



# The Covenant

## A Christmas Message From Father George

*“Emmanuel: God With Us”*



My Beloved spiritual children,

“Be astonished, O ye heavens, be ye horribly afraid, and let the foundations of the earth be shaken. For lo, He who bears the whole world in the hollow of His

hand, is wrapped in swaddling clothes and received as guest in a narrow manger. Him do ye children bless, ye priests praise, and ye people exalt above all forever.”

So we hear in the hymns of the Orthodox Church as we stand only a few (continued - pg. 4)

### Inside This Issue

This is the last Covenant of 2010. It is a pleasure bringing it to you, and I look forward to reporting the news of St Anna Greek Orthodox Church in 2011. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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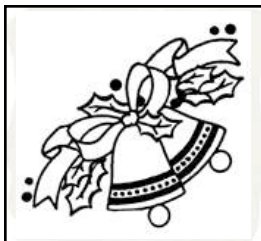
See us on the internet - [www.stannagoc.org](http://www.stannagoc.org).

*-Bill Panageas*

### **SAINT ANNA PREPARES FOR CHRISTMAS EVENTS**

“Peace and goodwill toward mankind.” The Christmas season is here again, and St Anna Greek Orthodox Church has the spirit. The community has been a bustle with bake sales, fellowship events, and Holiday activity.

The Philoptochos has



spearheaded food and clothes drives, while the GOYA participated in the Bridges Outreach Program, making and delivering sandwiches to homeless men and women in Newark, NJ.

As for fellowship within the community, parishioners and friends enjoyed a lovely Wine & Dine at (continued - pg. 7)



### Parish Administration / 2010 Saint Anna Ministries Directory

Currently worshipping at Allerton United Methodist Church, 104 Allerton Rd, Annandale, NJ 08801  
PO Box 2505, Flemington, NJ 08822 • (908) 782-9741 • [www.go-church.org](http://www.go-church.org) • Vol 1, Issue 1

- Our Vision: To establish a Greek Orthodox Church and set the foundations for spiritual growth, cultural continuity, and educational values.
- Our Mission: To fulfill the needs of Greek Orthodox Christians in Hunterdon County and the surrounding area who share our spiritual and cultural values by providing a place of prayer, fellowship, and renewal.

A Parish of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople • Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America • Metropolis of New Jersey

**Priest:** Very Reverend Archimandrite George Nikas (Email: [gnikas@mail.com](mailto:gnikas@mail.com)) ..... Office: (908) 782-9741  
Metropolis: 215 East Grove St., Westfield, NJ 07090 ..... Cell: (732) 232-1036

#### CHURCH OFFICE AND MEDIA RELATIONS

**Secretary:** Lilyan Shepardson Office Hours - M-W-Th - 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm ..... Office: (908) 782-9741

**Media Contact:** Eva Kubu ..... Cell: (908) 202-0662

#### PARISH COUNCIL 2010

**President:** John Kaldes ..... (908) 806-7422

**First and Second Vice Presidents:** Jorge Ferreira, Bill Panageas

**Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary:** Peter Zannikos, John Coutsouridis

**Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer:** Stamatis Manoussakis, John Vaporakis

Joanne Diver, John Douvris, Gus Kamnitsis, Peter Markos, Christi Staikos, Lou Vlahakes

#### PARISH ORGANIZATIONS AND MINISTRIES

**Choir:** Diana Grina, Coordinator

**Psaltists:** Seraphim & Ann Danckaert and George Parsenios

**Philoptochos:** Anastasia Vlahakes, President

#### **Youth and Adult Ministries**

**Youth Education Director:** Joanne Diver

**Religious Education:** Angela Ferreira, Coordinator

**GOYA (Grades 7-12):** Maria Tsatsos, Maria Georgelis, George Staikos, Coordinators

**HOPE (Pre-school) and JOY (Grades 1-6):** Joanna Dodd, Margaret Panageas, Coordinators

**Greek Language Education:** Bia Stavrakas, Director

**Senior Greek Dance Troupe:** Olga Mantsis, Lead Instructor

**Junior Greek Dance Troupe:** Maria-Alaina Jenkins, Lead Instructor

#### ARCHDIOCESE AND METROPOLIS

**His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America** ..... (212) 570-3500

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, 8-10 East 79th St. New York, NY 1002 ..... Web Site: [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org)

**His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey** ..... (908) 301-5100

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey, 215 East Grove St. Westfield, NJ 07090 ..... Web Site: [www.nj.goarch.org](http://www.nj.goarch.org)



## PARISH COUNCIL - A MESSAGE FROM JOHN KALDES, PRESIDENT

Dear Parishioners and Friends:

Shortly we will be celebrating the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

It is the time when everyone celebrates the accomplishments of the passing year and begins making plans for the coming year. We all hope that the New Year is more prosperous than the previous.

