

# Visions



## CALMING THE STORM

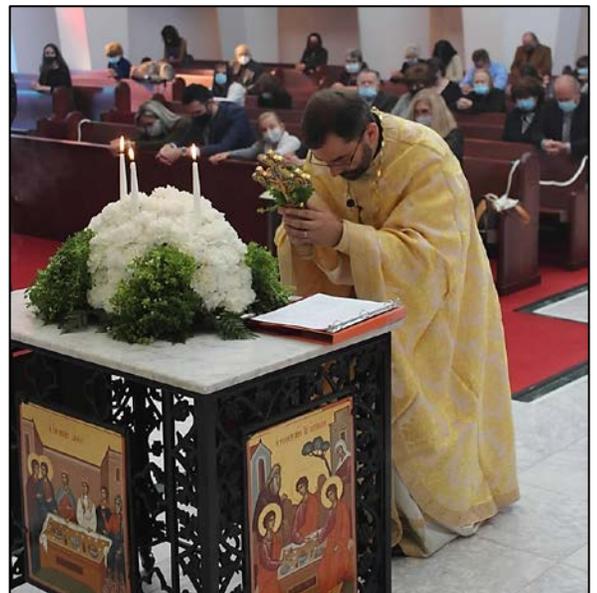
### TOGETHER IN FAITH DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

Nobody could have anticipated the challenges our local, global, and parish community would face during the year 2020. The COVID pandemic and a time of political unrest have created a “perfect storm” of fear and social isolation for many. We are so grateful for the opportunity to come together as a Church, whether it’s in person or through our computer screens, to be reminded that God is guiding our path to safety!

In this “Visions”, we are excited to feature the activities of our parish ministries, from youth programs to philanthropic efforts in the community, over the past few months. While we have been unable to hold Sunday School classes in person, our “Serving God and Serving Others” programming is providing our young people a living model of Orthodox faith in action. Our goals were to encourage participation in church, to model compassion toward others through community service and to teach empathy – important lessons for all of us!

We have learned one more important thing: our parish volunteers and group leaders are very creative problem-solvers! Through these past months, they have worked through every obstacle to safely conduct church services and activities. They found a new way to hold our annual Reverse Raffle, the Men’s Club Feed the Needy project, and the Philoptochos (No-show) Fashion Show. And on the Sunday of the Holy Cross, we were finally able to distribute the palm crosses that had been blessed and put in the deep freeze on Palm Sunday!

Through technology, parishioners and others from around the state and country have been able to connect with the church from their homes, place of work, or as they drive in the car! We are grateful to you all for your love and dedication to our church during this difficult time.



## WHILE YOU HANG YOUR HOLIDAY STOCKINGS....

Please remember those in need.



On Family Sunday and the Feast Day of St. Nicholas

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6<sup>th</sup>**

When you attend church, please bring

**NEW, WARM, ADULT MALE AND FEMALE SOCKS**

to be donated to the Community Housing Network "Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness" (PATH) program.

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**AND...**

There will be a tree set up in the Narthex area to collect **Adult and Children's Gloves, Mittens, Hats and Scarves** which will be distributed by the City of Westland, Dorsey Center to area families in need.

**From December 6<sup>th</sup> – December 25<sup>th</sup>**

**THANK YOU FOR SHARING WARMTH  
WITH THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THIS  
HOLIDAY SEASON.**



## A Message from Father Teodor



Dear Saints Constantine and Helen family,

For the last long months, we have been living amid the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic. These are uncertain and difficult times. Our world was turned upside down and although this is not unlike the experience of the early Christians, it is a unique situation for all of us. Fear, insecurity, and anxiety concerning how this pandemic will affect us, those we love and our communities, including the church, overwhelmed us. Conflicting information from the social media, television and newspapers seemed to make us more confused, many times not knowing what to do.

As a church, we faced unseen situations; we celebrated Holy Week and Easter with an empty church, we went 100% virtual for months and I can't even begin to describe how disheartening it was for me as your priest to not have you, my flock in front of me for the divine services!

Since the end of June we have opened our church once again, with limited exposure and physical interaction and I was glad to see how many of you were eager to once again be in the presence of the Lord in His church. Our faith gives us more than enough reason for courage – for we worship One who created life and conquered death. Moreover, we are part of God's people, His family, that was born from the blood poured out on the cross. As followers of Christ we put our trust in God who raised Him from the dead and that gives us courage and love in the face of sickness and death.

While "social distancing" might be the order of the day to lessen the spread of COVID-19, spiritual and closeness in these times is called for more than ever before. Prayer is a potent force in this. In prayer we are profoundly connected to God and one another in deep and meaningful ways that passes all understanding. In prayer we are never alone, and you have been and continue to be kept in my fervent prayers.

