

The Desert



Messenger

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

Volume 7, Issue 2

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

February 2009

**From
Father
John**

Beloved in Christ:

By the grace of God we enter the second month of 2009 – giving special thanks to Him as we celebrate our 50th year as a parish. Our theme for this milestone anniversary is taken from the First Letter of Peter (1:7), *“A Faith More Precious than Gold.”* Given the context in which St. Peter wrote these words, his message appears just as timely today as it did when he penned them to encourage the Churches in Asia Minor that were undergoing persecution: *“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:6-7)*

From the earliest days of Christianity, the followers of Christ learned that victory does not come without suffering. St. Peter’s words reminded the faithful that although we are clothed in the salvation offered by Jesus Christ at the time of baptism, this experience of death and resurrection is an ongoing experience throughout our lives as we face and endure our trials in faith. Like gold tested by fire, our Lord purifies us as we willingly suffer for His glory, until we reach the fulfillment of our baptism in God’s Kingdom. One of the ancient martyrs, St. Haralambos, who also lived in Asia Minor during a period of persecution, underwent fierce tortures, but refused to be discouraged or to falter in faith. Although the faith of this holy priest, whom we commemorate on February 10, was repeatedly tested – as gold through fire – his suffering became a witness to the praise, glory and honor of Christ.

President Barack Obama reiterated in his inauguration speech that we live in a time of crisis, yet offered words of hope that even though our challenges are serious and many, and that they “will not be met easily or in a short span of time . . . they will be met.” Obama concluded by applying to our current challenges the courageous words of our first President, written and read in the year of our nation’s birth as the enemy was advancing: “With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children’s children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God’s grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations.”

In our personal lives, just as in the life of our parish for these 50 years, we have experienced many challenging times – and while the obstacles may have been many, through our faithful endurance abundant blessings unfolded before our eyes. Looking ahead, regardless of the trials or challenges we may face, let us always keep before us the promise of the reward that awaits us, knowing that as the outcome of our faith we shall obtain the salvation of our souls. *(1 Peter 1:9)*

Love in Christ,

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

Sunday, February 1/17th Sunday of Matthew/
The Canaanite Woman/St. Tryphon
Orthros: Tone Eight (Fourth Plagal)
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): John 21:14-25
Epistle: Romans 8:28-39
Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28

Sunday February 15/17th Sunday of Luke/
The Prodigal Son/Apostle Onesimos of the 70
Orthros: Tone Two
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Mark 16:1-8
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20
Gospel: Luke 15:11-32

Monday, February 2/ *The Meeting of Our Lord in the Temple*
8:00 am Orthros - 9:00 am Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Hebrews 7:7-17
Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Fast on Wednesday and Friday this Week

Saturday, February 21/1st Saturday of Souls
8:00 am Orthros - 9:00 am Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 10:23-28
Gospel: Luke 21:8-9, 25-27, 33-36
Memorial follows Liturgy

Sunday, February 8/16th Sunday of Luke/
Publican and Pharisee/Great Martyr Theodore
Orthros: Tone One
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Matthew 28:16-20
Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15
Gospel: Luke 18:10-14

Sunday, February 22/*Meatfare/The Last Judgment*
Orthros: Tone Three
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Mark 16:9-20
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2
Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

Triodion Begins: *No Fasting this Week*

Abstain from meat beginning Monday

Tuesday, February 10/*Hieromartyr Haralambos*
8:00 am Orthros - 9:00 am Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:1-10
Gospel: John 15:17-27; 16:1-2
Artoclasia follows Liturgy (Lekar/Eliades Family)

Saturday, February 28/2nd Saturday of Souls
8:00 am Orthros - 9:00 am Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2
Gospel: Matthew 6:1-13
Memorial follows Liturgy

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

February 1

Ushers: William Carrico, Pete Kypreos, John Karas, George Bochanis, George Kakavulias, George Nikols
Fellowship: Philoptochos - Kids 'n Cancer

February 8

Ushers: Angela Coutris, Peter Papas, Marina Adamy, Spiros Filios, Sam Koutsulis, Gary Waters
Memorials: Rinaki Wallach (40 days); Tessie Peterson (1 year); Evangelia Irene Collins (2 years) and Vasili David Collins.