I feel that that our family, the Saint Anna Greek Orthodox community here in Hunterdon County, has a lot to celebrate and be thankful for.

We had the most successful year in our history. Here are some of the highlights:

Early in 2010, we received our name - St Anna Greek Orthodox Church - and a permanent charter. Both were long awaited dreams, and His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey, our spiritual leader, finally made both realities.

In mid May, the community celebrated the purchase of the 12-acre Voorhees Corner Road property, the new name, and the permanent charter with a land-blessing ceremony on the property site. Over 200 people witnessed the events, including His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos and our anonymous great benefactor, who made our dream a reality. With his strong support, we have purchased the land outright, without mortgage. Thank you again "Mr. Anonymous."

In September we reached over 100 steward families for first time in our history, and by the end of November, we broke through to over 103 steward families. The additional stewards came with more children, which pushed our Religious Education rosters to over 100. The average Sunday attendance is about 60 children. Space is becoming tight, but this is the best problem we can wish for.

The Greek School program is doing very well. We have the largest class of preschool children ever, and the upper classes are almost as high as ever before. The GOYA, JOY, PTO, Greek Dancing, Volleyball and Basketball groups are all doing very well. We are proud to have them represent Saint Anna at the various events throughout the state.

Philoptochos again standing at the side of the Parish Council is providing the needed help with events, and along with the other organizations, the ladies continue with their philanthropic mission.

In November, we finalized a \$1.5 million construction draw-loan to build our facilities. This gives us the opportunity to move as planned. I would like to thank Jorge Ferreira, Bill Panageas, Gus Kamnitsis, and Louis Vlahakes who came forward to cosign the loan with me. In addition, I would like to give special thanks to Jim Demetriou, who worked many hours pouring over countless legal papers and served as council for the church at the signing.

I would like to share with you some additional ongoing activities. As Parish Council President, I am focusing on a finalized and signed contract with the Architectural/Engineering company before the end of the year. This is critical because we want to start design work in early January 2011.

The second item on my critical to-do list is to obtain Request-for-Proposal bids for Construction Management services to oversee day-to-day activities for our facilities. Our goal is for the selected Construction Manager onboard by early February and start construction in March 2011. We would like the facilities ready as soon as possible. I believe that if we start as planned, the facilities should be ready for our first service on Easter 2012.

The third area in which I am concentrating my efforts is to enhance our Ways and Means and Fundraising efforts to maximize proceeds for construction needs and future rainy-day security mortgage payments. As discussed at the September Special General Assembly and the November General Assembly, we are working on establishing a bank account dedicated to the Mortgage, in which every steward family can volunteer to contribute \$20 per month. The money deposited into this account is dedicated to assist with mortgage payments should we experience difficult times. Contributions by steward families can be monthly or at any desired interval.

We are so close to achieving our dream, and we need to move ahead and complete what we have started. You have all made a difference in this community, and I know you will continue to support our efforts. After all, we "Are Building Our Future Together."

Parish Council members are working very hard to get us there, and I would like to thank them for their efforts and hard work. But we need to get more people outside the Parish Council involved in the various activities. Father George and I will be reaching out to volunteer and assist with the Ways and Means/Fund raisin, Stewardship, and Capital Campaign committees.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for helping our church to achieve so much this year. I would like wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I believe that "our best years are ahead of us."

John Kaldes  
President, PC



## FATHER GEORGE'S MESSAGE - CONTINUED

days away from Christmas. A short time away from the threshold of an event that changed the way we track the years, changed the way people think, and changed the very meaning of our existence. Such is the cosmic nature of this event, which we seek to celebrate, in the waning weeks of the last month of the year. Because of the Social context within which we live, we tend to think of Christmas—that is the **Nativity of Christ**—in simple, sentimental ways. There are parties to go to, gifts to buy, and decorations to put up. The hymns of this great feast, however, give us pause as they call us all to witness to nothing less than the rebirth of humanity.

For Christ comes to us as the “New Adam” in order to undo the sin of the “Old Adam.” In his pride and selfishness, Old Adam condemned himself and his generations to the bondage of death by failing to obey the simplest of God’s commandments. Christ came into the world to undo the sin of Adam and show mankind how to walk in the way of God’s commandments. He came as the great example for us all. For if Old Adam, the creature, could not obey, then New Adam, Jesus Christ, who is The Creator, would come to show us how to obey. And as St. Paul tells us, “He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:8)

How can we explain The Creator taking the form of His creation in order to save it? Indeed, the Theotokos, the Mother of God, stood in awe of this great mystery, for as the hymnographers of the Church tell us, “The Virgin was amazed, as she beheld a conception past telling and a birth past utterance. Rejoicing at once and weeping, she raised her voice and said: ‘How shall I feed with milk, Thee, who givest nourishment to all the world, or shall I sing Thy praise as my Son and my God? What manner of name shall I find to call Thee, O Lord whom none can name?’”

Indeed, because of God’s infinite love for humankind, he desired to save it from peril and to “be with us”, as we read in the Gospel of Matthew, “This was **done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel,”** which means, “God with Us.” (Isaiah 7:14) For God truly is with us, “For where

**two or three are gathered in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”** (Matthew 18:20) We know that God is with us in trouble- to see us through; in sorrow- to brush away the tears; when we fall- to raise us up; in weakness- to make us strong; and in death- to make us confident.

God, in his incomprehensible and infinite love, has made His presence known to us throughout our entire lives, in times of joy, such as at the birth of our first child, and at times of sorrow, such as at the passing of a loved one. God does not discriminate as we do, He is always with us!! We have His promise of His continued presence: “**And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”**

May the Incarnate Logos, through the intercessions of St. Anna, carry our hearts to Heaven as we celebrate His glorious Nativity with our loved ones. May the Christ-child bless each and every one of you and may you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2011.

With Love in the New Born King and God,  
† Archimandrite George Nikas

### Program Of Special Services and Liturgies

- Dec 24 - 9:30 am - The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Royal Hour/Vesperal Liturgy of St Basil
- Dec 24 - 9:00 pm - Orthros/Christmas Divine Liturgy
- Dec 25 - No Divine Services
- Dec 26 - 8:00 am - Orthros; 9:00 am - Divine Liturgy
- Jan 1 - 9:30 am - The Naming of Our Lord/ St Basil the Great Orthros/Divine Liturgy
- Jan 2 - 8:00 am - Orthros; 9:00 am - Divine Liturgy
- Jan 6 - 9:30 am - Holy Theophany/Great Blessing of Waters Orthros/Divine Liturgy/Megas Agiasmos
- Jan 9 - 8:00 am - Orthros; 9:00 am - Divine Liturgy/ Cutting of the Vasilopita/PC Oath of Office

May we all come together as one community and family to welcome the King of Kings into our hearts, to proclaim the New Year 2011 as a time of spiritual renewal and to receive the blessings of the Sanctified Waters.

**STEWARDSHIP 2010**

CONGRATULATIONS! WE DID IT - WE'RE OVER 100 FAMILIES! For the first time in the history of our church, we have reached and surpassed the 100 family steward mark. To the 103 families to date who have returned their pledge cards, we thank you. We enthusiastically await everyone's response to generate 100% participation in our stewardship program. In order to continue with all of the programs the parish offers, we kindly ask that you continue your support to keep these ministries viable. We need everyone's love, help, and support. Prayerfully, we ask you to send in your 2010 commitment and begin contemplating your 2011 contribution. It's never too late.

