

ST. DEMETRIOS

Volume XXXVI, No 1

Saco, Maine

JANUARY 2025

A blessed, blessed **New Year - 2025**

The **12 Days of Christmas end with Theophany** *(Jan. 6)*

Thursday January 2, we complete 25 years with our “new” church in Saco!

*(We begin our **26th year.**)*

*Included in this Newsletter is the 2025 BUDGET **Informational/General Assemblies Announcement.** (Please make it a point to attend.) In the February Newsletter we will include the **actual Proposed Budget** to be voted on.*

The days now are getting longer. Spring is just over two months away!

*Soon you will receive the **2025 Stewardship Packet.** Please, please, please, return the **Card** in the next 2-3 weeks with your January offering. We depend on it!*

Thank you for your incredible support for this past year.
116 years – Our Community in this part of Maine!

ST. DEMETRIOS

Greek Orthodox Church

METROPOLIS OF BOSTON

Archdiocese of America

186 Bradley Street

Saco, ME 04072

(207) 284-5651 Ph (207) 283-4651 Fax

Fr. Basil Arabatzis
Presiding Presbyter

St Elephtherios
Dec 15th, 2024

Operating Budget 2025

Informational Assembly

Our Community's **Informational Assembly to discuss the 2025 Operating BUDGET & the Fire Suppression System**, is Scheduled for **Sunday January 19th**, right after the Div. Liturgy.

General Assembly

On **Sunday February 9th** we will have our **General Assembly to vote** on the above. Right after the Div. Liturgy.

The Agenda:

Opening Prayer

- 1. Election of Chairman of Assembly.**
- 2. Presentation & vote on our 2025 Operating Budget.**
- 3. Fire Suppression System.**

Closing Prayer

Note: In order to vote, one must be a member in good standing (Orthodox with no impediments & financially part of our Stewardship Program).

If inclement weather, the Assembly will be held **the following fair weather Sunday**.

(signature on file)

+Fr Basil Arabatzis
Presbyter

(signature on file)

Adriana Popa
Financial Secretary

Theophany (2025)

(Schedule of services.)

Wed. Jan. 1 – 8:30am Orthros, 9:30am Div Liturgy (Lit of St. Basil), Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord & St. Basil
w/ VASILOPITA (St. Basil's Bread)

Sun. Jan. 5 – **MORNING** 8:30am The service of the Hours of **THEOPHANY.**
9:30am Vespereal Liturgy (Lit of St. Basil), 10:30am Blessing of Waters. *Eve* of the Feast of **THEOPHANY.**

Mon. Jan. 6 – 8:30am Orthros, 9:45am Liturgy (St. Chrysostom), 10:30am Blessing of Waters. Feast of **THEOPHANY.**

Tues. Jan. 7 – (Normal Hours) 8:30am Orthros & by 9:30am Liturgy **Orthodox Christmas & St. John the Baptist** (Lit of St. John Chrysostom).

(Οι Ωρες των Ακολουθιων)

(2025)

Τετ. 1 Ιαν. – 8:30πμ Ορθρος, 9:30πμ Λειτουργια (Μ. Βασιλειου)
Περιτομη του Κυριου & του Αγ Βασιλειου.

ΒΑΣΙΛΟΠΙΤΑ !

Κυρ. 5 Ιαν. – 8:30πμ οι Ωρες Θεοφανιων,
9:30πμ Εσπερ.Θ. Λειτουργια (Μ. Βασιλειου), 10:30πμ Μ. Αγιασμος
Θεοφανιων.

Δευ. 6. Ιαν. – 8:30πμ Ορθρος, 9:45πμ Θ. Λειτουργια (Αγ. Χρυσοστομου) & 10:30πμ Μ. Αγιασμος **Θεοφανιων.**

Τρι. 7. Ιαν. – **ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΑ Χριστουγεννα,** Του Αγ. Προδρομου
8:30πμ Ορθρος & 9:30πμ Θ. Λειτουργια (Αγ. Χρυσοστομου)

Metropolitan Methodios' Christmas Reflection 2024

As we gather to celebrate the nativity of our Lord and Savior, let us reflect on the great mystery and profound significance of this great feast. The birth of Jesus Christ in a humble manger in the town of Bethlehem is not only a historical event, but a divine revelation that touches the very core of our lives as Orthodox Christians. On Christmas Day we are invited to embrace the joy and hope that the birth of our Savior brings to the world.

At the heart of Christmas lies the astonishing reality that the son of God, the Creator of the universe, chose to take on human flesh, to be born in a manger, and to experience the fullness of our humanity. This incredible act of love demonstrates the depths to which Almighty God went to redeem His creation. It is a reminder that God is not distant or aloof, but rather is intimately involved in our lives. He shares in our joys, in our sorrows, in our hopes and struggles. His birth is a sign of his desire to dwell in our midst to transform our lives through His love.

