

The Desert



Messenger

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

Volume 22, Issue 4 St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

April 2024

From
Father
John

Beloved in Christ:

I pray all of us are having a spiritually fruitful voyage on the great sea of the Fast. If you are feeling tempest-tossed during the Lenten journey, I suggest you do as I do, and take the Fast one day at a time. Begin each day prayerfully, offering all things up to God – our sins, our loved ones, our struggles and even our fast. If we went off course the previous day, then arise, make the sign of the Cross, get back on track and begin fresh. Never give up. Even for the most spiritually advanced people, there is always much more to learn and grow, so that we might be perfected by God’s grace.

St. Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem (reposed March 11, 638), wrote about the Elder Zosimas who, having lived his entire life as a monastic, “began to be tormented (at the age of 53) with the thought that he was perfect in everything and needed no instruction from anyone, saying to himself mentally, ‘Is there a monk on Earth who can be of use to me and show me a kind of asceticism that I have not accomplished? Is there a man to be found in the desert who has surpassed me?’” An Angel of the Lord then appeared to Zosimas, saying, “Before you lie unknown struggles greater than those you have accomplished.” Following the directive of the Angel, he left for a Monastery near the Jordan River, where he witnessed “elders proficient both in action and the contemplation of God, aflame in Spirit, working for the Lord.”



Yet the true reason the Lord brought Zosimas to that Monastery was because of their yearly rule during the Great Fast: Following the Divine Liturgy and Vespers on Forgiveness Sunday, all the brothers (except for one or two who remained to celebrate the Divine Services) crossed the Jordan, taking very little sustenance for their bodies, and scattered far and wide in different directions, without talking to one another – and they would return to the Monastery for Palm Sunday. In the isolation of the wilderness, and while in the midst of prayer, Zosimas encountered Mary of Egypt. He listened intently as she confessed in great detail about her early years as a harlot, the many people she lured into sin, her life-changing repentance at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and her subsequent forty-seven years in ascetic struggle – physically and in thoughts – in the wilderness. Through Mary, the Holy Spirit revealed to Zosimas the meaning of a life of genuine and continuous repentance. And through Zosimas, this holy woman received the following year the blessing of partaking of the Holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, in preparation for her departure from this life.

Having heard the account of St. Zosimas and St. Mary of Egypt from the oral tradition of the monks, St. Sophronios wrote it down for our spiritual edification. The Orthodox Church commemorates St. Mary of Egypt on the day of her repose, April 1 (522 AD), and on the Fifth Sunday of Lent: This Saint is a model of true repentance, and her life is an affirmation of God’s love, forgiveness and mercy toward each of us who willingly deny ourselves, take up our Cross, and follow our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. St. Mary’s commemoration brings us toward the conclusion of the forty-day Lenten Fast, and like St. Zosimas, many pilgrims will assemble in our Holy Church for Palm Sunday and Great and Holy Week. As we experience the Life-giving Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ – through which we are forgiven, saved and perfected – may we do so with genuine faith, humility, contrition, love and gratitude to God, Who lifts us up, renews us and grants us Life.

With Much Love in our Crucified and Risen Lord,

Father John

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

*All our Sunday Divine Services are Available on Live-Stream!
Access the Live-Stream on <http://youtube.com/vegasgreekorthodox>*

Monday, April 1

5:30 pm Great Compline

Wednesday, April 3

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, April 5

6:30 pm Third Salutations to the Theotokos

Sunday, April 7/Third Sunday of Lent/Veneration of the Holy Cross/Holy Martyrs Calliopios and Akylina/St. George, Bishop of Mytilene/St. Gerasimos the God-Bearer of Byzantium/Righteous Father Savvas the New of Kalymnos/St. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and Enlightener of North America

Procession of Holy Cross at Doxology

Orthros: Third Tone

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): John 21:14-25

Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-18; 5:1-6

Gospel: Mark 8:34-38; 9:1

Memorials: Eugenia Markantonis (2 years), Minas Markantonis (5 years), Sophia Mitchell; Rebecca Berdos, Kostandinos and Elizabeth Pouridis; Paul Kachikis, and Peter Kachikis

Fellowship: Philoptochos - Benefiting Holy Cross

5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at Ss. George & Dimitrie

Homily by Father John Hondros

Monday, April 8

5:30 pm Great Compline

Wednesday, April 10

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, April 12

6:30 pm Fourth Salutations to the Theotokos

*Hail, O Bride
Unwedded!*



Sunday, April 14/Fourth Sunday of Lent/St. John

Climacos (the Ladder)/Ss. Aristarchos, Pudens, Trophimus the Apostles of the 70/Holy Martyr Thomaïs of Alexandria/Holy Martyr Ardalion the Actor/New Martyr Demetrios of Arcadia

Orthros: Fourth Tone

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

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20

Gospel: Mark 9:17-31

Memorials: Departed Members of Konsolakis and Georgis Families

Fellowship: Philoptochos - Benefiting IOCC

5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Simeon

Homily by Father Florin Ristache

Monday, April 15

5:30 pm Great Compline

Wednesday, April 17

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, April 19

6:30 pm The Akathist Hymn

Sunday, April 21/Fifth Sunday of Lent/St. Mary of

Egypt/Holy Hieromartyr Januarios and his Companions/ Holy Father Maximian, Patriarch of Constantinople/Holy Martyr Theodore and his mother Philippa of Perge/Holy Martyr Alexandra the Empress/St. Anastasios the Monk of Sinai/St. Beuno, Abbot of Clynnog

Orthros: First Plagal Tone

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

Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14

Gospel: Mark 10:32-45

Fellowship: Stewardship Committee

Spring Parish Assembly in Panos Hall

Monday, April 22

5:30 pm Great Compline

Wednesday, April 24

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Saturday, April 27/*Saturday of Lazaros*

8:00 am Orthros

9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Hebrews 12:28-29; 13:1-8

Gospel: John 11:1-45

Palm Tying and Lenten Breakfast follows Liturgy

5:00 pm *Great Vespers of Palm Sunday with Metropolitan Gerasimos*

Sunday, April 28/*Palm Sunday/Holy Nine Martyrs*

of Cyzikos/Holy Martyr John of Romania/

St. Memnon the Wonderworker

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos, Celebrant

Festal Gospel: Matthew 21:1-11, 15-17

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9

Gospel: John 12:1-18

Blessing and Distribution of Palms

Palm Sunday Luncheon in Panos Hall

GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday Evening, April 28

7:00 pm *First Bridegroom Service with Metropolitan Gerasimos*

Holy Monday, April 29

7:00 pm *Second Bridegroom Service*

Holy Tuesday, April 30

7:00 pm *Third Bridegroom Service (Hymn of Kassiani)*

Holy Wednesday, May 1

9:00 am *Presanctified Liturgy*

7:00 pm *Sacrament of Holy Unction
(Anointing with Holy Oil)*

Holy Thursday, May 2

9:00 am *Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil*

7:00 pm *Holy Passion of Our Lord
(Twelve Gospel Readings)*

Holy Friday, May 3

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, May 4

9:00 am *Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil*

11:00 pm *Resurrection Vigil*

Sunday, May 5/GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA

12:00 am *Resurrectional Orthros and Divine Liturgy*

Resurrection Gospel: Mark 16:1-8

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8

Gospel: John 1:1-17

Blessing and Distribution of Red Eggs

12:00 pm *Agape Vespers and Agape Picnic on Church Grounds*

You and your family are cordially invited
to join His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos
for the Annual



Palm Sunday Fish Luncheon

Sunday, April 28, 2024

Following the
Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
in Panos Hall

Menu:

Baked Fish Plaki, Rice,
Greek Style Peas, Salad
Fresh Baked Bread and Dessert

\$20 per Person

Cash Bar: Beer and Wine





Please Join Us for Our
AGAPE PICNIC

Holy Pascha Sunday, May 5, 2024

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

12:00 noon to 4:00 pm

(Agape Vespers at noon, followed by the Picnic)



*Tickets are \$30
for either Traditional
Lamb or Chicken Meal,
or Specialties:
Spanakopita, Tyropita,
and Pastitsio*

- ◆ *Greek Pastries and Bar*
- ◆ *Greek Music*
- ◆ *Children's Egg Hunt at 2:00 pm*
- ◆ *Table Reservations are Available and Encouraged*

Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!

*For tickets and table reservations, please call
Karen at the Church Office (702) 221-8245*



**Parish
Council
Report**

Dear Father John, Father Florin, Deacon John, Ministries and Parishioners,
Let me begin by wishing everyone *“Kalo Pascha!”*

This month’s column is strictly to wish you and your families a Blessed Lent and a Wonderful Pascha. Please be mindful of our Holy Days and plan to attend as many services as you can. His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos will visit us Palm Sunday Weekend and celebrate the Great Vespers and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Palm Sunday, as well as the First Bridegroom Service. As always, we will be hosting a Palm Sunday Luncheon after services, and tickets will be sold at \$20 per person.

Following Holy Week, we hope to see all of you at our Annual Agape Picnic *on Sunday, May 5*. This has been a successful event every year and definitely a spiritual time when we all come together to glorify our Resurrected Lord!

I would like to inform you that Angelo Stamis offered to chair our Greek Food Festival and the Parish Council unanimously accepted. Plans will be forthcoming. We are still working with Clark County to ensure that our adjacent streets are clear from construction. In addition, the Parish Council secured the dates of *September 27, 28 and 29, 2024*. These dates were selected to avoid other popular venues during the month. There is still some planning in place and once informed, I will address the Parish. Please plan to help in the organization of the Festival and let us pray that everyone offers their focus, support and commitment to doing what is best for God and our Church.

In closing, the *Spring Parish Assembly* will take place *on Sunday, April 21, following the Divine Liturgy, in Panos Hall*. Please make sure to offer your 2024 Stewardship Pledge so you can have a voice at the meeting.

Wishing everyone *“Kali Anastasi!” Blessed Resurrection!*

Yours Always in Christ, John Fotopoulos, Parish Council President

Notice of Parish Assembly

Sunday, April 21, 2024
Following the Divine Liturgy in Panos Hall

AGENDA:

- Call to Order/Opening Prayer
- Election of Assembly Chair
- Approval of Minutes (November 12, 2023)
- Approval of 2023 Financials
- 2024 Stewardship Commitment and Report
- National Biennial Clergy Laity Delegates (June 30-July 4 in San Diego)
- Greek Food Festival (September 27, 28 and 29)
- Closing Prayer/Adjournment

*Everyone is encouraged to attend, although only Pledged Stewards for 2024 may vote.
Please see a Parish Council Member, a Stewardship Committee Member
or call the Church Office to become a Steward.*

Philoptochos News

Dear Father John, Father Florin, Deacon John, Parish Council, Philoptochos Members, and Fellow Parishioners,

Great Lent is upon us. I like to think that it is not what we do or do not put in our mouths, but rather, how we speak and treat each other. Great Lent means adding those acts of extra kindness, prayers and deeds that will fulfill our Lent promise of preparing our hearts and souls for Pascha. It also means that your Ladies Philoptochos now turns their focus on the work of the Faith that we are called upon to contribute to our preparation.

Please keep the following dates and projects in mind to participate.

Sunday, March 31: Wine Wagon tickets will go on sale. This \$5 ticket can get you up to 70 bottles of wine in a great garden wagon. (PS – LPS members please bring your two bottles of wine to Church for the wagon.)

Sunday, April 7: Holy Cross Lenten Fellowship and Collection. We will need help serving the soup and light lunch. We will be sending a sign up form to our members using the *Sign up Genius*.

We will also be starting to take your donations for the Epitaphion flowers at this time. Envelopes are available in the Narthex and will be mailed soon.

Sunday, April 14: IOCC Fellowship and Collection. Christine Tijiboy will be chairing this Fellowship. Please contact Christine or Dora Hart to volunteer. We will be sending a sign up form to our members using *SignUpGenius*.

Friday, April 19: Agape Picnic Baking Day. We will be baking Kourambiethes and Koularakia for the Picnic. We always have fun, as well as get to play in the powdered sugar. Eleni Kakavulias will be our Fearless Leader as always. This will be a morning event so please join us!

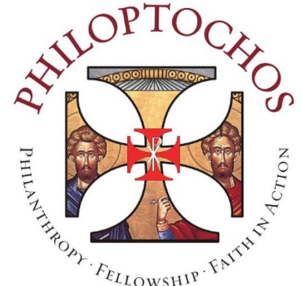
Saturday, April 27: We will be setting tables in the afternoon for the Palm Sunday Luncheon. We will be starting following services. More hands will make it easier and faster.

Sunday, April 28: Palm Sunday Luncheon. We will need about ten volunteers to help on the buffet lines. For both days, Nana Allen will be coordinating the volunteers.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. Philoptochos Members: We will be updating you more in the *Weekly Word*.

I pray we all have Blessed Great Lenten Fast,

Your Sister in Christ, Bernadette Anthony, Philoptochos President



KOKKOS SCHOLARSHIP

The Scholarship Committee for the Kokkos Scholarship Fund is pleased to announce that applications are now available at the Church Office. If you wish to receive your application via email, please contact Karen at karen@vegasgreekorthodox.com. The applications must be returned *on or before Friday, May 10*. 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 scholarship amounts this year are \$1,500. 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.

Great and Holy Week Services

We will be blessed to have our spiritual shepherd, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos, in our Parish for Palm Sunday Weekend to worship with us and to usher in Great and Holy Week. Holy Week commences on Palm Sunday Evening – *April 28* – when we will celebrate the Orthros of Holy Monday, known as the Bridegroom (*Nymphios*) Service: For three consecutive nights we have our eyes fixed on the Icon of Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church, in the center of the Soleas – although this is an image of our Lord clothed in a scarlet robe, crowned with thorns, hands bound, and holding a reed. The hymns and readings of these services set the stage for our Lord’s Passion, while simultaneously making us mindful of His imminent Second Coming: *“Behold, the Bridegroom approaches in the middle of the night, and blessed is the one He finds awake and waiting.”*



In the Greek Orthodox practice, the Sacrament of Holy Unction is placed mid-week and, as a service of healing, its link to Christ’s Passion is indisputable: We humans are sick – physically, emotionally and spiritually – as a result of Adam and Eve’s Fall and the perpetual sinfulness of each generation. In the seventh and final Gospel reading of the service, the Lord’s words are directed to each of us: *“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.” (Matthew 9:12)* All of us are in desperate need of the healing and redemption of our Great Physician, Jesus Christ, and as we shall see within a day, *“with His stripes we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)*



Holy Thursday is the turning point of Holy Week: Although the services become more powerful and admittedly much longer, the saving works of our Lord accelerate rapidly – within twelve hours we witness in hymns, readings and liturgical actions our Lord Jesus Christ washing the feet of His Disciples, instituting the Mystical Supper (the Eucharist), as well as His betrayal by Judas Iscariot, His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, His arrest, trial, mocking and scourging, His death sentence and, at the climax, His voluntary Crucifixion for the salvation of the world. That evening, after the fifth of twelve Gospel readings, the priest carries the Lord’s Cross, just as Simon of Cyrene, and after placing the Crucified Lord in the midst of the faithful, he solemnly intones, *“We worship Your Passion, O Christ. Show us now Your glorious Resurrection.”*

Holy Friday is the most solemn day of the year, and our Holy Orthodox Church offers throughout the day the most beautiful and spiritually stirring services. At the mid-afternoon service the priest reads the long Gospel passage recounting the Lord’s Crucifixion and Death, and toward the end he pauses to bring the narrative home: He goes before the Cross, prostrates himself and then solemnly removes our Lord, wraps Him in a linen shroud, and places Him in the Altar, which becomes His Tomb. Shortly after, the priest processes the *Epitaphios* (the cloth Icon of the Entombed Lord) around the Church and then gently lays Him in the Sepulcher. That night we participate in the Funeral of our Lord Jesus Christ and chant the spiritually rich, much beloved and beautifully melodic Lamentations: *“In a grave they laid You, O my life and my Christ; and the armies of the angels were quite amazed, as they sang the praise of Your submissive love.”*



(Continued on Page 9)

Great and Holy Week Services (Continued from Page 8)

The Vespertal Liturgy of Holy Saturday morning is replete with joyful anticipation, especially with the inspired and spirited hymns. Many prophecies from the Old Testament are read, prefiguring Christ's Resurrection on the third day and His power over Death. Just before the reading of the Holy Gospel, the priest sprinkles bay leaves all around the Church – as a symbol of Christ's victory – while chanting triumphantly: *“Arise, O God, and judge the earth, for You shall bring all nations to Your inheritance!”*

Much later that night, we will wait in anticipation to celebrate Great and Holy Pascha, the Feast of all feasts. At midnight the Royal Doors are quickly opened and the priest lights the large Paschal Candle from the solitary flame of the Altar vigil lamp, and then raises it before the faithful – as a visual expression that our Risen Christ has overcome the bonds of Hades and Death – proclaiming in chant, *“Come, receive the light from the Light that is never overtaken by night and glorify Christ, Who is risen from the dead.”*

You are highly encouraged to attend and participate in the Holy Week Services and, moreover, to follow the many services with a Holy Week and Pascha Service Book. If you wish to purchase one, please visit our Orthodox Bookstore or call the Church Office.

With Love in the Crucified and Risen Lord,



Father John



*Lenten Prayer of
St. Ephraim the Syrian*

*Lord and Master of my life,
cast away from me the spirit of laziness,
idle curiosity,
love of power and vain talk.*

*But grant me, Your servant,
the spirit of moderation,
humility, patience and love.*

*Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see
my own faults and
not to judge my brothers and sisters.*

*For You are blessed forever.
Amen.*



Fallen Asleep in the Lord

Pauline Kellaris on February 2, 2024.
Funeral on March 1.

Mark Anastasakis on February 18, 2024.
Funeral on March 8.

Christine Pavlakis on February 23, 2024.
Funeral on March 9 in Ely, NV.



Stewardship and Community Outreach

It is my pleasure and honor to serve as the Stewardship Committee Chair for this coming year. Before going forward, it is always useful to look back and, in that regard, we thank John Karas for his years of service in chairing the Stewardship Committee and salute him for his hard work, passion and success in steering this important ministry within our Church.

For 2024, our theme for stewardship is “Let God’s Love Guide Us.” There can be no better theme to guide us in supporting our St. John Church Community than this concept. Stewardship must always be looked at as not being some type of business transaction, but something that is motivated by our hearts in deciding our support. This is especially true with the start of our Lenten Season leading up to Holy Pascha.

We currently have received pledges from 315 families which is a wonderful start, but it is just the beginning. If we were to base an average Stewardship donation on this current number of pledges, the average donation would need to be almost \$3,700 per family to meet the Church’s expenses. Thus, it is vitally important to fill out your pledge card now. It is particularly difficult for our Church to plan to meet its current budget without all of our Parishioners committing to Stewardship.

On April 21, the Stewardship Committee will be hosting Fellowship Hour and will have Stewardship Cards available for completion. But there is no reason to wait. Stewardship Cards are available at the Church Office during the week, and you can ask any Parish Council Member for a Stewardship Card to complete during Church Services.

As we have been told year after year, the days of being able to rely on our Greek Food Festival as the means for support of our Church are slowly coming to an end. All it takes is one bad weather day or some other calamity (remember something called COVID-19?) to cause a substantial reduction in what we expect from the Food Festival.

The lesson in all of the above, is that Stewardship has to be the source of financial support for our Church and that God’s love for our Church has to be our guide to decide how we support it.

During the course of this year, we will continue to talk about the importance of Stewardship and keep our Church Community updated with the progress we are all making together.

Respectfully, George T. Bochanis,
Stewardship Committee Chair



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

5300 El Camino Road
Las Vegas, NV 89118

Rev. Father John Hondros
fjohn@vegaskgreekorthodox.com

Rev. Father Florin Ristache
frflorin@vegaskgreekorthodox.com

Rev. Deacon John Nixon
deaconjohn@vegaskgreekorthodox.com

Karen Rawlinson
Administrative Assistant

Michelle Eugenio
Bookkeeper

Claudia Kasiotis
Housekeeping

Office Hours

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

Telephone: (702) 221-8245
www.vegaskgreekorthodox.com

Parish Council: John Fotopoulos

Philoptochos: Bernadette Anthony

Stewardship & Community Outreach:
George Bochanis

Maintenance: Steve Tzelalis

Building Committee:
Eleni Filios & Steve Tzelalis

Choir: Athena Mertes

Byzantine Chanters:
Presvytera Maria Hondros

Church School: Eileen Koutsulis

Altar Servers: Father John & Mark Stransky

GOYA: Father Florin & Maha Habiba

Orthodox Family Fellowship:
Father Florin & April Rivera

Young Adults: Father Florin

Greek Folk Dance: Sia Dalacas

Greek Language:
Paula Kelesis & George Kouris

Mr. & Mrs.:
Father John & Presvytera Maria,
Father Florin & Presvytera Alexandra

Kali Parea: Demetrious Asim

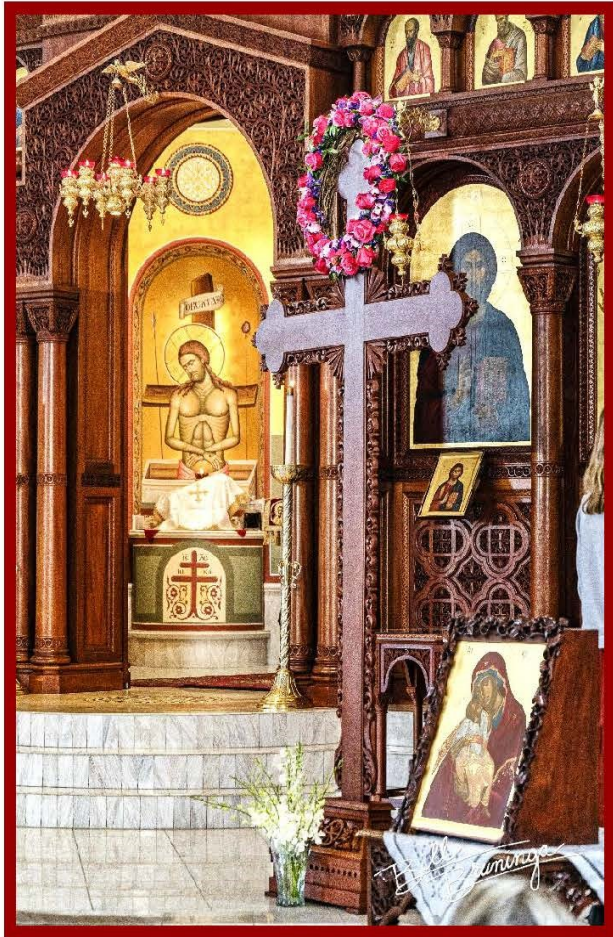
Forerunners: Paula Kelesis

Orthodox Bookstore: Paraskevi Santamaria

Hellenic Historical Society:
Nitsa Filios, Cheryl Pandelis & Susan Stamis

Greek Food Festival:
Angelo Stamis

Photography & Live-Streaming:
Bill & Erin Bruninga



Stewardship 2024

LET GOD'S LOVE GUIDE US

Let Us Love One
Another, That With One
Mind We May Confess.

Please detach and return to St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

+++++

Please Print Name(s), Address, Phone and Email

“Let God’s Love Guide Us”

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

As a blessed member of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, I/we commit to \$ _____
per week/month, with the total amount for the year 2024 of \$ _____.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Orthodox Christian: Yes No

Orthodox Christian: Yes No

Others sharing in the gift (children): _____

From Father Florin

St. John Climacos (reposed March 30, 603) lived a life of asceticism from his youth and eventually was appointed Abbot of the Monastery of Mount Sinai. The famous book written by St. John Climacos, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, was dedicated primarily to the monastic life. But the essence of the work of salvation is one and the same for everyone: It consists in cleansing our nature from the evil that exists in it, and in filling it with the grace of God, through virtues. St. John's *Ladder* is very useful and soul-saving for anyone who wants to be a Christian not just in name, but in deed. *The Ladder* is universally read in its entirety during Great Lent in monasteries, but is also read by faithful Christians throughout the world; in fact, it is the second most copied, translated and published book after *the Bible!*

There are thirty steps or spiritual reflections in *The Ladder*, according to the number of years of our Lord Jesus Christ's Earthly life before His Baptism. When our Lord reached age thirty, He started out the work of our salvation. It is assumed that human nature reaches its full age at this time, according to the words of St. Paul, **"until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."** (*Ephesians 4:13*) This is precisely what *The Ladder* facilitates: It leads to the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ. Therefore, the virtues are presented one after the other, in their natural order and succession, beginning with the preliminary and lower ones.

The Gospel passage we hear in our Orthodox Churches for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, on which St. John Climacos is commemorated, mentions that there are some kinds of unclean spirits that **"cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting."** (*Mark 9:29*) Let us see how the miraculous power of prayer is depicted in *The Ladder*: "Prayer, by reason of its nature, is the converse and union of man with God, and by reason of its action upholds the world and brings about reconciliation with God; it is the mother and also the daughter of tears, the propitiation for sins, a bridge over temptations, a wall against afflictions, a crushing of conflicts, a work of angels, the food of all the bodiless spirits, future gladness, unending activity, a source of virtues, a means of obtaining graces, invisible progress, food of the soul, enlightenment of the mind, an axe against despair, a demonstration of hope, a cure for sorrow, the wealth of monks, the treasure of hesychasts, the reduction of anger, the mirror of progress, the disclosure of status, an indication of one's condition, a revelation of future things, a sign of glory. For him who truly prays, prayer is the court, the judgment hall, and the tribunal of the Lord before the judgment to come." (*28.1*)

St. John brings forth the many mysteries and miracles of prayer. This whole image of prayer is composed not by the imagination, as often happens with us, but from actual experience! That is why every word and expression is so full of life! One of the most important questions about prayer is about what attitude to have in prayer: "If you have ever been under trial before an Earthly judge, you will not need any other pattern for your attitude in prayer. But if you have never stood before a judge yourself and have not seen others being cross-questioned, then learn at least from the way the sick implore the surgeons when they are about to be operated on or cauterized." (*28.8*) The answer is brief, but quite embracing of the whole matter.

St. John also delineates the steps in prayer: "The beginning of prayer consists in banishing by a single thought, the thoughts that assault us at the very moment that they appear; the middle stage consists in confining our minds to what is being said and thought; and its perfection is rapture in the Lord." (*28.19*)

What should those who have yet to acquire the ability to pray do? "Until we have acquired genuine prayer, we are like people teaching children to begin to walk. Try to lift up, or rather, to enclose your thought within the words of your prayer, and if in its infant state it wearies and falls, lift it up again. Instability is natural to the mind, but God is powerful to establish all things. If you persevere indefatigably in this labor, He who sets the bounds to the sea of the mind will visit you too, and during your prayer will say to the waves: Thus far shall you come and no further. Spirit cannot be bound; but where the Creator of the spirit is, everything obeys." (*28.16-17*)



(Continued on Page 14)

Ministry News

Church School



Kali Sarakosti! I would like to first say thank you to all our teachers for such a great job and for all that they have done. Where has the year gone? The kids are enjoying their classes. There are a bunch of Lenten activities and services. Please bring your children so they have a fulfilling Lent this year.

Dates to remember: *No class on Palm Sunday, April 28 or Holy Pascha, May 5.* We will remain in Church for Family Worship on these Holy Feasts. *Last Day of Class and Church School Commencement and Field Day is on Sunday, May 19.*

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

Youth and Family Events

Dear Parents, Kids and Teenagers,

Thank you all for being present at our GOYA and OFF Retreats last month! I also want to thank all the parents who helped us during our Retreats, by organizing the activities and by bringing delicious food. We could have not done it without your help!

This month, we encourage you to join us for our *Youth Gathering on Saturday, April 13, starting at 4:00 pm.* We will go to the newly-opened *Spy Ninjas HQ Adventure Park (7980 West Sahara Avenue, Las Vegas)* for an afternoon of fun and games. Please let us know beforehand if you intend to participate, as we may be able to buy tickets at a reduced price as a group.



As we are getting closer to the Great Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, please try to attend as many services as you can, especially during the Great and Holy Week! We remind you that His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos will visit our Parish *on Palm Sunday Weekend, April 27 and 28.* As customary, His Eminence will want to meet with all our youth, so please try to be present at our liturgical services.

As every year, *on Lazaros Saturday, April 27,* after the 9:00 am Divine Liturgy, we will participate in the enjoyable labor and fellowship of *Palm Tying* and decorating the Church! Please come help us, as many hands are needed and make the work go quickly.

On *Great and Holy Friday, May 3, at 3:00 pm* – the day on which our Lord Jesus Christ was Crucified for our salvation – we will have the *Children's Procession*, following the *Removal of the Lord's Body from the Cross.*

We especially invite all the GOYAns to come and help with our readings during the Holy Week Services (please read Presvytera Maria's column for details). Also, we need your assistance *on Holy Saturday, May 4,* after Liturgy, to wrap red eggs and set up for the Agape Picnic.

Finally, *on Holy Pascha Sunday, May 5* after the *Agape Vespers (at noon),* and during the *Agape Picnic,* there will be a celebratory *Egg Hunt* for the young kids.

Thank you so much and Kalo Pascha!

Love in Christ, Father Florin, Maha and April, Youth Advisors

Young Adults - 18 Years through Early 30s

This month, please try to be present and to actively participate as much as you can at our liturgical services, especially during Holy Week. *On Holy Pascha, May 5,* we need volunteers to help at the *Agape Picnic* and our support will be greatly appreciated. Please see Demetri Asim and offer your services.

We will gather again for an outing after Pascha. I thank you all for your dedication!

Kali Anastasi! Father Florin

We Need Palms!

If you are blessed with a *canary date palm tree* in your yard, we would appreciate your donation of freshly cut fronds for our use for Palm Tying. Please deliver the fronds at the south side of Kokkos Hall *on either Thursday, April 25 or Friday, April 26 by 5:00 pm*. If you are able to hose them down before delivering, that will make it easier for us to trim and tie the Palm Crosses.

Thank You and God Bless You, Father John



Palm Tying

We are asking for all hands-on deck for palm tying *right after the Saturday of Lazarus Divine Liturgy on April 27*. We will be tying about 1,500 Palm Crosses for our Parish, as His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos will be with us for Palm Sunday.

Presvytera Maria will be there to lead the troops on this fun day. No worries, she will give us a refresher on how to tie the palms. A light Lenten breakfast will be served. "Many hands help ease the load." Please reach out to me for details.

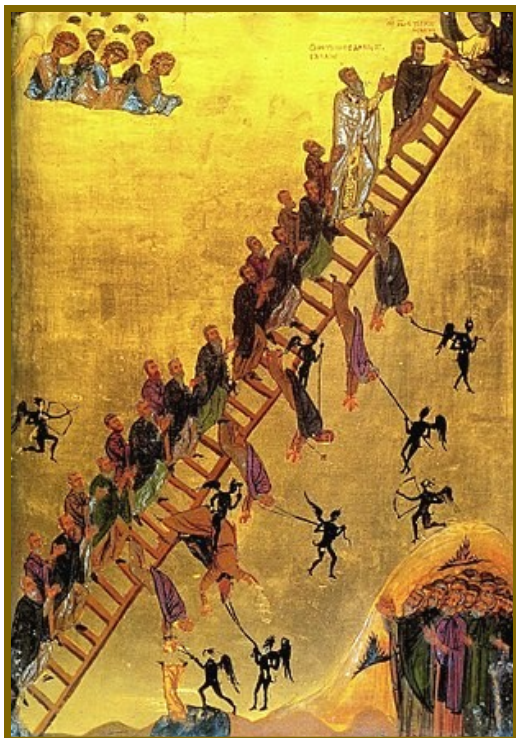
In Christ, Eileen Koutsulis, (702) 521-6516 or vivaleenie@cox.net

Egg Hunt

We are looking for donations for the *Egg Hunt at the Agape Picnic on Sunday, May 5*. I will take empty plastic eggs, candy, stuffed eggs (with candy preferred, not deviled), or cash donations. Please drop them off on Sundays at Classroom 5 *by Holy Thursday, May 2*. You can also drop them off at the Church Office during the week, or in the Parish Council Office during evening services.

Please reach out to me for details. Eileen Koutsulis (702) 521-6516 or vivaleenie@cox.net

From Father Florin (Continued from Page 12)



St. John most wisely calms those who think that their prayer is fruitless and are disturbed about it: "Do not say, after spending a long time at prayer, that nothing has been gained; for you have already gained something. And what higher good is there than to cling to the Lord and persevere in unceasing union with Him?" (28.29)

The holy ascetic also most wisely answers whether we can dare to pray for others before we have the gift of prayer: "Do not decline when asked to pray for the soul of another, even though you have not yet obtained the gift of prayer; because through contrition the faith of the suppliant also frequently saves the one who prays for him. Do not be puffed up if you have prayed for another and been heard, for it is his faith that has been strong and effective." (28.36-37)

Let us end with St. John's words regarding the time we should put in our prayers: "Do not abandon prayer until you see that, by Divine providence, the fire and water have diminished. For perhaps you will not have such a moment for the remission of your sins again in all your life." (28.49)

Fr. F. J. Ristache.

Myrrh Bearers

Calling Orthodox Middle School and High School girls to participate in being a Myrrh Bearer this year. We will have a brief meeting *on Sunday, April 21 in Classroom 5* to go over the details. If you are not able to make the meeting, that is okay; please reach out to me. The Myrrh Bearers will participate in the *Processions on Palm Sunday evening, April 28, for First Bridegroom Service, Holy Thursday evening, May 2, Holy Friday evening, May 3, and Holy Saturday night, May 4.*

Please see the Worship Schedule for service times, and reach out to me for more information, including clothing requirements. Eileen Koutsulis (702) 521-6516 or vivaleenie@cox.net

Altar Servers

There is a mandatory Acolyte practice *on Sunday, April 14, following the Divine Liturgy.* All Altar Servers must attend this practice in preparation for the Hierarchical Services with His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos on Palm Sunday Weekend, as well as for Holy Week Services.

Yours in Christ, Father John and Mark Stransky

Byzantine Chanters and Readers

We invite those interested in reading and chanting for the Lenten and Holy Week Services (with the blessing of Father John) to join us at the Chanters Stand. Practices will start this month *on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm* – thirty minutes before the Presanctified Liturgy – in the Church. Please let me know if you are interested.

Together with the abundance of Old Testament readings this season, we chant a plethora of hymns written by our Holy Church Fathers which reflect the deep theology, the poetic beauty and the rich melodies of our Orthodox Faith. All these readings and hymns allow us to participate in our Divine Services in such a way that elevates our spiritual worship, and more so during Lent, Holy Week and Pascha.

Adults and Teens are welcome and encouraged to join us!

With Love in Christ, Presvytera Maria

Kali Parea

This month, we will not be having a gathering, but rather we will participate as much as we can at our liturgical services in Church, especially during the Holy Week. Additionally, we will help, support, and serve both *on Palm Sunday, April 28, at the Luncheon, and on Holy Pascha, May 5, at the Agape Picnic.*

Thank you all for your support in our community as Body of Christ! In Christ, Demetrious Asim

Mr. & Mrs.

We would like to thank Richard and Angela Acovino for generously opening their house to us last month. This month, we will not have a fellowship, as our goal is to be present and actively participate at our Lenten Services and especially at those during the Holy Week. We will organize another meeting after Pascha, so please stay tuned for details.

Yours in Christ, Father John, Presvytera Maria, Father Florin and Presvytera Alexandra

Forerunners - Our Seniors Fellowship

Kali Sarakosti . . . Kalo Pascha!

We had a great turn out for our March luncheon, which in addition to the delicious meal and enjoyable fellowship, there were door prizes, a raffle and Bingo prizes. A big thanks to our Kitchen Helpers!

There will be no luncheon in April. However, we will come back together in May for our final luncheon before Summer. You will not want to miss it! Have a Blessed Lenten Season and Holy Week.

Love in Christ, Paula Kelesis for the Forerunners

Orthodox Bookstore

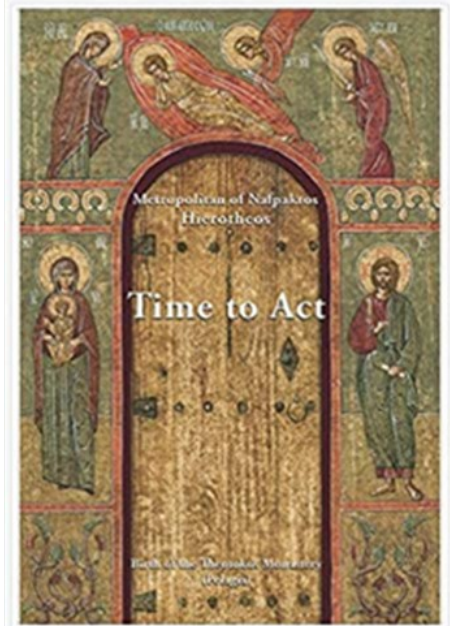
Greetings from the Bookstore!

New in store this month by Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos is *Time to Act*, published by Birth of the Theotokos Monastery. Previously published in Greece at the end of the twentieth century, it is composed of talks given at various conferences by the author with respect to differing religious and philosophical trends entering Greece. Such trends created problems and/or confusion for traditional Orthodox Christians there and have today here in the United States. Translated into English by Sister Pelagia Selfe, this book is for Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike and serves as a great edifying book in an age of many theological persuasions. “We are living at the eleventh hour, as the twenty-first century is coming and will have many surprises in store for us. I therefore ask the reader to note, above all, that the time in which we live is a ‘time to act.’” (Archimandrite Hierotheos Vlachos).

From *Time to Act*: “Other reasons for the emergence of these trends are: The great attraction of the appearance of a new way of life; curiosity to hear a different opinion about God; the egoism that prevents people from being satisfied with traditional beliefs and makes them search for new and better ways to be redeemed and to acquire superior knowledge that is not for the majority. When all these factors are combined with the devastating experience that falsehood and the absence of moral values are everywhere, they show the real reasons that motivate young people today to create and join these movements.”

