



VOICE OF ST. GEORGE

**SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT
74-109 LARREA ST.,
PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA**



AGAPE LOVE

Inside this Issue

The Orthodox Church holds a special and unique Vesper Service on the Sunday of our Lord's Resurrection from the dead. With this Service, the celebration of our Lord's Resurrection continues throughout the whole week, and beyond. This is why the week beginning with the celebration of Christ's Resurrection is known as "Bright Week," since we pledge our whole lives to carrying the Light of our Risen Christ to everyone around us. Sharing the Light of Christ, which is synonymous with His sacrificial love for each of us, is an act of our sacrificial love for others. Hence, this Vesper Service is known as the "Agape Vespers." The word "agape" is a Greek word for "sacrificial love."

Our participation in the Divine Liturgy through which we celebrate Christ's Resurrection from the dead serves define ourselves as individuals and as a people, collectively. The Divine Liturgy defines us as "the Holy People of God." As holy people of God, we proclaim the Gospel to the world – that is, we announce to the world the love of God. In this way, we imitate the angels, who are God's messengers and we mystically join with them in the effort of bringing Gospel to others.

Such an effort, in the end, is made possible by our willingness to seek

the power of the Holy Spirit; for, it was through the grace of the Holy Spirit that the Apostles preached the Resurrection of Christ in various languages. Thus, at the Agape Vespers, we hear the Gospel passages in various languages. The love of God is for all people, at all times, in every place.

On this note, making our Church and the Bible "relevant" to our times requires great caution. By "making relevant" do we mean *changing the message* of God's Word in order to have the ministry of the Church cater to *our* desires? Or, do we mean *changing ourselves* in order to comprehend the love of God for us and for others? If we are seeking to *change ourselves*, then the Church offers a plethora of examples of how people changed themselves from being sinful into being saintly – understanding that "being saintly" is a matter of becoming "a temple of the Holy Spirit," so that others may be inspired to worship Christ our Savior.

Implied in the reading of the Agape Vespers Gospel passage in various languages is our calling to be like the Risen Christ by embracing everyone, looking not only for our own interests, but for the welfare of others, imitating God's love, "Who sends rain on the just, as well as on the unjust." +FR. THEODORE

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Inserts: Philoptochos Outreach Flyer & Easter Bake Sale; Holy Week Explanation Page; Sunday School Holy Week Retreat Flyer; Golf Tournament Registration Form

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Fr. Theodore Pantels,
Pastor
Dcn. Euthym Kontaxis, M.D.
Deacon

SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS
by DEACON EUTHYM

"All images reveal and make perceptible those things which are hidden. For example, a man does not have immediate knowledge of invisible things, since the soul is veiled by the body. Nor can man have immediate knowledge of things which are distant from each other or separated by place, because he himself is limited by place and time. Therefore the icon was devised that he might advance in knowledge, and that secret things might be revealed and made perceptible. Therefore, icons are a source of profit, help, and salvation for all, since they make things so obviously manifest, enabling us to perceive hidden things. Thus, we are encouraged to desire and imitate what is good and to shun and hate what is evil." - St John of Damascus

Often times icons speak to us about the deep mysteries of God in a visceral, non intellectual way. An icon can help us understand God's love for us, contemplate His incarnation, honor the saints that have given their lives to glorify Him. Speak to us and remind us of miracles that are possible with God. They are essential to open our eyes to "see" God, as Phillip said to Nathaniel..."Come and see". We are invited every Liturgy to "Taste and See", "Let our Prayers rise as incense", "He who has ears to hear, let him hear", and finally the icons help us to "see" the incarnate Christ and his saints and pray with them during the Liturgy.

"The natural property of the lemon tree is such that it lifts its branches upwards when it has no fruit, but the more the branches bend down the more fruit they bear. Those who have the mind to understand will grasp the meaning of this."
— Saint John of Kronstadt

"Humility consists, not in condemning our conscience, but in recognising God's Grace and compassion." -- Saint Mark the Ascetic

"I saw the snares that the enemy spreads out over the world and I said groaning, "What can get through from such snares?" Then I heard a voice saying to me, 'Humility'." St. Anthony the

Great

"Complete trust in God, that is what holy humility is." - St. Porphyrios of Kavsokalyvia

"Let humility be your garment in everything."
— St. Joseph the Hesychast

I thought, since our goal during Lent is to focus on humility and spiritual growth, that I would share a series of beautiful quotes from the Church Fathers on humility. It seems that in all of our pursuits this one character is what allows the grace of God to enter. Without humility, God does not operate in our life. A shining example of this humility is in the life of Papa Nicholas Planas. He is a relatively modern saint. He had no real liturgical skills as a priest. He couldn't sing. He could barely read the gospel and the services. He was a single parent after his wife died...but he had humility and a desire to serve God with his life. Many miracles came from this humility particularly in the Liturgy. If you would like more there is a wonderful book written about his life...

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Please note the enclosed April Outreach Project: We are collecting non-perishable food to benefit families in need. Also...the Philoptochos will have a table set up after church to sell **Luminary Candles for Holy Friday**. See enclosed flyers— one side is for health of family/friends; the other side is for eternal memory of family/friends who have departed this life.

Over 50 current & new Philoptochos members attended our annual membership event on Saturday, March 11th, 2023. The church hall was transformed into an Hawaiian Luau party with festive decorations and music. Each attendee received a lei and many got into the spirit wearing a floral Hawaiian shirt! After opening remarks from President Rhonda Latkovic and a prayer from Father Ted Pantels, guests dined on a Lenten food fare with an Hawaiian twist including panic shrimp, veggie rolls, poached salmon, sushi, and salads. The afternoon ended with a fun basket
Continued on the next page — — —>

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS, Continued

raffle & 12 members going home with great prizes!

Our thanks to the Philoptochos Board members who assisted with the set up, food prep, raffle, clean-up, bar, & photography including Irene Stambolos, Linda Bozigian, Tina Veroulis, Linda Petalas, Pam Zaverdas, Margarita Pagoulatos, Kalitsa Xitco, & Nick Latkovic.

Philoptochos Luminaria-The Philoptochos will once again be offering luminary bags for a \$10 donation per bag. These bags will be placed along the path around the church on Holy Friday Evening. Luminary bags can be offered for "IN HEALTH OF" or "IN MEMORY OF" with a max of two names on each bag. Bags will be placed in alphabetical order along the path for ease in locating. Bags may be taken home after the service. Proceeds benefit St. George church and the Kids-N-Cancer fund.

Philoptochos Easter Bake Sale - Easter Bread and koulourakia will be available for sale on **Sunday, April 9th** after church services. Call the office to make an appointment if you need to pick up bread & cookies during the week of **April 2nd or 9th**, Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday. See enclosed flier.

Philoptochos Elections—**Elections for the New Chapter Board of Directors** will be held at the date, time and place mentioned above. **To vote in this election**, you must be a member in good standing in accordance with the Bylaws of Philoptochos (Article V, Section 4, Paragraph 3) as follows: Eligibility to Vote: Full members who have fulfilled financial commitment to the chapter for the current year are eligible to vote. New members may vote if enrolled at least three (3) months prior to the election meeting. **All candidates seeking election to the Chapter Board must qualify in accordance with the Philoptochos Bylaws** (Article V, Section 3, Paragraph 2) as follows: In order to be a candidate for election to the Chapter Board, a full member must have been a member in good standing with the parish and chapter for a period of at least one full year

prior to the date of election to the Chapter Board and must have attended a minimum of four (4) meetings/ activities held in the previous year.

- All candidates must be present at the election meeting unless reasonable cause for such absence is provided.
- A member is qualified to serve on the Board of Directors of one chapter only.
- Below are pictures from the "Hawaiian Luau" Membership Event held on March 11th.



50+ parishioners at the Philoptochos Membership luncheon



(Pictured above) Philoptochos President Rhonda Latkovic chaired the March Philoptochos General Meeting (pictured below) Kalitsa Xitco & Linda Petalas chaired the fundraiser raffle at the Philoptochos Membership Luncheon on March 11th.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS, Continued



Helping with kitchen duties at our Philoptochos Membership Luncheon on March 11th were: (left-right) Nick Latkovic, Pam Zaverdas, Irene Stambolos, Tina Veroulis, and Kalitsa Xitco.

SUNDAY SCHOOL



Mrs. Mary Brown presented a workshop to our Sunday School students about the meaning of Orthodox Christian Holy Week Icons on Sunday, March 12, 2023.

Many thanks to **Mrs. Mary Brown** for presenting our March 12th Sunday School workshop on the meaning of our Church's Holy Week Icons. Her presentation was very inspiring and informative, as she lovingly encouraged the Sunday School students to ask questions and become involved in the iconography surrounding our Holy Week service.

This workshop served to help prepare the students for their participation in this year's **Sunday School Holy Week Retreat**, which will be held on **Friday, April 7, 2023 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**



Athena Snarskis expressed gratitude to Mrs. Mary Brown on behalf of our Sunday School staff and students for her wonderful presentation.

Many thanks to **Athena Snarskis** and **Presvytera Petula** for organizing our upcoming Sunday School Holy Week Retreat. See the enclosed Sunday School Retreat flyer for more details.

In May, plans are to arrange a religious tour and end-of-year luncheon at the Date Palm Gardens in Indio. More details to come.

AHEPA NEWS

Applications for the **Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship** offered through our parish **AHEPA 528 Chapter** are due as soon as possible. This scholarship is available to college students pursuing undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as students pursuing education requiring specific training in various occupations. Copies of the Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Application are available both in our parish hall, as well as online at: <https://www.ahepa528.org>. The scholarship awards will be presented on **AHEPA Sunday, May 14, 2023** following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Our next **AHEPA Chapter meeting** will be on **April 18th at 6:00 p.m. (Bible Study)/ 6:30 p.m. (meeting)** at our parish hall.

The **AHEPA District 20 Convention** will be hosted by the **Anaheim AHEPA Chapter** this year — on **June 2 & 3, 2023 at the Double Tree Hotel by Hilton at 201 E. McArthur Boulevard in Santa Ana, California**. Details for this event can be acquired from **Chris Mellas** at (714) 813-6063, or christomellas@aol.com.

ST. GEORGE PARISH LENTEN RETREAT

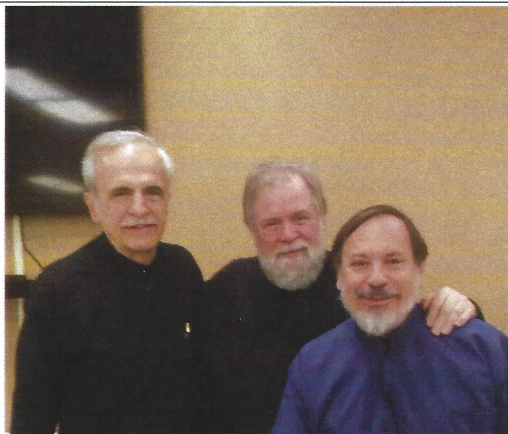
We are especially thankful to God for bringing us Fr. Steve Tsiichlis, the pastor of St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church in Irvine, California, to be our presenter for this year's St. George Parish Lenten Retreat, held on Saturday, March 18th. The theme of the retreat was, "Understanding the Divine Liturgy."

One of the great "take-a-ways" from the retreat was the understanding that the hymns, exclamations, and prayers of the Divine Liturgy are based on the Holy Bible. As Fr. Steve so often reminded us, "We don't make this stuff up." The Divine Liturgy is truly Bible-based. Living the prayers of the Divine Liturgy is, at the same time, living the Bible.

We plan to invite Fr. Steve to present our Lenten Retreat next year.



Fr. Steve Tsiichlis offered two presentations on the meaning of the Divine Liturgy at our Parish Lenten Retreat on March 18th.



We were honored to have Fr. John Alexandres (right), pastor of St. Prophet Elias parish in San Bernardino join us as a contributor for our Parish Lenten Retreat with Fr. Steve Tsiichlis (center) and Fr. Ted (left)



A delicious Lenten luncheon was prepared for participants at our St. George Parish Lenten Retreat on March 18th. (Left-right) Angeliki Maranda, Margarita Pagoulatos, and Kalitsa Xitco.

ST. GEORGE GOLF TOURNAMENT

Enclosed, please find the St. George Golf Tournament Registration and Reservation Form and plan to join us for our **St. George Golf Tournament on Saturday, April 22, 2023** at the **Desert Willow Golf Resort** in Palm Desert. **Shot-gun Tee-off time is 1:00 p.m.**

The Golf Tournament Awards Dinner will be held our parish hall at 6:00 p.m., featuring a traditional Greek Dinner and silent auction. Donation of items for the silent auction are very much appreciated.

NEW ALTAR COVERINGS

Many thanks to those parishioners who donated funds for our new altar coverings for Great Lent, as well as for a new Holy Water Font, used for the first-of-the-month "Blessing of the Waters" (Agiasmo) services. In addition, we thank those who contributed to the purchase of our new Chalice and Paten, which are currently used to celebrate the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and mid-week Church Services.

UPCOMING MAINTENANCE NEEDS—We express profound appreciation to those who would consider donating toward the various maintenance needs that were outlined at our Spring General Assembly Meeting on Sunday, March 26th. Needs include: slurry of the parking lot; improved sound system; improvements to our rental property, our sound system.

PARISH CALENDAR FOR APRIL 2023

Tuesday, April 4th..Bible Study-10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, April 5th...PRESANCTIFIED DIVINE LITURGY – 6:00 p.m.

Friday, April 7th ... PRESANCTIFIED DIVINE LITURGY – 9:00 a.m.

Friday, April 7th...Sunday School Holy Week Retreat – 9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

HOLY WEEK 2023

Saturday, April 8th... SATURDAY OF LAZARUS – Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Sunday, April 9th ... PALM SUNDAY – Orthros-8:00 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Bridegroom Service – 6:00 p.m.

Monday, April 10th...HOLY MONDAY – Bridegroom Service -6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 11th...HOLY TUESDAY – Bridegroom Service - 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 12th..HOLY WEDNESDAY-PRESANCTIFIED DIVINE LITURGY -9:00 a.m.

- Holy Unction Service – 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 13th...HOLY THURSDAY – DIVINE LITURGY -9:00 a.m.

Service of the Redeeding Passion of our Lord -6:00 p.m

Friday, April 14th...HOLY FRIDAY – Royal Hours-9:00 a.m.

– Service of the Unnailing of our Lord – 12:00 noon

– Lamentation Service- 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 15th..HOLY SATURDAY – DIVINE LITURGY -9:00 a.m.

– Vigil for the Resurrection of our Lord – 11:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 16th – THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST – Resurrection Service-12:00 midnight

– Divine Liturgy – 12:30 a.m.

– Agape Vesper Service – 1:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 18th....AHEPA 528 Meeting – 6:00 p.m.

Friday, April 21st.....THE LIFE-GIVING FONT – Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m

Saturday, April 22nd...St. George Golf Tournament – 1:00 p.m. (at Desert Willow Golf Resort, Palm Desert)

– Golf Tournament Awards Dinner – 6:00 p.m. (at our parish hall)

Sunday, April 23rd...FEAST DAY OF ST. GEORGE THE MARTYR (our Patron Saint)

Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy- 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, April 25th...Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

ST. GEORGE SUNDAY SCHOOL, PALM DESERT, CA

YOU'RE INVITED TO OUR

LENTEN RETREAT

FRIDAY, APRIL 7TH 2023

PS – K 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

1st to HS 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**RSVP : Mrs. Athena
219.313.6940 or Athna2@aol.com**

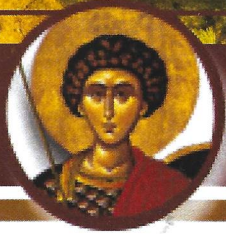
COME JOIN

- Fr Ted & Presb. Petula Pantel,
- Deacon Euthym & Deaconess Krisann Kontaxis,
- Mrs. Athena Snarskis & Mrs. Alex Pappas



