

Hymns and Holy Scripture Readings

Resurrectional Apolytikion in the Third Mode

Let the heavens be glad. Let the earth rejoice exceedingly. For the Lord has shown strength with his arm. He trampled death by death. He became the first-born of the dead. Out of the belly of Hades, He has rescued us, and to the world He has granted the great mercy.

Memorial Hymn

Remember, O Lord, as You are good, Your servants, and forgive every sin they have committed in this life. For no one is sinless except You, Who have power to grant rest to those who have fallen asleep.

Apolytikion of the Church in the Fourth Mode

You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, after You filled the Disciples with joy, by promising to send them the Holy Spirit, and You blessed them and established their faith, that You are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

Ἄνελήθης ἐν δόξῃ, Χριστὲ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, χαροποιήσας τοὺς Μαθητάς, τῇ ἐπαγγελίᾳ τοῦ ἀγίου Πνεύματος· βεβαιωθέντων αὐτῶν διὰ τῆς εὐλογίας, ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ Υἱός τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ λυτρωτὴς τοῦ κόσμου.

Apolytikion of St. Katherine (Protectress of our Chapel)

Let us praise and extol the all-lauded Bride of Christ,* the Protectress of Sinai, divine Saint Katherine,* as the one who gives aid and her assistance to us;* for she brilliantly suppressed the impious orators,* with the sword of the Spirit.* And being crowned as a martyr,* she asks that all receive the great mercy.

Seasonal Kontakion in the First Mode

When You come down to the earth, O God, in Your glory, all things will cower tremulous, and a river of fire will draw before Your Judgment Seat; the books shall be opened up, and public knowledge will things hidden be. Rescue me, then, I pray, from unquenchable fire, and count me worthy to stand at Your right hand, O You, the most righteous Judge.

The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2.

Brethren, food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall. Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.



The Gospel of Matthew 25:31-46

The Lord said, "When the Son of man comes in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and He will place the sheep at His right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then He will say to those at His left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then He will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

OUT OF RESPECT FOR THE ICON PRINTED ON THE BULLETIN, PLEASE RECYCLE RATHER THAN DISCARD IN THE GARBAGE

Ascension of Our Lord Greek Orthodox Church



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WEEKLY PARISH BULLETIN February 15 - 22, 2026

WELCOME TO THE ASCENSION PARISH! Your presence has brought us much joy! We hope your visit is memorable and meaningful in every way. Our doors and hearts are always open to you. Please join us for fellowship following the Divine Liturgy and visit with Fr. Sotirios and with members of the Parish Council. They will answer questions and provide you with information regarding Ascension's ministries and vibrant parish life.

COMMUNION GUIDELINES: To partake of Holy Communion, one must be a Baptized/Chrismated Orthodox Christian and be in good standing with the church. Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and regular participation in Holy Confession are welcome to receive communion. One should also be present at the Liturgy before the Scripture readings. Please follow the directions of the ushers during Holy Communion, and, also please allow the Sunday Church School staff and students to commune first so they can make their way to class and promptly begin their lessons. Thank you.

Spiritual Reflection

The Lord at the Last Judgement, as it appears clearly from this passage of the Gospel, will ask us nothing about the tenets of our faith, or about the way in which we have tried outwardly to please Him. **He will ask us: Have you been human, or inhuman?** When you saw someone who was hungry, did your heart turn to him in compassion and did you give him food? When you saw someone homeless, did you think of a way of providing a roof and a little warmth and safety for him? When we were told that someone, perhaps someone we knew, had disgraced himself and been put into prison, did we overcome the shame of being his or her friend, and go to visit him? When we saw someone to whom we could give the surplus of what we have, the unnecessary coat, the unnecessary object which we possessed – did we turn and do that? That is all the Lord is asking concerning the Last Judgement."

Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh

Weekly Calendar

Sunday 8:15 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	February 15 Orthros Divine Liturgy Sunday Church School Memorials Nicholas Stevens (40 Days) Ted Janakas (40 Days) Dimitrios Kontogiannis (3 months) Louis Sigalos (15 years) Meatfare Sunday Macaronada me Kreas Luncheon (reservation only) Baptism: Penelope, Daughter of Jonathan & Abigail Svigos <i>Sponsor: Dimitrios Svigos</i>	Judgment Sunday/Meatfare Sunday Project HOPE Sunday
Monday 6 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	February 16 Jr. GOYA GOYA	
Tuesday 5 p.m. 7 p.m.	February 17 Greek School Parish Council	
Wednesday 6 a.m.	February 18 Encounter the Word	
Thursday 10:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m. 6:15 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:45 p.m.	February 19 Ascending in Orthodoxy Senior Synaxis Valentine Day Luncheon @ Dover Straits, Mundelein Adult Greek School: Beginners/Advanced Beginners Koinonia Men's Ministry Meeting, Dinner & Presentation Adult Greek School: Intermediate/Advanced	
Friday 10 a.m. 6 p.m. 7 p.m.	February 20 HOPE Group Faith/JOY Cheesefare Pizza Party YAL Gathering, hosted by Fr. Sotiri & Presv. Stefanie	
Saturday 8 a.m. 9 a.m. 5 p.m.	February 21 Second Saturday of Souls Orthros Divine Liturgy Vespers	
Sunday 8:15 a.m. 9:30 a.m. Noon 5 p.m.	February 22 Forgiveness Sunday Orthros Divine Liturgy Sunday Church School Baptism: Elianos, Son of Antonios Stergiou & Sonya Nasario Membrenyo <i>Sponsor: Nikki Stergiou</i> Forgiveness Vespers	

+ **"BEAR DOWN" MEN OF ASCENSION:** You are invited to join the Koinonia Men's Ministry on Thursday, February 19, when invited guest speaker, Patrick McCaskey—Chicago Bears Corporate Secretary and Vice President—shares powerful insights on what sports and faith have in common, on and off the field. Kick-off time: 6:30 p.m. in the Anagnos Fellowship Hall. \$20 Donation. Dinner Served. See flyer for more information & RSVP to Steve Sintetas by Tuesday, 2/17 @ sas1@me.com | 630.774.3512.

+ **PHILOPTOCHOS UPDATES**

- Our First-Ever **Macaronda me Kreas Luncheon** follows Divine Liturgy today, in Anagnos Fellowship Hall! Say Farewell to Meat with this delicious dinner. Reservations are required. Hungry, but didn't reserve? Stop by the check-in table to see if any are still available!
- **Learn the Ancient Tradition of Crafting Koliva** at a hands-on workshop, Friday, February 27 from 5-7 p.m. We'll guide you through the process in Anagnos Fellowship Hall. See the enclosed flyer for details and registration information!
- **Did you see red last Sunday?** To spread awareness during **Phioptochos Go Red Sunday**, many of our Phioptochos Sisters, and even all of our priests, wore red during Divine Liturgy in recognition of women's heart health. By wearing red, we stood together in solidarity, education, and prayer for the health of the women in our families, parish, and community.

Stewardship 2026

Thank you to the stewards who have already set up their pledges for 2026 during our "Rise Up and Build" Campaign. To date, we thank the 202 families that have pledged \$309,612 as well as generously offer their time and talents to this Parish! Stewardship is the lifeblood of our Parish. As of this week, we are at 43% of our budgeted 2026 stewardship target of \$720,000. (*Please be aware that Stewardship doesn't automatically renew annually. We ask that you recommit your annual stewardship of time, talent and treasures by completing the online 2026 Stewardship Pledge form.*) If you have any questions, please contact the office. Let us draw together as a parish family to demonstrate our gratitude and lovingly serve God by supporting Ascension.