I thank all of you for your patience, prayer and support during the past several months. I thank all the volunteers, chanters, altar servers and office workers. I know that these have been challenging times for you and your families but as a people, we have done well in keeping each other and our parish safe both spiritually and financially.

I am closing by reminding all of us of this blessing from Paul's letter to the Philippians:

*"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:4-7)

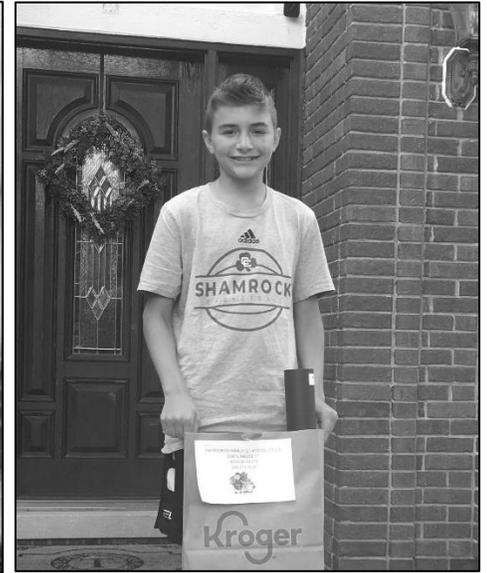
May the peace of God dwell richly in your homes.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. T. Petuk".

Father Teodor

# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL – AT HOME

As soon as strict “shelter-in-place” orders were lifted in June, our dedicated Vacation Bible School team got to work. They developed guided lessons and activities our children could do at home with their families, included crafts and even a few snacks – all focused on the Old Testament Bible stories of the Creation and the Garden of Eden, the Tower of Babel, and Noah and the Great Flood. Everything was packed into bags, which our team delivered to all the children’s homes. The kids were able to have fun at home while they learned lessons of our faith.





## A WELL-DESERVED THANK YOU!

On Sunday, October 4th, "National Church Music Sunday", our St. Cons' parishioners had a big surprise for our Chanters, George Smyrnis and Strat Calagias. At the end of the service, Father Teodor called them forward to thank them, and to recognize their contribution to our Divine services, and on Father's signal, everyone in the church held up a sign to express their love and thanks!

Each year on the first Sunday of October, our church recognizes church musicians, and generally, we bring the Choir up to be honored. But since March 2020, when the pandemic began, our Choir has been on hold. George and Strat have been chanting several services per week, and working "overtime" as Altar Servers, Audio and Video technicians, and even Ushers when it was needed. Their beautiful voices, in both Greek and English, blend so well with Father's, we truly appreciate it!

On that day, we also held a memorial service for our beloved John Angelopoulos, who acted as Protopsalti/Chanter for our parish for over 50 years, and passed away in April from COVID. Memory eternal!

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## KEEPING THINGS SAFE

We look forward to the day when these restrictions won't be necessary, but for the time being, our parish is maintaining safety precautions for the protection of our parishioners. This includes masks, social distance requirements, and capacity limits as put forward by the Metropolis of Detroit and the State of MI Health Department. The building is cleaned and professionally disinfected after each service. If you are not comfortable attending services in person, you may always participate in all of our divine services via live video-streaming on our parish website, [www.stcons.org](http://www.stcons.org)

During this time, we are especially in need of volunteer ushers and Greeters for Sunday and holiday services. If you are able to help, please contact Annette at the church office, 734.525.6789. No in-person Sunday School classes, or large group meetings are allowed in the church building at this time. Our Hellenic Cultural Center is now booking events for the 2021 calendar year.





## OUR GENEROUS PARISHIONERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

**FEED THE NEEDY:** Through the John Koinis Feed the Needy program, the St. Cons' Men's Club have delivered food for Thanksgiving dinner to over 1000 families in the last nine years. However, due to the COVID pandemic, they are unable to make food deliveries this year. Instead, the Men's Club has provided needy Westland and Livonia area families with restricted food gift cards to purchase groceries. Thanks to the generous monetary donations of parishioners, past sponsors, and area businesses, the Feed the Needy program will be providing more than 110 area families (314 members) with \$30 gift cards to each individual based on the number per family. Outstanding work!

**PROJECT SAMARITAS:** Another major effort this year was the St. Helen Philoptochos "Project Samaritas" collection providing needed groceries, child care and paper products, and children's books and activities to the Samaritas Family Center. Samaritas provides shelter and wrap-around services to homeless and transitional families in Wayne County.