Saint George Greek Orthodox Church Golf Tournament

Saturday, April 22, 2023 | 1:00 PM Shotgun Start | Desert Willow Golf Resort



ENTRY INFORMATION

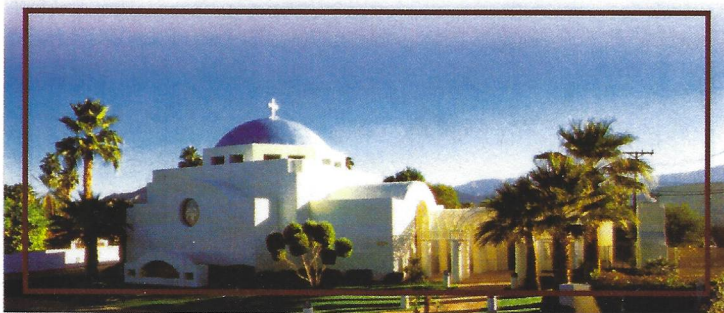
Saturday, April 22, 2023

- \$185 per player (includes Golf and Awards Dinner)
- 1:00pm Shotgun Start at Desert Willow Golf Resort
- 6:00pm Social Hour at St. George Greek Orthodox Church
- 7:00pm Traditional Greek Dinner, Silent Auction, and Live Music at St. George Greek Orthodox Church

INDIVIDUALS AND SPONSORSHIPS

- Individual Player(s) ___ (# of Players) x \$185 \$ _____
- Tee Sponsorship(s) ___ (# of Sponsorships) x \$100 \$ _____
- Traditional Greek Dinner ___ (# of Dinners) x \$45 \$ _____
- Donation \$ _____

Total Amount \$ _____



EVENT REGISTRATION

Name _____

Company/Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

PLAYER NAMES

1. _____ GHIN# _____

2. _____ GHIN# _____

3. _____ GHIN# _____

4. _____ GHIN# _____

REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 2023

Sign up online at www.desertwillow.com/StGeorge

Make Checks Payable To:

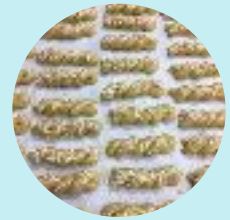
“Saint George Greek Orthodox Church”

Send Checks and Registration Form to:

74-109 Larrea | Palm Desert, CA | 92260

Easter BAKE SALE

Ladies Philoptochos Society, Chapter 4035



Koulourakia
\$10.00 per dozen
with or w/o sesame



Baklava
\$14.00 per 4 pcs.
box



Easter Bread
\$20.00 per 2 lb. loaf
with or w/o dyed
egg

Easter Bake Sale - Palm Sunday 4/9

We will be selling Greek pastries & bread after church services on Palm Sunday, April 9th.

We have limited quantities of Easter bake sale items available, so please plan on getting your pastries & bread on this day.

Contact Tina Veroulis @ (406) 431-9516 for alternate pick-up dates/times.

1

PALM SUNDAY SALE

April 9th-Available after church services in the hall.

2

ALTERNATE PICK-UP DATE/TIME

Contact Tina Veroulis
tel. (406) 431-9516

3

CASH, CHECK, OR CREDIT CARD

Pay any one of three ways.



Luminary Candles to Light the Church on Holy Friday

*Let's light the path around our Church during **Holy Friday Evening** services with the names of our loved ones who have passed on or our wishes for the health of our family and friends.*

Each candle-lit bag will be personalized with either: "In Memory" (name) or "In Health" (name) depending on your choice.

There is a \$10 donation for each luminary bag and up to two names maximum may be displayed on a bag.

Luminary Orders will be taken beginning Sunday, March 26th to April 9th.

Please complete your form, make your check payable to St. George Ladies Philoptochos and either mail back the form & your check or give it in person to the church office or a Philoptochos board member. Project Chairperson: Margarita Pagoulatos.

Total Bags _____ **Donation Amt. Total \$** _____
Check _____ **Cash** _____ **Credit Card** _____

\$10 Luminary "In Memory" (Max of 2 names for each luminary bag)

Ordered By: _____

Contact Info (Tel. or email): _____

Name 1: Last _____ First _____

Name 2: Last _____ First _____

PHILO STRONG

St. George Ladies Philoptochos | Palm Desert, CA | Chapter 4035

Next General Meeting April 24th

Our next General Meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 24th at 11:30 AM in the church hall. Please plan on attending this important meeting as we will be holding Philoptochos board elections for the 2023-2025 term. See pg. 3/4 for election notice & list.