Departed Members of Philoptochos

Fellowship: Folk Dance Group Luncheon and FDF Performance

February 15

Ushers: John Karas, Spiros Filios, William Carrico, Sam Koutsulis, George Kakavulias, George Nikols
Memorial: Athanasios Kanelos (40 days).
Fellowship: Cathy Markakis - 50th Anniversary Celebration Fundraiser

February 22

Ushers: Marina Adamy, George Bochanis, Peter Papas, Angela Coutris, Gary Waters, Pete Kypreos
Fellowship: Senior Forerunners

President's Column

It is a great honor to serve as President of the Parish Council. Congratulations to all the new officers and Parish Council members. All of us have one common goal, our Church. With that said I would like to talk about the Church's current situation.

As all of you know, these are tough times for families and businesses; it is no different for Churches. I am anxious to work with Father John, the Parish Council and the Stewardship Committee to prepare for 2009. I think it is obvious that raising our income and spending less is a must. So there will need to be changes made, as the Church can't continue on the same track it has been on for the past few years. So many people have given and worked so hard through the years, that it is our duty to not have it be for nothing.

I encourage all of you to contribute what you have pledged or more if it is within your means. Also, if you know of someone that is not a steward, please suggest they become one. Please feel free to contact me with any suggestions at (702) 378-7700.

XRONIA POLLA! HAPPY NEW YEAR! Peter Kypreos, Parish Council President

Financial Status for Month of December 2008

Bank Accounts	Beginning Balance		Expenses	Internal Bank Transfers		Balances as of 12.31.08
	as of 11.30.08	Income		Transfers In	Transfers Out	
General Operating	(\$9,361.45)	\$61,318.78	\$76,857.99	\$29,000.00		\$4,099.34
Building/Maintenance	\$46,144.44	\$1,008.10			\$12,000.00	\$35,152.54
Community/Education Ctr	\$10,583.86	\$3,910.46	\$4,177.81		\$6,000.00	\$4,316.41
Construction (Loan Paymts)	\$48,015.63		\$5,247.97			\$42,767.66
Food Festival	\$11,391.77	\$375.00	\$22,745.32		\$6,000.00	(\$16,978.55)
Icon Money Market	\$5,812.62	\$4,133.31	\$32.00		\$5,000.00	\$4,913.93
Library Checking	\$17,448.66	\$3.17				\$17,451.83
Construction Loan	\$708,017.87					\$706,383.14
Revolving Line of Credit	\$71,074.98					\$71,074.98

Philoptochos News

Thanks again everyone for your support and participation in the Vasilopita Festivities. Through these initiatives Philoptochos was able to donate over \$1,500 to St. Basil's Academy.

There will be no general meeting in February, as we prepare for our many activities associated with Lent. However, on *Sunday, February 1 we will be hosting a Fellowship to benefit Kids 'n Cancer*, a vital and important ministry of the Metropolis Philoptochos. In addition, *we will pay our respect in honoring our Departed Philoptochos Members with a Memorial Service on Sunday, February 8*. Please join the women of Philoptochos on this Sunday in Church as we remember and cherish those who built the foundation upon which we stand.

Mark your calendars as our next General Meeting is scheduled for *Tuesday, March 17* at 7:00 pm in Kokkos Hall. We'll be in need of lots of hands to help with our "hands-on" project. April will be filled with the many activities and projects associated with Pascha. In May, we'll celebrate the end of the two-year Board term with the fun and relaxing President's Dinner.

We are currently accepting nominations for women to serve on the 2009-2011 Philoptochos Board. Call Karen at the Church Office at (702) 221-8245 to submit a nomination. Nominees must be a steward in good standing of our parish and also a full-time member of the Philoptochos Panagia Chapter.

Finally, *we send many good wishes and best of luck to the FDF dancers and their amazing advisors!*

Amalia Dominguez and the Board Members



Adult Study Group with Father John Hondros
Meets Every Wednesday (Unless Noted) ~ 7:00-8:30 pm in Kokkos Hall
Join us in "Learning Orthodoxy through the Gospel of John"

**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:
fjohn@vegasgreekorthodox.com
Website: vegasgreekorthodox.com

Parish Council: Peter Kypreos

Philotochos: 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 and Eileen Koutsulis

Junior GOYA:
Tami Stefanatos
Tammy Chomakos

HOPE and JOY:
Jennifer Orlando
Sharon Katsaros

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



The Pan-Arcadian Federation of America
Alea Chapter of Las Vegas
Invites You to Attend an

“Apokreas Macaronada!”

**Sunday, February 22, 2009
6:00-10:00 pm in Panos Hall**

Come celebrate before Lent!

Good Food, Libations, Music, Dancing and Fellowship!

