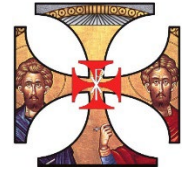


**GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, INC.**  
**METROPOLIS PRESIDENT'S REPORT**  
**2022 – 2024**



**Metropolis of Boston Philoptochos**

Jane Kourtis, President

July 2024

Your Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, Your Grace Bishop Athenagoras, National Philoptochos President Arlene Siavelis Kehl, and Sisters of the National Philoptochos Board,

It is with great pleasure that I bring you greetings from His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios and the Metropolis of Boston Philoptochos. The Metropolis of Boston Philoptochos is comprised of 42 Chapters in the Parishes spanning across six New England states including Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. The following are the Officers and Board Members of the 2023-2025 Metropolis of Boston Philoptochos Board:

His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios - Chairman

Jane Kourtis - President

Savina Prokopios-Davos - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President

Eleni Kalioras - Recording Secretary

Diane Stamatopulos - Treasurer

Athena Kalyvas - Advisor

Matina Pappas - 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Kally Badavas - Corresponding Secretary

Yannoula Ballassi-Ass. Treas/Membership

Debbie Ciejek

Dr. Calliope Galatis

Georgia Dukakis Genna

Anna-Helene Grossomanides

Vicki Konstandakis

Georgia Lagadinos

Denise Reed

Eleni Stamboulidis

Irene Stefanakos

Maria Tamvakologos

Alexa Vafiades

Kathy VanKiulenberg

Elaine Zetes

**Metropolis Philoptochos Update**

Since the last National Philoptochos Convention in July 2022, our Metropolis of Boston Philoptochos Board and Chapters have been active and thriving under the spiritual leadership of His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios.

2022 and beyond have been years of rebuilding, and we have been ramping up to our full level of pre-pandemic activities. We hold regular, monthly virtual Chapter meetings. We reach 42 parishes across the six New England states. We are also able to hold meetings every other month with our Metropolis Board. We are able to make productive use of the virtual meetings to focus our energies on areas that need our in-person attention. We look forward to our in-person meetings even more to enjoy fellowship with each other.

On Saturday, November 12, 2022, almost three years since the pandemic onset, we held our first

Metropolis-wide in-person event, featuring best-selling author Yvette Manassis Corporon's new book: *Where the Wandering Ends*. The event was held at St. Demetrios parish in Weston, MA. It was a success, attended by over 100 women from all the New England states and raising over \$23,000 for our Metropolis Philoptochos ministries. Instead of flowers, we created a tower of non-perishable food items as centerpieces which were donated to the Bristol Lodge, a homeless shelter in the adjacent city of Waltham, Massachusetts.

On Saturday, October 28, 2023, in conjunction with the Metropolis of Boston Clergy-Laity Meeting, the Metropolis of Boston Philoptochos hosted its Biennial Conference. There was a joint session with the Clergy-Laity to start, then the Metropolis Philoptochos held its business meeting led by Metropolis Philoptochos President Athena Kalyvas, at which elections of new Metropolis Philoptochos Board members took place for the 2023 – 2025 term. The event was attended by Philoptochos sisters from across the Metropolis of Boston.

### **Metropolis Philoptochos Board**

His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios attends all our monthly Metropolis Board meetings, whether in person or virtual. His presence at our meetings grounds us in our holy mission. This year we celebrated His Eminence's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his election as bishop by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and his enthronement as Bishop of Boston.

As a Board, we attended the annual Metropolis of Boston Laity Awards banquet on Sunday, June 9, 2024, at which our President Jane Kourtis offered the Board's congratulations and best wishes on His Eminence's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and extended our gratitude for his vision, dedication, and good works for our Metropolis. These works include the building of the Metropolis Center, the creation of the Metropolis of Boston camp, the building of the Faith and Heritage Center, and the establishment and operation of the Philoxenia House. Jane Kourtis noted that prior to 40 years ago none of these ministries existed.

At the banquet we also viewed a video of footage from His Eminence's Enthronement in April 1984 at the Annunciation Cathedral in Boston. His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos of Blessed Memory was present in the video, offering his blessing and words of support and encouragement for His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios' upcoming ministry in the then-Diocese of Boston.