Sunday Volunteers

Prophoro Bakers: Prophora offered for Saturday of Souls
Epistle Reader: Caity Anast
Greeter: Elaine Metropoulos
Ushers: UIC: Kathy Demas, Bill Athenson, Dean Argiris, Lou Demas, Alex Giaras, Eleni Hloros

Prayer Requests

PLEASE INCLUDE IN YOUR PERSONAL PRAYERS the servants of God: Eleni, George, Anastasia, Stella, Mitchell, Joanne, Panagiotis, Christina, Dee, Helen, Sophia, Connie, Katerini, James, Theresa, Peter, Anna, Alexander, Anthony, Magdalena, Maggie, Panagiotis, Paraschos, Chris, Don, Justin, Ignacio, Kevin, Theodore, Mary, Madison, Trinity, Evangelos, John, Rick, Robert, Tom, Georgia, Kristi, Rob, Maureen, Antonia, Christina, Constantine, Irene, Iliana, John, Carolyn, Mary, Maria, Patrick, John, Panagiota, Luci, Stephanos, Leonidas, Vasiliki, Nikki, Anastasios, Stacey, Eleni, Helen, George, Gregory, Irene, Artemis, Efthathia, Maria, Vasilios, Christina, Tom, Nick, Thomas, Nikita, Haralambos, Dean

+ **PASTORAL NEEDS, HOSPITAL CALLS, NURSING/REHAB AND HOME-BOUND PARISHIONERS:** If you have a pastoral need or emergency and would like to speak to Fr. Sotiri, or know of someone who would like to schedule a pastoral visit, please contact Father via the office.

+ **SENIOR SYNAxis WILL BE HOLDING ITS ANNUAL VALENTINE DAY LUNCHEON THIS THURSDAY**, February 19th at 12:30 p.m. at Dover Straits in Mundelein. Please RSVP by Tuesday, February 17 to Kay James at (847)533-1225; or yiayia.kayjames@gmail.com.

Announcements

+ **GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH PRAYER +**

- Forgiveness Vespers will take place next Sunday, 2/22 at 5 p.m.
- Kathara Theftera (Clean Monday), 2/23: 9 a.m. Reading of the Hours | 6 p.m. Great Compline Tuesday, 2/24: 5:30 p.m. Great Compline
- 9th Hour and Pre-Sanctified Liturgy will take place on Wednesday, 2/25, beginning at 5 p.m.
 - The First Salutations to the Theotokos is on Friday, 2/27 at 7 p.m.
 - The 3rd Saturday of Souls, 2/28: 8 a.m. Orthros | 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy

+ **THE SECOND SATURDAY OF SOULS** is this Saturday, February 21st. Names of your deceased loved ones and koliva can be brought to church, so that through your presence at the Divine Liturgy, you may offer prayers for the souls of your departed loved ones. You can also submit names online at www.ascensiongoc.com/aboutus/saturday-of-souls. *Names only need to be submitted one time and will be read at all Saturday of Soul services.*

+ **FLOWERS FOR THE THEOTOKOS** The Salutations for the Theotokos begin on Friday, February 27th. For the five consecutive Fridays, we adorn the Icon of the Theotokos with flowers. The dates of the Salutations are 2/27, 3/6; 3/13, 3/20; and 3/27. The cost of the flowers for each Friday is \$185.00. If you wish to donate the flowers to adorn Panagia's icon for any Friday, please call Lenora Vasilopoulos in the Church Office at 847.482.1200. We thank you in advance.

+ **SPECIAL APPEAL FOR FELLOWSHIP HOSTS THROUGHOUT GREAT LENT:** Please volunteer to host coffee fellowship with your family, or together with another family, so that we may continue our fellowship after Liturgy. Head to our coffee fellowship webpage to sign up and also view a listing of simple Lenten food items. Thank you in advance for supporting this ministry.

+ **ONE LAST PUSH TO SEND GOYA TO NEW YORK!** It's not too late to support our GOYAns as they pack their bags and prepare for their trip to New York! Our current GOYAns are eagerly awaiting the chance to build lifelong friendships, deepen their spiritual understanding, and explore sites tied to our nation's history and our Greek Orthodox faith in one of America's greatest cities. The trip takes place March 5-8, 2026, and will be a memorable event not only in the lives of our youth, but also in the life of this Parish. Please see the flyer or visit ascensiongoc.com/nyc and consider donating to help make this wonderful experience possible for our youth!

+ **FAITH AND JOY MINISTRY** Please join us on Friday, February 20th from 6-8 p.m. in the Anagnos Fellowship Hall for a fast-free Cheese Pizza Party during Cheesefare week. See flyer for more information.

+ **CROSSROAD APPLICATION DEADLINE THIS FRIDAY FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS & SENIORS** CrossRoad is a ten- day academic summer institute that connects high school juniors and seniors with Orthodox Christian theological and spiritual tradition. Sessions take place in the summer in either Boston, New York & Southern California. Visit CrossRoadInstitute.org for more info.

+ **ORATORICAL FESTIVAL! ATTENTION ASCENSION 4th - 12th GRADERS!** Do you like to write? Draw? Chant? Present in front of an audience? Don't miss the opportunity to show your God-given talents and express your faith as a writer, speaker, artist and vocalist by participating in the 2026 St. John Chrysostom Oratorical and Fine Arts Festival. This year, Ascension's Parish Festival will take place on Sunday, March 15, following Divine Liturgy. Submissions are due to Ascension on Wednesday, March 11. Submissions that advance from the Junior and Senior Divisions (grades 7-12) will present at the Metropolis Oratorical Festival on Bright Saturday, April 18, hosted by St. Mary's Church in Minneapolis, MN. More details, including this year's topics, can be found on the Youth Pages of our website or by contacting oratorical@ascensiongoc.com.

+ **FANARI INFO & IMPORTANT DATES:** FANARI Summer Camp Registration opens Monday, March 9 at noon for rising 6th grade through rising 12th graders. Five sessions will be offered this summer: June 14 – 20; June 21–June 27; June 28 –July 4; July 5 –July 11; and July 12– July 18, 2026. FANARI Staff applications open on February 23rd. For more information, visit www.fanari.camp, or stay in touch with Ascension's Youth and Young Adult webpages, updated regularly with events and highlights of Ascension's vibrant youth ministry life.

+ **LIGHTHOUSE CAMP REGISTRATION OPEN HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS:** The Metropolis of Chicago will hold its annual weeklong summer camp Saturday, June 13–June 20, 2026 at Carroll University in Milwaukee. Lighthouse is designed to help high school seniors build a stronger sense of their identity and prepare them for the practical and spiritual challenges they will encounter in college and beyond. Spots fill up quickly! Visit chicago.goarch.org/lighthouse for more information.

+ **AHEPA RECENTLY ANNOUNCED LOCAL AND NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP** opportunities for current high school seniors and college/graduate students. Applications are open until mid (local program) and late March (national program). For more information, visit: <https://ahepadistrict13.org/district-13-education-scholarship> and/or <https://ahepa.org/education/>

+ **REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR IONIAN VILLAGE** for the Summer 2026 programs: Session One: June 16 – July 5, 2026; IV NEXT: July 5 – 15, 2025; and Session Two: July 15 – August 3, 2026. Ionian Village is the international camping ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America located in Peloponnesus, Greece. Each 20-day session is open to young people who will have completed grades 9 through 12. For more information, visit www.ionianvillage.org/.

Did You Know?

Our Project HOPE efforts to feed the hungry and clothe the naked are treating real problems in our society. In 2023, the United States Department of Agriculture reported that food security continues to plague 13.5% of households (18 million households) nationwide. Of those households, 5.1% (6.8 million) had "very low" food security, meaning "normal eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake was reduced at times during the year because they had insufficient money or other resources for food." Across households with children, 17.9% (6.5 million) experienced food insecurity. Illinois has a food insecurity level near the U.S. Average of 12.2%. It is our God-given responsibility from today's Gospel reading to care for our brothers and sisters who need our help the most!