



# ELPIS PHILOPTOCHOS ANNUAL REPORT

2015

*A Review of the events and activities of the Ladies' Philoptochos Society of  
Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church (Elpis Chapter)  
Memphis, Tennessee*

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## About the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society

The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc. is the philanthropic arm of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America that has offered eighty years of philanthropy through a multitude of programs that make a difference in the lives of people in the United States and throughout the world. The Society was established in November 1931, by the late Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I, who was then serving as Archbishop of North and South America.

Philoptochos fulfills its mission to “help the poor, the destitute, the hungry, the aged, the sick, the unemployed, the orphaned, the imprisoned, the widowed, those with disabilities and the victims of disasters through its National and Metropolis Boards and its 26,000 members and more than 400 active chapters, nationwide.

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America called Philoptochos, “an army of nobility and the jewel of our Church. Philoptochos must continue to do what God does by loving people.”

Since the late 1950's, upon the recommendation of Archbishop Iakovos, Philoptochos has placed an increased emphasis on the implementation of important programs to benefit the Greek Orthodox community, including, but not limited to, institutions of the Church, the philanthropies of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and assistance to Greek and Greek Orthodox families. Involvement in social and moral issues encouraged the establishment of several committees to address topics such as child abuse prevention, domestic violence, homelessness, pornography, drug and alcohol abuse, and aging.

Since 1987, the National Philoptochos office has employed a professional Social Worker, engaged in assisting the Greek Orthodox community in the United States as well as Greek and Cypriot nationals. The Department of Social Services is a very important, vital element of our organization. The mission of the Department is to improve the quality of life of those in need, in a way that maintains the dignity and self-respect of the individuals. Through confidential and professional services, the office provides outreach, education, information, support, intervention, motivation, advocacy, financial assistance and referral to local and broader resources.

In 1980, the ladies auxiliary group of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Memphis formed the Elpis Chapter of Philoptochos. Since then, countless women have given of their time and talents to support the activities within the church as well as donate to local and national charitable efforts.

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## Elpis Chapter

During 2015, our local Philoptochos chapter committed to reaching out to our local Memphis community. We partnered with many existing local organizations and found several opportunity for us to serve.

Under the directive of the National Philoptochos Society, our mission this year was to feed the hungry. The directive #250thousandmeals asked for all local chapters to combine together to feed 250,000 meals across the country. In Memphis, we fed 1,200 meals through our efforts with More than a Meal as well as many more through the Highland Heights food pantry. We held two food collections where parishioners could donate non-perishable food items as well as started a process where any left-over food from luncheons or other church events would be delivered to the food pantry for distribution to those in need.

Throughout the year, Elpis also collected Kroger cards for the church office to distribute to those who came to our church for help. In February, members made blankets for the LeBonheur Children's Hospital ICU. In August, our membership collected school supplies for William Brewster Elementary School – an achievement school located near Sam Cooper Blvd. In October, we partnered with our Sunday School to create thank you cards for the local Veteran's Hospital. In December, we collected personal hygiene items for A Bridge of Hope – an organization helping victims of human trafficking.

Our efforts did not end with serving those outside our parish. Elpis continued its long tradition of serving those in need within our church community. The Social Service Fund – a special account to provide financial help – assisted many parishioners pay bills, help with medical expenses and provide funeral support. We reorganized many of our service committees and formed the St. Sarah Ministry - named for St. Sarah, wife of Abraham. St. Sarah and Abraham hosted to Lord (present as angels) and brought them food and drink (hospitality to strangers). In their faithfulness, they were blessed as she gave birth to Isaac at a very old age. God said she will be the “mother to all nations.” This committee houses the visitation, sunshine, and prayer circle committees. We can better communicate and serve those who are sick, lonely or troubled under this main ministry. Our future plans for this committee also include flower and meal delivery.

Our hopes are to continue building these programs and continue well into future years.

## Elpis Chapter Executive Board

The Elpis Philoptochos Executive Board consists of 7-15 women who dedicate their time and talents to our organization. The Board meets monthly and coordinates and plans the activities of the group.

It is our pleasure to represent and continue the traditions of the women who serve our parish.

### 2013-2015 Executive Board (through May 2015)

Cyndi Detty, President  
Catherine Hatzigeorgiou, Vice President  
Joy Touliatos, Treasurer  
Melissa Berretta, Secretary  
Stephanie Poplos, Advisor  
Connie Apalodimas  
Renee Graves  
Elizabeth Hawkins  
Georgia Karris  
Elaine Otto  
Marianthe Pilcher  
Loretta Taras  
Sophie Theodore

### 2015-2017 Executive Board (from May 2015)

Cyndi Detty, President  
Marianthe Pilcher, Vice President  
Joy Touliatos, Treasurer  
Melissa Berretta, Secretary  
Connie Apalodimas  
Jan Futris  
Joanne Gikas  
Elizabeth Hawkins  
Georgia Karris  
Linda Obradovic  
Stephanie Poplos  
Sophie Theodore  
Kristine Wagner

## 2015 Events and Activities

### January 2015

- **Vaselopita Sunday** – Sponsored the coffee hour and raised money for the St. Basil's Academy in New York. *Donated: \$632.00*
- **More than a Meal** – Served meals at Grace St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Midtown. *Meals Served: 100*
- **Girls' Night Out – Painting Class** – Gathered for an evening of fun and learning at Artist's Compass Studio

### February 2015

- **More than a Meal** – Served meals at Grace St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Midtown. *Meals Served: 100*
- **LeBonheur Blanket Project** – Made blankets for LeBonheur Children's Hospital Intensive Care Unit. *Donated: 70 blankets*

### March 2015

- **More than a Meal** – Served meals at Grace St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Midtown. *Meals Served: 100*
- **Annunciation Brunch** – Served a light brunch for members of our community who attended the Annunciation Liturgy on March 25<sup>th</sup>
- **Community Art Show** – Sponsored a community-wide art show featuring local artists and Greek cuisine. *Donated: \$350.00 to LeBonheur Children's Hospital*
- **Hunger Action Month – Collecting Food for the Mid-South Food Bank** – Collected non-perishable food items for the Highland Heights Food Bank (in our church neighborhood). *Donated: Canned Food for the Mid-South Food Bank*

### April 2015

- **More than a Meal** – Served meals at Grace St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Midtown. *Meals Served: 100*
- **Palm Sunday Luncheon** – Cooked and served a traditional Palm Sunday fish dinner for our church community. *Raised: \$1,030 for the Elpis General Fund*

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- **Epitaphion Candle Sale** – Sold candles from the Epitaphion on Holy Friday.  
*Raised: \$2,650 for the Elpis General Fund*

## May 2015

- **More than a Meal** – Served meals at Grace St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Midtown.  
*Meals Served: 100*
- **Bookstore** - We opened the bookstore during the entire festival. *Total Sales for the Weekend: \$700*
- **Graduation Sunday** – Sponsored a coffee hour with the Daughters of Penelope in honor of our graduates. *Awarded: \$2,000 Scholarship to Mark Deitz*
- **Farewell Coffee Hour in Honor of Father Jim Berends** – Sponsored a coffee hour along with the other church organizations in honor of Father Jim Berends and his family. *Donated: gift for Father Jim*
- **Election of the 2015-2017 Executive Board** – During the May general meeting, our membership elected a new board of officers. *Elected: thirteen board members (nine incumbents; four new members)*

## June 2015

- **More than a Meal** – Served meals at Grace St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Midtown.  
*Meals Served: 100*

## July 2015

- **More than a Meal** – Cooked and served meals at Grace St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Midtown, as well as provided blessing bags. *Meals Served: 100*
- **Welcome Coffee Hour in Honor of Father Simon Thomas** – Sponsored a coffee hour along with the other church organizations in honor of Father Simon Thomas and his family. *Donated: gift for Father Simon*
- **Community Picnic in Honor of the Thomas Family**– Sponsored a community-wide picnic along with the other church organizations in honor of Father Simon Thomas and his family

# ELPIS PHILOPTOCHOS

## August 2015

- **More than a Meal** – Served meals at Grace St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Midtown. *Meals Served: 100*
- **Summer Party and School Supply Collection** – During our annual summer party, we collected school supplies for a neighborhood elementary school. *Donated: School Supplies to William Brewster Elementary School*
- **Coffee Hour in Honor of the Dormition of the Theotokos** – Sponsored the coffee hour. *Raised: \$250 for the Elpis Social Service Fund*

## September 2015

- **More than a Meal** – Served meals at Grace St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Midtown. *Meals Served: 100*
- **Hunger Action Month – Collecting Food for the Mid-South Food Bank** – Collected non-perishable food items for the Highland Heights Food Bank (in our church neighborhood). *Donated: Canned Food for the Mid-South Food Bank*
- **Auxiliary Fair** – Coordinated the annual auxiliary fair for parishioners to meet the leaders of the organizations within our church community.
- **Membership Luncheon at Chickasaw Country Club** – Coordinated the annual membership luncheon at Chickasaw Country Club. We honored all past presidents of Elpis and the former Ladies Auxiliary.
- **Cooking for our Church Series – Prospora Workshop** – Sponsored a prospora workshop instructing members how to make our Holy bread.

## October 2015

- **More than a Meal** – Cooked and served meals at Grace St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Midtown, as well as provided blessing bags. *Meals Served: 100*
- **Sts Gerasamos and Demetrious Luncheon** – Cooked and served a dinner for our church community. *Donated: \$4,100 to the St. Nicholas Shrine in New York City*
- **Make a Difference Day** – Collected thank you and get well cards for veterans. *Donated: 130 cards to the Memphis Veterans Hospital*

# ELPIS PHILOPTOCHOS

## November 2015

- **More than a Meal** – Served meals at Grace St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Midtown.  
*Meals Served: 100*
- **Thanksgiving Luncheon** – Cooked and served dinner for our church community.  
*Raised: \$3,000 for the Elpis General Fund*
- **Annunciation Christmas Card** – Created a community-wide Christmas card to send to all members in our parish. *Raised: \$3,000 for the Elpis Social Service Fund*
- **Girls Night Out – Cooking Lesson** – Under the direction of Loretta Taras and Tasia Vergos, we gathered for an evening of fun and learning.
- **Elpis Bookstore Open House** – Sponsored an open house featuring holiday products in our bookstore.

## December 2015

- **More than a Meal** – Served meals at Grace St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Midtown.  
*Meals Served: 100*
- **Christmas Party and School Supply Collection** – During our annual Christmas party with the Daughters of Penelope, we collected hygiene supplies for a local human trafficking prevention organization. *Donated: Hygiene Supplies to A Bridge of Hope.*
- **Blessing of the Animals** – Sponsored our annual blessing of the pets and raised money for a local animal shelter. *Donated: \$250 to Sunny Meadows Animal Shelter*
- **Christmas Eve Reception** – Served a light reception for members of our community who attended the Christmas Eve services on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

## 2015 Donations

### National Commitments

*The National Philoptochos Society requests all chapters participate in these donations.*

- Vasilopita for St Basil Academy - \$632.00
- Cancer - \$350.00
- Major Illness - \$250.00
- Autism - \$250.00
- Saints Photios Shrine - \$50.00
- Orthodox Christian Mission Center - \$300.00
- Support a Mission Priest - \$200.00
- Hellenic College Holy Cross - \$100.00
- Sisterhood of Saint Basil Academy - \$25.00
- International Orthodox Christian Charities - \$100.00
- 75th Anniversary Founders Fund - \$100.00
- Orthodox Christian Fellowship - \$100.00
- Hellenic College Holy Cross Scholarship Fund - \$100.00
- Retired Clergy and Widowed Presvyteres Benevolent Fund - \$100.00
- Emergency Fund - \$25.00
- Ecumenical Patriarchate - \$100.00
- National Sisterhood of Presvyteres - \$25.00
- United Nations International Children's Fund - \$25.00
- General Medical Fund - \$100.00

### Metropolis Commitments

*The Metropolis Philoptochos Society requests all chapters participate in these donations.*

- Metropolis Partners in Philanthropy Fund - \$250.00
- Metropolis Scholarship Fund - \$100.00
- Metropolis Summer Camp Programs - \$375.00
- Metropolis Emergency Relief Fund - \$100.00
- St. Spyridon Fund - \$25.00

### Local (Memphis) Donations

- LeBonheur Children's Hospital - 70 handmade blankets for the ICU
- LeBonheur Children's Hospital - \$350
- Mid-South Food Bank – several boxes of non-perishable food
- More than a Meal (July) – 100 blessing bags for the homeless

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## **Local (Memphis) Donations (continued)**

- William Brewster Elementary School – several boxes of school supplies
- Mid-South Food Bank - several boxes of non-perishable food
- More than a Meal (October) – 100 blessing bags for the homeless
- Memphis Veterans Medical Center – 120 thank you cards sent
- A Bridge of Hope – several boxes of personal hygiene items
- Sunny Meadow's Animal Shelter - \$250.00
- More than a Meal, Meals for the Homeless – 1,200 meals served
- High School Scholarship to Youth - \$2,000

## **Other Donations/Service**

- St. Nicholas Shrine, New York City - \$4,100
- Social Service Fund - \$1,545 to our church members in need
- Tray collected for Father Baker (killed in an accident) - \$1,200
- St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Knoxville (church fire) - \$2,000
- Metropolis of Boston Philoptochos, Children's Medical Fund - \$250.00
- Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church Renovation Fund (3<sup>rd</sup> installment) - \$5,000
- Congratulatory Ad for Father Paul Christy's Anniversary - \$250.00