In our world, often filled with darkness and despair, the light of Christ's birth shines brightly, illuminating our path to salvation. The angels that announced His birth to the shepherds, proclaimed "peace on earth and goodwill toward all people". This peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but a deep and abiding peace that is the result of a restored relationship with Almighty God. It is the peace of knowing that we are loved and that our lives have eternal significance. As we celebrate this great feast, let us renew our commitment to live as witnesses of Christ's peace and love in the world in which we live.

Christmas is a time for us to reflect on the virtues of humility, simplicity, and generosity. The Lord chose to be born in a humble manger, not a royal palace. This humble beginning calls us to embrace the virtues of meekness and humility in our lives. It invites us to serve one another selfishlessly just as Christ who came to serve and not be served. In a world that values wealth and status, the manger reminds us that true greatness lies not in the things we possess, but in the love and service we offer to our brothers and sisters in our own neighborhoods and throughout the World.

As we exchange gifts this Christmas, let us remember the greatest gift that has ever been given – the gift of God himself. Let us open our hearts to receive the love of Christ and share that love with those around us. May our hearts be filled with the light of Christ's presence, and may our lives reflect His love, mercy, and compassion in the world in which we live.

Let us remember those who are suffering, who are lonely, or in need. Let us reach out to embrace our brothers and sisters in the spirit of Christmas. Christ was born to heal and to serve. As his followers, we are called to continue His mission of bringing comfort and hope and salvation to the world.

May the joy of Christmas fill your hearts with peace, joy, and every heavenly gift and may the blessing of the Christ child be with you and your loved ones.

Let us Prepare The Way in our Heart.

Theophany: The coming of the Lord to the Jordan to be baptized by John the Forerunner and the Appearance of the Father & the Spirit above the Son & Word of God as he enters the Jordan River waters.

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.”

Mal 3:1

A voice of one calling: “Prepare the way for the LORD in the wilderness; make a straight way for our God in the desert.”

Is 40:3

John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet: “I am a voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’”

Jn 1:23

This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him.’”

Mt 3:3

Theophany 2025

(edited, from [Orthodox Christianity 101](#))

Every January, I find myself swept up in the profound spiritual significance of the Feast of Theophany, a cornerstone of The Faith..... as believers prepare to commemorate a pivotal moment in Christian faith: the baptism of Jesus Christ. But why is this event so crucial, and how does it shape our spiritual journey?

.... let’s dive into the waters of understanding together and uncover the essence of Theophany in Orthodox Christianity.

The Significance of Theophany in Orthodox Christianity

This feast is far more than a mere commemoration; it's a celebration of Jesus Christ's baptism in the Jordan River. This event marks the manifestation of God as the Holy Trinity to the world — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — providing a profound revelation of Divine truth that resonates with believers.

Theophany stands as a pivotal point where heaven meets earth. During the liturgical services, I've witnessed the vivid imagery used to illustrate this junction, especially through the Great Blessing of the Waters. This ritual is not only about purification but also signifies the sanctification of the entire creation. Orthodox theology teaches that when the waters are blessed, they become a means of spiritual renewal, symbolizing the washing away of sins. Indeed, every aspect of Theophany is imbued with deep symbolism which adherents internalize and reflect upon. The icons depicting the feast portray the voice of God the Father proclaiming Jesus as His beloved Son, the Holy Spirit descending as a dove, and the figures of angels in awe. These are not just static images but invitations for us to contemplate the mystery of God becoming manifest in the world.

Orthodox Christians believe that participating in Theophany services invokes a renewal of their own baptismal vows. With Theophany, I'm reminded of the unity between the cosmic and the personal elements of my faith.

*** *** *** *** ***
** ** ** **

Orthodox Quote of the Day

In our sorrows, in our struggles, we should take our soul by the hand like a small child and lead it to Jerusalem, and other times to Paradise. From there, Christ will take it to the Jerusalem on high, where it will rest and not see earthly things, but heavenly things. There Christ will take you by the hand and sometimes speak fatherly words and sometimes words of a Bridegroom!

Gerondissa Makrina (Vassopoulou), *Words of the Heart* p.529

Notes (January 2025)

THE 12 Days of Christmas

This is from Dec. 25 to Jan 5, and the next day is Theophany!

From Christmas to Jan. 4 there is No Fast!

On Sunday Jan. 5 we Fast from meats & dairy.

After Theophany we have the normal Wed & Fri fast.....

.....

Theophany and the *Blessing of homes.*

Blessing of homes & businesses begins from Sun. Jan 5, after the service of Blessing the Waters.

