

The Desert



Messenger

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

Volume 19, Issue 7 St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV July /August 2021

**From
Father
John**

Beloved in Christ:

"When you pass beside a hospital," wrote St. Paisios the Athonite (commemorated on *July 12*), "make the sign of the Cross three times: One for the patients; one for their relatives; and one for yourself, because you aren't there." We might be fully vaccinated for COVID 19, but there are no guarantees in this life that we will not become ill from something else, or have a physical affliction, or get into an accident, or become a victim of a crime, which causes us to end up in the hospital. This is why our Lord Jesus Christ and the holy men and women who imitate His life teach us Christians to remember those who are sick – and to visit, tend to, and pray for them: Because it is the Godly thing to do, and by doing so we are mindful that we also could at some point become afflicted with illness and in need of the prayers and care of others.



Our awareness of our potential for physical afflictions, our own fragility as humans, and moreover our impending death have hopefully become heightened this past year and a half due to the pandemic. I am curious, however, if we have truly become better followers of Christ as a result. From what I have seen, heard and read, it appears that nothing has really changed regarding the deepening of our faith and, worse yet, more people have drifted further away from the Church, become more divided and consequently more isolated. "Social distancing" has become part of our new lexicon and this is unfortunate: God created us in community for union with Him and one another – and rather than love and compassion, we have allowed fear and anger to keep us apart.

Many of our beloved parish members remain afraid or reluctant to return to Church and receive the Holy Eucharist: We must pray for, reach out to and extend a personal invitation – with love and not judgment – for these brothers and sisters to return to the true sanctuary for our minds, bodies and souls. We have loved ones and friends who are in hospitals or nursing homes: We must not forget them, or remain content with calling them – rather, we must go visit and pray with and encourage them in person. We must stop feeding into the "great social divide" which is continuously propagated by the devil: We must avoid buying into the unholy trend of unfriending or canceling out others, and instead we must love, pray for and reach out to all – especially those who are not like-minded – in the Name of Jesus Christ, and for His glory! Indeed, if the Holy Apostles only preached to and taught those who thought like them, the Gospel would have never been spread!

When we were stripped, beat up and left for dead by the evil one outside of Paradise, our Lord – the True Good Samaritan (*Luke 10:29-37*) – had compassion on us, took upon Himself the wounds of our sins on the Cross, granted us new Life by His Resurrection, and brought us into His Church in order to care for us, spiritually, physically and emotionally until He returns again in glory. Our loving God has said, "*Fear not, for I am with you*" (*Isaiah 41:10*) – and, in the wise words of St. Paul, "*If God is for us, who is against us?*" (*Romans 8:31*) Let us then begin a "better normal" today, and from this time forth let us never cease coming together and serving one another, in imitation of the love of Christ our God, from Whom nothing will be able to separate us. (*Romans 8:39*)

With Love in Christ,

Father John

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

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

Sunday, July 4/*2nd Sunday of Matthew/
St. Andrew, Archbishop of Crete/Synaxis of all the
Saints of Crete*

Orthros: Tone One

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

Epistle: Romans 2:10-16

Gospel: Matthew 4:18-23

Memorial: Joan McSweeney (40 days)

Sunday, July 11/*3rd Sunday of Matthew/
St. Euphemia the Great Martyr/St. Sophrony of
Essex, the Hagiorite*

Orthros: Tone Two

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Mark 16:9-20

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Gospel: Matthew 6:22-33

Monday, July 12/*St. Paisios of Mt. Athos
8:00 am Orthros ~ 9:00 am Divine Liturgy*

Epistle: Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2

Gospel: Luke 6:17-23

Sunday, July 18/*Holy 630 Fathers of the Fourth
Ecumenical Council/St. Aimilianos the Martyr*

Orthros: Tone Three

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

Epistle: Titus 3:8-15

Gospel: Matthew 5:14-19

Tuesday, July 20/*Holy Prophet Elias
8:00 am Orthros ~ 9:00 am Divine Liturgy*

Epistle: James 5:10-20

Gospel: Luke 4:22-30

Sunday, July 25/*5th Sunday of Matthew/
Dormition of St. Anna, the Mother of the
Theotokos/St. Olympias the Deaconess*

Orthros: Tone Four

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

Epistle: Galatians 4:22-27

Gospel: Matthew 8:28-34; 9:1

Monday, July 26/*Holy Martyr Paraskevi of Rome
8:00 am Orthros ~ 9:00 am Divine Liturgy*

Epistle: Galatians 3:23-29; 4:1-5

Gospel: Mark 5:24-34

Tuesday, July 27/*Great Martyr and Healer
Panteleimon (His Relics are in our Holy Altar)
8:00 am Orthros ~ 9:00 am Divine Liturgy*

Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:1-10

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

Artoclasia (Lekar and Eliades Families)

Dormition Fast August 1-14

Sunday, August 1/*6th Sunday of Matthew/
Procession of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross/
Seven Maccabean Children and their Mother*

Orthros: Tone Five (First Plagal)

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:36-53

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Gospel: Matthew 14:14-22

Monday, August 2

6:00 pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos

Wednesday, August 4

*6:00 pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
(Followed by Adult Study in the Church)*

Friday, August 6/*Holy Transfiguration of Our
Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ*

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

Epistle: 2 Peter 1:10-19

Gospel: Matthew 17:1-9

Blessing of the Grapes

Sunday, August 8/*7th Sunday of Matthew/St.
Aimilianos the Confessor, Bishop of Cyzicus*

Orthros: Tone Six (Second Plagal)

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): John 20:1-10

Epistle: Romans 15:1-7

Gospel: Matthew 9:27-35

Monday, August 9

6:00 pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos

Wednesday, August 11

*6:00 pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
(Followed by Adult Study in the Church)*

Friday, August 13

6:00 pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Saturday, August 14

5:00 pm *Great Vespers for the Dormition of the Theotokos*

Sunday, August 15/ *Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary*

Orthros: Seventh Tone (Grave)

Festal Orthros Gospel: Luke 1:39-49, 56

Epistle: Philippians 2:5-11

Gospel: Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28

Artoclasia (Papás and Kakavulias Families)

Sunday, August 22/ *19th Sunday of Matthew/ St. Agathonikos the Martyr/ St. Anthousa the Martyr*

Orthros: Tone Eight (Fourth Plagal)

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

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 3:9-17

Gospel: Matthew 14:23-34

Memorials: Fotini Karas Beadell (1 year), Alexandra Karas Gonos, Paraskeve Karas and George Karas

Blessing of Phanouropites

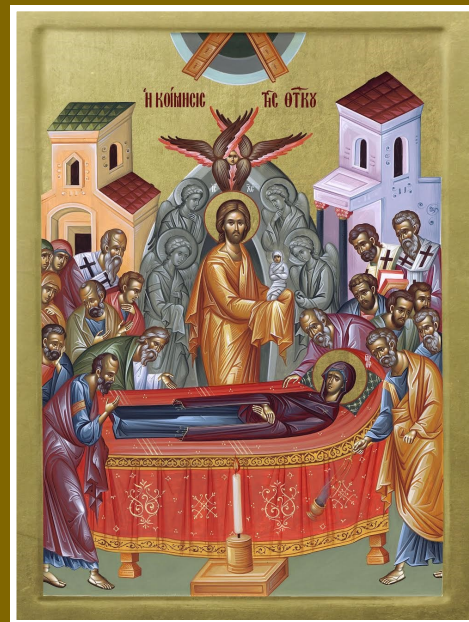
Sunday, August 29/ *Beheading of St. John the Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist - Our Parish Patron (Strict Fast)*

Orthros: Tone One

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

Epistle: Acts 13:25-32

Gospel: Mark 6:14-30



Adult Study with
Father John and Father Seraphim

*The Most Holy
Theotokos*

*Two Classes Only
Wednesday, August 4 & 11
Following Paraklesis
in the Church*



Baptized into Christ: Na Mas Zisoun!

