

The Desert



Messenger

“Behold, I send My messenger before Your Face, who shall prepare Your way...” (Matthew 11:10)

Volume 6, Issue 9 St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

October 2008

**From
Father
John**

Beloved in Christ:

October is upon us, and that means God saw us through another Greek Food Festival! By His good grace, we were blessed with perfect weather and the overwhelming support of the local community, even in this tough economic period. I thank God for these blessings, and for our parishioners who labored selflessly for our Church. When all is said and done, we should humbly be grateful to God alone, knowing that He has control over this event, as well as all we do in His Church and our lives. Whatever the Lord allows – even the challenges – is always for our sanctification.

We are now preparing for the pastoral visit of His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, who will be in our parish to celebrate his Name Day on the weekend of *October 25-26*. We hope you will join us for the celebration, which begins Saturday evening with Great Vespers at 5:30 pm, followed by a Reception and Dinner in his honor; on Sunday morning His Eminence will preside at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy.

The actual Feast Day of St. Gerasimos of Cephalonia is October 20. The Orthodox Calendar is filled with Feast or Name Days that relate to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary or, almost daily, the date on which a Saint entered God’s Kingdom. For the Orthodox, the Name Day has greater significance than the date of one’s physical birth and from the earliest years of the Church, Orthodox Christians have named their children to honor the Lord, His Mother and the Saints, whose lives and deaths were to the glory of God. Even when names are given to honor parents or other beloved family members, the child (or adult) is given a “Christian name” on the day of his or her Baptism that connects the individual with a Patron Saint (whether or not it is the same as the birth name). The Christian name is our identity in the Church, as we receive the Holy Sacraments with this name and we look to our Patron Saint as a model for emulation.

We should put much thought and prayer into naming a child, heeding to the advice of Holy Scripture: *“A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches . . .” (Proverbs 22:1)* From the days of the Old Testament to the accounts in the New Testament, we find countless references to names and their meaning which reveal a spiritual truth – and in many instances, the naming is directed by God or His Messengers, the Angels, for this very purpose. In *Genesis*, God creates man in His image and likeness, naming the male “Adam,” meaning both “man” and “ground” (from which man was formed – the dust that is given life by God’s Spirit) and the female “Eve,” meaning “living,” for by His blessing she is the source of life. A few chapters later, we encounter a man of great faith, “Abram,” meaning “exalted father”; prior to making a covenant with him, God aptly renames him “Abraham,” as he will be the “father of many nations” because of his fidelity to the Lord.

In the New Testament, in the first chapter of the *Gospel of Luke*, we are introduced to the elderly Zacharias and Elizabeth, whom God promises to bless with a child. Although he is a priest, Zacharias questions the Lord and becomes mute until his son’s birth when, in fulfillment of God’s command and in opposition to tradition, he names the boy “John,” which means “the grace of God.” Of course, the Name above all names is that which Mary gives the Christ Child, in obedience to Gabriel, God’s Messenger. The Holy Name “Jesus,” which means “God saves,” reveals to the world why the Son of God came in the flesh – to save us from sin and death. May our names and lives always be to the glory of God, so that we have an eternal identity in His Kingdom!

Love in Christ,

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sundays: 8:45 am Orthros ~ 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
Church School follows Holy Communion

Sunday, October 5/ *2nd Sunday of Luke*
National Church Musicians Sunday

Orthros: Tone Seven (Grave)
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:13-35
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10
Gospel: Luke 6:31-36

Sunday, October 12/ *4th Sunday of Luke/Holy*
Fathers of the 7th Ecumenical Synod

Orthros: Tone Eight (Fourth Plagal)
Resurrection Gospel: Luke 24:36-53
Epistle: Titus 3:8-15
Gospel: Luke 8:5-15

*"I have derived much joy and comfort
from your love . . ." (Philemon 7)*

Sunday, October 19/ *3rd of Luke/Prophet Joel*

Orthros: Tone One
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): John 20:1-10
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11
Gospel: Luke 7:11-16

Saturday, October 25

*5:30 pm Great Vespers of St. Demetrios with
Metropolitan Gerasimos*

Sunday, October 26/ *St. Demetrios the Great Martyr*
Hierarchical Liturgy with Metropolitan Gerasimos

Orthros: Tone Two
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): John 20:11-18
Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:1-10
Gospel: Luke 8:27-39

