



Church's Greek Food Fair & Christmas Bazaar returns this weekend

Pete Fontaine



Herald photos by Pete Fontaine

PROUD PARISHIONERS: These are some of the many proud parishioners of the Cranston-based Church of the Annunciation who worked tirelessly preparing for this weekend's Greek Good Fair & Christmas Bazaar. Seen from left are Lisa Petrou, Georgia Pappas, Mike Papigiotis, Bessie Papigiotis, Ginger Pappas and Ann Heberg.

jewelry. This may just turn out to be our best bazaar in years."

Add to that the parish's legendary food, like the roasted lamb and pork souvlaki and gyro sandwich that's also served each September at the Cranston Greek Festival, and it's easy to see why the Philoptochos ladies are preparing for this year's event with endless energy.

"This is an important fundraiser for our society," Pappas said. "All proceeds from the bazaar support many different charities like the American Cancer Society, Amos House, Bradley Hospital and Ronald McDonald House and Crossroads, just to name a few."

Pappas also announced that in keeping with tradition, the Ladies Philoptochos Society also supports the Saint Basil Academy, a home that's based in New York for children in need.

"The academy provides a loving Christian environment where resident children are nurtured to adulthood," Pappas said. "Philoptochos, a major benefactor, has two commitments per year to provide financial assistance to Saint Basil Academy."

Each year in January, Philoptochos chapters sponsor a Vasilopita event that provides for the operational costs of the academy, while the second commitment is the Sisterhood that provides for the physical needs of the children and graduation costs and awards.

The Ladies Philoptochos Society also has a new and unique undertaking.

"It's our Prayer Shawl Ministry," Pappas said. "Under the direction of Anna Demetrakas, some of our very talented members have knitted blankets, shawls, hats and scarves that were given to the Veterans Hospital, Hasbro and [Saint Basil Academy], as well as many other needy organizations."

That is what the Lady Philoptochos is – and always has been – about.

"Philoptochos means 'Friends of the Poor,'" said Pappas, whose late grandfather was the Church of the Annunciation's longtime priest. "We pride ourselves in presenting this annual food fair and bazaar. We have 26

The ageless scene has been repeated more times than volunteers at Church of the Annunciation in Cranston have made mouth-watering Greek pastry and cookies like baklava and Diples.

Saturday morning, the kitchen inside the church's Rev. Peter G. Mihailides Center was filled with volunteers from the parish's Ladies Philoptochos Society, who were making the famed Diples – fried strips of thick, flaky dough topped with chopped walnuts, cinnamon and Greek honey syrup – and packing Koulourakia in preparation for this weekend's Greek Food Fair & Christmas Bazaar.

The two-day event, which for years has ranked as one of the finest events of its kind in Rhode Island, will be held Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. inside the Mihailides Center's spacious Demetrakas Hall at 175 Oaklawn Ave.

"We'll have nine different booths," said Georgia Pappas, president of the Ladies Philoptochos Society. "There will be everything from handcrafts like knitted hats, sweaters and scarves to vintage treasures and both fine and costume

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people volunteering as co-committee chairpersons. People really love our food and Greek pastry, and we'll have plenty of both this weekend."

Thus, the table is set. The Ladies Philoptochos Society has again worked countless hours to prepare for the two-day food fair and Christmas bazaar. There will be everything from a silent auction to a traditional White Elephant booth and the Agora Market Place where attendees can purchase items like Greek delicacies such as cheese, olives, pasta, phyllo dough and more.

"If people enjoy our Greek foods and pastries, we can please their palates," Pappas said. "Each of our booths has reasonably priced items, and our Christmas boutique will be filled with wreaths, decorations and ornaments."

Admission and parking are free.

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