

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



METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH

Crystal G. Thomas, President

August 22, 2020

“God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

St. John's First Universal Letter

Your Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America,
Your Grace Bishop Apostolos of Medeia,
National President Maria Logus, Esq.,
Members of the National Board, and fellow Philoptochos Sisters,

Greetings from the Metropolis of Pittsburgh.

The ladies of the Metropolis of Pittsburgh wished to have greeted you in our Holy Metropolis this summer. Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought much change to our plans and schedule. We now are meeting virtually and greeting each other from a distance. It is our hope and prayer that we all safely return to some semblance of our normal lives – whatever that may be. The pandemic has caused us to be more creative in our ministry and outreach. We have found new ways of communicating and sharing our faith. We have realized how many of our brothers and sisters live one paycheck away from a financial emergency. Many children need extra help academically, emotionally, and financially. Our elderly loved ones are desperate for human contact, expressions of love and concern.

In the midst of these unprecedented times, we continue the Philoptochos mission of serving our fellow man, often finding ourselves thinking outside the box. We have joyfully met the challenge and continue to engage our community in new and appropriate ways. Our members have actively engaged in the national projects and worked within the Metropolis with our own special projects. We have dedicated ourselves to help those in need and to serve with humility, and we have tried to aid all who have come to us for assistance.

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh Philoptochos Society has continued the Feed the Hungry program with remarkable success. We have prepared and served over 530,000 meals. The Metropolis of Pittsburgh Ladies Philoptochos Society has granted annual honorariums for the seminary students from the Metropolis of Pittsburgh attending Holy Cross School of Theology of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Our membership has aided the Nativity of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Monastery of Saxonburg, Pennsylvania. We have continued to financially support St. Nicholas National Shrine at the World Trade Center. Accordingly, we had the great privilege of presenting a donation to St. Nicholas National Shrine in honor of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Former of America, which was the high point of our

Metropolis Philoptochos meeting in September 2019. Ms. Rhea Ballas, Director of the Metropolis of Pittsburgh Young Adult Ministries. and Rev. Earl Cantos, Youth Safety Compliance Officer of the Archdioceses, advised our membership about the National program of Youth Safety. The Metropolis Philoptochos has made a \$10,000 donation in 2018 and 2019 for our Youth and Camp ministries. National Board Member Thana Ward reviewed our Metropolis Philoptochos commitments with our membership. Thirty-one of our Chapters received Awards of Excellence in recognition of their 100% participation. National Board Member Despina Denne reviewed our progress in chapter elections and ratification, and continued effort in proper election and ratification of chapters is a priority. Operation Classroom has engaged many of our members in support of local schools with volunteer hours and donations to Comfort Closets or school supplies.

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh Philoptochos Society is grateful for the contributions of our stewards and ever mindful of the duty we owe to be responsible caretakers of the funds entrusted to us. We have continually operated with fiscal responsibility and in a position of complete financial transparency and solvency.

Our stewards' generous contributions donated for specific purposes have been disbursed only for the specific donated cause. Appropriately, those funds are distributed in a timely manner. As Christ's hands and feet on earth, we ask our faithful stewards to continue trusting us with the awesome responsibility of performing our work with honor, respectfulness, and clarity, aiding those who most need our assistance. We will continue our ongoing practice of fiscal responsibility to be worthy of your continued trust and support.

In closing, I would like to thank His Eminence Metropolitan Savas for his unwavering support of the Philoptochos Society and my fellow Philoptochos sisters who work each day for the betterment of others and a world filled with Christ's love.

Crystal G. Thomas, President
Metropolis of Pittsburgh Philoptochos