We have many other engaging selections by Archimandrite Hierotheos Vlachos in store as well. Stop by to check them out or find whatever you may need for your home prayer corner for Great Lent. Anna and I look forward to seeing you!

Serving you with Love in Christ, Paraskevi Santamaria, Bookstore Director



Tsoureki and Pastitsio Baking and Sale

If you are interested in helping bake Pastitsio and Tsourekia for the Agape Picnic, please join Steve Tzelalis and crew *on Saturday, April 20 at 8:00 am in the Kitchen.*

Please call Karen at the Church Office to pre-order and pay for your Tsoureki (sweet Pascha bread). Loaves are \$15 and can be *picked up on Palm Sunday, April 28, following the Divine Liturgy or at the Church Office during the week.*



INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES



Your Faith in Action

A Special Presentation

Sunday, April 14th, 2024

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church / St. Simeon Serbian Orthodox Church
5300 S El Camino Rd • Las Vegas, NV / 3950 S Jones Blvd, Las Vegas 5pm

NICK KASEMEOTES, IOCC GIFT OFFICER,
will give a brief update on the work of IOCC in Armenia, Ethiopia,
Gaza, Greece, Romania, Syria, Ukraine, and other countries.
Also, how much our help is really impacting families.

Since 1992, IOCC has delivered more than \$800 million in emergency assistance
and development programs families and communities in 60 countries.



On average over time, IOCC has used 92¢ of every dollar for direct program services, like:

- Responding to the needs of disaster victims
- Assisting refugees
- Helping subsistence farmers grow more food

8% of our funds go to administration and fundraising.



PO Box 17398 • Baltimore, MD 21297-0429
877.803.IOCC • relief@iocc.org

Visit us online at iocc.org

IOCC, in the spirit of Christ's love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to so respond.




Welcome to the Hellenic Historical Society's Month of April Blasts from the Past! In order for all of us to be represented more fully in St. John's continually growing vibrant history, we invite parishioners, ministries and Pan Hellenic Organizations to submit photos, documents and printed materials to the Historical Society.


Please contact the church office (702 221~8245) for more information as to how to donate or lend your memorabilia, or contact Susan Stamis (702 460-9954) for guidelines to digitally submit your materials.

Thank you and Kali Lambri!

120 A



ORDER OF
AHEPA
Boulder Dam
Chapter #314



Daughters
of Penelope
Panope #162

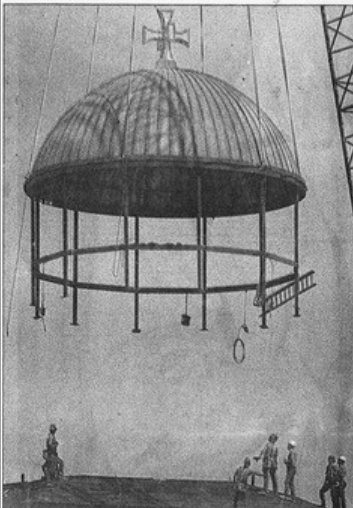
ΕΡΧΑΙΝΤΕΣ

OUR DEEP GRATITUDE TO ALL
WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TIME
AND EFFORT TOWARD MAKING
THIS EVENING A PLEASANT
AND MEMORABLE ONE.

FOFO KOKKOS
FRANK GEDROS
MIKE STAVROPOULOS

DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE
Founders Day Celebration
Saturday, April 16
1983

Dome crowns new church



LV 23 4/11/92

Jeff Scheldt Review-Journal

Workers on Thursday lower the dome on the St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church under construction at Hacienda Avenue and El Camino Road. The architectural design of the church, scheduled to open in September, is Byzantine to reflect the faith and culture of the Greek people.

4A Las Vegas Review-Journal Sunday, April 18, 1965



THE 'RED EGG'


The Rev. James T. Adams of St. John's Greek Orthodox Church, explains the significance of the red-colored Easter egg to Mrs. Charlotte Bozeka and Mrs. Harriette Pollard. The Greek population, who will celebrate Easter on April 25, use the dyed egg to signify the blood of Christ. Review-Journal Photo



THE "RED EGG"

Sunday, April 18
1965

48



Fr. Paul Eylar Fr. Leonidas Contos Fr. Nicholas Soraich

Topping it off LV 30 4/10/92

BY BRAD TALBUTT / STAFF


Parish priests watch the lowering of the dome at the new St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox church on Hacienda Avenue between Jones Boulevard and El Camino Road. The traditional dome-raising ceremony marks the final stages of construction for the church scheduled for a September opening. The church's Byzantine architecture of the Sixth Century is unique in Las Vegas.

RAISING OF THE DOME


Thursday, April 9

1992


209 A




AGAPE PICNIC
Easter Sunday
April 8
2007


296




ON YOUR MARK...GET SET...




GO!



Look what I got...





Lamb for lunch? I don't think so....



Georgia Kourfon, Thalia Orlando
Evangelos Zimmerman, Sophia Rotolo


"Apply your mind to instruction and your ear to words of knowledge." Proverbs 23.12

SATURDAY OF LAZARUS
Tying of Palms
In preparation for Palm Sunday Services
Saturday, April 19
2008

310


AGAPE PICNIC
CHILDREN'S EASTER EGG HUNT
Easter Sunday, April 27
2008



314



Adorning the Epitaphion - Good Friday, April 17, 1998
L. to R. Bess Suki, Janelle Salon, Dora Hart (front)
Cheryl Pandelis, Presvytera Helen Katre



Dyeing Red Easter Eggs in Jerry's Nugget Kitchen - Holy Thursday, April 16, 1998
Janelle Salon

LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY
Preparations for Easter

In Orthodoxy, the actual Easter festival begins several days before Easter. Preparations begin on Holy Thursday, when hard-boiled eggs are dyed red, symbolizing the blood of Christ.

On Good Friday, the priest takes down the icon of Christ from the cross and wraps it in linen, reenacting the ancient burial rituals. The icon is then placed in a symbolic casket (epitaphion) adorned with fresh flowers

1998

237

With Gratitude to God for Our Pledged Stewards in 2024
If you wish to become a Parish Steward, please call Karen for a Pledge Form

Acovino, Richard and Angela	Damascus, Peter	Hastings, Teri	Likourinou, Steve and June
Adamatopoulos, Alejandro and Mariana	Daskalos, George and Voula	Hollar, Michelle and DiGioia, Antonio	Litsos, Nicholas and Catherine
Adamy, Marina	Davis, Matthew and Christine	Hondros, Christina	Loughton, Dustin and Rena
Adondakis, George and Kim	Demas, Spiro and Rita	Hondros, Christopher and Darlene	Magee, Gerald and Catalina
Agouridis, Lambros and Erika	Demoleas, Spero and Grace	Hondros, Fr. John and Presv. Maria	Manakides, Alexis and Varonos, Nicholas
Alcala, Georgia	Demoleas, Stephanie	Hondros, Marissa	Mangafas, Kyriakos and Eleftheria
Alexander, Eleni	Dimitri, Martha and Janet	Hurey, Heather	Manolakos, Catherine
Alford, Cynthia "Mary"	Dominguez, Eric and Amalia	Ignadiou, Marios	Manos, Constantine and Michele
Alhayek, Areen and Majd	Doskas, Athanasios and Anastasia	Ingraham, Leland and Victoria	Mansour, Muna
Allen, John and Nana	Dramitinos, Mary	Iteen, Robert and Sophia	Markantonis, Demos and Kate
Anastasakis, Mark+ and Elaine	Earl, Christine	Jandete, Johanna	Markantonis, George and Sarah
Andrews, George	Eliades, Telly	Jaynes, Albert and Christine	Martinaitis, Louis
Anthony, Stavros and Bernadette	Eliades, Eleni and Garza, Everardo	Jensen, Matthew and Michelle	Mavrantonis, Kiki and Stacy
Aristides, George and Diana	Eliades, Gregory and Maria	Kachikis, Ernestine	Mavros, Alex and Jen
Asim, Demetrious	Eliades, Harry and Agapi	Kakavulias, George and Helen	Mavros, Debbie
Atkins, Sean and Christine	Eliades, Katerina	Kanis, Constantine and Katie	Mazzorana, Vicki
Ayalewu, Menbe	Eliades, Sia	Karakoli, Rula	McCarty, David and Soesetyo, Grace
Balaouras, Panos and Helen	Eliakis, Peter	Karaliats, Petros and Constance	McKinney, Michael and Mersene
Balodimas, James	Eliakis, Varthie	Karas, James	McManus, Jeanette
Barbarino, Demetra	Eyler, John and Elizabeth	Karas, John and Marcie	McPherson, Robert and Marie
Barrett, Jeremiah	Eyler, Reagen	Karris, Mark and Suzanne	McSweeney, Farolyn
Bartel, Ioanna and Robert	Failla, Jennifer	Kasiotis, Nicholas and Claudia	Mehas, Andrew and Samantha
Beeler, Mike and Carolyn	Feola, Richard	Katopodis, Efstratios	Menegatos, James
Belojevic, Marija	Filios, George and Nitsa	Katre, Sotir Mark	Merritt, Devin and Sonia
Berendji, Dimitrios	Filios, Spiridon and Eleni	Katris, Nick and Theana	Meyers, Evon
Bieker, Georgea	Fischer, Cheryl	Katsaros, Thomas and Sharon	Mikelis, Nikolas and Angela
Birtas, Helen and Ann	Fitzgerald, Norman and McCullen, Sandra	Kaytia, Patricia and Little, Martin	Monoyudis, Jim and Julie
Bjorklund, Danielle and Geroncin, Justin	Flangas, Gary and Amanda	Kebreah, Millien	Mulopulos, George and Jenny
Bland, James and Sherry	Flangas, Gus and Tamara	Kelesis, Paula	Murray, Christopher and George, Veneta
Blume, Michael	Flangas, Marilyn	Kiflezgi, Rahel	Newell, Ronald and Maria
Bochanis, George	Fleischer, Bob and Penny	Kinard, Panorea	Nicholas, Christina
Boehm, Alexy and Cone, Jayme	Foldes, Peter and Jordan	Kirchner, Gary "Barlaam"	Nicholas, John and Estella
Booth, Alina	Foster, Kyle and Mia	Kleanthis, George and Zanetta	Nichols, George and Tereza
Britten, Ronald and Carol	Fotopoulos, John and Barbara	Kokkinis, Peter and Jennifer	Nicolas, Samer and Christine
Brown, Faye	Fountoulakis, Vasileios	Koliambas, Eleni	Nixon, Deacon John and Diakonissa Ellyn
Brown, Mark and Alyssa	Franco, Yolanda	Konsolakakis, Eleni and Manoli	Olmsted, Travis and Marilyn
Bruninga, William and Erin	Frangakis, Christos and Anastasia	Konsolakakis, George and Sofia	Pahigiannis, Nikon
Bryant, Timothy and Janet	Freund, Kyle and Katherine	Kontos, Diana	Paikos, Tom and Elizabeth
Bucy, Brent and Elaine	Gauvin, Chad and Marissa	Kostopoulos, Georgia	Pajak, Scott and Angela
Carabas, Sotiroulla	Gebrehiwot, Kiros	Kountanis, Panagiota	Palivos, Peter and Vicky
Carahalis, John and Constance	Gebreybsus, Sador	Koupais, Mario and Cheri	Pallis, Paul
Caredis, Jon and Marjorie	Gekakis, George	Kouris, Demitris and Terry	Panos, Jeanne
Carrico, William and Alexandra	Generales, John and Arlene	Koutsulis, John and Eileen	Papas, Christian and Nicole
Carter, Maria	Georgia, David	Krikie, Jonathan and Iryna	Papas, Peter and Rita
Chachas, Bessie	Georgis, Pete and Keshia	Kypreos, Peter and Geri	Pappas, Panagiotis and Andrea
Chagares, Kiki	Gialketsis, William and Rachelle	Kyriannis, Justin and Linda	Paschalis, Evangelos and Maria
Chamie, Elie, Emil and Claudine	Giambi, Jason and Kristian	Kyriazopoulos, Constantine Jr.	Payan, Luis and Eleni
Chandrinis, Alexia	Giouzelis, Sasa	Laird, Blair and Leeann	Pendleton, Tricia
Chanos, Jennifer	Gordon, Victor and Demetria	Lakkis, Christina	Petro, Aleko and Georgia
Chio, Napoleon	Grabovoi, Daphne	Lamancusa, Lisa	Petrou, Jim and Penelopi
Chomakos, Dean and Tammy	Gutierrez, Connie	Landahl, Richard and Johana	Peterson, Todd and Diane
Chondrakis, Dimosthenis and Kragerud, Kaaren	Gutierrez, Daniel	Lavine, Frederick	Pierro, Joe and Rhonda
Coll, Patrick and Anita	Habiba, Maha	Lee, David and Alexandra	Pilatos, Emmanuel and Erica
Conger, William and Alexia	Hagos, Yohannes and Mebrat	Lekar, Caroline	Polimerou, Angeline
Costacos, John	Hailemichael, Harenet	Lekar, Michael and Effie	Politis, Pantelis and Dimitra
Costuros, George and Marsha	Hamilton, Mary	Leonis, Nick and Sophia	Poulos, Christine
Cotsilis, Jenny	Hamilton, Paul and Brandi	Leonis, Tishe	Pouridis, Kouli and Para
Crist, Adam and Kanistra	Haralambakis, Demetre and Dimitra	Liaos, James and Tina	Powell, Scott and Angela
Dalacas, Dimitri and Athanasia	Haramis, John and Kitsios, Eugenia	Liaos, Steven and Francine	Powers, Russell and Rebecca

*With Gratitude to God for Our Pledged Stewards in 2024
If you wish to become a Parish Steward, please call Karen for a Pledge Form*

Prestage, Adam and Courtney
Pytikakis, Manos and Elaine
Raptis, Presvytera Evonne
Rey, Robert and Patricia
Rigas, Anthony and Mary
Rihani, Gary and Linda
Ristache, Fr. Florin and
 Presv. Alexandra
Rivera, Elias and April
Robison, Diane and Patricia
Rodis, Dimitri and Angeline
Rodis, Sophia
Rotas, Beatrice
Sakkas, Georgios and
 Stavropoulos, Bessie
Salon, Janelle
Santamaria, Jennifer and Robert
Schremelis, Andy and Leslie
Setian, Gary
Shipman, Chad and Anastasia
Simos, Eleni

Simos, Tony and Lorie
Simpson, Bryan and Julie
Skalkotos, Nikolas and Georgia
Song, Adrienne
Soteropoulos, Gust and Rita
Sotiropoulos, Christopher and
 Jessica
Soursos, Helene
Sparkuhl, Alex and Antoinette
Spirtos, Nick
Staubs, Douglas and Anastasia
Stavropoulos, Terry and Niki
Stransky, Mark
Stransky, John and Rachel
Szukiewicz, Joseph and Justina
Tadich, Katarina
Tafoya, Steven and Irene
Tasios, Ramona
Tekle, Asli
Thanos, Nicholas and Victoria
Theros, James and Kathryn

Thompson, Maggy
Thompson, Steven and Aliko
Tijiboy, Ana
Tijiboy, Christine
Tohme, Tony and May
Toroopoulos, Eleni
Trebicka, Adrian and Paola
Tsarouhas, Maria
Tsiralidis, Kosmas and Katerina
Tsolis, Christos and Panagioula
Tzelalis, Antonia
Tzelalis, Steve
Tzelalis, Vaso
Voegele, Steven and
 Victoria Markantonis-
Wagner, Sophie
Wallace, Robert and Katerina
Walter, Vernon and Alice
Waterhouse, David and Aleighzja
Webb, Taylor
Williams, Anthony and Anna