Adults \$35 Children 12 and under \$15 Cash Bar

Advance ticket purchases (recommended) will be available after Church each Sunday in February. Reserved seating is available for advance purchase of tables of 10.

This is our only fundraiser, which allows us to contribute annually to St. John Iconography Fund, Greek Language Program and Folk Dance Groups.



In preparation for the 50th Anniversary Celebration
we are requesting your assistance

We need historical materials from the
1950s to 1973

*Letters *Photos *Documents *Newspaper Articles *Magazines Articles
*Invitations *Proclamations *Programs *Flyers *Posters
any and all other historical memorabilia related to our
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church and Community

Please Contact:

*Nitsa Filios (702) 595-6888 Susan Stamis (702) 460-9954
Cheryl Pandelis (702) 338-1601*

50th Anniversary: ‘A Faith More Precious Than Gold’

The planning committee and I would like to thank everyone who came out to the Spaghetti Luncheon Fellowship. Your support of this event is greatly appreciated. We would like to invite everyone to join us for another Fellowship fundraiser on *Sunday, February 15* after Liturgy.

Our 50th Anniversary Celebration will be October 17-18!
Cathy Markakis, Chair, 50th Anniversary Committee



The Priests and 2009 Members of the Parish Council following the Oath of Office on Sunday, January 4: (from left) George Kakavulias (Vice President), Gary Waters, John Karas (Asst. Treasurer), George Bochanis, William Carrico (Secretary), Fr. Paul Eyler, Angela Coutris, Fr. John Hondros, Fr. Constantine Raptis, Marina Adamy, George Nikols, Spiros Filios (Treasurer), Peter Kypreos (President), Sam Koutsulis and Peter Papas.

Our Community Registry

Baptized into Christ : Na Mas Zisoun!

Christina (Collette), daughter of Richard and Angela Plavcan, on December 20, 2008.
Godparent: Chrysoula Brilis.

Kassiani (Kazia), daughter of Richard and Angela Plavcan, on December 20, 2008.
Godparent: Chrysoula Brilis.

Natalia, daughter of Jeremy and Romina Chomakos, on January 11, 2009.
Godparent: Efthimia Eliades Lekar.

Marriage: Na Ziset!

Armen Bahadourian and Ani Gurunlian on January 3, 2009. Sponsor: Hratch Beylerian.

Jeremy Allen Chomakos and Romina Catalina Duran on January 11, 2009. Sponsor: Justina Szukiewicz.

Fallen Asleep in the Lord: Eternal Memory

Rinaki Wallach on January 2, 2009. Funeral January 12.

Athanasios Kanelos on January 13, 2009. Funeral on January 19.

Pan-Arcadians

The Pan-Arcadian Alea Chapter of Las Vegas announces its new board: Dean Cero, President; Vicki Kelesis, Vice President; Helena Soursos, Recording Secretary; Christina Kakavulias, Treasurer; and Rita Nikols, Corresponding Secretary. Please join us for the Apokreas Macaronada on *Sunday, February 22*.

Youth Ministries

Church School

Hi Everyone! I would like to wish the Dancers and Youth Choir "Good Luck at FDF!" Have a great time! We will be having *Family Worship Sunday on February 15*, so there will be no classes.

Remember, if you have not registered your children, please do so. There are registration forms on the bulletin boards outside the classrooms. Are you interested in knowing what your children are learning? Ask the teachers or see the lesson plans on the boards.

During Lent we will be collecting for "Pennies and Prayers," which benefits Home Missions; it's never too early to start saving your coins.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

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

Youth Choir News



Hi Youth Choir! Since the dancers will be performing for the community during Fellowship on Sunday, February 8 and the majority of you will be getting ready in your costumes, we will chant the Divine Liturgy on *Sunday, February 1*. Please be at the front right side as usual by 9:45 am.

During Lent, Youth Choir will be chanting at the Salutations to the Theotokos on Friday evenings. Our youth will also chant for the Sunday Pan-Orthodox Lenten Vespers on Sunday of Orthodoxy, *March 8*, at St. Michael, and on the Sunday of the Cross, *March 22*, at St. John the Baptist. Please mark your calendars.

I wish all of our FDF Youth Choir all the best for a fantastic performance this year at FDF. Good Luck! Love, Presvytera Maria

HOPE and JOY

We would like to thank everyone who attended "Game Day" in Kokkos Hall in January. We were thrilled at the great turn-out. The kids really enjoyed themselves playing the board games. We hope to see you all at future events. Remember to bring a friend!