Naomi (Nayah), daughter of Jon and Kokob Ghebrecristos, on June 5, 2021. Godparent: Algenes Mohammednur.

Athena (Madison), daughter of Junichiro Egi and Kelly Wilson, on June 5, 2021. Godparent: Clyde Athanasios Wilson.

Eleftheria (Kylie), daughter of Junichiro Egi and Kelly Wilson, on June 5, 2021. Godparent: Clyde Athanasios Wilson.

Chrismation

Petra (Lori Ann) Wayne on June 6, 2021. Sponsor: Eleni Bruninga.

Marriage: Na Zisete!

Elias (Elliot) Wayne and Petra (Lori Ann) Odom on June 8, 2021. Koumbaros: William Vasilios Bruninga.

Fallen Asleep in the Lord

Michael Karandos on June 12, 2021. Funeral on June 21.



Panígyrís tís Panagías

*Come Celebrate the Great Feast
of the Dormition of the Theotokos!*

*Sunday, August 15
following the
Divine Liturgy
in Panos Hall*

\$15 per Person

*Purchase your tickets or make
reservations by calling Karen at
the Church Office (702) 221-8245
or email her at
karen@vegasgreekorthodox.com*



*Chicken or Lamb
Gyro Plate
and Fries*

Cake and Coffee

*Wine-Beer-Soda
Cash Bar*

Parish Council Report

As we head into the summer months, it is great to be able to once again enjoy ourselves as we did pre-pandemic, both in our personal and spiritual lives. What a great feeling of optimism as we go forward in getting completely back to normal.

In conjunction with this great feeling of optimism, we are definitely proceeding with the 2021 Greek Food Festival. The dates again are *Friday, September 10 through Sunday, September 12*. We have been in the planning process for months, and our mission is to provide a very “high energy” and “festive” event with our keystone being “kefi.” As has been stated repeatedly over the years, the Festival is the primary showcase of our Church and Greek Culture to the Las Vegas area. Of great significance, many people have joined our Church through continued catechism after having attended the Festival and Church Tours. Our Festival is a monumental undertaking which takes months and months of planning, coordination and the involvement of our entire Church Community. Also, as stated through the years, it is extremely important and vital to our Church Community as one of the major sources of revenue for our Church capital and operating accounts. Needless to say, it is crucial for the Church’s financial support and future viability.



The Festival will probably be one of the first events of its kind post-pandemic, and we strongly believe that we will do very well this year. However, as we put the Festival together, we still need to recognize that there will be other alternatives in town. Thus, it is incumbent upon us to continue creating new attractions and experiences, while at the same time, offering our guests the total “Greek Experience” filled with high quality food and drink, high quality music, and Greek hospitality replete with courteous service.

Putting on the Festival requires an aggressive effort toward pre-sales, which include Raffle Tickets, Coupon Books, Souvenir Magazine Ads and Vendor leasing. These pre-sales provide “seed” money for the Festival. This is extremely important because we have many necessary expenditures prior to the Festival, and this seed money makes the entire Festival self-sustaining without putting any strain on Church finances. Additionally, on the first day of the Festival we need to have approximately \$40,000 in cash on hand to fund the “bank,” which allows us to fill the cash drawers at each booth. More importantly, good strong pre-sales could conceivably fund up to 35% or more of the nut going in. The stronger the pre-sales, the lower the risk for us in the case of inclement weather or other intangibles. It is our goal to reach \$200,000 with pre-sales. We can realistically get there prior to the Festival by selling at least 700 Raffle Tickets (\$70,000), \$25,000 in Coupon Books, \$70,000 in Souvenir Magazine Ad sales and \$35,000 in Vendor leasing sales. These are our goals and it takes everyone working on it together to realize them.

We are going to have our first Festival meeting after Church services *on Sunday, June 27, at noon, in Kokkos Hall*. We invite everyone to attend to learn more about what we are doing. We also welcome any suggestions to make the Festival better. Hopefully, we will see you there.

Switching gears, we have written and spoken about Stewardship for many years. Stewardship is the lifeblood of our Church, and it is imperative that we all work together on this vitally important aspect of our Church. One of the primary purposes of Stewardship is to promote spiritual growth and strengthen our Faith. It not only provides for our place of Worship, our Clergy and our Ministries, but it also provides for the future of our Church by bringing and keeping our youth in the Faith. By strengthening our Stewardship program, we can move forward with a vision for the future. The Greek Orthodox Faith is one of the oldest, one of the most beautiful, and one of the most respected religions in the world. A Greek Orthodox Altar sits upon the actual site of Jesus’ Crucifixion, which is located inside the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. The Tomb where Jesus was Buried and Resurrected, which is also located in the Holy Sepulcher, is protected by Greek Orthodox Monks. In Bethlehem, a Greek Orthodox Church is the entry point into and the main structure of the Church of the Nativity, and the Church’s Altar is situated directly above the Grotto of the Nativity, the place where Jesus was Born. Although we live and worship in Las Vegas in our beautiful Church, let us never forget that we are part of the *universal* Orthodox Church spread throughout the whole world.

(Continued on Page 6)

Parish Council Report *(Continued from Page 5)*

To make Stewardship successful requires each and every one of us to look into our hearts and give back to the Church for the gifts God has bestowed upon us all, and to look to the future of our Church for ourselves and our children. Becoming a Steward begins when we believe in God, to Whom we give our love, loyalty and trust and act on those beliefs. Stewardship calls on the faithful to cheerfully offer back to God a portion of the gifts with which they have been blessed. Please give generously toward our future through Stewardship. Our children and their children will truly thank us. ***“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)***

Fixing the Church facilities remains a high priority. We have completed the repairs on the small stucco pony wall surrounding the Dome on top of the Church along with a waterproof cap on top of it; hopefully there will no longer be any leaks in the Church (if we ever have rain again). We are presently engaged now in fixing the small dome situated on the roof above the Church Administration Offices: The wood beams supporting it are starting to rot and in the near future, the dome could conceivably end up in Father John’s Office. We are getting bids and will start the repair work on it soon. We are also going to look at resurfacing and fixing the floor in Panos Hall, and are in the process of getting bids on it as well. It is absolutely critical that we do so for the purposes of renting it out for various events. As stated last month, there are many other issues pertaining to the facilities that we will need to work on in the near future, and which we will need to prioritize in the coming months.