## 2015 Service Committees

### **Altar Committee** – *Laura Couloubaritsis, Chairman*

*Committee Members: Pauline Koplín, Kristine Wagner, Amira Wassef, Luane Semos, Vicki Hoover*

The altar committee works to maintain the needs of the altar of our church, from cleaning to replacing linens and other items as needed. They assess the needs of the altar and work with Father Simon to recommend when items need to be replaced or repaired. Elpis maintains money within its budget for the needs of the altar, and can assist the Altar Committee in soliciting donations if more money is needed than is available.

### **Bookstore** – *Angela Tobias, Manager; Stephanie Poplos & Connie Apalodimas, Assistant Managers*

This committee runs the bookstore, looking after ordering, maintaining stock and working with Father Simon to ensure that certain books are available to our parishioners. The bookstore is a function of Elpis, both for moneymaking purposes, and as a service to the community. It was created in order to enable Elpis to fund their annual scholarship fund.

### **Charitable Giving** – *Elizabeth Hawkins, Chairman*

The Charitable Giving committee assesses the solicitations for money that Elpis receives in the mail, as well as seeks out new charities that could benefit from assistance from Elpis. Based on criteria that they have formulated (using advice that has been communicated to us from Father Simon and Metropolitan Nicholas), this committee makes suggestions to Elpis about charities that we should consider when we have money to donate to a worthy cause. This committee also selects a charity to designate as our “Christmas Charity.” Donations for this cause are collected at our annual Christmas Open House.

### **Cookbook** – *Elaine Otto, Chairman*

*Committee Members: Angela Tobias, Georgia Karris*

The cookbook committee keeps up with the inventory and the sales of our Elpis cookbook, “It’s Greek to Me.” Proceeds from this cookbook go to Elpis, so it is in our interest to continue to market the cookbook as much as possible. Therefore, this committee is also responsible for seeking out new opportunities for us to sell the cookbook to the general public.

### **Docent Committee** – *Renee Graves, Chairman*

*Committee Members: Melissa Berretta, Joanne Gikas, Catherine Wiggins*

This committee works with Father Simon to co-ordinate the Sanctuary Tours during the Greek Festival, and ensures that the sanctuary is clean and manned with individuals who

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can answer questions from visitors in between tours. In addition, it hosts a free informational pasta dinner for visitors who want to learn more about Orthodoxy (usually on the second Tuesday after the Festival).

### **Hospitality Committee** – *Chairperson – Open*

The hospitality committee has the important task of ensuring that events hosted by Elpis are properly set up and sufficient food is provided. This committee will work with a local bakery to provide donuts and fruit for our sponsored coffee hours. This helps fulfill Elpis' mission as the "hostess of the parish." In the past, this committee organized the coffee hour for Graduation Sunday, a coffee hour on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, and the Christmas Eve Reception at the church, amongst others.

### **Bereavement**– *Marianthe Pilcher, Chairman*

*Committee Members: Despina Karas*

The bereavement committee is on call to help guide a family through the process of organizing a makaria meal following the funeral of a departed loved one. We currently provide fish and a pot luck of side dishes and desserts. The committee is responsible for setting up the lunch as well as serving.

### **LeBonheur Blanket Committee** – *Elaine Otto and Luane Semos, Chairman*

This committee collects or creates baby blankets to donate to LeBonheur Children's Hospital. The items are tagged with a small tag that indicates that they were made with love at Annunciation, and then are donated to LeBonheur, who distributes the items to the parents of critically ill newborns in the ICU of the hospital.

### **Membership** – *Chairman, Open*

The membership committee works to come up with ideas for increasing the membership in our chapter; from ensuring that dues reminders are sent out, to assisting with membership parties and events throughout the year.

### **More than a Meal** – *Cyndi Detty, Chairman*

By partnering with Grace St. Luke's Evangelical Church, this committee serves, and sometimes cooks, meals for the hungry in the midtown area. They also create "blessing bags" containing clothes, food, water and other items to provide to the guests.

### **NEW! New Mother Support** – *Chairman, Open*

This committee provides support for expectant mothers in our congregation. They will offer advice and guidance (40 Day Blessing, Baptism, etc) through the first year of the

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baby's life. They will also ensure that sufficient copies of the Akathist Hymn for New Mothers and My Forty Day Blessing Book are tagged with gift tags stating that they are donated with love from Elpis, and that they remain on hand in the altar, to be given as gifts to mothers who bring their new babies in to be church-ed after forty days.

### **Poor and Homeless/Food Pantry** – *Anna Paris, Chairman*

This committee ensures that donation day is set and advertised for the local food pantry, and that the food is transported to Highland Heights Methodist Church food bank after it is collected. Highland Heights (on Highland and Summer) is the MIFA-sanctioned neighborhood food pantry that Elpis supports. This committee also delivers “left over” food from luncheons to local soup kitchens to feed those in need.

### **Publicity** – *Linda Obradovic and Elizabeth Hawkins, Chairman*

The publicity committee works to publicize upcoming events and promote our activities. Members of this group send the monthly newsletter, hang flyers and take photographs of events. They are also responsible for our organization's online presence.

### **Scholarship** – *Melissa Berretta, Chairman*

*Committee: Loretta Taras, Sophie Theodore*

The scholarship committee collects the applications for the annual Elpis scholarship, “blinds” the applications in some way (redacting the name from the application), and evaluates the anonymous applications using a specific weighted rubric in order to determine the scholarship winner.

### **Social Services** – *Cyndi Detty, Chairman*

Using monies from the proceeds of the Christmas Card as well as other fundraisers, this committee works with Father Simon who receives requests from members of the parish who are in need of financial assistance during times of crisis

### **NEW! St Sarah Ministry** – *Stephanie Poplos, Chairman*

In order to create a cohesive process, the St. Sarah Ministry allows members of the service organizations to communicate with each other to best serve those in our community who are sick, lonely or troubled.

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- **Prayer Circle** –*Luane Semos, Chairman*  
The prayer circle works with Father Simon to establish a calendar for a monthly Paraklesis Service to be prayed on behalf of those who submit their names for prayer. The committee also prays for those on the prayer list.
- **Sunshine Committee** –*Zoe Futris, Chairman*  
The sunshine committee is responsible for ensuring that notes and cards are sent to members of our parish on the occasions of illness, death, congratulations, and other such events deemed necessary by the membership.
- **Visitation Committee** – *Kristine Wagner, Chairman*  
The visitation committee ensures that those parishioners who are ill, infirm, bed-ridden or hospitalized receive regular visits from members of the community, thus brightening their day and letting them know that we still remember and love them. The chairperson works with Father Simon to establish the list of those to visit – to add someone to the visitation list, please contact Fr. Simon.
- **NEW! Take them the Meal Committee** – *Chairman, Open*  
We are looking for several members to kick-off a program within our church community that delivers meals to the home-bound, sick, troubled or lonely. Meals may be delivered monthly or occasionally depending upon the availability of the committee members.
- **NEW! Flower Delivery Committee** – *Chairman, Open*  
We are looking for several members to kick-off a program within our church community that delivers flowers to the home-bound, sick, troubled or lonely. Through arrangements with a local florist, flowers will be placed in the altar for Sunday services then delivered.

## **Youth Mentoring Committee** –*Stephanie Poplos, Chairman*

The Youth Mentoring committee creates events in which Elpis can meet and work with our youth (especially the young women of the parish), by giving them an opportunity to learn how to provide service to the parish as a whole. We also look for ways pass on the traditions of parish life as well as being present in the youth's lives.

## **NEW! Welcome Committee** – *Joanne Gikas and Melissa Berretta, Chairman*

The welcome committee will work with the parish council to welcome new and visiting members to our community.

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## 2015 Event Committees

**Art Show** – *Peter Malonas, Chairman*

**Auxiliary Fair** – *Chairman, Open*

**Blessing of the Pets** – *Connie Apalodimas & Jan Futris, Chairman*

**Christmas Card** – *Sophie Theodore & Joy Touliatos, Chairman*

**Christmas Party** – *Anastasia Terranova & Cyndi Detty, Chairman*

**Dormition Reception** – *Angela Buchanan, Janet Boosalis, Alex Vergos, Chairman*

**Epitaphio Candles** – *Loretta Taras, Chairman*

**Flu Shot Project** – *Stephanie Poplos, Chairman*

**Membership Luncheon** – *Sophie Theodore, Chairman*

**Palm Sunday Luncheon** – *Dennis Patrikios and Cyndi Detty, Chairman*

**Saint Gerasimos and Saint Demetrios Luncheon** – *Sophie Sousoulas and Zoe Anaston, Chairman*

**Sunday of Orthodoxy** – *Elizabeth Hawkins, Chairman*

**Thanksgiving Luncheon** – *Gabriel and Enosis Touliatos, Chairman*

## Photo Gallery