In the video we also heard His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios' response; here is an excerpt: "Let us not be parochial in our outlook, but let our vision carry us far beyond the boundaries of our parishes and the borders of this Diocese to see the needs of the "least of our brethren." All who viewed the footage were very moved and affirmed how His Eminence lived those words in his episcopal ministry these past 40 years, and how his enthronement message still resounds today.

This is the very mission of Philoptochos. In appreciation, our Metropolis Philoptochos Board presented to His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios its annual donation, this year in the amount of \$50,000 from the Metropolis of Boston Philoptochos Board and Chapters, for Philoxenia House, the Metropolis of Boston camp, the St. Methodios Faith and Heritage Center, the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards (FOS), and the Metropolis ministries fund which includes Feed the Hungry, Operation Housewarming for Homeless and Veterans, Operation Classroom, and Social Services needs.

On Saturday, June 15, 2024, we hosted a luncheon in honor of His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and, also in honor of his name day for the feast day of St. Methodios

on June 14. Our Metropolis Board gathered at our Metropolis center where we enjoyed a beautiful luncheon, a celebratory cake, and presented His Eminence with an engraved gift as a memento of the milestone.

### **Metropolis Chapters**

Our Metropolis Chapters are lively and flourishing. It is truly amazing to see all the varied activities across the Metropolis.

Here is a small sampling of the past year:

**Annunciation Cathedral, Boston, MA.** The Annunciation Cathedral chapter in Boston, led by President Aglaia Georgountzos, held a blanket and sock drive for Safe Haven, an operation for homeless children. In March this chapter made a visit to the Hellenic Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Canton, MA, where they visited with the residents and kept them company and provided them with new socks. This chapter, being the Cathedral in Boston of His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios, hosts special receptions year-round for many events for His Eminence and the elected officials and dignitaries visiting Boston. Also, being so close to many Boston schools, this chapter also regularly hosts OCF events and welcomes Orthodox college students to the Cathedral.

**Arlington, MA.** The St. Athanasios chapter, led by President Annette Tsitsopoulos, held a Dignity Bags drive to collect women's hygiene products and placed in tote bags or gently-used handbags for HELPIS, a Massachusetts-based non-profit organization that connects charitable organizations with people in need.

**Brockton, MA.** The Annunciation chapter, led by President Kathy Malone, has been promoting several initiatives this past year: They gave \$350 each month to feed 30 children in western Kenya; they gave gifts cards to schools for Target and Market Basket grocery store; they gave to My Brother's Keeper, and they gave to Cradles to Crayons in Boston, an organization in Boston that supports children in need with clothing, shoes, diapers, and school supplies.

**Burlington, VT.** The Dormition chapter in Burlington, VT, led by President Theodora Contis, is a small chapter doing big works. This past year one of their many efforts was to hold a hat, glove, coat, and sock drive to help the refugees and homeless who live in the bitter cold of Vermont stay warm.

**Dartmouth (formerly in New Bedford), MA.** The St. George chapter, led by President Connie Bebis, held a new initiative to bring joy to chemotherapy patients. The Philoptochos members bought supplies and created floral bud vases with silk flowers which they then distributed. This chapter also held a mobile ministry of giving gently worn jackets and boots to local homeless shelters. This chapter also gave fuel assistance to families in need to get them through the cold New England winters.

**Peabody, MA.** The St. Vasilios chapter in Peabody, led by President Stacey Yavorski, holds their meetings on Sunday afternoons so they can have better attendance. They supported Haven for Hunger, held a blanket drive, raised supplies for the Operation Classroom list, held an act of kindness campaign, and offered an annual Greek Independence Day luncheon.

**Portsmouth, NH.** The St. Nicholas chapter, led by President Janice Kanteres, has approximately 80 members. This chapter holds regular drives to collect supplies for a haven for domestic violence

victims. The head of the shelter came to the parish to express their appreciation and to share their mission. This chapter also holds two social/fellowship events for the community each year: Happy Hour and Paint and Sip. They cook for the community, believing in building community by “breaking bread” together.

