalisperis - Villa Maria Academy
Villanova University - Biochemistry

Evangelos Katsapis - Strath Haven High School
Pennsylvania State University - Physical Therapy-DPT

Daniel Ernest Kellis - Radnor High School
Wake Forest University – Finance

Evan Andrew Kelly - Marple Newtown High School
West Chester University

Markella Kevgas - Great Valley High School
Scranton University - Pediatric Nursing

Stavros Koulas - Marple Newtown High School
Drexel University - Finance/Business

Christian P. O'Donnell - Delaware County Christian School
Drexel University – Business, Real Estate and Property Development

Katerina Evangelia Poole - Haverford High School
William and Mary - Biology, Dance, Hispanic Studies

Zachary Thomas Poole - Penncrest High School
Juniata College – Zoology

Andonia Pylaras - Marple Newtown High School
West Chester University - Early Childhood Education Grades (Pre K-4)

Constantine A. Samios - Delaware County Christian School
Eastern University

Stavros Stefanidis - Marple Newtown High School
Pennsylvania State University

Lianna Thompson - Marple Newtown High School
University of South Carolina – Pre-Law

Alexandra Zarvalas - Marple Newtown High School
Saint Joseph's University - Finance

College Degrees

Associate

Kostandinos Mouzithras - Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology
Associate, Automotive Technology

Theodoros Mouzithras - Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology
Associate, Carpentry Technology

Bachelor

Arianna Elizabeth Berryman - Marymount Manhattan College
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Acting

Dimitrios Botos - Eastern University
Bachelor of Science, Education

Justin Thomas Brennan - Pennsylvania State University
Bachelor of Science, Supply Chain Management and Information Systems

George Lambros Economides - Rutgers University
Bachelor of Science, Marketing

Theodore Alexander Fooskas - University of Pittsburgh
Bachelor of Arts, Economics

Ariana Vasiliki Karalis - University of Maryland
Bachelor of Science, Biology

Evelyn Kallista Kennedy - Pennsylvania State University
Bachelor of Science, Computer Science

Stella Kontos - Immaculata University
Bachelor of Science, Exercise Science (Pre-Physician Assistant)
Minor in Biology

Daphne Kounios - Drexel University
Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences, Honors Program
Concentration: Pre-Physician Associate Studies

Konstantinos Koutsoutis - Pennsylvania State University
Bachelor of Science, Biomedical Engineering - Biomechanics

Alexander Theophilos Kornblatt - Pennsylvania State University
Bachelor of Science, Finance

Ainsley Drew Marinakos - University of Vermont
Bachelor of Arts, Sociology, Crime and Criminal Justice

John Papadopoulos - Pennsylvania State University - Schreyer Honors College
Bachelor of Science, Finance
Minors in Information Systems and Global Studies

Alexandra Pastris - University of Delaware
Bachelor of Science, Finance

Alex Pylaras - Drexel University
Bachelor of Science, Electrical Engineering

Christopher George Tsetsekos - Tufts University
Bachelor of Arts, Economics
Minors in Finance and Philosophy

Alexia Zografakis - Pennsylvania State University
Bachelor of Arts, Broadcast Journalism

Master Degrees

Jerry A. Karalis - Villanova University
Master of Business Administration

Caroline Kusturiss - Temple University
Master of Business Administration, Strategic Management

John Serafim - Rochester Institute of Technology
Bachelor of Science & Master of Engineering, Mechanical Engineering

Alexia Serafim - Eastern University
Master of Education in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)

Nikos Alexander Schwarz - Holy Cross School of Theology
Master of Divinity

Anna Trantas - The University of Pennsylvania
Master of Professional Nursing

Christina Thomas – guest speaker



Christina Thomas is the President and owner of Carneys Point Metal Processing, Inc., a certified women-owned sandblasting and industrial painting facility in Carneys Point, New Jersey. A Magna Cum Laude graduate of Moore College of Art and Design, she spent ten years running her own interior design company before joining her family business alongside her brother, Speros Thomas. She now leads CPMP with a dedication to growth, excellence, and safety.

A lifelong member of St Luke Greek Orthodox Church, Christina joined the Ladies Philoptochos Society board in 2025. She's an avid traveler and a passionate cook who loves caring for others through food. When she's not working or volunteering, she's often relaxing on the beaches of Ocean City, New Jersey—or discovering new ones around the world.

