

GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, INC. METROPOLIS PRESIDENT REPORT 2024 - 2026



Archdiocesan District (AD)

Irene Hotzoglou, President

National Convention, Cleveland, Ohio

June 29 – July 2, 2026

The Archdiocesan District Philoptochos Board, alongside our devoted chapters and passionate women of Philoptochos, continues to be a driving force in carrying out our sacred mission. Through faith, compassion, and a spirit of sisterhood, we work together to uplift those in need and strengthen our communities. The following update highlights the impact of our collective efforts and the opportunities that lie ahead as we continue to strengthen and support our communities.

- **Feed the Hungry** - Our monthly Feed the Hungry ministry remains a meaningful outreach effort. On the last Tuesday of each month, a chapter—often joined by parishioners and youth—serves those in need by providing food, clothing, and essential personal care items to underserved and homeless individuals in our community.
- **Social Services** - Our Social Services program is the core of Philoptochos and showcases our collective strength. Since March of 2026, we have disbursed close to **\$ 17,000.00 across 14 cases and distributed \$1,800** in gift cards.

We select special drives that support specific causes and encourage our chapters to participate. Each chapter may participate in the way that best suits their community and capabilities. The most recent initiative introduced to our chapters supported our veterans. This initiative involved compiling *Move-In Essentials* for veterans moving into permanent housing.

We remain committed to helping those in need and responding to the many challenges faced by individuals and families in our communities.

- **St. Michael's Home** - Construction in Uniondale, Long Island, continues to make meaningful progress, with the construction well underway. We are grateful that financing has been secured with the support of Nassau County, and we hope the project will be completed by the end of this year. As always, we remain committed to supporting St. Michael's Home through the generous annual contributions from our chapters and the proceeds from our Biennial Agape Luncheon.
- **The Archbishop Elpidophos Beacons of Hope" Seminarian Scholarship Fund** - Established in 2022 with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, the Beacons of Hope Seminarian Scholarship Fund was created to invest in the future of our Church by supporting seminarians from the Archdiocesan District pursuing their studies at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. Since its inception, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to growing this fund through awareness, outreach, and fundraising efforts. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our Philoptochos chapters

and faithful supporters, we have raised more than \$80,000 and have distributed over \$76,000 in scholarship assistance to seminarians as they prepare for a life of ministry and service. As of September 2025, five seminarians from the Archdiocesan District were enrolled in the Master of Divinity program, and we joyfully celebrate the recent graduation of two others. We remain committed to growing the Beacons of Hope Seminarian Scholarship Fund so those answering God's call receive the encouragement and support they need. In supporting our seminarians today, we help nurture the future spiritual leaders of our Church.

On Saturday, April 19, some of our board members visited The Hellenic College, Holy Cross Seminary. The purpose of this visit was to create a meaningful opportunity to connect with the seminarians, offer our support, and strengthen our relationship with the future clergy of our church. The visit was well organized, and we were warmly welcomed by Father Bartholomew Mercado and some of our District seminarians, who gave us a tour of the campus. We also had the pleasure of meeting with Father Michael Lambakis, the President of the school, and Dr. Bruce Beck, Director of Enrollment Management, and we shared a gracious lunch. We concluded our day by attending vespers and participated in the Divine Liturgy the following day. What stood out most was the genuine happiness and appreciation the seminarians expressed for our visit. They conveyed heartfelt gratitude and a desire for continued connection with Philoptochos.

- **Lenten Retreat** - We had our Lenten retreat on Saturday, March 21, beautifully hosted by the Holy Trinity Philoptochos in New Rochelle, NY, with 23 chapters represented. We were blessed to have Father Elias Villis, Father Nicholas Anctil, and Father Dimitri Balidis with us, and we were honored to receive a heartfelt message from His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, which Father Elias read on his behalf. Dr. Evelyn Bilias Lolis spoke on the topic: "Sustaining the Woman Who Serves: Gratitude, and Self-Compassion in the Sacred Rhythm of Lent," reminding us to care for ourselves as we serve others and to lead with gratitude and compassion. It was a wonderful day of reflection.
- **Chapter/Community Outreach** - We are dedicated to maintaining strong communication with our chapters through regular emails, our website, and personal phone calls. We have events like "The Sisterhood of the Traveling Philoptochos" that allow our chapters to connect, socialize, and share innovative ideas through meaningful discussions. We also organize impactful workshops, both in person and via Zoom, ensuring accessibility and participation for everyone. Additionally, we proactively collect gift cards at our events to assist our many Social Services Cases.

I am pleased to share that we will be holding a webinar in partnership with the Saint Anastasia Fellowship Addiction Ministry, scheduled for Saturday, October 3, 2026. Father Nicholas Delaveris will moderate the webinar and will be open to all Philoptochos members throughout our District. The topic will be ***"How to Support Family Members Struggling with Addiction,"*** keeping the conversation deeply rooted in the resources our faith offers.

- **Upcoming Events**

- **Beacons of Hope Fundraiser Event – Raffle Drawing** – Saturday, September 19, 2026, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Shrine Church, Flushing, NY – Michelis Cultural Center.
- **Webinar Saturday, October 3, 2026, on “How to Support Family Members Struggling with Addiction”** - Keeping the conversation deeply rooted in the resources our faith offers. Moderated by Father Nikolas Delavaris, St. Anastasia’s Addictions Ministry
- **Agape Luncheon** – Saturday, May 8, 2027, V.I.P. Country Club, New Rochelle, NY.
- **A.D. Philoptochos Biennial Conference** - Saturday, May 22, 2027

The Archdiocesan District Philoptochos expresses its heartfelt love and gratitude to His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, National Philoptochos Spiritual Advisor; His Grace Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos, Archdiocesan District Chancellor; Rev. Protopresbyter of the Ecumenical Throne Elias Villis, for their spiritual guidance, encouragement, and unwavering support.

We also extend our heartfelt appreciation to National Philoptochos President Debbie George for her leadership. She has served with dignity, poise, compassion, and dedication, exemplifying the spirit of Philoptochos. We are deeply grateful to the National Philoptochos Society for its leadership, love, support, and partnership in this sacred ministry.

As we look ahead to the National Philoptochos Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, we do so with gratitude, hope, and enthusiasm. The convention will provide meaningful opportunities for fellowship, learning, sharing ideas, and conducting the important work of Philoptochos. Most importantly, it will strengthen the bonds that unite us and renew our commitment to serving Christ through faith, philanthropy, and love. May God continue to bless and guide the work of Philoptochos as we strive to be His hands and heart in the world.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Hotzoglou, President
Archdiocesan District (AD)