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## **Gov. Cuomo and Archbishop Elpidophoros Announce Construction to resume on St Nicholas**



**GOVERNOR CUOMO AND ARCHBISHOP ELPIDOPHOROS ANNOUNCE CONSTRUCTION TO RESUME ON ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH AND NATIONAL SHRINE AT WORLD TRADE CENTER**

***Governor Officially Welcomes New Archbishop of America, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros to New York - See Photos [Here](#)***

***Church Project Will Resume Under the Leadership of 13-Member 'Friends of St. Nicholas' Board Now in Place to Oversee Financing and Construction of Major Effort***

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today officially welcomed Archbishop Elpidophoros of America to New York and announced plans to resume the rebuilding of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center. This was

the Governor's first meeting with His Eminence since the Archbishop was elected by the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as Archbishop of America to succeed Archbishop Demetrios in May. The project will be driven by a new non-profit organization with an independent, 13-member board – the Friends of St. Nicholas. The new entity has been formed to ensure that the sacred space is completed as expeditiously as possible and can begin welcoming visitors from around the world. The Friends of St. Nicholas will aim to resume construction with a two-year target to complete the church.

“The rebuilding of St. Nicholas Church that was destroyed on September 11 is a moment of coming together and healing not only for the Greek Orthodox community but for all New Yorkers who lived through that horrific day,” **Governor Cuomo said.** “This house of worship will serve as a reminder that our collective faith is something we can always count on to move past our painful memories and build a better tomorrow.”

**Archbishop Elpidophoros said,** “On behalf of the Greek Orthodox Faithful, we have made a commitment to open the doors of this National Shrine by September 11, 2021, the twentieth anniversary of that fateful day. I pledge to you, Governor Cuomo, and to all the people of New York, that we will be ready; we will be on time; and we will be open to all women and men of good will who wish to honor the memory of all who perished on September Eleventh.”

Today, the Governor and the Archbishop were joined by Rick Cotton, Executive Director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; John Catsimatidis, Vice Chairman of the Archdiocese Council; Dennis Mehiel and Michael Psaros, Chair and Vice-Chair respectively of the Friends of St. Nicholas; and the Rev. Father Alexander Karloutsos, Vicar General of the Archdiocese to discuss and announce the resumption of work at the St. Nicholas Church site on the south side of Liberty Street.

The Friends of St. Nicholas will be responsible for the timely rebuilding of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine. The new organization will: raise money for the re-building of St. Nicholas; fund the re-building of St. Nicholas; oversee construction of St. Nicholas; and conduct appropriate audits. The 13-member board will be chaired by Dennis Mehiel, former Chairman of the Battery Park City Authority (2012-2018), and the Chairman of US Corrugated, which he founded in 1966. Richard Browne, Managing Partner of Sterling Project Development Group, will serve as COO of construction.

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros (Lambriniadis) of America will serve as the

Honorary Chairman on behalf of Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Other board members include: Board Vice Chairman Michael Psaros, Co-Founder and Managing Partner of KPS Capital Partners, LP; Maria Allwin, Co-founder Aetos Capital LLC and The Allwin Family Foundation; John Calamos, Founder, Chairman and Global Chief Investment Officer of Calamos Investments; John Catsimatidis, Owner, president, chairman, and CEO of Gristedes Foods and Vice Chair of the Archdiocesan Council; Chrysa Demos, President & CEO of AKT Investments Inc.; John Georges, Founder and CEO of Georges Enterprises; George Marcus, Chairman and Founder of Marcus & Millichap Company; George Mihaltzes, Vice President for Government and Community Affairs, NY Public Library; John Payiavlas, Founder and Owner of AVI Foodsystems, Inc.; Dean Spanos, Owner and Chairman of the Board for the National Football League's Los Angeles Chargers franchise; and George Stamboulidis, Partner at BakerHostetler LLP, and the Rev. Father Alexander Karloutsos, Spiritual Advisor of the Friends of St. Nicholas and Vicar General of the Archdiocese.

**Rick Cotton, Executive Director of the Port Authority, said,** "Governor Cuomo has been a passionate advocate for St. Nicholas Church and for the redevelopment of Lower Manhattan. The Port Authority welcomes the news that, following consultation with the Governor and the Port Authority, the Archdiocese has formed the Friends of St. Nicholas and that construction will soon resume at the south end of our campus. We look forward to the completion and opening of St. Nicholas Church at the World Trade Center where it will serve as a symbol of inspiration to the millions of visitors to our campus each year."

**The Friends of St. Nicholas Chairman, Dennis Mehiel, said,** "The Friends of St. Nicholas are one hundred percent committed to expediting the completion of the Shrine, and at the same time maintaining a public and transparent record of the finances surrounding this historic and sacred project. We thank the Governor and the Port Authority for their unfailing support."

The original St. Nicholas Church at 155 Cedar Street was the only place of worship that was completely destroyed in the September 11th attacks. Upon taking office, Governor Cuomo made the restoration of St. Nicholas Church a top priority, working with the Archdiocese and the Port Authority to reach agreement on a larger, more accessible site for the rebuilding of the Church and National Shrine and personally raising donations for the privately funded complex. When completed, the new St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at 130 Liberty Street just south of the 9/11 Memorial Plaza will serve as a place of prayer and silent reflection and also house a nondenominational bereavement center for

anyone seeking solace and strength at a time of loss. The complex, designed by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava and modeled after Byzantine churches of Hagia Sophia and the Church of the Holy Savior in Istanbul, was designed to glow in the evening hours, an ever-present beacon of hope on the World Trade Center campus.

This progress on St. Nicholas Church builds on the Port Authority's commitment to completing major projects at the World Trade Center campus. In June a request for proposals was released for Site 5, previously home to the Deutsche Bank Building. One year ago, Tower 3 opened and is over 50 percent leased. Shortly after Tower 3 opened, the Port Authority opened Dey Street and Cortlandt Way to pedestrian traffic to greatly improve access to the site – the first time these streets have been opened since the original World Trade Center was built in the 1970s. Meanwhile, Tower 4 is fully leased, and One World Trade Center is 83 percent leased. The Tower 2 site, which is controlled by Silverstein properties, is scheduled to become a future commercial office tower, with its construction to start as soon as for an anchor tenant commits to the building.

Construction of one of the last signature structures on the World Trade Center campus – the Ronald O. Perelman Performing Arts Center – also is underway following an agreement strongly supported by Governor Cuomo in 2018. The Performing Arts Center is projected to open in 2021 and will be able to seat over 1,000 people in a flexible, state-of-the-art space.

— Source: [goarch.org](https://goarch.org)