

## For Immediate Release

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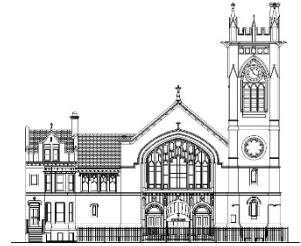
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## NEWS RELEASE

### Celebrating 125 Years of Faith, Community, & Culture

#### **New York City's Oldest Greek Orthodox Community Celebrates 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with Historic Walkathon, Divine Services, and Celebratory Luncheon**

**New York, NY – August 15, 2017** – In celebration of 125 years of faith, community, and culture since its original founding in 1892, the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church invites all New Yorkers to participate in Anniversary events: historic Preservation Walkathon fundraiser on Saturday, September 30 and Hierarchical Divine Services with following celebratory luncheon on Sunday, October 1, 2017.

On Saturday, September 30, 2017 members of the Parish and guests from the community follow in the footsteps of the church history, participating in a Walkathon to raise funds for the preservation of our church building. The historic walk begins at 9:45 AM at Judson Memorial Church (Washington Square South) stopping at three additional stops historic church sites (West 30<sup>th</sup> St., West 54<sup>th</sup> St., and West 85<sup>th</sup> St.) ending at the current Parish home. Along the route, costumed characters from the period will meet walkers, informing them of world, social, and church events relating to each site. Those who wish to walk or donate to the church restoration may do so by going to the church Web site: [www.annunciation-nyc.org](http://www.annunciation-nyc.org)

On Sunday, October 1, 2017, 8:30 AM church hierarchy, dignitaries, community members, and guests come together for Divine Services. His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America presides over the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. Co-celebrants include V. Rev. Archimandrite Father Chrysostomos Gilbert (current parish priest), Rev. Archdeacon Panteleimon Papadopoulos, and Rev. Deacon Eleftherios Constantine. Christos Stavropoulos, Protopsaltis and the Annunciation Choir under the direction of Michael Janaros Cofield will sing the hymns and responses for the service.

Immediately following Divine Liturgy, a formal 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Luncheon honoring the philanthropic works of parishioners Nicholas and Julie Sakellariades will take place in the Parish hall. Luncheon tickets are available for purchase online through the church Web site. LIMITED SEATING IS AVAILABLE.

At the time of its founding, the New York Greek Orthodox “Society of Athena” community was one of only three Orthodox parishes in the contiguous United States, and the only one east of the Mississippi River. Since its 1892 founding, the community of Orthodox faithful has evolved from assembling at a restaurant in the Two Bridges neighborhood of New York’s Lower East Side, to the basement of a German-Swiss Evangelical Church located at 340 West 53rd St. to the basement of Judson Memorial Church (then at West 4<sup>th</sup> St.). By 1894 the community found itself operating out of the Asbury Methodist Church at 5<sup>th</sup> Street and East Washington Square. In the years 1907, 1908, and 1909 there were three respective moves.

After dotting its way across the city, the growing West Side Greek community created a few church homes that were newer, larger, and more permanent. In May 1913 the “Down-Town Greeks” purchased Amity Baptist Church at 308 West 54<sup>th</sup> St, (whose design was inspired by Aghia Sophia in Istanbul [Constantinople], Turkey). To make way for the new 18<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct, in 1938 the City of New York forced the community to move yet again. This time further north to 325 West 85<sup>th</sup> St. where the church found a home until 1953.

With the 85<sup>th</sup> St. Church operating at near capacity, in December of 1953 the Evangelismos community purchased the historic church edifice owned by the Fourth Presbyterian Church on the corner of 91<sup>st</sup> Street and West End Ave. The 1894 Gothic Revival/Richardsonian Romanesque designed by noted Philadelphia architectural firm Heins and LaFarge boasted not only an ample-sized sanctuary but also a five story formal rectory and a two story Parish House. Decorated with the finest of stained glass windows by L.C. Tiffany and Benjamin Sellars the Greek community also inherited a landmark clock tower by E. Howard of Boston, and 1927 symphonic Skinner Organ.

Late January of 1954 witnessed a great solemn procession through West Side streets as the community of faithful carried forward their treasured church artifacts and icons to officially transition into their new home. 1957 saw the installation of a large hand-carved orange and lime wood Byzantine iconostasis commissioned by the community. Carved by famed woodworker Theofanis Nomikos, the iconostasis at Annunciation is a scaled-down of his original 1931, larger work found in Athens at the church of Aghios Dionyssios Areopagitis. Completing the iconostasis are six large-scale icons by Bronx-based iconographer Constantine Youssis.

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**Note to Editors:** Artwork to accompany this news release is located at the bottom of the Press Center page at <http://www.annunciation-nyc.org/home/press-center>