



# St. SOPHIA NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2010 EDITION

## **FR. JOHN A. LIMBERAKIS**

*Protopresvyteros of the Ecumenical Patriarchate  
Pioneer Priest of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America for 60 Years  
October 7, 1925 ~ June 10, 2010*

Father John A. Limberakis, 84 a leading priest of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America for over 60 years died in Philadelphia, with his loving wife Elizabeth and his children and grandchildren at his bedside. Known as a builder of churches, he led four Greek Orthodox parishes (Fresno, California, Cranston, Rhode Island, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania and Valley Forge (Jeffersonville), Pennsylvania in building houses of worship. A senior priest in the Philadelphia area since 1970, he served in various leadership and ecclesiastical capacities for the Greek Orthodox Church.

Father John was born on October 7, 1925 in Boston, Massachusetts of immigrant parents, Anthony John and Evangeline Karadimitriou Limberakis, who left their homeland of Alatsata, a suburb of Smyrna, Asia Minor in 1922. The eldest of four children, he attended public schools in Somerville, Massachusetts and at age 16, graduating high school in his junior year, he enrolled in Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology when it was located in Pomfret, Connecticut. Upon graduation in 1948, he was appointed registrar of the Seminary, serving as executive secretary to the late dean, the Rt. Rev. Athenagoras Cavvadas, who was also bishop of New England. He pursued graduate studies, first in Fresno, California, then in Providence, Rhode Island and finally in Philadelphia. He received Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Divinity (BD) degrees from Holy Cross School of Theology and a Master of Arts (MA) degree from Temple University.

Prior to his ordination into the holy priesthood on November 8, 1949, The Feast day of the Archangels, he married Elizabeth Constantine, a native of Los Angeles, California. They raised four children, two girls and two boys. Their firstborn, Evangelyn, died at age 11, and is buried in Providence, Rhode Island. Their eldest son, Cary, married to Alexis Demetris, is a dentist in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania with four children; Anthony, married to Maria Borden, is a radiologist in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with three children and two grandchildren; and Catherine, married to James T. Tsatalis, is a school teacher by profession with three children, in Dayton, Ohio.

Father John's first pastoral charge was in Fresno, California, where he immediately initiated a church building program resulting with the relocation of the parish and the construction of a new Byzantine Church of St. George in the suburbs. In 1955 he was assigned to the Annunciation in Providence, Rhode Island where once more the parish relocated and erected a new church edifice in the suburb of Cranston. He came to Philadelphia in 1970 and was assigned to the Annunciation in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania where the following year construction began on its new Byzantine edifice. In 1990, he retired from the Annunciation and within a week was asked by the Archdiocese to once again, shepherd a parish in need of a house of worship, St. Sophia in Norristown, Pennsylvania. Always eager to serve the needs of the church, he accepted this challenge with alacrity and dedication. Upon his arrival at St. Sophia's a new building program was launched. The parish relocated to the gateway of historic Valley Forge in 1996, not far from the site where George Washington wintered his troops during the American Revolutionary War. In each parish Father John served, building programs were inaugurated, parishes were relocated and new edifices completed.

The church has honored Father John with the Byzantine ecclesiastical officia of *Economos*, *Sakelarios* and *Protopresvyteros of the Ecumenical Patriarchate*. He was bestowed the high honor of Crossbearer of the Holy Sepulcher (Stavroforo tou Panagiu Tafou), a title presented by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. He served in various capacities of elected office for the clergy locally and at the diocesan and archdiocesan levels. He was active in inter-faith and affairs

Father John A. Limberakis was an exemplary pioneer priest in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America having shepherded four parishes into building houses of worship. A dynamic homilist and liturgist, a devoted husband of 60 years, a loving father, grandfather and great grandfather, he always supported and defended the Mother Church of Constantinople, the Ecumenical Patriarchate. His remarkable and pioneering ministry will long be remembered by the thousands of lives and souls who were comforted by his loving pastoral care.

## Memory Eternal

*Victoria Stern*

*As many of you are aware our community was devastated by the sudden and tragic loss of our beloved Victoria Stern.*

*Victoria was the daughter of Ron and Theodora Stern.  
Victoria was 20 years old.*

*Please keep her tender soul in your prayers.  
As a community please continue to remember  
Ron and Theodora  
in your prayers as well.*



## From the Building Committee

As of August 6, 2010 we received the preliminary bids (based on the schematic design) from five general contractors. Two of the bids were above our budget number for the basic (Phase I) church, two bids were close and one bid was below our budget. Based on the committee's review of the bids with our architect and telephone conferences with the contractors, we decided to proceed with three contractors; Horst Construction, E. Allen Reeves and Glacon Construction. Ultimately, these contractors will provide us with guaranteed maximum price bids based on the final construction drawings to be prepared in the next two months.

Our meeting with W. Norriton Township officials was postponed to mid-September to allow them more time to study our site plan before they grant our preliminary approval. This slight delay will not alter our time table significantly.

In the meantime, we are discussing our project with three area banks, all of whom have expressed interest: Wachovia, Citizens Bank and Bryn Mawr Trust. Our loan request package will be reviewed by them and they will be looking for more information, particularly regarding the status of our Capital Campaign. Therefore, if we are to qualify for a loan, it is important that all supporting stewards make a meaningful pledge that will help us build our church, as soon as possible. It is also important that St. Sophia's stewards continue to pay on their Capital Campaign pledges so we will have the funds to carry on with this important project as we demonstrate our faith.

## From the Capital Campaign Committee

As of 8/31/10, the total amount pledged to the Capital Campaign is approximately \$1,030,000. Because we are beginning to incur costs (survey, engineering, architect, etc.), we are asking everyone who has pledged to please begin to make payments (checks payable to St. Sophia Building Fund). We still need pledges from half of our stewards. While we expect to have the plans, permitting, and pricing all in place at the end of summer, we will not be able to proceed with construction until we hear from the rest of our Stewards. Please help us glorify God by building this beautiful Byzantine church! For those who have pledged, you will be receiving a statement reflecting your pledged amount and total paid to date. Please let us know of any corrections or questions.

The time for excuses is over. The time for action has come! Members of the Capital Campaign Committee and Parish Council will be reaching out to all of our Stewards who have not yet pledged over the next several weeks. Please help by making a sacrificial gift that reflects your faith in God. If you have questions about our project or need a new pledge form, please ask a member of the Capital Campaign Committee or the Parish Council or Father Peter.

God Bless You for your glorification of Him and support to build Him a new house of worship in Valley Forge!!

# Visit of the Archbishop



On Sunday July 11, our parish was visited by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America. This was a historic visit for our community in that this was the first time that the Archbishop of America has ever visited this community.

His Eminence came to visit our parish on the occasion of the 40 day memorial for our beloved Fr. John Limberakis who fell asleep in the Lord this past June.

His Eminence arrived early

Sunday morning from New York and was greeted by members of the community. During the Orthos the Archbishop vested and prepared the Holy Gifts of the bread and wine for the Divine Liturgy.

The Hierarchical Divine liturgy was a most spiritually uplifting experience. Following the Gospel lesson the Archbishop offered a most inspiring sermon on both the day's Epistle and Gospel read-

ings, speaking on the threefold ministry of Christ as Preacher, Teacher, and Healer.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy the Memorial Service was offered for the repose of Fr. John's soul.

We wish many years of good health to His Eminence and hope that he is able to come back and visit with us again.



# Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

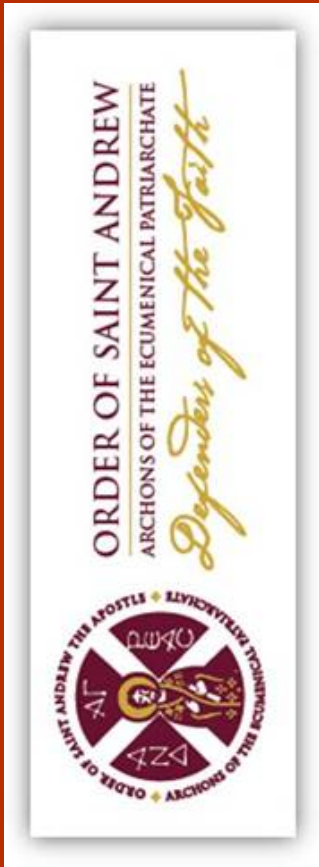
We as citizens of the United States have been blessed with so many freedoms. The freedom to assemble, the freedom of speech and the freedom of worship/religion are just a few of these God given rights. Unfortunately in many countries around the world these freedoms are not recognized. This is especially true in the Republic of Turkey, and in particular with our Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Orthodox Christian Community that has been decimated under the practices of the Turkish state. Thousands of Properties, including Churches, Monasteries, Seminaries, orphanages, hospitals and under ecclesiastical entities belonging to the ecumenical Patriarchate have been illegally confiscated, desecrated and even destroyed.

In this Country we have a dedicated group of church-

men who are spearheading the fight both here and abroad for the restoration and rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. These men are known as the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. They are led by our own Dr. Anthony Limberakis, who together with his fellow archons, strives to educate world leaders about the plight of our ecumenical patriarch. As this newsletter is being written the Leadership of the Archons is in Brussels Belgium laying the ground work for an upcoming International Conference on Religious Freedom. The focus of the archons has been the leadership of the European Union. They are constantly meeting with leadership to lobby for the Ecumenical Patriarchate as Turkey seeks admittance into the EU.

Here in the United States,

Archons are trying to have their state and Local governments pass resolutions declaring their support for the religious freedom and rights of the ecumenical Patriarchate. On the Local level the Archons of the Delaware Valley have hosted a symposium on the Ecumenical Patriarchate in their continued effort to educate the faithful on the plight of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. May God Grant the Archons the strength to carry out their work and bring about the release of our Mother Church from oppression.



## GOYA

After a brief hiatus, the GOYA group is once again active at St. Sophia. Lead by John Pogas, the GOYA group had their first official group activity in April with miniature golfing at Waltz Golf Farm. Even though the weather felt more like Winter than Spring, the kids had a great time. The parents that braved the cold winds also had a great time honing their putting skills and enjoying καλή παρέα. And even with the frosty temps, we HAD to cap off the event with ice cream!

As the weather became more temperate, the GOYA kids ventured north and west to Elysburg PA for camping and fun at Knoebels Grove. Knoebels is a family owned amusement park a few miles south of Bloomsburg, PA and is legendary for their roller coasters, bumper cars and overall fun family experience. This kids had a great time on the rides during the day and camping in the woods at night. We made s'mores around the camp fire and enjoyed each other's company in the great outdoors.

June activities were planned, but between school schedules, vacations and the festival, we had to postpone them for the future.

On August 14th, the GOYA kids will be chasing each other in go karts and blasting each other with lasers at Arnold's Family Fun Center. We are meeting at St. Sophia at 2:00 p.m. SHARP, carpooling to Arnolds and then returning to St. Sophia for dinner and fellowship. Please contact John Pogas if you would like to join us.

Future events include a Phillies game in September, Paintball in October, Bowling in November and skiing/snowboarding in December. If you are between the age of 12 and 18, you can join in on the fun! Just contact John Pogas and he will include you in all of the GOYA communications. The next GOYA meeting is scheduled for Sunday, September 19th, after the Divine Liturgy.

John's contact information is: e-mail: [pogworld@yahoo.com](mailto:pogworld@yahoo.com) Home: 215-703-0118 Cell: 215-896-1963

## Regional Orthodox Church School Directors and Teachers Training

On Saturday, September 25, 2010 the Cathedral of St. Stephen in Philadelphia is sponsoring a seminar for all those who are involved in Sunday School programs for the Orthodox Parishes.

There will be two seminars that attendees can choose from, "the Church School Director Seminar" or "Teacher Training I"

Each seminar will have three tracks.

The Church School Director seminar includes: Intro. To Church School Ministry, Curriculum and resources for Church School Dept., and Build Your Staff, Build Your Students,

The Teacher training I seminars include Overview to Orthodoxy, Introduction to teaching, and Curriculum and

Resources.

