

The Desert



Messenger

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

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

June 2011

**From
Father
John**

Beloved in Christ:

Christ is Risen! Having beheld in worship, in celebration and hopefully in our renewed personal spiritual life the Resurrection of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, we are drawing near the Feast of His Holy Ascension into Heaven (*June 2*) and, then 10 days later – that is, the 50th day after Pascha – the Feast of Pentecost Sunday (*June 12*).

For 40 days our Lord revealed Himself to His 11 Disciples on several occasions before instructing them to go to the Mount of Olives in Galilee, where He commissioned them at the appointed time to, “*Go therefore to all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. . .*” As the consolation for responding obediently to His command, He then promised His Disciples and, by extension, all of us: “*I am with you always, to the close of the age.*” (*Matthew 28:19-20*) After blessing His Disciples, His Mother and those with them, Jesus was carried up into Heaven by the Holy Angels, and subsequently with great joy His followers returned to Jerusalem to the upper room where they were staying, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit that was promised them by their Teacher at the time of His Passion.

Soon after, on the Sunday of Pentecost, which for the Jews was the commemoration of God’s giving of the Tablets of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai, the Holy Disciples – now numbering 12, including the newly-chosen Matthias – received in the upper room as tongues of fire the Gift of the Holy Spirit, granting them the authority to proclaim courageously the *good news* of the Risen Lord in various languages and to baptize about 3,000 people who were gathered in Jerusalem that day (*Acts 2*). For Orthodox Christians this Feast marks the fulfillment of the Divine Dispensation, or God’s plan of salvation, which began with the Incarnation of Christ: With the advent of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles (meaning, “*those who are sent*”) were empowered from on high to establish the Body of Christ throughout the world, allowing through the Church and Her Holy Mysteries the opportunity for all of us to become partakers of the Kingdom of God.

Through the bold preaching and adherence to the commands of our Lord by the Holy Apostles, as well as those who have faithfully followed them throughout the ages, the Orthodox Christian Church has grown and the good news of eternal Life in Christ Jesus has reached many places in our world – and, amazingly, even in Las Vegas! As such, we are able, by God’s good grace, to have our Resurrected Lord dwelling within each of us. Beloved, each time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy we experience first-hand the joy of Pentecost, for in the words of St. John Chrysostom: “*On this day commenced the celebration of the Holy Eucharist by which we become ‘partakers of the Divine Nature’ (2 Peter 1:4).*” Through the Holy Church, and especially in Her Holy Mysteries, we continuously have the Holy Spirit abiding and moving within us – and in the Spirit we share communion together with the Father and the Son.



Continued on Page 2

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sundays: 8:45 am Orthros - 10:00 am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, June 1

5:00 pm Orthros - 6:00 pm Divine Liturgy

(Holy Ascension of Our Lord)

Epistle: Acts 1:1-12

Gospel: Luke 24: 36-53

Thursday, June 2/*Holy Ascension*

Liturgy Celebrated on Wednesday evening

Sunday, June 5/*7th Sunday of Pascha/*

The Holy Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council

Orthros: Tone Six (Second Plagal)

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): John 21:1-14

Epistle: Acts 20:16-18, 28-36

Gospel: John 17:1-13

Saturday, June 11/*Saturday of Souls*

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

Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

Gospel: John 21:14-25

Memorial follows Liturgy

Sunday, June 12/*8th Sunday of Pascha/*

HOLY PENTECOST

Festal Gospel (Orthros): John 20:19-31

Epistle: Acts 2:1-11

Gospel: John 7:37-52; 8:12

Kneeling Vespers follows Liturgy

No Fasting All Week

Monday, June 13/*Monday of the Holy Spirit*

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

Epistle: Ephesians 5:8-19

Gospel: Matthew 18:10-20

Sunday, June 19/*1st Sunday of Matthew/All Saints*

Orthros: Tone Eight (Fourth Plagal)

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

Epistle: Hebrews 11:33-40; 12:1-2

Gospel: Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38; 19:27-30

Happy Fathers Day!

Luncheon in Panos Hall follows Liturgy

Holy Apostles Fast: June 20 - 28

Friday, June 24/*Nativity of St. John the Baptist*

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

Epistle: Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4

Gospel: Luke 1:1-25, 57-68, 76-80

Sunday, June 26/*2nd Sunday of Matthew*

Orthros: Tone One

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

Epistle: Romans 2:10-16

Gospel: Matthew 4:18-23

Tuesday, June 28

5:00 pm Orthros - 6:00 pm Divine Liturgy

(Holy Apostles Peter and Paul)

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 11:21-33; 12:1-9

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-19

Wednesday, June 29/*Ss. Peter and Paul*

5:00 pm Orthros - 6:00 pm Divine Liturgy

(Synaxis of the 12 Holy Apostles)

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16

Gospel: Matthew 9:36; 10:1-8

Thursday, June 30/*The 12 Holy Apostles*

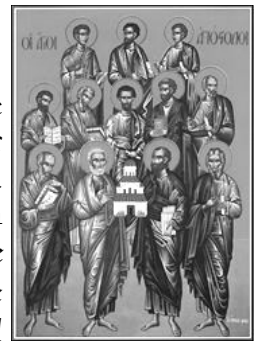
Liturgy Celebrated on Wednesday Evening

From Father John (Continued from Page 1)

While Pentecost marks the beginning of the mission and evangelical work of the Church, it obviously must continue for the Life of the world. In an encyclical written for this season, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos reminds all of us that we also have a role, like the Apostles, in spreading the important message of God's love and salvation in Christ beyond the walls of our Church and throughout the greater community: "As the season of our Lord's Resurrection transitions into the Feast of Pentecost, may these great feasts have the same effect on us, motivating us to also reach out and draw the whole world around us into our 'spiritual nets', the Holy Orthodox Church." The reward for sharing in this holy labor is that, as promised, our Lord will be with us always, to the close of the age.

With gratitude and love for the fellowship we share in the Holy Trinity,

Father John



Stewardship Report: “We are Members of the Body of Christ!”

From time to time it is important to review, and perhaps together with our priest, our personal goals of spiritual growth. Spiritual growth, as we know, is the foundation of our faith and is guided by many things, including participation in Church and Stewardship to God. However, it is often the case that we miss that spiritual growth and Stewardship are connected, when in fact they are directly and strongly linked.

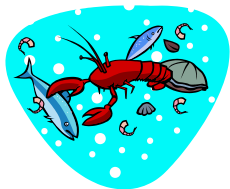
We can become very comfortable in our daily lives, although being a good and faithful servant to God does not mean we need to be uncomfortable. Our tendency is to seek a more comfortable path – and stay on it – rather than looking for new paths or even challenging the decision to stay on our current path. Staying comfortable is often preferred to making changes in our lives, even if we recognize that some changes are helpful or healthful to us, physically or spiritually. Some call this reluctance to change either “getting set in our ways,” or the “hardening of the attitudes.” In reality, most people do not change or grow due to some external reason, but merely because they are comfortable where they are and perceive change as difficult or uncomfortable.

However, spiritual growth requires that we challenge the forces of complacency and seek new insights: The important process of reviewing our spiritual growth is best accomplished if we also look to a major component of it – namely, Stewardship. It is important to remember that spiritual growth requires we attend to all the practices of Orthodox Christianity by being present and active in our commitment to God through our Stewardship of time, talents and treasures. Indeed, we are reminded of this several times during the Holy Liturgy with the declaration, “*Let us be attentive!*” Being present and attending to both our spiritual growth and Stewardship advances our understanding and connection to God and His Church.

Christ is Risen! Gary Waters and the 2011 Stewardship Committee

<u>2011 Stewardship Status (May 15, 2011):</u>	Stewardship Target – 2011	\$350,000
Stewardship Families Pledged 344	Stewardship Gifts Pledged	\$286,829
Stewardship Gifts Received \$135,740	Current Stewardship Deficit	\$63,171
Average Stewardship Pledge \$768.21	Percentage of Goal Achieved	82%

<u>Pledge Range</u>	<u>Number of Families</u>		<u>\$ of Gifts Pledged</u>
\$1-\$999	247		\$ 83,909
\$1,000-\$2,499	76		\$ 96,180
\$2,500-\$4,999	12		\$ 39,440
\$5,000-\$9,999	6		\$ 33,200
\$10,000-\$14,999	1		\$ 10,000
	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Stewards Pledged	350	344	-6
Gifts Pledged	\$274,117	\$286,829	+\$12,712
Gifts Received	\$120,107	\$135,740	+\$15,633
Average Pledge	\$787.00	\$768.21	-\$18.79



Friday Feast and Glendi
Friday, June 10 ~ 7:00 pm ~ Panos Hall
\$15 Adults - \$5 Children under 12 years
Kids under 6 years free



Hosted by the Flangas Family
Proceeds benefit St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church Operational Fund

Parish Council Report

Christos Anesti! In this month's report, I would like to thank Darrick Cole, our current Treasurer. He has done an excellent job as Treasurer and is truly an asset for St. John Church; he works very hard to keep the finances of the parish in order.

As summer begins the Food Festival draws closer and we will need everyone to help. Please look to the baking schedule in this issue and lend a hand.

On a different note, I believe we are moving into an exciting time in our Church's history. I marvel when I take the time to think about what our forebearers have accomplished here in Las Vegas: Although we currently have issues to work through, there is really no better time to come to Church, become a steward, and join a ministry.

The Parish Council is also undertaking outreach to add new Stewards to our Church. If you are not a Steward, please become one; if you know of someone who is Orthodox but not a Steward, kindly ask them to become a Steward. In the weeks and months to come the Stewardship Program will be going through a much needed change and we will require more volunteers. Please consider helping both the Parish Council and Stewardship Committee. Now is the time to think about the future: The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, but the second best time is now!

And, as always, if you are having an event, baptism, wedding, birthday party, office party, or if you need meeting space or convention space . . . please call Sheryl, our catering director, and book your event with us. You will be helping your Church as well as showing off our great facilities.

God Bless St. John Church! Spiros Filios, Parish Council President

Financial Status for Month of April 2011

Bank Accounts	Beginning Balance			Internal Bank Transfers		Balances as of 4.30.11
	as of 3.31.11	Income	Expenses	Transfers In	Transfers Out	
General Operating	\$957.66	\$88,064.34	\$60,406.29			\$28,615.71
Building/Maintenance	\$26,532.97	\$3.20	\$3,368.86			\$23,167.31
Community/Education Ctr	\$5,600.47	\$4,304.37	\$8,205.33			\$1,699.51
Construction (Loan Paymts)	\$30,252.90		\$5,258.15			\$24,994.75
Food Festival	\$46,157.38	\$70.00	\$20,025.00			\$26,202.38
Icon Money Market	\$7,253.23	\$351.31	\$32.00			\$7,572.54
Library Checking	\$15,598.75	\$1.86				\$15,600.61
On-Line Donations	\$1,200.09					\$1,200.09
Bookstore Checking	\$506.28	\$605.00	\$16.00			\$1,095.28
Construction Loan	\$657,508.46					\$655,730.77
Revolving Line of Credit	\$0.00					\$0.00
Term Loan (5 year loan)	\$0.00					\$0.00



Fathers Day Luncheon

Sunday, June 19, 2011
Following Divine Liturgy
in Panos Hall

\$15 per person

Souvlaki with various sides and fruit

Proceeds to benefit Parish Operations
Sponsored by the Parish Council

Greek Food Festival Baking Schedule

Save the Dates:

Saturday, July 9 - Baklava
Saturday, July 23 - Baklava

It's that time again!
 Please join us at 8:00 am in the Kitchen.
 We can use any and all help.
 Lunch will be served.
 Please look to *The Desert Messenger*
 for more baking dates as
 the Greek Food Festival nears.

**Philoptochos
News**

Christos Anesti! As the newly elected Philoptochos Panagia Chapter President, I would like to introduce myself for those who do not know me. I have been a member of St. John Church for 41 years and I am looking forward to working with all of you over the next two years.

I want to thank April Karalis and her Board for all their leadership. Our last three donations that were presented and approved at the Presidents Dinner were \$3,000 to pay down the mortgage principal, \$1,000 for the Kokkos Scholarship and \$312 for Father John's Discretionary Fund.

The new board and I will be busy over the summer working with Father John on our calendar for the upcoming year. Please look to upcoming issues of *The Desert Messenger* for important dates.

Yours in Christ, Geri Kypreos and the Philoptochos Board



Philoptochos Board Oath of Office on Sunday, May 8, 2011 - Photo by Stephen Carabas

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

June 5

Ushers: Demetrious Philippou, Jim Monoyudis, Stephanie Demoleas, George Bochanis, Darrick Cole and Demetrious Asim

Memorial: Domna Kalfas (40 days); Pamela Rose Castiglione (40 days); George Kostopoulos (3 years).

Fellowship: Pan-Arcadians

June 12

Ushers: Marina Adamy, Linda Dougan, John Fotopoulos, Sam Koutsulis, George Kakavulias and Spiros Filios

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

June 19

Ushers: Darrick Cole, Demetrious Asim, Jim Monoyudis, George Bochanis, Stephanie Demoleas and Demetrios Philippou

Fellowship: Fathers Day Luncheon, Sponsored by the Parish Council

June 26

Ushers: John Fotopoulos, Sam Koutsulis, George Kakavulias, Linda Dougan, Spiros Filios and Marina Adamy

Fellowship: Pan-Arcadians

**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: Spiros Filios

Philoptochos: Geri Kypreos

Choir: Athena Mertes

Chanters/Youth Choir:
Presvytera Maria Hondros

Church School:
Eileen Koutsulis

Altar Servers:
Sam Koutsulis

Stewardship Committee:
Alex Sparkuhl
Gary Waters

Hellenic Historical Society:
Nitsa Filios

GOYA:
Effie Lekar
Tammy Chomakos

HOPE and JOY:
Sharon Katsaros
Jennifer Orlando

Orthodox Family Fellowship:
Tami and Michael Stefanatos

Youth Ministries:
Eileen Koutsulis

Orthodox Connection Las Vegas:
Adam Bieker

Forerunners:
Charles Teed

Greek Folk Dance:
Tina Liaos, Chair
Bryan Taxopoulos, Director

Greek School: TBD

Orthodox Bookstore:
Matthew Castillo

Bill Andrews Library:
Spero Demoleas

Congratulations, Graduates!

Catherine Carrico

Catherine Carrico is graduating from Faith Lutheran High School and will receive her High School Diploma with Honors from the National Art Honor Society. She is the recipient of the AHEPA, Kokkos and Arrupe Scholarships. Catherine plans to attend Seattle University in the fall and study Chemistry. Catherine is the daughter of William and Alexandra Carrico.



Dante Richmann Karalis

Dante Richmann Karalis is graduating from Faith Lutheran High School. She will be attending UNLV and majoring in Communications. She eventually plans to attend William S. Boyd School of Law. Dante is involved in dance and loves to help people. She hopes to work in mediation in the future. Dante is daughter of Gianni and April Karalis.

Sam Koutsulis

Sam Koutsulis is a 2011 High Honors Graduate of Coronado High School. He has served as Altar Boy Captain at St. John Church for four years and is a member of GOYA. He is a four-year member of the Coronado High School Football Team, along with “Cougars for the Cure,” and a four-year member of Coronado’s Varsity Band where he is the percussion section leader and was named Coronado Band Student of the Year. Sam is a three-year member of the CCSD Honor Band and two-year member of the NMEA (Nevada Music Educators Association) All State Band as a Percussionist, sitting third chair in his junior and senior years. He has received seven first place medals in the Clark County Solo and Ensemble Competition on the Marimba, and three of those for Regional Competition. Sam is a member of the Coronado National Honor Society and Mu Alpha Theta. He was awarded an Honorable Mention for the Nevada Prize Exam in Math, which is given to the top 10 percent of Advance Pre-Calculus and Calculus Students across the country.



Sam is the recipient of the Fofu Kokkos Scholarship, the Las Vegas Chapter 314 AHEPA Scholarship and the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation Scholarship. Sam will be attending Creighton University, where he received the prestigious Magis Scholarship (for doing more for Christ) as a Pre-Med major; he would like to go on to Medical School to become an Oncologist. He is the son of John and Eileen Koutsulis.

Class of 2011!



Joana Maresh

Joana Maresh is graduating with an Advanced Honors Diploma with a 4.3 weighted GPA from The College of Southern Nevada High School. She will also receive an Associates Degree of Fine Arts from the College of Southern Nevada. Joana will be attending Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts in New York, NY to study Culture/Media and Writing. She is the daughter of Silviu and Cosette Maresh.



Elizabeth Anthony

Elizabeth Anthony is graduating from the University of Nevada, Reno with a Bachelors Degree in Human Development and Family Studies with a minor in Psychology. After graduation she plans to move to San Diego and will be studying for the GRE exam and applying to Graduate Schools. Elizabeth is the daughter of Stavros and Bernadette Anthony.



Athena Bochanis

Athena is graduating from New York University School of Law with a Juris Doctorate. At NYU she was the Evan and Barbara Chesler Scholar, and was active in international law and policy work. Athena spent two summers interning in Budapest, Hungary, and currently works part time for the International Labour Organization (the UN agency for labor). She will spend the summer studying for the New York bar exam, and plans to pursue a career in international law and policy either in New York or abroad. Athena is daughter of George Bochanis and Mari Bochanis.

Graduates 2011!

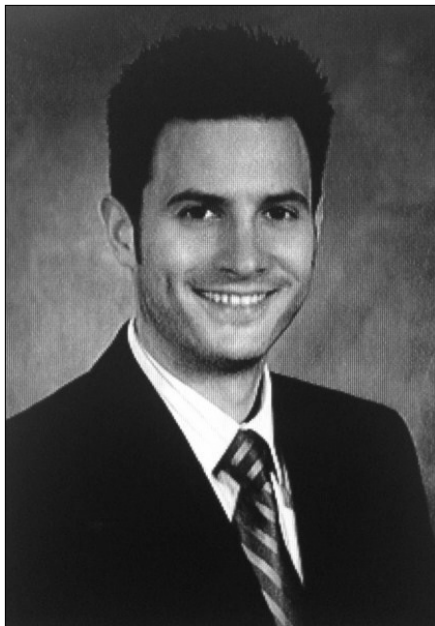


George Spiro Demas

George Demas received his Masters of Divinity with Distinction from Holy Cross School of Theology in Brookline, MA, on May 21, 2011. George grew up in Portland, OR, and attended St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church while enrolled at UNLV, where he received his BA. George will serve the Church as a layman, until ordination in the future. His special interest is in the Church Fathers, and he wrote a thesis on St. Gregory of Nyssa. George thanks St. John Church for the great role it played in his spiritual formation, which led to his decision to attend Holy Cross. George is the son of Spiro and Rita Demas.

April Gulling

April Gulling will graduate from the University of Phoenix with a Bachelors Degree in Business Science Management. April eventually plans to return to the University of Phoenix to complete courses for her Masters Degree.



Elias Pete George

Elias George received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas William S. Boyd School of Law. He will be Judicial Clerk to Chief Judge Jennifer Togliatti in the Eighth Judicial District Court. Elias is son of Pete and Georgia George.

God Bless Our Graduates!

Alexandra Katerina Lemelson

Alexandra Lemelson will receive an AA in Business from Cascadia Community College in Washington State; she also began her classes at Harvard University's Extension School last semester. Alexandra is a member of the PTK Honor Society and was the recipient of an academic excellence scholarship from Harvard. She is planning on pursuing a degree in Child Psychology.



Irene Skarlatos

Irene Skarlatos, a University Honors Scholar, graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Political Science from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Her future plans include taking time off to study for graduate and law school exams, traveling, and gaining work experience. She would like to thank her family and friends who have supported her along the way and wishes to extend a big thank you to AHEPA and the Kokkos Scholarship committee members for their support during her four years of college. Irene is daughter of Konstantinos Skarlatos and Hristina Frangopulu.



Summer Adult Study: 'The Pentecostarion Scriptures'

*On Wednesdays - 7:00-8:30 pm (unless noted)
in Kokkos Hall - Bring your Bible (RSV)
Father John Hondros, Instructor*



Kokkos Scholarship Recipients

The Fofa and George Kokkos Scholarship Committee would like to congratulate Samuel Koutsulis and Catherine Carrico, our 2011 scholarship recipients.

Youth Ministries

Church School

Hi Everyone! Congratulations to our graduates: I know that each and every one of you will do great, and we are all so proud of you!

We had a successful season raising funds for Pennies and Prayers, which supports the mission parishes of our Metropolis. The year, we collected \$897.32. Thank you for all of your donations.

Our first day of the 2011-2012 Church School Year will be on *Sunday, September 11*. Look for the registration in the July-August issue of *The Desert Messenger*.

Finally, I would like to offer my thanks again to all our teachers. You are the best! Parents and children: Please don't be strangers over the summer! Church still goes on even without Church School.

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

Youth Choir News

Christos Anesti, Youth Choir!

Since we had the opportunity to chant for Mothers Day last month, now our Dads, Papous, Theios, and Nounos will get their chance to hear all of you on their special Sunday! The Youth Choir will Chant on the *third* Sunday this month – that is, on *Sunday, June 19*. You do not have to wear your black and white outfits; please just come to Church on time (9:45 am) with your great voices! Thanks!

Love, Presvytera Maria



GOYA

On *Pentecost Sunday, June 12*, following services we will gather for a picnic at Mountain's Edge Park. Please pack a lunch or bring money to purchase a sandwich. We will have water and Gatorade for everyone. In addition, bring a change of clothes for activities such as hiking and any footballs, frisbees, etc. Hope to see you then!

A Big Congratulations to all our graduates and best wishes! GOYA is a youth ministry for middle and high school students.

May Christ and Panagia be with everyone during our summer travels! Happy and Safe Summer!

Love in Christ, Effie Lekar (702) 768-5500 and Tammy Chomakos (702) 338-4671

HOPE and JOY

Let's start summer off with a day at the park on *Friday, June 10*. To beat the heat and the crowd, we will meet at 9:30 am at Town Square Children's Park, located at 6605 Las Vegas Boulevard South. They have a fun water feature in the park, along with a merry-go-round and slides. It will be a fun way for us to get together and afterwards we can have lunch at one of snack shacks. See you there!

Your HOPE & JOY Advisors, Sharon Katsaros and Jenn Orlando

Orthodox Family Fellowship

Congratulations to all the young graduates! Your adventures in childhood are behind you, and now it is time to spread your wings and fly. Remember all that you have learned and, most importantly, stay true to your roots in our Lord Jesus Christ – for He is the only way to true and undying happiness.

In Christ's Service, Michael and Tami Stefanatos

Greek Folk Dance

Registration for the 2011-2012 Greek Folk Dance Year has begun. A table will be set up during Fellowship on Sundays or you can mail your registration to the Church Office. The registration fee is \$75 per dancer if paid by *July 31*. The fee, if paid between *August 1 and October 4 (the final date for registration)*, will be \$150. The first day of dance practice will be October 4, except for those returning dancers that will be practicing earlier for the Greek Food Festival.

Registration is open to all youth who have been baptized and/or chrismated in the Orthodox Church, who are at least 4 years-old as of October 4, 2011. Proof of such must be turned in at the time of registration, so if you do not have a copy of your baptismal certificate, you should get on top of this asap. Dancers must attend Divine Liturgy on Sunday on a regular basis and those who are of age (4-17) must be a regular participant of Church School. Also, parent(s) must be a Steward of Record at St. John Church for 2011.

Our *Annual Swim Party* will be held on *Saturday, June 11* at 2:00 pm and, again this year, George and Aris Bochanis have graciously offered their home for this fun event. Please bring a salad, side dish or dessert. George will provide the main entrée and the Dance Board will provide beverages.

Pan-Pontian Cultural and Folkloric Weekend – June 17-19 in Atlanta, GA. Anyone interested in attending this weekend of Pontian dance workshops, lectures, and glendia, please contact *Bryan Taxopoulos at (702) 336-2119*.

Remember . . . The early bird registration deadline for Greek Folk Dance is *July 31*. Save \$75 by registering early.

Tina Liaos and the Greek Folk Dance Board



Notes from the Loft

The Choir will be singing the Divine Liturgy on *Sunday, June 5, 12 and 26*. The Youth Choir will be singing on Sunday, June 19 for Fathers Day. There will be a Choir Rehearsal on *Wednesday, June 8* at 6:00 pm for Pentecost. I hope to see everyone there!

The Church Music Federation Conference will be at the Annunciation Cathedral in San Francisco on *June 17-18*. If you are interested in attending or would like more information, please let me know.

Athena Mertes, Choir Director

Our Community Registry

Baptized into Christ: Na Mas Zisoun

Stefanos, son of Curtis and Angeliki Ward on April 30, 2011. Godparents: Jerry and Elli Thermos.

Elizabeth (Arianna), daughter of Phillip and Georgia Alcala on May 1, 2011. Godparent: Tishe Leonis.

Paul (Mason), son of Paul and Brandi Hamilton on May 8, 2011. Godparent: Angela Likourinou.

Eleni (Ella Ruby), daughter of Paul and Brandi Hamilton on May 8, 2011. Godparent: Marissa Nestlebush.

Zoe (Zen), daughter of Talor and Michelle Zamir on May 15, 2011. Godparent: Eleni-Eliades Payan.

Helen (Hilary) Huggins (Adult Baptism) on May 15, 2011. Godparent: Mary Hamilton.

Fallen Asleep in the Lord: Eternal Memory

Helen Koutouras on April 28, 2011. Funeral on May 3.

Domna Kalfas on May 7, 2011. Funeral on May 14.

Constantine Attard on May 8, 2011. Trisagion on May 11.

2011 Stewards and Contributors: "We are Members of the Body of Christ!"

Abernathy, Gordon and Akaterine	Dalacas, Dimitri and Athanasia	Grillas, Roula	Leonis, Tishe
Adamy, Marina	Dalacas, Nick and Georgia	Grissom, Tony and Georgeea	Leventis, Nicholas and Christina
Agnos, Dimitrios and Angeline	Danik, Mary	Gruber, Ernest and Zoe	Lewis, Foula
Agnos, George and Maggie	Daskalos, George and Voula	Gulling, April	Liaos, James and Tina
Alcala, Phil and Georgia	Dawood, Evon	Hallis, Louis and Betty	Liaos, Steven and Francine
Alex, Jim and Renee	Delalis, Dina	Hamilton, Mary	Liaos, William and Irene
Anastasakis, Mark and Elaine	Delalis, Pete and Alysondra	Hamilton, Paul and Brandi	Likourinou, Angie
Anastasiou, Andrew and Kathleen	DeMangus, Robert + and Joanne	Harris, Melty and Angeline	Likourinou, Steve and June
Anastasiou, Constantino and Hilary	Demetriou, Demetrios and Bessie	Harrison, Angie	Luckey, Jason and Shawna
Andraktos, Manuel	Demoleas, Spero and Grace	Harrison, Clifford	Lymberopoulos, Mary
Andrews, Catherine	Demoleas, Stephanie	Hemmers, Oliver and Pantelas, Anne	Malamatos, Kindina
Anthony, Stavros and Bernadette	Demopoulos, Tommy and Vasiliki	Hernquist, Angela	Maland, Tim and Donna
Apostolopoulos, Chris and Katia	DeWindt, Dennis and Susan	Hertzel, David	Malpee, Mack and Kalliope
Arcamuzi, Georgia	Diamantis, Filippos	Hondros, Catherine	Mamasis, Dena
Aristides, George and Diana	Doering, Bruce and Lynn	Hondros, Christina	Mamasis, Tessie
Asim, Demetrious	Doskas, Athanasios and Anastasia	Hondros, Fr. John and Presv. Maria	Maniatakos, Ted and Maria
Attard, Constantine + and Sophia	Dougan, Linda	Hoover, Patrick and Pauline	Manolakos, Catherine
Bacon, Ken and Dianne	Dounis, Dina	Howe, Kiparissia	Manolakos, John and Jennifer
Balason, Anna	Dounis, Georgia	Hristopoulou, Spiridoula	Manos, Patricia
Balason, Voula	Dounis, Kiki	Hutchings, Brett and Nancy	Mansour, Muna
Balodimas, James	Dudunakis, Michael	Iniakina, Elena	Manteris, Arthur and Sue
Barney, Richard and Marianthi	Economon, Andrew and Stacy	Kachikis, Paul and Ernestine	Margaretis, John and Lucila
Bartzos, Sam and Eugenia	Edmunds, Paul and Barbara	Kachnik, Alison	Markakis, Mike and Catherine
Bauck, Jeremy and Amy	Eliades, Aristotelis and Caroline	Kakavulias, Christina	Martinaitis, Louis and Audra
Berendji, Jim and Vivian	Eliades, Artemis	Kakavulias, George and Helen	Mastakas, Michael
Berta, Irene	Eliades, Gregory and Maria	Kakavulias, John	Matsis, John and Rebecca
Bicos, Andriana	Eliades, Harry and Agapi	Kakavulias, Maria	Mavrantonis, Kiki and Stacy
Bieker, Adam	Eliades, Katerina	Kalkantzakos, Alexandra and Zamora,	Mavroidis, Demetrios and Debra
Bingham, Robert and Melissa	Eliades, Pete	Ulrich	Mavros, Michael and Debbie
Birtas, Helen	Eliakis, Peter and Glenda	Kanelis, Ann	McKinney, Michael and Mersene
Bochanis, George	Eliakis, Varthie and Lee Ann	Kanelos, Mahi	McNear, Elizabeth
Borzekas, Stephen	Eliopoulos, Goldie	Kanelos, Nikki	Mertes, Patrick and Athena
Brilis, George and Satoko	English, Marika	Kanoles, Konstantine and Helene	Meziloun, Evangeline
Britten, Ronald and Carol	Esqueda, Victor	Karacostas, Alice	Mihopoulos, John
Brown, Faye	Exarhos, Nick and Sharon	Karalias, Petros and Constance	Miller, Mary
Buckalew, Cassandre	Eyler, Fr. Paul and Presv. Ilean	Karas, James	Millet, Jennie
Bucy, Brent and Elaine	Eyler, John and Elizabeth	Karas, John and Marcie	Milonas, George and Eugenia
Capadalis, Tim and Marling	Failla, Jon and Jennifer	Karas, Vasiliki	Mimikos, Matina
Captain, Nicholas and Maria	Falcone, Frank and Nancy	Karris, Mark and Suzanne	Miner, George and Loreane
Carabas, Stephen and Linda	Farren, Anthony and Maritsa	Karvounidis, Nick and Alexandra	Mirich, Kyle
Carabas, Thymios and Sotiroulla	Felecos, Sophia	Katris, Nick and Kathryn	Moffett, Todd and Eliopoulos, Tina
Carahalios, John and Constance	Filios, George and Nitsa	Katsaros, Thomas and Sharon	Monoyudis, Jim and Julie
Caras, Louis	Filios, Spiridon and Eleni	Katsikakis, Evangelos	Moraites, Peter
Caredis, Jon and Marjorie	Flangas, Albert and Trudi	Kelesis, Dina	Mulopoulos, George
Carrico, William and Alexandra	Flangas, Gary and Amanda	Kelesis, John and Vicki	Murnane, Sharon
Carson, Michele	Flangas, Gus and Tamara	Kelesis, Paula	Murphy, Terry and Karen
Carter, Maria	Fotopoulos, John and Barbara	Kentros, William and Fernanda	Murray, Chris and George, Veneta
Castillo, Matthew	Frangakis, Christos and Anastasia	Kilgore, Richard and Eleni	Myers, Stella
Cero, Dean	Frangakis, Costa	Kokenes, Katherine	Nadzan, Don and Athena
Chachas, Bessie	Frangakis, John	Koliambas, Eleni	Neocleous, Plato
Chachas, James	Frantzen, Robert and Margery	Kolinas, Claire	Nichlas, Arthur
Chandrinos, Alexia	Franzi, Jack	Kolokithas, Thomas and Angie	Nicholas, James and Myrna
Chandrinos, Peter	Fronimos, John and Margaret	Konsolakis, George	Nicholas, John and Estella
Chanos, George	Gear, Darius	Kontos, Spero and Diana	Nichols, Mary
Chomakos, Dean and Tammy	George, Angela	Kostopoulos, Georgia	Nickolson, Chloe
Chomakos, George and Nikki	George, Pete and Georgia	Kotonias, George and Patricia	Nikitas, Rigas and Aphrodite
Chondrakis, Dimosthenis	Georgiou, Byron and Therese	Kountanis, Dennis and Panagiota	Nikolopoulos, Nick and Demetra
Christodoulidou, Natasa and Rothen-	Georgiou, Trula	Kouretas, Demetri and Amanda	Nikols, George+ and Christine
berger, Marcus	Georgis, John and Kaliop	Kouris, Anastasios	O'Brien, William and Chris
Christopoulos, Ann	Gialketsis, Barbara	Kourlos, Georgia	Olmsted, Travis and Marilyn
Christou, Andreas and Toni	Gialketsis, Bill and Shelli	Koutsulis, John and Eileen	Orlando, Alleck and Jennifer
Chumas, Russell and Stella	Gialketsis, Julie	Koutsulis, Sam and Effie	Osborn, Pearl
Cole, Darrick and Carla	Gialketsis, Steve	Kover, Barbara	Ostis, Sotirios
Collins, David	Gialketsis, Babe and Terry	Kuntelos, Simon and Sophia	Pacheco, Nia
Collins, Dean	Gianakoulis, Nick and Magda	Kypreos, Peter and Geri	Pandelis, Cheryl
Cominos, Ted	Giouzelis, Anastasia	Kyprianou, Gilbert and Alexis	Pantinas, John and Monica
Conklin, Demetra	Goddard, Elizabeth	Lakis, Antoinette	Pantos, James
Conger, William and Alexia	Goldrick, Ethan and Robyn	Lambros, Argere and Mary	Papas, Christian and Nicole
Constantine, Bill	Gomes, Joseph and Cecelia	Latelle, Penny	Papas, Louis and Magaly
Costuras, George and Marsha	Gordon, Victor and Demetria	Lazarakis, John and Panagiota	Papas, Peter and Rita
Cosulas, Rev. Basil and Samantha	Gotsopoulos, Dennis	Lekar, Michael and Effie	Pappas, Adrian and Diane
Cotsilis, Jenny	Gott, C. Thomas	Lemelson, Katerina and Carolyn	Pappas, Constantine and Karina
Coutris, Angela	Gousdovas, Nikos	Leone, Stephen	Pappas, Rita
Dalacas, Anthony and Eugenia	Gousias, Elias and Maria	Leonis, Nick and Sophia	Paton, Mia

From the Metropolis of San Francisco Youth Office**“In Brightest Day, In Blackest Night” - By Rev. Deacon Niko Bekris**

During the four years I attended seminary at our beloved Holy Cross School of Theology in Brookline, MA, I found that the more responsibility I took on, the more I needed hobbies to help me unwind. And the more I was (hopefully) growing in my faith, the more I began enjoying stories in pop culture that were metaphors for God and religion, as well. In my second year, I read a book called *Emerald Dawn*, an origin story for one of my favorite superheroes as a kid, Green Lantern. I loved every page, since it was both a great pastime, and a great metaphor for faith. I've been reading the monthly Green Lantern book ever since.

So you can imagine my excitement when I heard about a huge *Green Lantern* movie coming out this summer. I know the trailer alone has created a lot of buzz, and I'm sure a lot of teens will be lining up at theatres this June to catch it (I know I will). Since you're probably reading this before the movie comes out, I'll tell you that Green Lantern is basically about overcoming fear. It's about using one's will power and courage to face the worst things about ourselves and in creation and defeat them. In the story, special rings are sent to every part of the universe, including Earth, and one by one select the bravest beings to put them on. Whoever does is able to fly, have super-strength, and create anything they want out of green light (hence the name “Green Lantern”) to help them fight bad guys. This green light is the source of a Green Lantern's power. Fear represents dark; hence, by wielding light, a Green Lantern battles fear by his/her courage. In the book *Emerald Dawn*, the ring that selects the main character, Hal Jordan, says, “*Embrace the light. Wield the power.*”

Since this story is a metaphor for religion, “embracing light” is fantastic. When we remember the verse, “*I am the way, the truth, and the light,*” (*John 14:6*), it takes on a whole new . . . well, light. God is light. And we also believe God is love. *1 John* (my favorite book of the Bible) says, “*Perfect love casts out fear . . . he who fears has not been made perfect in love.*” (*4:18*) Truly, isn't the struggle of each of our lives trying to embrace God? We know He is love and He is light. We know that He casts out fear and darkness, having experienced it in our lives. And we all want battle to overcome the darkness and fear that cripple and prevent us from loving our neighbor, our family members, or even our enemies. Darkness that is stored up within us hinders us from following Jesus' example and becoming the people we truly want to be – one with God. Yet, we also know that God is all-powerful, and I'm sure we have felt His light enter us one moment, and overcome that darkness and fear the next. We may not wear a green mask and fight darkness in the form of Green Lantern's villains, but that darkness does take some shape against each of us.

Let us then embrace the true light, which is His light, by receiving Holy Communion, through prayer and confession, and living our life the way He teaches us. Then we can truly “wield the power,” because it is the power of the Almighty, and with it we can defeat any darkness, and any fear we may face.

Pelletier, Michael	Rouvas, John and Keri	Sparkuhl, Alex and Antoinette	Teed, Charles	Walters, Lane and Mary
Pendleton, Tricia	Salon, Nicholas and Janelle	Stamias, George and Effie	Thomas, Angie	Ward, Curtis and Angeliki
Pentogenis, Mike and Kathy	Salvarlis, Thomas and Joyce	Stanford, Mike and Victoria	Thompson, Maggy	Waters, Gary and Susan
Peterson, Barbara	Savvas, Savva	Stanford, Nennette	Thome, Tony and May	Weisman, Phil and Diane
Petro, Aleko and Georgia	Scott, Ann	Stavropoulos, Bessie	Tomlinson, Christina	Wilkerson, Chuck / Kristina
Philippou, Demetrios and Luanne	Setian, Gary and Marie	Stavropoulos, Terry and Niki	Touroutoglou, Nikolaos	Willey, Anthony
Platis, Anna	Shinas, Maria	Stefanatos-Hetzel, Joanne	Trebicka, Ardian	Wilson, Steven and Cleo
Plentzas, Spiros and Ruth	Sirhan, Michael	Stefanatos, Michael and Tami	Tringas, Chris	Womack, Carl
Polimerou, Angeline	Skalkotos, Nikolas and Georgia	Stenos, Louis and Litsa	Tsarouhas, Maria	Womack, Kimberly
Poulos, Christine	Skandros, Georgia	Stephanos, Aspasia	Tsolis, Christos and Pat	Wronski, Chuck
Pouridis, Kouli and Para	Skarlatos, Konstantine and	Stergion, Peter	Tsolis, Kosta	Xikis, Victoria
Prather, Moses Jr	Frangopulu, Hristina	Stika, Art and Melinda	Tsolis, Panagiote	Zaferatos, Ted and Marinella
Prokopis, Chris and Ritsa	Skarlatos, Irene	Stock, Helen	Tsoukalas, Spyridon	Zander, Becky
Prud'homme, Edwin and Penny	Skerbetz, Frank and Sophia	Struzas, Maria	Tsouras, Chris and Diane	Zarras, Nick and Cherry
Punsalan, Basil and Sophie	Smith, Kathleen	Szukiewicz, Joe	Tzelalis, Steve	Zimmerman, Paul / Angela
Radosta, Athena	Snow, Cliff and Christina	Szukiewicz, Joe and Jennia	Varinos, Nick and Kiki	Zoumboulis, James and Tina
Raptis, Fr. Dean and Pres. Evonne	Snow, Stephanie	Tafoya, Steven and Irene	Vassiliadis, Athena	
Rifakes, John and Carol	Snowden, Robert and Niki	Takas, Andrea	Vassiliadis, Spiros/ Shiona	
Rigas, Anthony and Mary	Soper, Robert and Maria	Tasios, Pete and Ramona	Vaughn, Craig and Sophia	
Roberts, Christopher	Sotira, Dhimitra	Taxiarchos, Andrew and	Vavoukakis, Gus+ and	
Rodis, Dimitri and Jennifer	Soursos, Savvas and Helene	Alexandra	Penelope	
Rodis, Sophia	Spanopoulos, Ellias	Taxopoulos, Bryan	Vergos, Charles and Eve	
Ross, John and Georgia	Sparangis, Spyro and Helen	Taylor, Katherine	Walter, Vernon and Alice	

Forerunners - The Seniors of St. John the Baptist

Once again our monthly luncheon was a most enjoyable gathering of old friends and even one new member. With summer approaching, our group will take some time off.