**SOLES-4-SOULS:** On September 9<sup>th</sup>, our first "Family Sunday" of the Ecclesiastical year, the Sunday School team sponsored a shoe drive for "Soles-4-Souls", a national organization providing shoes for homeless adults and children. On this kick-off for our Serving God, Serving others youth program, our parish collected more than 250 pairs of new and gently used shoes for all ages!

**OPERATION GRATITUDE:** For our November Family Sunday, children and parishioners were asked to bring in their extra Halloween candy for Operation Gratitude. The one-day collection provided over 90 pounds of candy for US active service military and first responders.

Thank you for sharing your many blessings with others in need!



# AND THE WINNER IS...

Even though we were not able to hold our annual “Putting on the Glitz” Dinner and Auction this year, our Reverse Raffle is the church’s largest annual fundraising event – bringing in needed dollars. The financial need this year is great: our Hellenic Cultural Center has been unable to host events and generate any revenue, and yet our building’s fixed expenses must be paid.

## “All the Blitz. Save the Glitz.”

Not to be discouraged, our Parish Council members rolled up their sleeves, and put forth an enormous effort to sell Reverse Raffle tickets and then held a virtual event on Zoom, where ticket buyers could see the numbers being drawn and winners called in real time. The final ten ticket holders were called and came online to make their choices to “share” or “draw”.

Congratulations to the final 3 ticket holders and big winners: Peter and Stacy Theophelis, Nicole Rosati, and Dino Lembesis, who decided to split the top \$4,000 prize. An additional 45 people won gift cards, certificates, and other “1 in 10” prizes. But the parish was the biggest winner of the night: we are pleased to say that the raffle raised approximately \$50,000 for the church.



## And in other winning news:



None of us who have tasted her delicious Vasilopita each New Year at Saints Constantine and Helen were surprised to learn that the winner of the St. Helen Philoptochos (1<sup>st</sup> annual?) “Carrot Cake Competition” was Demitra Serafim! Her cake was selected over some very tasty competition! Carrot cake finalists included: Carol Bozadzis, Chrys Schwartz, Irene White, and Dimitra. What a fun way to make a Philoptochos meeting something special! Our suggestion for next year is lemon meringue pie, or maybe cream puffs, or brownies...



### **PHILOPTOCHOS SUNDAY**

Sunday, November 15<sup>th</sup> was Philoptochos Sunday in our church. In addition to an Artoclasia offering prayers for our St. Helen Philoptochos, on that day a 6-month Memorial service was held for Joan Kecker, who served as Philoptochos President for three terms – longer than any other Philoptochos President in our parish history.

Other current Philoptochos activities include a “No Show Fashion Show” soliciting donations for the Philoptochos charities, and offering a big discount at the The Clothing Cove for all those who donate money. The Philoptochos is also holding a Bake Sale on November 22, offering Greek pastries and Spanakopita/Spinach Pies for sale in advance of Thanksgiving.

### **TLC ON HOLD**

Since we are not currently able to hold any meetings or church activities of more than 10 people at the church due to the COVID pandemic, we are unable to hold monthly TLC “Thursday Lunch Club” activities. We look forward to the time when we are able to meet again for lunch and offer fun and fellowship for our senior parishioners.

# News and Notes

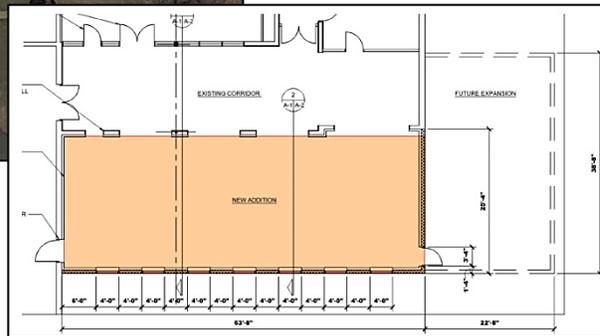


## PLANNING FOR EXPANSION

At the Fall General Assembly meeting on Sunday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, John Avdoulos presented information about a proposed building expansion which would open out the connecting area between the church and the Hellenic Cultural Center hallways by approximately 25', creating a space for 10 – 12 tables and chairs.

Regular parishioners will remember many Sundays last year when we were unable to hold coffee hour or other activities due to bookings in the HCC. The proposed expansion would create an auxiliary space for coffee hour, group meetings, and other fellowship activities such as TLC and HOPE and JOY. The space could also provide new opportunities for the HCC for gazebo weddings, cocktail hours, funeral luncheons, and small community meetings.

