

# The Desert



# Messenger

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

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Volume 18, Issue 3    St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

March 2020

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**From  
Father  
John**

Beloved in Christ:

A few thousand pilgrims boarded the Diamond Princess Cruise Ship last month to explore the wonders of Japan and Southeast Asia, only to be quarantined for two weeks and, on top of all that, exposed to the deadly coronavirus. As I write this the number of people continuing to die in China from this new epidemic is frightening – exceeding 2,000 – and more and more people are testing positive for this virus, even outside the plagued city of Wuhan: Just try going to your local drug store here in Las Vegas and you will find that face masks are selling out even in our country!

If coronavirus is the epidemic of this new decade, we must keep in mind that each previous decade has had a unique deadly affliction to combat: Yet with that said, there is one disease that has persisted in spreading from the time of Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise – namely, the epidemic of sin, which has caused catastrophic sickness, suffering and death for the entire human race. As we Orthodox Christians will universally chant on the Sunday of Forgiveness, *"Come, my wretched soul, and weep today over your acts, remembering how once you were stripped naked in Eden and cast out from delight and unending joy."* (Troparion, Orthros, Sunday of Forgiveness) Like Adam and Eve – and yes, the Prodigal Son – each of us must begin the Forty Day Fast of Great Lent soberly mindful that *every human being* has transgressed the will of God . . . lived selfishly and continued breaking His commandments . . . and thus has been plagued with sin and consequently exists in the "far country" away from His Kingdom.

**On Monday, March 2**, we will embark on our voyage over the Great Sea of the Fast, and for six weeks we will be encouraged to *"love abstinence, that we may not weep as (Adam) did outside Paradise, but may enter through the gate."* (Kathisma, Sunday of Forgiveness) Our Orthodox Christian Faith prescribes each of us to fully partake of *"the season of the virtues"* through fasting, prayer, repentance and the giving of alms – that our awareness of our spiritually diseased condition might be heightened, and thus we may be emboldened to look to Jesus Christ as our strength, our God and Lord, and our only Redeemer through His Life-giving Crucifixion and Resurrection. *"O Master, Guide to wisdom, Giver of prudent counsel, Instructor of the foolish and Champion of the poor, make firm my heart and grant it understanding. O Word of the Father, give me words, for see, I shall not stop my lips from crying out to You: I am fallen, in Your compassion have mercy on me."* (Kontakion, Sunday of Forgiveness)

During the Holy Fast, we will be instructed to abstain from meat and dairy products – but this must go hand in hand with our effort to abstain from sin, in our thoughts, words and actions. Through the increased number of Lenten services, we will be given more opportunities as we fast to feast upon the spiritually beneficial hymns, prayers and scriptural readings – as well as the precious Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the weekly Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. We will be invited to conduct an assessment of our souls and to come to the Sacrament of Holy Confession, so that we can be purged of the many sins that afflict us – and granted through God's absolution a new and pure garment for our soul, mind and body. Through the disciplines of daily prayer and repentance, we will hopefully become mindful that sin and suffering – and spiritual death – is a *shared condition* . . . and so we will be deeply moved to stop judging and condemning our brothers and sisters, and moreover be stirred to show mercy through continuous forgiveness as well as by giving alms to those in need.

May we have a blessed and fruitful Lenten journey so that we might be God-pleasing partakers of our Savior's glorious Resurrection!

With much love in Christ,

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

Sunday, March 1/*Cheesefare Sunday/Forgiveness  
Sunday/Expulsion of Adam from Paradise/  
St. Evdokia of Heliopolis  
+Family Worship Sunday+*

Orthros: Tone Four

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

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

Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21

*Forgiveness Vespers follows Divine Liturgy*

*Abstain from Meat and Dairy for 40 Days*

Monday, March 2/*Clean Monday: 1st Day of Lent  
6:00 pm Great Compline*

Wednesday, March 4

*6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy*

Friday, March 6

*6:30 pm First Salutations to the Theotokos*

Saturday, March 7/*3rd Saturday of Souls/Miracle  
of St. Theodore the Recruit and the Kollyva  
8:00 am Orthros*

*9:00 am Divine Liturgy and Memorial*

Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:1-10

Gospel: Mark 2:23-28, 3:1-5

Sunday, March 8/*1st Sunday of Lent/  
Triumph of Orthodoxy/St. Theophylactos Bishop  
of Nicomedia*

*+Family Worship Sunday+*

Orthros: Tone Five (First Plagal)

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

Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40

Gospel: John 1:43-51

*Procession of Icons follows Divine Liturgy*

*5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Paul the Apostle  
(OCA) Church/Homily by Father John Hondros*

Monday, March 9

*6:00 pm Great Compline*

Wednesday, March 11

*6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy*

Friday, March 13

*6:30 pm Second Salutations to the Theotokos*

Sunday, March 15/*2nd Sunday of Lent/*

*St. Gregory Palamas/St. Agapios and Companions*

Orthros: Tone Six (Second Plagal)

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

Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-14; 2:1-3

Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

*5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at Ss. George and  
Dimitrie Romanian Church/Homily by Father  
Seraphim Ramos*

Monday, March 16

*6:00 pm Great Compline*

Wednesday, March 18

*6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy*

Friday, March 20

*6:30 pm Third Salutations to the Theotokos*

Saturday, March 21/*St. James the Confessor/  
Adult Lenten Retreat at St. John the Baptist with  
Father Theodore Dorrance*

*9:00 am Divine Liturgy*

Epistle: Hebrews 10:32-38

Gospel: Mark 1:35-44

*5:00 pm Great Vespers*

Sunday, March 22/*3rd Sunday of Lent/  
Veneration of the Holy Cross/St. Basil of Ancyra  
Procession of Holy Cross at Doxology*

Orthros: Tone Seven (Grave)

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

Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6

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

*5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Simeon Serbian  
Church/Homily by Father Michael Balan*

Monday, March 23

*6:00 pm Great Compline*

Wednesday, March 25/*Annunciation of our Most  
Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary  
8:00 am Orthros*

*9:00 am Divine Liturgy*

Friday, March 27

*6:30 pm Fourth Salutations to the Theotokos*

*(Continued on Page 3)*

## *SUNDAY SCHEDULE*

### *MARCH 1 - FORGIVENESS VESPERS FOLLOWS LITURGY*

Ushers: Peter Papas, Justina Szukiewicz, Alex Mavros, Stacy Mavrantonis, Mark Karris  
and John Matsis

Memorials: Helen Stock (40 days); Panagiot Taronis (40 days); and Barbara Peterson (1 year)

Fellowship: Daughters of Penelope

### *MARCH 8 - SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY: PROCESSION OF ICONS*

Ushers: Entire Parish Council

Fellowship: Folk Dance Groups

### *MARCH 15*

Ushers: Stacy Mavrantonis, Alex Mavros, Mark Karris, Justina Szukiewicz, John Matsis  
and Peter Papas

Memorial: Evangelos Palivos (1 year); and Michael Mavros (3 years)

Fellowship: Ladies Philoptochos Society - Benefits Holy Cross

### *MARCH 22 - VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS*

Ushers: Gus Flangas, Skip Ruffner, Telly Eliades, Spiros Filios, Demetrious Asim  
and John Koutsulis

Memorial: Athena Radosta (40 days); and Albert Flangas (5 years)

Fellowship: AHEPA - Greek Independence Day

### *MARCH 29*

Ushers: Telly Eliades, John Matsis, Justina Szukiewicz, Alex Mavros, Stacy Mavrantonis, and Mark Karris

Memorial: Rev. Father Constantine Raptis (3 years); and Maria Xenou (3 years)

Fellowship: Spiridoulla Hristopoulou, in honor of her departed sister, Maria Xenou

## *WORSHIP SCHEDULE*

*(Continued from Page 2)*

Sunday, March 29/*4th Sunday of Lent/  
St. John Climacos/St. Mark Bishop of Arethusa*

Orthros: Tone Eight (Fourth Plagal)

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): John 20:11-18

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20

Gospel: Mark 9:17-31

*5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. John the Baptist  
Church/Homily by Father John Dresko*

Monday, March 30

*6:00 pm Great Compline*

### *HOLY CONFESSION DURING LENT*

*Father John is available for Confession by  
appointment only during the weekdays of  
Lent. Do not delay, as Confessions will not  
be heard Holy Week.*



## *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.*

## Parish Council Report

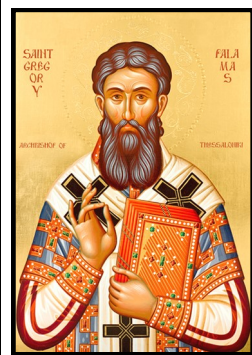
Greetings to all of our Saint John the Baptist Community! How quickly time passes as we have recently celebrated the Birth of our Lord, and now we are on our way to our most holy period of Lent! February has been a month full of activity and March, with the beginning of Holy Lent, promises to be even more eventful.

In February, our community hosted the Church Music Institute, drawing 40 participants from throughout the country, and I am sure that you would agree that the chanting they provided during the Divine Liturgy was hard to describe other than the term "Heavenly." Plus, we sent two Folk Dance groups to this year's FDF, and while both had successful performances, our youngest group, Aetopoula, won First Place in their category! What a wonderful accomplishment, and we congratulate all of the dancers, directors, parents, and the Folk Dance Board for their time and efforts in participating in this wonderful event! As February is not over yet, we invite the entire community for the pre-Lenten *Mardi Gras Gala taking place on Saturday, February 29 at 6:00 pm in Panos Hall*. Sponsored by Philoptochos and the Pan Arcadians, proceeds from this annual event will go toward the much-needed roof replacement of our Church.

This month will come in with *the beginning of Holy Lent on Monday, March 2*. During the month, our Parish Council will have a special Leadership Meeting with Father Theodore Dorrance *on Friday, March 20*. Then, *on Saturday, March 21, Father Theodore will facilitate the Annual Lenten Retreat* at our Church (*see flyer on Page 5*). At the end of the month, our Parish will be hosting *Lenten Vespers on Sunday, March 29 at 5:00 pm*.

At its February meeting, your Parish Council reviewed a list of items that are important for the future of our community. In the very near future, our Church will require: replacing the Church roof, repair/replacement of half of Hall roof, painting the Church and Community Center interior and exterior, repairing the parking lot, resurfacing of Panos/Kokkos hall floors, refurbishing the courtyard fountains, revitalizing the landscaping of our grounds, replacing courtyard lights, and replacing the parking lights. While this list may seem daunting, this is the reality of maintaining our beautiful Parish, and you will be hearing more in the near future about the plan of attack of seeing these projects through. In the meantime we look forward to seeing all of you at the various Lenten Services over the next month as we prepare for Holy Pascha, our Lord's Resurrection.

In Christ, John Matsis, Parish Council Vice President



*Holy and divine instrument of wisdom,  
joyful trumpet of theology, with one accord we  
sing your praises, O Gregory inspired by God.  
But since you stand now in mind and spirit  
before the Original Mind, guide our minds to  
Him, O father, that we may cry to you:  
Hail, preacher of grace.*

(Kontakion, Second Sunday of Lent, St. Gregory Palamas)

## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Rev. Father Seraphim Ramos  
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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: Benita Beeman

Stewardship & Community Outreach:  
Justina Szukiewicz

Choir: Athena Mertes

Chanters & Youth Choir:  
Presvytera Maria Hondros

Church School: Eileen Koutsulis

Altar Servers: Father John

GOYA:  
Kouli Pouridis & June Likourinou

Orthodox Family Fellowship:  
Jelena Boskovic & Amy Khuri

Young Adults:  
Nicholas Asim & Melissa Fleetwood

Greek Folk Dance: Sia Dalacas

Greek School: Paula Kelesis

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

Kali Parea: Demetrious Asim &  
Joy Wolfenbarger

Adult Basketball:  
Nate Dallas

Forerunners: Vicki Xikis

Orthodox Bookstore:  
Constantine Frangakis,  
Paisios & Mary Pursell

Greek Food Festival: Gus Flangas

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

Photography: Bill Bruninga



*The Clark County Orthodox Clergy Association  
Invites All Adults to Join Us for the*

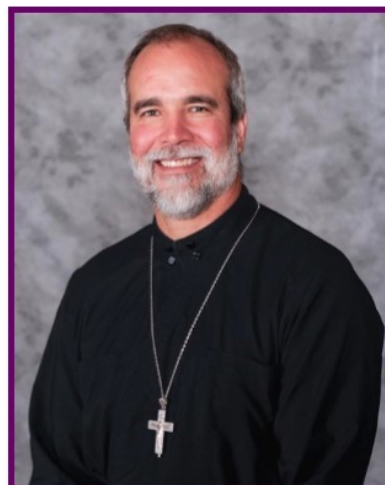
## Annual Lenten Retreat

# Watchfulness in the Midst of Noise and Distraction

**Saturday, March 21, 2020**

*St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church*

**Rev. Father Theodore Dorrance**  
**Retreat Speaker**



### Program

9:00 am	Divine Liturgy
10:15 am	Registration and Refreshments
10:45 am	<i>The Challenge of Spiritual Watchfulness</i>
12:00 pm	Lenten Lunch
1:15 pm	<i>Watchfulness: Lent and Holy Week</i>
2:30 pm	Break
2:45 pm	<i>Watch and Pray</i>
4:00 pm	<i>Questions and Answers</i>
5:00 pm	Great Vespers

**\$15 per person,**  
**includes lunch.**  
RSVP by March 13, 2020.  
Cash or checks only.  
Payable to St. Paul Church,  
Memo: Lenten Retreat

Father Theodore was ordained in 1991. He served the Ascension Cathedral in Oakland, CA for two years as an assistant priest, St. Katherine in Redondo Beach, CA as proistamenos for four years, and founded the parish of St. John the Baptist in Portland, OR, which he served for 20 years. He has four children: three girls and a boy. The three oldest are married, and the fourth is in college. He and Presvytera Stacey are blessed with six grandchildren. While in the Metropolis of San Francisco, Father Theodore served as a member of the Metropolis Council, Vicar of the Northwest region, and Director of the Metropolis Ministry of Missions and Evangelism. In 2017, he transferred into the Metropolis of Denver to direct the new Office of Parish Health and Church Growth. He is also working on his Doctor of Ministry in Leadership. When he gets the chance, he enjoys the beautiful outdoors, fly fishing, hiking in the mountains, and taking long walks with his beautiful wife.

## Philoptochos News

Dearest Sisters of Philoptochos and the St. John the Baptist Community,

As Lent begins, let us focus on drawing closer to God, spiritual renewal, self-awareness in the light of the Gospel, and recognizing the fullness of life to which each person is called.

On February 2, we celebrated American Heart Association Month, and provided literature to women concerning the prevention of heart disease and wore red in solidarity for all who suffer from the disease. Heart disease is the leading cause of death among women in the US. We also passed red carnations to all the ladies who attended the Divine Liturgy. Thank you to our wonderful Philoptochos Board for the beautiful Fellowship.

On February 9, we held a Memorial for our Departed Philoptochos Members, remembering and honoring all the wonderful women who came before us, who through their dedicated service have passed on the treasure of Philoptochos to us.



**On February 23**, we will have our Kids 'n' Cancer Collection and Fellowship. Special thank you to Litsa Smith, our wonderful Fellowship hostess and all those who helped with setup and serving.

Coming up, **on Saturday, February 29**, both the Philoptochos and Pan Arcadians will host the **Annual Mardi Gras Gala at 6:00 pm in Panos Hall**. Adults \$50, Table of 10 \$450, Children 6-12 \$15, Children 5 and Under Free – all proceeds benefit the Church Roof Replacement. With your support and participation, this should be a successful and fun event with great music, delicious food, dancing and beautiful costumes. Thank you to our amazing Mardi Gras Gala Chairwoman Geri Kypreos and her committee for doing such a beautiful job in organizing this event. And a very special thank you to Vicky Palivos for getting the gorgeous diamond cross donated for the raffle; our appreciation is extended as well to the people who are making donations and devoting their time for the gala. Thank you so much to Karen Rawlinson for assisting with ticket printing and sales, and so much more.

Below are our **March** events:

**Monday, March 2 – Great Lent Begins.**

**Tuesday, March 10 at 6:00 pm in Kokkos Hall – Philoptochos General Meeting.** All ladies of our Church community are welcome and encouraged to attend. We still need two women to host.

**Sunday, March 15 – Fasolada Luncheon benefitting Hellenic College Holy Cross.** Vickie and John Kelesis, with their love and generosity, will continue the tradition of offering the fresh-made Fasolada for this special Fellowship. Melissa Fleetwood will be chairing this event. Please be generous in support of the school that provides the future leaders of our Church and our Orthodox Faith. Additionally, **on Sunday, March 22**, we will have a collection for HCHC. *Please be generous!*

**Saturday, March 21 – Lenten Retreat with Father Theodore Dorrance.**

**Sunday, March 22: The Veneration of the Holy Cross – Special Collection for HCHC.**

**Sunday, March 29 at 5:00 pm – Pan Orthodox Lenten Vespers, followed by a light Lenten meal hosted by Philoptochos.** Join us as we welcome all the Orthodox faithful from the other Orthodox Parishes in Las Vegas. Bessie Chachas is the chair of this event. LeeAnn and Steve Eliakis have graciously volunteered once again to donate and prepare the delicious Lenten soup: Their contribution is greatly appreciated! We need volunteers at 4:00 pm offering help in setting up the hall for the dinner and also to serve the food.

Coming up in **April**:

**Palm Sunday, April 12 – Palm Sunday Luncheon.**

**Holy Thursday, April 16 – Dyeing of the Red Eggs.**

**Holy Friday, April 17 – Epitaphion Decorating.** *Please look out for our Epitaphion Flower Donation Envelopes!*

**Holy Pascha, Sunday, April 19 – Agape Picnic, Wine Wagon and Sale of Pastries.**

Let us never forget: When Philoptochos sees despair, we seek to offer help.

With Love in Christ, Benita Beeman, Philoptochos President

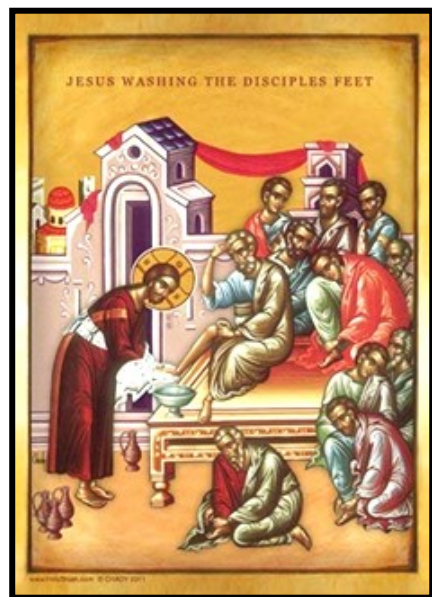


## Stewardship and Community Outreach

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory be to God for all things. As we are beginning Great Lent, let us take a moment to reflect on the incredible gift our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ has granted us. He became incarnate for one purpose: That He might *“be about His Father’s business”* (Luke 2:49), which was to die on the Cross to fulfill God’s plan of salvation; to open up a pathway for all of us, who seek it, to His Heavenly Kingdom. As St. John wrote in his Gospel, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* (John 3:16)

Jesus did not come as a conquering King riding on a chariot with an army of heavenly hosts to establish an earthly kingdom, but rather He rode on a donkey. (John 12:12-16) He came as a simple, poor and humble man to show us the right way to turn back to Him and the Father. He came as a servant. He served the needs of many by cleansing lepers (Matthew 8:1-4, Mark 1:40-42, Luke 5:12-16), giving sight to the blind (Mark 8:22-25, Mark 10:46-52, John 9:1-7), hearing to the deaf (Mark 7:33-35), healing physical maladies (Matthew 12:15, Luke 4:40, Mark 6:56), casting out evil spirits (Matthew 8:28-34, Luke 4:33-36 and 8:27-33), and raising the dead (Luke 7:11-15, Luke 8:41-56, John 11:38-44).



On the very night He was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, He lowered Himself to the level of a slave and servant by washing the feet of His disciples. (John 13:3-11) After doing so, our Lord said to them *“If I, then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.”* (John 13:13-45) The Lord showed His disciples – and us – to be servants of one another and to care for each other.

After Pentecost, and with the growth of the Church, the Apostles soon realized that they could not be all things to all people. As such, they ordained seven deacons to handle the matters of caring for those *“neglected in the daily distribution.”* (Acts 6:1) Eventually, they ordained Bishops, Priests, and Deacons in the areas they evangelized. Yet even these ordained ministers of the Word and the Holy Mysteries could not do it all themselves: They depended on the members of the Church, all who were given spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit to be used to serve others in their communities. *“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for edifying the body of Christ.”* (Ephesians 4:11-12) *“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”* (1 Peter 4:10)

Are we, as members of the Body of Christ, offering up our time and talents to support our Parish and the holy full-time work of our Priests? Or are we taking the approach to let someone else take care of the day-to-day operations of our Church – which oft times falls upon our Priests.

Let us use this Lenten season to *renew our commitment* to give back a portion of our time and talents to God’s glory and the building up of His Church.

In Christ, Stewardship and Outreach Committee



Through our 2020 Stewardship Pledge, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God! Please return your 2020 Pledge Card to benefit your Church and your soul. Thank You!



## Adult Study with Father John

### *Churchianity vs. Christianity*

*By Metropolitan Anthony Bloom*

*Join us every Wednesday, 7:30 - 8:30 pm, following  
Presanctified Liturgy, in Kokkos Hall.*

*All are Welcome.*

*Metropolitan Bloom's book is available in our Bookstore.*

*Great Lent begins on  
Monday, March 2.  
Forgiveness Vespers  
ushers in the Lenten  
Season: Please join us  
for this beautiful service  
on Sunday, March 1,  
immediately following  
Divine Liturgy.  
Our weekly Lenten  
Services will start  
30 minutes earlier,  
so please refer to the  
Worship Schedule  
for service times.*



### *Our Community Registry*

#### *Baptized into Christ: Na Mas Zisoun*

Makrina Markella, daughter of Father Seraphim and Presvytera Olenka Ramos, on January 28, 2020  
at Life Giving Spring Monastery. Godparent: Presvytera Victoria Siskos.

Michael Green (Adult Baptism) on February 1, 2020.  
Godparent: Paisios Pursell.

Mary (Susan) Green (Adult Baptism) on February 1, 2020.  
Godparent: Eleni Bruninga.

Nicholas, son of Scott and Angela Pajak on February 8, 2020.  
Godparents: Alexander Mavros and Alexandria Bucy.

#### *Marriage: Na Zisete!*

Scott Pajak and Angela Coutris on February 8, 2020.  
Koumbaros: Alexander Mavros.

#### *Fallen Asleep in the Lord: Eternal Memory!*

Helen Stock on January 24, 2020. Funeral on February 5.

Panagiotis Taronis on January 29, 2020. Funeral on February 7.

Athena Radosta on February 12, 2020. Funeral on February 18.

Stephen Borzeka on February 12, 2020. Funeral on March 2.



## From Father Seraphim

*You scaled the mountain of Godly virtue to raise up a great and sacred ladder on which we ascend from this fallen state; and leaving the passions beneath, we rise step by step unto the vision of God and the life on high. Thus, O righteous Father John, as our God-appointed guide, entreat the Lord to grant great mercy unto us.*  
(Hymn for St. John of the Ladder)

Our Holy Father, Saint John Climacos loved God from his youth, took up the sweet yoke of monastic life, and through it came to divine vision and was deified. Being united to the living God, he shares in His uncreated glory and energies and is shown forth as a teacher and father, not for his own time only, but for all centuries until the consummation of time. This Holy Father, Saint John of the Ladder (κλίμαξ in Greek), lived and struggled for a whole lifetime on the God-trodden Mountain of Sinai, having entered the monastic struggles in his teens. For forty years he lived as a hermit at Thola, about five miles from the monastery (now known as St. Catherine's) and later he became the abbot of Sinai. At that time, the monastery erected by the Emperor Justinian in the 6<sup>th</sup> century was already in existence and still stands intact to this day. It was built at the site of the Burning Bush and dedicated to the Transfiguration of our Lord. St. John lived to the age of eighty, and reposed in the Lord in the year 603.

It was during the time that he was abbot that St. John wrote, among other things, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, from which his name is derived. In this God-inspired book, he has written observations and teachings which are taken from his long experience as an ascetic struggler against the passions. It is composed of thirty steps, and each step deals with a certain virtue or sinful passion, informing us from where it originates and the different paths it takes in our experiences. In each step or *logos* (as the steps were originally called in the manuscripts where they were presented as words of instruction) deep insights are revealed about our fallen nature, our captivity therein, and a way to freedom in Christ. This work is so greatly esteemed by the Church that its author is celebrated twice in the liturgical year: On the day of his repose, March 30, on the Fourth Sunday of Lent.



In all of the Orthodox Church's monastic communities throughout the world, the *Ladder* is read in the refectory during the common meal for the entirety of Lent. Thus, the natural setting in which millions of Christians have encountered this work throughout the centuries is in the context of strict fasting, of prostrations, of contrite prayers, when only one meal is partaken of throughout the day – and that after the ninth hour (3:00 pm). Being read therefore during the meals in this period of fasting and struggles, it makes a profound impression on its hearers. And this is exactly how such texts should be read if they are to bear any fruit in us – not in spaciousness and comfort, not sitting in arm chairs, eating snacks and sipping soft drinks, but rather with prayers and fasting, and with prostrations and repentance. It is truly a book to awaken us, to call us to spiritual action, and must be read with discernment and humility. We can derive immense benefit and increase our love for Christ in the reading and putting into practice of many things in this deep and lofty text, but we do not need to go live in a cave in the desert to do so.

During this holiest of seasons, let us read the Scriptures and God-inspired books of the Church with reverence, fasting and prayer. Let us especially put into practice, those things which we read: “*Let us try to learn divine truth more by toil and sweat than by mere word, for at the time of our departure it is not words but deeds that will have to be shown.*” (Step 26:36) This Lent, if we even take a single step up *The Ladder*, we will find that we have already left the earth behind in our ascent toward the love of God.

With Love in Christ,

*Father Seraphim*

## Youth and Family Ministries

### Church School

First, I would like to congratulate our Folk Dancers on a job well done at FDF. They work so hard all year long, and our Primary group, Aetopoula, won first prize in their category! All of our kids should be so proud of themselves.

Thank you for bringing your children every week to Church School – we have so many students in our classrooms and they are eager to learn. We are still working on the Creed, so please help your children learn this most important statement of Faith at home.

*On Sunday, March 1*, we will have *Forgiveness Vespers right after the Divine Liturgy*. As this is a Family Worship Sunday, the students will stay in Church and worship with their families to prepare for Great Lent. *Lent will start on Monday, March 2*. As always, we are encouraging our students to attend at least one weekday service to make their Lenten journey more fulfilling. On Monday is Great Compline, on Wednesday the Presanctified Liturgy, and the Friday service is Salutations to the Theotokos. As the Youth Choir chants for the Salutations, it is a wonderful service for our children to participate in. Please see the Worship Schedule for all the Lenten opportunities and liturgical services.

*On Sunday, March 8, the Triumph of Orthodoxy*, our Church School children will participate in *the Procession of Icons*: Please bring a favorite icon from home to carry for the First Sunday in Lent. Also on that date, we will begin collecting for “Missions Possible.” This annual Lenten drive supports the work of the Metropolis of San Francisco Missions and Evangelism Ministry, which assists in the growth of new and existing Mission Parishes and provides outreach tools for all Parishes. We will have a weekly collection in the classrooms: Please have your children collect their loose change or paper money during the week to add to our bucket on Sunday, which will continue *through Palm Sunday, April 12*. The children will receive a little treat for every week that they bring money for the bucket. Missions Possible is the main funding source for the Missions and Evangelism Ministry.

Please feel free to call or email me with any questions or concerns. Wishing you a blessed Lenten Journey! In Christ, Eileen Koutsulis, Church School Director (702) 521-6516 or [vivaleenie@cox.net](mailto:vivaleenie@cox.net)

### Youth Choir News



*Kali Sarakosti – Blessed Lenten Season to all!*

We had such beautiful voices on February 9. Keep up the good work! The Youth Choir will have practice *on Sunday, March 1 following Forgiveness Vespers and Sunday, March 15 at 12:15 pm* in the 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grades Classroom. We will chant the Divine Liturgy *on Sunday, March 29*. (Please note Sunday change)

Lent has come upon us. This is to inform all Youth Choir members and parents that our Youth Choir chants on the first five Fridays of Lent for the Salutations to the Theotokos. This year's schedule is as follows: *March 6, 13, 20, 27 and April 3*. Practices are *at 6:15 pm* in the 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grades Classroom. The service starts *at 6:30 pm* (please note time change – 30 minutes earlier than previous years).

More on Holy Week next month. Looking forward to another blessed Lenten Season with the Youth Choir! Thank you so much for all your children's participation in this wonderful Parish ministry.

With Love in Christ, Presvytera Maria

### Greek Language Program

*Kali Sarakosti! Blessed Lent!*

Many of our Greek School children went to FDF and won awards, and we are very proud of them! *On Sunday, March 22* our students will be reciting their poems and chanting hymns for Greek Independence Day. We hope you enjoy the program, as they have been working diligently to present to the Community. Paula Kelesis, Greek School Director (702) 249-4740



## ***GOYA ~ For Teenagers***

Dear GOYANs and Parents,

It is time again for the Annual Lenten Teen Overnight Retreat! *“Identity”* – our identity in Christ – is the spiritual theme we will explore together at this two-day event (*see flyer on Page 13*). We pray it will prove to be a spiritual experience in our Faith, fellowship with your friends (including those from St. Paul OCA Church and our other sister Orthodox Churches), and overall incredibly fun! We will camp out in the Church on *Friday Night, March 27 and conclude in the afternoon on Saturday, March 28. We will gather together at the Church at 6:00 pm on Friday and will dismiss at 1:30 pm on Saturday.*

Please remember to wear Church clothes Friday for the Salutations to the Theotokos at 6:30 pm; we will have Confessions after the service. Also bring with you appropriate casual clothes, with running shoes for games on the field. Remember also to bring sleeping clothes, your sleeping bag, your pillow and a toothbrush. Please RSVP with Father Seraphim at [frseraphim@vegasgreekorthodox.com](mailto:frseraphim@vegasgreekorthodox.com) or (702) 768-7480 so that we can begin to get a head count and appropriately plan the meals for the participants.

With Love in Christ, June Likourinou and Kouli Pouridis, GOYA Advisors

## ***Orthodox Family Fellowship***

With our Mini-Retreat so close to March and the Lazaros Saturday Palm-Tying around the corner in April, we will be taking a hiatus this month to focus on the many services offered by the Church for our spiritual growth. We look forward to the Resurrection and good weather in April and many more wonderful things to come this year!

In Christ, Amy Khuri and Jelena Boskovic, OFF Advisors

## ***Greek Folk Dance***

The 44th Annual Folk Dance Festival took place in Anaheim, California on February 13 – 16. There were over 110 dance and choral groups from all over the Metropolis! We had 22 dancers and four directors participate on behalf of our Parish. The dancers did awesome!

Our Delfinia group, directed by Kyriacos Philippou and Niko Pouridis, competed in the Advanced Junior Category and performed beautifully! Our Aetopoula group, directed by Nick Barbarino and Demetri Pouridis, competed in the Primary Category and were awarded FIRST PLACE in their category! It was a fantastic weekend and we cannot thank all the members of our community who supported our kids. A huge thank you to all the family and friends who made the trip to Anaheim and cheered on our groups (including Metropolitan Ilia and both priests). The directors also deserve recognition, as they volunteered countless hours to teach the kids the dances and get them ready for their performances.

Leading up to FDF, we had our Glendi and our Preview Brunch, both of which were outstanding successes. Our musicians from Greece provided wonderful entertainment at our Glendi and our youngest dance group, Liondaria, directed by Sophia Tsiralides, showed us their dancing skills at the Preview Brunch!

We have to thank all the wonderful community members who donated their time and efforts to make our events memorable. A special thank you to Steve and Vaso Tzelalis for spearheading the kitchen for the Glendi and to Jimmy Philippou and Steve Thompson for spearheading the kitchen for the Preview Brunch. Also, there were many generous donations from community members for food, raffle prizes, and more. We truly appreciate the support for our Ministry! We are so grateful.

Greek Folk Dance will be taking a much deserved break! Look for information in the upcoming *Desert Messenger* as to when we will start dancing again!

With Much Gratitude, The Folk Dance Board

*P.S. Enjoy the photos on Page 12!*

***Hail! Life-giving Cross, the fair Paradise of the Church, Tree of incorruption that brings us the enjoyment of eternal glory! (Orthros, Sunday of the Cross)***

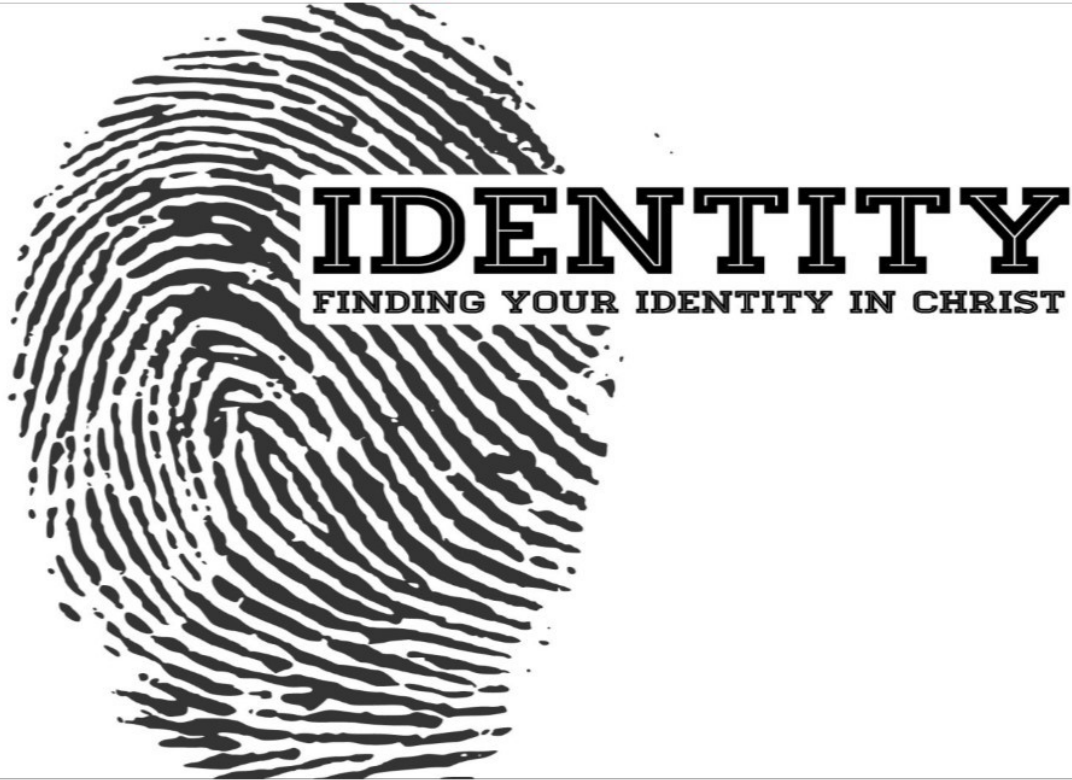


## *Congratulations to our Folk Dancers and Directors!*





# 2020 Orthodox Teen Overnight Retreat



**Friday, March 27 at 6:00 pm through  
Saturday, March 28 at 1:30 pm**

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

*All Middle School and High School Students are welcome!*

## What to Bring:

- ♦ Wear Church clothes
- ♦ Casual clothes and running shoes (dress warm!)
- ♦ Sleeping clothes, sleeping bag, pillow, toothbrush, etc.

# Adult and Young Adult Ministries

## Young Adults

We want to thank Daniella Yurkov for hosting an awesome YA event at her home in February!

This month we will have a night out *on Saturday, March 14* with dinner at BJ's (10840 W. Charleston Blvd., Las Vegas), followed by bowling at Red Rock Lanes. We will meet *at 6:00 pm* for dinner and head across the street afterwards. There are many fasting options at BJ's and we hope to enjoy some awesome fellowship as well as a little fun competition in bowling.

Please also plan on attending the *Pan Orthodox Lenten Retreat with Father Theodore Dorrance on Saturday, March 21 (see flyer on Page 5).*

We hope to see you at the many increased opportunities for Church services this holy period of Lent: May we all have a spiritually renewing journey to Pascha and the Resurrection!

In Christ, Niko Asim and Melissa Fleetwood, YA Advisors

## Mr. & Mrs. - A Couples Fellowship



We want to thank Thomas and Kitty Gott for hosting the upcoming Cheesefare Pre-Lenten Mr. and Mrs. at their home *on Friday, February 28 at 6:00 pm*. We anticipate a wonderful night of fellowship and food

In March we will once again gather for a fast-friendly meal at the home of John and Marcie Karas *on Saturday, March 28 at 6:00 pm*. Please RSVP with Marcie or Father Seraphim and also bring your favorite Lenten salad, side dish, drinks or dessert and come ready for an enjoyable evening.

Please also plan on attending the *Pan Orthodox Lenten Retreat with Father Theodore Dorrance on Saturday, March 21 (see flyer on Page 5).*

We hope to see you at the fellowships and retreat!

Yours in Christ, Father John, Father Seraphim, and their Presvyteres

## Kali Parea - "Good Company" for the 40+ Crowd

*Blessed Lent!* This month we will be supporting and attending the *Pan Orthodox Lenten Retreat* hosted by our Parish *on Saturday, March 21 (see flyer on Page 5)*. This is an opportunity for spiritual growth, and relationship building – both with members of our Parish and the larger Las Vegas Orthodox Community – and will be a wonderful time.

We will also gather together for good company at the weekly *Pan Orthodox Sunday Lenten Vespers at 5:00 pm* – and especially *on Sunday, March 29* (St. John Climacos), when our Parish will host the service and meal. We look forward to seeing you at our spiritually focused events this month!

Love in Christ, Lydia Joy Wolfenbarger for Kali Parea

## Notes from the Choir Loft

We will have the following rehearsals for Holy Week and Pascha. Please mark your calendars, as we will not be meeting every Friday during Lent. It is extremely important that we have everyone at these rehearsals, so we are prepared to sing.

*Sunday, March 22 after Liturgy (12:15 – 1:15 pm).*

*Sunday, April 5 after Liturgy (12:15 – 1:15 pm).*

*Friday, April 10 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm.*

*Holy Week: Monday, April 13, Tuesday, April 14 and Wednesday, April 15 5:45 – 6:45 pm.*

Please note that the *Youth Choir will sing on Sunday, March 29*, instead of the second Sunday.

Athena Mertes, Director





## *Forerunners - The Seniors of St. John the Baptist*

### *Kali Sarakosti! A Blessed Lenten Season.*

How wonderful it was at our February luncheon meeting to have His Excellency Metropolitan Ilia with us. We enjoyed having fellowship with him as well as his marvelous and informational presentation of the Panagia Soumela. Polla Ta Eti! Steve and our culinary crew again prepared a delicious lunch for us and thank you to Sam for the delicious Galopita.

This month, our Lenten Luncheon Meeting will take place **on Monday, March 9 at 11:30 am in Kokkos Hall.** Steve will be preparing a Lenten meal.

Our membership is still open and it is only \$20 for the year, which means you are investing \$1.66 per month to enjoy this fine ministry. There are many of you out there who have not joined as yet and we look forward to adding you to our list of Forerunners.

Please note that our March Sunday Fellowship has been canceled, so that Philoptochos can utilize this opportunity to raise funds for Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.

We thank you all who participate in our Senior Forerunner Ministry, and we thank everyone who volunteers to make it successful. As always our love, prayers and wishes go out to all our homebound and sick Forerunners who are unable to join us.

With Love in Christ, Victoria Xikis for the Senior Forerunners

## *Orthodox Bookstore*

### *Greetings and Blessed Lent from the Bookstore!*

This month, as we enter into the Lenten Season, we are featuring *The Spiritual Life and How to Be Attuned to It*, written by Saint Theophan the Recluse.

Our Father among the Saints, Saint Theophan (1815-1894) was Bishop of Tambov in Russia. His thirst for complete union with God led him to reclusion, but he did not deprive the world of his rare gift of combining Patristic expertise with his deep understanding of the souls of contemporary people. The Saint received 20-40 letters per day, and answered each one.

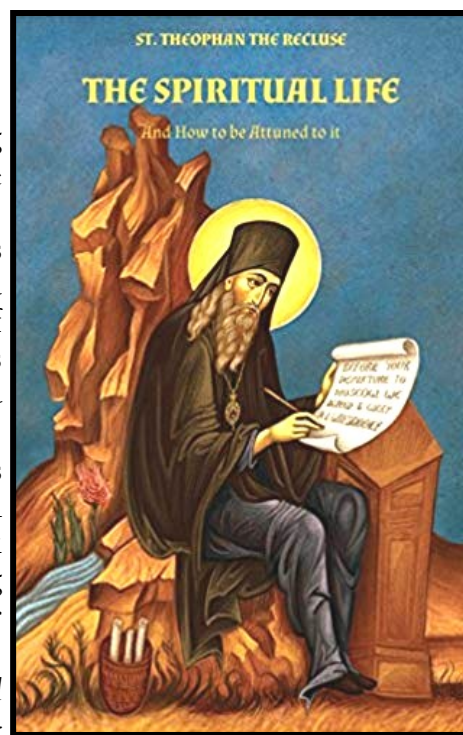
*The Spiritual Life and How to Be Attuned to It* is a collection of letters that Saint Theophan wrote in correspondence with a young woman from Moscow, who was struggling with spiritual difficulties. The book is the saint's spiritual advice in letters. The reader can feel the young woman's struggles, and with each successive letter, comprehend her progress.

"Once, in the middle of the dance floor at some annual ball, a young lady had a sudden glimpse of the immortality of her soul; and as this vision flashed upon her inward eye, she was struck with the thought that all this swirling around the dance floor was utterly futile. Amazed and disturbed, she wrote to the recluse: "Is this normal, or is it a morbid hindrance to a desire for a happy life in the world?"

The answer to her question evoked a correspondence which resulted in this volume. The saint writes: "When writing to you, I had nothing in mind other than to set you on the way of the true Christian life..."

The letters read like they were written with us in mind today. In the introduction of the book, Protopriest Milos M. Vesin of Lansing, Illinois said, "The need for such a book in our time is truly great." Saint Theophan's other titles that are available in the Bookstore are: *The Path to Salvation*; *Raising them Right*; *Kindling the Divine Spark*; *Turning the Heart to God*; and *Unseen Warfare*.

Until next month, God willing, Mary Pursell and the Bookstore Team



## 2020 VISION: STEWARDS OF OUR CHURCH

Acovino, Richard and Angela	DeMangus, Joanne	Katris, Nick and Theana	Papas, Peter and Rita
Adamy, Marina	Demoleas, Stephanie	Katsaros, Thomas and Sharon	Pappas, Rita
Albertson—Reizakis, Yianna	Demopoulos, Vasiliki	Kelesis, Paula	Pappas, Spiros and Libby
Alcala, Georgia	Dominguez, Eric and Amalia	Kinard, Panorea	Paschalis, Evangelos and Maria
Alford, Cynthia “Mary”	Doskas, Athanasios and Anastasia	Koliambas, Eleni	Paton, Mia and Kirani, Laura
Anastasakis, Mark and Elaine	Dramitinos, Mary	Konsolakis, Eleni	Payan, Luis and Eleni
Anastasiou, Andrew and Kathleen	Earl, Christine Michaelides	Konsolakis, George and Sophia	Pelletier, Michael
Andrews, Catherine	Eliades, Artemis	Kontos, Diana	Pendleton, Tricia
Andrews, George	Eliades, Telly and Caroline	Kostopoulos, Georgia	Philippou, Demetrios and Luanne
Andricopoulos, Margo	Eliades, Harry and Agapi	Kountanis, Panagiota	Pierro, Joe and Rhonda
Anthony, Stavros and Bernadette	Eliakis, Peter and Glenda	Koupais, Pat	Pitts, Anton and Athena
Anton, Mike and Carol	Eliakis, Varthie and LeeAnn	Koutsulis, John and Eileen	Polimerou, Angeline
Aristides, George and Diana	Eyler, John and Elizabeth	Koutsulis, Sam and Effie	Politis, Pantelis and Dimitra
Asim, Demetrious	Eyler, Fr. Paul and Presv. Ilean	Kratky, Frank and Constance	Poulis, Chris and Frances
Athens, Maria and Centers, Scott	Felecos, Nektaria	Kypreos, Peter and Geri	Poulos, Christine
Bacon, Ken and Dianne	Fenlason, Nathan and Zmina-Fenlason, Jennifer	Lakkis, Christina	Pouridis, Kouli and Para
Balason, Voula	Filos, Spiridon and Eleni	Lamancusa, Lisa	Powers, Russell and Rebecca
Balaouras, Helen	Fischer, Bob and Cheryl	Lambros, Kyriakos and Mary	Pursell, Robert and Mary
Balaouras, Paris	Flangas, Marilyn	Lavine, Frederik	Radosta, Athena +
Balodimas, James	Flangas, Gus and Tamara	Lekar, Caroline	Ramos, Fr. Seraphim and Presv. Olenka
Barbarino, Dee and Nick	Foster, Kyle and Pierro, Maria Elena	Lekar, Michael and Effie	Raptis, Presv. Evonne
Bartzos, Eugenia	Frangakis, Constantine	Leong, Marissa	Rasmussen, Scott and Rebecca
Beeler, Mike and Carolyn	Frangakis, John	Leonis, Tishe	Rigas, Anthony and Mary
Beeman, Karl Jr. and Ivana	Frangakis, Sophocles and Tara	Liaos, Jim and Tina	Rigas, Evie
Berendji, Jim and Vivian	Garza, Everardo and Eliades, Eleni	Liaos, Steven and Francine	Rihani, Gary and Linda
Bernier, Micah and Alissa	Geiger, Dan and Hart, Dora	Likourinou, Steve and June	Robison, Patricia and Diane
Berta, Irene	Gekakis, George	Litsos, Nicholas and Catherine	Rodis, Dimitri and Angie
Bieker, Adam and Cassie	Generales, John and Arlene	Loughton, Dustin and Rena	Rosenthal, Joseph and Stephanie
Bledsoe, Lori	Gianakoulis, Nick and Magda	Maniatakos, Ted and Maria	Rotas, Beatrice
Britten, Ronald and Carol	Gideon, Jesse and Sara	Manolakos, Catherine	Rudolph, Brandon
Brown, Faye	Giouzelis, Sasa	Manteris, Arthur and Sue	Ruffner, Skip and Kathy
Bruninga, Bill and Erin	Gott, C. Thomas and Kitty	Maravic, Marija	Sakkas, Georgios and Stavropoulos, Bessie
Bucy, Brent and Elaine	Green, Michael and Susan	Markakis, Joseph	Salon, Janelle
Cahill, Irene	Gutierrez, Connie	Markantonis, George and Sarah	Salonikis, Valentinos and Sophia
Campbell, Theodore and Cheryl	Gutierrez, Daniel	Matsis, John and Rebecca	Santamaria, Jennifer and Robert
Cappony, Martha	Hadzoglon, Christos	Mavrantonis, Stacy and Kiki	Setian, Gary and Marie
Carabas, Stephen and Linda	Hamilton, Mary	Mavroidis, Demetrios and Debra	Skalkotos, Nikolas and Georgia
Carahalios, John and Constance	Hammers, Oliver and Pantelas, Anne	Mavros, Alex and Jen	Smith, Kathleen
Caredis, Jon and Marjorie	Henderson, Jimmie Laverne	Mavros, Debbie	Snow, Adrienne
Carrico, William and Alexandra	Hertberg, Jennifer	McManus, Jeanette	Snow, Clifford and Christina
Carter, Maria	Hetzal, David and Joanne	McKinney, Michael and Mersene	Snowden, Robert and Niki
Chachas, Bessie	Hondros, Catherine	McPherson, Robert and Marie	Sparkuhl, Alex and Antoinette
Chachas, James	Hondros, Christina	McSweeney, Farolyn	Sorkhabi, Arian and Habiba, Maha
Chagares, Kiki	Hondros, Christopher and Darlene	Menegatos, James	Staubs, Douglas and Anastasia
Chamie, Elie and Claudine	Hondros, Fr. John and Presv. Maria	Merritt, Devin and Sonia	Stavropoulos, Terry and Niki
Chandrinos, Alexia	Hondros, Marissa	Minas, Arthur and Eva	Stefanatos, Michael and Tami
Chanos, Jennifer	Houlis, Ila and Debbie	Moffett, Todd and Eliopulos, Tina	Stinis, Pam and Greg
Chomakos, Dean and Tammy	Howard, William and Willie	Monoyudis, Jim and Julie	Stransky, Mark
Chondrakis, Dimosthenis and Kragerud, Kaaren	Iteen, Robert and Sophia	Moore, Brenda	Stransky, Jack and Rachel
Christian, Chloe	Kachikis, Ernestine	Mulopulos, George and Jenny	Szukiewicz, Joseph and Jennia
Christou, Andreas and Toni	Kakavulias, George and Helen	Myers, Stella	Tafoya, Steven and Irene
Cocores-Ely, Caron	Kambouris, Litsa	Neocleous, Plato	Theros, James and Kathryn
Cokotis, Julie	Kanis, Constantinos and Katie	Nicholas, Christina	Thompson, Maggy
Collins, David	Kaptain, Emmanuel	Nicholas, John and Estella	Thompson, Steve and Alik
Cominos, Ted	Karalias, Petros and Constance	Nichols, George and Tereza	Tohme, Tony and May
Conger, William and Alexia	Karas, John and Marcie	Nichols, Mary	Tsarouhas, Maria
Costacos, John	Karris, Mark and Suzanne	Nichols, Stella	Tsiralidis, Kosmas and Katerina
Crist, Adam and Kanistra	Katopodis, Efstratios	Nixon, John and Ellyn	Tsolis, Christos and Panagioula
Cromwell, Michael and Allison		Pajak, Scott and Angela	Tsolis, Panagiote
Dalacas, Dimitri and Athanasia		Pallis, Paul	Tzelalis, Steve
Dalacas, Eleni		Panos, William and Jeanne	
		Papalois, John and Maria	
		Papas, Christian and Nicole	

Wadlow, Nicholas and Pamela  
Wallace, Robert and Katerina  
Walter, Vernon and Alice  
Ward, Curtis and Angeliki  
Wilkerson, Chuck and Kristina  
Wilson, Kelly and  
Egi, Junichiro  
Wilson, Steven and Cleo  
Womack, Karl

Womack, Kimberly  
Wood, Nadine  
Wronski, Chuck  
Xerogiannes, Nick and Nikki  
Yfantis, Evangelos  
Zaferatos, Ted  
Zervas, Dionisios  
Zimmerman, Paul and Angela  
Zmina, Stephen and Cynthia



## 2020 VISION CHRIST \* CHURCH \* COMMITMENT

### 2020 Stewardship Report (as of 2/21/20)

Stewardship Gifts Pledged: \$320,455 (\$360,043 in 2019)  
Stewardship Gifts Received: \$127,518 (\$111,986 in 2019)  
Unfulfilled Pledge Balance: \$192,936 (\$248,057 in 2019)  
Stewardship Families Pledged: 265 (281 in 2019)  
Average Pledge to Date: \$1,209 (\$1,281 in 2019)  
Average Pledge Needed: \$3,755 (262 Families)

## Church Account Summaries ~ January 2020

Nevada State Bank Accounts	December Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January Ending Balance	Notes
General Operating Account (GOA)	\$33,245.58	\$96,730.13	\$1,407.68	\$14,631.81	\$53,346.12	\$63,405.46	
Community and Education (C&E)	\$5,020.10	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00		\$5,020.10	
Greek Food Festival (GFF)	\$4,082.72	\$136.15	\$60.00	\$3,592.85	\$432.33	\$253.69	
Designated, Restricted & Other (DR&O)	\$231,415.47	\$54,556.00	\$4,512.00	\$2,943.66	\$6,096.43	\$281,443.38	
Folk Dance Group	\$17,823.10	\$2,915.00		\$2,585.41		\$18,152.69	
Hellenic Historical Society	\$3,300.94					\$3,300.94	
Mortgage Account	\$0.00					\$0.00	Mortgage Balance \$0.00
Designated Funds	December Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January Ending Balance	Notes
Bookstore	\$4,412.15	\$4,356.00	\$390.00	\$2,643.66	\$568.08	\$5,946.41	
Ornaments	\$1,087.41		\$82.00			\$1,169.41	
Restricted Funds	December Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January Ending Balance	Notes
ICON	\$139,367.76	\$175.00	\$40.00			\$139,582.76	
Library Account	\$1,470.77					\$1,470.77	Account owed \$21,000. Funds used to make payroll and pay bills in 2015
Miscellaneous	\$25,160.02		-\$19,999.00		\$5,161.02	\$0.00	Young Adults deposit error-\$161.02. \$5,000 transferred to credit 2019 Stewardship. \$19,999 Transferred to Three Priests
Giving Tree	\$0.91					\$0.91	
Line of Credit Reserve	\$0.00		\$4,000.00			\$4,000.00	
Building Fund	\$24,019.26					\$24,019.26	
60th Anniversary Funds	\$7,742.87	\$25.00		\$300.00	\$367.33	\$7,100.54	
Youth Choir	\$2,989.18					\$2,989.18	
Church School	\$1,306.37					\$1,306.37	
Three Priests	\$22,684.49		\$19,999.00			\$42,683.49	
Roof Appeal	\$522.68	\$50,000.00				\$50,522.68	Anonymous Donor
Baptismal Water Heater	\$69.24					\$69.24	
Altar Servers	\$440.00					\$440.00	
GOYA	\$142.36					\$142.36	
<b>Designated, Restricted, and Other Total</b>	<b>\$231,415.47</b>	<b>\$54,556.00</b>	<b>\$4,512.00</b>	<b>\$2,943.66</b>	<b>\$6,096.43</b>	<b>\$281,443.38</b>	
Other Funds	December Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January Ending Balance	Notes
Kokkos Scholarship Fund	\$72,126.26	\$24.19		\$1,500.00		\$70,650.45	
<b>January 2020 Candles</b>	<b>\$5,462.00</b>						
<b>January 2020 Trays</b>	<b>\$4,032.00</b>						
<b>Total January Candles &amp; Trays</b>	<b>\$9,494.00</b>						



## KOKKOS SCHOLARSHIP

The Scholarship Committee for the Kokkos Scholarship Fund is pleased to announce that applications will be available at the Church Office beginning *on Monday, March 2*. If you wish to receive your application via email, please contact Karen at [karen@vegasegreekorthodox.com](mailto:karen@vegasegreekorthodox.com). The applications must be returned *on or before Friday, April 24*. Late and/or incomplete applications will not be considered.

The eligibility requirements were established by Fofo 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. Two scholarships will be given, and the amounts this year are \$1,500 each. 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 Fofo Kokkos; therefore, this is also a factor in evaluating the applicants. Please contact the Church Office for more information at (702) 221-8245.



The AHEPA Las Vegas Chapter 341  
*invites all to join us for the*  
*Greek Independence Day Celebration*  
*on Sunday, March 22, following the Divine Liturgy.*

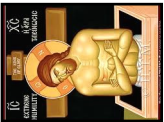
Brothers, please mark your calendars for *Tuesday, March 17 at 6:30 pm in Kokkos Hall* to discuss Executive Board Positions, March 25<sup>th</sup> Events and the 2020 Calendar.

We are looking for volunteers to assist with a Membership Drive and we need Brothers to assist with this endeavor. 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, Kouli Pouridis, Acting Chapter President [pouridis5@cox.net](mailto:pouridis5@cox.net) (702) 604-0885



*Moses, in the season of abstinence, received the Law  
 and proclaimed it to the people.  
 Elijah by fasting closed the heavens;  
 and the three children of Abraham through fasting  
 overcame the lawless tyrant.  
 Count us also worthy, O Christ, through fasting  
 to attain the Feast of Your Resurrection, as we cry aloud:  
 Holy God, Holy and Strong, Holy and Immortal,  
 have mercy on us.*  
 (Doxastikon, Orthros, Sunday of Orthodoxy)



# MARCH 2020 ~ IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD

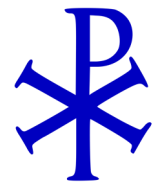
<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
<b>1 Cheesefare Sunday</b> 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <b>Forgiveness Vespers</b> <b>Follows Liturgy</b> 12:15 pm Youth Choir Practice in 4th/5th Class	<b>2 Lent Begins</b> 6:00 pm Great Compline	<b>3</b> 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes	<b>4</b> 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy 7:30 pm Adult Study in Kokkos Hall	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 6:15 pm Youth Choir Practice in 4th/5th 6:30 pm 1st Salutations to the Theotokos	<b>7 Saturday of Souls</b> 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy and Memorial
<b>8</b> 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Procession of Icons</i> 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Paul the Apostle	<b>9</b> 11:30 am Senior Forerunner Luncheon in Kokkos Hall 6:00 pm Great Compline	<b>10</b> 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes 6:00 pm Philoptochos General Meeting in Kokkos Hall	<b>11</b> 6:00 Presanctified Liturgy 7:30 pm Adult Study in Kokkos Hall	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 6:15 pm Youth Choir Practice in 4th/5th 6:30 pm 2nd Salutations to the Theotokos	<b>14</b> 6:00 pm Young Adults Dinner (BJs Restaurant) and Bowling (Red Rock Lanes)
<b>15</b> 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 12:15 pm Youth Choir Practice in 4th/5th Class 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at Ss. George and Dimitrie	<b>16</b> 6:00 pm Great Compline	<b>17</b> 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes 6:00 pm Parish Council Meeting in the Library 6:30 pm AHEPA Meeting in Kokkos Hall	<b>18</b> 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy 7:30 pm Adult Study in Kokkos Hall	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 5:00 pm PC Leadership Meeting 6:15 pm Youth Choir Practice in 4th/5th 6:30 pm 3rd Salutations to the Theotokos	<b>21 St. James the Confessor</b> 9:00 am Divine Liturgy <b>Adult Lenten Retreat</b> <b>with Father Theodore</b> <b>Dorrance</b> 5:00 pm Great Vespers
<b>22</b> 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 12:15 pm Adult Choir Practice 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Simeon	<b>23</b> 6:00 pm Great Compline	<b>24</b> 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes	<b>25 Annunciation of the Theotokos</b> 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy No Adult Study	<b>26</b>	<b>27 6:00 pm GOYA</b> <b>Overnight Lenten Retreat</b> <b>(thru 3/28 at 1:30 pm)</b> 6:15 pm Youth Choir Practice in 4th/5th 6:30 pm 4th Salut. to the Theotokos	<b>28</b> 6:00 pm Mr. and Mrs. at John and Marcie Karas' Home
<b>29</b> 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Youth Choir Chants</i> 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. John the Baptist	<b>30</b> 6:00 pm Great Compline	<b>31</b> 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes				

# *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*



*We venerate Your holy icon,  
loving Lord, asking You to  
pardon our transgressions,  
Christ our God. For You of  
Your own will were pleased  
in the flesh to ascend upon  
the Cross, so to deliver from  
the bondage of the enemy  
those whom You had  
fashioned. Therefore, in  
thanksgiving we cry aloud  
to You: You have filled all  
things with joy, our Savior,  
when You had come to save  
the world.*

*(Troparion, Sunday of Orthodoxy)*