

GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, INC. METROPOLIS PRESIDENT REPORT 2024 - 2026



Metropolis of Chicago

Kathy Katrakis, President

2026 National Philoptochos Convention, Cleveland, Ohio

June 29 – July 2, 2026

Your Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros,
Your Grace Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianos,
National President, Debbie George,
Members of the National Executive Board,
National Board Members and all Convention Delegates,

Since the 2024 National Philoptochos Biennial Convention, the Metropolis of Chicago Philoptochos Chapters have been dutifully fulfilling the Mission of Philoptochos in many ways. Our Metropolis Philoptochos kicks off every Ecclesiastical year with an annual September Luncheon. On September 28, 2024, our Luncheon theme, “Sisters in Faith: Turning Lemons into Love,” was a huge success with over 450 attendees and proceeds benefitting *Lemons of Love* and our beloved St. Iakovos Retreat Center. *Lemons of Love* is an organization that shares love with those impacted by cancer through personalized care packages and support. Our guest speaker for the day was food blogger, historian and author, Isabella Zampetaki, who traveled from Athens, Greece to share her stories of food and culture.

The following year, September 20, 2025 marked another successful Metropolis Philoptochos luncheon; “Spirit of Hope: Soaring through God’s Strength.” Our beneficiaries included, Wings of Hope in St. Louis, Missouri, Guardian Angel Community Services, Joliet, Illinois and the St. Iakovos Retreat Center. Our guest speaker, Katrina Markoff, entrepreneur and owner of Violet Flame Chocolates, shared her experiences as an entrepreneur to our 430 plus attendees.

In the month of October of each year, our Philoptochos chapters come together for the annual IOCC walk which is always held the first Saturday of October at St. Andrew’s church in Chicago. We then continue on to our annual “Dress A-Girl” at St. Basil’s church also in Chicago to help make dresses for young girls in need. In 2024, 360 dresses along with 250 pants, were made for the year and were sent to India, along with t-shirts, socks and underwear. In 2025, another 399 dresses were made and distributed to tornado victims in St. Louis, Missouri, local shelters and shelters in Mexico.

We celebrate our Patron Saints, Cosmas and Damian, at St. Demetrios Church in Elmhurst, Illinois on October 31st and November 1st each year. The Metropolis Philoptochos has an Artoklasia for our current Board members during vespers and we honor our Past Presidents that have fallen asleep on the Feast Day with a Memorial service.

The first Sunday in November marks National Philoptochos Sunday, giving Chapters an opportunity to celebrate and share the mission of Philoptochos with all stewards in our Metropolis.

We held our Metropolis wide Clergy Laity Conference on November 5-6, 2025 at the Meridian Banquet and Conference Center in Rolling Meadows, Illinois, with over 80 Philoptochos delegates. In addition to Metropolis Board member elections, highlights included a presentation on The National Sisterhood of Presvyteres and panel discussions on Prison Ministry and Social Services.

Our 2025-2027 Metropolis Philoptochos Executive Board Members include:

President: Kathy Katrakis

Corresponding Secretary: Kathi Stamatis

1st Vice President: Pat Gerbanas

Treasurer: Anna Duros

2nd Vice President: Dena Pavlopoulos

Assistant Treasurer: Wanita Loupakos

Recording Secretary: Eleni Zervas

Board members: Demetria Bakris, Hellena Chrones, Samantha Dulles, Marilynn Jemas, Vonnie Karafotias, Georgia Karnezis, Debbie Katsulis, Georgia Kolovos, Kiki Korkofigas, Maria Macris, Nancy Paganis, Joanna Pinos, Kathy Siavelis and Kathy Walstrom.

Honorary Past Presidents: Marilyn Tzakis, Pam Argyris, Irene Arsoniadis and Joanne Stavrakas.

During the last two years, three of our Honorary Past Presidents fell asleep in the Lord; Helen Theodosakis, Maryann Bissias and Lori Voutiritsas. Our Beloved Bishop and Spiritual Advisor, His Grace Bishop Timothy of Hexamilion also fell asleep in the Lord in November 2025. May Their Memory Be Eternal.

During the Metropolis-wide Christmas celebration, the Metropolis Philoptochos collected various items from guests. In 2024, we collected over 200 winter hats, scarves and gloves for the homeless in Chicago. In 2025, over 1000 toiletry items were collected to make kits for Guardian Angels in Joliet, Illinois.

Our Metropolis continues to kick off the New Year with a Metropolis-wide Vasilopita Celebration where 400-500 faithful gather at a different church each year for the cutting of the Vasilopita by His Eminence, Metropolitan Nathanael. Funds are raised for the St. Basil Academy and Youth Programs National Commitment.

Blankets for Babies is another Metropolis wide event, where Philoptochos members come together at Saints Peter & Paul Church in Glenview, Illinois to make blankets for babies which are distributed to local hospitals. We made 180 blankets in 2024 and over 200 in 2025 that were distributed to the University of Illinois Pediatric Center.

During Great Lent, our Metropolis Philoptochos organizes an annual retreat under the leadership of our Bishop and Chancellor. In 2025 close to 180 Philoptochos members gathered at the Annunciation church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to hear presentations from two of our clergy in both English and Greek simultaneously. The topic, "Using your Gifts for the Glory of God", stimulated much thought and good discussion.

This past March 2026, over 250 guests attended our Lenten Retreat hosted by St. Demetrios church in Schererville, Indiana with His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael presenting on the topic: "Repentance as an Occasion for Joy," which sparked thought-provoking questions and reflection.

Bright Friday, Zwodoxos Phgi, is celebrated annually at the St. Iakovos Retreat Center in Kansasville, Wisconsin with Divine liturgy and a Paschal Luncheon for a few hundred attendees each year. The Metropolis Philoptochos Board provides assistance to the St. Iakovos Retreat Center Board by contributing red Easter eggs and desserts and serving our guests.

Philoptochos Chapters from our Metropolis continue to participate in our Metropolis-wide Feed the Hungry program which takes place weekly at our Annunciation Cathedral in Chicago. Through this program, over 7,000 meals are served annually. Chapters sign up to serve meals 1-2 times per year. Collectively, our chapters serve 300,000-450,000 meals per year at various venues.

In 2024, The Metropolis Philoptochos Philanthropy Fund, in partnership with the Hellenic Foundation distributed \$80,000 in assistance towards rent, utilities, medical bills, funerals and more for those requesting assistance. The Philoptochos portion was close to \$50,000. The amount of assistance increased to \$94,000 in 2025, with Philoptochos contributing \$62,000.

Our Metropolis Philoptochos wide Chapter Connect meetings are held on a Saturday in October, February and May at various churches. Our May meeting is held at the St. Iakovos Retreat Center in Kansasville, Wisconsin which gives the Metropolis Board a chance to stay overnight the night before for a board meeting and team building games. These meetings offer an opportunity for Philoptochos sisters across our Metropolis to come together for information and fellowship. With 90-100 members either present or on ZOOM, we are able to share chapter experiences, discuss membership opportunities and updated National and Metropolis information within the Mission of Philoptochos.

All of our chapters continue to support their National and Metropolis commitments. Our members are at the ready when asked to fulfill the Mission of Philoptochos. The Chicago Philoptochos Sisterhood continues to be a body of dedicated women, helping those in need, assisting our Metropolis and our fellow Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

We thank His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael and our recently ordained Bishop and Spiritual Advisor, His Grace Bishop Dionysios of Zenopolis, for their continued support and spiritual guidance.

In Christ's Love,

Kathy Katrakis

Kathy Katrakis, President
Metropolis of Chicago Philoptochos