

THE ORTHODOX POST



St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church, 181-14 Midland Parkway, Jamaica Estates, New York, NY 11432
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Pastor's Message

by Fr. Nikodhim

At this autumn's general meeting, our parish voted to embark on a new endeavor. Even in the midst of these unprecedented times—or, perhaps, because of this season of grief—it seemed right and necessary to start something new and good. Thanks to a generous initial donation offered in memory of our friend and faithful sister in Christ, Viola Kallinikos, St. Nicholas Church will begin in 2021 to give back to our community and our world with an official outreach program for charitable causes. Those who remember Viola, her spirit and labor on behalf of her family and this community, will know how fitting it is to think of her as we undertake this new and important project together.

St. Nicholas has long been a generous place, helping as we have been able. Yet what we have not had is a consistent mandate and budget to make these offerings and investments more than sporadic. In my years as a priest here, it has been gratifying to see your responses, our response, to both local and national and international appeals. Missionaries, village priests, minders of children in orphanages, natural disasters, the ills of warfare and human tragedy, when confronted by these we have done what we can, trusting that God's blessings will be carried with what we place into baskets and envelopes and that He heals and will help. This new program, though, is slightly different. For the first time, rather than waiting for needs to arise, we will cultivate and invest ourselves into the consistent practice of generosity. A handful of people will guide this each year, deciding where and how best to give and to whom of those funds that they will be mandated to spend annually. And this new fund will be there for as long as our parish lasts, enhanced and augmented with future gifts. Complementing the parish memorial fund, which for decades has ensured the beauty of our services, this new program will also be a way to leave behind long-lasting gifts and bequests so that St. Nicholas can be both spiritually and compassionately beautiful. Finally, this new fund will be a way to teach and include our young people in the spiritual discipline and virtue of caring for others.

We need your help. I am not writing this right now to ask for money. **We need your help right now** in finding the right name for this new and exciting ministry of our community. From its very inception, we want you to be involved so we are running our own little competition to find the right words to help inaugurate this project.

Please send your submissions for a name for our new charitable program to Fr. Niko (fr.niko@stnicholasalbanian.org) by February 28. The person who submits the winning title will receive a special prize. Challenge your friends and help us all to begin this new year with something good!



ST. NICHOLAS ALBANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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 Father Nikodhim, Priest • Tel: 208-818-3372
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Icon Sunday 2021

Brothers and Sisters,

Christ is in our midst! Krishti midis nesh!



While normally we would be sending out this letter in anticipation of seeing many of you participating in the annual Icon Presentation and Auction on that Sunday after Theophany, January 10, this year must be different. We all relish this longstanding tradition at St. Nicholas of fun and spirited bidding on our favorite icons, and it remains one of the major fund raisers for our parish. But this is not a normal year, and the pandemic is still with us. There surely is finally some optimism that this will come to an end sooner rather than later with the vaccines that are now being distributed; however, January and February may be difficult months until this is broadly available to the whole public. Therefore, please continue to wear masks, practice social distancing, wash your hands, and avoid large gatherings, as we have all been advised to do and are now all too familiar with. Because of this, we are sad to announce that, as you probably expected, the icon presentation in person will be cancelled. Yet we will continue this tradition as best we can.

Attached is the listing of all the icons that are normally present. **For this year only, hold onto your icons. Do not plan on bringing them back to Church just yet.** If you would like to make the same donation as last year, it would be much appreciated. If you would like to make a donation for a specific icon, please indicate a sponsorship amount next to this on the form when you send it back in to Church. If this is a new pledge and you do not have the icon, let us know if you would like to receive this icon to have for 2021, and we will do our best to get this out to you.

With God's help and our careful watchfulness, we look forward to bringing this beloved tradition back in 2022. Until then,

We wish you a very happy and healthy New Year! Gezuar vitin e ri!

*Fr. Niko
 Lou Foundos
 and the whole Parish Council*

Icon Sunday and Its History



The icon “auction” at St. Nicholas Church is part of a uniquely Albanian annual custom. Under Ottoman oppression, the faithful of southern Albania often had to ransom their holy items and places from the ruling powers, paying taxes and fines to reclaim what they loved. Over time and as the government changed, these payments became part of a beloved local tradition around the feast of the Lord’s Baptism. Where once these tolls were paid simply to keep the churches open and properly outfitted, now the auction was an opportunity to express pride—particularly by claiming or outbidding competitors for favorite icons of one’s patron or family saints. So the

Church reformatted its former means of subjugation and this day near the feast of Holy Theophany became one of communal joy and support. As the tradition was carried to America, it took yet another form here in New York, where bids are now made for icons that can then go home with each family, blessing them from the walls and tables and bookshelves where they are installed until they are returned for the next year’s event.