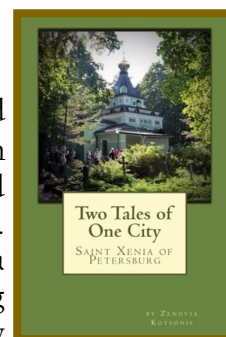
In closing, we want to again thank the various Church ministries and organizations, and the many individuals for all the work they do. It clearly takes a lot of work from the entire community to maintain our Church. Please step forward whenever you can and pitch in. Please get involved as we move forward to make our Church better. May God Bless! **In Christ, Gus Flangas, Parish Council President**

Orthodox Bookstore

Greetings from the Bookstore! New to the Bookstore from Anaphora Press (and perhaps a great summer read!), *Two Tales of One City* by Zenovia Kotsonis. *Two Tales* is an engaging story about Saint Xenia of Petersburg and her life and influence on those around her at the time as well as throughout the course of history in Russia and the Soviet Union. The story alternates between 1963 Leningrad and 1727 St. Petersburg where Saint Xenia lived and transformed her life in Christ, even becoming a “fool for Christ,” having permanently donned her late husband’s military uniform to become one with his identity toward the endeavor of his salvation along with that of her own. She would wander the streets of St. Petersburg, sleep and pray in open fields, and ultimately become known as bearing the gift of clairvoyance.

From an online book review: *“Set in Russia, this revolving story follows the lives of two fascinating women and how they intersect across more than a century. Physician Lena, newly engaged, is impassioned by her work helping to heal during the Communist era, but finds herself plagued by unanswered questions. When her fiancée’ is assigned an old chapel as his artist workspace, Lena is reintroduced to a historical figure, St. Xenia, whom she considers a part of Russia’s obsolete past. Lena is both surprised and troubled by the pilgrims and devotees to this mysterious saint who continue to gather and pray at her shrine, even after all these years and all the education that should have eradicated the old superstitious ways of thinking. Lena wanders through her own discovery of faith as the story of Xenia also unfolds through the chapters. While learning the amazing lengths to which St. Xenia went in honor of her deceased husband, and the miracles left in her wake which Lena cannot explain away with her training in science, it is ultimately a relationship with one of the believers that brings Lena’s own story full circle. This tale of faith developing even through adversity is based in historical research. The fictionalized characters help bring St. Xenia alive anew. Her clarion call to believe and to follow Christ echoes through these lives and pages, bringing illumination to Russia’s darkest period spiritually. Ms. Kotsonis has given us a memorable and uplifting story. May St. Xenia bless it with her prayers.”*

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



Philoptochos News

Dear Father John, Father Seraphim and Fellow Parishioners,

The Ladies Philoptochos Society – Panagia Chapter Board met on Sunday, June 6 following the installation to draw up plans for the 2021-2022 calendar year. What a fantastic feeling to be making plans to be back at Church, to pray together, share fellowship and of course a little work. As always it is our pleasure and honor to serve our Church and Community of St. John the Baptist.



As in any project, many hands will make light work and the 2021-2022

Calendar will be emailed to all Ladies Philoptochos Society members. Please look at the events and meetings and make your plans to join in. Currently, we have over 100 fabulous members and associate members and we do need each one of you and your special talents and ideas. The calendar is a work in motion, and we always have room for your creativity. We will also be including a list of officers and chairs so you will know whom to contact to volunteer. I am also always available as well.

As summer is usually a quiet time for activities, I will be looking for someone to help organize the Philoptochos closet in Kokkos Hall. Anyone out there aspiring to be Marie Kondo? (she organizes and declutters!), please let me know.

The next event of our Ladies Philoptochos Society, Panagia Chapter, will be *on Sunday, August 15, the Dormition of the Theotokos*. We will assist with the celebratory Fellowship Luncheon honoring the Falling Asleep of the Mother of God.

Respectfully and prayerfully yours,
Bernadette Anthony, Philoptochos President

Notes from the Choir Loft



THE CHOIR IS BACK! Both Adults and Youth are invited to join us every Sunday in the front right exedra to sing together for Divine Liturgy. If you need a book, please let me know, and we will have one available for you. We look forward to hearing the Choir every Sunday! If you are interested in joining the Choir, please come sing with us. All are welcome.

Much Love, Athena Mertes, Director

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

Rev. Father John Hondros
fjohn@vegaskgreekorthodox.com

Rev. Father Seraphim Ramos
frseraphim@vegaskgreekorthodox.com

Karen Rawlinson
Administrative Assistant

Michelle Eugenio
Bookkeeper

Mara Braun
Catering & Events

Constantin Petriuc & Ramona Tasios
Maintenance & Grounds

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

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

Parish Council: Gus Flangas

Philoptochos: Bernadette Anthony

Stewardship & Community Outreach:
Justina Szukiewicz

Choir: Athena Mertes

Chanters & Youth Choir:
Presvytera Maria Hondros

Church School: Eileen Koutsulis

Altar Servers: Father John

GOYA:
Anne Pantelas & Maha Habiba

Orthodox Family Fellowship:
Imtisal Amy Khuri & April Rivera

Young Adults:
Fr. Seraphim

Greek Folk Dance: Sia Dalacas

Greek School: Paula Kelesis

Mr. & Mrs.:
Fr. John, Fr. Seraphim & Presvyteres

Kali Parea: Demetrios Asim

Adult Basketball:
TBD

Forerunners: Victoria Xikis

Orthodox Bookstore:
Paraskevi Santamaria

Greek Food Festival: Gus Flangas

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

Photography & Live-Streaming:
Bill & Erin Bruninga



CONNECTION!

*“... that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You;
that they also may be one in Us...” (John 17:21)*

CONNECTING WITH ... CHRIST OUR CHURCH AND ONE ANOTHER

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

+++++

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

2021 CONNECTION

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 2021 of \$ _____.

Signed: _____

Orthodox Christian: Yes No

Signed: _____

Orthodox Christian: Yes No

Others sharing in the gift (children): _____

Stewardship and Community Outreach

Summer is hot in Las Vegas, especially when the A/C is off. It is hot inside the house, it is hot outside of the house; however, nothing is hotter than the inside of our cars – yowzers – talk about your chariots of fire! The Church is quite wise to celebrate *St. Elias the Prophet's feast day on July 20*. Of course, many other feast days are celebrated in the summer. Those in August include the *Holy Transfiguration (August 6)*, *Dormition of the Theotokos (August 15)*, and *Beheading of St. John the Baptist (August 29)*. It is fitting that the Ecclesiastical Year winds down with a glimpse of the glory to come through a life in Christ juxtaposed with the inevitable death of us all, even the saintliest among us.

As it turns out, the wisdom of the Church is evident not just during a long hot summer but throughout the entire year as well, if one but chooses to contemplate such things. Weekly cycles, seasonal cycles, and an annual cycle are repeatedly interwoven into a beautiful tapestry of holy instruction in Life (with a capital L). We need the repetition to drive home lessons which we should already know and already do. Unfortunately, this is often fruitless since we live in a fallen world and, as weak humans, we are forever stuck in a perpetual loop of: a) stumbling and falling, b) rising and repenting, and c) trying to do better. Thus, despite the constant reinforcement we inevitably fail, week after week, season after season, and year after year. I often wonder if God grows weary with this endless iteration but then realize with relief that He has infinite patience with our fallen human nature. Otherwise, the Lord might have long ago gone blue in the face instructing us in the Way, and I have yet to see an icon like *that . . .* then again, Divinity is universally depicted in iconography by the color blue.

These long hot days have been called the dog days of summer, named such by ancient Romans, who observed Sirius, the Dog Star, rising and setting with the Sun. The days usually had hot and sultry weather which led to periods of stagnation. As good stewards, it is important for us not to stagnate during these hot summer months. Perhaps this year, even with resumed travels or otherwise busy summer schedules, we will take the time to sneak in some additional prayers, not just for the A/C, but for one another and for the Church. We can try to stay a bit more connected to God's Word, a bit more committed to God's Plan, and a bit more current in our Stewardship offerings.