Preliminary documents for the proposed expansion are being put together within the next month with assistance by a structural engineer. The church will then seek bids, research materials costs, and city restrictions as a plan is developed.



## ICONOGRAPHY PROJECT PHASE ONE UPDATE

The vision is becoming a reality! As of 11/15/20 Phase One: East and Dome, of the Saints Constantine and Helen Iconography Project, has approximately 90% of our fundraising goal! Several of the Iconostasis icons have already been completed, and will be shipped to the church in the coming months. The church is responsible for installing these icons.

Due to COVID delays, the Phase One project may take two – three years to complete, as all additional icons and the dome are installed personally by the iconographer, Maria Sigala-Spanopoulos directly to the walls of the church.

We are still seeking sponsorships for the following icons:

- EVANGELISTS: Matthew (\$15,000 sponsorship)
- HIERARCHS: St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Iakovos (James) (\$9,000 sponsorship each)
- GOLD BEAUTIFICATION MOTIF encircling the Pantokrator (Dome): \$500/ft.

For those who are interested in sponsoring and icon, contact Father Teodor or the church office for more information. We are also still in need of general donations of any amount to complete our fundraising on Phase One: East and Dome.

## PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD

Our parishioners have provided generous support to the church when needed this year and will have several upcoming opportunities to make a donation during the Nativity season. Because of this, the decision has been made to not collect donations for the parish Christmas Card. We will include in the card names of all those who have completed a Sts. Constantine and Helen pledge card for 2020.

**IF YOU DID NOT COMPLETE A PLEDGE CARD THIS YEAR BUT WOULD LIKE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE CHRISTMAS CARD, IT'S NOT TOO LATE! PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE AND WE CAN SEND (EMAIL OR SNAIL MAIL) THE FORM OUT TO YOU. PLEDGE FORM MUST BE COMPLETED BY DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>.**

# OUR FALL FEST FUN WALK!

Family Sunday, November 1<sup>st</sup>



# SERVICES AND SACRAMENTS (May 1 – November 15, 2020)

*So far in 2020, Saints Constantine and Helen Church has had 2 Weddings, 15 Baptisms, and 24 Funerals. Listed below are those held since our last issue of "Visions" in May, 2020.*

## **BAPTISMS**

- 7/25/20 - **OWEN PATRICK HATHAWAY**, Parents: Greg and Elaine Hathaway  
Godparent: Andrew Stergiou
- 7/30/20 – **NICHOLAS CHRISTOPHER BOLOVEN**, Parents: Chris and Victoria Boloven  
Godparents: Mike and Maritsa Kalasz
- 8/9/20 – **VASILIKI MELISTAS**, Parents: Demo and Kaliana Melistas  
Godparents: Constantina Vlahakis and Grant Vlahopoulos
- 8/9/20 – **SOPHIA MADELINE BROWN**, Parents: Cote and Natalie Brown  
Godparents: Stephen and Denise Tripp
- 8/15/20 – **CAMERON ALEXANDER NASH**, Parents: Alexander and Lea Nash  
Godparents: Steven Lagas and Cindy Lagas
- 9/6/20 - **JACE LEONIDAS COWDEN**, Parents: George Konstantopoulos and Shana Cowden  
Godparent: Arash Aryana
- 9/6/20 - **CAMERON CHRISTOS KONSTANTOPOULOS**, Parents: George Konstantopoulos and Shana Cowden  
Godparent: Heather Aryana
- 9/12/20 - **MELINA SOPHIA MICH**, Parents: Iwan and Christie Mich  
Godparents: Brittany Mouzourakis and Nicholas Mouzourakis **Baptisms:**
- 10/17/20 - **MIA FELICIA LAMACH**, Parents: Mike & Nicole Lamach  
Godparent: Joanna Colovas
- 10/23/20 - **THOMAS M. TSIMPIDIS**, Parents: Nikolaos Tsimpidis & Natalie Hage Hassan  
Godparent: Thomas Jordan
- 10/24/20 - **NIKO DIMITRI TYNER**, Parents: James and Nicole Tyner  
Godparents: Paul Pallas, John Tyner

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

## **40 DAY BLESSINGS**

- 7/17/20 – **ANGELIKA CONSTANTINA VALKANOS**, Parents: Andrea & Elliott Valkanos
- 7/25/20 - **MARIA TSOUKALAS**, Parents: George and Mariana Tsoukalas
- 8/14/20 – **SEBASTIAN KOKAS BRADLEY**, Parents: Clem & Lainie Bradley
- 11/8/20 - **CHRISTIAN SPIRO**, Parents: Theodoros and Dorjana Spiro
- 11/8/2 - **LYDIA TSAKAS**, Parents: Paschalis and Anna Tsakas