Anastasiou Panayiotis and Peggy  
Balios John and Efthemia  
Blanos Marlene  
Bongiovanni, Robert and Michele  
Bouras Nicholas  
Bulzacchelli Thomas and Valerie  
Christou Elias and Donna  
Collett Martin and Adriane  
Connell William and Nikki  
Connelly Emily  
Costalas Paul and Josi  
Coutsouridis John and Denise  
Danckaert Seraphim and Anne  
Diver Sean and Joanne  
Dodd Thomas and Joanne  
Doty James and Kathy  
Douvris John and Aimee  
Faches Allison, Brian Hawes  
Fallon Tomas and Anna  
Ferreira Jorge and Angela  
Florin Vlad  
Georgeles George and Maria  
Giannouris John and Tracey

Gianos Thomas and Irene  
Giotis John and Karen  
Glynos Argie  
Grina Peter and Diana  
Hannis Donald and Maria  
Hedinger Robert and Nancy  
Heinke Michael and Simone  
Hindle John C, Jr. and Irene  
Hiras Mike and Stacie  
Isaac Fikry and Irene  
Jenkins Marie-Alaina  
Kaldes John and Zoi  
Kamnitsis Christopher  
Kamnitsis Gus and Nancy  
Karamitros Antonios  
Karantoni Niki  
Kefalos John and Jacqueline  
Kehayes Stephen and Beth  
Kika John and Tina  
Kitsikopoulos Silas  
Koehler Charles and Helen  
Komninos Alexios and Anne  
Kousoulis Theodore and Rosmarie  
Kubu James and Eva  
Lewis Katerini  
Logothetis Nikita & Sophia

Loizou Joannis and Florette  
Loukedis Alexander and Jennifer  
Loumakos George and Maria  
Manoussakis Stamati and Sofia  
Mardakis Arge  
Markos Peter and Elaine  
Martini Matthew and Meropi  
Massos James and Mary  
Mataras Alex and Kaliopi  
McElroy Stephanie  
Millett Matthew and Maria  
Minakas George  
Minikus Chad and Phaedra  
Mulcahy Dr Wayne and Mary  
Nikas Fr. George  
Originos Helen  
Originos Irene  
Paliatsos Mary  
Panageas Bill and Margaret  
Panageas Nicholas  
Pantos Chris and Cheryl  
Papas Peter and Catherine  
Pappas Helen (cont - pg. 7)

**ST. ANNA - ONE SMALL MIRACLE AFTER ANOTHER - MERRY CHRISTMAS****- By Bill Panageas, Editor**

As 2010 nears its end, I can't help to reflect upon the wonderful story that is our beloved Saint Anna community - one small miracle followed by another and then another.

The incredible achievements, dedication, and inspiration of this past year as described in messages by Father George and Parish Council President John Kaldes speak for themselves and are yet more examples.

With the celebration of the grandest miracle of all - the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ - just a few days away, I am moved by everyone in this community, who in essence, are small miracles themselves. Merry Christmas to you all! And thanks.

Having been a parishioner since the church's inception in 2002 and a parish council member since 2003, I have had the opportunity to meet and work with so many kind people. Some have become good friends of mine while others have moved away. I'd like to thank each one individually, but I have only a limited amount of white space.

Instead, I would like to recognize all those who have contributed so much over the years -- from clergymen who have served so passionately and provided much spiritual wisdom, to past Parish Councils and presidents and their guiding hands, to the ladies of the Philoptochos, forever giving and caring, to the Religious and Greek language and dance educators, PTO, and Youth Leaders, keeping the faith and culture alive, to the choir and psaltists, may your voices and praises reach the heavens, to the altar boys, walking the sacred footsteps, to the administrative assistants, organizing the affairs of the church, and finally, to all the parishioners and families, whose children pacing the communion line bring warm smiles to everyone praying from the pews and serve as reminders of the small miracle that is our church.

**Saint Anna Historical Timeline**

- ◆ **Sep 2002** - celebrates first Divine Liturgy at a property on Route 12, Delaware Twp. Name of the new community is Greek Orthodox Parish of Hunterdon County
- ◆ **May 2003** - holds first dinner dance
- ◆ **Sep 2004** - Father George Nikas arrives
- ◆ **Oct 2004** - Ladies Auxiliary becomes Agia Magdalene Ladies Philoptochos Society
- ◆ **May 2005** - holds first Greek OPA! Festival at Razberry's, Flemington, NJ
- ◆ **Jul 2006** - moves to the Allerton United Methodist Church, Route 31 S, Annandale, NJ
- ◆ **Nov 2006** - parishioners welcome His Eminence, Metropolitan Evangelos of NJ to the community
- ◆ **Dec 2007** - Parishioners at General Assembly vote unanimously to pursue 12 acres of land on Voorhees Corner Road, Raritan Twp
- ◆ **Jul 2008** - Parishioners at General Assembly vote to proceed with due diligence to acquire Voorhees Corner Road property.
- ◆ **Jun 2009** - Raritan Twp Planning Board votes unanimously, 7-0, to grant preliminary and final site plan approval for the construction of a 24,528 square foot church on Voorhees Corner Road
- ◆ **Oct 2009** - parish finalizes proceedings and purchases 12 acres of land on Voorhees Corner Road, Raritan Twp
- ◆ **Jan 2010** - His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos of the Metropolis of NJ, under the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, announces official name - Saint Anna Greek Orthodox Church - and grants a full-time charter
- ◆ **Nov 2010** - St Anna Greek Orthodox Church signs and closes on a \$1.5 million mortgage loan for construction for new place of worship on 85 Voorhees Corner Road, Flemington, NJ.

**2010 Stewards - Continued From Page 5**

Parsenios George and Maureen	Shepardson Lilyan	Vaporakis John and Kimberly
Pelios Georgia	Shepardson Robert and Deirdre	Vlahakes Louis and Anastasia
Peppe George and Demetra	Sideris Fay	Vlahakis Daniel
Rentoulis Nicholas	Sideris Stefanos and Eleni	Walz Christina
Poulis Renee	Soteropoulos Dean and Elizabeth	Walz John and Anna
Radzicki Martin and Kate	Staikos George and Christie	Ypsilantis Peter and Antonia
Rentoulis Nicholas	Stavrakas Spyros and Bia	Zanidakis Ted and Charlotte
Rudy George and Sofia	Stieglitz Robert and Katerina	Zannikos Peter and Amy
Rumbas John and Michelle	Tattoli Larry and Maria	
Sakellos Evan and Cathy	Trumpy Fred and Larisa	
Sfondouris John and Maria	Tsatsos Constantine and Maria	
Shepardson Alethea	Tzovolos Olympia	

**Parish In The Christmas Spirit - Continued From Page 1**

the beautiful home of parishioners Fikry and Irene Isaac at the beginning of the Advent Season.

Wine Sommelier George Staikos and hostess Christi Staikos, along with George Rudy and Peter Grina (bar tenders) and the GOYA youth (food servers) organized and presented a fun and tasty event. Thanks again to Fikry and Irene and George and Christi - well done!

**Parish Council Election Results - 2011**

A few weeks ago, parishioners voted in the 2011 Parish Council Elections. Seven of 13 seats were up for grabs, with 10 parishioners vying for the seven positions.

With all votes counted, the 2011 Council consists of John Kaldes, Jorge Ferreira, Bill Panageas, Peter Zannikos, John Coutsouridis, Stamatis Manoussakis, John Vaporakis, Joanne Diver, John Douvris, Louis Vlahakes, Antonia Ypsilantis, Arge Mardakis, and Dean Soteropoulos. Congratulations to the new council and thank you to the 2010 Council for one of the parish's most productive years.

**Christmas Concert and Pageant**

This year, we are in for a special treat, as the St Anna Choir presents its first Christmas Concert, Sing Gloria, at 7:00 pm, this Friday, December 17.

Choir Director has prepared a choral playlist that includes traditional, classical, and ancient Byzantine Carols from across the globe. Both adult and children's choirs will perform. Admission is free but donations are accepted. Proceeds help the parish choir music ministries. Refreshments will be served following the concert.

The annual children's Christmas follows two days later, Sunday, December 19, following the Divine Liturgy. This is one of the parish's most touching events, as the youth of St Anna reenact the birth of the infant saviour Jesus Christ.

Lisa Soteropoulos and Angela Ferreira organize and direct the pageant, which also includes Christmas Carols and narrations. A special thanks to Lisa, Angela, and all the children.

Merry Christmas to all!



# Schedule of Services



St Anna Greek Orthodox Church offers services every Sunday at the Allerton United Methodist Church, Route 31 South and 104 Allerton Road, Annandale, NJ.

The Orthros begins at 8:00 am. The Divine Liturgy begins at 9:00 am, followed by a coffee fellowship hour at 10:30 am. For any questions about services and feast days, please contact Father George Nikas.

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St Anna Greek Orthodox Church

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