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

October 5

Ushers: Alleck Orlando, Peter Papas, Marina Adamy, Stephen Carabas, Angelo Stamis, Gary Waters
Memorial: Departed Members of St. John the Baptist Choir
Fellowship: Orthodox Family Fellowship

October 12

Ushers: John Karas, John Nicholas, William Carrico, Sam Koutsulis, George Kakavulias, George Nikols
Fellowship: Philoptochos

October 19

Ushers: Marina Adamy, Stephen Carabas, Peter Papas, Alleck Orlando, Gary Waters, Angelo Stamis
Memorial: Neoclis Michael, John Neocleous, Christina Neocleous.
Fellowship: Cathy Markakis - Brunch Fundraiser for 50th Anniversary Event

October 26

Ushers: William Carrico, Sam Koutsulis, George Kakavulias, George Nikols, John Nicholas, Gary Waters
Fellowship: AHEPA - OXI Day Luncheon

Six Classes on the Orthodox Faith

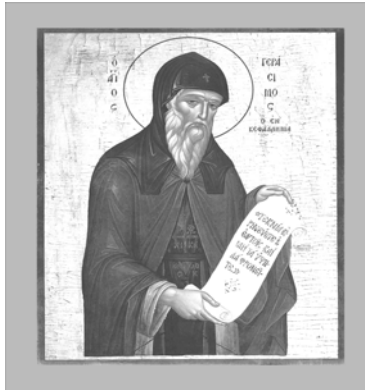
On Wednesdays ~ Through Wednesday, October 29
7:00-8:30 pm

At St. John the Baptist Community and Education Center
Father John Hondros, Instructor

For inquirers, catechumens and Orthodox Christians, who want to know more about the ancient Apostolic Faith

The Ladies Philoptochos Society Panagia Chapter
The Parish Council of St. John the Baptist
The Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos Board

*Invite You to an Evening Gala
Celebrating*



The Feastday of His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos

*“Looking Forward:
The Future is Something We Create”*

Saturday, October 25, 2008

Panos Hall

*Saint John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
5300 South El Camino Road
Las Vegas, Nevada 89118*

*5:30 pm Vespers
6:30 pm Reception
Silent Auction
7:30 pm Dinner*

Cocktail Attire *RSVP by October 17, 2008*
Information (702) 451-1440

*Dora Hart, Chairwoman
Cheryl Pandelis and Susan Stamis, Co-chairwomen*

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

5300 S. El Camino Rd.
Las Vegas, NV 89118

Rev. Father John Hondros

To Be Determined
Business Administrator

Karen Rawlinson
Administrative Assistant

Janice Leavitt
Facilities and Catering Manager

Office Hours

Monday - Friday
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Telephone: (702) 221-8245

FAX: (702) 221-9167

E-mail:

frjohn@vegasgreekorthodox.com
Website: vegasgreekorthodox.com

Parish Council: George Nikols

Philoptochos: Amalia Dominguez

Choir: Faye Brown

Chanters/Youth Choir:
Presvytera Maria Hondros

Church School:
Eileen Koutsulis

Altar Servers:
Sam Koutsulis

Stewardship Committee:
John Karas

Hellenic Historical Society:
Nitsa Filios

Senior GOYA:
Effie Lekar
Eileen Koutsulis

Junior GOYA
Tami Stefanatos
Tammy Chomakos

HOPE and JOY:
Jennifer Orlando and Christy Vino

Orthodox Family Fellowship:
Michael and Tami Stefanatos

Youth Ministries:
Eileen Koutsulis

Orthodox Connection Las Vegas:
Angela Coutris

Senior Forerunners:
Ruth Plentzas

Greek Folk Dance:
Tina Liaos, Chair
Bessie Stavropoulos and Carla Cole

Orthodox Bookstore:
Costa Frangakis

50th Anniversary Celebration:
Cathy Markakis

**President's
Column**

We made it through our 36th Annual Greek Food Festival and the initial results look good. Our major fundraising event appears to be an overwhelming success and we have maintained the tradition of having the best Festival in Nevada.

I would like to THANK all those that work so hard for so many hours; it is our community and our hard work that makes this event so great. I would also like to thank the Las Vegas community which always supports us and all the vendors that worked with us in putting on the Festival. Results from our fundraising event will be coming soon.

October 5 is National Church Musicians Sunday, and the Parish Council will show our community's gratitude to our choir, youth choir, chanters and organist by hosting a special luncheon for them following the Divine Liturgy. Please take a moment that day to thank our Church Musicians for their dedication to our worship!

On *Saturday, October 25* we will be celebrating with *Metropolitan Gerasimos his Name Day*. The Philoptochos Board of San Francisco, our Panagia Chapter and the Parish Council are hosting this event and would like everyone to come and be a part of the celebration. More information will be forthcoming. On *Sunday October 26* after Divine Liturgy, Metropolitan Gerasimos will be present at our annual *OXI Day Celebration*, hosted and sponsored by our AHEPA Family.

George Nikols, Parish Council President

50th Anniversary

The planning committee for the upcoming Golden Anniversary event of our Church will be holding a *Fundraiser Brunch on Sunday, October 19* after Divine Liturgy. Tickets are \$5 per person and proceeds will go toward expenses for the event. More information will be forthcoming.

Any questions please call the 50th Anniversary Celebration Chair, *Cathy Markakis*, at (702) 254-2243.

"I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers . . ." (Philemon 4)

**Philoptochos
News**

Congratulations (and THANKS) to John Koutsulis, all of the Greek Food Festival chairpersons and volunteers for preparing for and hosting a fun and successful event! The Festival has become a staple that our Las Vegas community looks forward to and loves.

It was so nice to see everyone at our September General Meeting. Over 55 women came together to start and plan the calendar year. We enjoyed fellowship, great food and a hands-on project which benefited the foster children at Trinity.

Please plan on attending the next General Meeting on *Tuesday, October 14* at 7:00 pm in Kokkos Hall. Here we will gear-up for the scheduled activities and events in October, November and December. Events include the Name Day Celebration for His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos on October 25, the Autumn Bake Sale, our Parish Christmas Card, the annual Philoptochos Pastry Sale, and the Philoptochos Christmas Party. More information on each of these items will be coming your way very soon.

Amalia Dominguez and the Board Members

Our Community Registry

Baptized into Christ: Na Mas Zisoun!

Stefanos (Tyler Steven), son of Paul and Brandi Hamilton, on September 6, 2008.
Godparent: Stamatios Likourinou.

Chrismation:

Joseph L. Szukiewicz on August 31, 2008. Sponsor: Rigas Nikitas

Marriage: Na Zisete!

Anthony Alvarez and Patricia Anna Lanzano on September 8, 2008. Sponsor: John Karas.

Phillip Alcalá and Georgia Bingham on September 8, 2008. Sponsor: Eleni Eliades.

Orthodox Bookstore

First of all, I would like to thank the leaders of our Greek Food Festival and the Parish Council for their great wisdom in selecting our location at the Festival this year. The Parish Bookstore is not merely a gift shop, but rather a storehouse of some of the treasures of the Orthodox Church. How wonderful it was to have these treasures displayed prominently for our visitors!

I would also like to thank the volunteers who helped make this a successful Festival for our Bookstore: Jennia, Alex, Tony, Matthew, Father James, Tammy, Vangelis, and the whole community of St. John the Baptist.

We have some new items available at our Bookstore, so please come by and have a look. In particular, check out the Byzantine-style sterling silver crosses.

Until next month, God willing ~ **ICXC NIKA,**
Costa Frangakis, Director

Orthodox Connection Las Vegas

It seems like it's been awhile since we've seen each other. This month OCLV will be gathering at Yianni Frangakis' home on *Sunday, October 12* at 4:00 pm. Yianni has a genuine love of hospitality for his friends and family, which is a pillar in the teachings of our Orthodox Faith. Please call *Yianni at (702) 423-0202 or Angela at (702) 497-2529* to RSVP.

We would also like to encourage each member of Orthodox Connection Las Vegas to attend the *Name Day Dinner for Metropolitan Gerasimos on Saturday, October 25*. Please contact Angela Coutris if you would like to purchase a seat at the "Orthodox Connection" tables. This is an excellent opportunity to meet and talk with our Metropolitan. I look forward to this month's gatherings!

Angela Coutris acoutris@hotmail.com

Senior GOYA

OPA! Thank you to all that volunteered at our Festival, it was a great success! On *Saturday, October 11*, we will have our annual *Red Rock Hike* led by Angela Hernquist. We will hike from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm. Please bring water and a small snack. Don't forget sun block too! Please RSVP for the hike so that we all meet at the right spot: *Effie Lekar (702) 768-5500 or Eileen Koutsulis (702) 521-6516*. Also, that day is our Orthodox Family Fellowship Mexican Potluck from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Keep November 8 open for our next youth day. Senior GOYA is for all teens from 9th through 12th grade.