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

## **WEDDING:**

7/26/20 - **ALEX GORDON** to **COURTNEY HOGER**

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

**ORDINATION:** 9/19/20 **DEACON NIKO TZETZIS** was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by  
His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas. **Axios!**

## **FUNERALS**

- |                                     |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 5/7/20 - <b>JOAN KEKER</b>          | 9/1/20 - <b>SIMEON NICOLAIDIS</b>     |
| 5/10/20 - <b>EVANGELOS PATSALIS</b> | 10/6/20 - <b>MARIA LIVANOS</b>        |
| 5/13/20 - <b>JULIA MARIE KOINIS</b> | 10/22/20 - <b>ALEXANDER SEBASTIAN</b> |
| 5/26/20 - <b>ANDREW PSILIS</b>      | 11/4/20 - <b>NICKOLAOS KAOUNAS</b>    |
| 6/1/20 - <b>GEORGE KOURMADAS</b>    |                                       |
| 6/20/20 - <b>DOROTHY PLAKAS</b>     |                                       |
| 7/7/20 - <b>DOLORES KARFIS</b>      |                                       |
| 8/21/20 - <b>EMMANUEL CIUNGAN</b>   |                                       |

**MAY THEIR MEMORY BE ETERNAL!**



# The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Mary Drakos Christmas Tree of Lights

The Saints Constantine and Helen 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Mary Drakos Christmas Tree of Lights will be illuminated in memory or in honor of people you love on Sunday, December 20, 2020, immediately following the Divine Liturgy.

Each name you submit will be printed on a card and displayed on the tree. Minimum donation is \$10.00 per name. All proceeds will benefit our church. During the prayer service, each name on the tree will be read by Father Teodor. The tree will remain on the solea until after the New Year.

You and your guests are cordially invited to share in this spiritual tradition. This annual event is a cherished time for parishioners, family, and friends to gather and celebrate the Christmas season and the traditional symbol of peace.

Looking forward to your presence. Your Donation is appreciated!

Diane Drakos Plungis, Chairperson (734)462-1179

DONATED BY \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBMIT FORM AND PAYMENT BY MAIL OR DROP IN THE BOX LOCATED IN THE CHURCH NARTHEX.**

Please print clearly below the FIRST AND LAST NAME(S) you want to appear on the TREE OF LIGHTS.  
MINIMUM DONATION- \$10 per name.

Make checks payable to: **Saints Constantine and Helen Church**  
**36375 Joy Road, Westland, Michigan 48185**

**In honor of:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**In memory of:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of check \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Taken by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sts. Constantine and Helen  
Greek Orthodox Church  
36375 Joy Rd.  
Westland, MI 48185**

Rev. Fr. Teodor Petrutiu,  
Parish Priest



Phone: 734-525-6789  
E-mail: stcons2@gmail.com  
Website: www.stcons.org

**"Where there is no vision,  
the people perish"**  
Proverbs 29:18

NON-PROFIT  
ORG.  
U.S.POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Westland, MI  
PERMIT NO. 113

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

## PARISH MINISTRIES

### ALTAR BOYS

Pete Simakas, 313-350-1111

### CHOIR

Maritsa Kalasz, 734-516-8548

### G.O.Y.A.

Cathy Brylinski, 734.432.0834

### GREEK SCHOOL

Anna Liakou-Hentnik 248.425.2321

### H.O.P.E. and J.O.Y.

Frances Marinos, 734.459.7606

### MEN'S GROUP

Peter Souchock, 734.558.7843

### MOMS GROUP

Corrin Stamatakos, 312.961.8615

### PARISH COUNCIL

Dino Lembesis, 586.484.1517

### PHILOTOCHOS

Carol Bozadzis, 248.921.5421

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

Church Office, 734.525.6789

### TLC- THURSDAY LUNCH CLUB

Al Sudia, 734.455.2337

## UPCOMING EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

11/22/20

Philoptochos Bake Sale

11/26/20

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**



12/6/20

"Family Sunday"/St. Nicholas Feast Day

12/18/29

Paraklesis Service, 6:30 pm

12/20/20

Mary Drakos Tree of Lights Ceremony

12/24/20

**Christmas Eve**

12/25/20

Vespers Divine Liturgy, 5:30 pm

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

1/1/20

Divine Liturgy, 10:00 am

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

1/10/20

Divine Liturgy, 10:00 am

Parish Vasilopita Cutting



**WISHING EVERYONE IN OUR PARISH FAMILY  
A BLESSED AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!**