I hope this Messenger finds you all well!

The year 2020 has commenced, and it is already hard to fathom how a month has already passed! Last month, I issued a 90-day challenge to our parishioners—that is, to find a spiritual activity you will work upon, whether it is praying more, attending church more, or reading the Scriptures, and to assess after 90 days your progress. How have you been doing? It’s never too late to begin! You can do it!

I am also pleased to announce the Parish Council for this year. The new Parish Council President is Ron Rookey, with the following officers and members: Judy Lelas-George (Vice President), Joseph Dasco (Treasurer), Nicles Lefakis (Secretary), Anthony Antonopoulos, Roseanne Desautels, John Foscolos, Assaad Hallak, George Katsoulis, and Nick Vamvilis. Please keep them in your prayers. We are also looking for another member to complete the eleven people we should ideally have. If you are interested in helping the church, are collaborative, enjoy working with others, and love ministry, please consider the Parish Council! I would also like to thank the previous Council under the stewardship of Assaad Hallak for their wonderful work! God bless you all!

Our 2020 Stewardship Campaign has also progressed. As I said in a homily a couple of weeks ago, there is a difference between being a steward and being a member. Membership may or may not require certain obligations. Usually, it requires some monetary donation to an organization. However, to be a steward is more meaningful. A steward in the Bible is someone entrusted with something valuable, for which they will have to give an account and return to the rightful owner. We call our parishioners stewards, because we have been entrusted by God to use the time, talent, and treasure with which we have been blessed to serve God and our neighbor. As you prayerfully consider your stewardship involvement, please keep this awesome responsibility we all have in mind and glorify God because of it!

February is usually also a busy month for us — we anticipate the beginning of Lent (March 2 this year), which
**Pastor- Fr. Panteleimon Klostri**

**2020 Parish Council**
- Ron Rookey — President
- Judy Lelas-George — Vice President
- Joseph Dasco — Treasurer
- Nicles Lefakis — Recording Secretary
- Anthony Antonopoulos
- Roseanne Desautels
- John Foscolos
- Assaad Hallak
- George Katsoulis
- Nick Vamvilis

**Philoptochos**
- President - Maria Londo
- Vice President - Melissa Kaitis
- Treasurer - Vaceleci Zaharis
- Secretary - Rosanne Desautels
- Corresponding Secretary - Evangelia Tsikrikis
- Past President/Advisor - Dorsey Cokkinias

**Ministries**

**Chanters** - Aristidis Zaharis and Damian Zaharis

**Choir Director** - Toni Rizas  **Organist** - Kristen Flanagan

**Endowment Fund** - James Bologa

**GOYA Advisor** - Jennifer Russell

**JOY Advisor** - Sarah Kirchner

**Memorials** - Maria Laware

**Messenger** - Editor - Need a Volunteer  **Co-editor** Presvytera Eleni

**Stewardship Chairs** - Joe and Meghan Dasco

**Sunday School Director** - Christina Nikolis

**Welcome Committee** — Judy Lelas-George, Maria Laware, Parris Ochsner, Ron Rookey

**Facilities Committee** - Nicles Lefakis

**Church Secretary** - Paula Assad

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**Bible Study**  Mondays @ 6:30PM/ Friday @ 11:00AM  (unless otherwise stipulated)

**Orthodox Life** - after Lent

**Council Meetings**  2nd Tuesday of the month @ 7:00 PM  (unless otherwise stipulated)

**Dance Practice**  TBA

**Loaves and Fishes**  Pick up on the 3rd Friday of the month

**Knitting**  1st and 3rd  Wednesday of the month  @10:30  (unless otherwise stipulated)

**Romeos and Juliettes**  4th Thursday of the month  (unless otherwise stipulated)

**Choir**  Thursday @ 6:30 PM  (September 10th - June10th)  (unless otherwise stipulated)

**GOYA** 3rd Sunday of the month following Liturgy  (unless otherwise stipulated)

**JOY**  3rd Friday of the month  6pm-7:30 unless otherwise announced

**Endowment Meeting**  2nd Tuesday @ 6:30

**40 to 4 Club/Hope** - seeking a volunteer coordinator and meetings TBA

**Miles to Smiles** - Walking Ministry, after Liturgy

**Health Ministry** - Monthly Blood Pressure during coffee hour, TBA
February 2 — Presentation of the Lord to the Temple

This feast, celebrated on February 2, is known in the Orthodox Church as The Presentation of Christ in the Temple. Another name for the feast is The Meeting of our Lord. Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians call the feast, The Purification of the Holy Virgin. About 450 AD in Jerusalem, people began the custom of holding lighted candles during the Divine Liturgy of this feast day. Therefore, some churches in the West refer to this holy day as Candlemas. The Feast of the Presentation concludes the observances related to the Nativity of Christ, a period that opened on November 15 with the beginning of the Nativity fast.

Apolytikion (First Tone)

Hail Virgin Theotokos full of Grace, for Christ our God, the Sun of Righteousness, has dawned from you, granting light to those in darkness. And you, O Righteous Elder, rejoice, taking in Your arms, the Deliverance of our souls, who grants us Resurrection.
Dear Fellow Parishioners,

I would like to humbly thank everyone who voted for me as Parish Council President. I want you to know that I am honored to receive this nomination.

I want to begin by thanking Assaad Hallak, for his dedication and hard work as past President Council President. The church Parish Council is a wonderful, hard working group of individuals that come together as a team for the good of our church.

As your President, I will work to ensure that I am open to your ideas, interests, concerns and comments you may have.

I look forward to all of us working together on our shared goals. I realize that not all of us will agree on topics, but we will be mindful to be respectful, and with dignity, make decisions with our hearts for the greater good of our community.

I solicit your prayers for our cause. I am confident with the Holy Spirit guiding our work and our willingness, we will make a positive difference to our Church that we all love.

Blessings for the New Year!

Ron Rookey

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**PHILOPTOCHOS**

A special thank you to Georgia Klitsas, Helen Nikolis, Bess Zaharis, and Phyliss Lavallee for the beautiful Vasilopita breads and to all who helped us at on Vasilopita Sunday. It is truly appreciated!

Our upcoming Philoptochos Membership Drive will be on Sunday, February 9. We are hosting coffee hour so pastries and sweets are always welcome. We thank you in advance. We had a wonderful turnout last year and look forward to another great year. Old and new faces can make a difference, so please come and join us.

In recognition of women’s health, we are asking our members of our church community (women and men) to wear RED in solidarity of “Go Red for Women” on February 9.

Last but not least, we fulfilled our obligations for January to St. Basil’s Academy (in which we raised $810) and Social Services/Cancer and Other Major Illnesses Fund and the Enfield Food Shelf for outreach - a donation in honor of Barbara Costas.

I wish you all a very warm month of February!

The Philoptochos Board
Dear Fellow Parishioners;

Over the past two months the Stewardship Committee has invited members of the community who have benefited from our parishioner’s Stewardship In Action. We would like to thank Toni Bator from Lighthouse, Craig Kazin from the Shriners Hospital for Children and Darlene St. Jaques from Open Pantry of Springfield who all came to speak to our parish about how our Time, Talent and Treasure have impacted the lives of so many. We thank our loving and involved St. Luke community and continue to be awed and moved by your generosity. With your continued support of these wonderful charities and the others that our parish sponsors throughout the year, we are all truly God’s Stewards on Earth.

Yours in Christ,
Joe and Meghan Dasco

Once again, we would like to thank the 2019 Stewards of Saint Luke. I would also like to point out that an error was made on the list that was published last month. I inadvertently excluded a handful of parishioners who gave their gift of treasure at the end of 2018 which was actually prepaid for the fiscal year 2019. I sincerely apologize for the mistake—Joe Dasco

Penelope Anastasiou
Pamela Anastasiou-Cole
John and Sylvia Cardone
Michael Darmochwat
Catherine Darmochwat
Jane Sherman
Kiki Trial
Mary Turner*
Happy February to all! It’s hard to believe that this month the choir will have special pre-Lenten hymns to sing. Rehearsals will be scheduled for February 6th, 13th and 20th weather permitting.

Our younger voices from our Sunday School will be joining us on Sunday, February 9th.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me or any choir member if you would like to participate in any of the Holy Week services. We’d love to have you!

God bless,

Toni
Our beautiful Vasilopita cutting in honor of St Basil and to support St Basil’s Academy. Thank you to our lovely Philoptochos and for all the wonderful breads made. We had Father Demetrios Moraitis visiting and the coin was found in the piece cut for Presvytera Eleni.
**Start the Day with a Grateful Heart!**

Fellowship time /coffee hour is a vital ministry of church - please consider signing up and stewarding a Sunday.

Make it as simple as you like- it is all appreciated.

It is a beautiful offering to remember someone or show friendship and gratitude to those around you.

These are the Sundays in February that are open for anyone wishing to make an offering to their friends, family and new friends yet to be.