Call the office or put your name on the list (Narthex).

.....

Bible Study

Our **Bible Study**, is on **Tuesdays @ 6:00-7:15pm.**

We continue (restart) on Jan. 14.

(We will stop with the beginning of Great Lent.)

The Epistle of St Paul to the **EPHESSIANS.**

.....

The Faith – Catechism Class

For everyone interested in the FAITH @ 10:00am.

Please connect w/ Fr Basil.

.....

Email/call to Fr Basil!

Please **do NOT email** Fr Basil.

Call the office or text him.

For appointments always connect with the office.

.....

Let it Snow!!

Remember, in case of **INCLEMENT** weather always call first for any & all activities/services!!

January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 NO fast Circumcision of the Lord & St. Basil Services-see Schedule	2	3 NO fast	4
5 THEOPHANY Eve First <u>Great Blessing of Waters</u> Services-see Schedule	6 THEOPHANY <u>Great Blessing of Waters</u> Services-see Schedule	7 <i>Orthodox Christmas</i> St. John the Baptist Services-see Schedule	8	9	10	11
<i>Blessing of homes begin!</i>						
12 Sund. After Theophany <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; transform: rotate(-2deg);">Vasilopita</div>	13	14 6:00pm Bible Study/ Faith	15	16 6:00pm Ch Council????	17 (o oil/wine)	18 8:30am Liturgy St Athanasios Αγ Αθανασίου 10:00am The FAITH, Catechism Class. (Speak w/ Fr B)
19 12 th Sund. of Luke <u>Oper. Budget</u> <u>Information Assembly</u>	20	21 6:00pm Bible Study/ Faith	22	23	24	25
26 15 th Sund. of Luke	27	28 6:00pm Bible Study/ Faith	29	30 8:30am Liturgy Three Hierarchs Τριτων Ιεραρχων	31	

2025 SAMP (SUPPORT A MISSION PRIEST) (thru the OCMC)

SUPPORT A MISSION PRIEST (SAMP)

Every year, we approach our community and ask for your support for the SAMP program. And quite frankly we are never disappointed. We initiated the program whereby you pick a month special to you...birthday, anniversary, in honor of, in memory of or just because.

Cost is \$50 per selected month, January thru December.

It is interesting to note that these Priest Missionaries *live on \$50/month!*

The Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) has done a marvelous job placing priests and their families in very needy, indigenous areas. Many Orthodox Churches are being built (through your generosity) in places we never thought possible.

Many of you have met Fr. Athanasios Akunda and other missionaries. They are the living example of a Missionary Priest sharing and doing God's work.

Also, some folks sponsor certain months every year. But please know that more than one person/family can be added to any of the months.

Please speak with Stephanie. We will list each donor's name (and selected month) in the newsletter.

We only do this the month of January, so please reply soon.

It is done through the OCMC, Orthodox Christian Mission Center.

100% of your donation goes to the SAMP PROGRAM! 100%

January, taken by

February, taken by

March, taken by Petros & Nikki Douzepis & family, *In Loving Memory of William Philipakos*

April, taken by Christopher & Eileen Nugent family

May, taken by, taken by

June, taken by, taken by Paul Macdowell, for *Sts. Peter and Paul*

July, taken by Antonia Spirounias

August, taken by The Kouzounas Sisters, *In Loving Memory of our parents Vasily & Venetia*

September, taken by Antonia Spirounias, *In Loving Memory of my mother Maria Goranites*

October, taken by Antonia Spirounias, *In Loving Memory of Kyriakos (Charlie)*

November, taken by

December, taken by

Notes continued for January 2025

CHURCH COUNCIL ELECTIONS, NAMES SUBMITTED INCLUDE:

The Nominating Committee (Sam Anagnosits, Cindy Carr, Chris Hadiaris, Dr. Phil Kowash, and Maria Zafirson), along with Fr. Basil Arabatzis have accepted the Church Council Candidates.

They are: Thomas Carr, Michael Christakis, Pota Kouzounas Desjardins, Stavro Nashi, Adriana Popa, Antonia Spirounias, Irene Steltzer, Caton Tompkins from the present council; and Fox Christopher Silva, Asha Tompkins and Stephen Zafirson.

.....
CANISTERS. Just a reminder to take one of the Canisters (located at the Candle Stand), and fill it with quarters. Bring the filled canister to the office when ready. Thank you for your offering.

.....
TWO CARVED ICONS AVAILABLE. FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED.

Once again, we are blessed with two donated carved Icons, one of the Panaghia and one of St. Nicholas. Minimum donation is \$400 (each). To benefit St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church. Please see Fr. Basil or Stephanie.

.....
DAILY LIVES CALENDARS have arrived. If you ordered, please see Stephanie.
All checks made payable to St. Demetrios Bookstore, \$22 each book ordered.