Senior Forerunners

The Senior Forerunners Fall Kickoff Luncheon was held on September 9 in Panos Hall with approximately 35 in attendance. It was an enjoyable event, and we look forward to our next get-together.

This month our gathering will be on *October 14* in Panos Hall at 11:30 am. We will have a guest speaker and lunch will be provided; all we ask is a donation of \$3 for members and \$5 for non-members.

The Senior Forerunners is a ministry that is open to all seniors in our parish; please come and join us for good food, entertainment and fellowship.

For more information, call the Church Office or *Ruth Plentzas at (702) 221-0989*.



Double the Blessings...

On Sunday, September 7, two moms and their 40-day-old sons received the ancient "Churching." Above: Fr. John brings Xander Chomakos and Caleb Anthony Goldrick toward the Altar, followed by parents, Christopher and Kary Chomakos, and Ethan and Robyn Goldrick.



Notes From the Loft

The hymnologists of the Orthodox Church have been endowed with musical talent as well as religious inspiration. Their creations enrich our worship services and help turn our minds to God. Perhaps the greatest of all hymnologists was St. Romanos the Melodist. Because of his profound contributions to divine worship, he is the Patron Saint of all those who sing for the Church.

The Sunday closest to the Feast of St. Romanos, *October 5*, is designated by our Archdiocese as *National Church Musician Sunday*. Each year on this Sunday, we honor the contributions of our Church Musicians - clergy, choir directors, choir members, youth choir, chanters and organists. In addition, we will offer a memorial for those choir members who have fallen asleep in the Lord: Ann Fleigh, Dayle Plentzas, Loukia Manos, Lilly Fulton, Sophia Kyrias, Lula Katre, Sam Markou, Tula Mavrantonis and Andrew Barngrover.

The devotion of our Church Musicians is exceptional. Please take a moment on this day to thank all of the Church Musicians who, each Sunday and on special holidays, are present to sing the beautiful hymns of our Greek Orthodox Faith. Faye Brown, Choir Director

St. John the Baptist Greek Folk Dance Groups
are proud to present

**The 2nd Annual
Horepse '08 Glendi
Sunday, November 9
Featuring LIVE Music**

Pontic Lyra by Vaggelis Anastasiadis from Thessaloniki
Ntaouli by George Michailidis from Toronto, Canada
-and-

The 5-piece band Ziyia playing music from Epirus, Thrace, Macedonia
and the Islands

Appetizers	7:00 pm
Dinner	8:00 pm
Dancing	9:00 pm

Adults - \$50 (Pre-Sale by November 4)
Or \$60 at the door
Children 12 & under - \$25

*No-host cocktails
This is an evening you won't want to miss!*

**For more information, contact Bessie Stavropoulos at
(702) 362-7327 or via email at bstavrop@yahoo.com**

36th Annual Greek Food Festival

Amazing! This is the word I think of to explain our Greek Food Festival. By God's grace, we had amazing weather. The effort everyone gave to make our Festival successful was amazing. How smoothly the Festival ran and with very few problems . . . was amazing. How quickly we took down the equipment afterward, amazing.

I want to say "Thank You" to everyone who helped before, during and after the Festival. It will take a few days for our bodies to heal from the sore feet and backs, bruised and burnt hands and arms, but soon we will be sharing all the fun stories that go along with this hard work. It is for the love of our Church and Faith that we work so hard - a labor of love that brings our parish family together.

Soon I will have a report showing our profit for this year's Festival, which will allow our bills to be paid and our parish to continue growing. I had an amazing time as this year's chairman. It was an experience that made me grow within my faith and closer to God. Again, thank you for an amazing experience.

In Christ, John Koutsulis, '08 Festival Chairman



2008 Raffle Winners

<u>Ticket #</u>	<u>Name / Prize</u>
0013	Anna McDonough - Pure Digital Flip Ultra 60 min. Camcorder
0024	Michael Dudanakis - Men's Watch
0035	John Gianakopoulos - HomeBase Digital Photo Frame
0050	Louis Teplis - 2009 Mercedes Benz
0143	Peter Papas - HomeBase Digital Photo Frame
0162	Charlotte Procalamos - HomeBase Digital Photo Frame
0188	Bruno Aizier - Ladies Watch
0255	Dave Ross - Ladies Watch
0260	Antonio Jaen - Men's Watch
0266	Terry Watanabe - HomeBase Digital Photo Frame
0288	Paul McGovern - Pure Digital Flip Ultra 60 min. Camcorder
0315	Sophia Rodis - Men's Watch
0343	Telly Eliades - Men's Watch
0446	Jason Reasbeck - Pure Digital Flip Ultra 60 min. Camcorder
0454	Don Kaiber - HomeBase Digital Photo Frame
0490	Chris and Geo Nikols - Ladies Watch
0552	Jesse Larrabee - Pure Digital Flip Ultra 60 min. Camcorder
0665	John Tobin - Pure Digital Flip Ultra 60 min. Camcorder
0677	Jim Monoyudis - Pure Digital Flip Ultra 60 min. Camcorder
0697	Colleen Wilson-Pappas - Men's Watch
0605	Jim Higgins - Ladies Watch
0742	Patrick Leon - Ladies Watch
0721	Georgene Pappas-Bratta - HomeBase Digital Photo Frame
0776	Anna Bevardos - Men's Watch
0982	Eifgenia Christensen - Ladies Watch



Trip Winners:

Thursday

445-Dave O'Hayon

Friday

74-Geri Kypreos

Saturday

241-Paris Balaouras

Tickets Sold:
Mercedes-794
Trip-552

Youth Ministries

Church School



*Blessing of the Church
School Year on September 7.*

Hi Everyone! I would like to say how wonderful the Greek Food Festival was. I was so happy to see so many of our young people working. I know that everyone worked so hard and this allowed us to have such a successful event.

We are off to a great start! We have 116 students registered in our program. Please make sure that you have enrolled and paid the \$5 cash fee for your children. We will not let the children enter the classroom unless they are currently registered; please look to the bulletin boards for extra forms, or see your child's teacher.

If you would like to see what your child is doing, check out the bulletin boards. They are loaded with useful information. It is always best to expand at home what your child is

learning in school, so they have a rich and fulfilling spiritual life.

Church School will have its annual *Open House on October 19* right after Divine Liturgy. Come and see what your child has done so far, and say hello to his or her teacher. The kids really love showing off their hard work.

On November 2 we will not have class due to Nevada Day. It will be Family Worship Sunday, and we encourage all families to come and worship together. Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Eileen Koutsulis, Director (702) 521-6516 or vivaleenie@cox.net



Youth Choir News

Welcome back, everyone! The Youth Choir was amazing on September 7; everyone loved you, including your director. It is a great start to the new school year. We will chant the Divine Liturgy on *Sunday, October 12*, please meet at the usual gathering place EARLY at *9:45 am*.

We are now welcoming new members to join our talented ranks. Anyone from second grade and up can join the group. Rehearsals are on Sundays after Church School at 12:15 pm. We meet in Kokkos Hall and practice runs about 30 minutes. Please note that the FDF Competition Choir has already begun rehearsals. This group meets on Tuesdays at 4:30 pm before dance practice.

Thank you to all who have made this group a blessed and joyful success. May God Bless you all!
Love, Presvytera Maria

Greek Folk Dance

Our new year for Greek Folk Dance has begun and our young dancers are as enthusiastic as ever! Our young people did a fabulous job performing at our Greek Food Festival and made us all so very proud. We can't wait to see them perform their new dances for this year. Remember, all dancers of school age (through 12th grade) must attend Church School regularly.

All dancers and parents must attend a mandatory *FDF Southwest Regional Meeting with Metropolitan Gerasimos on Saturday, October 25, 11:00 am-1:00 pm*. We will be hosting this meeting which will be attended by dance directors, dancers, parents and others from the southwest part of our San Francisco Metropolis. Metropolitan Gerasimos will be visiting our community on this weekend to celebrate his Name Day and will be attending this meeting. His Eminence loves our community and our kids, and we would like 100% attendance at this meeting by those involved in our Folk Dance Ministry.

Rummage Sale: Due to Metropolitan Gerasimos' visit to our parish and the celebration of his Name Day, we have rescheduled our Annual Rummage Sale to *Saturday, November 15*, please hold onto your discards for a few more weeks. All your donated items will be greatly appreciated.

Adult Greek Dance Classes: The Greek Folk Dance Ministry held its first class in September and was attended by four eager students. We put the class together with very short notice and were happy to see those that turned out. We are planning to hold more classes, so look in future Sunday bulletins for more information. If you are interested in being notified of any upcoming adult dance classes, please contact *Jennifer Orlando* via email at FamilyOrlando@yahoo.com or by phone at (702) 355-0260.

Tina Liaos, Greek Dance Board Chair

Horepse '08

St. John the Baptist Greek Folk Dance Groups are proud to announce the *2nd Annual Horepse Dance Seminar* on Veteran's Day weekend, *November 7-9*. We are very excited to be bringing *both* of our instructors from Greece this year. Joining us again will be Kyriakos Moisidis from Thessaloniki presenting dances from Garasari, Pontos and Agistro, Cerres. And for the first time in our community, we welcome our second instructor, Kostas Mitsis from Preveza/Athens, who will be showcasing dances from Metsovo, Epirus. The weekend will be full of traditional song and dance beginning Friday evening and concluding *Sunday evening* with LIVE music at our *Horepse Glendi*. The evening will include Pontic Lyra by Vaggelis Anastasiadis from Thessaloniki and Ntaouli by George Michailidis from Toronto, Canada. The entertainment does not stop there, as the five-piece band Ziyia will play music from Epirus, Thrace, Macedonia and the Islands. It will be a night you won't want to miss and remember, Monday is a holiday!

Interested in just attending the Glendi only? Tickets for adults are \$50 before November 4 and \$60 at the door. Children 12 and under are \$25. For more information regarding our Horepse Dance Seminar, please contact *Bessie Stavropoulos* at (702) 362-7327, via email at bstavrop@yahoo.com, or check out the Church website which will soon have all the information posted. We hope to see you all there!

Orthodox Family Fellowship

Now that everyone has worked hard and hopefully experienced a wonderful time at the Food Festival, it's time to sit back, relax and enjoy each other's company at our next OFF gathering on *October 11, 5:00-8:00 pm in Kokkos Hall*. It's a Mexican Potluck, so please bring your favorite south-of-the-border dish. Please call *Tami Stefanatos* at (702) 491-2713 so we'll know what you are bringing.

OFF is also preparing for our *4th Annual Homeless Outreach Project*. We will be collecting items such as socks, gloves, scarves, caps, toothpaste, toothbrushes soap, baby wipes (carry along packs) and blankets. If you would like to make a monetary donation or start collecting items, please contact Tami. More information will be provided in the November *Desert Messenger* and weekly bulletins.

In Christ's Service, Michael and Tami Stefanatos

Stewardship Report: "Commit to Christ"

<u>2008 Stewardship Status (September 15, 2008):</u>		Stewardship Target – 2008	\$470,500
Stewardship Families Pledged	465	Stewardship Gifts Pledged	\$364,250
Stewardship Gifts Received	\$244,458	Current Stewardship Deficit	\$106,250
Average Stewardship Pledge	\$777.81	Percentage of Goal Achieved	77.42%

<u>Pledge Range</u>	<u>Number of Families</u>	<u>\$ & % of Gifts Pledged</u>
\$1-\$999	344	\$123,315 - 33.85%
\$1000-\$2499	97	\$126,055 - 34.61%
\$2500-\$4,999	16	\$ 53,640 - 14.73%
\$5,000-\$9,999	5	\$ 29,240 - 8.02%
\$10,000-\$14,999	3	\$ 32,000 - 8.79%

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Our 2008 Stewardship Drive continues running behind last year's pace. As of September 15, we have 11 less families pledged as compared to last year and the total gifts pledged are running \$7,326 behind last year.

St. John the Almsgiver was a seventh century Patriarch of Alexandria. You may ask, 'What does Patriarch John have to do with Stewardship?' If we look more carefully at his life, we will see that he was one of the great Stewards of the Church of Christ. His was the true embodiment of giving because of the many philanthropic programs he initiated as Patriarch.

Those who knew him spoke of his great compassion for the needy. He would never think of ignoring a beggar, a prisoner, or any afflicted person that he met in the street. As often as he gave, though, he never seemed to run out of resources for the work of the Church. God abundantly blessed him in every conceivable way because of his charity to others.

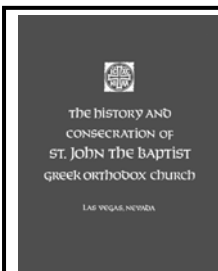
At John's enthronement to the Patriarchal See of Alexandria there was an immediate indication of the kind of Patriarch he would become. His first act as Patriarch was to summon the treasurers and financial administrators of the various branches of the Church. He addressed them in the following words: "It is not right, brethren, that we should prefer anyone over Christ."

The whole assembly which had gathered together was deeply touched by his words and in complete agreement with him. Then the holy man continued: "Go, therefore, through the whole city, and make a list of all my masters down to the last." But his listeners could not imagine who his masters could be. In astonishment they asked him to reveal the names of those who were above him in stature. After all, he was the Patriarch. He opened his mouth and again said: "Those whom you call poor and beggars, these I proclaim my masters and helpers. For they, and they only, are really able to help us and bestow upon us the Kingdom of Heaven." Once his command was carried out with all speed, he instructed his private treasurer to set aside a daily sum sufficient for the needs of these poor — and there were more than 7,000 .

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as the Body of His Church it is up to us to do our part in glorifying the Lord and his mission on this earth. Let us all strive to emulate St. John the Almsgiver as we put forth our best efforts to serve Him. May everything we do be for His Glory.

Glory be to God – Δόξα Σοι ο Θεός.

With Love in Christ, John G. Karas (702) 219-5057, Stewardship Chairman



*The History and Consecration of
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church!
You can purchase your own Commemorative Album
at the Church Office or our Orthodox Bookstore.
A magnificent 'family treasure' for a donation of \$100!*

OCTOBER 2008 - IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
			1 7:00 pm 2nd Orthodoxy Class with Fr John	2	3 5:30 pm Orthodoxy Clergy Meeting	4
5 National Church Musician Sunday 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy	6	7 4:30 pm FDF Choir 5:30 pm Liondaria 6:15 pm Hrisi Thisavri 6:15 pm Stavroforoi 7:00 pm Philoptochos Board	8 7:00 pm 3rd Orthodoxy Class with Fr John	9	10	11 7:00 am GOYA Red Rock Hike 5:00 pm OFF Potluck in Kokkos Hall
12 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Youth Choir Chants 4:30 pm OCLV at Yianni Frangakis' Home	13 6:30 pm Parish Council Meeting	14 11:30 am Seniors 4:30 pm FDF Choir 5:30 pm Liondaria 6:15 pm Hrisi Thisavri 6:15 pm Stavroforoi 7:00 pm Philoptochos	15 7:00 pm 4th Orthodoxy Class with Fr John	16	17	18
19 8:30 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy	20	21 4:30 pm FDF Choir 5:30 pm Liondaria 6:15 pm Hrisi Thisavri 6:15 pm Stavroforoi	22 7:00 pm 5th Orthodoxy Class with Fr John	23	24	25 11:00 am FDF Meeting (Mandatory) 5:30 pm Vespers 6:30 pm Metropolitan Nameday Celebration
26 St. Demetrios 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Hierarchical Liturgy w Met Gerasimos OXI Day Luncheon follows	27	28 4:30 pm FDF Choir 5:30 pm Liondaria 6:15 pm Hrisi Thisavri 6:15 pm Stavroforoi	29 7:00 pm 6th Orthodoxy Class with Fr John	30	31	

The Desert Messenger

*St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
5300 South El Camino Road
Las Vegas, Nevada 89118-1922*

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Las Vegas, NV
Permit No. 98

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

POSTMASTER : DATED MATERIAL - PLEASE EXPEDITE

THE DESERT MESSENGER

The Way of the Lord

“ . . . To claim that there are no living embodiments of the Spirit today - that there are no Church Fathers or even Mothers - is tantamount to denying the living presence of the Spirit of God. In the Orthodox Church, we believe that we remember the flames and not the ashes of the early Church Fathers.

According to the Orthodox theological perspective, therefore, the authority of the Fathers depends less on antiquity; it is not related to their *historical* proximity to the early Church and Christ, namely to the age of the Apostles and martyrs. Their authority is grounded, rather, on the quality of their testimony; it is related to their closeness to the *faith* - and not simply to the times - of the Apostles. This is why the tenth-century mystic Saint Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022) can be described by his contemporary biographer and closest disciple, Niketas Stethatos (1005-90), as someone ‘entirely possessed by the Spirit - his thought being equal to that of the Apostles - for the divine Spirit inspired his every movement.’”

- His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, *Encountering the Mystery*