- February 16th is available
- All dates in March are available

Coffee is made and set up by our wonderful coffee stewards - Harry Georgiades and Peter Alexopoulos.

All anyone needs to do is bring something to share and place it on the table with plates and cutlery (which are all provided)

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**It’s That Time Again....**

As January hits, we start seeing the options of various scholarships available for graduating seniors as well as for on-going college students and post grad students.

Following this introduction, you will read about a past parishioner of St. Luke as well as of St. Nicholas...Barbara Olender. Barbara was an educator and a well-recognized one at that. After Barbara passed away, her family decided to give an annual scholarship in her memory. The scholarship forms will be located in a rack in the Fellowship Hall next to the bulletin board on the left wall as you enter the hall. Please take one. Education is made up of many concepts ...this scholarship recognizes that. So, don’t be fooled by the term “field of education”. Take a look at the options listed on the form. These forms may also be found on the St. Luke Website. If you have any questions, please let me know. If I can’t answer them, I’ll relay them to Barbara’s family.

judy
New day, new week, new month, new decade… NEW MINISTRY

Have you been waiting for an opportunity to work on a new you?

St Luke’s Miles to S’Miles is your first “step” in that direction.
   Come one, come all ~ walk, run or crawl!

**Sunday, January 5th in the Fellowship Hall during coffee hour.**

*Free Fun & Fellowship with a Focus on Fitness.*
*Please join in! Bring your comfy shoes (sneakers)!*

For information call Kathy Kalaitzidis 413-374-3709

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St Luke’s has been recognized as a 2020 Best Places of Worship in East Longmeadow for its worship and service to the wider community.
Our popular pre-Lenten Lamb Shank Dinner be held on Sunday, February 23, following Liturgy. As always, the shank will be coupled with roasted potatoes and green beans as well as salad, bread, dessert, coffee and a glass of wine. And for those not fond of lamb, “ahem”, a pasta/meatball dinner including salad, bread, dessert, and coffee will be offered. Reservations must be made and paid for in advance of the meal. **No tickets will be sold at the door.**

New this year, will be the option of “take out” meals. All of the above will be included with the exception of coffee. **Take-outs must be ordered and paid for in advance of the meal.** Please call the church office at 525-4551 or see me at the ticket table.

We hope you can join us in the Fellowship Hall for this wonderful meal and opportunity to spend time with your fellow St. Luke parishioners. If you aren’t able to do that, we hope you can enjoy the meal in the comfort of your own home with your family!
Philoptochos has designated Sunday, February 9, 2020 as Go Red Sunday! This day is designated to support the “Go Red for Women” movement! It’s a national call established by the American Heart Association to support programs and critical research for women’s cardiovascular health. In solidarity we are asking all parishioners of the St. Luke community to Go RED – Wearing red articles of clothing while attending church services. We’re offering Lapel Pins for purchase with proceeds to benefit the “Go Red for Women” movement.

The fact is: Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women, causing 1 in 3 deaths each year. That’s approximately one woman every minute!

It takes money and research, to answer questions and ever increase our knowledge and understanding about heart disease and stroke – AHA is one of the largest funders of heart disease research.

By supporting this cause TODAY you may help save a life TOMORROW!

Do you know what causes heart disease in women?

What about the survival rate?

Or whether women of all ethnicities share the same risk?

Minimum pledge of $35
$20 National Society + $10 Metropolis = $5 St. Luke Chapter

Let’s not keep Philoptochos a secret!
The Philoptochos Membership Drive is the perfect time to ask important questions like, “What does Philoptochos actually do?” Given the opportunity we’d love to answer that important question along with any other questions you’ve been pondering! In fact, we’d rather show YOU what “Philoptochos does.”

So, whether you’ve been an active member of Philoptochos or considering pledging at the Full Membership or Associate Membership levels for the first time, we are encouraging all to attend our upcoming meetings being held the first Sunday of each month during coffee hour.

Give the gift of membership! This gift will give the recipient the opportunity to learn and become involved in the dynamic and life changing work of Philoptochos. Together we can actively promote fellowship while committed to our purpose of helping those in need.
Dancing With Heart

Planning for our 2020 fundraiser, “Dancing With Heart”, is in the works! In coordinating and putting into action an event such as this, all areas need to be covered and covered well. It wouldn’t work otherwise! We have a wonderful committee working with us. We thank each and every one of them for volunteering or saying “yes” when asked. With positive responses such as we have received, we are assured things will run smoothly.

”Dancing With Heart”….when and where will this event take place?