In Christ, Michael Beeler, Stewardship and Outreach Committee

PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND



You are invited and encouraged to join
Metropolitan Ilia of Philomelion and Very Reverend Father John Hondros on
**A Spiritual Pilgrimage to the Jordan River for the Feast of Holy Theophany and throughout
the Holy Land, including Petra in Jordan and St. Catherine's Monastery at Mt. Sinai in Egypt
January 13 - 27, 2022.**

All inclusive price is \$5,265 for double occupancy. You can get the registration form and full itinerary
at www.mgatours.com, or by contacting Victoria Xikis at (702) 419-5294
or Paula Kelesis at (702) 249-4740. **ONLY 10 SPOTS LEFT!**

Deadline to register and pay is September 15, 2021.

From Father Seraphim

Perhaps the most powerful prayer I have ever encountered is that of the “*Canon of Repentance to the Most Holy Theotokos*” written by St. Theodore the Studite. The lines of this prayer read like a story, and they tell of a man who is calling out to the Mother of God, asking her to pray for Christ to forgive him. Throughout the prayer, the Panagia comes before her Son, and tells Him to give this man another chance, while Christ replies with lines such as: “*Sensibly, O Mother, I call out to you also to hear me now: he who of old lived prodigally with most fervent repentance returned and came crying, ‘I have sinned.’ But this man calling to you in remorse later proves himself as false.*” At first, reading these dialogues is difficult. We are confronted with the reality that Christ is God and Judge, versus the modern view of Christ as “friend” which tends to always infiltrate our mindset. As Father, He both chastises and has infinite mercy, and His Mother both shelters and immeasurably defends us. This is the subject of this month’s contemplation: The pure and Ever-Virgin Mary.

We know that she is Jesus Christ’s mother. She carried the Son of God in her womb and nursed Him from her breasts. She both taught Christ our Savior to walk, and watched Him walk up the hill of Golgotha. She brought Him water as He crafted wood as a carpenter in His youth, and stood at His feet as He declared His thirst nailed upon the wood of the Cross. Yes, we know she is God’s Mother, but have we fully understood that she is ours? When St. John the Apostle wrote that at the Cross stood “*the beloved disciple,*” (John 19:25-27) he was both disguising his own identity and at the same time identifying himself with all of “Christ’s beloved.” He knew that when Christ spoke from the Cross, “*behold your mother,*” He was speaking not only to John back then in 33 AD but also to us today in 2021. She is our Mother. Christ has offered her to us, just as the Father has adopted us as His Children, and confirmed this in teaching us to pray with the words, “*Our Father who art in heaven . . .*” (Matthew 6:9-13)

What does this mean though, that Panagia is our Mother? Well – setting aside situations of lost and damaged mothers – it means that she is an amplified version of what most mothers are. They are our realities and memories of what compassion and softness are. They are our sources of comfort when hurt, and our defense against the strong hand of our fathers’ anger. As we make our way through the “*Canon of Repentance to the Most Holy Theotokos*” we can come to see ourselves running to the Mother of God, knowing she will enfold us in her arms, and hug us tight despite the terrible wrongs we have done. Truly, and honestly, we run to her for protection from our God, knowing that we are truly worthy of punishment for our many sins.

Yet, our mind stops often in its logic, and asks, “How can the Mother of God be such a source of mercy over our Lord and Savior?” And to this I respond, “Don’t let the Mother of God be the stumbling block, for the stumbling block is the humility and Cross of Christ.” She is our sweet, and most generous Mother. She is the one who cares if we run out of wine at a wedding feast (John 2:1-12) and she is the one who knows the pains of motherhood. She is our perfect Mother, who lives through our beautiful biological mother or lives on for us despite our broken and lost biological mothers.

Turn to her, who so gently and powerfully loves us. She who is “Quick to Hear” is waiting for our voice to cry out to her. She is the “Axion Estin” – the one it is proper and right to bless with hymns of praise – waiting to bless us. She is the “Joy of All Who Sorrow,” fully aware of all our pain. Let us renew or make a new beginning in our relationship with the Mother of God, and just as we would NEVER miss the funeral of our own earthly mother, let us *never again* miss the Dormition of our Mother in August. Just as we would never not attend the festival of our earthly mother’s birthday, let us also never again miss the Nativity of the Theotokos in September.

(Continued on Page 11)



Ministry News

Church School

Hi Everyone! I hope you are enjoying your summer. We cannot wait to see all our youth back for the *First Day of Church School on Sunday, September 19, the weekend after the Greek Food Festival*. Please see the *Registration Form (Page 14)* to enroll your child. Pre-K will start for children who are 4 years-old (by September 30): We follow the CCSD school year.

We will have the Blessing of the Waters after Holy Communion, and then proceed to our classrooms. More details will be forthcoming on exactly how the school year will look in the September issue of *The Desert Messenger*. Please reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns.

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

Greek Language Program

We are finally able to come back and continue the Greek Language Program . . . but in order to do so we need teachers! To continue teaching our children the Greek Language we will need *four teachers*. Being a Greek Language Teacher requires a 90 minute commitment once a week. If you are interested, please contact me at pkelesis89104@yahoo.com.

Keep practicing Greek with your children this summer! Look to the *Weekly Bulletin* for more information on the upcoming Greek School year. Have a nice summer!

Paula Kelesis, Greek School Director

Orthodox Family Fellowship

For all our families with Children 5-10 years-old (or from 1st to 5th grades), we invite you to mark your calendars and come out for our wonderful activities of Faith and Fellowship as we enjoy the summer together. First, we will be gathering *on Saturday, July 17 at 2:00 pm* at the Whitney Ranch Activity Pool (1575 Galleria Drive Henderson, NV) for an enjoyable afternoon of water fun. Please bring a potluck dish, drinks, salad, or side to share for a great meal together. Please note the entry fee: \$4 Adults, \$3 Kids. If you would like they do have Icee's for sale for \$3 each.

Secondly, *on Sunday, August 8 after Divine Liturgy*, we will head out to Suncoast Bowling Alley (9090 Alta Drive, Las Vegas). We will meet at the bowling alley *at 1:00 pm*. The cost is \$13.50 per person, which includes the lane fee, shoe rental and two games. Please RSVP with Father Seraphim at frseraphim@vegasgreekorthodox.com.

Love in Christ, Father Seraphim



From Father Seraphim (Continued from Page 10)

This is our greatest hope, that through our relationship with His Mother, Christ will say (in some of the final words of St. Theodore in the *Canon*): “Vessel of Joy, O my Mother, persuaded by your prayer, I grant forgiveness of sins to this ungrateful man, so cease crying out to Me, but rather turn back to him and say unto him to sin no more, for by sinning he stirs My wrath, though by nature I am merciful.” And she will in return say to us: “Behold, you have the remission of your sins, by my prayers, be careful that the rest of your life now be pleasing unto to God, that you might enjoy the sweet pleasures of Paradise with all of God’s elect chosen ones and partake of its glory that shall never end.” Wishing all a blessed Dormition Fast and Feast Day!