However, we still have one more luncheon on **Tuesday, June 14** at 11:30 am. We will be meeting at the Rio Casino Buffet. The Forerunners have a special rate of \$10 per person, including gratuity. This is a great price, considering the general public price is \$17. This buffet has been awarded recognition as the best value in Las Vegas.

Our “2 for 1” campaign for the Sunday collection plate continues to be a success. Thanks to all. What if we apply this same “2 for 1” thought to the number of shifts we volunteer to work at the Food Festival. Every extra hour we work means more profit for our Church. Don’t forget that this same thought can be applied to pre-Festival food preparation.

We wish everyone a safe and happy summer. Charles Teed

Orthodox Connection Las Vegas

Greetings from OCLV!

“Brethren, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another.” (Galatians 5:22-26)

In just a couple of weeks, we will commemorate the Holy Spirit being received by the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday. The above passage from St. Paul gives us the guidelines of how to truly live as Orthodox Christians with the grace of the Holy Spirit. As we live our lives attempting to imitate the Saints, let us keep these words in mind and meditate on what they mean in our lives today. The blueprint is laid before us and through prayer and God’s grace may we also receive the “fruit of the Spirit.”

This month we will meet at the Orleans Casino for “Bowling Night” on **Friday, June 17** at 7:00 pm. Please RSVP by Monday, June 13, so reservations can be made.

In Christ, Adam Bieker (702) 321-7611 orthodoxconnectionlv@gmail.com

Orthodox Bookstore

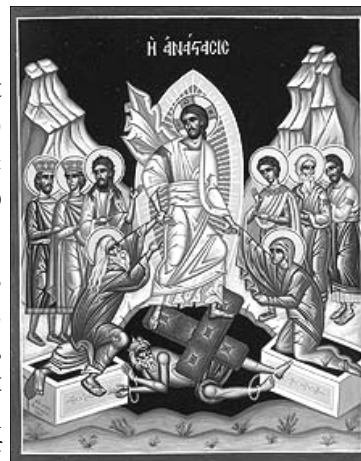
Christos Anesti! This, by far, is my favorite time of the year. I cannot get enough of this proclamation, and find it a bit upsetting when we go back to “ordinary liturgical time.” But how much more is the excitement when we revisit the Paschal Season the following year and reconnect with those who make their pilgrimages home to celebrate once again and “Come Receive the Light.”

Pascha is year-round if we are living in the True Presence of the Lord, though we often get caught up in the cares of the world. The Lord is with us, and is working in us. Repentance is not just a year-round or a seasonal practice, but a life-long embrace – as long as we have a correct understanding of what that means in the Love of the Lord, rather than the guilt caused by our own Pride. As reflected in a prayer by St Basil, the Lord leaves no one out of

returning to communion with Him: “Receive me O Lord, as you received the sinful woman, the thief, the publican and the prodigal son.” This is the Season in which we really learn about forgiveness, and come to proclaim, “He is Risen,” while our hearts ceaselessly pray, “Lord, have mercy!”

Come, check out our titles for summer reading for your soul and CDs for your spiritual journeys!

Blessed Ascension and Pentecost! Matthew Castillo, Bookstore Director





JUNE 2011 - IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

				1 Apodosis (Leaving) of Pascha 5:00 pm Orthros 6:00 pm Divine Liturgy (<i>Holy Ascension</i>) 7:30 pm Adult Study	2 Holy Ascension (Celebrated on 6/1)	3	4
5 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy	6	7	8 6:00 pm Adult Choir Practice in Choir Loft 7:00 pm Adult Study	9	10 9:30 am HOPE & JOY at Town Square Children's Park 7:00 pm Friday Feast & Glendi in Panos Hall	11 Saturday of Souls 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Liturgy & Memorial 2:00 pm Folk Dance Swim Party at Bochanis'	
12 Holy Pentecost 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Kneeling Vespers follows Liturgy 1:00 pm GOYA at Mountain's Edge Park	13 Monday of the Holy Spirit 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	14 11:30 am Forerunners Luncheon at Rio Buffet	15 6:00 pm Festival Mtg. 7:00 pm Adult Study	16	17 7:00 pm OCLV Bowling Night at Orleans	18	
Pentecost Week: Fast Free							
19 All Saints 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Youth Choir Chants Happy Fathers Day! Fathers Day Luncheon	20	21 6:00 pm Parish Council	22 7:00 pm Adult Study	23	24 Nativity of St. John the Baptist 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	25	
Holy Apostles Fast: June 20 - 28							
26 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy	27	28 5:00 pm Orthros 6:00 pm Divine Liturgy (Ss. Peter and Paul)	29 Ss. Peter and Paul (Celebrated on 6/28) 5:00 pm Orthros 6:00 pm Divine Liturgy (12 Holy Apostles) 7:30 pm Adult Study	30 12 Holy Apostles (Celebrated on 6/29)			
Holy Apostles Fast through June 28							

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

“At Pascha, beloved brethren, it was the Lord’s Resurrection which was the cause of our joy; our present rejoicing is on account of His Ascension into Heaven. With all due solemnity we are commemorating that day on which our poor human nature was carried up, in Christ, above all the hosts of Heaven, above all the ranks of angels, beyond the highest Heavenly powers to the very throne of God the Father. It is upon this ordered structure of divine acts that we have been firmly established, so that the grace of God may show itself still more marvelous when, in spite of the withdrawal from men’s sight of everything that is rightly felt to command their reverence, faith does not fail, hope is not shaken, charity does not grow cold.

... And so our Redeemer’s visible presence has passed into the Sacraments.

Our faith is nobler and stronger because sight has been replaced by a doctrine whose authority is accepted by believing hearts, enlightened from on high.

This faith was increased by the Lord’s Ascension and strengthened by the gift of the Spirit ...”

- St. Leo the Great of Rome (Synaxarion of the Lenten Triodion and Pentecostarion)