

GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, INC.
METROPOLIS PRESIDENT'S REPORT
2018-2020



Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos

Irene Politis, President

August 22, 2020

Greetings from the Metropolis of Atlanta!

First and foremost, I want to thank Metropolitan Savas, Barbara Pasalis, chair, Crystal Thomas and Georgia Vlitas, co-chairs of the 2020 Philoptochos Clergy-Laity, for planning what would have been an unbelievable convention. Regrettably, this event was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic; however we are fortunate to be able to conduct our business virtually via Zoom video conferencing.

Members of our Philoptochos Chapters have continued working faithfully to fulfill the mission of Philoptochos. We remain dedicated to helping those in need through direct assistance with medical, household, funeral and other expenses. We extend our thanks to Paulette Geanacopoulos for her support and guidance with our Metropolis' social services cases, especially for the help provided for Maya, a little girl suffering from brain cancer. A special thank you for all donations received from outside of our Metropolis. I'm happy to report Maya is doing amazing for now!

On November 9 and 10, 2018, a Metropolis of Atlanta Board meeting was held in Atlanta, Georgia. Reports were given by the committee chairs. Discussions were held regarding our projects, commitments and ways to improve contact with our Chapters. Our Metropolis consists of 70 Chapters, 63 of which are active. We have an amazing digital presence including a website and Facebook page. Chapters are encouraged to share their information so their good works can be published on our social media platforms.

Even though we have all been impacted by COVID-19, we are blessed with the ability to continue to help in one way or another. Many Chapters have made masks, delivered food to essential workers, sent thank you notes, checked on the elderly in their communities---whatever they were able to do during this pandemic.

Our Chapters are striving to support both National and Metropolis commitments and programs. For example, support and participation in our "Feed the Hungry" and "Operation Classroom" initiatives continue. Chapters are encouraged to promote Philoptochos and work on their membership. These have been very difficult times but the women of Philoptochos always come together to make a difference in people's lives.

Lenten Spiritual Retreats are held annually in March at our beautiful Diakonia Retreat Center in Salem, South Carolina. The 12th Annual Spiritual retreat was held March 16-18, 2018. Seventy

women from 23 Chapters attended the retreat. Father Mark Leondis, Saint Mark Greek Orthodox Church in Boca Raton, Florida was the presenter. In March 2019, the 13th Annual Spiritual retreat was held with 78 women from 25 Chapters in attendance. Father Nicholas Louh, Saint John the Divine in Jacksonville, Florida was the presenter. The schedule included confessions, prosforo demonstrations, church services and meeting sisters from our Metropolis. The Metropolis Board meeting was held prior to the participants' arrival. We were honored to have His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios and His Grace Bishop Sevastianos with us. We attended church services for His Eminence's Name day in the Panagia Chapel. Unfortunately, the 2020 Spiritual Retreat and Board meeting were cancelled due to the global pandemic. We are looking forward to next year's retreat in March 2021 with presenter, Fredeica Matthewes-Green, leading author and speaker on topics related to Eastern Orthodox belief and practice.

Our Metropolis Philoptochos sponsors a special needs camp, "Christ the Good Shepard", held annually in May at the Diakonia Retreat Center. Families with children within the autistic spectrum are invited to attend. Participation is limited to 10 families and trained counselors are available for each child. This event is underwritten by a very generous donor, our Chapters and the Metropolis Philoptochos Board. We were saddened that this year's camp was cancelled due to the pandemic.

The Metropolis Clergy-Laity and the Philoptochos Conference was held in Jacksonville, Florida on June 19-22,2019. It was an honor that His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros attended the conference. Philoptochos delegates participated in workshops on Treasury, Philanthropy and Membership. Board members led the workshops and delegates were encouraged to communicate what they learned with their Chapters. Guest speaker topics included: Human and Sex Trafficking, Orthodox Christian Fellowship, Hunger Fight, Angels for Allison (a non-profit that provides financial assistance for expenses associated with the death of a child) and Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry. We were honored our National President, Maria Logus and National Assistant Treasurer, joined our meeting via video-conference to address the delegates. Delegates visited the Saint Photios Shrine. Philoptochos Chapter Saint Anargyri of Saint John the Divine did an amazing job planning and hosting this conference.

The Ipapanti Chapter of the Annunciation Cathedral, Atlanta, Georgia, celebrated their 75th Anniversary on August 24, 2019. A beautiful luncheon was held where past presidents were honored. A \$1000 donation designated for social services was given to the Metropolis Philoptochos.

The Agape Celebration event is held biennially in a different conference in our Metropolis. This event was planned for August 2020 but has been postponed until Spring 2021. Proceeds from this event assist Metropolis youth programs. Our Metropolis Board supports many youth activities such as The Winter Youth Rally and St. Stephen's Camp.

Every year our Metropolis Board sends a special gift of support to our Metropolis of Atlanta students and seminarians at Hellenic College Holy Cross.

At our most recent Metropolis Board meeting, held via Zoom on April 28, 2020, the Metropolis Board voted to send a \$5000 donation to the rebuilding of the Saint Nicholas Shrine.

Aid was provided by the Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos Board and National Philoptochos to churches in our Metropolis that experienced extensive hurricane damage.

In closing, I would like to thank our spiritual leader, His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios for his support and guidance, as well as to the Board's spiritual advisor, Father Michael Platanis.

Thank you to the members of our Metropolis Board and all the Philoptochos sisters throughout the Metropolis for all your love and dedication as you continue your work for Philoptochos! Together we can accomplish a lot!

May God bless us all!
In His service,

Irene Politis, President
Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos