

50th
Anniversary
1923-1973



The Greek Orthodox Church
"Taxiarchae"
Watertown, Mass.

The Greek Orthodox
Church
"Taxiarchae"

50th
ANNIVERSARY



*This book is dedicated to
all the men and women
that have worked to make
the Community what it is
today.*

THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

TAXIARCHAE

Spiritual Leader- Rev. Emmanuel Metaxas

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GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΒΟΡΕΙΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΝΟΤΙΩΝ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ

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Τῆ 18ῃ Σεπτεμβρίου 1973

Εύλαβέστατον Ἱερατικῶς Προϊστάμενον
καί Ἐντιμότατον Διοικητικόν Συμβούλιον
τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Κοινότητος
τῶν Παμμεγίστων Ταξιαρχῶν
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS

Ἄγαπητοί,

Ἀπευθύνομεν ὑμῖν διὰ τῆς παρουσίας θερμότατα πατρικά συγχαρητήρια διὰ τὴν λίαν ἐπιτυχῆ ἀπόφασίν σας, ὅπως ἐορτάσητε τὴν 50ῆν ἐπέτειον ἀπὸ τῆς ἐγκαταστάσεως τῶν πρώτων Ἑλλήνων μεταναστῶν εἰς τὴν πόλιν τοῦ Γουώτερτάουν, καί ἀπὸ τῆς ἰδρύσεως ἐν αὐτῇ τοῦ "Ἑλληνικοῦ Συλλόγου" καί τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἀπογευματινοῦ Σχολείου.

Οἱ τετιμημένοι Ἕλληνες πρωτοπόροι διὰ τῆς ἰδρύσεως Συλλόγου κατὰ πρότον καί Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἀπογευματινοῦ Σχολείου, ἐξέλεξαν τὴν ὀρθὴν ὁδὸν πρὸς διάσωσιν, μεταλαμπάδευσιν καί διαιώνισιν τῶν ἀτιμῆτων θησαυρῶν τῆς Ἁγίας Ὁρθοδόξου ἡμῶν Πίστεως καί τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς γλώσσης, ἡ ὁποία εἶναι ἡ γλῶσσα τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου. Τὴν πολύτιμον ταύτην κληρονομίαν ἐξησφάλισαν δι' ὑμᾶς, ἰδρύσαντες βραδύτερον Κοινότητα καί ἀνεγείροντες τὸν ἱερόν ὑμῶν Ναόν.

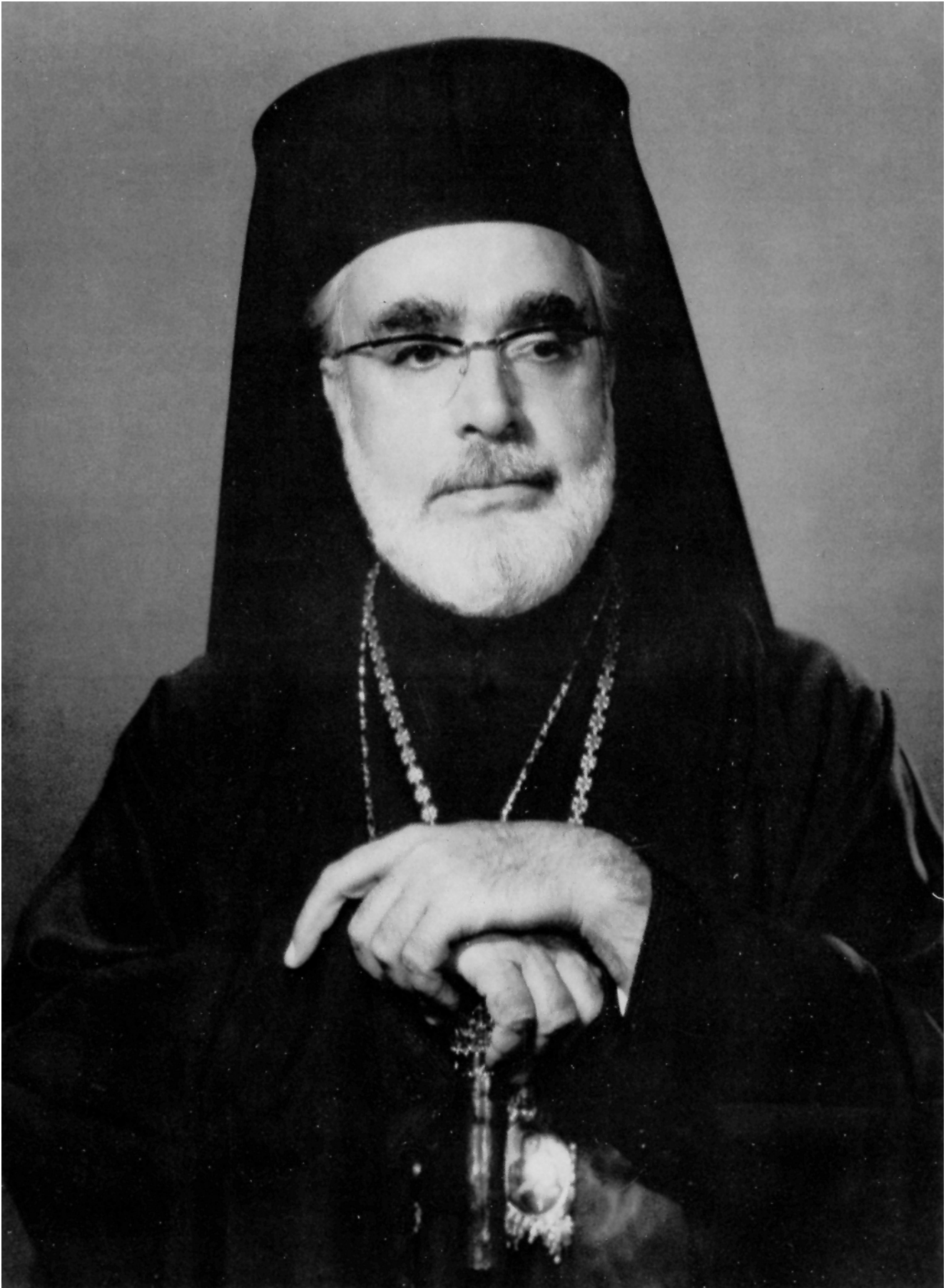
Καί ὑμεῖς, ἀγαπητοί, ἐπὶ τὰ τίμια ἴχνη αὐτῶν πορευόμενοι, μεταδώσατε εἰς τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν τὴν πολύτιμον ταύτην πατρῶαν κληρονομίαν, διὰ τῆς ὁποίας θά ἐπιτευχθῆ ἡ ἐπιβίωσις καί διαιώνισις τῆς Ἁγίας ἡμῶν Ὁρθοδόξου Πίστεως καί Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ Χώρᾳ ταύτῃ.

Εὐχόμενοι δ' ἐπὶ τῇ εἰσόδῳ εἰς τὴν β' πεντηκονταετίαν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλεύσεως τῶν πρώτων μεταναστῶν, ὅπως ὁ Κύριος εὐλογῆ καί ἐνισχύῃ ὑμᾶς ἐν παντί ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ, διατελοῦμεν

Μετά πατρικῆς ἀγάπης καί εὐχῶν πρὸς πάντας

Ο ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ

Ο ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ ΙΑΚΩΒΟΣ







Μετ' εὐχῶν καὶ ἀγάπης,

Ο ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ

fr. Δημήτριος Δημήτριος
ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ

ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΗ ΑΝΑΣΚΟΠΗΣΙΣ

Κάθε μέλος τῆς Κοινότητος τῶν Ταξιαρχῶν τοῦ Γουώτερτάουν, με ὑπερηφάνεια στρέφει τὸ βλέμμα του εἰς τὸ παρελθόν, καὶ με εὐλάβεια φέρει στὴν σκέψι του τοὺς πρωτεργάτας τοῦ Κοινοτικού αὐτοῦ συγκροτήματος.

Πενήντα χρόνια παρήλθον ἀφ' οὗτοι οἱ πρώτοι Ἕλληνες ἐγκατεστάθησαν εἰς τὴν πόλιν τοῦ Γουώτερτάουν τῆς Μασσαχουσέτης. Πρῶτη τους ἰδέα ἦτο τὸ πᾶς θὰ διέσωζαν τὸν πολύτιμον θησαυρὸν πού ἔφεραν μαζί των ἀπὸ τὴν Ἑλλάδα. Τὴν ἰδέα τῆς Πατρίδος, καὶ τὴν θρησκείαν των. Πρὸς τοῦτο, τὸ ἔτος 1923 ἵδρυσαν τὸν "ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΝ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΝ" καὶ τὸ πρῶτον Ἑλληνικὸν τὰν Σχολεῖον.

Εἰς τὴν προσπάθειαν αὐτὴν, πρωτεστάτησαν ὅλοι με μιά ψυχὴ καὶ μιά καρδιά.

Ἐνδομύχως εἶχον μεγάλα ὄνειρα. Εἶχον ὅμως καὶ μεγάλες δυσκολίες. Ἡ οἰκονομικὴ τῶν καταστάσις ἦτο πενιχρά· οἱ ἐργασίες των ἀπεροφούσαν ὅλον τὸν χρόνον των· εἶχον ὑποχρεώσεις ἐδῶ, καὶ ὑποχρεώσεις εἰς τὴν Πατρίδα. Ἡ κατοικία των δὲν ἦτο πλουσία καὶ ἀνετη. Εἶχον ὅμως ἀποφασιστικότητα. Μὲ πολὺν κόπον καὶ με τὸν ἰδρωτὰ των ἐβάδισαν ἐμπρός. Δὲν ἐκάμθησαν πρὸ οὐδενός ἐμποδίου. Δι' αὐτὸ καὶ ἡ πρόοδος των εἰς τὰ ἐπακόλουθα ἔτη, ἦτο ἀξιοθαύμαστος.

Τό ἔτος 1937 ἰδρύουν Ἑλληνικήν Ὁρθόδοξον Κοινότητα, καί μέ τήν κανονικήν ἀδειαν τῆς Σεβαστῆς Ἱεράς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς ἀποκοῦν τήν πρώτην τους ἐκκλησίαν, ἐπί ὀνόματι τῶν Παμμεγίστων Ταξιαρχῶν. Τήν πρώτην θείαν Λειτουργίαν, ἐτέλεσε ὁ ἀείμνηστος ἱερεὺς Ἰοβιανός Λαυρακάς. Ὡς τακτικός ἱερατικός Προϊστάμενος διορίζεται ὁ ἀείμνηστος ἱερεὺς Εὐστράτιος Ρηγέλης. Οὗτος ἀναδεικνύεται ὁ ἐμπνευστής μεγάλων σχεδίων διὰ τήν Κοινότητα. Ἦνωσε τήν Κοινότητα, καί ὡς πνευματικός πατέρας συμπαρίστατο εἰς τό πλευρόν τῶν καλῶν ἐργατῶν τῆς Κοινότητος.

Τό ἔτος 1949 ἐτέθησαν τά θεμέλια τοῦ νέου περικαλλοῦς ἱεροῦ ναοῦ.
Τό 1951 προσλαμβάνεται ὡς Ἱερατικός Προϊστάμενος ὁ αἰδ. Γεώργιος Κουτσογιαννόπουλος. Τοῦτον διεδέχθη τό 1953 ὁ νῦν ἱερατικός προϊστάμενος Αἰδ. Ἐμμανουήλ Μεταξάς.

Διὰ τās πολλαπλᾶς καί διαρκῶς αὐξανομένας ἀνάγκας, τό ἔτος 1957, ἀνεγείρεται τό Κοινοτικό Κέντρον, μέ τās ἀνέτους καί εὐρυχωρούς αἰθούσας του. Ἦτο τό πρῶτον Κοινοτικό Κέντρον εἰς τήν περιφέρειαν Μείζονος Βοστώνης.
Ἀπό τοῦ ἔτους 1969 ἡ Κοινότης εὐρίσκειται ἄνευ οἰκονομικοῦ χρέους.

Ἡ Φιλόπτωχος Ἀδελφότης, τό δεξι χέρι τῆς Κοινότητος, ὑπό τήν διευθύνειν τῶν εὐγενεστάτων Κυριῶν, συνετέλεσε μεγάλως εἰς τήν πρόοδον, τῶν καλλωπισμῶν τῶν κτιρίων, καί εἰς τήν ἐξάσκησιν τῆς Φιλανθρωπίας, καθῶς καί εἰς τήν προαγωγήν διαφόρων προγραμμάτων. Σήμερον ἡ Κοινότης εὐρίσκειται εἰς ἀξιοζήλευτον θέσειν. Ὑπερφανεύεται διὰ τὰ σχολεῖα τῆς, τήν χορωδίαν τῆς, τήν νεολαίαν, τό προσωπικόν τῆς, τοὺς γνωστούς καί ἀφανείς ἐργάτας καί δωρητάς τῆς καί ἰδιαιτέρως διὰ τὰ ἐκλεκτά μέλη τῶν ἐκάστοτε Διοικητικῶν Συμβουλιῶν, πού ὅλως εὐχαρίστως διαθέτουν τόν καιρόν των εἰς τήν ὑπηρεσίαν τῆς Κοινότητος.

Εἰς τήν χρυσήν ἀλυσίδα τῶν ἐκάστοτε Προέδρων, ἀναφέρονται τά ἐξῆς ὀνόματα: Ἀντώνιος Παπαδόπουλος, Ἀσιμάκης Ἐλευθερίου, Βασίλειος Γκουϊσημπέλης, Ἐμμανουήλ Γαϊτάνης, Ἀχιλλεύς Βάρκας, Βασίλειος Ἀβτζῆς, Παντελῆς Γιακουμῆς, Ἡρακλῆς Τσοσιμετζῆς, Εὐάγγελος Χάραρης, Νεοκλῆς Ράλλης, Γεώργιος Μηλιώτης, Καραλάμπος Φλάμπουρας, Νικόλαος Μυλωνάς, Γεώργιος Δωσσης, Δημήτριος Κολλιας, Βασίλειος Χάραρης, Γεώργιος Κοντοπός, Παναγιώτης Σταυρόπουλος, Δημήτριος Βούρος, Ζήνων Ζαννέτος, Ἰωάννης Τσάλας, Ἀλέξανδρος Β. Ἀβτζῆς, Ἀνδρέας Χάραρης καί Γεώργιος Καραλάμπου.

Ἡ Κοινότης τῶν Ταξιαρχῶν πάντοτε θά προχωρεῖ ἔμπρός. Τό ὀφείλει τοῦτο εἰς τοὺς ἰδρυτάς καί πρωτεργάτας τῆς. Τό ὀφείλει ἐπίσης καί εἰς τήν νεολαίαν μας. Οἱ νέοι εἶναι ἐκείνοι πού θά γίνουν συνεχισταί τῶν ἀξίων προγόνων των.



REV. EFSTRATIOS RIGHELLIS



GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE ARCHANGELS

'Ελληνική 'Ορθόδοξος 'Εκκλησία - «Οι Ταξίαρχαι»

25 Bigelow Avenue — Watertown, Massachusetts 02172

WATERTOWN—WALTHAM—BELMONT

Church Office WA 4-8182

Community Center WA 4-9592



REV. EMMANUEL METAXAS

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Fifty years ago, in 1923, the first Greeks arrived in the Town of Watertown. Their first thought was to organize themselves. They founded the "Hellenic Association of Watertown" and they obtained their charter from the State of Massachusetts.

Their second thought was to establish a Greek School, through which to perpetuate the Greek Language. In 1937, they built their first church. Since then, the Watertown Community has experienced only progress and rapid growth.

Those were the years of extreme economic hardship for our people. Many were the prophets who ridiculed those who worked for the Hellenic-Orthodox ideals, claiming that within twenty years no one would be interested in a Greek Language and in a Greek Church. One can only be amazed at the audacious courage of our "old-timers" for even contemplating supporting a school and of building in such days, when many of them were unemployed. One can only be inspired by the fact that this church was completed during their time. Sacrifice is a word we use too much and too loosely at the present time. The "first comers" knew what sacrifice was, and they accomplished all this, literally, by trust in God and faith in the future with their blood, sweat and tears.

And, now, fifty years later, we, the successors to those who built this church, enjoy affluence that goes far beyond anything they could have imagined. While we are not without problems, our church is strong and vibrant. The prophets of yesteryear have been proved false. We are here and our facilities have expanded, our membership grows, our activities multiply, our income increases each year. One wonders, however, if our courage and our faith can match that of the preceding generation.

Let us not use the occasion of this Fiftieth Anniversary to congratulate ourselves. Let us rather, acknowledge our debt to the past. Let us rather, accept our responsibility to the future and dedicate ourselves with a courage and a faith akin to those who founded this church to build up our church, making it truly a bastion of Christian ideals, in a world that slowly slips into paganism, and a citadel of our Greek Heritage for a generation that seeks its roots, that fifty years from now our children can look back and acknowledge our endeavors with gratitude.

Rev. Emmanuel S. Metaxas

Pastor

ΧΑΙΡΕΤΙΣΜΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ ΠΡΟΞΕΝΟΥ

Ἐπί τῆ εὐκαιρίᾳ τῆς συμπληρώσεως πεντηκονταετίας ἀπὸ τῆς ἰδρύσεως τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Κοινότητος τοῦ WATERTOWN ἐπιθυμῶ νὰ συγχαρῶ τὰ παλαιότερα μέλη αὐτῆς διὰ τὰς προσπάθειάς τὰς ὁποίας ἐπὶ τόσα ἔτη κατέβαλον, ὥστε νὰ δημιουργήσουν μίαν ἀπὸ τὰς πλέον ζωντανὰς καὶ φημιουργικὰς Ἑλληνορθόδοξους κοινότητες τῆς Ἀμερικῆς πέραξ τοῦ Ἱεροῦ Ναοῦ τῶν Ταξιαρχῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνέτων πολυτελῶν κοινοτικῶν ἐγκαταστάσεων καὶ νὰ εὐχηθῶ εἰς τὰ νεώτερα μέλη νὰ συνεχίσουν τὰς προσπάθειάς τῶν παλαιοτέρων ὥστε τὸ Ἑλληνικόν ὄνομα καὶ ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος πίστις νὰ κοσμοῦν ἀδιακόπως τὴν ὀμορφὴν πόλιν τοῦ WATERTOWN.



Ἰωάννης Φωτόπουλος
Πρόξενος τῆς Ἑλλάδος

On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Greek Community of Watertown, I wish to congratulate the pioneers, the elder members, for their tireless efforts towards the establishment and growth of one of the most vital and creative Greek Orthodox Communities with its buildings and modern facilities. It is my wish that the younger members will follow the example of their fathers and continue their efforts so that the Greek name and the Orthodox Faith will enhance forever the beauty of the city of Watertown.

John Photopoulos
Greek Consul



HISTORY OF The Greek Orthodox Church Of Watertown 1923-1973

The Greek community of Watertown, Massachusetts traces its beginnings to three families in 1913. The infant community grew to approximately thirty families by 1923. The small group of immigrants had a dream and a burning desire to pass on to their children their heritage. They organized themselves into the Greek Society of Watertown, and elected Mr. Anthony Pappas as its first president.

The Society rented a hall on Crawford Street, Watertown which was used for both Greek School and a meeting place for the men of the organization, who met there socially on Sundays and weekday evenings. It was here that Dr. Basil Despotes gave lectures and inspired the group to preserve their language, culture, and religion. He provided the drive to the people to build a church. (For these efforts and his other activities within the Church Patriarch Athenagoras elevated him to Archon of the Church).

The student body grew rapidly and within a few years larger quarters were required. Land was purchased on Arlington Street, Watertown and a contractor was engaged to build a new school. With the help of the men of the community, the building was completed in the early thirties. It housed two halls. One was used to continue the teaching of the Greek language and the lower hall was used as a "kaffenio" and a cultural center for the adults.

Father Iovianos Lavrakas celebrated Divine Liturgy on a special occasion in the new building. This gave the needed stimulus to the group to seriously think of forming a new church. In 1937, while Mr. William Avtgis was president of the Greek Society of Watertown, they began to convert the upper hall into a small church, while classes continued in the lower hall. The Archdiocese approved the new church and appointed Rev. Efstratios Righellis as its first pastor.

A name was needed for the new church. At a meeting of the Board of Trustees, names of various saints were submitted and dropped into a box. Mr. Neoclis Rallis drew the name "Taxiarchae" which had been submitted by Mr. Apostolos Lavrakas.

The women of the newly-formed church were just as ambitious as the men. They were deeply interested in the well being of the community. With the guidance of Mrs. Mary Tsolas, the first Philoptohos was established with Mrs. Andromachi Doukakis as president and Mrs. Fotini Lavrakas as vice president.



Rev. Righellis served in many and varied capacities. He was spiritual leader, Greek school teacher, founder of the Sunday School program, organizer of the choir, and even found time to direct plays. He was dearly loved by young and old alike for his boundless devotion to the church and its people.

Blessing Of The
Land On
Bigelow Avenue
1949



Through Father Righellis' efforts and the efforts of the subsequent administrations the community grew at an accelerated pace between the years of 1937 and 1949.



The problem of expansion had to be met again in 1949. During the administration of Mr. William A. Harris with Mr. Harry Flambouras as the chairman of the building committee, a contract was signed for the erection of the present church building, The new church was completed in November of 1950 at the cost of \$125,000. The building of Arlington Street was sold in June of 1954.



During the administration of Mr. Demeter Kollias the Community embarked on another ambitious project. The Community Center was started to better serve the educational and social needs of the members. Mr. William A. Harris was the chairman of the community center building committee.

The cornerstone of the Center was laid in 1957. The edifice was completed in 1958 at the cost of \$145,000. The Community had borrowed very heavily. The old spirit of courage prevailed among the members. Many pledged their own personal property against construction costs until bank mortgages could be secured. Boards of Trustees that followed diligently worked against many odds until all mortgages were paid off.



Many thanks go to the tireless workers of the past and of the present. It is impossible to name them all, because so many have left their mark on our history. The endless hours given by our spiritual leaders, the members of the Board of Trustees, the Greek School teachers, the Sunday School staff, choir members, cantors, Ladies Philoptochos, G.O.Y.A., Junior G.O.Y.A. are contributions that can never be repaid. Heart-felt thanks are given to all of the magnificent people who helped to change a dream into reality. May God help us all to keep changing our dreams into realities for a better tomorrow.



A new pastor, Rev. George Koutsougianopoulos, was appointed in 1951. Father Righellis retired in 1952, however before his death on May 3, 1953, he saw his dream of the new church come true. Rev. Emmanuel Metaxas, our present spiritual leader, joined the community in September of 1953 after the transfer of Rev. Koutsougianopoulos.

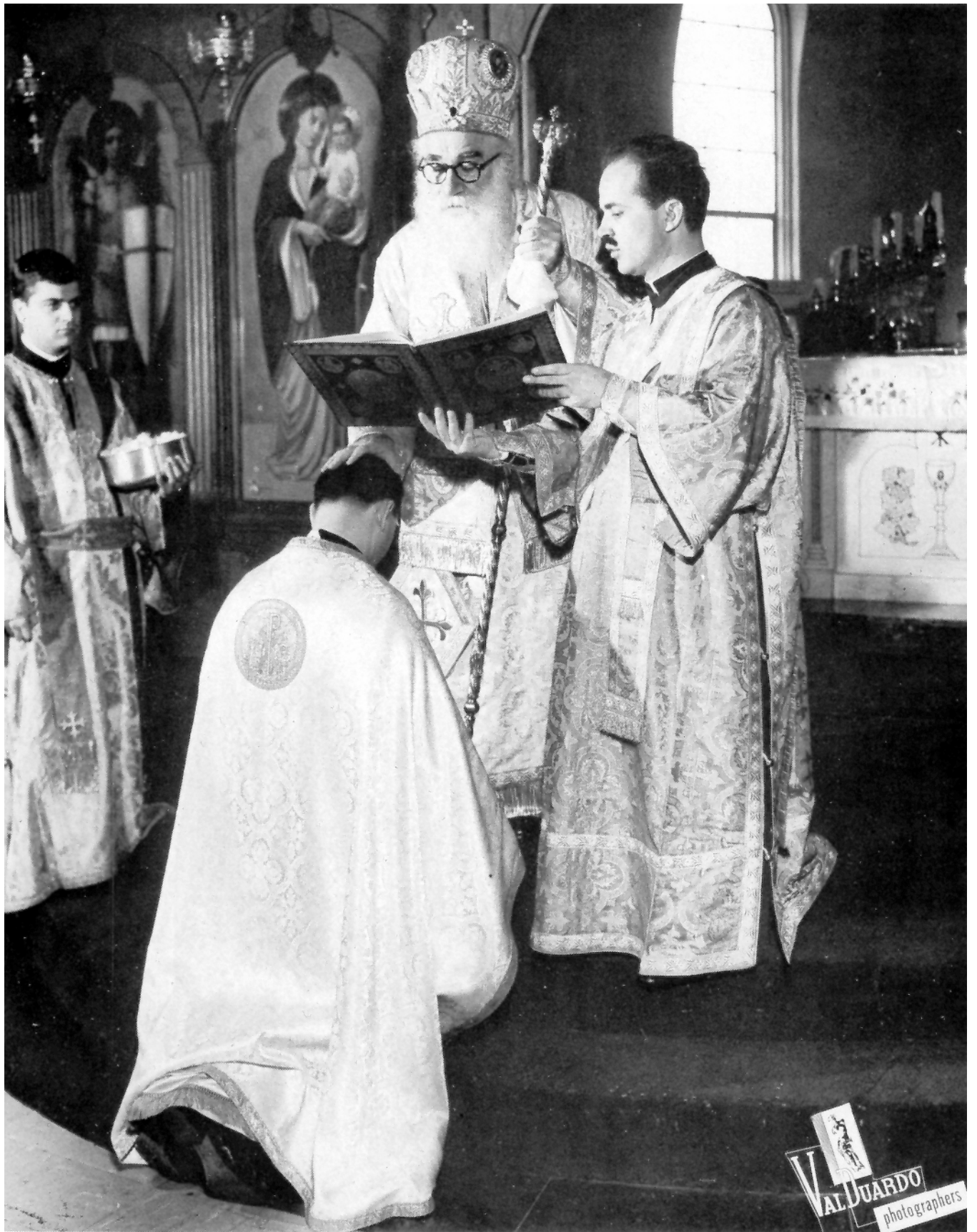


Our hard working spiritual leader who has been with us since 1953.





At the time of completion of the church building the Community owed \$75,000. Six years later, on February 26, 1956, the mortgage was burned.



The late Archbishop Michael during Pontifical Liturgy.
February 26, 1956 5th Anniversary of Bigelow Avenue
Taxiarchae Church

VALBUARDO
photographers



OLYMPIANS Evangelia Vlassakis, Nancy Hunter, Dianne Tzannos, Helen Vasiliou



OLYMPIADS Nick Makris, William Tragakis, Bill Karravatos, Chris Tragakis



SUNDAY SCHOOL FACULTY 1956



GOYA



1966



1973



1973 BAZAAR





1973 BOARD OF TRUSTEES



SUNDAY SCHOOL



1973 PHILOPTOCHOS







TAXIARCHAE SENIOR CHOIR

Elias Zahos	Douglas Anthony	Basil Harris	Frank Peros	Chris Anthony	David Peros	Peter Darvirris
Prodromos Stephanidis	Penelope Metaxas	Hope Carras	Jan Avery	Mercene Peros	Alysia Anthony	Katherine Jais
Ginny Peros	Irene Peros	Joanne Peros	Cathy Colt	Sandy Avtgis	Patricia Anthony	Daphne Smerlas
Sandy Kalafatis	Eugenia Chingros	Debbie Ducas	Catherine Bibiles	Stephanie Chagaris	Susan Avtgis	Debbie Demetriades

Rev. Emanuel Metaxas

Arthur Peros (Director)

Missing when picture was taken: Vicki Anthony, Cathy Kalivas, George Colt, Ted Filandrianos, William Peros
Stephen Jais (Organist)



TAXIARCHAE JUNIOR CHOIR

	Fay Vahos	Daphne Smerlas	Francine Smerlas	Marianne Andrews Effie Patsios	Patty Patsios	
George Haralambos	Olympia Fournarakis	Vicki Chronis	Angela Filandrios	Lauren Colt	Mary Vahos	
George Andrews	Debbie Peros	Nikki Fournarakis	Lisa Haralambos		Charles Chronis	Arthur Peros (Director)

Missing when photo taken: Linda Anastas, Mary Chiochios, Elaine Palashis, Stella Pourikas, Michael Kovacs



Cutting 20th Anniversary Cake by Bishop Athenagoras assisted by Dr. Basil Despotes (left) and Rev. Emmanuel Metaxas and Mr. Demeter Kollias.