



# PHILOPTOCHOS CORNER

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church  
3109 Scio Church Road  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

January 2017

*"Let Today Be the Start of Something New!"*

**HAPPY  
NEW YEAR**

We would like to wish a Happy Name Day and  
Χρόνια Πολλά to everyone with the name  
"Vasili" or "Vasiliki"

A very special Χρόνια Πολλά to Father Vasili

## JANUARY NEWS BRIEFS

A new year is just beginning, and our Philoptochos has already started planning activities and projects for 2017. Let's start with our January meeting and our January Membership Tea . . .

## MEMBERSHIP TEA

Our membership continues to grow each year, and we anticipate that the trend will continue.

Your daughters, God-daughters, nieces, sisters, and sisters-in-law are invited to attend our January Membership Tea on **Saturday, January 21, at 1 p.m.** Our "Tea Party" will include lunch/desserts and promises to be a fun afternoon.

## DATES TO REMEMBER



**SUNDAY, JANUARY 8**  
Annual Vasilopita

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11**  
Philoptochos Meeting, 11 a.m.  
Soup/Sandwich Lunch Combo  
Crafts Project!

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 21**  
Membership Tea -1:00 p.m.



**SATURDAY, MARCH 18**  
Women's Lenten Retreat  
Sponsored by our Philoptochos  
Details to Follow

## SAINT BASIL THE GREAT Feast Day--January 1



During the 4th century, one of the greatest Fathers of the Christian Church appeared on the spiritual horizon of the Orthodox Faith. His name was Basil and he was Bishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia (Asia Minor). He was born four years after the First Ecumenical Council held in the year 325 A.D. Saint Basil was one of the three Cappadocian Fathers of the Church (the others were Gregory of Nazianzus, his best friend, and his brother, Gregory of Nyssa).

Saint Basil was the first person in human history to establish an orphanage for little children. He also founded the first Christian hospital in the world. His fame as a Holy Man spread like wildfire throughout the Byzantine world. He was considered one of the most wise and compassionate clergymen in the entire history of the Church.

His Feast Day is observed on January 1, the beginning of the New Year and the Epiphany season.

The Church, therefore, in respect for his many contributions to the Church and to mankind in general, combined the joy and happiness of the New Year with the glory of the birth of Christ and the Epiphany into what is known in the Orthodox Church as the Vasilopita Observance. —www.goarch.org

## VASILOPITA

One of the most beautiful, inspiring traditions and customs of the Greek Orthodox Church is the observance of Vasilopita. It is this annual family observance, together with many other traditions of our Church, which joins our Orthodox Faith and heritage with the history of the Christian religion itself.

The word Vasilopita is a compound Greek word meaning the sweet 'bread of Basil.'

### Background

This age-old tradition commenced in the 4th century when Saint Basil the Great, who was a bishop, wanted to distribute money to the poor in his Diocese. He commissioned some women to bake sweetened bread in which he arranged to place gold coins. Thus the families, in cutting the bread to nourish themselves, were pleasantly surprised to find the coins.



### Annual Home Observance

Sweets are added to the bread that symbolize the sweetness and joy of life everlasting. It also symbolizes the hope that the New Year will be filled with the sweetness of life, liberty, health, and happiness for all who participate in the Vasilopita Observance. When the bread is cut and the observance begins, the individual who receives that portion of the bread which contains the coin is considered to be blessed.

This tradition adds joy to the celebration at the beginning of the New Year which everyone hopes will bring joy to all. Many Orthodox Christians enjoy the Vasilopita at home with their loved ones during the New Year celebration. The head of the family cuts pieces of bread for all members of the family. Since Saint Basil loved the poor people, a special piece is cut for the unfortunate of the world, which symbolizes our concern for poverty-stricken people of all nations. —www.goarch.org

## "THIS YEAR IS YOURS"

God built and launched this year for you  
Upon the bridge you stand  
It's your ship, aye, your own ship,  
And you are in command

Just what the twelve months' trip will do  
Rests wholly, solely, friend, with you

Your logbook kept from day to day  
My friend, what will it show?  
Have you on your appointed way  
Made progress, yes or no?