DWH is in its fourth year as St. Luke’s second largest fund-raiser. Last year, we again had a “full house” and as the saying goes...a good time was had by all! This year, the event will again be held at The Cedars Banquet Hall located at 375 Island Pond Road in Springfield, MA. Our “Dancing With Heart” 2020 will take place on Saturday, April 25th with doors opening at 6:30.

“Dancing With Heart”...what’s special about this event?
St. Luke’s has again joined in a charitable partnership with Shriners Hospitals for Children-Springfield. This philanthropic institution opens its arms to children of all ethnicities and ages from the US as well as worldwide. It is renowned for its good work on behalf of the children. Fifty percent of the profit garnered from this event will benefit Shriners Hospitals for Children-Springfield. St. Luke’s is proud to say that in the two years we have been charitable partners with Shriners, we have been able to donate $35,000.00 to the hospital.

”Dancing With Heart”...how can I support this charitable partnership?
We would love to have you join us for the evening. The evening’s ticket cost is $45.00 which will offer you hot and cold hors d’oeuvres; a dessert table with both traditional and Greek pastries; and a cash bar. In addition, there will be a 50/50 raffle; an opportunity to vote for one or more of your favorite dancers at a minimum of $1.00 per vote; a DJ who will provide music for the show as well as for social dancing for all at a certain point during the evening; and best of all, you will be entertained by a fabulous dance competition. What more can you ask for!!!

However...if you are unable to join us for the evening, you can participate in several ways...

You can write a tax-deductible check to St. Luke’s. Be sure to write the name of the dancer you want to support and the word “vote” in the check memo. This step is imperative as each dancer is credited for the amount of money they raise. You can also follow the same procedure above and donate to DWH in general as anything we receive goes towards our goal of helping the children at Shriners Hospitals for Children. Your support can also be shown by taking part in our program book. There are levels of giving ranging from $30.00 to $1,500.00. Please see attached form. This will allow you to advertise your business and/or send personal wishes to the dancers, Shriners Hospital For Children, and/or St. Luke’s Church.

We guarantee you a fabulous evening so please join us!
The Dancing With Heart Committee
How Can I Help...

I’d like to let you in on a secret...

I made a huge omission in the “How Can I Help” message in the January edition of the Messenger. Thanks to the keen eye of a friend who questioned me about it, I’d like to give some additional info to the description of what our church sexton does. Please look below the “blurb” as it stood last month with this important added information at the end.

The Church Sexton

You all know Michael Kennedy...you might not know him by name, but you sure do know him by sight! You will see Michael at Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, Vespers, and Liturgies...those are the finished product of his work. But as with all finished products, there is the preparation that is of most importance. Michael is a wealth of knowledge and the right-hand man of the priest. There is a need for volunteers interested in this wonderful and much needed ministry to “shadow” Michael in his duties so the knowledge does not get lost. Maybe you love weddings and would like to learn what goes into making this day so special. Maybe you get much joy in seeing a baby baptized and would like to be part of that special family day. You’ll learn the traditions of the altar décor for different events and holidays, learn about the different icons used for name days and processions etc. You won’t get bored with repetition, that’s for sure! Not only will you not get bored, you will receive compensation for your duties. Yes, this position, considering its importance, its time commitment and its varied duties, is a paid position. Michael has done this on his own for years, however it may be that we may need more than one person to do the job. If you are interested, please speak to Father....

The Taste of Greece Chairperson

We will be needing a new chairperson for the 2021 Taste of Greece. Why, might you ask, are we bringing this up now two years in advance? Our present chairperson, Vicki LaRoche, came back to the helm to chair the 2019 Taste due to the fact that no one had stepped up to do so. Vicki, as do many of us, realizes that St. Luke is very lucky to obtain the financial boost the TOG offers. This is her “second tour of duty” with this event, having chaired it in previous years for a long stretch of time. When she came to the council and said she would do it, she asked that a “shadow” be asked to work along with her with the intent of taking over the reins in 2021. The importance of continuing this yearly event cannot be denied, so we ask that you seriously consider this position. It is not long before the basic planning begins, and it is important to get in on this early step. Like the sexton, this does not have to be a “one-person” position. Our quest is to find a person or a couple of people who would consider co-chairing St. Luke’s biggest fundraiser. If you are interested in helping your church continue this annual event, please speak to Vicki or a PC member....
February 2020 - The Month

February is fast approaching and with it are many special days and events.