Graduate Sunday Speech - June 7th, 2026

Christina Ute Thomas

Father Chris, Proud Parents, grandparents, siblings, friends and of course honored graduates. I'm really honored to be here today to talk about lessons I learned in life and celebrate your accomplishments. Please bear with me, I might get choked up, I decided to be brutally honest. It's the only way I know how to be. When I agreed to speak, I thought about just talking about life lessons. Almost like a how to list. But I decided that I didn't want this to sound like another lecture (as graduates, you've either had enough of those in your life or you're about to get more than you can handle). So, I am going to give you a snippet of my life to hopefully give you encouragement as you embark on your next chapter. Wow if that doesn't sound like a cliché.

I am not sunshine and roses. I am strongly independent and driven. But I will also do anything to help anyone. Once you are in my heart, I will do anything for you.

I've been a member of this wonderful Community my whole life and my strength as an individual has been shaped by this church.

I graduated high school and set off for college with NO clue as to what I wanted to do with my life. When I went to my 1st college, Hobart and William Smith, and yes, I said 1st college, I chose my first major by what I was good at and what came easy. My goal was to get an education and have fun. What came next in life was not my concern. I didn't want to be an adult! I was going to college to find myself and enjoy life. My education, what I was going to do with it was not my priority. I wanted to have fun. I joined crew team, made lifelong friends, and I had a blast. Math and numbers always made sense to me. So, I decided I was going to be a math major. It was easy. I constantly chose fun over going to class and still got all A's. Then came linear algebra and I literally hit it like a brick wall. I could not wrap my head around the third dimension of numbers. I shifted gears and econ/business was going to be my major (I learned a lot, but it bored me to tears). Time to readjust and pick a new major. One subject I had taken since freshman year was German so that became my new major. Remember, I had no clue what I wanted to do as an adult, I wanted everything easy and fun. Halfway through my Junior Year my professor informed me that next semester we would be translating Freud from German to English.... So, I thought to myself, I don't understand Freud in English...how I am going translate it and more importantly why would I want to. This way my A Ha Moment "What am doing with my life"

I remember vividly that moment; I was in my parents' bedroom when I told them I didn't want to go back to college. It was a lot of money and I had no direction.

My parents, surprisingly for immigrants, who valued education, were very supportive. So, I dropped out. It was the first time, as an adult, I realized I needed to get my act

together. I took a year off and, in that time, I worked as a bookkeeper (not fun), and I took art-classes (something I always enjoyed). I still hadn't changed. Life was about fun.

But that is when my mom, a very successful architect, and I formulated a plan. We were going to expand her business; I was going to get my interior design degree, and we were going to work together. I felt proud and excited. I finally had a plan.

I got into my second college, Moore College of Art and Design, and I started over as a freshman. (nothing transferred). I am not an artist by any means. I struggled in class, but I always worked hard. I was constantly frustrated, what I pictured in my head, for drawings and painting, did not translate onto the page. I was good at some skills, space planning, functional design, while some of the aesthetic aspects of the field I struggled with. I had grown up watching my mother design buildings and spaces, so I understood the structural and functional requirements, but I needed to learn how to expand the artistic side of design. It was ok, I was going to work with my mother in commercial design, and I was not going to be a decorator. I did an accelerated program and graduated in 3 years Magna Cum Laude with a BFA. It felt so right. I was excited!

Two months before graduation, life threw me a curveball. My mother was diagnosed with a serious illness, but we were reassured she could beat her cancer. But that was not the case. Two months after I graduated, my mother passed away. I was once again lost, no clue what I was going to do.

It was the Church community that got me through it. My mother had a few projects with members from the Greek community, and they asked me to finish the jobs she was working on. Their support and the need to finish, nearly broke me.... But it also kept me going. It led to an opportunity to get a job doing both commercial and residential design at an architectural firm. I was keeping the plan, but I just need to redesign it. I eventually opened my own Interior Design business. I stayed in the field for 10 years.

During this time, I learned a lot about myself. My confidence grew as an adult. I became strongly independent, both good and bad. And I realized my strength and fortitude.

Then came life's next curve ball. My dad got sick. He asked me to join the family painting company. It was never planned for me. The industrial painting industry was and sort of still is, primarily a male driven industry and my father felt that his little girl wasn't supposed to be in that environment. Typical Greek father. It turned out to be a pivotal moment in my life and one of the best curve balls I never saw coming.

For past 15 years my brother and I have been running the family business. Neither of us could do this without each other. I love how close my brother and I have become because of this.

I love what I do. I wear jeans, tee shirts, steel tip boots and pink hard hat every day to work. Not what I pictured my life, but I can't believe how lucky I am. This role brings it all together. Every day, I use math, geometry is my jam, every econ and finance class helps me run our business, my design degree allows me to read and understand structural

engineering plans. I could not do what I do today without all the steps I have taken. And as for working in a male driven industry, I get great joy when that moment hits, when I gain someone's respect. It doesn't matter about your gender, that moment is powerful. It's those moments that will stay with you and that you will remember. The feeling it gave you. The strength you gained. The pride that you feel today. You accomplished something great.

I am aware that, as I speak, that I have described my life in a way that it looks relatively easy and straightforward. In reality, these steps, these transitions, curve balls were difficult and at times very painful. During the loss of mom, I clearly questioned my faith, everyone said to me "God never gives you more than you can handle" that phrase, to this day, makes me angry and also brings me comfort. I have been angry at God, and I have also embraced his guidance and love. That phrase has shaped who I am. Think about the words, The Hurt, The Pain, The Joy and The Love, you can handle it all. No matter what life throws at you, God will give you the strength and the tools you need.

So, these are my life lessons to you as you move on to your next chapter:

- I know we are Greeks, BUT don't always be the loudest person in the room
- Embrace the knowledge you gain and the friendships you will form
- Stay open and adaptable
- Say yes to the unexpected – This has shaped my life.
- Stay curious
- Try it a different way
- Learn by doing – Don't be afraid if it doesn't work, try something new, a new way of doing life.
- Ask questions and listen to the responses – Let me say that again. Ask questions and listen to the response.
- Don't be afraid of change – it may be your path. It sure was mine. Nothing is linear.
- Progress comes from showing up and doing the work
- Lead with kindness and a giving heart

Listen to your gut, that little voice inside your head, that feeling that something new may be around the corner. So, if you are going off to college, just graduated and ready to become an adult, going to a trade school or have chosen that you are ready for the real world and school isn't for you....

What I wish for you is to craft a life well lived. God never promised anyone a perfect life or clear path. Remember this community is very special ...allow it to support you and celebrate.

Congratulations class of 2026!

PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY NEWS

SAVE THE DATE

Table at the Festival of Ministries – Sunday September 13, 2026

Welcome Back Potluck – Friday September 25, 2026

Trip to Woodbury Outlets – Saturday October 3, 2026

October General Assembly Meeting – Sunday October 11, 2026

St. Luke Name Day Vespers – Saturday October 17, 2026

St. Luke Name Day Lunch – Sunday October 18, 2026

Cooking Class – Friday October 23, 2026

Bag Bingo – Friday November 6, 2026

Boutiques & Greek Treats – Saturday December 5 – Sunday December 6, 2026

Summer Coffee Hour Volunteers- Beginning June 28th and ending September 6th, the Coffee Hour will be held in the Education Building Social Hall. As it has become nice tradition, feel free to bring cakes or pastries to share with fellow parishioners. If you can volunteer one or more Sundays, please contact Dee Karras at deekarras@verizon.net

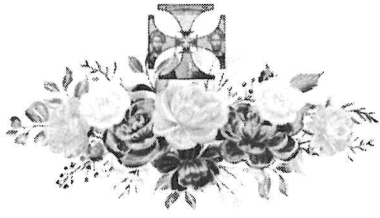
Bid n Buy Thank you! On behalf of St Luke Ladies Philoptochos, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who attended this year's 80's Ladies Bid' n Buy. Your presence and generosity made the evening truly unforgettable, and we are incredibly grateful for your support! A sincere "Thank you" to all the volunteers who worked tirelessly to make this year's Bid' n Buy a HUGE success! Our 360+ guests and 75 volunteers traveled back in time to the 1980s. They enjoyed an Electric Slide Mojito or a Pretty in Pink Bay Breeze and a retro glam atmosphere! There were 310 beautiful prizes up for grabs for our guests to win. It was a fun-filled, festive evening for all. We had many sponsors and donors who helped defray our costs, and we thank them for their continued support! The proceeds of the Bid 'n Buy support the mission of the Ladies Philoptochos Society of St. Luke to promote charitable, benevolent, and philanthropic outreach, to preserve the sanctity of life and family, and to perpetuate and to promote our Orthodox faith and traditions.



Save the Date for next year...May 13, 2027!

Please scan the QR Code to enjoy our 80's Ladies Bid 'n Buy photo album.

National Sisterhood of Presvyteres- On Sunday, June 14, 2026, we celebrated the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres. Each year, our Archdiocese sets aside the closest Sunday to the feast of the Holy Sisters Mary and Martha—the patron saints of the Sisterhood of Presvyteres. This day is dedicated to honoring the wives of our beloved priests, women who, like the Holy Sisters, embody both devotion and service. Like Martha, they labor quietly and faithfully for the good of our community. Like Mary, they guide us through their example of



prayer, wisdom, and a heart centered on Christ. On this day, we joyfully honored two of our own: *Presvytera Michele and Presvytera Betty*. Both embody faith, devotion, and a quiet strength that blesses our parish in countless ways. Thank you for the many ways you uplift our parish and support our ministries

with grace, humility, and love. May God grant you both with strength, peace, and many blessed years.

Carnation Karros, St. Luke Philoptochos President, on behalf of all members

Reception Sponsorship- CELEBRATE A LOVED ONE BY SPONSORING ONE OF OUR UPCOMING RECEPTION. Sponsorships may be made in honor of someone special or in memory of a loved one, offering a meaningful way to support our parish while recognizing those that mean so much to us. Your sponsorship helps us host a warm and welcoming event for our community, while your generosity will be acknowledged with gratitude. Please scan the QR code to become a Reception Sponsor.



Father's Day Reception Sponsorship - Thank you! We extend our sincere thanks to Katie Grinias, our Father's Day Reception Sponsor, for her generous contribution made in honor of her husband, Jim Grinias, and Jim's father, Pete Grinias. This thoughtful dedication came at a special moment for their family, as Jim was recently awarded the HTC Innovation Award, an international recognition for scientific excellence. With Pete visiting for Father's Day, this sponsorship offered a meaningful way to celebrate both father and son and also helped us host a warm and welcoming reception for our St. Luke community. Thank you, Katie!

Bag Bingo- Save the Date! The Ladies Philoptochos Society is excited to introduce a brand new fundraising event - Bag Bingo on November 6, 2026 in the Community Center! Join us for a fabulous night of bingo, beautiful designer bags, luxury raffles, and wonderful company - all benefiting our Philoptochos charities! Tickets: \$35 per person. More details coming soon. Interested in donating a prize? Contact Christina Mahjouri, at christina@cemeli.com, or Patty Karalis. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our mission!

12th Annual Boutiques & Greek Treats 2026- "Save the Dates"! 2026 Boutiques & Greek Treats. Saturday, December 5th & Sunday, December 6th. Interested *vendors*, as well as *volunteers* needed to help with publicity and solicit some vendors, may contact boutiquesgt@gmail.com or the church office 610-353-1592.

Hosts for Hospitals-*Hello to my fellow Philoptochos sisters, I'd like to take a minute to share some information about a great organization called Hosts for Hospitals, one of our newest charities. This non-profit has been arranging housing for families staying in the Philadelphia area seeking medical treatment for the past 25 years. Volunteers with Hosts for Hospitals can provide a spare bedroom to someone whose family member is undergoing surgery or treatment at one of our many*

Philadelphia area hospitals. It is a great way to help someone in need who is going through a difficult time. As we all know, hotel stays can be expensive (not to mention scarce in 2026!). Please contact Mike Aichenbaum (mike@hostsforhospitals.org) if you are willing to apply to be a host family. Warm regards, Pamela Milcos-Smith

Philoptochos Charity Committee- The Charity Committee is pleased to share several meaningful outreach efforts and donations made throughout May and June in support of children, families, veterans, and community organizations throughout Chester County and the greater Philadelphia region.

-On May 18, 2026, the committee donated \$2,000 to the *Arc of Chester County* in support of its Annual Bubble Walk and Fun Day. This event helps raise awareness and provides valuable programs and services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

-On May 22, 2026, the committee provided support to the *Friends Association for Care and Protection of Children* through the purchase of playground equipment and supplies totaling \$1,027.52. These items will help create engaging and enriching outdoor play experiences for the children served by the organization. In addition, the committee purchased 18 extension cords for program use at a cost of \$151.04, helping meet practical needs within the facility.

-Also on May 22, 2026, the committee made a budgeted donation of \$1,000 to *Sharing Excess Philadelphia*. Sharing Excess works to combat food insecurity by rescuing surplus food and redistributing it to individuals and families in need. We are grateful for the opportunity to support an organization making a meaningful impact in our region.

-On June 1, 2026, the committee donated \$200 to the *Coatesville Veterans Affairs Medical Center* for canteen books to be used as prizes during Veterans Bingo. These events provide opportunities for recreation, socialization, and community building among local veterans.

-In June, the committee twice provided \$1,500 (a total donation of \$3,000) in gift cards to *Home of the Sparrow* to assist families experiencing housing insecurity and financial hardship. The gift cards helped provide flexibility for families to purchase groceries, household necessities, and other essential items during the summer months.

-On June 9, 2026, the committee purchased a ball pit and balls for students served through *St. Agnes Outreach Services* at a cost of \$148.38. This donation will provide a fun and engaging resource for children while supporting the educational and enrichment programs.

-On June 11, 2026, the committee reimbursed the *CHOP Homeless Health Initiative Art Program* \$600 for the purchase of Walmart and Uber gift cards. These resources help support youth and families participating in the program by providing access to necessities and transportation.

-On June 15, 2026, the committee provided \$748.80 to *Grands Stepping Up* to assist a grandparent caregiver with necessary vehicle maintenance. Reliable transportation is critical for caregivers who are responsible for school transportation, medical appointments, employment, and other daily family needs.

-Also on June 15, 2026, the committee made a donation of \$1,000 to the *Chester County Food Bank* to support a program identified as having an immediate need. This contribution will help further the Food Bank's mission of providing nutritious food and resources to individuals and families facing food insecurity throughout our community.

-The committee also continued its support of veterans at the *Coatesville Veterans Affairs Medical Center* through the purchase of \$315.18 in Bingo prizes and \$127.30 in refreshments for Veterans Bingo activities. These events provide veterans with opportunities for fellowship, recreation, and community connection.

Sponsorship of Floral Décor- Icon and Floral Sponsorship opportunities are available throughout the year for ecclesiastic feast days. S

ponsorship can be made in honor or in memory of a loved one or for the well-being of your family.

Upcoming sponsorship opportunities include:

Monday July 27th – St Panteleimon the Great Martyr & Healer

Thursday August 6th – Transfiguration of Jesus Christ

Saturday August 15th – Dormition/Koimisis of the Theotokos

If you would like to sponsor an icon, you may pay: online through the Philoptochos website; scan the QR code below with your phone; or mail your payment to the church and include the words 'icon sponsorship' on your envelope. If you are paying by check, please make the check out to "Ladies Philoptochos of St. Luke". Contact Niki Tsetsekos at 610-500-3056 or ntsetsekos@gmail.com if you have any questions.



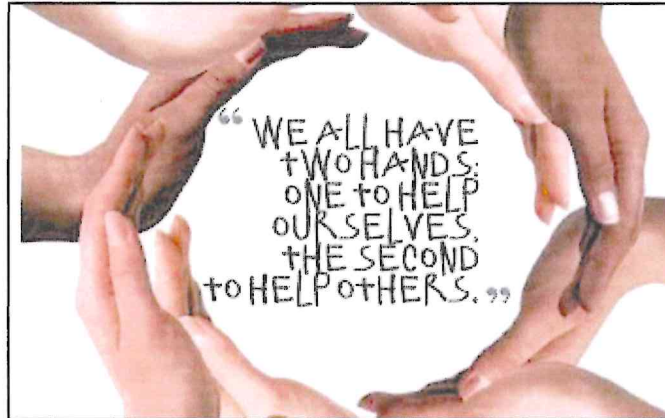
Philoptochos Cookbook and Apron- For experienced cooks looking to perfect their craft; the cooks-in-training who need inspiration; the perfect housewarming or "thank you" gift for teachers, co-workers, employees or friends; the ideal gift for newlyweds and new graduates, or those simply looking to expand their culinary repertoire, *we have just the thing!* Καλή Όρεξη, a Greek Cookbook created by the Ladies Philoptochos of St. Luke, and apron. The cost is \$25 for the book and \$15 for the apron (blue only, and with pockets!), plus \$5 for shipping, if applicable. A beautiful gift package, ready for giving, for \$40.00! For more information, or to order, please contact Phyllis Roebas at proebas@gmail.com, or Kathy Fifis at kfifis@aol.com.

Philoptochos Members - OUR DIRECTORY IS ONLINE! Please register with our website: www.stlukephiloptochos.org for access to the Members Only Online Directory. Get our APP! For directory access, Philoptochos news & events on the go, use our Membership Toolkit app right from your smartphone. *Paper directories are available by request.*



GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY ST LUKE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

- *Empowering community through faith and philanthropy*
- *Improving the lives of Orthodox Christians in the United States who are affected by societal, human service or financial challenges*



- *Has a loss of employment put you behind on your rent or mortgage?*
 - *Are you overwhelmed with out-of-pocket medical costs?*
 - *Did you just receive a utility shut-off notice?*
 - *Does your child have a life-threatening illness, and do you need help negotiating the healthcare system?*
 - *Are you unable to pay for the funeral and burial arrangements of a loved one?*
 - *Are you shocked by how your partner treats you when he gets angry?*

*If you answered yes to any of these questions
or you know someone in our community facing these challenges,*

PHILOPTOCHOS IS HERE TO HELP
Confidentially, compassionately and with cultural sensitivity

CONTACT:

St Luke Ladies Philoptochos
215.917.5014 and EMAIL info@stlukephiloptochos.org

St Luke Greek Orthodox Church | 35 North Malin Road | Broomall, PA 19008

"Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."

- 1 John 3:18

SAVE THE DATE

BAG BINGO

— ST. LUKE PHILOPTOCHOS —



November 6, 2026

— 7:00 PM —

St. Luke Community Center

35 N. Malin Rd

Broomall, PA 19008

*Join us for a night out with bingo,
beautiful bags, and even better company!*

Please contact Christina Mahjouri or Carnation Karros to offer
a prize donation for the Bag Bingo. Thank you!

info@stlukephiloptochos.org



Join Our New Online Church Directory

We are excited to introduce our long-awaited **Online Directory through Realm** - a wonderful way for our parish family to stay connected and grow closer together. By choosing to participate, you'll be helping us put **names to faces** and strengthen the sense of community within our church. You will also have the option to **upload a photo of yourself or your family**, making it even easier for everyone to get to know one another.

How the Directory Works

The directory is permission-based, meaning:

- Only those who choose to share their information will appear
- You control exactly what details are visible (phone, email, address, etc.)
- Your privacy is always respected

As more parishioners opt in, the directory will continue to grow into a valuable resource for our Church community.

How to Participate

Joining the directory is simple:

- Log in to your Realm account (via the website or Realm Connect app) www.onrealm.org/stluke
- Click on your name or profile icon and select **"My Profile"**
- Choose **"Edit Profile"** and review your information
- Adjust your **privacy settings** to share the details you'd like included
- Upload a photo if you wish
- Click **Save** (if you have another family member attached to your profile, you will want to follow the same steps for that individual)

How to Access the Directory

- Log into your Realm account via the website or Realm Connect app
- From the main menu, select **"Directory"**
- Browse and search for fellow parishioners who have chosen to be listed

We're Here to Help

If you're unsure how to log in or update your profile, simply contact the Stewardship Committee at stlukegiving@gmail.com - we're happy to assist you! Let's come together to build a stronger, more connected parish community!



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— FESTIVAL HOURS —



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4 PM – 10 PM



SATURDAY

11 AM – 10 PM



SUNDAY

12 PM – 8 PM



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Visit

www.thegreekaffair.com
for event details!



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For your convenience, our monthly bulletin,

The Epistle is now online and can be accessed by visiting the church website

www.st-luke.org

Just click on "Monthly Epistle". If you would like to receive the Epistle in this digital format only and not by mail, please email our Office Manager:

stlukeoffice@gmail.com or call (610) 353-1592

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