We encourage all of our Sunday School staff to attend this important event. The parish will pay the \$25.00 registration fee for each teacher.

For more information please contact Fr. Peter or Sofia Sprayberry.

## Fall Festival is Around the Corner

As you all well aware the Annual Fall Festival is around the corner. It is going to be held from Thursday, September 9 through Sunday, September 12, 2010. We need everyone's help! This is a great event that so many of our supporters look forward to. If everyone commits to working their fair share, this festival will be a success. We need help preparing, setting up, decorating, serving, and cleaning up. There is something for everyone to help with — bussing tables, cutting tomatoes and onions, prepping salads, working cash registers, greeting visitors. Please do not be shy!!! **THE CHURCH NEEDS YOUR HELP!** This is a way of offering your stewardship of your time and your talents!!

## Exploring Our Orthodox Church Building– Part 1

Here in America and throughout the Orthodox World many of our churches differ in their exterior looks, some have large domes, some have small onion shaped domes. Some have bells and fountains and some may have iconography on the exterior. Amazingly enough the interiors of our churches are remarkably the same. The structure and divisions of the interior, the furnishings and everything contained in our new church will each serve a specific purpose.

Our New Church will have three specific parts: 1) the Narthex, 2) the Nave, and 3) the Sanctuary.

### Why Three Parts?

One might assume that this is symbolic of the Holy Trinity, but in reality there is a practical reason for the Areas. During the Early life of the church, the Sanctuary was for the Clergy( Bishops, Priests and deacons) while the nave was for the Laity( the Christian faithful), and the Narthex was for the catechumens (those learning about the faith and preparing for Holy Baptism).

Today, as we live our everyday life (our work, worries, problems and daily challenges) we enter God's Holy House through the Narthex where we prepare ourselves for the sacraments. It is here that we transition from the earthly work and prepare to enter the Heavenly. We begin by trying to leave the outside world behind.

We should turn off our cell phones, PDAs, and others means of communication. Our conversations should stop so that we can then clear our minds and thoughts of earthly ideas and began to offer up our prayers to God.

From the Narthex we move into the Nave where we gather together to offer up praise and thanks to God. Here is where we receive the Holy Mysteries (sacraments). Here is where life begins and ends for us as believing orthodox Christians. In the nave we will not only be surrounded by members of the community but also by the saints. In Our new church the walls will eventually be covered with Icons of the Saints and moments in the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary! These Holy images will serve as inspiration to us all.

From the Nave we see the Holy Altar. It is on the Holy Altar that the Bread and Wine are consecrated through the Holy Spirit and become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This is why the Altar is the focal point of our worship.

In the next several issues we will discuss more about these three areas and how these what goes on in these areas are unique to us and the Orthodox tradition and faith.

# Stewardship

Pledge Goal for 2010: 210 stewards  
To Date: 163 stewards

Our Stewardship Budget Goal \$180,000.00  
Amount Collected \$82,199.00

Our Average Pledge \$886.00

***“Everything  
belongs to  
GOD; we are  
called to be  
stewards of his  
creation”***

## THOUGHTS ON ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

A steward is one who manages another's property or resources. The Christian, therefore, is a steward of everything he is and has, including his own body and soul; for according to the mystery of salvation, we possess nothing from ourselves — not even our own life and being. All belongs to God and is given to us by the Father through His Son and because of the richness of His love and mercy.

If the stewardship with which man has been entrusted by God is the management of that which belongs to God, then it does not simply concern the gift of salvation, but man's creation, his very existence... stewardship encompasses the whole mystery of salvation which embraces man's beginning and end — his nature and destiny....



**ST. SOPHIA  
SS. FAITH, HOPE & AGAPE  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF VALLEY FORGE**



900 South Trooper Road, Jeffersonville, PA, 19403 · Tel: (610) 650-8960 · Fax: (610) 650-8961  
 Web: [www.stsophiavf.org](http://www.stsophiavf.org) · E-mail: [stsophia@verizon.net](mailto:stsophia@verizon.net)  
 Rev. Fr. Peter J. Thornberg, Proistamenos

**SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION  
2010-2011**

**PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM COMPLETELY**

Family Name: _____	
Address: _____	
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____	
HUSBAND	
WIFE	
First Name: _____	_____
Home Tel.: _____	_____
E-Mail: _____	_____

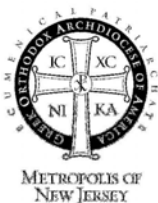
**Please complete the information below for each child being registered**

Child's Name	Baptismal Name	Date of Birth	Age	Grade in School	Please list any food allergies (see note below)

**PLEASE NOTE** – Children entering the Nursery class must be 2 years old by September 1, 2010, and children entering the Pre-K/Kindergarten class must be 4 years old by September 1, 2010.

If your child is in Nursery, Pre-K/Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and he/she has a food allergy, please list it in the space provided above.

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO THE PARISH OFFICE  
BY SEPTEMBER 5, 2010**



**ST. SOPHIA**  
**SS. FAITH, HOPE & AGAPE**  
**GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF VALLEY FORGE**



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 Rev. Fr. Peter J. Thornberg, Proistamenos

**GREEK LANGUAGE SCHOOL REGISTRATION FORM 2010-2011**

**Location:** Classes are held at St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church, 900 S. Trooper Rd, Jeffersonville, PA 19403

**Schedule:** Classes will begin the week of September 13, 2010

**Tuition:**

<b>Pre-K/Kindergarten</b>	<b>\$250 per child</b>
<b>Children - Level 1 and above</b>	<b>\$275 per child</b>
<b>Adult</b>	<b>\$300 per adult</b>

Each additional student per family receives a \$25 discount (Does not apply to Pre-K / Kindergarten enrollment)

For non-stewards (non-members) of St. Sophia's Parish, an additional \$100 fee is assessed per family.  
 In the case of financial hardship, please contact Fr. Peter Thornberg to discuss your situation.

**Please complete form and return along with your payment to St. Sophia by August 31, 2010**

**Parent's Contact Information:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip code** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone # (Required):** \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name	Level/Grade	Fee
_____	_____	\$ _____
_____	_____	\$ _____
_____	_____	\$ _____
_____	_____	\$ _____

**Sub-total:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Non-Member:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Grand Total:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to "Church of St. Sophia" and remit by August 31, 2010  
**St. Sophia Greek Language School**  
**900 S. Trooper Road, Jeffersonville, PA 19403**  
 Address any questions directly to:  
 Roger Witt skylawitt5@comcast.net or Maria Tsipras tsipras@verizon.net  
 To pay by credit card, please contact the Church Office during business hours



These are photos of geological testing that recently took place on the church property. This process is required to determine if the land is suitable for building and if the soil can support the weight of a new building.

The results of this test will allow for the proper design and placement of the church foundation.



# St. Sophia's PTO

Spirit Night at



September 23, 2010

5pm - 8pm

Chick-fil-A at Audubon  
680 South Trooper Rd., West Norriton, PA, 19403  
610-650-8505

A portion of all sales between 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.  
on Thursday, September 23rd will be donated to benefit St. Sophia's PTO.

Spin the prize wheel for \$1.00 - you can't lose!  
100% of the proceeds from the prize wheel will go to  
St. Sophia's PTO.

All parents, teachers, family members and friends are  
encouraged to help support St. Sophia's PTO  
by dining at Chick-fil-A at Audubon.

We hope to see you there!



[www.chick-fil-a.com/audubon](http://www.chick-fil-a.com/audubon)

**St. Sophia, Ss. Faith, Hope and Agape  
Greek Orthodox Church of Valley Forge**

900 South Trooper Road  
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Email: [stsophia@verizon.net](mailto:stsophia@verizon.net)

Web Address: [www.stsophiavf.org](http://www.stsophiavf.org)

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## Saint Sophia Feast Day

September 16, 2010 - Great Vespers - 7:00 pm

September 17, 2010 - Orthros 8:45am; Divine Liturgy 10:00am

Luncheon hosted by our beloved Philoptochos!

Come and join us as we celebrate the feast of our Patron Saints,  
St. Sophia, Ss. Faith, Hope and Agape!

**Χρονια Πολλα to all!**