HOPE & JOY are ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. HOPE (Hellenic Orthodox Primary Education) serves families with children in grades pre-K through 2nd grade. JOY (Junior Orthodox Youth) serves families with children in 3rd through 5th grade.

Please mark your calendars for *Sunday, March 1*. We have a great day planned! We will meet on the field after Church School (about 12:30 pm) for a "bring your own" picnic lunch and then we'll play kickball. If you have not attended a HOPE & JOY event yet we've been missing you! Newcomers are always welcome. See you soon! With Love in Christ, Your Advisors,

Jenn Orlando (702) 631-0111 and Sharon Katsaros (702) 242-2457

Junior and Senior GOYA

Hi GOYAns! Our big event for February is our *Lenten Retreat*. It will take place at Life-Giving Springs in Boulder City. We will be leaving from Church on *Friday, February 27* after school and be returning on *Saturday, February 28*. Everything will be provided. We will keep you posted as more details become available. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to Eileen or Effie so we can hold a spot for you. Spaces will be on a first come, first serve basis, so please RSVP to one of us as soon as possible. Advisors: Eileen Koutsulis (702) 521-6516 or Effie Lekar (702) 768-5500

Greek Folk Dance

ANNUAL LUNCHEON - *Sunday, February 8* is the date of our Annual Luncheon Fellowship. Our dancers will perform for the community all the dances they've learned for FDF. We'll be serving chicken pitas, rice, salad, and dessert. Tickets are \$10 per person and can be purchased after Church. As a special treat, we will have live musicians accompany our Argonaftes dancers while they perform at the luncheon. Please buy your tickets early so we can accommodate everyone that wants to attend, as this event sells out each year.

PRACTICES - We can't stress how important it is to be at every practice right now. As a reminder, practice times are as follows:

Liondaria: Tuesday 5:30-6:15 pm and Sunday (for those going to FDF) 12:30-1:30 pm

Hrisi Thisavri: Tuesday 6:00-8:00 pm, Friday 6:00-8:00 pm, and Sunday 1:00-3:00 pm

Stavroforoi: Tuesday 6:15-8:30 pm, Saturday 1:00-3:00 pm, and Sunday 1:00-3:30 pm

Please note that practice times are subject to change and additional practices may be added as we get closer to the date of the Folk Dance Festival. Please check your email frequently as that is our main method of communication with you all.

JOIN US FOR A LOCK-IN - We have an exciting event planned for our dancers this year. On *Friday, February 6* we are holding a Lock-In in Panos Hall, at which the dancers can enjoy some Greek dancing, activities and fellowship. The event begins at 4:00 pm on Friday and ends at 12:00 noon on Saturday. Because of their age, the Liondaria dancers are welcome to attend on Friday from 4:00-8:00 pm, but will not be spending the night. We need parent volunteers to stay the night as well. A \$5 fee is requested to cover dinner and breakfast. Please see Jennifer Orlando if you have any questions.

SEE'S CANDY BAR SALE - Our See's candy bar sale continues. If you have sold all your candy, please return the money in the envelope provided to Tami Stefanatos. We have more boxes available if you think you can sell more. This will be a very profitable fundraiser if we sell all the candy.

FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL - By now all of us have hopefully registered for FDF. The last day to register online was January 26. An email was sent to everyone on our email list informing you to book your hotel room for FDF through the FDF website (www.yourfdf.org). I hope by now you have all made your hotel reservations.

ADULT GREEK DANCE CLASS - Because we are all so busy getting the dancers ready for the Folk Dance Festival, we will not be having any classes until at least after Easter. We will post flyers when we will resume classes for the adults. In the meantime, if you are interested in being included in our email notifications for the Adult Greek Dance Classes, please contact Jennifer Orlando at FamilyOrlando@yahoo.com. If you are not receiving emails, please let me know so we can add you to the list or check that we have the right email address.

We want all our dancers to know how proud we are of you and wish you the best of luck at FDF 2009! Tina Liaos, Greek Folk Dance Board Chair

AHEPA 2009 Scholarships

The Order of AHEPA, Las Vegas Chapter 314, encourages worthy students to submit applications for one of the two types of scholarships offered for 2009:

JOURNEY TO GREECE - This is a month-long study program, July 20-August 12. It is sponsored in conjunction with the University of Indianapolis, and takes place in Athens, Greece. Students may select two out of six courses, and upon completion will earn six transferable university credits.

ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP - for students entering or continuing college. It consists of an award to assist students in meeting their tuition and registration requirements. The deadline for both scholarships is *March 1*. Applications for both scholarships are available at the Church Office.

The scholarships will be awarded on *Saturday, March 28* when AHEPA hosts *The Greek Independence Day Dinner*. Please mark your calendars; more information will be forthcoming.

Orthodox Bookstore

On God and human logic: We often hear the statement that we all believe in the same God. This seems to be the prevailing thought in society today. Whether you are a Muslim, or Hindu, or Buddhist, or a Christian, or a Jew, it is said, that in reality, it is the same God. Let's analyze this a little and apply simple human logic and see if this is true.

If the teachings of any religion contradict the teachings of another, then by simple logic, we can see that they cannot both be right at the same time. Let's apply this logic to our Christianity in relation to other beliefs. We believe that God is Trinity, that is, one God in three persons. And we also believe that one of the three persons took on humanity like one of us and walked among us: Jesus Christ. This is the core belief of Christianity and this is what we know about God and this is the God that we believe in.

Now, if anyone will deny that Jesus Christ is God, then we can see by applying simple human logic that we don't believe in the same God. When I call on GOD, I call on the name that He gave me so that He will know that I am talking to Him. If I don't call on God using His own name for Himself and call Him by the name of another god, then who am I talking to? My name is Costa, and this is the name that I respond to when someone will want to get my attention. If God's Name is Father, Son (Jesus Christ), and Holy Spirit, then this is how I will call on Him to get HIS attention.

It is up to each one of us to seek a relationship with the one true God. For those who want to know more, we have many books available in our Bookstore to help illumine our minds and hearts.

Until next month (GW) - ICXC NIKA, Costa Frangakis

Senior Forerunners

On January 20, the Senior Forerunners enjoyed a special luncheon hosted by the Dounis Family at OPA! Restaurant, in memory of Seraphim Dounis. May his memory be eternal.

Our next meeting will be *Tuesday, February 17*, and it will be a Valentine Party. Watch the Sunday bulletin for more details.

Thanks to all of our members, \$1,000 has been donated to the St. John Iconography Fund. Membership fees for 2009 are due and are \$10 per person. Please pay your part so that we can continue with our projects. Thank you.

For more information, please contact *Ruth Plentzas at (702) 221-0989*.

Orthodox Connection Las Vegas

"Social networking" has become a household phrase through several virtual venues such as MySpace, Facebook, and OrthodoxCircle. Recently, I broke down and opened a Facebook account and have experienced the benefits of "networking" with friends and family. Unfortunately, I have also found I can easily spend a few hours of aimless searching in front of my computer (if you have an account, you know exactly what I'm talking about!), and neglecting other chances of face-to-face interactions.

We have a wonderful opportunity for "social networking" within our beautiful Orthodox Church. OCLV is a ministry for Orthodox Christian singles from every jurisdiction to gather once a month in fellowship, love and unity that makes us "the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church."

After a few special requests, this month we will be gathering in Panos Hall for an "*Open Gym/Ice Cream Social*." Dust off your tennis shoes and bring a basketball to play some ball. For those who don't want to play, we'll have other activities available - so don't let basketball scare you away. Afterwards we'll all enjoy an ice cream snack. Join us *Thursday, February 26* at 6:30 pm for some "social networking!" We're asking for \$5 to help with some of the expenses. For more information contact *Angela Coutris at (702) 497-2529* or orthodoxconnectionlv@gmail.com.

Notes From the Loft



Victoria Xikis and I attended the Winter Business Meeting of the Choir Federation for our Metropolis at St. Anthony Greek Orthodox Church in Pasadena on January 23-25.

Members of the Chicago Choir Federation will be attending services on *Sunday, February 8* and singing with our Choir. Please make them feel welcome.

Faye Brown, Choir Director

Stewardship Report: "Strengthened by Christ and His Church"

<u>2009 Stewardship Status (January 15, 2009):</u>		Stewardship Target – 2009	\$411,000
Stewardship Families Pledged	242	Stewardship Gifts Pledged	\$197,392
Stewardship Gifts Received	\$28,797	Current Stewardship Deficit	\$213,608
Average Stewardship Pledge	\$815.67	Percentage of Goal Achieved	48.03%

<u>Pledge Range</u>	<u>Number of Families</u>	<u>\$ & % of Gifts Pledged</u>
\$1-\$999	171	\$ 59,682 - 30.24%
\$1000-\$2499	57	\$ 73,290 - 37.13%
\$2500-\$4,999	9	\$ 31,700 - 16.06%
\$5,000-\$9,999	4	\$ 22,720 - 11.51%
\$10,000-\$14,999	1	\$ 10,000 - 5.06%

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Our 2009 campaign is off to a noticeably slow start. Compared with last year, we currently have 11 fewer families pledged, and the sum pledged is \$31,073 *behind*. We all need to prayerfully consider our personal situations and give back to the Lord a portion of the wonderful gifts He has blessed us with.

STEWARDSHIP- How often do we hear this word in Church and in our religious life? Although stewardship is referred to and demonstrated throughout Holy Scripture, do we really know what it means? While stewardship clearly involves our faith in Jesus Christ and following His teachings, is it enough that we understand this? The answer is NO!

Referring to the Patriarch Abraham of the Old Testament, the Holy Apostle James in his epistle asks, "*Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?*" (*James 2:22*) Abraham never lost faith in God - when directed to leave family and friends and head off into the wilderness, when promised a son, and again when directed to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice to the Lord. Throughout his many trials, Abraham *never lost faith in God and continued to perform good works*. If good works are absent or if evil works are present, then we can only assume that there is something wrong with our faith to begin with, as St. James concludes: "*For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.*" (*James 2:26*)

What are the works being referred to here? The answer may be found in whatever it is we do to express that love we have for God, our Church, our families, neighbors and all of God's people. It is not enough to simply say, "I am a member in good standing," or to write a check to the Church and then to walk away from the responsibilities that God has placed on our hands. It is through our deep abiding love and commitment to the Holy Trinity, as expressed in both our faith and actions, that salvation can be ours. May everything we do be for His Glory - Δόξα Σοι ο Θεός.

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

Greek Food Festival: September 17 ~ 20, 2009

After Stewardship, our annual Greek Food Festival is the second largest source of funding for our Church operation. As stewards of the gifts He has bestowed upon us, we are called on to offer back to the Lord a portion of our time, talents and treasures. Year-after-year the costs of running our Festival have gone up. One of the largest sources of cost is hired labor. Part of the reason we have increased the amount of hired labor is due to the scope and size of the Festival; however, another reason is the decline in parishioner support for this important event. By offering your time and talents, you will help us reduce these costs and increase the benefit to the Church and the Lord's work.

All previous Festival chairmen, booth captains and anyone else interested are encouraged to join us in a preliminary meeting on *Tuesday, February 24* at 6:30 pm in Kokkos Hall to review plans for our 37th Annual Greek Food Festival. **John G. Karas, Chairman**

2009 Stewards and Contributors: Strengthened by Christ and His Church

Adamy, Marina
 Agnos, Dimitrios and Angeline
 Alsop, Trever and Kelly
 Anastasiou, Andrew and Kathleen
 Andraktos, Manuel
 Andrews, Catherine
 Andrews, Presvytera Helen
 Anthony, Stavros and Bernadette
 Aristides, George and Diana
 Augousti, Michael and Helene
 Bacon, Diane
 Bagatelos, Michael
 Bakalas, Estella
 Balason, Anna
 Balason, Voula
 Baldwin, Richard and Vivi
 Balodimas, Dr. James
 Bartzos, Sam and Eugenia
 Bauck, Jeremy and Amy
 Berendji, Jim and Vivian
 Berta, Irene
 Bingham, Robert and Melissa
 Bledsoe, Lori
 Bochanis, George
 Borzekas, Stephen and Katharina †
 Britten, Ronald and Carol
 Brown, Faye
 Bucy, Brent and Elaine
 Bullivant, John and Jana
 Capadalis, Tim and Marling
 Captain, Nicholas and Maria
 Carabas, Stephen and Linda
 Carabas, Thymios and Sotiroulla
 Caredis, Jon and Marjorie
 Carrico, William and Alexandra
 Carson, Michele
 Carter, Maria
 Castillo, Matthew
 Cero, Dean
 Chachas, Bessie
 Chachas, James
 Chandrinis, Alexia
 Chandrinis, Peter
 Chandrinis, Ricki
 Chomakos, Dean and Tammy
 Chomakos, George and Nikki
 Chomakos, Jeremy and Romina
 Christopoulos, Ann
 Cole, Darrick and Carla
 Conger, William and Alexia
 Contos, Michael
 Coroneos, Marika
 Costuras, George and Marsha
 Cotsilis, Peter and Jenny
 Coutris, Angela
 Dalacas, Dimitri and Athanasia
 Dalacas, Eleni
 Daskolos, George and Voula
 DeCarlo, Frank and Nadine
 Delalis, Dina
 Delalis, Pete and Alysondra
 Demolas, Maria
 Demoleas, Helen
 Demoleas, Stephanie
 Demopoulos, Tommy and Vasiliki
 Demetriou, Demetrios and Bessie
 DeWindt, Dennis and Susan
 Doppe, Victoria
 Doskas, Athanasios and Anastasia
 Dougan, Linda
 Doukakis, Panagiotis and Chrisi
 Edmunds, Paul and Barbara
 Eliades, Artemis

Eliades, Harry and Agapi
 Eliades, Peter and Janet †
 Eliakis, Peter and Glenda
 Eliopoulos, Goldie
 Ene, Ovidiu and Mira
 Exarhos, Nick and Sharon
 Eyler, Fr. Paul and Presv. Ilean
 Falcone, Frank and Nancy
 Fanandakis, George and Helen
 Filios, George and Nitsa
 Filios, Spiridon and Eleni
 Flangas, Albert and Trudi
 Flangas, Bill and Marilyn
 Foskaris, Nicholas and Dana
 Foskaris, Thomas and Iryna
 Frangakis, Costa
 Frangakis, John
 Frantzen, Robert and Margery
 Franzi, Jack
 Gear, Darius and Bessie
 Giouzelis, Anastasia
 Goddard, Elizabeth
 Gousias, Elias and Maria
 Grillas, Vasilios and Roula
 Hailemariam, Tesfa
 Hallis, Louis and Betty
 Hamilton, Mary
 Hamilton, Paul and Brandi
 Haralambakis, Demetre and Dimitra
 Harris, Melty and Angeline
 Harrison, Angie
 Hondros, Catherine
 Hondros, Christina
 Hondros, Fr. John and Presv. Maria
 Hoover, Patrick and Pauline
 Howard, Willie B.
 Johnson, Stephen
 Kachikis, Paul and Ernestine
 Kakavulias, Christina
 Kalkantzakos, Pete and Decker, Misty
 Kanellis, Ann
 Kanoles, Helene
 Kanoles, Konstantine
 Karas, James
 Karas, John and Marcie
 Katris, Nick and Kathy
 Koliambas, Eleni
 Kolinas, Claire
 Kotonias, George and Patricia
 Kourafas, Christopher and Trish
 Kouretas, Demetri and Amanda
 Kouretas, Valdean
 Kourlos, Georgia
 Koutsulis, Sam and Effie
 Kypreos, Peter and Geri
 Kyprianou, Gilbert and Alexis
 Lakis, Antoinette
 Lazarakis, John and Panagiota
 Lekar, Michael and Effie
 Leonis, Tishe
 Liaos, Jim and Tina
 Liaos, Steven and Francine
 Liaos, William and Irene
 Lymberopoulos, Mary
 Malamatos, Kindina
 Mamasis, Dena
 Mamasis, Tessie
 Manolakos, Catherine
 Manos, Patrica
 Manteris, Arthur and Sue
 Marlas, Louis and Vivien
 Markou, Ann
 Matsukas, John and Ariadne

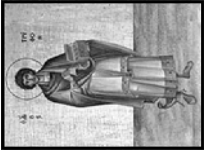

Mavrantonis, Stacy and Kiki
 McPherson, Robert and Marie
 Mezilson, Evangeline
 Miller, Mary
 Milonas, Henry
 Miralles, Jean
 Mirich, Kyle and Melissa
 Moffett, Todd and Eliopoulos, Tina
 Monoyudis, Jim and Julie
 Morgan, Brian and Adrienne
 Mulopoulos, George
 Murphy, Karen and Terry
 Neocleous, Plato
 Niarkos, Eugenia
 Nichlas, Arthur
 Nicholas, James and Myrna
 Nikitas, Rigas and Aphrodite
 Nikolopoulos, Nick and Dimitra
 Nikols, George and Christine
 Nikols, Rita
 Orlando, Alleck and Jennifer
 Ostis, Sotirios
 Panagopoulos, Konstantina
 Pantos, James
 Papas, Christian
 Papas, Peter and Rita
 Pappas, Constantine and Karina
 Pearson, Jeff and Adrienne
 Pelletier, Michael
 Pendelton, Patricia
 Pentogenis, Michael and Kathy
 Peronis, Fay
 Philippou, Demetrios and Luanne
 Platis, Anna
 Plentzas, Spiros and Ruth
 Pouridis, Kouli and Para
 Prather Jr., Moses
 Radosta, Athena
 Rifakes, John and Carol
 Roberts, Sofia
 Rodes, Anne
 Rodis, Dimitri and Jennifer
 Rodis, Sofia
 Ross, John and Georgia
 Salvarlis, Thomas
 Santumo, Alfred and Tamarak
 Savvas, Savva
 Skalkotos, Nikolas and Georgia
 Snow, Clifford and Christina
 Snowden, Robert and Niki
 Soper, Bobby and Maria
 Sotira, Dhimitra
 Sotira, George
 Spanopoulos, Elias
 Sparangis, Spyro and Helen
 Sparkuhl, Alex
 Stavropoulos, Bessie
 Stefanatos, Michael and Tami
 Stefanatos-Hetzal, Joanne
 Stephanos, Stanley and Aspasia
 Stika, Arthur and Melinda
 Szukiewicz, Joseph and Jennia
 Szukiewicz, Joe
 Tafoya, Steven and Irene
 Takas, Andrea
 Taxiarchos, Andrew and Alexandra
 Taxopoulos, Bryan
 Taylor, Frederick and Katherine
 Teed, Charles
 Theros, James
 Thomas, Angie
 Thompson, Maggy
 Tourlis, Angelo and Betty

Trebicka, Ardian
 Triffon, Cathy
 Tselikis, Nicholas and Jennifer
 Tsouras, Helen
 Tzelalis, Steve
 Vasos, Maria
 Vassiliadis, Athena
 Vegas, Charles and Eve
 Vervilos, James and Anna
 Vino, Joseph and Christy
 Vlahos, Alex and Iris
 Walter, Vernon and Alice
 Walters, Lane and Mary
 Waters, Gary and Susan
 Willey, Anthony
 Wilson, Clyde
 Wilson, Steven and Cleopatra
 Wirtz, Athena
 Womack, Karl
 Womack, Kimberly
 Wronski, Chuck
 Xikis, Victoria
 Zarkos, Nick and Dina
 Zimmerman, Paul and Angela
 Zouboulis, James and Tina



Fr. John blessed and cut the Community Vasilopita, offered by Elizabeth Goddard (who has baked the bread for our Church for 45 years) on Sunday, January 4. The coin winner in the first loaf was Guy Monroe, and in the second, our Greek Food Festival. The Ladies Philoptochos Society sponsors this annual event, which benefits St. Basil's Academy.

FEBRUARY 2009 - IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Youth Choir Chants	2 Meeting of our Lord in the Temple 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	3 4:00 pm Folk Dance Board	4 7:00 pm Adult Study: The Gospel of John	5	6 4:00 pm Folk Dance "Lock-In" Sleepover @ the Church thru 2/7 5:30 pm ^{Orthodox} Clergy Meeting	7
8 Welcome, Chicago Choir Federation Members! 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Folk Dancers Luncheon and Performances	9 Welcome, Retired Greek Orthodox Clergy!	10 St. Haralambos 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy & Artoclasia	11 7:00 pm Adult Study: The Gospel of John	12	13	14 Folk Dance Festival in Ontario CA 2/12—2/16
15 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Family Worship Sunday	16 Presidents Day Office Closed	17 11:30 am Seniors in Panos Hall 6:30 pm Parish Council Meeting	18 7:00 pm Adult Study: The Gospel of John	19	20	21 1st Sat. of Souls 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy & Memorial
22 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 6:00 pm Apokreas Macaronada in Panos	23	24 6:30 pm Food Festival Planning Meeting	25 7:00 pm Adult Study: The Gospel of John	26 6:30 pm OCLV in Panos Hall for Open Gym/Ice Cream Social	27 4:00 pm GOYA Lenten Retreat at Life- Giving Spring in Boulder City thru 2/28 (meet at Church)	28 2nd Sat. of Souls 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy & Memorial
						

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



“Not parted in Your divinity from the bosom of the Father,
You were made flesh according to Your good pleasure;
and upheld in the arms of the ever-Virgin
You have been committed to the hands of Simeon,
the receiver of God,
O You Who uphold the whole world with Your Hand.
Therefore he cried with joy:
‘Now let Your servant depart in peace,
for I have seen You, O Lord.’”
~ Ainoi (Hymn of Praise), Orthros,
The Meeting of Our Lord in the Temple