

The Desert



Messenger

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

Volume 8, Issue 4 St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

April 2010

**From
Father
John**

Beloved in Christ:

As I write this message, President Barack Obama has signed into law a transformative health care bill that will reportedly allow near-universal medical coverage for the first time in our nation's history. Supporters of the bill applaud it for providing our citizens more access to health care, especially those who have been dropped by insurance companies due to pre-existing conditions or inability to pay for coverage. Critics decry the bill for its exorbitant cost which will be subsidized by higher taxes, as well as the idea of government-regulated health care.

Amazingly, and perhaps according to divine providence, the passage of this historical health reform bill occurs as we Orthodox Christians prepare to embark on Holy Week, during which we experience in worship, hymns, readings and liturgical actions the Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. In this holiest week of the year we witness the fulfillment of ancient prophecy regarding mankind's return to Paradise through Christ, Who is the Sacrificial Lamb of God: *“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with His stripes we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)* As Isaiah foretold, the saving events of Holy Week form the most extensive and transformative health care coverage that has been *freely offered* since the world was created, for our Lord willingly suffered Crucifixion and Resurrected from the dead in order to deliver all people in every nation from the pre-existing condition of sin, sickness, hardship, violence and death.

Very soon we will gather again *en masse* in the darkened Church, where the only illumination shall emanate from the small vigil light on the Holy Altar Table. As the priest guides his festively decorated Paschal Candle toward the light that never wanes – an image of Christ, the eternal Light – he will concurrently invite the faithful through the beautiful hymn to *“Come, receive the light!”* This life-altering moment, which is nothing less than an expression of divine love and forgiveness, constitutes the apex of the lengthy Lenten season of strict fasting, repentance and plentiful services. After partaking of the Holy Eucharist on Pascha, we will hear again the familiar words of the eloquent and powerful sermon of St. John Chrysostom, and feeling spiritually recharged and encouraged we will hopefully respond wholeheartedly to the saint's assertion: *“Death, where is your sting? Hades, where is your victory? Christ is risen and you are overthrown.”* The *“good news”* of our Lord's glorious Bodily Resurrection forms the basis of God's definitive health plan for all creation and moreover is the cornerstone of our faith that gives renewed hope and meaning to our existence: May the realization of our Provider's good will for all penetrate our hearts and lead us to genuine repentance of our former unhealthy ways, allowing us to relinquish our fears and anxieties, so that we might move in the direction of spiritual wholeness in Christ.

Beloved, let us joyfully greet one another with *“Christ is Risen”* for forty days, and in doing so, allow our thoughts, words and actions to be guided by the powerful life-changing reality of the Risen Lord – thereby letting go of our grudges and hurtful ways, being quick to repent, forgive, love, show mercy and patience toward one another. God's universal health plan benefits all, offering all who willingly receive Christ the potential for holiness and access into His Kingdom!

With love in the Risen Lord,

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

Holy Thursday, April 1

9:00 am Vespertal Liturgy of St. Basil

7:00 pm Holy Passion of our Lord

12 Gospel Readings

Holy Friday, April 2

10:00 am Royal Hours

3:00 pm Descent from the Cross

Children's Procession

7:00 pm Lamentations

Procession of the Epitaphion

Holy Saturday, April 3

9:00 am Vespertal Liturgy of St. Basil

11:00 pm Vigil of the Resurrection

Sunday, April 4/GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA

*12:00 am Resurrectional Orthros and
Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*

Festal Gospel (Orthros): Mark 16:1-8

Epistle: Acts 1:1-9

Gospel: John 1:1-17

Blessing and Distribution of Red Eggs

12:00 pm Agape Vespers and Picnic

Friday, April 9/*Theotokos, the Life-Giving Spring*

8:00 am Orthros - 9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Acts 3:1-8

Gospel: John 2:12-22

Sunday, April 11/*2nd Sunday of Pascha/St. Thomas*

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Matthew 28:16-20

Epistle: Acts 5:12-20

Gospel: John 20:19-31

Sunday, April 18/*3rd Sunday of Pascha/
The Holy Myrrh-Bearers*

Orthros: Tone Two

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:1-12

Epistle: Acts 6:1-7

Gospel: Mark 15:43-47; 16:1-8

Friday, April 23/*Great Martyr George*

8:00 am Orthros - 9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Acts 12:1-11

Gospel: John 15:17-27; 16:1-2

Sunday, April 25/*4th Sunday of Pascha/
The Paralytic/Apostle and Evangelist Mark*

Orthros: Tone Three

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:13-35

Epistle: 1 Peter 5:6-14

Gospel: John 5:1-15

*Christ is Risen from the dead,
by Death He has trampled down death,
and to those in the tombs
He is bestowing Life.*

Notice of Parish Assembly

Sunday, April 25, 2010 ~ following the Divine Liturgy

AGENDA:

- Call to Order/Opening Prayer
 - Election of Assembly Chair
- Approval of Minutes (November 8, 2009)
- Financial Report: Update on Line of Credit
 - Audit Committee Report
 - Stewardship 2010 Report
- Greek Food Festival Report (September 24-26, 2010)
- Election of Two Delegates for Clergy-Laity Congress in Atlanta (July 4-8, 2010)
 - Old Business
 - New Business
- Closing Prayer/Adjournment

You must be a Steward in Good Standing for 2010 to participate and vote.

**President's
Column**

On Saturday, March 6 our parish was blessed to have Mother Melania join us for our annual Lenten Retreat. Her speeches were very informative and inspiring; I know I can say for everyone who attended that the retreat was enjoyed immensely.

This Lenten Season is coming to an end and I must say it was filled with many blessings! His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos graced us with his presence for Palm Sunday! As we look ahead to Holy Week, I hope to see everyone come together for worship during these beautiful services.

Please mark your calendars for our upcoming Parish Assembly on *Sunday, April 25* in Panos Hall following Liturgy. Please remember that you must be a 2010 Steward to participate and vote. I encourage everyone to attend.

Peter Kypreos, Parish Council President

Financial Status for Month of February 2010

<u>Bank Accounts</u>	<u>Beginning Balance as of 1.31.10</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Internal Bank Transfers</u>		<u>Balances as of 2.28.10</u>
				<u>Transfers In</u>	<u>Transfers Out</u>	
General Operating	\$32,867.99	\$42,190.06	\$60,385.59			\$14,672.46
Building/Maintenance	\$36,931.93	\$5.20	\$6,078.73			\$30,858.40
Community/Education Ctr	\$10,130.69	\$2,000.00	\$3,326.45			\$8,804.24
Construction (Loan Paymts)	\$39,862.97		\$7,758.94			\$32,104.03
Food Festival	\$45,785.84	\$309.00				\$46,094.84
Icon Money Market	\$33,916.26	\$833.42	\$37.00			\$34,712.68
Library Checking	\$25,972.76	\$3.87			\$1,000.00	\$24,976.63
On-Line Donations	\$0.00			\$1,000.00		
Construction Loan	\$684,034.83					\$684,034.83
Revolving Line of Credit	\$0.00					\$0.00
Term Loan (5 year loan)	\$77,122.98					\$77,122.98

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

April 4 - GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA

Ushers: Entire Parish Council

AGAPE PICNIC

April 11

Ushers: Angela Coutris, Alex Sparkuhl, Marina Adamy, Spiros Filios, Sam Koutsulis and Gary Waters

Fellowship: Orthodox Family Fellowship

April 18

Ushers: Sam Koutsulis, Darrick Cole, Demetrios Philippou, George Bochanis, William Carrico and Marina Adamy

Memorials: Estella Bakalas (40 days); Christina Manis (40 days); Peter Payne (40 days); Ann Campbell (40 days); Amalia Cominos (6 months); Benito Parrelli (1 year); Antoinette Wadlow (3 years); Edward George Gatski (4 years); Rebecca Berdos, Kostantinos Pouridis.

Fellowship: Forerunners, the Seniors of St. John the Baptist

April 25

Ushers: George Kakavulias, Demetrios Philippou, Spiros Filios, Gary Waters, Angela Coutris and Pete Kypreos

Parish Assembly follows Liturgy

Fellowship: Daughters of Penelope

What God is great as our God? You are God, Who alone works wonders!

**Philoptochos
News**

Hello Ladies!

Pascha is upon us and we have a lot to do! First let me thank the ladies who helped out in March for the Sunday of the Cross and the Palm Sunday Luncheon with His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos; your help is always needed and truly appreciated. Our March General Meeting was very successful. Our Social Services Chairwoman, Vivi Baldwin presented Three Square with a check large enough to provide 30,000 meals to hungry people in our own community. Bravo!

Our next three events will all take place directly after services.

April 1 - Dye Red Eggs for Pascha - Andrea Takas, Chairwoman

April 2 - Decorate Epitaphion - Ernestine Kachikis, Chairwoman

April 4 - Agape Picnic - Pastries - Amalia Dominguez, Chairwoman.

Please join us for as many events as possible; all are welcome and it is a great chance to enjoy the sisterhood of Philoptochos. Also, don't forget to buy your Wine Wagon tickets – tickets are only \$5. The winner will be announced at the Agape Picnic.

On Sunday, May 2 we will be hosting Fellowship for the annual Memorial Service for Mary Bartsas. Please join us in remembering this great lady whose contributions allow us to help so many.

There will be no meetings in April and lastly, our next and final meeting of the Philoptochos calendar will be on May 11. Please join us before we say goodbye for the summer.

Yours in Christ, April Karalis and the Philoptochos Board

Philoptochos Cookbook



Philoptochos is working on creating a cookbook and we need your assistance. There is no better way to remember a loved one and cherish their favorite recipes than preserving them in a cookbook which can be handed down from generation to generation.

Help us create this memorable cookbook by providing your wonderful home-cooked recipes. We would like to publish the cookbook for the Greek Food Festival. Please give the recipes to Marcie Karas or Catherine Manolakos, or e-mail them to c.manolakos@yahoo.com no later than *May 2*. Please contact us if you would like to help with this project.

Our Community Registry

Fallen Asleep in the Lord: Eternal Memory

Christina Manis on February 18, 2010.

Funeral at Ss. Constantine and Helen in Chicago, IL.

Peter G. Payne on March 2, 2010. Funeral on March 10.

Ann M. Campbell on March 7, 2010. Funeral on March 13.

Estella G. Bakalas on March 12, 2010. Funeral on March 17.

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ! ΑΛΗΘΩΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!

**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

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

Rev. Father John Hondros

Karen Rawlinson
Administrative Assistant

Maria Kakavulias
Business Administrator

Sheryl Lujan
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@vegaskgreekorthodox.com
Website: vegaskgreekorthodox.com

Parish Council: Peter Kypreos

Philoptochos: April Karalis

Choir: Faye Brown

Chanters/Youth Choir:
Presvytera Maria Hondros

Church School:
Eileen Koutsulis

Altar Servers:
Sam Koutsulis

Stewardship Committee:
Angela Coutris

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:
Matthew Castillo

Forerunners:
Ruth Plentzas

Greek Folk Dance:
Tina Liaos, Chair
Bessie Stavropoulos, Director

Orthodox Bookstore:
Costa Frangakis

Greek Language Classes:
Thymios Carabas



Please join us for our

AGAPE PICNIC

Holy Pascha

Sunday, April 4, 2010

Beginning with Agape Vespers at 12:00 noon

Dinner served until 3:30 pm

Greek Salad

Traditional Roasted Lamb

Rice Pilaf & More

\$20 per plate

Greek Music & Dancing

Greek Pastries

Easter Egg Hunt for the Kids

On the Grounds of

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

(Hacienda between Jones & Torrey Pines)

Tickets available on Sundays from Parish Council Members

or during the week at the Church Office

For information, please call (702) 221-8245

CHRIST IS RISEN! ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!

Youth Ministries

Church School

Hi Everyone! I would first like to thank everyone for their help with 'Pennies and Prayers.' I'll be able to tell the students how much we raised after Pascha.