With Love in Christ,

Father Seraphim

GOYA ~ Our Teen Ministry

Dear GOYANs of St. John the Baptist,

We hope you are having a beautiful Summer Break from school and enjoying the hot sun here in the Las Vegas Valley. Please note the following three wonderful ministry events that we truly hope to see you at:

First, we will be gathering *on Saturday, July 17 at 2:00 pm* at the Whitney Ranch Activity Pool (1575 Galleria Drive Henderson, NV) for an enjoyable afternoon of water fun. Please bring a potluck dish, drinks, salad, or side to share for a great meal together and please note the entry fee: \$4 Adults, \$3 Youth. If you are up for an Icee, bring another \$3!

Secondly, *on Sunday, August 8 after the Divine Liturgy*, we will “hit the lanes” at the Suncoast Bowling Alley (9090 Alta Drive, Las Vegas). We will meet at the bowling alley *at 1:00 pm*. The cost is \$13.50 per person, which includes the lane fee, shoe rental and two games. Please RSVP with Father Seraphim at frseraphim@vegasgreekorthodox.com.

Finally, we will have our first GOYA Night since March 2020 *on Sunday, August 22 at 5:00 pm in Panos Hall*. We would like to really enhance our GOYA Nights with a themed discussion going forward. More information will be forthcoming regarding this, but be prepared for a lively open forum: We will need your input of the major issues you are dealing with in your life, so we can be prepared for a meaningful discussion. Of course we will also keep our tradition of sports/games and activities, a prayer service in the Church, and a wonderful meal together!

Much Love in Christ, Father Seraphim

Greek Folk Dance

Hello all! We hope everyone is having a wonderful summer full of rest and relaxation! We are planning the return of our beloved Greek Folk Dance Ministry! We welcome all dancers ages 4 (by September 30, 2021) and up to come and check out our vibrant ministry, participate in some wonderful fellowship and learn to dance traditional Greek folk dances.

Registration forms are in this issue of *The Desert Messenger* (Pages 15-16) and also with Karen in the Church Office. Please fill out one form per child. Registration fees are now reduced to \$125 for each dancer (\$100 for siblings) in our competitive groups, and \$75 for each dancer in our youngest, non-competitive group.

Our first practice for all dancers is *on Sunday, August 22, 2021 following Church services in Panos Hall*. Look for further details in the *Weekly Bulletin* as it approaches. Questions? Please feel free to email stjohnngreekdance@gmail.com.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

Much gratitude, Folk Dance Board

Young Adults

Blessed Summer Season!

We pray you are well as we both navigate the heat and stay connected to the Lord, our wonderful Church, and fellowship together in community. We enjoyed an awesome time recently at the Chomakos' Home. Looking ahead, we have two events we hope you will join us at this July and August.

First, we will have our first ever Pickleball Tournament *on Sunday, July 25, following the Divine Liturgy in Panos Hall*. We will set up our court as well as enjoy a potluck lunch together. We will be playing doubles, so we will partner all the young adults present for our fun tournament.

Our second event will be *on Saturday, August 28 at 2:00 pm* at the home of Sam, John and Eileen Koutsulis. This will be a potluck dinner event with a spiritual conversation – please bring a delicious dish, dessert, drinks or salad to share! Please RSVP for directions with Father Seraphim at frseraphim@vegasgreekorthodox.com or (702) 768-7480.

In Christ, Father Seraphim

Mr. & Mrs.

Dear Married and Engaged Couples of St. John the Baptist,

Thank you for such a great turnout at our June Mr. & Mrs. which was graciously hosted by Richard and Angela Acovino. Not only was there a sumptuous feast, but we also had an incredible discussion and a joyous time.

We will skip over July and head to the end of August with our next dinner and fellowship potluck gathering. John and Ellyn Nixon have agreed to host us at their home *on Saturday, August 28 at 6:00 pm.*

Please contact Father Seraphim for directions and to let us them know what you will be bringing for the potluck so we can coordinate. RSVP at frseraphim@vegaskgreekorthodox.com or (702) 768-7480.



Kali Parea

Kali Parea would like to extend an invitation to the Parish to an outing at the SUPER SUMMER THEATRE to watch the performance of "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" *on Friday, July 16 at 6:00 pm.* The show starts at 8:00 pm. For Tickets, you have several options available: \$15 Cash/Check during Super Summer Theater Studio's Office Hours (at 4340 S. Valley View Blvd. Ste. 208), \$17.50 via credit card online, or \$25 on the day of performance.

Tickets are on sale now! This Production will be performed at the Bowman Outdoor Pavilion at Spring Mountain Ranch State Park (6375 NV-159, Blue Diamond, NV 89004). We hope to see you there!

Demetrious Asim and Catherine Manolakos



*All our
Ministries are
back and
in person at
St. John the
Baptist Greek
Orthodox
Church!
GLORY TO
GOD!*



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

2021-2022 CHURCH SCHOOL REGISTRATION

Please Write Legibly - Use One Form Per Child

Church School Classes begin on Sunday, September 19.
Pre-Kindergarten (4 years by September 30) through High School.

*Let's show our children how to be committed to Christ by bringing them to
the Divine Liturgy and Church School each week!*

Student Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

School Grade (2021-2022 school year): _____

Special Needs, Allergies, Medications: _____
(e.g. "Autism Spectrum," "Peanuts," "Insulin Dependent")

Patron Saint and Date of Commemoration: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN OR OTHER RELATIVE (Relationship: _____)

Name: _____ Name: _____

Phone: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____ E-mail: _____

Home Address: _____
Street City ZIP

Student Cell Phone: _____ Student E-mail: _____
If you DO NOT want your child to be contacted by phone/text or by e-mail, please leave one or both of these blank.

I give my child permission to take part in all Church School activities and
will support this ministry through my annual Stewardship.

Signed, Parent or Legal Guardian: _____

Many hands ease the load! Please let us know in which way you would like to help our children:

_____ Classroom Cleanup _____ Crafts

Please return this registration form to Karen at the Church Office before classes start.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

GREEK FOLK DANCE MINISTRY

2021-2022 REGISTRATION FORM

One Registration Form Required for Each Dancer
Registration Deadline: September 26, 2021

Dancer's Name: _____ Age: _____ Birth Date: _____

Minimum Age: 4 years old by September 30, 2021

Address: _____

City: _____, Nevada Zip Code: _____

Mother's Name: _____ Father's Name: _____

Contact Information (Please fill out completely and legibly):

Phone Numbers: Mother's Cell: _____ Father's Cell: _____
 Dancer's Cell: _____ Home: _____

If you DO NOT want your child to be contacted by text message, please check this box: ☐

Email Addresses: Mother: _____

Father: _____

Dancer (if applicable): _____

If you DO NOT want your child to be contacted by e-mail, please leave this blank.

I understand and accept the following requirements for participation in the Greek Folk Dance Ministry:

1. The dancer must be Baptized or Chrismated in the Orthodox Church. Proof of Baptism or Chrismation must be provided for each dancer (or previously verified by Fr. John).
2. The parent(s) must be Steward(s) of St. John Church for 2021 **before their child(ren) attend any dance practice** and Steward(s) for 2022 by January 16, 2022. **Please check one box:**
 - ☐ I am already a 2021 Steward. (This will be verified with the Church Office.)
 - ☐ I am attaching my Stewardship Commitment Card to this registration form.
3. The dancer must **on a regular basis participate** in Divine Liturgy on Sunday, throughout the year, and in Church School (if he or she is of age), **September through May**. Infrequent participation is a basis for removal from the program.

