

The Desert



Messenger

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

Volume 21, Issue 3 St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

March 2023

From
Father
John

Beloved in Christ:

Καλη Σαρακοστη! Blessed Lent!

Just as our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ fasted for forty days in the wilderness immediately following His Baptism in the Jordan River by St. John the Forerunner, our Holy Orthodox Church has for centuries dedicated a forty-day fast preceding Great and Holy Week and Pascha. Our Lord refrained from all food and drink during His entire fast: We are guided by His Church to abstain merely from certain food products – yet even this is a challenge for most of us and many of us do not even attempt to fast. But if fasting were not essential to the spiritual health of the soul, then why did our Lord do so, and further, why did He direct His faithful (from Ancient Israel to the Apostles and all His followers) to fast during prescribed periods?

There are four important reasons for following the Great Fast:

Fasting is a sign of obedience to God. In the Garden of Eden God commanded Adam to eat freely from every tree *except* from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *"for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."* (Genesis 2:17) By breaking the Lord's commandment to abstain from this tree, Adam and Eve were banished from Paradise. Through disobedience, sickness, suffering and death entered human nature. *"Adam was driven out of Paradise, because in disobedience he had eaten food; but Moses was granted the vision of God, because he had cleansed the eyes of his soul by fasting. If then we long to dwell in Paradise, let us abstain from all needless food; and if we desire to see God, let us like Moses fast for forty days."* (Orthros, Sunday of Forgiveness, The Lenten Triodion)

Fasting is an essential weapon for combating in spiritual warfare. In the first century St. Paul wrote to the Church in Ephesus, *"For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."* (Ephesians 6:12) Every person, whether or not he believes so, is engaged in spiritual warfare. As St. Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain wrote: *"The arena, the field of battle, the site where the fight actually takes place is our own heart and all our inner man. The time of battle is our whole life."* After expelling a demon from a young boy, our Lord instructed His Disciples (who had been unsuccessful in their own attempts to do so), *"This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting."* (Mark 9:29) Thus prayer and fasting are both required to cast out our own unclean spirits whom we battle regularly!



Fasting is a discipline that helps us to acquire *"the mind of Christ."* (1 Corinthians 2:16) In the first century, Christians were taught to imitate Christ: *"Bless those who curse you . . . pray for your enemies . . . and fast for those who persecute you. . . Abstain from physical and bodily cravings."* (The Didache or The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles 1:3-4) The faithful were instructed to *"fast on Wednesday and Friday."* (Didache, 8:1) From the earliest years of the Church, Christians were instructed to fast, just as Christ fasted and in remembrance of His saving acts.

(Continued on Page 3)

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

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

Abstain from Meat and Dairy until Holy Pascha

Wednesday, March 1

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 3

6:30 pm First Salutations to the Theotokos

Saturday, March 4/*Third Saturday of Souls/
Miracle of St. Theodore and the Kollyva/Holy
Father Gerasimos of the Jordan/Holy Martyrs Paul
and Juliana*

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 5/*First Sunday of Lent/
Triumph of Orthodoxy/
Commemoration of the
Restoration of the Holy
Icons/St. Conon the
Gardener/New Martyr
Parthenios*

Orthros: First Plagal Tone

Resurrection Gospel

(Orthros): Luke 24:13-35

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

Gospel: John 1:43-51

Procession of Icons follows Liturgy

Fellowship: Philoptochos Kids 'n' Cancer

*5:00 pm Lenten Pan-Orthodox Vespers at St. John
the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church*

Monday, March 6

5:30 pm Great Compline and Adult Study

Wednesday, March 8

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 10

6:30 pm Second Salutations to the Theotokos



Sunday, March 12/*Second Sunday of Lent/*

St. Gregory Palamas/St. Theophanes the Confessor

Orthros: Second Plagal Tone

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

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

Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

Memorials: Glenda and LeeAnn Eliakis (1 year)

Fellowship: Elias and April Rivera

*5:00 pm Lenten Pan-Orthodox Vespers at
St. Simeon Serbian Orthodox Church*

Monday, March 13

5:30 pm Great Compline and Adult Study

Wednesday, March 15

6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 17

6:30 pm Third Salutations to the Theotokos

Sunday, March 19/*Third Sunday of Lent/
Veneration of the Holy Cross/Holy Martyrs
Chrysanthos and Daria*

Procession of Holy Cross at Doxology

Orthros: Grave Tone

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

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

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

Memorial: Vivian Berendji (40 days)

Fellowship: Philoptochos Society for Holy Cross

*5:00 pm Lenten Pan-Orthodox Vespers at
Ss. George and Dimitrie Romanian Orthodox
Church*

Monday, March 20

5:30 pm Great Compline and Adult Study

Wednesday, March 22

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 24

6:30 pm Great Vespers for the Annunciation

(Continued on Page 3)

Worship Schedule (Continued from Page 2)

Saturday, March 25/*Annunciation of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary*

8:00 am *Orthros*

9:00 am *Divine Liturgy*

Epistle: Hebrews 2:11-18

Gospel: Luke 1:24-38

Sunday, March 26/*Fourth Sunday of Lent/
St. John Climacos/Apodosis of the Annunciation/
Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel*

Orthros: Fourth Plagal Tone

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

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20

Gospel: Mark 9:17-31

Memorials: Anastasia Kozonas (3 months), Christos Patsis (3 years); Smaragdi Gianakoulis (3 months); Dina Dounis (1 year)

Fellowship: Ristache Family in Honor of Daria's First Birthday

5:00 pm *Lenten Pan-Orthodox Vespers at St. Paul Orthodox Church (OCA)*

Monday, March 27

5:30 pm *Great Compline and Adult Study*

Wednesday, March 29

6:00 pm *Presanctified Liturgy*

Friday, March 31

6:30 pm *The Akathist Hymn*



During the Season of Fasting and Repentance, You are Invited to Join in an

Adult Study in the Church with
Father John and
Father Florin

*The Lenten Journey
A Six-Week Series*

Mondays through April 3
5:30 pm Great Compline
6:30 pm Adult Study

From Father John (Continued from Page 1)

Finally, fasting allows the soul to be ever vigilant and prayerful, rather than weighed down by dissipation and laziness. The opening words of the Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, which is prayed daily in Lent, are *“Lord and Master of my life, cast away from me the spirit of laziness . . .”* The primary reason for not fasting is laziness: Yet fasting is the most effective tool in overcoming our spiritual and physical laziness! Fasting strengthens our soul, renews our mind, and reinvigorates our spiritual resolve to live in union with Christ. *“Let us put on the armor of abstinence and clothe ourselves in the glory of the angels!”* (Doxastikon, Orthros, Sunday of Forgiveness)

With Love in Christ,

Father John



Parish Council Report

Dear Father John, Father Florin, Ministries and Parishioners,

I want to thank everyone who helped make Father Florin's Ordination Weekend two wonderful events in the history of our Church. Truly Father Florin exemplifies the statement, "AXIOS!" We wish Father, Presvytera Alexandra and Daria many years of happiness and good health. Let us pray that his tenure with our Parish is long term.

Sometime this month, I would like to meet with all our ministry leaders to discuss our role as good Stewards and what we can do to enhance our involvement with the Church as a whole. I will contact each of you by email as to the best date and time which works for all. I would like each of you to please come prepared with your input concerning issues that you may have and how we can move forward as devout Christians to better serve our Church. I also encourage some positive feedback so we can continue growing our ministry commitments.

As we prepare ourselves for Great Lent, let us be mindful that your presence at Church services during the fast is appreciated. Let us come together during this great period as one loving community as we journey toward the ultimate celebration of our Lord's Resurrection!

Congratulations to our Folk Dancers at FDF! I was so proud of our children. We placed in two categories and Sofia Poulis was a scholarship recipient.

The Parish has worked diligently on the Church 360 platform which enables all of us to stay connected and recognize each of you on your Name Days and Birthdays. John Karas would be more than happy to help our Parishioners with enrolling into the program. He will make himself available after Church services on Sundays.

Gus Flangas and key Food Festival personnel have started holding meetings as the Festival approaches: The Festival will be *on September 15-17*. We encourage your support in attending meetings and letting us know that you would like to be a part of this ongoing super event that has the attention of the entire city. By offering your services, we can collectively contribute to our Church's many needs. The proceeds of this event allow us the necessary funds in the operation of our facilities and personnel expenses. The Festival is also a mechanism to bring new members to Orthodoxy. Ultimately, isn't that what our spiritual goal should be? Please, I ask that this year we do our best to promote and get involved as it marks our 50th year celebration. Raffle tickets as well as coupon books will be available soon. Your support and hands-on participation are key to our success. Our Parish Council members will be soliciting your help. Please be proactive and enlist your talents before we approach you.

Finally, there have been several events and milestones that our Church has crossed, and the Hellenic Historical Society of our Church is working diligently on identifying these important days in the life of our Church. Those who have not seen the large collection of documents recorded by this ministry are missing out. Records and articles that date back to the original Church on Carson Avenue offer a wealth of knowledge regarding our Parish history. Please contact our Church Office, and Karen will put you in touch with a member of the HHS for more information and to set up an appointment to view documents.

May God continue to bless our Parish! **John Fotopoulos, Parish Council President**

CHURCH 360

As we expand the ways we communicate and engage with our community, we request you take the time to fill out the questionnaire we have prepared. Click [HERE](#) to access the questionnaire. The information you provide will only be used by the Parish to better serve the members of our community.

Everyone who fills out this questionnaire will be entered into a raffle. The winner of the raffle will receive: A beautiful Icon of the Baptism of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. The drawing for this raffle will take place *on Sunday, April 9 – Palm Sunday*.





Stewardship 2023

WALK IN LOVE

*“Walk in love, as Christ loved us
and gave Himself up for us,
a fragrant offering and
sacrifice to God.”
(Ephesians 5:2)*

Connecting in Love
with Christ,
Our Church
and One Another
Throughout the Year!

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

+++++

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

“Walk in Love”

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 2023 of \$ _____.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Orthodox Christian: Yes No

Orthodox Christian: Yes No

Others sharing in the gift (children): _____

Stewardship and Community Outreach



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Having just begun our journey to Pascha, through Great Lent, we are reminded of the three pillars that should especially guide us: Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving. According to St. Seraphim of Sarov, these three disciplines, along with every good deed done for Christ's sake, help us deepen our relationship with Christ and aid in the acquisition of the Holy Spirit.

The ability to pray is one of the many gifts given to us by the Lord. All the virtues and powers of God are attained primarily by prayer, *"for prayer is the root of everything."* (St. Theophan the Recluse) Our prayers must be to unite our minds and hearts with God. We should pray that God's will be done in our lives, that whatever we need from God, for our spiritual growth, will be given to us. Our prayers should consciously and with full awareness express the fact that all that we have, are and do is dependent on God.

On Judgment Day we will also be giving an account of our stewardship of prayer. This accounting will recognize what we were able to cause through our prayer, to the glory of the Lord, and it will also include an accounting of what we could have accomplished through additional prayer. Thus we must always remember the words of our Lord: *"And whatever you ask in My Name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."* (John 14:13)

The ability to fast is another one of the many gifts given to us by the Lord. Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ fasted and He taught His Disciples to fast. His teaching was to show us the path to gain mastery over ourselves and to conquer the passions of the flesh. Fasting liberates us from dependence on things of this world in order to concentrate on the things of the Kingdom of God. It gives power to our soul so that it will not yield to temptation and sin. *"Meager food at the table of the pure cleanses the soul of those who partake from all passions . . . for the work of fasting and vigil is the beginning of every effort against sin and lust . . . almost all passionate drives decrease through fasting."* (St. Isaac the Syrian)

By freeing ourselves from carnal passions we open ourselves to the free gift of salvation in Christ, that it might produce great fruit in our lives. We fast so that we might more effectively serve God. In serving God, we serve one another as good stewards of this marvelous gift.

When we pray and fast, we must then show our love through active generosity to others, which is almsgiving. St. John Chrysostom reminds us that no one can be saved without giving alms and without caring for the poor. All that we have belongs to God, we are simply stewards of those gifts He has bestowed upon us. Therefore, our Lord calls upon us to share these gifts with those in need: *"For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me."* (Matthew 25:35-36)

The giving of alms should be a sacrificial act for it to have spiritual worth. We do not just give of what we have left over after satisfying our own needs. We must be willing to take from ourselves and give to others. The Church teaches us that what we save through fasting and abstinence during Lenten Season, should be given to the poor and not saved for "a rainy day." Let us remember: *"A poor man, when he reaches out to you, does not beg, but offers you the Kingdom of God!"* (Elder Arsenie Papacioc of Romania)

May this blessed Lenten Season, through prayer, fasting and almsgiving, bring all of us much reflection on the state of our soul. And with faith in our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, through His abundant mercy, we may be granted everlasting life in His Eternal Kingdom. Kali Sarakosti!

In Christ, Stewardship and Outreach Committee



Your Faith in Action

A Special Presentation following the Divine Liturgy

Sunday, March 26, 2023

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
5300 S El Camino Rd • Las Vegas, NV

NICK KASEMEOTES, IOCC GIFT OFFICER,
will give a brief update on the work of IOCC, the Ukraine crisis,
the earthquake in Syria/Turkey and projects in Greece.
Also, how much our help is really impacting families.

Since 1992, IOCC has delivered more than \$771 million in emergency assistance
and development programs families and communities in 60 countries.



8% of our funds go to administration and fundraising.

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

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



IOCC®

PO Box 17398 • Baltimore, MD 21297-0429

877.803.IOCC • relief@iocc.org

Visit us online at iocc.org

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

Building and Maintenance Committee

Wishing everyone a Blessed Lent! The month of February was quite busy. We were able to finish the repair and replacement of all the perimeter iron gating as well as the drywall and painting in the warehouse from a recent roof leak. After a recent visit from our representative at Church Mutual, we have also started inventorying all items and updating our insurance schedule. Our contact at Lowes who is also a Parish member, Daniel Brunetti, was extremely generous in securing the donation of 15 palettes of materials needed to get our field ready for summer and our Festival in the fall.

I am happy to report that we hired a replacement for Marc Harvel. Our new maintenance man is Bruce Royal. He has extensive knowledge and experience in plumbing, electrical needs and carpentry and we are very lucky to have him join our community. With that said, please be patient as he learns the grounds and facilities. Please also continue to be mindful and respectful by placing things back where they belong and picking up after yourselves. I dislike having to reiterate this monthly, but it is disheartening when we are trying to keep things clean and organized for everyone and various individuals continuously abuse and disregard these efforts. We are trying to avoid reaching a point where facility use is limited or restricted.

As far as projects, we have prioritized a few. The first is our HVAC units which are on order and expected to arrive by September. The cost of these is \$95,000. Some of the other much needed repairs also include paint and stucco exterior of the Community Center building. Bids for this have come in around \$130,000. Finally, we need to repave and restripe the parking lot(s). I currently have this out for bid with various companies. We are looking to raise at least \$250,000.

I ask you to support the Building and Maintenance Committee with any monetary donation so that we can help pay for these restoration improvements.

In Christ, Eleni Filios, Chair of the Building and Maintenance Committee

*GREAT LENT BEGAN ON
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27*

*HOLY WEEK IS APRIL 9 - 15
GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA IS
APRIL 16*

*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.*

*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and
just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse
us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)*



*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.*

From Father Florin

The Annunciation of the Theotokos

The Great Feast of the Annunciation (“Evangelismos” in Greek) of the Theotokos is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Church. It is celebrated on March 25, which always falls during Great Lent.

The word “Evangelismos” (Ευαγγελισμός) means the announcement of the Good News of the salvation of mankind by our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. This salvation was made possible by the consent of the most pure, most humble, and most faithful human being in the history of mankind: The Virgin Mary – the God-sent daughter of the old, faithful and barren couple, Joachim and Anna. According to our Orthodox teaching, she is “more honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim” – Cherubim and Seraphim being the two highest ranks of Angels who stand constantly in the presence of God.

We Orthodox Christians do not call the Virgin Mary by her name, as it is considered disrespectful. In the Orthodox tradition, she is called the Theotokos, which literally means “She who gave birth to God”, or in short, “the Mother of God.” In the Greek Orthodox Church, we also call her Panayia (pronounced: Pa-na-YEE-ah), the All-Holy one, and most affectionately invoke her intercessions to our Lord in every instance of need.

In the Gospel passage for the Annunciation during the Divine Liturgy, we find out that the Archangel Gabriel was the one sent to tell her that she was chosen to become the Mother of the Incarnate God. So, on this Feast, we celebrate two things: 1) The divine initiative of God: He took on flesh from the Theotokos for our salvation; 2) The Theotokos’ consent: She freely accepted the vocation offered to her.

In our own lives, we are called to imitate the Theotokos’ example. God wants us to freely accept and follow His will. Is that an easy task to accomplish? Of course not! Accepting and doing God’s will in a Godless world will always be a difficult thing to do, but we must never forget that we are not alone: “God is with us” – as we chant repeatedly during Great Lent.

On a personal note, the Annunciation has become a special feast for my family, as a year ago, our daughter Daria Gabriella was born. Even though her birthday is on March 26 – which will be on a Sunday this year, when we celebrate the Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel (thus, her middle name, Gabriella) – it is nonetheless a feast associated with the Annunciation. A lot of things have happened since, that changed our lives completely, and for this we are grateful to God. I remember it snowed that day in Jackson, Michigan, a phenomenon that rarely takes place in the sunny Las Vegas, a fact that contributes to our joy even more.

I would like to conclude by mentioning also the traditional Greek Independence Day, commemorating the start of the War of Greek Independence in 1821. Greece had been part of the Ottoman Empire since 1453. The Greek revolt was precipitated on March 25, 1821, when Bishop Germanos of Patras raised the flag of revolution over the Monastery of Agia Lavra in the Peloponnese. The cry “Freedom or Death” became the motto of the revolution. The Greeks experienced early successes on the battlefield, including the capture of Athens in June 1822.

To the whole community of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, “Blessed Feast Day!” and “Χρόνια Πολλά!”

Fr. F. J. Ristache





Dear Father John, Father Florin and Beloved Fellow Parishioners:

With every good intention this letter is intended to refresh the memory of our community and/or familiarize those of us who may be unaware of the history of the *Hellenic Historical Society*.

In 2003, at the Parish Assembly of that year, the *Hellenic Historical Society* (HHS) was established. From that time through 2009 a concentrated effort was made by our archivists to systematically collect and preserve the first 50 years of history of our St. John the Baptist Church Community and the Greek Community at large in Las Vegas and Nevada. This monumental undertaking guaranteed that our history has not been lost.

In 2009 our community was able to enjoy the fruits of that labor at the 50th Anniversary Celebration. During the 3-day celebration of *Our Golden Heritage*, 740 chronologically ordered display boards with a program guide, presenting approximately 7,500 documents, letters, charters, books, photos, newspaper clippings, invitations, etc. were mounted on the walls of Panos Hall and on the walls of the foyer.

In 2019 at the 2-day 60th Anniversary Celebration of our community, *Our Diamond Jubilee*, we were able to further enjoy the fruits of that initial labor in addition to 50 new display boards. These displays were reproduced and those interested can find five large albums in the Church Library.

Please remember how valuable and interesting our story has been. Too many of us do not know of the events that led us to this magnificent Church where we are today. There are **many gaps in the history** which we would like to fill. To further preserve a more inclusive and detailed history we are asking the Parish Council, the Ministries and Pan Orthodox organizations to **select a member of their body to act as historian to gather past, present and future records and to share these documents with the Hellenic Historical Society.**

We welcome any and all submissions from any member of the community who has material pertinent to the St. John the Baptist Church Community and the Greek Community at large in Las Vegas and Nevada.

We look forward to receiving your historical materials. Please see the guidelines for your submissions.

We count on your continued support of this most important ministry.

Thank you kindly.

Your Sisters in Christ, for Hellenic Historical Society.

Nitsa Filios
nitsalv@aol.com
702 595-6888

Cheryl Pandelis
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SPECIFICATIONS FOR SUBMISSIONS

- a) actual materials to Karen Rawlinson at St. John Church Office (702 221-8245)
(a receipt will be issued for temporarily loaned or permanently donated items)
- b) digital materials (**high resolution** scanned documents, captioned photos, PDF's, etc.).
to susanstamis@gmail.com

SUGGESTED MATERIALS (including but not limited to)

- a) Documents
- b) Letters
- c) Charters
- d) Books
- e) Newspaper pages or clippings
- f) Invitations
- g) Photos (please include)
 - 1. name of event
 - 2. date of event
 - 3. names of people
 - a) labeled left to right
 - b) front row, second row, third row etc.

We count on your continued support of this most important ministry.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

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Susan Stamis
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Philoptochos News

Dear Father John, Father Florin and Fellow Parishioners,

On Sunday, March 5, the Ladies Philoptochos Society will host the Kids 'n' Cancer Fellowship and Collection to benefit the Camp Agape ministry which is sponsored by the Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos. With your generous donations you will be participating in putting a smile and giggle in a child's summer that may not have been there. You will be able to give a parent a few minutes of relief knowing that their little one will forget about tests, blood draws and IVs for just a little while. As we like to think about these happy times, please note that the Ladies Philoptochos is also there when the worst happens to comfort and aid the family. More information will be found on the flyer in this issue of *The Desert Messenger*.

March 5 will also be the kickoff for the Wine Wagon Raffle. Members: Please start bringing your donations of wine to Church. We hope to collect upwards of 70 bottles to stuff in the wagon. Tickets will be \$5 each and the drawing will be at the Agape Picnic **on Holy Pascha, April 16**.

Great and Holy Lent is a time where we should slow down, pray, confess and take a spiritual journey. It also the time when your Philoptochos needs its members more than ever to help with the Traditions of our Faith and the preparations for Pascha. Please check the *Weekly Word* for dates and times for all the different events. If you are new to St. John the Baptist, participating in as many of these projects and services will be a great way to meet some of our fabulous members. If you are not on the *Weekly Word* email blast and would like to be, please let Tina Liaos, Chris Snow or me know. Of course, by being a member you are automatically on the list.

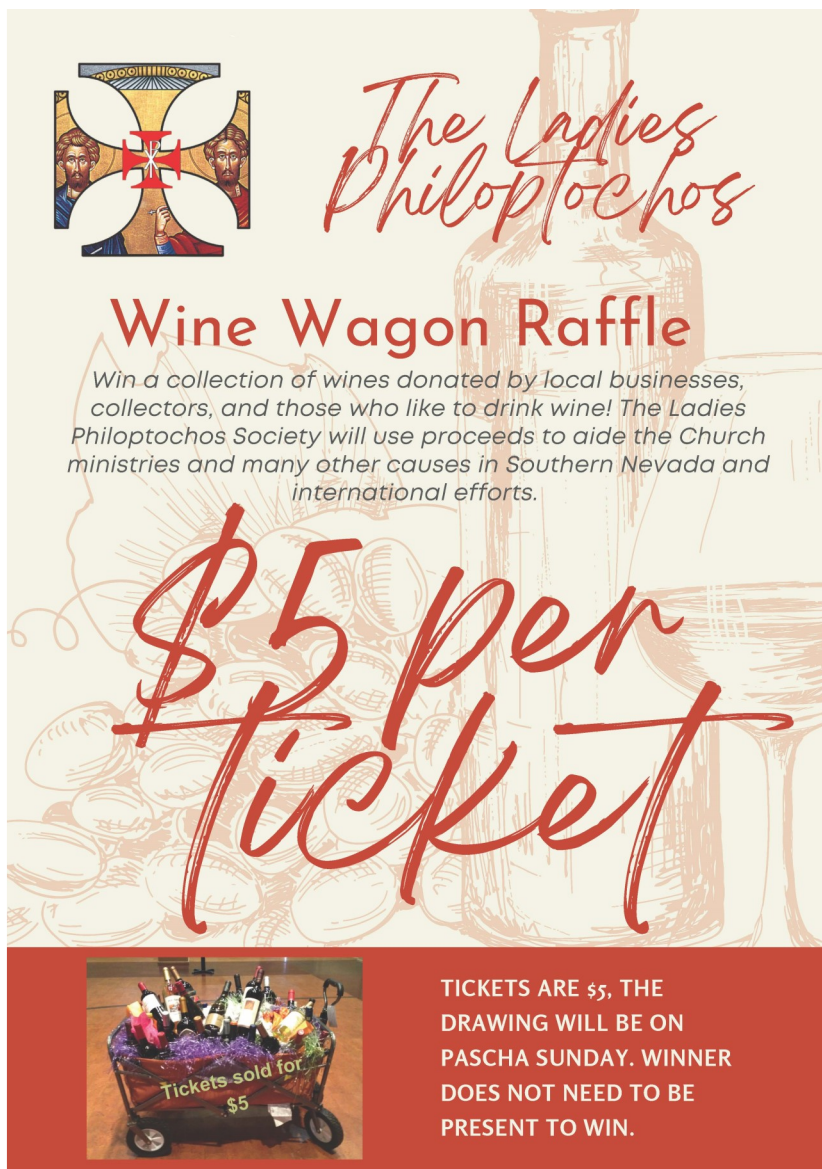
On Sunday, March 5, our Parish will host the first of the Pan Orthodox Lenten Vespers and light suppers. At this time, we will need salad, fruit, and a Lenten dessert to go with our dinner. As it seems to work for us, we will need several teams – to set up, cook, serve and clean up. Please let me know if you can help with this dinner.

Membership in the Ladies Philoptochos Society is still open. We welcome all with open arms to be a part of the Faith, Fellowship and Philanthropy that is the Philoptochos.

Elections for the Board of Officers is coming up this May. We invite all members in good standing to think about sharing their time and talents as a member of the Board. If you have a passion for our Faith and would like to share it – or for Social Services, Fundraising, working on projects – we need and want you!

As always, I give thanks for all the lovely women and the few strong men that help with all the projects that come our way.

Kali Sarakosti! Καλή Σαρακοστή!
Bernadette Anthony,
Philoptochos President



The Ladies Philoptochos

Wine Wagon Raffle

Win a collection of wines donated by local businesses, collectors, and those who like to drink wine! The Ladies Philoptochos Society will use proceeds to aide the Church ministries and many other causes in Southern Nevada and international efforts.

\$5 per ticket

TICKETS ARE \$5, THE DRAWING WILL BE ON PASCHA SUNDAY. WINNER DOES NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT TO WIN.

Please join the
Ladies Philoptochos Society
on Sunday, March 5, 2023
to Celebrate the Return of



The mission of the Kids 'N' Cancer/Camp Agape Ministry is dedicated to providing support for children afflicted with cancer and their families. This beloved ministry offers a compassionate and caring environment, exemplary of Christ's unconditional love, along with an opportunity to shape meaningful friendships and create memories.

GIVE YOUR HEART TO A CHILD

Please make your plans to attend the Fellowship following Divine Liturgy and support this most worthwhile ministry.



Philoptochos Members ~ "Go Red for Your Heart"

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

Rev. Father John Hondros
frjohn@vegaskgreekorthodox.com

Rev. Father Florin Ristache
frflorin@vegaskgreekorthodox.com

Karen Rawlinson
Administrative Assistant

Michelle Eugenio
Bookkeeper

Bruce Royal
Maintenance & Grounds

Office Hours

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

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

Parish Council: John Fotopoulos

Philoptochos: Bernadette Anthony

Stewardship & Community Outreach:
John Karas

Choir: Athena Mertes

Chanters & Youth Choir:
Presvytera Maria Hondros

Church School: Eileen Koutsulis

Altar Servers: Father John

GOYA:

Fr. Florin Ristache & Maha Habiba

Orthodox Family Fellowship:
Fr. Florin Ristache & April Rivera

Young Adults:
Fr. Florin Ristache

Greek Folk Dance: Sia Dalacas

Greek School: Paula Kelesis

Mr. & Mrs.:

Fr. John & Presv. Maria,
Fr. Florin & Presv. Alexandra

Kali Parea: Demetrios Asim

Adult Basketball:
Nick Kelesis

Forerunners: Paula Kelesis

Orthodox Bookstore:
Paraskevi Santamaria

Greek Food Festival: Gus Flangas

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

Photography & Live-Streaming:
Bill & Erin Bruninga

Ministry News

Church School

Hi Everyone! Congratulations to our FDF Dancers. We are so proud of you and all your hard work.

AXIOS to Father Florin! What an amazing weekend we had witnessing his Ordinations to the Holy Diaconate and Holy Priesthood.

Happy Lent! Our school year is going strong. In our classes we are learning about the Church Calendars and the Holy Sacraments. The students are learning a ton of new information about our Orthodox Faith this year.

Please let the teachers know if you are interested in bringing snacks or small bottles of water. We would really appreciate it.

Per our annual tradition, we will have the Procession of Icons *on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 5*. Please make sure that your children bring their Icons to participate in the beautiful service. This will be a Family Worship Sunday.

Upcoming Family Worship Sundays in April: *Palm Sunday, April 9; Holy Pascha, April 16*.

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

Greek Folk Dance

Our Folk Dance ministry participated in the annual Metropolis Folk Dance Festival that took place in Phoenix, Arizona from February 16 to 20. We had 46 participants from our Parish attend, in three different groups. Our oldest competitive group, Erimos, won 3rd place in the Senior category. Aetopoula, competing in the Junior category, won 2nd place. Our youngest, non-competitive group, Liondaria, stole the show in the Exhibition category, and wowed us all with their tsamiko! Also, Sofia Poulis from our Erimos group won a scholarship! Congratulations to Nicholas Katopodis who was selected to sing the US National Anthem, and did so beautifully. It was a wonderful weekend, and we thank all the families who attended.

We especially want to thank our directors, who put in countless hours leading our groups. Without their hard work and dedication every week since September, we would not have been so successful. Nick Barbarino, Demitri Pouridis, Niko Pouridis, George Karvounidis, Kyriacos Philippou, Alyssa Liaos, and Gabi Payan are true leaders!

Finally, a big thank you to all the members of the community who supported us at our FDF preview pancake breakfast. It was wonderful to see Panos Hall overflowing with love and joy for our ministry. We would also like to thank Demetri Philippou, who spearheaded our pancake breakfast! There are so many more thank you's that we need to highlight! The Parish Council provided our ministry with overwhelming support this year, and we are also forever grateful! George Kypreos made a generous donation to our costume fund, and we could not have bought new costumes from Greece without his generosity. Steve Tzelalis and Vaso Tzelalis cooked so many meals for our fundraisers throughout the year! Philoptohos gave our ministry a generous donation! And so many individuals provided love, kind words, and donations to keep our program alive. It was a wonderful dance year! See you in August for our 2024 season!

Much Gratitude, Folk Dance Board

Young Adults - 18 Years through Early 30s

Dear Young Adults of St. John the Baptist,

Please join us *on Saturday, March 11 at 8:30 am* for a hike at Lone Mountain Park (4445 N. Jensen Street, Las Vegas). Please see Darren (Constantine) for more details. You can also contact me at frflorin@vegasgreekorthodox.com to let us know you are coming.

Thank You, Father Florin



GOYA - Our Teen Ministry

Dear GOYANs,

Many of you asked me when are we going to have our Teen Retreat? I am glad to announce that we have finally found the perfect dates: *Friday, March 10, starting at 5:00 pm, through Saturday, March 11, until 11:00 am.*

Please join us on Friday for a Lenten Dinner, followed by Salutations to the Theotokos, and then Confession; we will have our traditional games and fellowship, but most importantly: PRAYER. On Saturday morning, we will enjoy a Lenten Breakfast together, pray, have spiritual lessons, and enjoy an unforgettable time with our friends at Church!

Extremely important: We need parent chaperones for the night, so please contact me to let me know if you can help. Also, in order to know how much food we need, please do not forget to RSVP at frflorin@vegasgreekorthodox.com. You can also contact Maha, our GOYA Advisor.

Thank you all and see you soon!

Love in Christ, Father Florin and Maha

Orthodox Family Fellowship (OFF)

We remind you of our invitation to the families of the Parish to our annual *Lenten Mini Retreat* for our OFF Ministry *on Saturday, March 4*. We will be attending the Divine Liturgy *at 9:00 am* for the *Saturday of Souls* in the morning when we will pray for our departed ones. *From 11:00 am to 1:00 pm* we will go to Panos Hall and will enjoy Lenten food together, as well as other activities and games. Also, the children will have an opportunity for the Sacrament of *Holy Confession* with Father John.

If you would like to contribute by bringing Lenten food to our Mini Retreat, please contact April, our OFF Advisor! Please do not forget to RSVP at frflorin@vegasgreekorthodox.com.

With Love in Christ, Father Florin and April

Youth Choir

Kali Sarakosti! Blessed Lent!

Congratulations to our dancers who performed at FDF in Phoenix last month. Your dancing *and singing* were fantastic! We are so proud of all of you. Special kudos go to Nicholas Katopodis who was selected to sing the National Anthem at Opening Ceremonies! Awesome job!

We will resume our Youth Choir practices *on Sundays, March 12, 19 and 26 at 12:15 pm sharp* (right after Church School) in Classroom 6. Snacks will be provided. We will continue to work on the New Divine Liturgy as well as Holy Saturday Morning, *Saturday, April 15 at 8:45 am*. Please mark your calendars.

Love in Christ, Presvytera Maria

Mr. & Mrs.

Dear Couples of St. John the Baptist,

We thank Effie and Mike Lekar for hosting a most successful Mr. and Mrs. Potluck Fellowship in their home last month. It was well attended, the food was bountiful and amazing, and the discussion was lively as always.

This month we will take a break due to the abundance of worship services. Mr. and Mrs. will resume in April following Pascha. Please look to the April issue of *The Desert Messenger* for details. May we have a blessed Lenten journey to our Lord's Passion and Resurrection.

Kali Sarakosti! Father John, Presvytera Maria, Father Florin and Presvytera Alexandra

Lord of the Powers, be with us. For in times of distress, we have no other help but You. Lord of the Powers, have mercy on us!
(From Great Compline)

2023 OFF Mini Retreat

Come, join us, and learn
about Holy Confession
during the Lenten Season!



Saturday, March 4 at 11:00 am

Immediately following Saturday of Souls Memorial

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

All 5th graders and under are welcome!

Kali Parea - For the 40+ Crowd

On Saturday, March 25, the Annunciation of the Theotokos, starting at noon and until 3:00 pm, we will be gathering at the home of Demetrious Asim for a Lenten Potluck (fish is permitted for this Feast)! We will bless the water, his home and everyone present. After that we will have a spiritual discussion with question and answers, and we will enjoy a meal and great fellowship together.

Please, contact Demetrious Asim for details and to let him know what you will be bringing.

Thank you, Demetri, for hosting this event! We are all looking forward to it!

In Christ, Father Florin, on behalf of Kali Parea

Forerunners - Our Seniors Fellowship

Our Valentine's Day Luncheon was wonderfully attended! We had a great time together, with lots of Valentine treats, Bingo, door and raffle prizes!

Thank you to Steve Tzelalis, Mike Beeler and Nick Xerogianes for cooking and serving!

A special thank you to Bea Rotas, who for years has brought the dessert to our Luncheons for all to enjoy. This month she sponsored the delicious Valentine cake made by Van Bakery. Thank you for your generosity.

For March, please note that we have moved our Forerunners Luncheon **to Monday, March 20 at 11:30 am**. We will have a delicious Lenten meal, door and raffle prizes as well as Bingo.

Kali Sarakosti! Paula Kelesis



"You are my rock and my fortress; for Your Name's sake lead me and guide me." (Psalm 31:3)

2023 Orthodox Teen Overnight Retreat



*Come, join us, and
learn about Repentance during
the Lenten Season!*

Friday, March 10 at 5:00 pm through
Saturday, March 11 at 11:00 am

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

All Middle School and High School
Students are welcome!

LENT



*Please, wear Church clothes
and, also, bring with you
casual and appropriate
sleeping clothes, sleeping bag,
pillow, toothbrush, etc.*

Orthodox Bookstore

Greetings from the Bookstore!

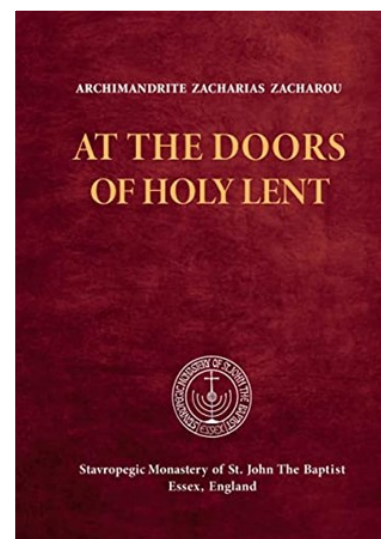
New to the store this month for our Lenten journey is *At the Doors of Holy Lent*, by Archimandrite Zacharias Zacharou of the Stavropegic Monastery of St. John the Baptist in Essex, England. First published in 2021, this selection has two key themes, the first involving the antechamber of Holy Lent beginning with reflections on the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee and taking us on through to the Sunday of Forgiveness. The author explains that during this period, the Church “sets forth before our eyes various lessons through the Gospel readings” and that “through some word, deed, or attitude, these people (of the parables) all attracted God’s gaze upon them. These suffering souls, who had withered away either because of sin or because of not knowing the true God, came into the presence of the Lord and ‘a spiritual sun, the name of which is persona,’ began to rise in them. Their attitude and their words are concrete examples of a right presentation before the Holy of Holies.”

The second theme, in keeping with this right presentation before God, revolves around what the author calls constant principles for our spiritual warfare. Covered are a range of topics that extend to us not just once per year for Great Lent and Holy Week, but for a lifetime in the Church. We are to transform from persons of the “reproachable passions to the Godly passion of divine love” as set forth by the prescription of the Church. In this latter chapter the author states:

“If fasting occurs without any spiritual purpose, it is neutral, meaningless, it may even harm. Whereas, if its purpose is to make the mind light and vigilant in prayer, and the heart painful and contrite so that it may open to the grace of God, then it has value in eternity. Without a crushed heart, man is a stranger to God, since in this world the Lord had to suffer and be crucified. Christ was revealed to us as a man of sorrows, and so, if we do not suffer together with Him, we remain alienated from His life.”

Concluding with a final chapter on the Prayer of Saint Ephraim, this is a perfect read for those seeking not only greater spiritual depths of Orthodox Theology this Lenten Season, but further explanation and meaning behind why we do what we do as striving Orthodox Christians. We hope to see you in the store soon for your copy or other Lenten needs (Triodion/Pentecostarion books, Holy Week service books, prayer books, confession guides, prayer ropes, etc.). Come and see!

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



Ordination of Florin Ristache
to the Holy Diaconate
by Bishop Ioannis of Phocaea



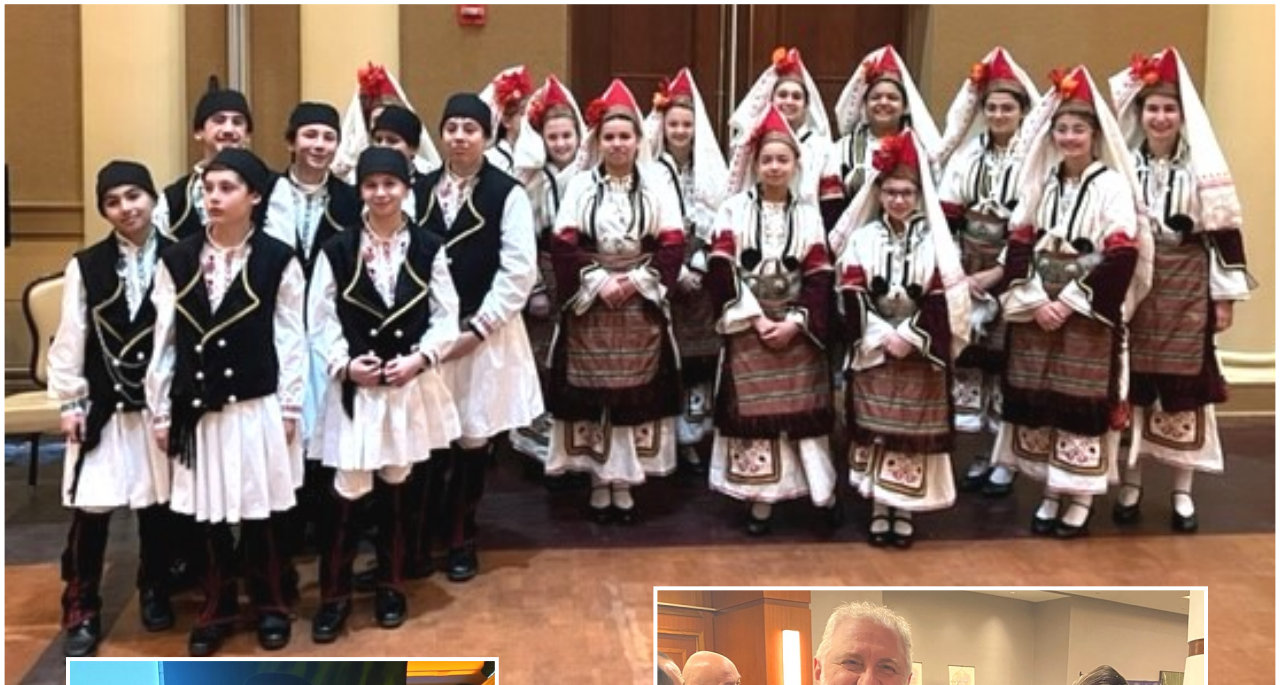
February 4,
2023 -
AXIOS!!!



Ordination of Florin Ristache to the Holy Priesthood
by the Hand of Bishop Ioannis of Phocaea
February 5, 2023 ~ AXIOS!!!



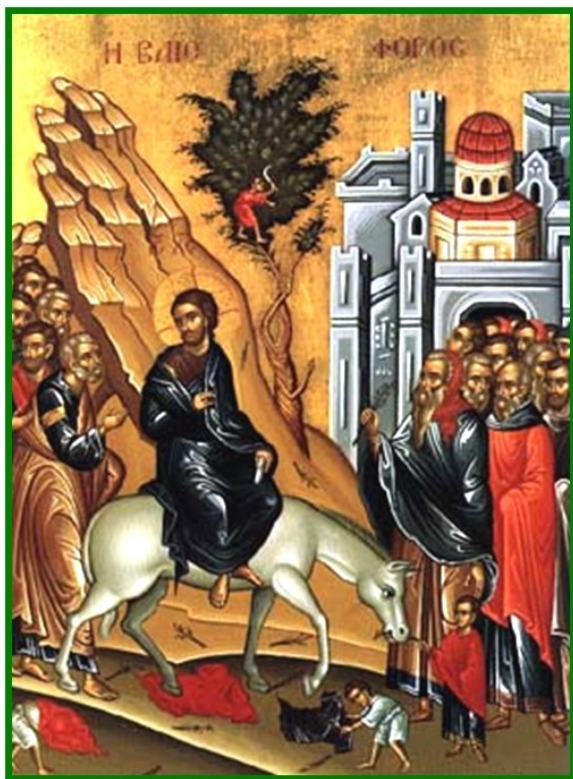
BRAVO TO OUR GREEK FOLK DANCE GROUPS!



FDF 2023 ~ RISE!



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



Palm Sunday Fish Luncheon

Sunday, April 9, 2023

Following the
Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
in Panos Hall

Menu:

Baked Fish Plaki and Rice,
Salad, Fresh Baked Bread
and Dessert

\$20 per Person

Cash Bar: Beer and Wine





Please Join Us for Our
AGAPE PICNIC
Holy Pascha Sunday, April 16, 2023
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
12:00 noon to 4:00 pm
(Agape Vespers at noon, followed by the Picnic)



***Tickets are \$30
for either Traditional
Lamb or Chicken
Dinner Plate or
Specialty Item 4-Pack
(Spanakopita, Tyropita,
Kreatopita and Pastitsio)***

- ♦ *Greek Pastries and Bar*
- ♦ *Greek Music*
- ♦ *Easter Egg Hunt at 2:00 pm*
- ♦ *Table Reservations are Available and Encouraged*

Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!

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



With Gratitude to God for Our Pledged Stewards in 2023

If you wish to become a Parish Steward, please fill out Pledge Form and return to Karen

Acovino, Richard and Angela	Doukakis, Panagiotis and Chrisi	Kalkas, John and Rena	Melake, Nayel and Euxana
Adamy, Marina	Dramitinos, Mary	Kambouris, Litsa	Menegatos, James
Adondakis, George and Kim	Dudunakis, Michael	Kanis, Constantinos and Katie	Merritt, Devin and Sonia
Alcala, Georgia	Earl, Christine	Karas, George	Meyers, Evon
Alexander, Eleni	Eliades, Aristotelis and Caroline	Karas, James	Mikelis, Nikolas and Angela
Alford, Cynthia "Mary"	Eliades, Eleni and	Karas, John and Marcie	Minas, Arthur and Ewa
Allen, John and Denise	Garza, Everardo	Karas, Kevin and Elaine	Monoyudis, Jim and Julie
Anastasakis, Mark and Elaine	Eliades, Gregory and Maria	Karris, Mark and Suzanne	Moore, Brenda
Andrews, Catherine+	Eliades, Harry and Agapi	Kasiotis, Nicholas and Claudia	Murray, Christopher and
Andrews, Chris and Pamela	Eliades, Katerina	Katopodis, Efstratios	George, Veneta
Andrews, George	Eliades, Sia	Katre, Sotir Mark	Nicholas, John and Estella
Andrews, Vasiliki	Eliakis, Peter	Katsaros, Thomas and Sharon	Nichols, George and Tereza
Andricopulos, Margo	Eliakis, Varthie	Kelesis, Paula	Nicolas, Samer and Christine
Anthony, Stavros and Bernadette	Eyler, John and Elizabeth	Kiflezgi, Rahel	Niforos, Helen
Antoniou, Elias and Glorielys	Failla, Jennifer	Kirchner, Gary "Barlaam"	Nixon, John and Ellyn
Aristides, George and Diana	Fenlason, Nathan and	Kirollos, Michael and	Olmsted, Travis and Marilyn
Balason, Voula	Zmina-Fenlason, Jennifer	Molina, Adriana	Orlando, Ritsa
Baldwin, Richard and Vivi	Feola, Richard	Kokkinis, Peter and Jennifer	Oustian, Juliette and Ararat
Balodimas, James	Filios, Spiridon and Eleni	Koliambas, Eleni	Pahigiannis, Nikon
Barbarino, Demetra	Fischer, Cheryl	Kontos, Diana	Paikos, Tom and Elizabeth
Bartel, Robert and Ioanna	Fischetti, George and Cassidy	Koroni, Tara	Palivos, Peter and Vicky
Beeler, Mike and Carolyn	Fitzgerald, Norman and	Kostas, James	Pallis, Paul
Beeman, Benita	McCullen, Sandra	Kostopoulos, Georgia	Pandelis, Cheryl
Belojevic, Marija	Flangas, Gus and Tamara	Kountanis, Panagiota	Panos, Jeanne
Berendji, Jim and Vivian+	Flangas, Marilyn	Kouretas, Daniel	Papas, Christian and Nicole
Birtas, Helen and Ann	Foster, Kyle and	Kouris, Demitris and Terry	Papas, Peter and Rita
Bjorklund, Danielle and	Pierro, Maria Elena	Koutsulis, John and Eileen	Pappas, Panagiotis and Andrea
Geronsin, Justin	Fotopoulos, John and Barbara	Koutsulis, Sam and Effie	Paschalis, Evangelos and Maria
Bochanis, Aris and Savannah	Fountas, Constantinos	Krikie, Jonathan and Iryna	Payan, Luis and Eleni
Booth, Alina	Fountoulakis, Vasileios	Kypreos, George	Peratikos, Tony
Britten, Ronald and Carol	Franco, Yolanda	Kypreos, Peter and Geri	Peterson, Todd and Diane
Brown, Faye	Frangakis, Christos and Anastasia	Kyriannis, Justin and Linda	Petro, Aleko and Georgia
Brown, Mark and Alyssa	Gauvin, Chad and Marissa	Lakkis, Christina	Philoptochos Society
Bruninga, William and Erin	Generales, John and Arlene	Latelle, Penny	Pierro, Joe and Rhonda
Bryant, Timothy and Janet	George, Pete and Georgia	Lavine, Frederick	Politis, Pantelis and Dimitra
Bucy, Brent and Elaine	Gialketsis, William and Rachelle	Lee, David and Alexandra	Poulis, Chris and Francine
Carahalios, John and Constance	Giambi, Jason and Kristian	Lekar, Caroline	Pouridis, Kouli and Para
Caredis, Jon and Marjorie	Giouzelis, Sasa	Lekar, Michael and Effie	Powell, Scott and Angela
Carrico, William and Alexandra	Gordon, Victor and Demetria	Leong, Marissa and Elaine	Powers, Russell and Rebecca
Carter, Maria	Grabovoi, Daphne	Leonis, Tishe	Pytikakis, Manos and Mary
Chachas, Bessie	Granillo, Abrahan	Leonis, Nick and Sophia	Rasmussen, Scott and Rebecca
Chamie, Elie, Emil and Claudine	Gutierrez, Connie	Liaos, James and Tina	Rigas, Anthony and Mary
Chandrinis, Alexia	Gutierrez, Daniel	Liaos, Steven and Francine	Rigas, Evie
Chanos, Jennifer	Hamilton, Mary	Likourinou, Angie	Rihani, Gary and Linda
Chomakos, Dean and Tammy	Hamilton, Paul and Brandi	Likourinou, Steve and June	Ristache, Fr. Florin and
Chondrakis, Dimosthenis and	Haramis, John and	Litsos, Nicholas and Catherine	Presv. Alexandra
Kragerud, Kaaren	Kitsios, Eugenia	Loughton, Dustin and Rena	Rivera, Elias and April
Christou, Toni	Hastings, Teri	Makris, Apostolos	Robison, Diane and Patricia
Coll, Patrick and Anita	Haynes, Maria	Malamatos, Kindina+	Rodis, Dimitri and Angeline
Collins, David	Hemmers, Oliver and	Manakides, Alexis and	Rotas, Beatrice
Conger, William and Alexia	Pantelas, Anne	Varonos, Nicholas	Santamaria, Jennifer and Robert
Costacos, John	Hollar, Michelle	Manolakos, Catherine	Savvas, Savva
Cotsilis, Jenny	Hondros, Christina	Manos, Constantine and Michele	Sechrist, Carl and Christine
Crist, Adam and Kanistra	Hondros, Christopher and Darlene	Mansour, Muna	Setian, Gary
Dalacas, Dimitri and Athanasia	Hondros, Fr. John and Presv.	Markakis, Sandy Kiriaki	Simpson, Bryan and Julie
Dalacas, Georgia	Maria	Markantonis, Demos and Kate	Skalkotos, Nikolas and Georgia
Damascus, Peter	Hondros, Marissa	Markantonis, George and Sarah	Soteropoulos, Gust and Rita
Daskalos, George and Voula	Iteen, Robert and Sophia	Mavros, Alex and Jen	Sotiropoulos, Christopher and
Davis, Matthew and Christine	Jandete, Johanna	Mavros, Debbie	Jessica
Demas, Spiro and Rita	Jaynes, Christine	Mazzorana, Vicki	Soursos, Helene
Demoleas, Spero and Grace	Jensen, Matthew and Michelle	McKinney, Michael and Mersene	Sparkuhl, Alex and Antoinette
Demoleas, Stephanie	Kachikis, Ernestine	McSweeney, Farolyn	Sparkuhl, Andreas and Diana
Dominguez, Eric and Amalia	Kakavulias, George and Helen	Mehas, Andrew and Samantha	Staub, Douglas and Anastasia

With Gratitude to God for Our Pledged Stewards in 2023
If you wish to become a Parish Steward, please fill out Pledge Form and return to Karen

Stavropoulos, Terry and Niki
 Stransky, John and Rachel
 Stransky, Mark
 Szukiewicz, Joseph and Justina
 Tadich, Katerina
 Tafoya, Steven and Irene
 Thanos, Nicholas and Victoria
 Theros, James and Kathryn
 Thompson, Maggy
 Thompson, Steven and Alik

Tijiboy, Ana
 Tijiboy, Christine
 Tsolis, Christos and Panagioula
 Wagner, Sophye
 Wainscott, Betty
 Walter, Vernon and Alice
 Ward, Angeliki
 Waterhouse, David and Aleighzja
 Webb, Taylor
 Williams, Anthony and Anna

Williamson, Daniel and Stavroula
 Wilson, Clyde
 Wilson, Kelly and
 Egi, Junichiro
 Wilson, Cleo
 Wirtz, Aphrodite
 Womack, Karl
 Womack, Kimberly
 Xerogianes, Nick and Nikki
 Yurkov, Andre, Kalina and Daniella

Zaferatos, Ted
 Zakis, Pope
 Zarkos, Nick and Dina
 Zarras, Nick and Chery
 Zaronis, Mary
 Zervas, Dionisios
 Zimmerman, Paul, Angela,
 Christopher and Vangeli
 Zimmerman, Paul and Julie
 Zmina, Stephen and Cynthia



*With Gratitude to Bill and Erin
 Bruninga for Continuously Offering
 Their Talents to Our Church!*



Baptized into Christ: Na Mas Zisoun

Vasilios (Basel), son of Alexander Liguori and Athena Bochanis, on February 11, 2023.
 Godparents: Theodore Bochanis and Aris Bochanis.

Penelope, daughter of Elias and Glorielys Antoniou, on February 17, 2023.
 Godparent: Katerina Charalambous.

Marriages: Na Zisete

Robert Fleischer and Penny Latelle on February 17, 2023. Koumbara: Tara Koroni.
 Jonathon Krikie and Iryna Volyanyuk on February 25, 2023. Koumbaros: Dr. John Nixon.

Fallen Asleep in the Lord

Kindina Malamatos on January 23, 2023. Funeral on February 7.
 Maverick "Leonidas" Bombard on January 25, 2023. Funeral on February 8.
 Vivian Berendji on February 2, 2023. Funeral on February 21.

**2023
Stewardship
Report
(as of 2/27/23)**

Stewardship Gifts Pledged: \$458,965 (\$398,734 in 2022)
 Stewardship Gifts Received: \$151,203 (\$146,265 in 2022)
 Unfulfilled Pledge Balance: \$307,762 (\$252,469 in 2022)
 Stewardship Families Pledged: 278 (280 in 2022)
 2023 Goal: \$600,000 . . . Keep the Pledges Coming!

**“WALK
IN
LOVE”
(Ephesians 5:2)**

<u>Average Pledge</u>	<u>No. of Families</u>	<u>Amount Pledged</u>
\$1 - \$500	111	\$ 27,666
\$501 - \$1,000	56	\$ 42,308
\$1,001 - \$2,500	70	\$112,043
\$2,501 - \$5,000	21	\$ 78,764
\$5,001 & Above	20	\$198,184
Total Families	278	\$458,965

Church Account Summaries ~ January 2023

Nevada State Bank Accounts	December	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
General Operating Account (GOA)	\$22,481.54	\$155,339.46	\$3,481.63	\$64,018.81	\$64,488.50	\$52,795.32	
Community and Education (C&E)	\$61,369.50	\$200.00				\$61,569.50	
Greek Food Festival (GFF)	\$88,112.72	\$1,770.61	\$0.00	\$2,983.70	\$109.76	\$86,789.87	
Designated, Restricted & Other (DR&O)	\$263,434.22	\$12,705.88	\$40.00	\$1,391.01	\$3,792.04	\$270,997.05	
Folk Dance Group	\$31,679.54	\$1,525.00	\$6,000.00	\$4,482.67	\$5,639.66	\$29,082.21	
Hellenic Historical Society	\$305.47			\$15.00		\$290.47	
Designated Funds	December	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
Bookstore	\$37,234.19	\$2,189.00		\$731.21	\$3,487.22	\$35,204.76	
Ornaments	\$601.33					\$601.33	
Restricted Funds	December	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
ICON	\$5,717.58	\$470.00	\$20.00			\$6,207.58	
Library Account	\$1,470.77					\$1,470.77	
Giving Tree	\$7,889.87					\$7,889.87	
Faithtree	\$1,626.39					\$1,626.39	
Building Fund	\$105,628.93	\$10,046.88	\$20.00		\$304.82	\$115,390.99	Donation from Jerry Lodge Foundation.
Youth Choir	\$2,989.18					\$2,989.18	
Church School	\$2,116.44					\$2,116.44	
Three Priests	\$52,055.52			\$659.80		\$51,395.72	Upholstering the two chairs in front of Karen's office
Roof Appeal	\$10,283.22					\$10,283.22	
Altar Servers	\$440.00					\$440.00	
GOYA	\$530.36					\$530.36	
Panos Flooring Repair	\$23,722.83					\$23,722.83	
Church Flooring Replacement	\$0.00					\$0.00	
Restricted Donation	\$5,654.00					\$5,654.00	
Live Streaming Equipment	\$473.61					\$473.61	
Designated, Restricted, and Other Total	\$263,434.22	\$12,705.88	\$40.00	\$1,391.01	\$3,792.04	\$270,997.05	
Other Funds	December	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
Kokkos Scholarship Fund	\$61,691.65					\$61,691.65	as of 12.31.22
Commonwealth Investments (Icon)	\$115,026.57		\$7,746.65			\$122,773.22	Change in Investment

January 2023 Candles **\$6,880.77**
 January 2023 Trays **\$5,166.15**
Total January 2023 Candles & Trays \$12,046.92



MARCH 2023 ~ IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

				1 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy	2	3 6:30 pm 1st Salutations to the Theotokos	4 Saturday of Souls 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy and Memorial 11:00 am OFF Lenten Mini Retreat
5 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Procession of Icons</i> 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. John the Baptist <i>Lenten Meal follows</i>	6 5:30 pm Great Compline 6:30 pm Adult Study	7	8 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy	9	10 5:00 pm GOYA Retreat Begins 6:30 pm 2nd Salutations to the Theotokos	11 8:30 am Young Adults Hike at Lone Mountain Park	GOYA Overnight Lenten Retreat
12 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 12:15 pm Youth Choir 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Simeon	13 5:30 pm Great Compline 6:30 pm Adult Study	14 5:00 pm Dance Board Meeting in Library	15 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy	16	17 6:30 pm 3rd Salutations to the Theotokos	18	
19 8:45 am Orthros <i>Procession of Cross</i> 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 12:15 pm Youth Choir 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at Ss. George and Dimitrie	20 11:30 am Forerunners Luncheon in Kokkos Hall 5:30 pm Great Compline 6:30 pm Adult Study	21 6:00 pm Parish Council Meeting in Library	22 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy	23	24 6:30 pm Great Vespers of the Annunciation	25 Annunciation of the Theotokos 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 12:00 pm Kali Pareia Potluck at Demetri Asim's Home	
26 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 12:15 pm Youth Choir 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Paul the Apostle	27 5:30 pm Great Compline 6:30 pm Adult Study	28	29 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy	30	31 6:30 pm The Akathist Hymn		

The Desert Messenger

*St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
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THE DESERT MESSENGER

The Way of the Lord



*TASTE AND
SEE THAT
THE LORD
IS GOOD!
ALLELUIA!*

*(Communion
Hymn for the
Presanctified
Liturgy)*

Bill Bruninga