During the Paschal Season, we will be collecting jars of peanut butter for Three Square, an organization that helps feed the hungry. Our last day to collect peanut butter will be on Pentecost Sunday, which is May 23. Please bring un-opened jars to your Church School teacher.

We will accept enrollment for new students until *April 11*; after that, we look forward to seeing your child next year. Save the Date: Our last day of class will be *Sunday, June 6*. Following Commencement, we will have our end-of-year party on the Church grounds. More details to follow.

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

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

Youth Choir News

Καλο Πασχα! The Youth Choir has been very busy this Lenten Season, chanting for various services. We also have been diligently practicing for our day, *Holy Saturday Morning, April 3*, when we sing some of our favorite hymns of the year. Please be *early*: no later than 8:45 am in your black and white outfits. Thanks.



We will as usual chant the Divine Liturgy on the second Sunday of the month, *April 11*. Please be up in the usual spot by 9:40 am.

Love, Presvytera Maria

HOPE and JOY



We had to cancel last month's hike due to unpredictable weather; with that said, we will reschedule for *Saturday, April 10* . . . at the same place, Children's Discovery Trail at Red Rock. We will meet in the parking lot of the Visitor's Center at 11:00 am, and then caravan out to the trail. The drive alone is beautiful.

Please pack a lunch to enjoy at the waterfall at the end of the trail. Also, it will be important to pack extra water and sunscreen. This is a great way for our children to spend time together. Please RSVP with Sharon at katsaros@embarqmail.com or (702) 242-2457.

Your sister in Christ, Sharon Katsaros

GOYA

Christ is Risen! Hello GOYANs!

We are planning our field day on *Saturday, April 10*, 11:00 am-2:00 pm Please bring a lunch, water, hat and sunscreen for a fun day in the sun! It will be held on the field at Church so wear sneakers and comfortable clothes for lots of activities and games.

See you there! GOYA is for all kids in Middle and High School.

In Christ, Effie Lekar (702) 768-5500 & Eileen Kousulis (702) 521-6516 (Senior Advisors)
Tammy Chomakos (702) 338-4671 & Tami Stefanatos (702) 491-2713 (Junior Advisors)



Glory to His Resurrection on the third day!
We worship His Resurrection on the third day!

Greek Folk Dance

Another exciting year of Greek Folk Dance is about to start and registration will begin on *April 5*. A table will be set up during Fellowship on Sundays or you can mail your registration to the Church Office. The registration fee is \$50 per dancer if paid by *June 6*. The registration fee will increase to \$100 if forms are turned in between *June 6 - 30*.

Registration is open to all children who have been baptized and/or chrismated in the Orthodox Church, and are at least 4 years-old as of December 31, 2010. Proof of such must be turned in at the time of registration; if you don't have a copy of your certificate, you should get on top of this ASAP. Dancers must attend Divine Liturgy on Sunday on a regular basis and those who are ages 4 to 17 must be a regular participant of Church School. Also, parents must be Stewards in Good Standing at St. John for 2010.

We will also be accepting applications from dancers that are at least High School age for the 2010-2011 school year who are interested in being a director and/or assistant director for our younger dance groups. Please contact a Dance Board member if you are interested.

REMEMBER: The *registration deadline* for Greek Folk Dance is *June 30*. We know a lot of kids get excited after seeing the dance groups perform at the Festival in September and want to join then. We are sorry, but September is too late to sign up, as registrations will not be accepted after the deadline date.

"ANI" ARMENIAN DANCE COMPANY: Our dancers have been asked to perform with the Hamazkayin Ani Dance Company of Los Angeles on *Saturday, May 22* at UNLV Performing Arts Center – Judy Bayley Theater. This performance will benefit the renovation of the building recently purchased by the Armenian Orthodox Church here in Las Vegas. Our Hrisi Thisavri and Stavroforoi dancers will perform as a combined group. It should be a great experience for our dancers and our community to enjoy folk dancing from another country. For information on tickets contact the UNLV Box Office at (702) 895-2787.