Ankandi i Ikonave në Dioqezën e Korçës

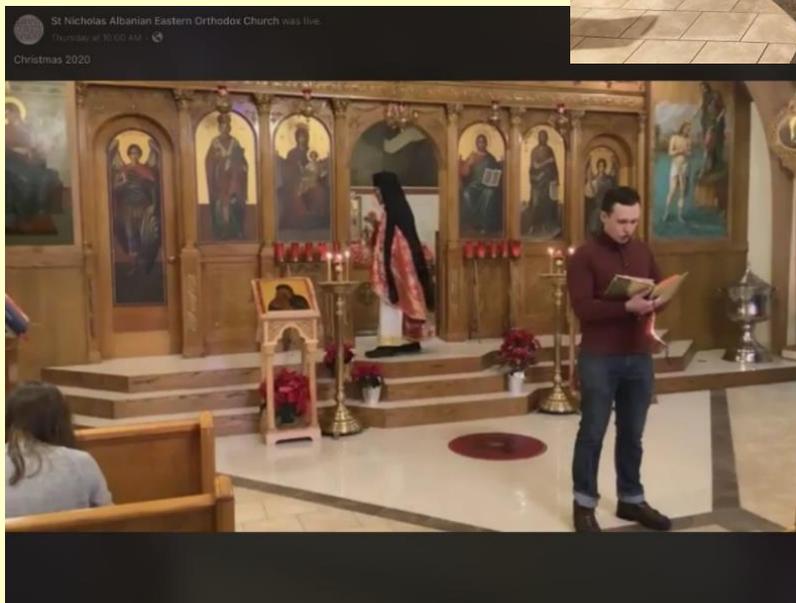
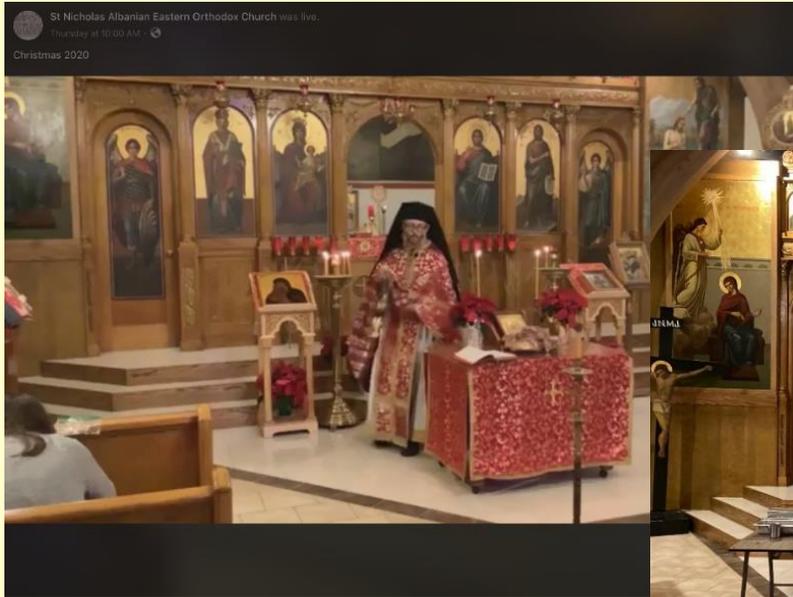
Ankandi i ikonave ka një histori që tradita e ka përmbledhur kështu: Një Sulltan, në dioqezën e Korçës kishte kërkuar nga të krishterët taksa të forta. Peshkopi dhe grigja e tij dhanë sa mundën por meqë shuma ishte marramendëse dhe nuk mund të plotësonte kërkesat e Sulltanit atëherë, ky i fundit mori çgjeti në Kishë, ikonat dhe objektet kishtare, enët e shenjta etj. Kishat ngelën të zbrazëta. Kjo u vu re nga e gjithë komuniteti dhe kisha kaloi në krizë ekonomike për të vijuar aktivitetin e saj shpëtimtar. Pak kohe me pas, të krishterët shkuan tek Peshkopi i tyre dhe i thanë: Ne i dhamë para Sulltanit dhe nuk i japim dot kishës sonë. Atëherë u bë një ankand ikonash, në të cilin ikonat nuk shiteshin por çdokush që i merrte pas një ankadi me një vlerë monetare, i mbante për bekim për dyzet ditë dhe përsëri ia kthente ato Kishës. Në të njëjtën mënyre vepruan edhe me kryqin që bekonte ujërat me gjashtë Janar. Kjo traditë u vazhdua nga të krishterët çdo 6 Janar ashtu siç akoma dhe sot vazhdon në dioqezën e Korçës. Kjo traditë kryhet për të ndihmuar kishën nga vetë pjesëtarët e komunitetit. Ajo të kujton dhe ka të njëjtën frymë, me traditën e Kishës së Hershme, në vitet apostolike, ku pasuria e të krishterëve, vendosej përpara këmbëve të apostujve, pra dorëzohej në kishë dhe ajo përdorej për të mirën e gjithë pjesëtarëve të komunitetit të saj.