Firstly, this is a Leap year which adds 1 additional day to the month of February giving it 29 days and gives the year 2020 366 days rather than 365. February also hosts Valentine’s Day, celebrated on February 14th and over time has become known as a day of expressing love, romance, and gift giving. February is also the month we celebrate the birthdays of two of our Presidents...Lincoln (12th) and Washington (22nd). In the mid 1980’s, it became a day to honor all Presidents. This year President’s Day is celebrated on February 17th.

St. Luke’s also has a busy February....

February is the month that our Philoptochos holds its Membership Drive. This is an opportunity for the ladies (and men if they should want to join) of the parish to join this very worthy organization. The Philoptochos is the philanthropic arm of the church and contributes not only to Orthodox causes such as St. Basil’s and the Philoxenia House, but also reaches out to the surrounding communities in many different ways. Ladies working on behalf of the Philoptochos have been the initial force behind the Blessing Bags for the homeless, supported the Lighthouse project which aids adults with mental illness, initiated the “I Am Loved Campaign” for the NICU unit at Bay State Hospital and the “Back Pack Drive” supplying backpacks filled with school supplies for Homer Street School children, have prepared meals for Loaves and Fishes, and have collected hats, gloves, mittens and scarves for those in need of them. Keep an eye out for their Membership Drive/Go Red Day to be held on February 9th.

Wear red and join the group so you too can get the feel of doing good work for people who need our support in one way or another.

February is also the month that we prepare for our Lenten season to begin. We always hold our famous Lamb Shank Dinner right before Lent. This meal has become well recognized around town, and it draws not only parishioners but also community members. The prep for this meal is consuming, so if you can help out, it would be appreciated. Keep an eye out for tickets also!

You’ll be seeing signs of “Dancing With Heart 2020”...check the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall to see who will be in the spotlight for this year’s show and read about the “nuts and bolts” of the event in the Messenger and Vestal...Representing St. Luke on the 2020 slate of dancers will be ... the wife of a past president, the sister of a council member, and the brother in law of a long standing St Luke family....Hmmm...mmm.

This is the time of year that students heading to college, presently in college, and/or doing graduate work start looking into scholarships to help with their expenses. St. Luke offers these students the Olender Scholarship, the St. Nicholas Scholarship, and the Endowment Scholarship. Please look at the rack near the bulletin board as you enter the Fellowship Hall to see if one of them, or all of them, may be something of interest/help to you.

Lastly, take a look around to see who you think would be the perfect person to represent St. Luke as its Laity Award Nominee! You can give your suggestion, which be accompanied with a write up describing the reason for your choice to any Council member.

judy
May Her Memory
Be Eternal

Evangelia Spiridoulias (mother of Presvytera Eleni) fell asleep in the Lord on Friday, January 10, 2020. Her funeral was held on Monday, January 13, 2020.

May consolation and comfort be with her family.

SATURDAY OF THE SOULS

All parishioners are invited to submit the names of departed loved ones to Father, with the form below for your convenience. These vital days encourage our families to gather in holy remembrance; they remind us of the power of prayer. Please note that lists need only be submitted once and will be read at all three services.

NAMES OF DECEASED

ONOMATA
ΑΠΟΘΑΝΟΝΤΩΝ

These names will be read at each Saturday of the Souls Service this year. Please print clearly the names of departed family and friends that you wish to be remembered at these services.

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Give graciously to all the living; do not withhold kindness even from the dead — Sirach 7. 33

Saturday of the Souls
February 22nd
February 29th
March 7th

If you are able, please bring your offering of Koliva for these liturgies.
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<th>In Memory of Aspasia Lemnios</th>
<th>In Memory of Dr. Angelo Bilionis</th>
<th>In Memory of Jonathan Topodas</th>
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<td>Luke and Lorraine Ahladas</td>
<td>Anita and John Themistos</td>
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<td>Peter and Lanie Alexopoulos</td>
<td>Anita and John Themistos</td>
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<td>Thia Ploubides</td>
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<td>John and Marie Hennessy</td>
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<td>Kevin Trombly</td>
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<td>The Nadler Family</td>
<td>Katherine Papazoglou</td>
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Thank you

To my dearest church family, I wish to express my gratitude for your condolences and love after the passing of my sweet mother. I wish you all could have known her. She was dynamic, spirited, fun-loving, had an astounding talent with numbers, conflict resolution and ease with people. Her philoxenia, and compassion for others were only outweighed by her love of family and faith.

I feel so blessed to have had her guidance and love and am comforted by the love surrounding me. The love we feel from our mothers is a foretaste of the love that awaits us from God in heaven.

Love, Presvytera Eleni