March Diaper Drive

This March we are taking donations for diapers and diaper wipes that will be given to the local Birth Choice of the Desert organization to benefit new moms and their babies. The most needed diaper sizes are 4 thru 6. The diaper drive ends on March 31st.

April Food Bank Drive

The month of April, we will be collecting non-perishable food to be donated to The Narrow Door Food Bank. The two most needed items are 1 pound bags of rice and beans.



Membership & Aloha!

Over 50 current & new Philoptochos members attended our annual membership event on Saturday, March 11th, 2023. The church hall was transformed into an Hawaiian Luau party with festive decorations and music. Each attendee received a lei and many got into the spirit wearing a floral Hawaiian shirt! After opening remarks from President Rhonda Latkovic and a prayer from Father Ted Pantels, guests dined on a Lenten food fare with an Hawaiian twist including pan-fried shrimp, veggie rolls, poached salmon, sushi, and salads. The afternoon ended with a fun basket raffle & 12 members going home with great prizes! (see pg. 2)





Luminary's to Light the Path on Holy Friday Evening

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Proceeds benefit St. George church and the Kids-N-Cancer fund.

EASTER BAKE SALE

Easter Bread and koulourakia will be available for sale on Sunday, April 9th after church services. Call the office to make an appointment if you need to pick up bread & cookies during the week of April 2nd or 9th, Mon., Tues., or Thurs.

(Cont. pg. 1)

Our thanks to the Philoptochos Board members who assisted with the set up, food prep, raffle, clean-up, bar, & photography including Irene Stambolos, Linda Bozigian, Tina Veroulis, Linda Petalas, Pam Zaverdas, Margarita Pagoulatos, Kalitsa Xitco, & Nick Latkovic.

THANK YOU ALL FOR A WONDERFUL EVENT!

Previous Page Photos:

Left: Pam Zaverdas Middle: Kalitsa Xitco & Linda Petalas Right: Nick Latkovic, Pam Zaverdas, Irene Stambolos, Tina Veroulis, & Kalitsa Xitco

Below Photo: Carol Lyons and Mary Piggott making a selection from the dessert table with Nick Demetropoulos in the upper right corner.



ELECTION NOTICE TO ALL ELIGIBLE MEMBERS

DATE: April 24, 2023

TIME: 11:30 am

PLACE: St. George Greek Orthodox Church Hall

This is to notify you that Elections for the New Chapter Board of Directors will be held at the date, time and place mentioned above.

To vote in this election, you must be a member in good standing in accordance with the Bylaws of Philoptochos (Article V, Section 4, Paragraph 3) as follows:

Eligibility to Vote: Full members who have fulfilled financial commitment to the chapter for the current year are eligible to vote. New members may vote if enrolled at least three (3) months prior to the election meeting.

All candidates seeking election to the Chapter Board must qualify in accordance with the Philoptochos Bylaws (Article V, Section 3, Paragraph 2) as follows:

In order to be a candidate for election to the Chapter Board, a full member must have been a member in good standing with the parish **and** chapter for a period of at least one full year prior to the date of election to the Chapter Board and must have attended a minimum of four (4) meetings/ activities held in the previous year.

- All candidates must be present at the election meeting unless reasonable cause for such absence is provided.
- A member is qualified to serve on the Board of Directors of one chapter only.

Please make every effort to attend this meeting.

Chapter Secretary, Julia Hays

Election Committee:

Tasia Richards

Emmy Karas

Francine Vasilomanolakis

List of candidates running for election/re-election for the
2023-2025 term:

- 1-Linda Bozigian
- 2-Julia Hays
- 3-Linda Kallis
- 4-Rhonda Latkovic
- 5-Margarita Pagoulatos
- 6-Debbie Pousen
- 7-Athena Snarskis
- 8-Irene Stambolos
- 9-Tina Veroulis

*Anyone else interested in running for the board please
contact Rhonda Latkovic by April 2nd, 2023.