Shkroi: Thoma Shkira

CHRISTMAS AT ST. NICHOLAS

Christmas at St. Nicholas was very different this year. Instead of one big gathering, everyone was invited to come to Church with just their family and to spend a brief time in prayer. Although we missed seeing everyone, we were glad to welcome many, and we are already looking forward to next year when we can all come together again to celebrate!

A big thank you to our wonderful choir! You can find recordings of all our services and their singing on Facebook.



President's Message

by Lou Foundos

December has been a very busy month at St. Nicholas. We had record participation with our Annual Christmas Card this year. We had over 100 families and 13 businesses that participated. Thank you all for making this a big success! I think since we have not been able to see many people, this was a good way to reconnect with all in the St. Nicholas community.

Father Nikodhim has reminded us, once again, the procedures that we must follow when we attend church during these difficult days. We have been quite successful and have only had one incident in over 6 months due to the procedures and everyone's cooperation. The service on St. Nicholas day was our biggest challenge and we reached near capacity that day. We would love to have more attend services, but remember, you must call prior to attending to insure that we have space and can accommodate all with the present limitations that we must abide by. Due to these limitations, we were unable to have the regular Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. However, Father created a signup sheet so families could come to church in 15 minute intervals so they could light a candle and pray during what would normally be a very festive time of the year.

After all the struggles and challenges of this last year, we are now optimistic that the end is approaching since the vaccine is rapidly being distributed. We must continue following the instructions of wear face masks, wash your hands and distance spacing during the next few months until the vaccine starts to work in the majority of the population.

I would like to wish all a HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR!!

Daughter's Corner

by Linda Foundos & Adriana Topore

The New Year has begun; but before we talk about New Year's resolutions, let us go over the "Best of 2020." You might ask, "Are you out of your mind? Are you serious? Are you crazy?" These questions have crossed my mind as well. We have been fighting the virus for almost a year, and in the meantime, we are living our lives. We hear about the virus every day, and it is becoming our new normal. But besides hearing non-stop about the virus, when you hear about Claire Wollocko and Lucas Alla getting baptised, Lucas Liolin being born, Kiara Petro being born, Adelina Llupa welcoming her grandson Julian, and Britu Haille soon to become a grandmother, how do you feel? You feel alive and joyful!

What else happened last year along with Covid-19? Something else, something new.....Zoom meet and Google meet. Who knew that a time would come that we would attend Church services online, Sunday school would meet online, and adult classes would be very successful online. We were not prepared for such circumstances, but we learned and we became smarter and stronger. We have also been in touch with families and friends more than ever. That is how we have learned that Angela Mile became a lawyer, Kimberly Oswald has gotten engaged, Christiana Sera got a puppy dog, Ketrini Celo is attending St. John's University, Elisabeth Brehl has graduated, Nicholas Brehl is going for his Master's degree and even more news that we are not aware of. We are always delighted to hear news of happy events & accomplishments of our St. Nicholas Family.

What else is there to remember from 2020? Sadly, a number of our loved ones fell asleep in the Lord: Viola Kallinikos, Agatha Nache, Elizabeth Jones, Bill Peters, and Vasil Cakuli. Difficult times did not stop (please see next page)

Daughter's Corner

by Linda Foundos & Adriana Topore

(from previous page)

our Church from remembering our dear parishioners. Our deepest sympathy to the families. May their memory be eternal.

We ended the year with the celebration of Christmas, a Christmas like never before. Christ is in our midst!

We wish you all a very Happy and Blessed New Year.

Congratulations and best wishes to all.

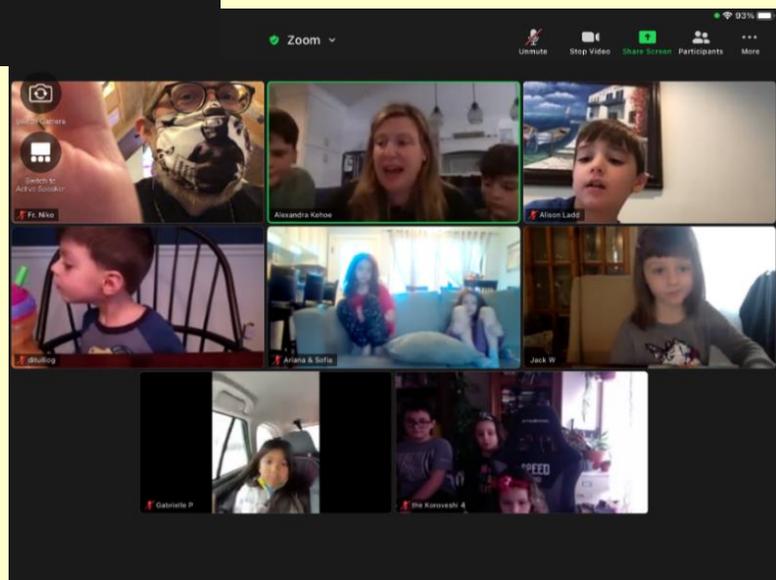
Please contact the church office if you have any news you would like to share.