Tina Liaos and the Greek Folk Dance Board

Kokkos Scholarship

The Scholarship Committee for the Kokkos Scholarship Fund is pleased to announce that applications are available at the Church Office. The applications must be returned on or before *May 1*. Late and/or incomplete applications will not be considered.

The eligibility requirements were established by Fofu Kokkos in her Last Will and Testament. The Scholarship Committee for the Kokkos Scholarship Fund administers this program under the guidance of Father John Hondros.

The Kokkos Will stipulates that two high school graduates of Greek descent within the St. John Community be selected, who are enrolled for higher education to a college or university. The students must have an outstanding scholastic record and be in financial need. Also, parish involvement by the students at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church was important to Fofu Kokkos; therefore this is also a factor in evaluating the applicants.

Please contact the Church Office for more information at (702) 221-8245.

Attention All Graduates!

We want to share your good news in the May issue of *The Desert Messenger*! If you (or your child) will be graduating soon from High School or University, please email the following to frjohn@vegasgreekorthodox.com by *May 15*:

- School from which you are graduating
- The degree you will receive, including honors
- What your plans are, and what you will study if pursuing further education
- And most importantly, a photo of you!

Orthodox Connection Las Vegas

Brothers and Sisters of OCLV:

April's meeting has been dubbed the "Post Pascha Pig-Out." For those interested in joining we will be meeting for dinner on *Wednesday, April 7*, 7:00 pm, at Lucille's Smokehouse in the District at Green Valley Ranch. Please respond through orthodoxconnectionlv@gmail.com so we can get a head count. I will take RSVPs until *April 6*.

A Happy Resurrection and Blessed Paschal Season to you and yours! Matthew Castillo, Director

(Sadly, we say "Good-bye" to Matthew who is moving after Pascha - Our prayers are with him and we look forward to his visits!)



Adult Study: 'The Way of a Pilgrim'

*Join us on Wednesdays
at 7:00 pm in Kokkos Hall*

Fr. John Hondros, Instructor

Orthodox Bookstore

Hello from the Bookstore! Καλη Ανασταση!

Our all-good and all-wise Lord created the universe and everything in it for us, as we are the pinnacle of His creation. God created us in His own image and according to His own likeness – as the Fathers say, with a view that He would one day enter into His creation and join us by becoming one of us. Of course, this did occur 2000 years ago.

The Lord uses His creation to teach and to guide us. He gives us the animals as our helpers and friends, but to teach us also. We learn from the poisonous and dangerous animals that although this world is beautiful, it is not our permanent home. We are reminded by snakes and scorpions that the world, after the fall of man, has become hostile to us because of our disobedience.

There is however one particular animal that teaches us about the spiritual life very well: the caterpillar. Beginning its life as an egg and then hatching, the caterpillar emerges. The caterpillar crawls like a worm and eats leaves or even decaying matter. After some time, the caterpillar becomes a pupa as it is enclosed into its cocoon. Once inside, a transformation takes place and the lowly, crawling caterpillar becomes a butterfly. The butterfly has wings and now it flies from flower to flower drinking the nectar. It was the same life that entered the cocoon as a caterpillar that emerges as a butterfly.



And so it is with us. We are born into this world and we feast on the lowly things of the world. Then we enter the Church and through the Mysteries and obedience to our Master Christ we become transformed into new creatures. We become detached from this dying world and – through prayer, hope, faith and love – we fly toward Heaven and begin to eat spiritual food which was previously unknown to us.

Here at our Bookstore, we have the writings of such men and women who have become transformed through a holy way of life. Come and read what they have to teach us about the spiritual life and how we can follow their examples and become transfigured as they were. Let us place holy icons in our homes so that we may be reminded of where we want to go and Who is our King and Benefactor. Let us listen to Byzantine hymns and chants to hear how a transformed and purified heart sings to the Creator. Let us read Orthodox prayers that the Holy Spirit breathed into the hearts of the Church Fathers and which teach us what our correct posture should be toward God and each other.

Let us enter fully into the life of our Holy Orthodox Church and become new creatures, with wings flying to our eternal home to be with our Father together with His family of Saints and Angels. Come to the Bookstore and see, so that by God's grace, and under the direction of your spiritual father, you may be inspired and acquire additional tools to augment the Holy Mysteries of our Church.

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

Your Resurrection, Christ Savior, illuminated the universe and You redeemed Your own creation.



Stewardship Report: “Come and See!”

<u>2009 Stewardship Status (March 15, 2010):</u>	Stewardship Target – 2010	\$350,000	
Stewardship Families Pledged	322	Stewardship Gifts Pledged	\$259,887
Stewardship Gifts Received	\$99,645	Current Stewardship Deficit	\$90,113
Average Stewardship Pledge	\$807	Percentage of Goal Achieved	74%

<u>Pledge Range</u>	<u>Number of Families</u>	<u>\$ & % of Gifts Pledged</u>
\$1-\$999	225	\$ 82,761 - 32%
\$1,000-\$2,499	80	\$ 101,686 - 39%
\$2,500-\$4,999	10	\$ 31,480 - 12%
\$5,000-\$9,999	6	\$ 33,720 - 13%
\$10,000-\$14,999	1	\$ 10,000 - 4%

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Stewards Pledged	357	322	- 35
Gifts Pledged	\$269,391	\$259,887	- \$9,504
Gifts Received	\$86,723	\$99,645	+\$12,922
Average Pledge	\$755	\$807	+\$52

What Does Being a Steward Really Mean?

From the moment we believe inwardly in Christ and His Church, and then when we publicly attest to that belief as active Orthodox Christians, we do so with the realization that all gifts are given by God and we are responsible to Him as stewards of His Church and all things He created.

At each Divine Liturgy we willingly seek out and receive the Gift of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, having faith that we are transformed by the grace of the Holy Spirit and that, through partaking, our sins are forgiven and we are granted eternal life. But what do we then return to God for these gifts? God tells us in Scripture that we can respond to His love through the acts and service of stewardship.

Fr. Joseph Fester of the Orthodox Church of America clearly helps us understand the meaning of stewardship by his comments: *“Stewardship is not a new subject nor is it just about money. Stewardship is Orthodox because it is part of God’s plan! Stewardship and being a good steward are core teachings of Holy Scripture and the Church. These teachings form the basis for the Orthodox Church.”*

That’s right – the “basis” of the Orthodox Church! Stewardship is not an “add-on” to our faith and some form of obligation and duty. Stewardship is also not the practice of paying dues in some idealized membership process to being a Christian. Stewardship is fundamentally another gift of God – a gift given to all of us.

All of us can be stewards and being a steward means caring for, or managing the affairs of another. That “another” is God Himself! How wonderful it is to care for God, His Church, His world and those made in His image, just as God Himself has so wonderfully cared for all of us. As faithful stewards we must ask ourselves if there is anything we would deny to Christ or His Church that it was within our power to give?

The meaning of stewardship is giving willingly of our time, talents and treasures – and with love for God and each other. We should expect nothing in return as we have already received all that we need by the grace provided to us by Him. Our personal relationship with God as His stewards is confirmed by the words of our Lord Jesus: *“Well done good and faithful servant, you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.” (Matthew 25:21)*

Gary Waters, Stewardship Committee



“We offer to You these Gifts from Your own Gifts, in all and for all.”



Notes from the Loft

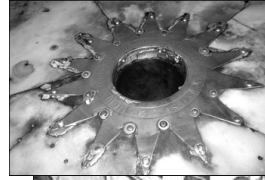
The Choir of St. John mourns the passing of Estella Bakalas, our organist of 19 years. Her devotion and faithfulness to our Choir was beyond measure; she was always promptly in the Choir Loft each Sunday, on special days and during rehearsals.

Estella performed her obligation to the Church and her ministry humbly with love and with a deep abiding faith. Even when her health was not up to par, she would climb the steps with difficulty and make certain she was there on time.