The log will tell, like a guiding star  
The sort of captain that you are

For weal or woe this year is yours  
Your ship is on life's sea  
Your acts as captain must decide  
Whichever it shall be

So now in starting on your trip  
Ask God to help you sail your ship

--Alfred Lord Tennyson



## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

### Vegetable Lasagna



This colorful and tasty lasagna is filled with a variety of vegetables, two kinds of cheese, and is just perfect on a cold, snowy January day

- 8 uncooked lasagna noodles
  - 1 tbsp. olive or vegetable oil
  - 1 garlic clove, minced
  - 3 cups broccoli cuts
  - 1 ½ cups sliced fresh mushrooms
  - 1 medium red, yellow, or orange bell pepper or a mixture of all—about 1 cup coarsely chopped
  - 1 egg
  - 1 container ricotta cheese—15 oz.
  - 1 tsp. dried Italian seasoning or seasoning of your choice
  - 1 jar chunky vegetable tomato pasta sauce or homemade sauce—26-28 oz. (3+ cups)
  - 8 oz shredded cheese of your choice
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- Heat oven to 350 degrees
  - Cook noodles; drain; cool
  - Heat oil ; add garlic, broccoli, mushrooms, peppers; saute 3-4 minutes
  - Beat egg; add ricotta cheese and seasoning
  - Spread ½ cup pasta sauce in ungreased 13x9" baking dish
  - Top with 4 noodles; half of ricotta mixture, half of cooked vegetables, half of remaining pasta sauce and 1 cup of the shredded cheese
  - Repeat layers starting with noodles
  - Bake for 45-50 minutes or until hot and bubbly. If cheese gets too brown, cover loosely with foil
  - Let stand 15 minutes before serving



### BRAIN TEASER!

**Mary's father has 5 daughters  
Nana, Nene, Nini, Nono, and \_\_\_\_\_  
What is the fifth daughter's name?  
(Answer on p. 5)**

# ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER

What a FUN evening! We all enjoyed a delicious dinner at Mediterraneo; and as a surprise, seven members of the St. Nicholas Men's Choir led by Alex Kales performed Christmas Carols after which we all joined in.

Our "Singing Santas" included Peter Ballios, Father Nick, Tom Kolokithas, Jim Prokos, Stephen Kolokithas, Jamie Kales, and Alex Kales. The ladies brought hats/gloves/scarves and other items for children in need, and by the end of the evening the Christmas spirit was well underway!





## NEW YEAR TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

New Year's Day is a holiday celebrated all over the world with different customs and rituals during different months of the year. Those celebrating on January 1 besides the United States include . . .

 **Spain.** As midnight strikes, it is customary to quickly eat twelve grapes, one at each strike of the clock. The grapes are supposed to bring good luck

 **England.** The English custom for welcoming New Year's is full of hospitality and warmth. They believe that the first guest for the year would bring fortune for them. The person should be a male, should enter through the front door and bear some traditional gifts like a loaf for the kitchen, drink for the head of the family, and coal to light the fire. They believe that these bring good luck throughout the year

 **Germany.** Lead is considered to be auspicious in Germany. They pour molten lead into cold water and the shape that it takes afterward predicts the future

 **Brazil.** Brazilians believe that lentils signify wealth and prosperity so they serve food items made up of the legume (like soup) on the New Year

 **Wales.** At midnight at the initial toll, the back door of the house is first opened and then immediately shut which symbolizes releasing the old year and locking out all of the bad luck that it brought. At the 12<sup>th</sup> strike of the clock, the door is re-opened to welcome the New Year with all its goodness, luck, and prosperity

 **Denmark.** Breaking old plates and glasses against friends' and relatives' doors is a sign of friendship

## NEW YEAR FACTS

- ❖ According to statistics from the National Insurance Crime Bureau, vehicles are stolen on New Year's Day more than any other holiday
- ❖ The first use of a Times Square New Year's Eve Ball to signal the end of 1907 was the result of New York City banning fireworks because they were too dangerous. The 2017 ball is covered with 2,600 Waterford crystals
- ❖ The top three places to celebrate New Year's Eve in the USA are Las Vegas, Disney World, and New York City. Internationally, one of the biggest celebrations is in Sydney, Australia
- ❖ In 1788 Robert Burns sent the poem "Auld Lang Syne" to the Scots Musical Museum indicating that it was an ancient song but that he had been the first to record it on paper. Translated "times gone by" the song is all about preserving old friendships and looking back over the events of the year
- ❖ Using a baby to signify the New Year began in ancient Greece around 600 B.C.



Answer to riddle—"Mary"