Church School

The children of our Sunday School look forward to spending time together on the first and third Sunday of each month. Although they can't yet gather in person, they share projects and crafts and get to see their friends on the screen. If your little ones would like to take part, please reach out to Adriana:

secretary@stnicholasalbanian.org



JANUARY SAINTS AND NAME DAYS

1 - St. Basil

Keni Gjika, Bill Nasi, Vasil Baltadori, Vasilika Dajko, Vasian Gjoka, Visjanos Papalilo, Vasil Pecani, Betty Kelapire

3 - St. Genevieve

Jenny Peters, Jennifer Slane

6 - Theophany of the Lord

Photaq Kondili, Jordan Krastev

7 - St. John the Baptist

John Jance, Johnny Tsamblakos, Zhani Joanidhi, Joanne Heiser, Jonida Dervishi, Jana Foundos, Jani Kolovani, Jani Panajoti, Jean Preftes, Johnny Shkurti, Yona Stefani, Jonathan Topore

12 - St. Tatiana

Tatiana Prela

17 - St. Anthony

Andon Dede, Antoneta Mertiri, Anthony Aleko, Andi Mitre

18 - St. Athanasius

Nasi Pavllo, Thomas Tili, Renas Tili

20 - St. Euthymius

Rosa

If you don't see your name please contact Fr. Nikodhim.

25 - St. Gregory the Theologian

Gregory DiTullio, Gregory Papalexis

Nëse nuk sheh emrin tënd, të lutem lajmëro priftin.

14 - St. Nina

Zanina Sherko

ATTENTION

The **2021 Annual Pledge** campaign started November 2020. The Covid Virus has significantly affected the church financially and needs your support even more than ever. Please be as generous as you can. If you have any question, please call the office and someone will get back to you. Thank you!

Ads from Merchants Who Support the Church

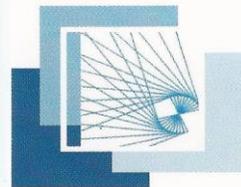
Please look at the Ads and support these Merchants by buying goods and services from them, whenever possible.

Tell the Merchant that you are from St, Nicholas Church and saw their Ad in the Church's Monthly Newsletter!!!

For new ads please contact Lou Foundos

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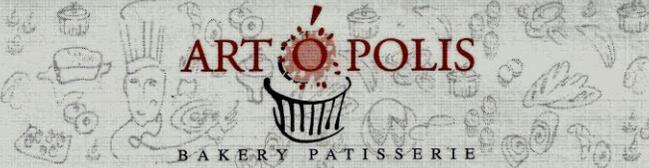
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CHURCH SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

Fri. January 1 - Liturgy, 10am: St. Basil
 Sat. 2 -- Vespers, 5pm
 Sun. 3 -- Liturgy, 10am
 Tue. 5 -- Great Vespers, 5pm
 Wed. 6 -- Liturgy, 10am: Theophany of the Lord
 Sat. 9 -- Vespers, 5pm
 Sun. 10 -- Liturgy, 10am
 Sat. 16 -- Vespers, 5pm
 Sun. 17 -- Liturgy, 10am
 Sat. 23 -- Vespers, 5pm
 Sun. 24 -- Liturgy, 10am
 Sat. 30 -- Vespers, 5pm
 Sun. 31 -- Liturgy, 10am

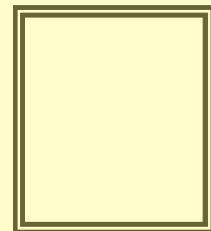
**Planning to attend Church this Sunday?
Please call.**



At St. Nicholas we are committed to the safety of all who worship here. Right now, this means a few additional responsibilities. Please help keep everyone healthy by reading and following those directions posted in the parish entryway. Please help us make sure that everyone who wants to come to Church can; you can do this by phoning the parish office (718-380-5684) and leaving a message by the Friday before you wish to attend or by sending an email to secretary@stnicholasalbanian.org

We can't wait to see you soon!

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