(Continued)

4. The dancer must arrive to practice **on time** and be **respectful**.
5. The dancer and parent(s) are expected to participate in **all fundraising activities** of the Greek Folk Dance Ministry.
6. Dancers who have excessive absences may be subject to removal from the program.
7. The Folk Dance Festival (FDF) will take place Feb 16-21, 2022. Both the location and format are **unknown** at this time. The dancer and parent(s) must determine by October 31, 2021 if they will attend FDF. Dancers who elect not to go to FDF may only participate in dance practices through the end of December.
8. The dancer and parent(s) agree to meet all financial responsibilities assigned to the participants by the St. John Greek Folk Dance Ministry and FDF.
9. Registration fees are:
 - a. Competitive Dance Groups: \$125 per dancer, or \$100 for each additional sibling, due by **September 26**. *(No registrations will be accepted after this date.)*
 - b. Liondaria (non-competitive) Dance Group: \$75. *(Must be at least 4 years old by September 30.)*
10. Registration can **only** be accepted when all of the following are turned in:
 - a. Registration form
 - b. Non-refundable registration fee
 - c. Proof of Baptism/Chrismation (unless verified by Fr. John)
 - d. Stewardship Commitment Card (unless verified by Church Office)
11. Dancers from previous years must re-register. **Dancers are prohibited from practice until their registration is complete and until their parent(s) become Steward(s) for 2021.**

*First Folk-Dance Practice for All Dancers: Sunday, August 22, 2021
Additional practice days/times TBA*

*****Face masks are encouraged*****

For information on the St. John Greek Folk Dance Ministry, please contact the Folk-Dance Board at stjohngrekdance@gmail.com or the Church at (702) 221-8245.

MAKE OUT CHECKS TO "ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH," WITH "FOLK DANCE GROUP" IN THE MEMO LINE.

Signature of Dancer

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

Date

FOR DANCE BOARD USE:

Payment Received On: _____ Check #: _____ OR Cash: _____

Stewardship Card Received: _____ Proof of Baptism/Chrismation: _____

WE ARE INVITING YOU TO THE



GOYA/OFFO POOL PARTY!

Saturday, July 17, 2021
2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Whitney Ranch Activity Pool
1575 Galleria Drive
Henderson, NV 89014

Can Stay until closing time at 6 PM, however the area set aside for us must be cleared.

Bring your family and a potluck dish to share. \$4 Adult, \$3 Child and \$3 Icee

Park in the back to enter the outdoor pool area.

Congratulations, Class of 2021!



Nicoletta Filios graduated from Bishop Gorman High School with a High Honors diploma. She is the daughter of Eleni and Spiridon Filios and will be attending Chapman University where she plans to pursue a Business degree in Marketing with a minor in Film and Television Production. Nicoletta was member of the National Honors Society, Link Crew and is a Scholastic Gold Key Winner for her writing. She volunteers often for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Three Square, Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, Miracle League and feeds the homeless regularly at the Las Vegas Rescue Mission. She plans to continue her philanthropic and charity work when she attends college this fall.

Katerina Kane, daughter of Larry and Irene Kane, graduated from the University of Nevada Reno with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Community Health Sciences. Her plans are to pursue a graduate degree in Physician Assistant Studies next Spring.



*You were Transfigured on the Mount, O Christ our God,
revealing Your glory to Your Disciples
insofar as they could comprehend.
Illuminate us sinners also with your everlasting light;
through the intercessions of the Theotokos,
O Giver of Light, glory to You.*

*(Apolytikion for the Feast of the Holy Transfiguration
of Our Savior, commemorated on August 6)*

*Our Church is fully open for the scheduled Divine Services.
If you have been sick for the last 48 hours, please do not come
to Church. If you are unable to come to Church,
your Priests are here to light a candle for you and your loved ones.
Please call Karen with your request.*



2021 Stewardship Report (as of 6/22/21)

Stewardship Gifts Pledged: \$409,353 (\$453,370 in 2020)
Stewardship Gifts Received: \$272,506 (\$291,804 in 2020)
Unfulfilled Pledge Balance: \$136,847 (\$161,566 in 2020)
Stewardship Families Pledged: 351 (360 in 2020)
Average Pledge to Date: \$1,166 (\$1,259 in 2020)
2021 Budgeted Goal: \$500,000 . . . Keep the Pledges Coming!

Church Account Summaries ~ May 2021

Nevada State Bank Accounts	April	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	May	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
General Operating Account (GOA)	\$222,579.13	\$68,202.83	\$1,421.12	\$35,756.58	\$49,428.61	\$207,017.89	
Community and Education (C&E)	\$4,281.01	\$5,000.00				\$9,281.01	
Greek Food Festival (GFF)	\$1,909.84					\$1,909.84	
Designated, Restricted & Other (DR&O)	\$256,013.14	\$2,726.00	\$1,000.00	\$6,601.92	\$1,592.54	\$251,544.68	All checks were for Bookstore merchandise and Transfers out were for Bookstore/PPP W-2. Agape Picnic used the credit card machine \$552 which was transferred to GOA
Folk Dance Group	\$17,958.00					\$17,958.00	
Hellenic Historical Society	\$3,284.94					\$3,284.94	
Designated Funds	April	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	May	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
Bookstore	\$9,111.27	\$2,174.00		\$347.92	\$1,040.54	\$9,896.81	
Ornaments	\$1,169.41					\$1,169.41	
Restricted Funds	April	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	May	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
ICON	\$140,726.44					\$140,726.44	
Library Account	\$1,470.77					\$1,470.77	
Giving Tree	\$1,936.97		\$1,000.00			\$2,936.97	
Faithtree	\$1,626.39					\$1,626.39	
Building Fund	\$28,019.26					\$28,019.26	
Youth Choir	\$2,989.18					\$2,989.18	
Church School	\$1,306.37					\$1,306.37	
Three Priests	\$39,033.50					\$39,033.50	
Roof Appeal	\$28,041.22			\$6,254.00		\$21,787.22	Down payment for Dome repair
Altar Servers	\$440.00					\$440.00	
GOYA	\$142.36					\$142.36	
Designated, Restricted, and Other Total	\$256,013.14	\$2,174.00	\$1,000.00	\$6,601.92	\$1,040.54	\$251,544.68	
Other Funds	April	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	May	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
Kokkos Scholarship Fund	\$78,372.33					\$78,372.33	

May 2021 Candles **\$2,911.00**
 May 2021 Candles - Holy Week **\$7,766.00**
 May 2021 Trays **\$2,412.57**
 May 2021 Trays - Holy Week **\$4,218.43**
Total May 2021 Candles & Trays \$17,308.00

With Gratitude to God for Our Pledged Stewards in 2021
If you wish to become a Parish Steward, please fill out Pledge Form and return to Karen

Acovino, Richard and Angela
 Adamy, Marina
 Alford, Cynthia "Mary"
 Alvarado, Jessie and Julie
 Anastasakis, Mark and Elaine
 Anastasiou, Andrew and Kathleen
 Andrews, Catherine
 Andrews, Chris and Pamela
 Andrews, George
 Andricopoulos, Margo
 Anthony, Stavros and Bernadette
 Arges, Dimitri
 Aristides, George and Diana
 Asim, Demetrious
 Atkins, Dakota
 Atkins, Sean and Christina
 Bacon, Ken and Dianne
 Bakalas, John and Deme
 Balanos, Anastasia and Garyfalia
 Balaouras, Panos and Helen
 Balason, Voula
 Balodimas, James
 Barbarino, Dee and Nick
 Bartzos, Eugenia
 Beeler, Mike and Carolyn
 Beeman, Benita
 Berendji, Jim and Vivian
 Bieker, Adam and Cassie
 Bieker, Georgea
 Birtas, Helen and Ann
 Bjorklund, Danielle
 Bledsoe, Lori
 Bochanis, George and Enid
 Booth, Alina
 Bratta, Georgene
 Brennan, Peter and Maria
 Britten, Ronald and Carol
 Britton, Josh and Elizabeth
 Brown, Faye
 Bruninga, Bill and Erin
 Bryant, Timothy and Janet
 Bucy, Brent and Elaine
 Campbell, Theodore and Cheryl
 Carabas, Stephen and Linda
 Carahalas, John and Constance
 Caredis, Jon and Marjorie
 Carrico, William and Alexandra
 Carter, Maria
 Chachas, Bessie
 Chachas, James
 Chagares, Kiki
 Chamie, Elie, Emil and Claudine
 Chandrinou, Alexia
 Chanos, Jennifer
 Chomakos, Dean and Tammy
 Chomakos, Jeremy and Romina
 Chondrakis, Dimosthenis and Kragerud, Kaaren
 Christou, Toni
 Collins, David
 Conger, William and Alexia
 Costacos, John

Costuros, George and Marsha
 Cosulas, Fr. Basil and Presv. Samantha
 Cotsilis, Jenny
 Coyle, Helen
 Crist, Adam and Kanistra
 Dalacas, Dimitri and Athanasia
 Dalacas, Eleni
 Dalacas, Georgia
 Daskalos, George and Voula
 Deep, Joe and Schumacher, Alexi
 Demas, Spiro and Rita
 Demolas, Maria and Nour, Reza
 Demoleas, Alexandra
 Demoleas, Eleni and Thomas, Kristian
 Demoleas, Spero and Grace
 Demoleas, Stephanie
 Demopoulos, Vasiliki
 Dimitri, Patricia, Martha and Janet
 Dominguez, Eric and Amalia
 Doskas, Athanasios and Anastasia
 Dounis, Dina
 Dounis, Georgia
 Dounis, Kiki
 Earl, Christine Michaelides
 Eliades, Aristotelis and Caroline
 Eliades, Gregory and Maria
 Eliades, Sia
 Eliades, Harry and Agapi
 Eliades, Katerina
 Eliakis, Peter and Glenda
 Eliakis, Varthie and LeeAnn
 Eyler, Fr. Paul and Presv. Ilean
 Eyler, John and Elizabeth
 Farren, Anthony and Maritsa
 Felecos, Nektaria
 Fenlason, Nathan and Jennifer
 Filios, Spiridon and Eleni
 Fischer, Cheryl
 Fitzgerald, Norman and McCullen, Sandra
 Flangas, Gary and Amanda
 Flangas, Gus and Tamara
 Flangas, Marilyn
 Fleetwood, Brandon
 Fletes, Richard and Stephanie
 Foster, Kyle and Pierro, Maria Elena
 Fotopoulos, John and Barbara
 Fountas, Constantinos
 Frangakis, Christos and Anastasia
 Garza, Everardo and Eliades, Eleni
 Gauvin, Chad and Marissa
 Geiger, Dan and Dora Hart
 Gekakis, George
 Generales, John and Arlene
 George, Elias and Saladino, Maria Veronica
 George, Louis

George, Pete and Georgia
 Georgiena, Reni
 Georgis, John
 Ghebreab, Daniel and Ghermay, Selam
 Ghebrecrestos, Jonathan and Habtay, Kokob
 Gialketsis, Bill and Shelli
 Gialketsis, Julie
 Gialketsis, Steve
 Gialketsis, William
 Giouzelis, Anastasia
 Goodman, Robert and Linda
 Gordon, Victor and Demetria
 Gorgan, Patrick
 Gutierrez, Connie
 Gutierrez, Daniel
 Hadzoglon, Christos
 Hall, Elizabeth
 Hamilton, Mary
 Hamilton, Paul and Brandi
 Hastings, Teri
 Hemmers, Oliver and Pantelas, Anne
 Hertberg, Jennifer
 Hoadrea, Jimmy and Monci
 Hondros, Catherine
 Hondros, Christina
 Hondros, Christopher and Darlene
 Hondros, Fr. John and Presv. Maria
 Hondros, Marissa
 Houlis, Ila and Debbie
 Howard, William and Willie
 Iteen, Robert and Sophia
 Jandete, Johanna
 Jensen, Matthew and Michelle
 Johnson, Robert and Helen
 Kachikis, Ernestine
 Kakavulias, George and Helen
 Kakavulias, John and Elizabeth
 Kambouris, Litsa
 Kanellopoulos, Evangelia
 Kanis, Constantinos and Katie
 Karas, James
 Karas, John and Marcie
 Karris, Mark and Suzanne
 Katopodis, Efstratios
 Katris, Nick and Theana
 Katsaros, Thomas and Sharon
 Kelesis, Paula
 Kiflezgi, Rahel
 Kilgore, Alexandra and Rickerson, Connor
 Kinard, Panorea
 Kirchner, Gary "Barlaam"
 Kirolos, Elhamy and Molina, Adriana
 Kleanthis, George and Zanetta
 Kolev, Plamen and Koleva, Slaveya
 Koliambas, Eleni
 Konsolakis, Eleni and Sophia
 Kontos, Diana

Kostas, James
 Kostopoulos, Georgia
 Kountanis, Panagiota
 Koupais, Mario and Cheri
 Kouris, Demetris and Terry
 Koutsulis, John and Eileen
 Koutsulis, Sam and Effie
 Kypreos, George and Lesley
 Kypreos, Peter and Geri
 Kyriannis, Justin and Linda
 Kyriazopoulos, Constantine, Jr.
 Lakkis, Christina
 Lambros, Kyriakos and Mary
 Latelle, Penny
 Lavine, Frederic
 Lee, David and Alexandra
 Lekar, Michael and Effie
 Leone, Stephen
 Leong, Marissa
 Leonis, Nick and Sophia
 Leonis, Tishe
 Leventis, Naomi
 Leventis, Nicholas and Christina
 Lexis, Annette
 Liaos, James and Tina
 Liaos, Steven and Francine
 Likourinou, Angie
 Likourinou, Steve and June
 Litsos, Nicholas and Catherine
 Loney, Thomas and Chrysi
 Luke, Parker and Maria
 Malamatos, Kindina
 Maland, Donna
 Malpee, Kalliope
 Manolakis, Catherine
 Manos, Constantine and Michele
 Margaretis, John and Lucila
 Markakis, Sandy Kiriaki
 Markantonis, George and Sarah
 Matsis, John and Rebecca
 Mavrantonis, Stacy and Kiki
 Mavroidis, Demetrios and Debra
 Mavros, Alex and Jen
 Mavros, Debbie
 Mavroudis, Frank
 McManus, Jeanette
 McKinney, Michael and Mersene
 McPherson, Robert and Marie
 McSweeney, Farolyn
 Menegatos, James
 Merritt, Devin and Sonia
 Minas, Arthur and Ewa
 Moffett, Todd and Eliopoulos, Tina
 Mohammednur, Algenes
 Monolakis, Anthony
 Monoyudis, Jim and Julie
 Moore, Brenda
 Murray, Christopher and George, Veneta
 Myers, Stella
 Neocleous, Plato

(Continued on Page 21)

With Gratitude to God for Our Pledged Stewards in 2021
If you wish to become a Parish Steward, please fill out Pledge Form and return to Karen

Newell, Ronald and Maria
 Nicholas, Christina
 Nicholas, John and Estella
 Nichols, George and Tereza
 Nikolopoulos, Nick and Dimitra
 Nixon, John and Ellyn
 Pahigiannis, Nikon
 Paikos, Tom and Elizabeth
 Pajak, Scott and Angela
 Palivos, Peter and Vicky
 Pandelis, Cheryl
 Panos, Jeanne
 Papalois, John and Maria
 Papas, Christian and Nicole
 Papas, Peter and Rita
 Pappas, Panagiotis and Andrea
 Pappas, Rita
 Pappas, Stella
 Paschalis, Evangelos and Maria
 Payan, Luis and Eleni
 Pendleton, Tricia
 Peratikos, Tony
 Pertsinides, Irene
 Petersen, Todd and Diane
 Petriuc, Constantin
 Petro, Aleko and Georgia
 Petrou, Jim and Penelopi
 Philippou, Demetrios and
 Luanne
 Philoptochos Society

Pierro, Joe and Rhonda
 Polimerou, Angeline
 Politis, Pantelis and Dimitra
 Poulos, Christine
 Pouridis, Kouli and Para
 Powers, Russell and Rebecca
 Punsalan, Basil and Sophie
 Ramos, Fr. Seraphim and
 Presv. Olenka
 Raptis, Presv. Evonne
 Rasmussen, Scott and Rebecca
 Rigas, Anthony and Mary
 Rigas, Evie
 Rihani, Gary and Linda
 Rivera, Elias and April
 Rodis, Dimitri and Angie
 Rodis, Sophia
 Rosenthal, Joseph and Stephanie
 Rotas, Beatrice
 Rowe, Jim and Eleni
 Ruffner, Skip and Kathy
 Sakkas, Georgios and
 Stavropoulos, Bessie
 Salon, Janelle
 Salonikis, Valentinos and Sophia
 Santamaria, Jennifer and Robert
 Savvas, Savva
 Sechrist, Carl and Christine
 Schremelis, Andy and Leslie
 Setian, Gary and Marie+

Simos, Eleni
 Simos, Tony and Lorie
 Simpson, Bryan and Julie
 Sirhan, Michael and
 Khuri, Imtisal
 Skalkotos, Nikolas and Georgia
 Skandros, Stephanie
 Smith, Kathleen
 Snow, Clifford and Christina
 Snowden, Robert+ and Niki
 Sorkhabi, Arian and
 Habiba, Maha
 Sparkuhl, Alex and Antoinette
 Staubs, Douglas and Anastasia
 Stavropoulos, Terry and Niki
 Stenos, Louis
 Stransky, Jack and Rachel
 Stransky, Mark
 Szukiewicz, Alex
 Szukiewicz, Joseph and Justina
 Tafoya, Steven and Irene
 Takas, Andrea
 Tasios, Ramona and Pete+
 Theros, James and Kathryn
 Thompson, Maggy
 Tijiboy, Christine
 Tohme, Tony and May
 Tsiralidis, Kosmas and Katerina
 Tsoilis, Christos and Panagioula
 Tsortanidis, Sophia

Tzelalis, Steve
 Tzelalis, Vaso
 Wadlow, Nicholas and Pamela
 Wainscott, Betty
 Wallace, Robert and Katerina
 Walter, Vernon and Alice
 Wayne, Elias and Lori
 Wells, Adrienne
 Wilkerson, Chuck and Kristina
 Williams, Anthony and Anna
 Williamson, Rula Halatsis-
 Wilson, Clyde
 Wilson, Kelly and
 Egi, Junichiro
 Wilson, Lori
 Wilson, Steven and Cleo
 Womack, Karl
 Womack, Kimberly
 Wronski, Chuck
 Xerogianes, Nick and Nikki
 Yurkov, Andrea, Nikolina and
 Daniela
 Zaferatos, Ted
 Zarras, Nick and Chery
 Zekichev, Timothy and
 Morris, Alexandra
 Zervas, Dionisios
 Zimmerman, Paul and Angela
 Zmina, Stephen and Cynthia



*It is a privilege and a joy to be a
 Steward and join in the fellowship of
 our Lord Jesus Christ at St. John the
 Baptist Greek Orthodox Church!*



AHEPA Las Vegas Chapter 314 News

AHEPA Supreme Convention *July 25-31, 2021*
 in Athens, Greece.

More information is available at

<https://ahepa.org/supreme-convention/>.

2021 Dues are NOW DUE. Pay by credit card

at: <https://ahepa-314-las-vegas.square.site/>.

We are currently looking for Board Members to
 assist with the redevelopment of the Chapter.

If you are interested in a Board Position or
 assisting with this very important organization
 please contact me.

Thank you,

Steve Liaos, Acting President

ahepa314@gmail.com or (702) 518-8018



JULY 2021 ~ IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD



Sunday

Monday


Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

							1	2	3
									Fr. John on Vacation 7/12-9 & 7/13-28
4 US Independence Day 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 	5 Independence Day Observed Church Office Closed	6	7	8	9	10			
11 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy	12 St. Paisios the Athonite 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	13	14	15	16 6:00 pm Kali Parea at Super Summer Theater	17 2:00 pm GOYA/OFF Pool Day at Whitney Ranch Activity Pool			
18 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy	19	20 Prophet Elias 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	21	22	23	24			
25 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 1:00 pm Young Adult Potluck and Pickleball in Panos Hall	26 St. Paraskevi 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	27 Great Martyr Panteleimon 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy and Artoclasia	28	29	30	31			



AUGUST 2021 ~ IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

1 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Dormition Fast 8/1-14	2 6:00 pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos	3	4 6:00 pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos 7:00 pm Adult Study in Kokkos Hall	5	6 Holy Transfiguration of Our Lord 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy and Blessing of Grapes	7
8 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 1:00 pm GOYA/OFF at Suncoast Bowling Alley	9 6:00 pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos	10	11 6:00 pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos 7:00 pm Adult Study in Kokkos Hall	12	13 6:00 pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos	14 5:00 pm Great Vespers for the Dormition of the Theotokos
15 Dormition of the Theotokos 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Panigyri Luncheon follows</i>	16	17 6:00 pm Parish Council Meeting in Kokkos Hall	18	19	20	21
22 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 12:00 pm Folk Dance Practice Begins 5:00 pm GOYA Night in Panos Hall	23	24	25	26	27	28 2:00 pm Young Adults Potluck at Koutsulis Home 6:00 pm Mr. and Mrs. Potluck at Nixon Home
29 Beheading of St. John the Baptist (Strict Fast) 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy	30	31				

The Desert Messenger

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

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THE DESERT MESSENGER

The Way of the Lord

*Once the fire of love for the Lord
was lit in you, through ascetical rigor
you gave yourself to God.*

*O God-bearing St. Paisios,
for many you became consolation,
giving counsel with God-inspired
words, and by your prayers
working wonders. And now,
devout one, you intercede for the
whole world unceasingly.*

*(Hymn of St. Paisios the Athonite,
Commemorated on July 12)*

