

The Desert



Messenger

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

Volume 20, Issue 5 St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

May 2022

From
Father
John

Beloved in Christ:

Christ is Risen! Χριστός Ανέστη!

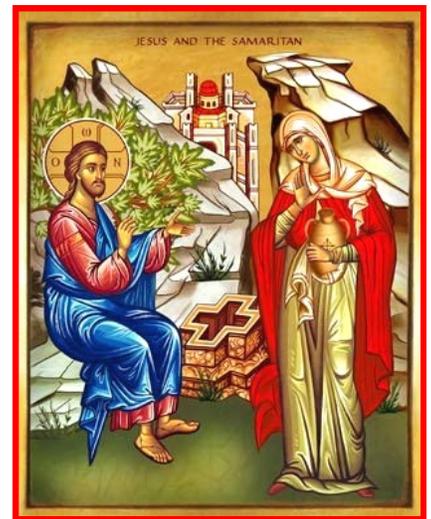
Ninety years ago, during the Great Depression, Hoover Dam was constructed to harness the Colorado River – and this led to the United States’ largest reservoir, Lake Mead. Today, Lake Mead is a shell of its former self, sitting at a record low water level of 1,068 feet above sea level: With the water demand continuing to grow due to the increasing population of Las Vegas (and other southwest cities), the current forecast shows the water levels dropping another thirty-four feet over the next two years.

While living in the desert compels us to be ever mindful of water conservation, especially as we approach hotter temperatures, the hymns and readings of the season between Pascha and Pentecost – known as the *Pentecostarion* – invite us faithful to: *“Come, let us partake of a new drink: Not one miraculously brought forth from a barren rock, but a spring of immortality, welling up from Christ’s tomb, from which we draw strength.” (Paschal Canon, Third Ode)* For us Orthodox Christians, following a season of repentance, we have now entered a period of renewal: Rather than staying away from the Church, as many are inclined to do after Pascha, this is the time for us to step up our efforts as active and faithful members of the Body of Christ, gathering together for prayer and worship, receiving the Holy Mysteries as often as possible, and working together with the Lord that we might add to the number day by day those who are being saved. *(Acts 2:47)*

Even though we live in a desert prone to drought, Jesus says to us – as He did to the Samaritan Woman – *“Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 4:13-14)* This Life-Giving Water flows continuously and abundantly in Christ’s Holy Orthodox Church: We become partakers of His Death and Resurrection through Holy Baptism; we are sealed with the ever-operative grace of the Holy Spirit through Holy Chrismation; we are reconciled with our Lord and His Church through our genuine tears of repentance and Holy Confession; we are cleansed of our sins, receive ongoing spiritual sustenance and indeed the Gift of Eternal Life through Holy Communion; and we are spiritually replenished daily through praying before our Holy Icons, as well as reading Holy Scriptures and the lives of the Saints. Beloved, there are so many countless ways we can draw from the deep well of Orthodox Christianity – so let us approach frequently that we might never thirst!

After five years, Father Seraphim and Presvytera Olenka Ramos will depart from the desert and the Parish of St. John the Baptist. They arrived fresh out of seminary with one child, and now leave us with three more – moreover, they leave us with many heartfelt memories, with gratitude to God for their presence in our lives. I personally thank Christ our God for Father Seraphim’s dynamic ministry and the brotherly love we share in His Name: May He always grant the Ramos Family His Divine Grace and good health as they continue to serve His Holy Church.

With Much Love in Our Risen Christ,



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

***Sundays: 8:45 am Orthros - 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
Church School follows Holy Communion (Commencement on May 22)***

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

Sunday, May 1/ Sunday after Pascha/Holy Apostle Thomas/Prophet Jeremiah/Holy Neo-Martyr Maria of Crete

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Matthew 28:16-20
Epistle: Acts 5:12-20
Gospel: John 20:19-31
Fellowship: Ramos Family Goodbye Luncheon

Sunday, May 8/ 3rd Sunday of Pascha: Holy Myrrh-Bearing Women, St. Joseph of Arimathea, and St. Nicodemos/St. John the Theologian/St. Arsenios the Great - MOTHERS DAY

Orthros: Tone Two
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:1-12
Epistle: 1 John 1:1-7
Gospel: Mark 15:43-47; 16:1-8
Memorials: Dina Dounis (40 days); LeeAnn Eliakis (40 days); Glenda Eliakis (40 days); Thanasis Kyriakos Tsirakis (40 days); Kalliope Malpee (6 months)
Fellowship: Hosted by Estella Nicholas

Sunday, May 15/ 4th Sunday of Pascha: The Paralytic/St. Pachomios the Great

Orthros: Tone Three
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:13-35
Epistle: Acts 9:32-42
Gospel: John 5:1-15
Memorials: Ioannis Apostolopoulos (40 days); Nick Dalacas (5 years)
Fellowship: Hosted by Pan-Arcadians

Saturday, May 21/ Ss. Constantine and Helen, Equal to the Apostles

8:00 am Orthros
9:00 am Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Acts 26:1, 12-20
Gospel: John 10:1-9



Sunday, May 22/ 5th Sunday of Pascha:

The Samaritan Woman/Remembrance of all the Holy and Sanctified Patriarchs of Constantinople/ St. Basilikos, Bishop of Comana

Orthros: Tone Four
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): John 20:1-10
Epistle: Acts 11:19-30
Gospel: John 4:5-42
Memorials: Presvytera Ilean Eyler (6 months); Mary Bartsas and Departed Family Members
Fellowship: Hosted by Philoptochos, in Memory of Mary Bartsas, Benefactor

Sunday, May 29/ 6th Sunday of Pascha/The Blind Man/Memory of the Holy Martyrs Theodosia and the Virgin-Martyr Theodosia of Constantinople

Orthros: Tone Five (First Plagal)
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): John 20:11-18
Epistle: Acts 16:16-34
Gospel: John 9:1-38
Memorial: Anna Balason (3 years)
Fellowship: Hosted by Steve Tzelalis



***Christ is Risen from the dead,
by Death trampling down upon death,
And to those in the tombs
He has granted Life.***

You Are Cordially Invited to Our Parish



Goodbye Luncheon for The Ramos Family

Sunday, May 1
Following the Divine Liturgy
in Panos Hall

Free-Will Offering
Gifts Not Necessary

Menu:
Greek Salad
Lamb Au Jus
Rice Pilaf
Pastitsio
Fasolakia
Garlic Bread
Tzatziki
Cake & Coffee

Cash Bar:
Beer & Wine



CHRIST IS RISEN!

From Father Seraphim

To His Excellency Metropolitan Ilia, Father John, Presvytera Maria, The Parish Council, Our Ministry Leaders, and to the beloved and God-Protected Community of St. John the Baptist:

Christ is Risen! Χριστός Ανέστη!

It is within the light and power of our Lord's unconquerable Resurrection that we look out over the past five years of service to the people of God, and we find that we are at a loss for the appropriate words of gratitude. Truly we have been embraced even more than we embraced you, and we have been served and helped as a family even more than we have served you – always seeking to follow the Lord's commandment of example to His Holy Apostles: *“Whoever will be the chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20: 27-28)* What a warm and inviting place this has been for us! This is not a guarantee in this fallen and wounded world: But the warmth was made to be something in reality for the Ramos Family because of the active love in your hearts, with your generosity and the beauty of your “care for the strangers” God sent to you from seminary. Φιλοξενία (hospitality) – literally the love, or friendship of the stranger – is the overwhelming virtue and character of the people we encountered from our very first day when Presvytera Olenka was asked, “Oh honey, are you a single mom and do you need help with the baby?” This one example of a holy question and the offering of support, aid, care, interest, help, and encouragement truly encapsulates the unending kindness we feel from each one of the parishioners in this Holy Church Community. We came to you as strangers and we leave you (without leaving you in our hearts) as family – for truly as St. Paisios said, where God's love is, there is no distance. This is because our Trinitarian and All-Loving God is everywhere present and filling all things, so when you continue to enter more and more deeply into the Love of God and we try to do so too, we will truly never be apart from each other. This is a sublime mystery – just as our Lord Jesus Christ promised the Apostles and to us at His Ascension, *“I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)* We too feel that although we are being physically distanced, we will be with you and take you with us for the rest of our lives.

To Father John who has trained, built up, corrected, taught, and nourished me for five years with diligence and true care as a father – thank you for being God's instrument of molding and testing as so many, many things were “unfinished” and needing work from the seminary! Please pray for me to continue to grow into the Priest, Man, Husband, and Father that God desires me to be. Thank you for exemplifying the many virtues – especially forgiveness and absolute dedication in hard work – that I will strive to emulate in your priesthood, which I pray will last for many more long and blessed years. I will miss you and I love you!

To Metropolitan Ilia: Thank you for taking the time to pour much wisdom, insight, and spiritual counsel into my young heart and life. I am forever “marked” by your love and pastoral attention and for that I am eternally grateful to God. May your years be ever increased for the joy of God's faithful whom you so richly bless! Εἰς Πολλά Ἐτι Δέσποτα!

I want to also thank the many different members of the Parish Council that have served Christ's flock here over the past five years, especially Gus Flangas, and John Fotopoulos, the only examples of “Parish Council President” that I have ever known. Both of you show an exemplary reverence for the things of God, our Holy Faith, and the unworthy Priests you serve together with.

I would like to thank deeply from my heart the few volunteers and ministry leaders – parents of the youth in our parish – who gave so selflessly of your time and resources to assist me in the planning and execution of our GOYA and OFF ministries in our parish. Without your help, excellent cooking, advice, and inviting other families to come and participate – we would not have youth ministries here at St. John the Baptist.

Thank you, dear Karen, Constantin, Michelle and more recently, Marc: Your presence and smiles in our office and campus are a daily blessing. The untold hours, labor, love, and painful effort you put into the job as service unto the Lord are both admirable and inspiring. This parish would not only not be the same without you, but it could also not function! I will miss you and thank God for the many kindnesses you continually showed to me and the family.

(Continued on Page 5)

Parish Council Report

Reverend Fathers, Ministries and Faithful Parishioners of St. John the Baptist,
Christos Anesti!

What a beautiful month of April, as we celebrated the journey with Christ up to His Resurrection. We were once again blessed with the presence of Metropolitan Gerasimos on Palm Sunday. We also had our own Metropolitan Ilia present for nearly four months. What a blessing! There are also many parishioners and ministries that stepped up to help with Father John and Presvytera Maria's celebration of 35 years of marriage and Father's ministry as a Priest.

Both the Palm Sunday Luncheon and the Agape Picnic meal, prepared by Steve Tzelalis and his team, were incredible. Thanks to all who participated in the food preparation and serving. Our Agape Picnic was once again well attended and a huge success! So many people to thank for their time and attendance: Most importantly, all our parishioners are to be thanked for attending with their families and friends!

Father Seraphim, Presvytera Olenka and children will be missed. With their decision to move on in their ministry, we wish them a heartfelt thanks of love and service to our community: May God continue to watch over their family. I know I speak for everyone in the community: May God bless you Father and your beautiful family. We will have a *Goodbye Luncheon on Sunday, May 1, following Divine Liturgy*.

The Parish Council is focused on the many needs of our Church concerning restoration of our facilities. I want to especially thank George Kypreos for his generous donation to support new carpeting throughout the Church and our classrooms. Thank you, Nick Barbarino, for taking on the task of updating our locks and security system, which were long overdue. You will find that the Parish Council Church Office will not be accessible as in the past. We have concentrated on securing certain areas of the Church to allow the counting of trays and candles in a safe environment. We appreciate everyone's understanding.

Many stewards have responded early with their commitments as we are ahead of last year's total. Please consider making your stewardship offerings early. Increasing your commitment is also appreciated. Again, parishioner response has been incredible. Please take the time to familiarize yourselves with the VANCO station in the Church Narthex: If you need help, ask one of our Parish Council members to assist; John Karas is also available for instruction, as he is the point person for the kiosk.

I appreciate everyone's support – and special thanks to our attentive and hardworking Parish Council!
In the Risen Christ, John Fotopoulos, Parish Council President

From Father Seraphim (Continued from Page 4)

Thank you also to Presvytera Maria for chanting with reverence and attention so many hundreds of Divine Services and continually assisting Father John and myself in all the liturgical chanting so beautifully. To the Altar Servers and faithful helpers who clean, encourage us behind the icon screen and cover our mistakes – thank you so much for such diligence and effort and for helping to keep the Holy Altar as a sacred space.

There are many countless people to properly thank. To everyone who gifted us with a kind or encouraging word or smile, to those who financially or materially were generous to us – especially at the births of our three children born here – to those who cooked for us and invited us into your homes and hearts, for all the advice, for the faith and devotion you show to God and the reverence you show for the Holy Priesthood, for all those who held our children in the Church services and helped teach them to be attentive and reverent, and for the gift of your trust and friendship: We say thank you and may God in return bestow His heavenly blessings upon you in this life and in the Kingdom to come. There may we be united forever in the everlasting love and communion of our Trinitarian God who saves us from all darkness, death, and the devil! We ask your prayers for us in this new chapter, and will never forget the time, people, and memories made here – together with the people in the Holy Liturgy as we make commemorations.

With Love in Christ,

Father Seraphim

**Philoptochos
News**

Dear Father John, Father Seraphim and our Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:
Christos Anesti!

On behalf of the members of the Ladies Philoptochos Society, we wish to thank you for your support of the events and projects that revolve around the traditions of our Faith during Lent and for Pascha! Faith, Family, and Philanthropy: These are the tenets for Philoptochos and everything we do for our St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church.

As always, so many of the members of Philoptochos contributed their time and talents to one or all of the events. We would like to acknowledge the help of Eleni Kakavulias, Kiki Mavrantonis, Sophia Leonis, and Marika Lamancusa, whose deep knowledge of the art of Greek baking and cooking produced the most amazing Lenten cakes for our events, and beautiful Koularakia and Kourembiethes for the Agape Picnic. Many thanks to Dora Hart and the generous benefactors for the devotion and dedication on the hours spent on the flowers for the Salutations of the Theotokos Icons, and the Epitaphion. Thank You to all those who donated wine for the Wine Wagon, and to those who bought tickets – and to Christina Snow for heading up this project. Much gratitude to Effie Eliades Lekar and her team for their devotion to preparing the red eggs – and to Effie for generously donating the eggs.

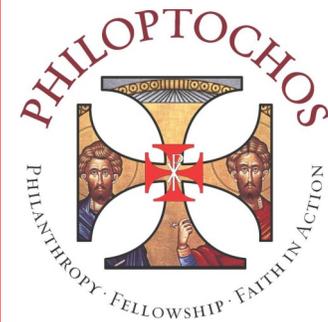


The Ladies Philoptochos Society would also like to acknowledge the folks that work so hard to bring you those lunches and fellowships time after time. You know who they are: Steve Tzelalis, Vaso Tzelalis, Savas Savvas, Demetri Theros, Michael Beeler, Eli Rivera, and Sam Koutsulis. These good souls spend their time in the kitchen week after week creating the delicious lunches. This Church Community could not possibly afford to pay for the time they give, so please shake their hands and say, “Thank You” the next time you see them.



As a special tribute, we would like to thank Demetri Asim for all the time he dedicates to our Church. You are so very special to Philoptochos and the Church Family.

Looking forward: The Metropolis Kids ‘N’ Cancer event will be *on Sunday, May 1* in Newport Beach, California. We are so happy to announce that due to all the generosity of the St. John Community, we will be presenting a check for \$6,000!



The Ladies Philoptochos Society will host a Dinner Meeting *on Tuesday, May 10*. Plans are in the works for a fun evening; look for more information in the *Weekly Bulletin* and emails.

Then wrapping up, we will host the Bartsas Memorial Fellowship *on Sunday, May 22*, to honor our benefactor, Mary Bartsas and her family, for their patronage of the Social Services projects.

The summer is almost here, but Philoptochos keeps on going. We are going to plan a ladies-only trip to the Life-Giving Spring Monastery at St. Nicholas Ranch. Please watch out for emails on this and other upcoming summer projects. If you are not getting our email blasts, please let Karen know.

At this time, on behalf of the Ladies Philoptochos Society, the words of thanks and gratitude seem so meager to express our appreciation for the blessings that Father Seraphim has brought to every parishioner during his tenure with us. His insight, his sermons, his sense of humor, and his love of our Faith and family were lessons to us all. We will miss you and wish you God’s Blessings in your new journey.

Your Sister in Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Bernadette Anthony, Philoptochos President

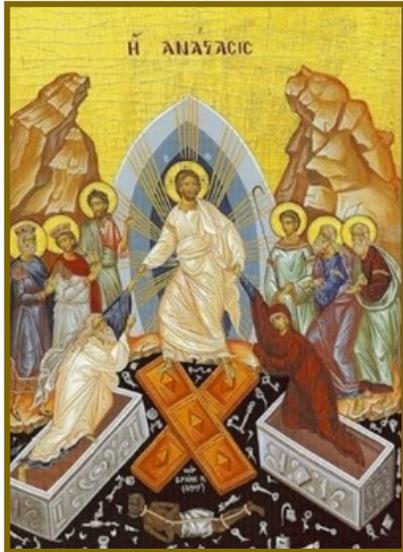
Stewardship and Community Outreach

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!

By God's Grace we have completed the Lenten Fast and Holy Week, walking with Him as He raised Lazaros from the dead, made His Triumphal Entrance into Jerusalem, and walked the path toward His Passion, Death on the Cross, and Glorious Resurrection. Why did our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ do all this? To show us unconditional love, which is the true meaning of stewardship – giving ourselves for one another.

These words from the anaphora from the Liturgy of St. Basil are instrumental in understanding His great love for us: *“But, being God before all ages, He appeared on earth and lived with humankind. Becoming incarnate from a holy Virgin, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, conforming to the body of our lowliness, that He might change us in the likeness of the image of His glory. For, since through man sin came into the world and through sin, death, it pleased Your only begotten Son, Who is in Your bosom, God and Father, born of a woman, the Holy Theotokos and ever Virgin Mary; born under the law, to condemn sin in His flesh, so that those who died in Adam may be brought to life in Him, Your Christ. He lived in this world, and gave us precepts of salvation. Releasing us from the delusions of idolatry, He guided us to the sure knowledge of You, the true God and Father. He acquired us for Himself, as His chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. Having cleansed us by water and sanctified us with the Holy Spirit, He gave Himself as ransom to death in which we were held captive, sold under sin. Descending into Hades through the Cross, that He might fill all things with Himself, He loosed the bonds of death. He rose on the third day, having opened a path for all flesh to the resurrection from the dead, since it was not possible that the Author of life would be dominated by corruption. So He became the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep, the first born of the dead, that He might be Himself the first in all things. Ascending into heaven, He sat at the right hand of Your majesty on high and He will come to render to each according to His works.”*



It is clear our Lord gave us His all for our salvation. What can we give Him in return? Our own unconditional love for all of mankind, for concrete actions of love reveal what lies hidden in our hearts. Both the Old and New Testaments are replete with guidance and how we can show this love. *“Whoever gives to the poor shall not be in want.” (Proverbs 28:29)* St. John Chrysostom elaborates on these words: *“Lift up and stretch out your hands, not to heaven, but to the poor; for if you stretch forth your hands to the poor, you have reached the summit of heaven, but if you lift up your hands in prayer without sharing with the poor, it is worth nothing.”*

“Break your bread for the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house. If you see a naked man, clothe him, nor shall you disregard your offspring in your own household.” (Isaiah 58:7-8) These words are reminiscent of those spoken by Christ about the Final Judgment, and the separation of “the sheep from the goats”: *“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; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.” (Matt 25:35-36)*

May we never forget the unconditional love shown to us by our Savior – and in response may we return that same love to Him and all of mankind. *“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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” (John 3:16-17)*

In Christ, Stewardship and Outreach Committee

Ministry News

Church School

Christos Anesti!

It was so nice to see our Church full this Lenten Season, Holy Week and Pascha. Thank you to our parents for bringing their children. It was great seeing all of their faces.

A special thanks to our Myrrh Bearers, Altar Servers, readers and chanters. We love to see our youth involved. Thank You also to those who donated, eggs, candy or money for our Pascha Egg Hunt, which was great fun for the kids at the Agape Picnic.

Please let me or Karen know as soon as possible about our *High School Graduates*, so we can honor them at our *Church School Commencement on Sunday, May 22*. Our Commencement is for all Church School participants and will take place immediately after the Divine Liturgy in Panos Hall. Following Commencement, we will have an *All Parish Youth and Families BBQ and Outdoor Activities on the Church Field*.

Thank you to our students, teachers, Father John, Father Seraphim, and Karen for all your support. A special thanks to our maintenance staff for keeping our classrooms clean. We appreciate every one of you.

First Day of Class for 2022-2023 will be *on Sunday, September 11*. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

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

OFF & GOYA: All Youth and Families BBQ & Field Day

Christ is Risen!

Calling all Youth and Families of St. John the Baptist: *On Sunday, May 22*, following Church School Commencement, please join us for a BBQ and an afternoon of activities. Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, buns and condiments will be provided. Please bring a side dish, chips, soda, water or desserts to share. Please also bring a change of clothes and plan on having fun in the sun with your Church family – continuing the joy of Christ's Resurrection!

Love in the Risen Lord, Father John, Eileen, Amy, April, Anne and Maha

Young Adults

Christos Anesti!

During this Season of Renewal, our Young Adults are warmly invited to join us for a four-week Bible Study on *The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-6-7)*, starting *Wednesday, May 4, 6:30-8:00 pm, in Kokkos Hall*. Please bring your Holy Bible and a heart open to growing in our Lord Jesus Christ.

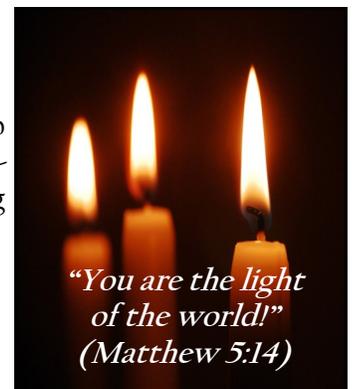
With Much Love in Christ, Father John

Kali Parea - For the 40-Plus Crowd

Blessed Resurrection! Christ is Risen!

This month we will join in on Father John's *new Bible Study on The Sermon on the Mount, starting Wednesday, May 4*. We will meet *every Wednesday for four weeks, from 6:30 to 8:00 pm, in Kokkos Hall*. Please bring your Holy Bible. We look forward to seeing you there!

Yours in Christ, Demetrious Asim (702) 210-4056



“Ask, and it will be given you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” (Matthew 7:7)

Mr. & Mrs.

Christos Anesti!

Please join us at the home of Mark and Alyssa Brown *on Saturday, May 28 at 6:00 pm*. If you have never participated in Mr. and Mrs., you are strongly encouraged to meet with us.

Mark will grill beef brisket, and you are encouraged to bring a side dish, dessert or drinks. Please RSVP with Karen – and she will let Alyssa know you are joining us and what you will be bringing. Along with great food, we will enjoy an evening of great fellowship and discussion.

Love in the Resurrected Christ, Father John and Presvytera Maria, Mark and Alyssa

Forerunners - Our Seniors Fellowship

Christos Anesti!

The Lenten Luncheon was well attended and enjoyable. Members were treated to a delicious lunch prepared by our excellent kitchen staff, Steve Tzelalis, Mike Beeler, and Sava Savvas. Dessert was prepared by Marika Lamancusa. Metropolitan Katre blessed the food and wished everyone a Blessed Holy Week and Pascha. A short talk was given by candidate Manny Kess, who is running for State Treasurer. Door and raffle prizes were awarded, and Bingo was played.

Our next luncheon will be *on Monday, May 9 at 11:30 am* in Kokkos Hall. We will enjoy a delicious Paschal meal and great fellowship as always.

We will recess over the summer and not convene again until October after the Food Festival. Please volunteer your services when you are able. We encourage seniors in our community to join us and enjoy good food and fellowship. As always, our prayers and good wishes are extended to seniors in our parish who are recuperating in hospitals, other facilities or at home.

Love in Christ, Faye Brown for the Forerunners

Notes from the Choir Loft

Christos Anesti!

Thank you to the Choir for their beautiful and prayerful singing for Holy Week and Pascha! It is so wonderful to be singing together again. In the next couple months, we will begin learning a new Doxology, which was composed by Christopher Hondros. If you would like to join the Choir and you want some help with the music, please reach out to me by email at athena.mertes@gmail.com or see me after Divine Liturgy on Sundays.

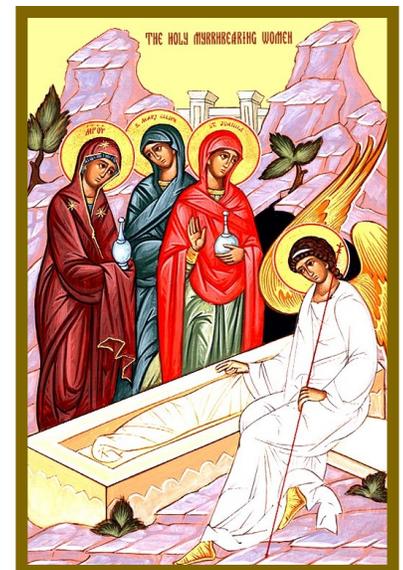
Athena Mertes, Director



Attention, Graduates:

We want to share the good news of your commencement in the June issue of *The Desert Messenger*! If you (or your child) will be graduating soon from high school or university, please email the following to frjohn@vegasgreekorthodox.com *by May 15, 2022*:

- School from which you are graduating,
- The degree you will receive, including honors,
- What your plans are, and what you will study if pursuing further education, and
- Most importantly, a photo of you in JPG format!



Kokkos Scholarships

The Scholarship Committee for the Kokkos Scholarship Fund is pleased to announce that applications are available at the Church Office. If you wish to receive your application via email, please contact Karen at karen@vegasgreekorthodox.com. The applications must be returned *on or before Sunday, May 15*. 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. The scholarship amounts this year are \$1,500. The students must have an outstanding scholastic record and be in financial need. Also, Parish involvement by the students at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church was important to Fofo Kokkos; therefore, this is also a factor in evaluating the applicants.

Please contact the Church Office for more information at (702) 221-8245. John Matsis and the Kokkos Scholarship Committee

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

Rev. Father John Hondros
frjohn@vegasgreekorthodox.com

Karen Rawlinson
Administrative Assistant

Michelle Eugenio
Bookkeeper

Mara Braun
Catering & Events

Constantin Petricu
Maintenance & Grounds

Office Hours

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

Telephone: (702) 221-8245
www.vegasgreekorthodox.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:

Anne Pantelas & Maha Habiba

Orthodox Family Fellowship:
Imtisal Amy Khuri & April Rivera

Young Adults:
Father John

Greek Folk Dance: Sia Dalacas

Greek School: Paula Kelesis

Mr. & Mrs.:
Father John & Presvytera Maria

Kali Parea: Demetrious 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



Christ is Risen! Χριστός Ανέστη

Members can visit <https://ahepa-314-las-vegas.square.site/> to pay your dues by credit card (if you would like to pay your dues by check, please email me at ahepa314@gmail.com). If you are not currently a member and are interested in joining the AHEPA please contact me at the email or phone number below.

AHEPA Chapter 314 continues to look for individuals who are interested in assisting with the redevelopment of the Chapter.

Lastly, please see the flyer in this issue of *The Desert Messenger* for information on the 100th Anniversary of AHEPA happening at the Golden Nugget Casino & Hotel *on June 16 - 18, 2022*.

Thank You, Steve Liaos, Chapter President (702) 518-8018



*Come, receive the light
from the Light,
that is never overtaken by night,
and glorify Christ,
Who is Risen from the dead!*

Orthodox Bookstore

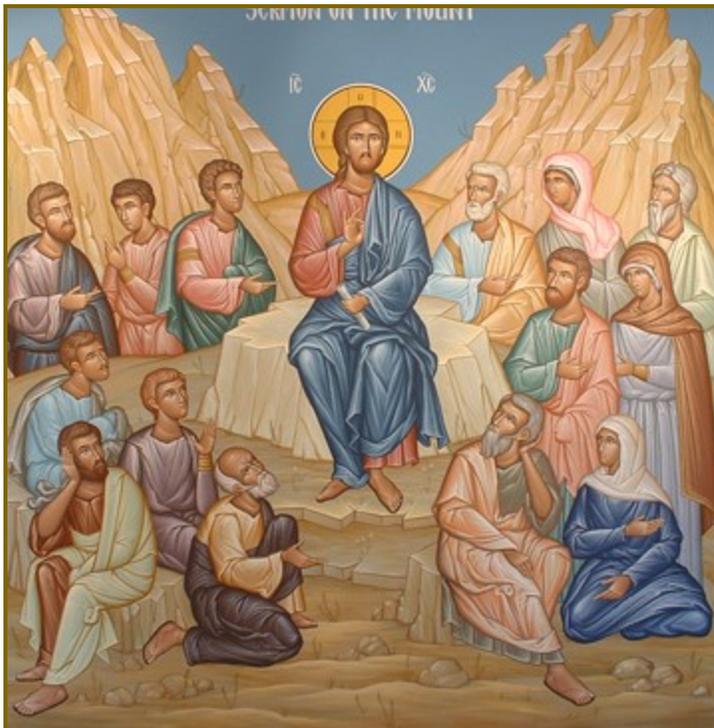
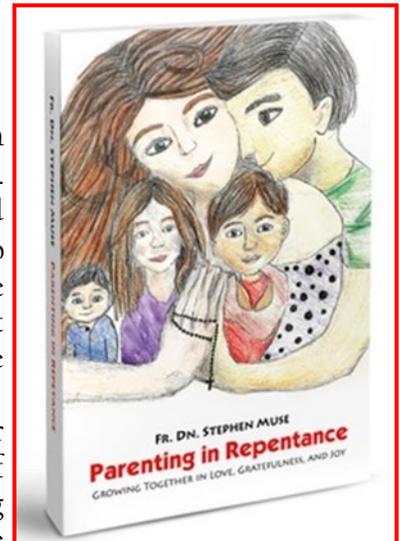
Christos Anesti! Greetings from the Bookstore!

This month the Bookstore is featuring a new release from St. Sebastian Orthodox Press by Father Deacon Stephen Muse, titled *Parenting in Repentance*. Muse is a pastoral counselor and marriage and family therapist. He is a gifted author of many titles, including *Treasure in Earthen Vessels*, which is also available on site. In previous talks on parenting, Muse has argued that the refusal to allow ourselves to be loved and enter into communion with Christ is at the root of the pain we cause our children. Moreover, healing can come to us from Christ through our relationships with them.

From the publisher: "With vulnerability and transparency, Father Stephen Muse draws on his journals of over thirty years, to offer glimpses of parenting as a lifelong spiritual journey. He draws the reader in by sharing stories of wonder, joy, and pain from moments in his life that became divine messages. Part memoir, part catechism and part call to action, readers will discover parenting revealed as a path to salvation, as the author reminds us of the vital importance of relationship with the source of love and life – the Triune God."

Looking forward to seeing you in the Bookstore. We have received many new Icons lately and remain stocked with the necessities. Come and see!

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



During This Season of Renewal
Young Adults and Adults
are Warmly Invited to Join in a
Bible Study with Father John
The Sermon on the Mount:
Matthew 5, 6 & 7
A Four-Week Series

Wednesdays, May 4 ~ 25
6:30 ~ 8:00 pm
in Kokkos Hall

*Please bring your Holy Bible and a heart
open to growing in our Lord Jesus Christ*

*"Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them;
for then you will have no reward from your Father Who is in heaven."
(Matthew 6:1)*

Saturday of Lazarus and Palm Sunday



Photos by
William Vasilios
Bruninga

Great and Holy Week



Holy Friday





ORDER OF AHEPA
EL CAMINO REAL
DISTRICT 20 CONVENTION
LAS VEGAS NEVADA
Celebrating 100 years of AHEPA
June 16-18, 2022



Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino



You may call 1-800-331-5731 in order to make individual hotel reservations. When booking reservations over the phone, mention the following group code: **GSAHE22**

Hotel reservation deadline is May 17, 2022 at 5:00 pm PST.

<https://goldennugget.reztrip.com/ext/promoRate?property=1115&mode=b&pm=true&sr=734240&vr=3>

- # _____ Convention Registration \$195.00
- banquet meal choice #__ Chicken #__ Salmon #__ Vegetarian
- Includes, Basil the comedian, plated and served Scholarship luncheon, and banquet dinner.*
- For family members who would like to join you at events , prices are as follow:*
- # _____ Basil the Comedian Friday \$55.00
- # _____ Scholarship Luncheon Saturday \$60.00
- # _____ Convention Banquet Saturday \$95.00
- #__ Chicken #__ Salmon #__ Vegetarian
- # _____ Include a Chapter or personal full page ad \$100.00 anniversary pricing



CONVENTION REGISTRATION DUE BY JUNE 1ST, 2022
PAY ONLINE AT <https://ahepadistrict20.org>
OR MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: AHEPA DISTRICT 20
AND MAIL COMPLETED FORM TO:

AHEPA DISTRICT 20
42-215 WASHINGTON ST A-154 PALM DESERT, CA 92211

AHEPA _____ DOP _____ SOP _____ MOA _____

Name _____ Alt (PDG...) _____ Chapter # _____ District # _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Work Phone _____ Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email Address _____

Total amount Enclosed \$ _____ Check # _____

With Gratitude to God for Our Pledged Stewards in 2022
If you wish to become a Parish Steward, please fill out Pledge Form and return to Karen

Acovino, Richard and Angela	Cotsilis, Jenny	Hastings, Teri	Liaos, Steven and Francine
Adamy, Marina	Crist, Adam and Kanistra	Hemmers, Oliver and	Likourinou, Angie
Agnos, George and Maggie	Dalacas, Dimitri and Athanasia	Pantelas, Anne	Likourinou, Steve and June
Alexander, Eleni	Dalacas, Eleni	Herman, Martin and Diane	Litsos, Nicholas and Catherine
Alford, Cynthia "Mary"	Dalacas, Georgia	Hertberg, Jennifer	Loney, Thomas and Chrysi
Allen, John and Denise	Daskalos, George and Voula	Hollar, Michelle	Loughton, Dustin and Rena
Alvarez, Kelly	Demas, Spiro and Rita	Hondros, Christina	Makris, Apostolos
Anastasakis, Mark and Elaine	Demolas, Maria and Nour, Reza	Hondros, Christopher and Darlene	Malamatos, Kindina
Andondakis, George and Kim	Demoleas, Spero and Grace	Hondros, Fr. John and	Maland, Donna
Andrews, Catherine	Demoleas, Stephanie	Presv. Maria	Manolakos, Catherine
Anthony, Stavros and Bernadette	Demopoulos, Dimitrios and Selina	Hondros, Marissa	Manos, Constantine and Michele
Aristides, George and Diana	Demopoulos, Vasiliki	Howard, Eddie and Willie	Manteris, Arthur and Sue
Asim, Demetrious	Dimitri, Patricia, Martha and Janet	Hristopoulou, Spiridoula	Margaretis, John and Lucila
Atkins, Sean and Christina	Dominguez, Eric and Amalia	Iteen, Robert and Sophia	Markakis, Catherine and Joseph
Avdoulos, Pagona and Chrysa	Doskas, Athanasios and Anastasia	Jandete, Johanna	Markakis, Sandy Kiriaki
Bacon, Ken and Dianne	Dramitinos, Mary	Kachikis, Ernestine	Markantonis, Demos and Kate
Balaouras, Panos and Helen	Earl, Christine Michaelides	Kakavulias, George and Helen	Markantonis, George and Sarah
Balason, Voula	Eliades, Aristotelis and Caroline	Kanis, Constantinos and Katie	Martinaitis, Louis
Baldwin, Richard and Vivi	Eliades, Gregory and Maria	Kapetanios - Fountoulakis, Maria	Mavrantonis, Stacy and Kiki
Balodimas, James	Eliades, Harry and Agapi	Karas, James	Mavros, Alex and Jen
Barbarino, Dee and Nick	Eliades, Katerina	Karas, John and Marcie	Mavros, Debbie
Bartel, Robert and Ioanna	Eliades, Sia	Karris, Mark and Suzanne	Mavroudis, Frank
Bartzos, Eugenia	Eliakis, Peter and Glenda+	Karvounidis, George	McManus, Jeanette
Beeler, Mike and Carolyn	Eliakis, Varthie and LeeAnn+	Kasiotis, Nicholas and Claudia	McKinney, Michael and Mersene
Beeman, Benita	Eyler, John and Elizabeth	Katopodis, Efsttratos	McPherson, Robert and Marie
Beeman, Karl Jr. and Ivana	Eyler, Fr. Paul	Katris, Nick and Theana	McSweeney, Farolyn
Berendji, Jim and Vivian	Failla, Jennifer	Katsaros, Thomas and Sharon	Menegatos, James
Bieker, Adam and Cassie	Farren, Anthony and Maritsa	Katsikakis, Evangelos	Merritt, Devin and Sonia
Bieker, Georgea	Feola, Richard	Kelesis, Paula	Meyers, Evon
Birtas, Helen and Ann	Filios, George and Nitsa	Kiflezgi, Rahel	Minas, Arthur and Ewa
Bjorklund, Danielle	Filios, Spiridon and Eleni	Kirchner, Gary "Barlaam"	Moffett, Todd and
Bledsoe, Lori	Fischer, Cheryl	Kirollos, Michael and	Eliopoulos, Tina
Bochanis, Aris and Savannah	Fischetti, George and Cassidy	Molina, Adriana	Mohammednur, Algenes
Bochanis, George	Fitzgerald, Norman and	Kleanthis, George and Zanetta	Monolakis, Anthony
Booth, Alina	McCullen, Sandra	Kokinelis, Irene	Monoyudis, Jim and Julie
Brennan, Peter and Maria	Flangas, Gus and Tamara	Kokkines, Peter and Jennifer	Moore, Brenda
Britten, Ronald and Carol	Flangas, Marilyn	Koliambas, Eleni	Murray, Christopher and
Brown, Faye	Flangas, Wanda	Konsolakis-Garcia, Eleni	George, Veneta
Brown, Mark and Alyssa	Foster, Kyle and	Kontos, Diana	Myers, Stella
Bruninga, William and Erin	Pierro, Maria Elena	Koroni, Tara	Neocleous, Plato
Bryant, Timothy and Janet	Fotopoulos, John and Barbara	Kostas, James	Newell, Ronald and Maria
Bucy, Brent and Elaine	Fountas, Constantinos	Kountanis, Panagiota	Nicholas, John and Estella
Carahalis, John and Constance	Fountoulakis, Vasileios	Kouris, Demitris and Terry	Nichols, George and Tereza
Caredis, Jon and Marjorie	Frangakis, Christos and Anastasia	Koutsulis, John and Eileen	Nikitas, Milissa
Carrico, William and Alexandra	Frudakis, George and Darlene	Koutsulis, Sam and Effie	Nikolopoulos, Nick and Dimitra
Carter, Maria	Gauvin, Chad and Marissa	Kypreos, Peter and Geri	Nixon, John and Elyn
Chachas, Bessie	Gekakis, George	Kyriannis, Justin and Linda	Pahigiannis, Nikon
Chachas, James	Generales, John and Arlene	Kyriazopoulos, Constantine Jr.	Paikos, Tom and Elizabeth
Chagares, Kiki	George, Pete and Georgia	Lakkis, Christina	Palivos, Peter and Vicky
Chamie, Elie, Emil and Claudine	Georgis, Pete and Keshia	Lamancusa, Lisa	Pallis, Paul
Chandrinou, Alexia	Geranios, John	Lambros, Kyriakos and Mary	Pandelis, Cheryl
Chanos, Jennifer	Ghebream, Daniel and	Latelle, Penny	Panos, Jeanne
Chio, Napoleon	Ghermay, Selam	Lavine, Frederic	Papalois, John and Maria
Chomakos, Dean and Tammy	Gialketsis, Julie	Lee, David and Alexandra	Papas, Christian and Nicole
Chomakos, Jeremy and Romina	Gialketsis, William and Rachelle	Lekar, Caroline	Papas, Peter and Rita
Chondrakis, Dimosthenis and	Giouzelis, Sasa	Lekar, Michael and Effie	Pappas, Panagiotis and Andrea
Kragerud, Kaaren	Goodman, Linda	Leone, Stephen	Pappas, Rita
Christou, Toni	Gordon, Victor and Demetria	Leong, Marissa	Paschalis, Evangelos and Maria
Collins, David	Granill, Abrahan	Leonis, Tishe	Pavlicas, Connie
Conger, William and Alexia	Gutierrez, Connie	Leventis, Naomi	Payan, Luis and Eleni
Costuros, George and Marsha	Gutierrez, Daniel	Leventis, Nicholas and Christina	Pendleton, Tricia
Cosulas, Fr. Basil and	Hamilton, Mary	Lexis, Annette	Peterson, Todd and Diane
Presv. Samantha	Hamilton, Paul and Brandi	Liaos, James and Tina	Petriuc, Constantin

Pledged Stewards in 2022

Petro, Aleko and Georgia
 Petrou, Jim and Penelopi
 Pierro, Joe and Rhonda
 Pitts, Anton and Athena
 Platis, Anna
 Polimerou, Angeline
 Politis, Pantelis and Dimitra
 Poulis, Chris and Francine
 Poulos, Christine
 Pouridis, Kouli and Para
 Powers, Russell and Rebecca
 Ramos, Fr. Seraphim and
 Presv. Olenka
 Raptis, Presv. Evonne
 Rasmussen, Scott and Rebecca
 Rigas, Anthony and Mary
 Rigas, Evie
 Rihani, Gary and Linda
 Rivera, Elias and April
 Robison, Diane and Patricia
 Rodis, Dimitri
 Rotas, Beatrice
 Ruffner, Skip and Kathy

Salon, Janelle
 Samoszuk, Michael and Jeanne
 Santamaria, Jennifer and Robert
 Savvas, Savva
 Searles, Chrysoula Sourla
 Sechrist, Carl and Christine
 Sehremelis, Andy and Leslie
 Setian, Gary
 Simpson, Bryan and Julie
 Sirhan, Michael and Imtisal
 Skalkotos, Nikolas and Georgia
 Smith, Kathleen
 Snow, Clifford and Christina
 Soursos, Helene
 Stathopoulos, Hristos and
 Anastasia
 Staubs, Douglas and Anastasia
 Stavropoulos, Terry and Niki
 Stenos, Louis
 Stransky, Jack and Rachel
 Stransky, Mark
 Szukiewicz, Joseph and Justina
 Tadich, Andrea and Milisav

Tafoya, Steven and Irene
 Tanguay, Steven and Elizabeth
 Tasios, Ramona
 Taxopoulos, Bryan and Irene
 Thanos, Nicholas and Victoria
 Theros, James and Kathryn
 Thompson, Maggy
 Tijiboy, Christine
 Tohme, Tony and May
 Trebicka, Adrian and Paola
 Tsiralidis, Kosmas and Katerina
 Tsobanoglou, Paris and Niki
 Tsolis, Christos and Panagioula
 Tsolis, Panagiote
 Tsortanidis, Sophia
 Tzelalis, Steve, Vaso and Antonia
 Varinos, Nick and Kiki
 Vervilos, James and Anna
 Wadlow, Nicholas and Pamela
 Wagner, Sophye
 Wainscott, Betty
 Walter, Vernon and Alice
 Ward, Angeliki

Waterhouse, David and
 Aleighzja
 Webb, Taylor
 Welles, Brigitte
 Wells, Adrienne
 Wilkerson, Chuck and Kristina
 Williams, Anthony and Anna
 Wilson, Clyde
 Wilson, Kelly and
 Egi, Junichiro
 Wilson, Steven and Cleo
 Womack, Karl
 Womack, Kimberly
 Xerogianes, Nick and Nikki
 Xikis, Victoria
 Yurkov, Andre, Kalina and
 Daniella
 Zaferatos, Ted
 Zarkos, Nick and Dina
 Zarras, Nick and Chery
 Zimmerman, Paul and Angela
 Zimmerman, Paul
 Zmina, Stephen and Cynthia



Baptized into Christ

Sophia (Myra), daughter of Robert and Ioanna Bartel, on April 2, 2022.
 Godparent: Erys Phillips.

Theodora Kosaiyakanon (Adult Baptism) on April 9, 2022.
 Godparent: Eleni Bruninga.

Stavroula Halatsis (Adult Baptism) on April 9, 2022.
 Godparent: Eleni Bruninga.

Paul Zimmerman (Adult Baptism) on April 9, 2022. Godparent: William Vasilios Bruninga.

Fallen Asleep in the Lord

Dina S. Dounis on March 28, 2022. Funeral on April 6.

Great and Holy Pascha



**2022
Stewardship
Report
(as of 4/26/22)**

Stewardship Gifts Pledged: \$446,562 (\$430,364 in 2021)
 Stewardship Gifts Received: \$248,103 (\$207,939 in 2021)
 Unfulfilled Pledge Balance: \$198,459 (\$222,425 in 2021)
 Stewardship Families Pledged: 329 (320 in 2021)
 2022 Budgeted Goal: \$500,000 . . . Keep the Pledges Coming!

*“Let Us
Exalt
His Name
Together!”
(Psalm 34:3)*

<u>Average Pledge</u>	<u>No. of Families</u>	<u>Amount Pledged</u>
\$1 - \$500	134	\$ 35,403
\$501 - \$1,000	75	\$ 57,944
\$1,001 - \$2,500	83	\$ 129,225
\$2,501 - \$5,000	22	\$ 81,890
\$5,001 & Above	<u>15</u>	<u>\$ 142,100</u>
Total Families	329	\$446,562

Church Account Summaries - March 2022

Nevada State Bank Accounts	February	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	March	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
General Operating Account (GOA)	\$126,662.30	\$102,990.70	\$1,807.32	\$21,190.42	\$72,799.25	\$137,470.65	
Community and Education (C&E)	\$50,345.50	\$5,700.00		\$2,000.00		\$54,045.50	
Greek Food Festival (GFF)	\$93,334.97	\$40.00	\$1,200.00	\$533.33	\$15.00	\$94,026.64	
Designated, Restricted & Other (DR&O)	\$223,594.26	\$59,323.94	\$300.00	\$25,934.22	\$1,903.88	\$255,380.10	
Folk Dance Group	\$19,719.20	\$3,912.00		\$3,037.90		\$20,593.30	
Hellenic Historical Society	\$8,064.94			\$3,791.00	\$31.47	\$4,242.47	
Designated Funds	February	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	March	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
Bookstore	\$25,059.79	\$3,410.00		\$934.22	\$1,903.88	\$25,631.69	
Ornaments	\$1,169.41					\$1,169.41	
Restricted Funds	February	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	March	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
ICON	\$3,199.27					\$3,199.27	
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	\$94,573.12	\$525.94	\$300.00			\$95,399.06	
Youth Choir	\$2,989.18					\$2,989.18	
Church School	\$6,306.37					\$6,306.37	
Three Priests	\$56,544.51					\$56,544.51	
Roof Appeal	\$11,183.22					\$11,183.22	
Altar Servers	\$440.00					\$440.00	
GOYA	\$142.36	\$388.00				\$530.36	
Landscaping	\$1,000.00					\$1,000.00	For re-seeding field
Panos Flooring Repair	\$0.00	\$5,000.00				\$5,000.00	
Church Flooring Replacement	\$0.00	\$50,000.00		\$25,000.00		\$25,000.00	
Restricted Donation	\$10,000.00					\$10,000.00	Undesignated Donation
Designated, Restricted, and Other Total	\$223,594.26	\$59,323.94	\$300.00	\$25,934.22	\$1,903.88	\$255,380.10	
Other Funds	February	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	March	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
Kokkos Scholarship Fund	\$76,944.03					\$76,944.03	As of 12/31/21
Commonwealth Investments	\$131,324.25	\$982.26				\$132,306.51	Change in Investment

March 2022 Candles \$7,480.72
March 2022 Trays \$4,573.00
Total March 2022 Candles & Trays \$12,053.72



MAY 2022 ~ IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD



Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

1 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Ramos Family Goodbye Luncheon</i>	2 6:00 pm Adult Basketball	3 6:00 pm Special Parish Council Meeting in Library	4 6:30 pm Adult & Young Adult Study: The Sermon on the Mount	5	6	7
8 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy	9 11:30 am Forerunners Luncheon in Kokkos Hall 6:00 pm Adult Basketball	10 6:00 pm Philoptochos Dinner Meeting in Panos	11 6:30 pm Adult & Young Adult Study: The Sermon on the Mount	12	13	14
15 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy	16 6:00 pm Adult Basketball	17 6:00 pm Parish Council Meeting in Library	18 6:30 pm Adult & Young Adult Study: The Sermon on the Mount	19	20	21 <i>Ss. Constantine and Helen</i> 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy
22 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Church School Commencement <i>All Youth and Family BBQ & Games on the Field</i>	23 6:00 pm Adult Basketball	24	25 6:30 pm Adult & Young Adult Study: The Sermon on the Mount	26	27	28 6:00 pm Mr. and Mrs. at the Brown Home
29 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy	30 6:00 pm Adult Basketball	31				

The Desert Messenger

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

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THE DESERT MESSENGER

The Way of the Lord

*It is the day of the Resurrection,
let us be glorious in splendor
for the festival, and let us embrace
one another. Let us speak also,
O brothers and sisters, to those
who hate us, and in the Resurrection,
let us forgive all things
and so let us cry:*

*Christ is Risen from the dead,
by Death trampling down upon death,
and to those in the tombs
He has granted Life!*

(Doxastikon for Holy Pascha)

