



GREEK ORTHODOX
METROPOLIS OF BOSTON

ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

7 Harris St., Newburyport, MA · Tel. (978) 465-5757
agocport@gmail.com



January 25, 2021

St. Gregory Nazianzus Γρηγόριος ὁ Ναζιανζηνός
(St. Gregory the Theologian), Archbishop of Constantinople

Beloved fellow parishioners,

Glory to God! We pray this finds you and your loved ones safe and well.

We write once again at the turning of the new year and during these times of great trial to remind us of the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ: “Lo, I am with you always.” (Matthew 28:20). There is no time where God is not walking beside us, holding our hands when we falter or are afraid, and strengthening us with His infinite love. God’s love for His Holy Church will always sustain Her.

Our beloved Annunciation Church, which has risen like a phoenix above fire and other grave challenges in the past, once again bears witness to the power of our Orthodox Christian faith. Our beautiful liturgies, circumscribed though they may be in the pandemic by our strenuous attention to the safety of all, continue to offer praises to God. Our open doors allow our ancient and timeless hymns to rise to heaven and to be heard by all who live or pass by on Park Street and beyond. Throughout these cold, dark months of winter and the surging virus, AGOC bears witness to the redemptive power of God’s love for humanity, offering “hope to the hopeless.”

I am delighted to report that our final Stewardship report for year 2020 shows a robust total of \$78,000.00 paid against a pledged amount of \$81,455.00. This represents an increase of \$15,553.00 more paid, against \$19,790 more pledged, than in 2019. We had the exact same number of stewards as last year—94—although some this year were new members or returning to give after a period of time away from stewardship.

Thank you for rising so magnificently to answer the needs of the Church.



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All of this was accomplished against all odds, and at a time when the Church needed it most. Whether you are a continuing or a new steward, we are deeply grateful for your faithfulness and sacrificial gifts to the work of Annunciation. We have needed every penny and put it into good use for God's work. Stewardship co-chairs Joanna Tsiantas, Arthur Housianitis, and I thank you with all our hearts. You have responded to our parish with faithfulness and wonderful generosity.

As the economic impacts of the pandemic continue to worsen, we write to ask that you renew your pledge for 2021. Although some of our operating costs have been reduced, most of our Church expenses are fixed and cannot be mitigated; monthly bills need to be paid and annual Archdiocesan and Diocesan financial obligations met. We welcome pledges of any amount. Even a small amount, especially if it is given monthly, would make a big difference to the survival of our parish. We believe that we can not only continue to survive, but flourish. We stand on the promises of God, and on our long history of strength and rebirth.

Against all odds, we have re-opened St. Basil's ministry to those in need on a limited and safe basis, as well as started a wonderful new music ministry involving three seminarians from the Holy Cross School of Theology, trained in Byzantine and later Orthodox chant, who travel up from Brookline to join our dedicated and gifted choir members every Sunday to chant Orthros and the Divine Liturgy. Every other Friday night, the combined choir offers the heart-lifting Paraklesis service to the Theotokos or St. Nicholas (listed in our Calendar of Services on the website and live-streamed). As of this Sunday January 24, 2021, we have 18 pledged stewards in 2021 who have pledged \$38,331.00 and paid \$6003.03 to date. More pledges are coming in each week. It is essential to the health of our parish that we sustain this inspirational momentum.

Please make or renew your annual pledge by filling out a pledge form and mail it to the church office: Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, Attn: Stewardship, 7 Harris Street, Newburyport, MA 01950. You can also fill in the form available on our website and email it to one of the stewardship co-chairs. If you have already made your pledge, you have our deep gratitude.

There are a number of ways to make and fulfill your pledge.

- 1) If you usually bring in your monthly pledge by check for the stewardship box, and would prefer to mail it, you can print out the new 2021 form and mail it to: Attn: Stewardship, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 7 Harris Street, Newburyport, MA 01950.
- 2) If it would be easier, you can set up monthly payments by bank check directly from your bank account (in the Institution for Savings in Newburyport, for example, this function is called "Bill Pay" on the website; Customer Support at your bank can help you do this if you have questions). Many people find this to



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- be a convenient way automatically to pay their pledges each month, just as one would pay any other important obligation. You can change this amount or frequency through your bank at any time.
- 3) As many of you know, we also have provided a secure link for e-giving, now available on our parish website at <http://annunciation.ma.goarch.org/>. This is administered through VANCOS, a trusted national financial services company that works in partnership with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America to facilitate parish finances across the country. Please click the red button labeled “Click to Donate Online.” For a one-time annual donation, choose “Stewardship: Pledge (2021).” For recurring donations, the option at the bottom of the page, you can choose the frequency that makes the most sense for your family finances. You can set up an account if you don’t already have one.
 - 4) You can download and install GivePlus+, a secure app especially designed for church donations, onto your phone. This is available through the App Store. A number of parishioners have done this and appreciate its convenience. You will need to enter our Zip Code: 01950 and select our church to receive your stewardship or one-time donation, then set up your own account with password.

We want to acknowledge that many of us are facing financial challenges or uncertainty during this terrible times. We can work with you to accept what you feel your family can manage. *We also welcome increased giving from those who want to help.* If you have not already pledged for 2021, please do so, at whatever level you feel you can. One-time donations are also welcome and deeply appreciated.

Please be sure to return to us a stewardship form, which also lets us know how you would like to participate in the life of our parish.

Many thanks and know that Father Costin and Presbytera Irina, the Parish Council, the Stewardship Group, and all the committees and groups that make up our vibrant Annunciation Church family are praying for each and every one of you.

With love in Christ,

Kimberley (Christina) Patton

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