**Somerville, MA.** The Dormition chapter in Somerville, led by President Domenica Karavitaki, holds a Family Table event three times a year, where they cook for community members. They also support a music ministry in their parish and support an annual Christmas concert. They are also working to increase the number of young people in their parish and their Philoptochos by taking the time to explain the mission of Philoptochos. This past year, they held a joint event with GOYA where they raised \$500 to renew the bedding at the Philoxenia House.

**Springfield, MA.** The St. George chapter, led by President Yvonne Kintgios, collected car seats and onesies for newborns of homeless families. They also bought 50 books and snacks and gave them to local schools where most children are from low-income families. This chapter also held a Lenten Luncheon with a speaker from Ancient Faith.

**Weston, MA.** In February 2024 the St. Demetrios chapter, led by President Kathy Damaskos, held a Valentine’s diaper/wipes drive jointly with the Church School. Philoptochos members and families contributed diapers and wipes to a local shelter in nearby Natick, MA. In April 2024 this chapter also held a Lenten Retreat at the St. Methodios Faith and Heritage Center in Contoocook, NH. The theme was “The Lord’s Prayer.”

### **National Philoptochos Board**

We have a number of Boston sisters who serve on the National Philoptochos Board. They serve in this role with enthusiasm and seriousness of purpose.

Savina Prokopios-Davos, RN, co-chairs the Opioid Committee and has spoken passionately about how opioid addiction is a medical condition that we must treat with dignity and respect. She has presented on this topic to our Metropolis Board and is actively seeking for all parish priests to complete the survey sent out by the Opioid committee. A goal of the committee is to create a relationship between parish priests and parishioners who are suffering from opioid addiction to create accountability for the victim to stay connected to our faith as a means of overcoming the addiction.

Matina Pappas serves on the Human Trafficking Committee and actively speaks and offers updates about the work of this committee. She disseminated the materials and promoted the webinar presented by National Philoptochos’ partner, Love 146.

On January 29, 2024, our Philoptochos had the opportunity to present a check in the amount of \$25,200 on behalf of the National Philoptochos National Children’s Medical Luncheon to Boston Children’s Hospital Exstrophy Research Program. In attendance were Philippa Condakes, Athena Kalyvas, Theresa Nibi, Matina Pappas, Savina Prokopios-Davos, Jane Kourtis, and Susan Kourtis Metropol. It was received with gratitude by Boston Children’s Hospital. It was an honor to make this presentation on behalf of the National Philoptochos.

We are looking forward to the National Convention to be held June 29 - July 4, 2024, in lovely San Diego, California. We are grateful to the Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos sisters for planning the Convention. The agenda is exciting. We have approximately 10 members from our

Metropolis attending. We will encourage increased attendance for future conventions.

We congratulate the St. George Philoptochos of Lynn, Massachusetts, led by President Zoe Haskell, for accepting and completing the 2024 National Chapter Challenge. The St. George Philoptochos's challenge was to establish a program of regularly providing hundreds of brown bag lunches to My Brother's Table, a homeless shelter in Lynn, MA. While this was not a new idea, it was new for this Philoptochos, and also new for them to involve their entire parish. The Philoptochos asked for help, and all the St. George parish ministries stepped up, eager to help. We are excited to view the video of the Chapter Challenges throughout the country at the upcoming Convention.

Looking ahead, our Metropolis Philoptochos Board is planning the following Metropolis-wide Philoptochos events:

- Saturday, November 2, 2024: Luncheon to roll-out our new Metropolis of Boston Philoptochos Cookbook.
- Thursday evening, May 1, 2025: Healthcare Panel, with reception, led by local TV medical journalist Dr. Mallika Marshall.

There will be more to come on these events.

I would like to thank His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios and Chancellor Father Theodore Barbas for their continued support and guidance as we continue to promote the mission of Philoptochos. I would also like to thank the Philoptochos sisters from our Chapters, our Metropolis Board, and on the National level, for the generosity, kindness, and grace they have shown me, to each other, to our parish families, and to all those in need in this country and around the world.

With love in the Lord,

***Jane Kourtis***

Jane Kourtis, President

Metropolis of Boston Philoptochos