.....
ETERNAL VIGIL LIGHT is available for 2025, cost is \$200. It is for the entire year and lit at every service. Please include the family or individual name.

Make your check payable to St. Demetrios, ear-marked Vigil Light. ***Please make sure you give the check and name to Stephanie, so that she can mark your candle properly.***

If you are mailing your request, put "Attn Stephanie" on the envelope.

Please note: If you have already purchased a Vigil Light, a letter will be sent to you as a reminder. Thank you.

.....
HELLENIC SOCIETY OF MAINE has events scheduled for January.

- **Thursday, Jan. 9, 5:00 – 7:00pm, LIVE Social and Vasilopita Cutting, at Batsonriver Brewing in Portland.**
- **Sunday, Jan 12, at 3:00pm, 2nd Biblia Mazi:** book discussion of *A Thousand Ships* by Natalie Haynes.

Notes continued for January 2025

GREEK SCHOOL: PAIDEIA OF MAINE is developing an Online Greek School. Classes will be offered for credit by the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, Greece. The cost of registration and Tuition is \$200.00 for a 12 week course to be offered between 01/27-05/02/2025.

Please call Dimitra Voulgari at (207) 329-0895 for more information.

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MUSICIANS, PLEASE READ:

Greetings,

My name is Sofia Kirtchev and I am a Junior at Falmouth high school and a member of the Portland Greek Church. The Hellenic Society Paideia of Maine would like to gather folks from three communities (Portland, Saco and Lewiston) who would be willing to share their musical talents in an orchestra to primarily play Greek music. I have been playing oboe in the Portland Youth Wind Ensemble and Portland Youth Symphony Orchestra for several years and I will be working with Dr. Annie Antonacos – USM Music Professor in this effort. All musicians are welcome! Please let us know via email or feel free to call us at 207-239-6914 or if any questions, email @ sofia.m.kirtchev@gmail.com or annieantonacos@gmail.com.

“Hello from Somewhere”

Our Iconographers Dimitri and Panayioti Christodoulou send very warm and sincere wishes of Merry Christmas and a much Blessed 2025 New Year.

Sofia and Gregory Ifantides, Evangelea and Ignatios want to be remembered to everyone at St. Demetrios. Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year.

Alina and Nicoletta send “hello and love you” wishes to everyone at St. D. Merry Christmas and Blessings in the New Year.

Monthly Financial Report. 12/12/2024
 (Operating Budget **2024**)

Mortgage Balance: \$96,035

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCIAL UPDATE *as of November 30, 2024*

Total Stewards: 178

Total Stewardship Received: \$157,234

<u>Month</u>	<u>Income (\$)</u>	<u>Expenses (\$)</u>	<u>Operating account (\$)</u>
January	\$22,632	\$21,277	\$1,355
February	\$40,905	\$31,845	\$10,414
March	\$12,548	\$19,854	\$3,110
April	\$25,951	\$26,924	\$2,136
May	\$19,184	\$21,156	\$774
June	\$22,267	\$23,747	-\$705
July	\$14,762	\$22,746	-\$7,984
August	\$13,825	\$23,282	-18,046
September	\$19,729	\$21,292	-\$19,609
October	\$13,525	\$23,189	-\$29,273
November	\$13,188	\$26,862	-\$42,614

We ended November in the **Red -\$42,614!** {Compare to 2023: -34,630}.

Our income is down by \$7,000 (compared to *LAST YEAR*).

Our Expenses are up by \$4,000 (compared to *LAST YEAR*).

Compare: Year to date:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Total Income:	\$212,011	\$205,328
Total Expenses:	\$230,348	\$234,600

Thank You!!

Let our giving reflect our faith!

* * * * *

When contrition (Repentance) seizes the heart through the action of the wordless Word within it, then man's spirit begins to experience, in some small measure, the life of the Word Himself.

Hieromonk Damascene (Christensen), Christ the Eternal Tao p.381

Thank you Sponsors for making our St. Demetrios Newsletter possible!



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Sunday Services:

9:00 AM Orthros

Divine Liturgy by 10:00 AM

Winter hours start September 29.

Fr. Basil Arabatzis, Presbyter

Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

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FAX: (207) 283-4641

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**“Where can I go from Your Spirit, and where can I escape from Your presence?
If I go up into heaven, *You art there;*
if I go down into hades, *You are present there.*
If I take up my wings toward the dawn, and make mine abode in the uttermost
parts of the sea, *even there shall Your hand guide me,*
*and Your right hand shall hold me.”***

(Psalm 138: 7-10)

Saint Demetrios

Greek Orthodox Church

186 Bradley Street

Saco, ME 04072

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