

120 Years of Orthodoxy in Maryland...
Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation
1906 - 2026



“Evangelismos” Greek Orthodox Church on Homewood Avenue, Holy Friday, April 14, 1922.

In the spring of 1906, the “Atlantis” Greek newspaper in New York ran an article of historic significance regarding our Cathedral community. “We were informed from Baltimore that Sunday’s Divine Liturgy, where 150 Greeks were present, was very impressive. The meeting was also successful and over \$400 was collected. The parish council elected that day decided to offer the Greek community of Washington the amount of \$100 so their priest could come to Baltimore once a month to conduct church services.” This first Divine Liturgy held on **Sunday, March 18, 1906**, at the Union Hall, 500 East Fayette Street, marked the formal establishment of the “Evangelismos” (Annunciation) Greek Orthodox Church – an immigrant parish that would mature and evolve into Baltimore’s Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation.

The Greek community’s strength during its early years is evident by the activities that quickly unfolded. The first full-time priest was assigned in **1907**. A formal charter under Maryland State Law was acquired in **1909** and the first church building on Homewood Avenue was purchased. The year **1912** saw the acquisition of the first Orthodox burial grounds within the Woodlawn Cemetery and the establishment of a Greek language school. The first youth group took form in **1915** as the forerunner to later groups such as EONA, GOYA and YAL. With the continued influx of Greek immigrants, the parish grew substantially during the 1920s and 1930s.

Progress during these years can be attributed to several groups that formed: local chapters of fraternal organizations such as AHEPA and GAPA; various Greek regional societies; and the Enosis and Elpis Ladies Associations that merged to become the Greek Ladies Philoptochos Society in **1936**. Soon it was apparent that the size of the Homewood Avenue Church was inadequate to serve the spiritual, educational, and social needs of the Greek community. **The second phase of parish history began in 1937** with the acquisition of the magnificent sanctuary at Maryland Avenue and Preston Street, formerly occupied by the Associate Congregational Church. This new home of the Greek Orthodox community was consecrated in the Orthodox tradition in **1938**. The dedication of the church energized parishioners and was symbolic of the community’s future role as a prominent congregation in Baltimore.

By the 1940s, while coordinating tremendous war relief efforts, Annunciation took the bold initiative to purchase property on Windsor Mill Road and established its own burial ground by **1944** known as the “Greek Orthodox Cemetery.” In the years following World War II, several developments strengthened the church’s relationship with

the surrounding community and with younger parishioners. The transition of the name from Evangelismos to Annunciation was symbolic of a new era. English and Greek languages were now interchanged in sermons and parts of liturgical services. In **1954**, Annunciation welcomed its first full-time American-born priest of Greek descent to serve the parish, and more interdenominational activities were held with other religious groups in Baltimore.

A major decision was made in **1958** when the parish chose to remain in Baltimore City and expand its present facility by demolishing the original rectory and constructing the Education Building which was dedicated in **1961**. Sunday school enrollment accelerated during the 1960s and church membership grew significantly. The fall of **1971** saw the first large scale three-day Greek festival called “Athenian Agora” which evolved from smaller church bazaars hosted by the parish in prior years. Another historic milestone took place in **1975** when the Annunciation Church was designated as the Greek Orthodox Cathedral for the State of Maryland. The pace of activities was about to accelerate.

As Annunciation continued its expansion of ministries under its new status as the Cathedral for Maryland, additional space was needed. The acquisition of five Preston Street townhouses led to the planning and construction of the Annunciation Orthodox Center which opened in **1984**. Other capital improvement projects were also completed during this era including the Chapel of Holy Wisdom in the Education Building and the Chapel of the Holy Resurrection and mausoleum on the cemetery grounds. Then, during the ninth decade, the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation hosted Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew during his tour of American cities. The historic Patriarchal Doxology took place in the sanctuary in the fall of **1997** attended by over 1,000 Orthodox Christians from various churches throughout the region.



The inscription above the portico translates as “House of God...Gateway to Heaven”

Today, reflecting on **120 years as a church organization**, we respectfully remember the five longest serving senior clergymen who guided the Greek Orthodox community’s spiritual growth during their tenure and helped the parish evolve into its present form: The Very Rev. Joakim Papachristou (1935-1950); The Rev. George Gallos (1954-1965); The Rev. Emmanuel Bouyoucas (1965-1975); The Rev. Constantine Monios (1975-2002); and The Very Rev. Constantine Moralis (2002-2022). Now, in its 12th decade, Annunciation has embarked on a monumental Capital Campaign filled with tremendous vision for future generations. Under the guidance and spiritual leadership of The Rev. George Mastakas since **2024**, the redesign and renovation of the Education Building will soon start to unfold. Through the continued financial support of parishioners, the five remaining historic Preston Street townhouses, built in the 1890s, will also be transformed for future use while maintaining the architectural details of their front facades.

The record of accomplishments shows that the congregation of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation is staunchly proud of its past while aspiring toward its future. May our blessings continue as we advance toward another historic milestone in **2031**...the observance of our 125th Anniversary!

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