Williamson, Daniel and
 Stavroula Halatsis-
Wilson, Cleo
Wilson, Clyde
Wilson, Kelly and
 Egi, Junichiro
Womack, Kimberly
Xerogianes, Nick and Nikki
Xikis, Victoria
Yurkov, Andre and Kalina
Zaferatos, Ted
Zamir, Michelle and Talor
Zarkos, Nick and Dina
Zaronis, Mary
Zarras, Nick and Chery
Zervas, Dionisios and Cacilda
Zimmerman, Paul, Angela,
 Christopher and Vangeli
Zimmerman, Paul and Julie
Ziu, Joana
Zmina, Stephen and Cynthia



*Please join us in welcoming and worshipping with His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos
for Palm Sunday Weekend, April 27 - 28. Kali Anastasi!*

**2024
Stewardship
Report
(as of 3/25/24)**

Stewardship Gifts Pledged: \$472,009 (\$512,635 in 2023)
 Stewardship Gifts Received: \$189,376 (\$202,535 in 2023)
 Unfulfilled Pledge Balance: \$282,633 (\$310,100 in 2023)
 Stewardship Families Pledged: 315 (315 in 2023)
 2024 Goal: \$600,000 . . . Keep the Pledges Coming!

*“LET
GOD’S LOVE
GUIDE US”*

<u>Average Pledge</u>	<u>No. of Families</u>	<u>Amount Pledged</u>
\$1 - \$500	120	\$ 30,853
\$501 - \$1,000	59	\$ 45,815
\$1,001 - \$2,500	92	\$139,879
\$2,501 - \$5,000	28	\$102,124
\$5,001 - \$9999	13	\$ 82,157
\$10,000 & Above	<u>3</u>	<u>\$ 71,180</u>
Total Families	315	\$472,009

Church Account Summaries ~ February 2024

Nevada State Bank Accounts	January	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	February	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
General Operating Account (GOA)	\$68,484.66	\$88,905.44		12,635.80	\$58,200.44	\$86,553.86	
Community and Education (C&E)	\$22,335.49					\$22,335.49	
Greek Food Festival (GFF)	\$150,962.98	1,968.00		\$4,128.92		\$148,802.06	
Designated, Restricted & Other (DR&O)	\$288,416.50	\$3,573.00		\$1,194.80	\$1,654.46	\$289,140.24	
Building & Maintenance (B&M)	\$72,263.38	\$6,731.91		\$10.00		\$78,985.29	
Folk Dance Group	\$27,354.19	\$6,251.04		\$10.00	\$9,765.65	\$23,829.58	
Hellenic Historical Society	\$1,651.46			\$835.50		\$815.96	
Designated Funds	January	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	February	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
Bookstore	\$40,779.40	\$3,423.00		\$1,194.80	\$1,654.46	\$41,353.14	
Restricted Funds	January	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	February	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
ICON	\$13,146.45	\$50.00				\$13,196.45	
Faithtree	\$1,626.39					\$1,626.39	
Youth Choir	\$2,989.18					\$2,989.18	
Church School	\$137,141.44					\$137,141.44	
GOYA	\$530.36					\$530.36	
Eyler Memorial Fund	\$20,090.15	\$100.00				\$20,190.15	
Emergency Fund	\$5,000.00					\$5,000.00	
Three Priests	\$66,673.13					\$66,673.13	
Altar Servers	\$440.00					\$440.00	
Designated, Restricted and Other Total	\$288,416.50	\$3,573.00	\$0.00	\$1,194.80	\$1,654.46	\$289,140.24	
Building and Maintenance Funds	January	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	February	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
Building Fund	\$25,612.96	\$1,631.91		\$10.00		\$27,234.87	
Panos Flooring Repair	\$27,477.33	\$5,100.00				\$32,577.33	
Hall Painting	\$10,283.22					\$10,283.22	
HVAC	\$0.00					\$0.00	
Giving Tree	\$8,889.87					\$8,889.87	
Lighting	\$0.00					\$0.00	
Building & Maintenance Funds Total	\$72,263.38	\$6,731.91	\$0.00	\$10.00	\$0.00	\$78,985.29	
Other Funds	January	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	February	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
Kokkos Scholarship Fund	\$71,362.83					\$71,362.83	as of 12.31.23
Commonwealth Investments (Icon)	\$134,956.91		\$5,040.09			\$139,997.00	Change in Investment

February 2024 Candles **\$5,239.20**
 February 2024 Trays **\$4,399.40**
Total February 2024 Candles & Trays \$9,638.60



APRIL 2024 ~ IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD



Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

<p>1 5:30 pm Great Compline</p>	<p>2 4:00 pm Greek School</p>	<p>3 5:30 pm Chanter Practice 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy</p>	<p>4 4:00 pm Greek School</p>	<p>5 6:30 pm Third Salutations to the Theotokos</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>7 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Procession of Holy Cross at Doxology 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at Ss. George and Dimitrie</p>	<p>8 5:30 pm Great Compline</p>	<p>9 4:00 pm Greek School 6:00 pm Parish Council Meeting in Library</p>	<p>10 5:30 pm Chanter Practice 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy</p>	<p>11 4:00 pm Greek School</p>	<p>12 6:30 pm Fourth Salutations to the Theotokos</p>
<p>13 4:00 pm Youth Event at Spy Ninjas HQ</p>	<p>14 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Acolyte Meeting 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Simeon IOCC Presentation</p>	<p>15 5:30 pm Great Compline</p>	<p>16 4:00 pm Greek School</p>	<p>17 5:30 pm Chanter Practice 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy</p>	<p>18 4:00 pm Greek School</p>
<p>19 8:00 am Pastisio and Pastry Baking with Steve and Crew</p>	<p>20 8:00 am Pastisio and Pastry Baking with Steve and Crew</p>	<p>21 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Parish Assembly in Panos Hall Myrr Bearer Meeting</p>	<p>22 5:30 pm Great Compline</p>	<p>23 4:00 pm Greek School</p>	<p>24 5:30 pm Chanter Practice 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy</p>
<p>25 4:00 pm Greek School</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27 Saturday of Lazarus 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Palm Tying Follows</i> 5:00 pm Great Vespers of Palm Sunday with Metropolitan Gerasimos</p>	<p>28 Palm Sunday 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy Palm Sunday Luncheon 7:00 pm 1st Bridegroom Service with Metropolitan Gerasimos</p>	<p>29 Holy Monday 7:00 pm 2nd Bridegroom Service</p>	<p>30 Holy Tuesday 7:00 pm 3rd Bridegroom Service <i>Hymn of Kassiani</i></p>
<p>31 9:00 am Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil 7:00 pm Holy Passion of Our Lord Reading of 12 Gospels</p>	<p>1 9:00 am Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil 7:00 pm Holy Passion of Our Lord Reading of 12 Gospels</p>	<p>2 Holy Thursday 9:00 am Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil 7:00 pm Holy Passion of Our Lord Reading of 12 Gospels</p>	<p>3 Holy Friday 10:00 am Royal Hours 3:00 pm Removal of Christ from the Cross <i>Children's Procession</i> 7:00 pm Lamentations</p>	<p>4 Holy Saturday 9:00 am Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil 11:00 pm Resurrection Vigil Midnight Resurrection Service and Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>5 9:00 am Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil 11:00 pm Resurrection Vigil Midnight Resurrection Service and Divine Liturgy</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



ΚΑΛΟ
ΠΑΣΧΑ!

BLESSED
PASCHA!



*“For the Son of Man
also came not to be
served but to serve,
and to give His life as
a ransom for many.”
(Mark 10:45)*