Estella deeply loved her family and spoke of them with fondness and with pride. She will be missed by each and every Choir member. Our prayers are with her family. ΑΙΩΝΙΑ Η ΜΥΗΜΗ.

Faye Brown, Choir Director

Holy Land Pilgrimage



His Grace Bishop Ilia Katre would like to invite all who are interested to join



him in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Mount Sinai. The pilgrimage is from

September 29 to October 10,

2010, with an optional extension to Greece from **October 11 to 18**. Please stop by the Church Office to pick up a copy of the brochure.

Forerunners ~ The Seniors of St. John the Baptist

On Tuesday, March 16 we met for our monthly luncheon. Our Lenten meal was delicious – thanks, Manny! Please mark your calendars for our next get-together on **Tuesday, April 20** at 11:30 am in Panos Hall.

All seniors in our parish are welcome to join us – please remember that annual membership dues are \$10 per person.

Lastly, we continue to support the homeless youth with healthy snack foods each month.

Love in Christ, Ruth Plentzas



Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ,
let us worship the Holy Lord Jesus,
the only Sinless One.

We venerate Your Cross, O Christ,
and we praise and glorify
Your Holy Resurrection.

You are our God.

We know no other than You,
and we call upon Your Name.

Come, all faithful, let us venerate the
Holy Resurrection of Christ.
For behold, through the Cross
joy has come to all the world.

Blessing the Lord always,
let us praise His Resurrection.
For enduring the Cross for us,
He destroyed death by Death.



APRIL 2010 - IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

<p>4 HOLY PASCHA 12:00 am Resurrection Orthros & Divine Liturgy 12:00 pm Agape Vespers & Picnic Christ is Risen!</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7 4:30 pm Youth Greek 7:00 pm OCLV at Lucille's Smokehouse</p>	<p>8 6:00 pm Adult Greek</p>	<p>9 Theotokos, Life Giving Spring 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>10 10:00 am HOPE & JOY Hike at Red Rock 11:00 am GOYA Field Day at Church</p>
<p>Bright Week: No Fasting All Week</p>						
<p>11 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Youth Choir Chants</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 6:00 pm Parish Council Meeting</p>	<p>14 4:30 pm Youth Greek 7:00 pm Adult Study</p>	<p>15 6:00 pm Adult Greek</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>
<p>18 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 11:30 am Forerunners Luncheon in Panos Hall 5:00 pm Folk Dance Board Meeting 6:00 pm Greek Food Festival Meeting</p>	<p>21 4:30 pm Youth Greek 5:30 pm Parish Bylaws Committee Meeting 7:00 pm Adult Study</p>	<p>22 6:00 pm Adult Greek</p>	<p>23 Great Martyr George 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>24</p>
<p>25 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Parish Assembly Follows</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 4:30 pm Youth Greek 7:00 pm Adult Study</p>	<p>29 6:00 pm Adult Greek</p>	<p>30</p>	
<p>Fr. John @ Archdiocese Presbyters Council Meeting</p>						

The Desert Messenger

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

NONPROFIT 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

“The Orthodox Church explains the events following death in this manner. Theologically, death is the separation of the spiritual dimension of the human being (the soul or spirit) from the physical (the body). When we die, we begin immediately to experience a foretaste of heaven or hell. That is, our spirits are either in communion with God, or they are not. This foretaste experience, based on the general character of our lives regarding our behavior, character and communion with God, is known as the partial judgment. At some unknown time in the future, the Church teaches that Jesus Christ will return. Each Sunday we repeat our belief in the return of Christ when we say in the Creed: ‘And He shall come again in glory...’

We also say in the Creed that when He returns, He will come ‘... to judge the living and the dead.’ The Creed also indicates what else will occur when Christ returns: ‘I expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.’ Christ will bring an end to this world as we know it, and He will inaugurate a new era, establishing His kingdom, which ‘shall have no end.’ This final judgment is known as the general judgment. Our resurrected existence will then live eternally in heaven in communion with God, or eternally in hell, out of communion with God.”

- Rev. Stanley S. Harakas, The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers