

The Desert



Messenger

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

Volume 17, Issue 3 St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

March 2019

**From
Father
John**

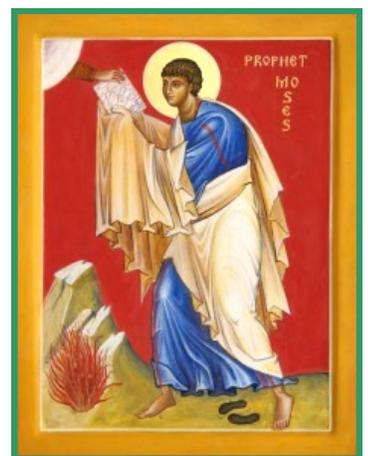
Beloved in Christ:

I just shared with a Parish member the good news that the Immigration Inspectors recently came out to our property, emphasizing that it has been two years to the day since our Iconographers were detained and sent back to Greece for having the wrong visas. While I explained this was a necessary and final step – in which we can begin to see light at the end of the proverbial tunnel – for bringing our Iconographers here, the response of this faithful woman was enlightening: “Two years is two days for God!”

Most of us, not unlike the ancient Israelites wandering in the desert for 40 years, have been wont to complain about our predicament and to be impatient with the unsightly scaffolding in our Church since February 2017 – we want the exedra icons yesterday, we want the scaffolding down, we want our baptistery back, we want the scaffolding covered up for a wedding, we want someone else to complete the project, we want to complain to those in congress about how slow the visa process is, and the list of grievances go on. Yet how many of us look past the scaffolding . . . to the fact we are worshiping in a warm (in winter) or cool (in summer) Church, blessed with two full-time clergy, chanters, choir (youth and adult), adorned with magnificent existent iconography and traditional Orthodox services and sacraments? God has never left us these past two years – and for 60 years this very month – and all our spiritual and sacramental needs have continued to be met, even with the scaffolding and the icon canvases still on the planks!

Perspective is always necessary when it comes to our spiritual journey in this fleeting life. How often do we complain about our obstacles, pain or difficulties, rather than looking at the larger picture and thanking God for His enduring love, mercy, protection and grace toward each and every one of us, His beloved children, from the beginning of creation! Great and Holy Lent, which starts this year on **Monday, March 11**, provides us an immense opportunity to restore perspective – specifically to put on the lens that allows us to see clearly what Christ our God voluntary endured, even to His Death on the Cross, to grant us eternal Life through His glorious third-day Resurrection.

One powerful hymn leading us into Great Lent elucidates the strong correlation between fasting and acquiring the vision of God: “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.” (Hymn of Praise, Orthros, Sunday of Forgiveness) Our Holy Orthodox Church provides many ways to assist us in acquiring the mystical lens during the Lenten season, which can be a great source of spiritual growth and renewal: Through the ascetic disciplines of increased prayer, intense fasting, amplified charity toward others, continuous forgiveness, participating in the abundant services and the Sacrament of Holy Confession, the spiritual floodgates are open – leading us to become painfully aware of how far we have gone away from Christ and, by His grace, to change the many spiritually undermining habits and behaviors that cloud the eyes of our soul to His Presence. The Lenten ascetic disciplines (*askesis*) also preclude that, as we are making a concerted effort to see and become united with Christ, we are simultaneously eliminating the things that distract our attention away from Him (as these vary from person to person, genuine self-reflection and confession are most helpful toward this end).



(Continued on Page 3)

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

Saturday, March 2/*1st Saturday of Souls/
St. Nicholas Planas*

8:00 am Orthros

9:00 am Divine Liturgy and Memorial

Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

Gospel: Luke 21:8-9, 25-27, 33-36

Sunday, March 3/*Meatfare Sunday/The Last
Judgment/Martyr Evtropios and Companians*

Orthros: Tone Seven (Grave)

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

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-13, 9:1-2

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

Abstain from Meat this Week

Saturday, March 9/*2nd Saturday of Souls/
Holy 40 Martyrs of Sebaste*

8:00 am Orthros

9:00 am Divine Liturgy and Memorial

Epistle: Hebrews 12:1-10

Gospel: Matthew 11:27-30

Sunday, March 10/*Cheesefare Sunday/Forgiveness
Sunday/Expulsion of Adam from Paradise/
Holy Martyr Kodratos*

Orthros: Tone Eight (Fourth Plagal)

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

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

Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21

5:00 pm Forgiveness Vespers

Abstain from Meat and Dairy for 40 Days

Monday, March 11/*Clean Monday: 1st Day of Lent*

6:30 pm Great Compline

Wednesday, March 13

6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 15

7:00 pm First Salutations to the Theotokos

Saturday, March 16/*3rd Saturday of Souls/Miracle
of St. Theodore the Recruit and the Kollyva*

8:00 am Orthros

9:00 am Divine Liturgy and Memorial

Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:1-10

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

Sunday, March 17/*1st Sunday of Lent/
Triumph of Orthodoxy/St. Alexios, Man of God*

Orthros: Tone One

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

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

Gospel: John 1:44-52

Procession of Icons follows Liturgy

5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. John the Baptist

Monday, March 18

6:30 pm Great Compline

Wednesday, March 20

6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 22

7:00 pm Second Salutations to the Theotokos

Sunday, March 24/*2nd Sunday of Lent/
St. Gregory Palamas/Forefeast of the*

Annunciation/St. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow

Orthros: Tone Two

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

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

Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Paul OCA Church

Monday, March 25/*Annunciation of the Most
Holy Theotokos*

8:00 am Orthros

9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, March 27

6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 29

7:00 pm Third Salutations to the Theotokos

Sunday, March 31/*3rd Sunday of Lent/
Veneration of the Holy Cross*

Procession of Holy Cross at Doxology

Orthros: Tone Three

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

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

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

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

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

MARCH 3

Ushers: Gus Flangas, Skip Ruffner, Bessie Stavropoulos, Spiros Filios, Demetrious Asim and John Nicholas
Fellowship: Daughters of Penelope

MARCH 10: FORGIVENESS SUNDAY

Ushers: Demetrious Asim, John Matsis, Mark Karris, Stacy Mavrantonis, Justina Szukiewicz and John Koutsulis
Memorials: Caliope Lavine (40 days); Alexander Dallas (6 months); Michael Mavros (2 years); Prodromos Lambros (3 years); Mary Van den Raadt (5 years); and Antonia Venea Poulos
Fellowship: Amy Girmay and Family

MARCH 17: 1ST SUNDAY OF LENT - ICON PROCESSION

Ushers: Adam Bieker, Spiros Filios, Gus Flangas, Bessie Stavropoulos, John Nicholas and Skip Ruffner
Fellowship: Forerunners, the Seniors of St. John the Baptist

MARCH 24: EVE OF ANNUNCIATION

Ushers: Justina Szukiewicz, John Koutsulis, Adam Bieker, Stacy Mavrantonis, Mark Karris and John Matsis
Memorials: Constandinos Birtas, Maria Birtas, George Elfter and William White.
Fellowship: AHEPA - GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

MARCH 31: MID LENT - PROCESSION OF HOLY CROSS

Ushers: Gus Flangas, Skip Ruffner, Bessie Stavropoulos, Spiros Filios, Demetrious Asim and John Nicholas
Memorial: Rev. Father Constantine Raptis (2 years)
Fellowship: Ladies Philoptochos Society - Hellenic College/Holy Cross

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.

From Father John (Continued from Page 1)

When all is said and done, the six weeks of Lent and one week of Holy Week amount to a little more than a tithe of the entire 52 week year – or just minutes, if we look at our life from God's perspective. But the spiritual benefit of genuinely and fully embarking on the Lenten ascetic journey can be life-changing, and moreover result in eternal rewards for each of us!

With love from your fellow pilgrim in Christ,




ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Parish Council: Gus Flangas

Philoptochos: Vicky Palivos

Stewardship & Community Outreach:
Justina Szukiewicz

Choir: Athena Mertes

Chanters & Youth Choir:
Presvytera Maria Hondros

Church School: Eileen Koutsulis

Altar Servers: Father John

GOYA:
Kouli Pouridis & June Likourinou

Orthodox Family Fellowship:
Jelena Boskovic & Amy Khuri

Young Adults:
Nicholas Asim & Elizabeth Arbuiso

Greek Folk Dance: Sia Dalacas

Greek School: Paula Kelesis

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

Kali Parea: Demetrious Asim

Adult Basketball:
Nate Dallas

Forerunners:
Vicki Xikis

Orthodox Bookstore:
Constantine Frangakis,
Paisios & Mary Pursell

Greek Food Festival: Gus Flangas

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

Photography: Bill Bruninga

THE LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY
AND PAN ARCADIANs

INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR THE 2019

Mardi Gras Gala



Saturday, March 2 at 6:00 pm

Panos Hall

Adults \$50 Children 6-12 \$15 Children 5 & Under Free

Table of 10 \$450 Tickets Available at Sunday Fellowship or Church Office

**FEATURING LIVE MUSIC WITH JOHN FOTOPOULOS
FAMILY STYLE MEAL WITH WINE
GREEK DANCING AND PERFORMANCES
COSTUME PRIZES AND MORE!**

All Proceeds Benefit the Mortgage Principal Payoff

Parish Council Report

Lent begins on *Monday, March 11* and as we begin this Lenten Season, please take the time to realize and be thankful to God for the many blessings we all have received. Many things in our Church are now getting fixed and, moreover, many of our visions are coming to fruition. We want to thank all those who give their time, talents and treasures to make things better and ensure the future of our Church for ourselves and our children. It takes a lot of effort by many and we are truly blessed.

We recently shared good news with the Parish regarding the Iconography. Recognizing that this has been a perpetually moving target, we have finally overcome another major milestone in our seemingly endless endeavor to get our Iconographers here to finish the project. This milestone involved having an inspection completed by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services to verify that we are actually a Church. This inspection was finally completed earlier this month. It was a close call; however, we succeeded. We are now finalizing audited Financials for 2018, as requested by Immigration Services, and will submit them in the coming days. Once the financials are submitted, we will then submit expedited visa applications for the Iconographers. We are told Immigration Services will issue the go-ahead within 15 days after submitting the expedited applications, absent any unforeseen circumstances. The only thing left to do will be for the Iconographers to attend an appointment for issuance of their respective visas with the consulate either in Greece or here in the US, via teleconferencing. Absent any unforeseen circumstances, we are told that it will take less than two months to get the Iconographers here. To answer a question many may have, the answer is yes: If the Iconographers' visas are approved prior to Holy Week, we are still going to bring them here to work prior to and during Holy Week. It has been a long journey, but the light is growing at the end of the tunnel.

We want to congratulate our Folk Dancers who recently attended and competed in the Dance Competition at the Faith Dance Fellowship (FDF) Conference in Southern California. It was a successful event and a great experience. Congratulations and thank you to the Folk Dance Board, Directors, Dancers, and everyone involved for a tremendous job well done in representing our Church. In the same vein, we want to also congratulate the Dance Ministry for a job well done in hosting their recent Glendi and Sunday Luncheon. Both events were awesome, and the food and music performed by live musicians from Greece were fantastic. We also saw our youth perform their Dances in preparation for FDF. Great job everyone.

We have a *Mardi Gras Gala* hosted by the Ladies Philoptochos Society and Pan Arcadians *on Saturday, March 2 at 6:00 pm in Panos Hall*, featuring live music with John Fotopoulos, a family style meal with wine, Greek Dancing and performances. All proceeds will help us pay down the mortgage, so please attend and support this fun and important event.

Father John, Father Seraphim, Jennia Szukiewicz and I are going to be attending the 2019 Metropolis Clergy Assembly at St. Nicholas Ranch *on March 4 and 5*. This is a great opportunity to learn about updates to the Strategic Plan for the Metropolis and the various ministries of the Metropolis, and to meet the Clergy and leaders from the other Parishes. In addition, it is a great opportunity to visit the Monastery and facilities at St. Nicholas Ranch, which are absolutely awe-inspiring.

As many of you are aware, we have been working on many projects. We recently did a deep cleaning and sterilization of the kitchen. During this process, we took everything out of the storage areas, and repainted and re-enameled the floors. We cleaned everything we took out, sifted through and tossed unnecessary items, and put everything back in an organized manner. We also moved all the kitchen appliances and deep cleaned them from top to bottom, and underneath as well. There is still much more to do. As stated last month, the biggest problem with the kitchen is that people who use the kitchen do not seem to care about cleaning up after they are done. Again, we implore you, if you use the kitchen, leave it better than you found it. This needs to be a community-wide effort to keep the kitchen clean.

We have also been working on receiving and evaluating bids to replace the roof on the Community Center. Thanks to some substantial donations we recently received in response to an Appeal, we are now in a position to fix this problem. Again, to everyone who donated their treasures to the roof effort, THANK YOU!

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Parish Council Report *(Continued from Page 5)*

As many of you know from last month's article, we obtained a couple of "working cats." The cats have been kept in a cage for a little over a month to acclimate them to the Church property and learn that this is their home. We just released them from their cage so they can roam the property and do their thing. As previously stated, these are "feral cats" and they may not be friendly. Please tell your kids to leave them alone and not try to pet them. If the cats want to interact, they will come to you, not the other way around. Again, please note that these cats may scratch and bite, so please inform your kids accordingly. On another note, these cats were featured in a Las Vegas Review Journal article and video. John Koutsulis who has been taking care of the cats was featured. See <https://www.reviewjournal.com/videos/working-cats-at-st-john-the-baptist-church/>.

We have our *Parish Assembly* scheduled for *Sunday, March 31*, following the Liturgy. These meetings are held semi-annually and are for all Stewards in good standing. There is a lot of important information provided and important votes taken on many things that affect not only the operation of the Church but also the vision of the Church. We encourage all Stewards to attend and participate.

We are in high gear for the planning of the *2019 Greek Food Festival: The dates this year are Friday, September 27 through Sunday, September 29*. Planning meetings will be starting soon. The immediate priorities are to slot individuals into leadership positions, and to begin aggressively pursuing Pre-Sales, which primarily include selling Raffle Tickets, Souvenir Book Ads, and Coupon Books. Pre-Sales provide the "seed" money for the Festival, and more importantly, strong pre-sales could conceivably fund up to 40% or more of the expenses going into the Festival, thus minimizing our risk. The Festival is a community effort so please step up and help when the time comes.

In closing, we want to again thank the various Church ministries and organizations, and the many individuals for all the work they do. It clearly takes a lot of work from the entire community to maintain our Church. Please step forward whenever you can and pitch in. Many events and meetings are always happening, but all are extremely important. Please get involved as we move forward to make our Church better.

May God Bless! Gus Flangas, Parish Council President

Notice of Parish Assembly Sunday, March 31, 2019 following Divine Liturgy

Agenda

- Call to Order & Opening Prayer
 - Election of Assembly Chair
 - Approval of Minutes (11/4/18)
 - CPA Audit 2017
 - Financial Report and Approval of 2018 Financials
- Greek Food Festival: September 27-28-29
 - Stewardship 2019
 - Iconography Status
- Adjournment & Closing Prayer

Your attendance is encouraged. Only Stewards in Good Standing for 2019 may vote.



Baptized into Christ: Na Mas Zisi

Demetria (Morgan) Lovato (Adult Baptism) on January 19, 2019.
Godparent: Rahel Kiflezgi.

Maria (Genevieve), daughter of Kyle Foster and Maria-Elena Pierro, on February 2, 2019.
Godparent: Joseph Pierro.

Elizabeth (Arya), daughter of Brian and Effi Booth, on February 23, 2019.
Godparent: Efrosyni Colati.

Marriage: Na Zisetel

Brian Thomas Booth and Eftihia Effi Kasandrinos on February 22, 2019.
Koumbara: Fotini Kasandrinos.

Fallen Asleep in the Lord: Eternal Memory!

Antoinette Lakis on February 11. Funeral on February 25.

Yvonne Hall on February 15. Funeral on February 26.



Adult Study with Father John

Churchianity vs. Christianity

By Metropolitan Anthony Bloom

*Join us every Wednesday 8:00 - 9:00 pm during Lent
(following Presanctified Liturgy) in Kokkos Hall*

This book is available in our Bookstore

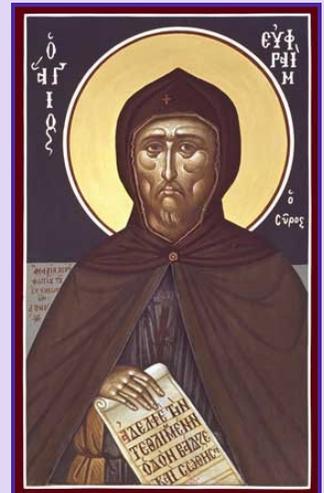
Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

*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.



Stewardship and Community Outreach

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Glory be to God for all things. As we continue our journey through the Triodion period, leading us toward Lent, Holy Week and Pascha, it is useful to remember the themes of the Gospel readings during this period. On the first Sunday of the Triodion period we read the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee (*Luke 18:9-14*), the theme being humility. The second week we heard the parable of the Prodigal Son (*Luke 15:11-32*), the theme being repentance. The third week of the Triodion, which falls on the first Sunday in March, will be the Sunday of Judgment (*Matthew 25:31-36*), where the Lord separates the sheep from the goats. The fourth Sunday of the Triodion period is Forgiveness Sunday (*Matthew 6:14-21*), which is what the Lenten period is all about.

We learn from the reading from St. Matthew's Gospel (Chapter 25) concerning the Final Judgement that we shall be separated into two groups. What will separate us into these two groups will be based on whether or not we fed those in need, gave drink to those who thirsted, took in strangers, clothed the naked, and visited the sick and those in prison. To be included among the sheep – that is, those who fulfilled the needs of their fellow man – let us remember the words of St. Paul to the Church of Corinth: “. . . *he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So, let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*” (*2 Corinthians 9:6-7*)

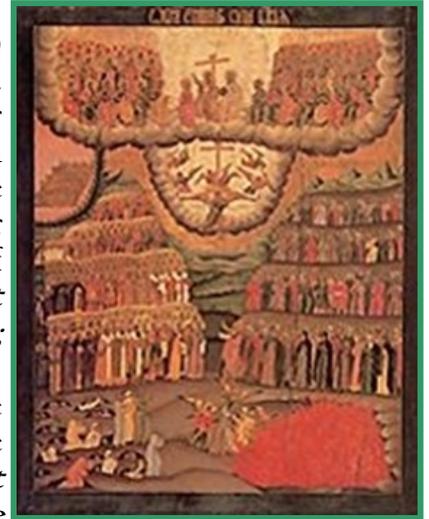
The Bible is replete with examples exhorting us to be charitable toward and take care of one another through the good Stewardship of the many blessings the Lord has bestowed upon each one of us. In his *First Letter to Timothy*, St. Paul notes: “*Command those who are rich in the present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold to eternal life.*” (*6:17-19*) The time to come is Judgment Day and by willingly and lovingly sharing with those in need we will find ourselves at the right hand of the Lord with the other faithful sheep.

St. Peter warns us that “*the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*” (*1 Peter 4:7-10*) As we have been in the end times since our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ reopened the pathway to Heaven for his sheep, may we all be good Stewards of the grace He has provided for us, ministering it to those in need, so that we too may be among these sheep at his right hand and enter into His Glory.

Being good Stewards of the blessings we have received is also a theme spoken of by many of the Holy Fathers. St. Anthony says, “*both life and death come to us from our neighbor.*” In other words, if we feed the hungry, give them drink, take them in, clothe them and visit them when sick or in prison, we are laying “*hold of eternal life.*” If we do not, then we will end up among the unfaithful goats on Judgment Day. St. Peter Damascene writes: “*As the poor should give thanks to God and love the rich who do them good, even more should the rich give thanks to God and love the poor; for they are saved by the providence of God, both now and in the future age, because of their alms. For without the poor, they not only cannot attain the salvation of their souls, but they also cannot avoid the temptations of wealth.*” Clearly, we must use the gifts we have received to benefit all of the Lord's children.

Let us prayerfully and lovingly give to our Church, the various ministries of the Orthodox Church, and to those charitable organizations that take care of those in need – so that we will find ourselves united with Christ and sharing in His Glory at the time of His Second Coming.

In Christ, Stewardship and Community Outreach Committee



The Clark County Orthodox Clergy Association
Invites All Adults to Join Us for the
Annual Lenten Retreat

**Face to Face:
Christ's Journey into Our Shame
and Our Journey Through It**

Saturday, April 6, 2019
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
**Rev. Father Stephen Freeman,
Retreat Speaker**



Program

10:00 am	Registration
10:30 am	3rd Hour
10:45 am	The Shame of the Cross
12:00 pm	Lenten Lunch
1:00 pm	Shame: The Master Emotion
2:00 pm	Break
2:15 pm	The Path to God's Healing
3:30 pm	Conclusion

Father Stephen is an archpriest in the Orthodox Church in America and serves as pastor of St. Anne Orthodox Church in Oak Ridge, TN. He was educated at Furman University, Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, and Duke University. He is author of the popular blog *Glory to God for All Things* and of the weekly podcast *Glory to God on Ancient Faith Radio* as well as the author of *Everywhere Present: Christianity in a One-Storey Universe*. His work has been widely translated and published in Europe and Russia.

\$15 per person, includes lunch

Please register by Friday, March 29, 2019

Make checks payable to St. Paul Orthodox Church, Memo: Lenten Retreat

**Philoptochos
News**

Dearest Sisters and Brothers of Philoptochos,

As Lent begins we are given many opportunities to make more time for God in our busy schedules and spend more time in His Presence.



On February 3 we celebrated National Heart Awareness Day, where we provided literature to women concerning the prevention of heart disease and wore red in solidarity with all who suffer from this disease. We also passed out red carnations to all the ladies who attended the Divine Liturgy. Additionally, we had our Membership Drive, which gave us an opportunity to share about Philoptochos and our role in both the greater world and locally. Please become a member of our wonderful and meaningful organization. Thank you to our Fellowship hostess, Alis Dokakis!

On February 10 we held a memorial for our Departed Philoptochos Members, remembering the wonderful women who came before us, and honoring their dedicated service and the treasure they have passed on to us.

MARCH EVENTS:



Mardi Gras Gala on Saturday, March 2: Please join us for a beautiful evening! Philoptochos and the Pan Arcadians are planning a wonderful event for all of you with great food, live music, dancing, costume prizes and a lot of fun! All of us are encouraged to wear costumes and get ready to dance. Tickets are \$50 per person and all the proceeds will go toward paying off the Church mortgage.

Pan-Orthodox Vespers and Dinner on Sunday, March 17 at 5:00 pm: Philoptochos is hosting a Lenten supper after the Lenten Vespers, which will allow us to welcome the Orthodox faithful from our community and from all the Orthodox Churches in Las Vegas. Bessie Chachas is the chair of this event.

LeeAnn and Steve Eliakis have graciously volunteered once again to donate and prepare the delicious lentil soup – their contribution is greatly appreciated. We need volunteers at 4:00 pm to help set up Panos Hall for the dinner, along with serving the food and cleaning up.

Philoptochos General Meeting on Tuesday, March 26, 6:00 pm, in Kokkos Hall: All ladies of our Church community are invited to attend.

Hellenic College/Holy Cross Collection and Fellowship on Sunday, March 31: On the Third Sunday of Lent, in observation of the Holy Cross, our Philoptochos will have a collection and host a Lenten Fellowship following the Divine Liturgy – the proceeds will be dedicated to Hellenic College Holy Cross to assist with operating expenses. Vickie and John Kelesis will continue their loving and generous tradition of offering the fresh-made Fasolada, to be served at the Fellowship. Tami Stefanatos will be chairing this event. Please be generous in support of the HCHC, which provides the future leaders of our Church and our Orthodox Faith.

Wine Wagon: Please buy raffle tickets so you can have a chance to win on Holy Pascha a wagon full of wine. Anastasia Dallas is in charge of this fun event. Please donate two bottles of wine and bring to Church throughout Great Lent.



ADDITIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS DATES:

Palm Sunday, April 21 – Palm Sunday Luncheon

Holy Thursday, April 25 – Red Egg Dyeing

Holy Friday, April 26 – Epitaphion Decorating

Holy Pascha, April 28 – Wine Wagon/Sale of Pastries

Sunday, May 12 – Mothers Day

Sunday, May 14 – Philoptochos General Meeting, 6:00 pm, in Kokkos Hall

Sunday, May 19 – Bartsas Memorial

Monday, May 20 – Presidents Dinner

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Philoptochos News *(Continued from Page 10)*

We are also pleased to announce the 60th Anniversary Celebration of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in Las Vegas, NV. Each of us is called to participate and prayerfully give from our precious resources to help pay off the mortgage of our Church. Our Church is where we gather to pray and worship, to grow in our Orthodox Faith, to receive God's grace and healing, to welcome others into the Faith, to do outreach and acts of philanthropy, and to carry on our cultural traditions. Please contact the Chairwomen Cheryl Pandelis and Nitsa Filios to offer your pledge! Please also mark your calendars for the weekend of **November 8, 9 and 10 for our 60th Anniversary Celebration events.**

May God bless your journey through Holy Lent to the Light of Pascha with prayerful experiences, a deeper relationship with Christ and renewed humility.

With Love in Christ, Vicky Palivos, Philoptochos President

Notes from the Choir Loft



This month we enter the season of Great and Holy Lent! The Choir will begin rehearsals in preparation for Holy Week and Pascha. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend on **Friday, March 22 and Friday, March 29** in the Choir Loft. Rehearsals will begin **at 5:45 pm and end before 7:00 pm**, when the Salutations to the Theotokos begins. Thank you for sharing your time and talent! Athena Mertes, Choir Director

Koukla and Pontiki . . .



have been released from their enclosure. They are feral cats and are not to be handled. They will come up to you on their own terms. Please see Karen to donate Tidy Cat non-clumping Kitty Litter and Friskies Dry and Friskies Shredded wet food.



**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

Dear Fellow Parishioners:

We pray that the New Year brings continued good health and many blessings to you and your families.

By God's Grace, The Ladies Philoptochos Society Panagia Chapter has been entrusted with the chairmanship of the **60th Anniversary Celebration of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, November 8, 9 and 10, 2019.**

Last October, as a forerunner to the 60th you were presented with a

"\$300,000 One Year Plan"

which outlined the means by which our beloved Church Community can be debt free by November, 2019.

We have eight months to bring this goal to fruition.

With a generous heart, please review once again, the packet sent to you on October 15, 2018

On behalf of the Ladies Philoptochos Society Panagia Chapter

Your sisters in Christ,

Vicky Palivos

Vicky Palivos, President
Ladies Philoptochos Society
Panagia Chapter

Nitsa Filios

Nitsa Filios, Chairwoman
702 595-6888
nitsalv@aol.com

Cheryl Pandelis

Cheryl Pandelis, Chairwoman
702 338-1601
cheryl.pandelis@outlook.com



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

\$300,000 ONE YEAR PLAN

SUGGESTED DONATIONS

Please choose one

Plan 1:	\$1,000	___ pay in full or	___ \$83.33 per month for 12 months***
Plan 2:	\$2,000	___ pay in full or	___ \$166.67 per month for 12 months
Plan 3:	\$5,000	___ pay in full or	___ \$416.67 per month for 12 months
Plan 4:	\$7,500	___ pay in full or	___ \$625.00 per month for 12 months
Plan 5:	\$10,000	___ pay in full or	___ \$833.33 per month for 12 months
Plan 6:	\$15,000	___ pay in full or	___ \$1,250.00 per month for 12 months
Plan 7:	\$25,000	___ pay in full or	___ \$2,083.33 per month for 12 months
Plan 8:	\$50,000	___ pay in full or	___ \$4,166.67 per month for 12 months

*****300 Contributors participating in Plan 1: \$1,000 over the course of 1 year,
or \$83.33 per month for 12 months, would abolish our \$300,000 debt!
Please think about what \$83.33 per month represents to you and
find a way to help make it happen!**

These are "SUGGESTED" donation plans, however

ALL DONATIONS ARE WELCOME

FOR ASSISTANCE IN DESIGNING A PERSONALIZED PLAN

OR TO SET UP A MONTHLY PAYMENT SCHEDULE

please call or email

Cheryl Pandelis 702 338-1601
cheryl.pandelis@outlook.com

Nitsa Filios 702 595-6888
nitsalv@aol.com

THANK YOU!



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

\$300,000 ONE YEAR PLAN

Please fill out and return this form to St. John Church in the enclosed envelope

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ MOBILE: _____

EMAIL: _____

DONATION AMOUNT: \$ _____

IN FULL: \$ _____ OR 12 MONTHLY PAYMENTS OF \$ _____ EACH

CHECK* Number: _____ Date: _____

CREDIT CARD** AMEX _____ VISA _____ MC _____ OTHER _____

Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

**Please make check payable to St. John Greek Orthodox Church*

***If you prefer, please call Karen directly at the Church Office 702-221-8245 with your credit card information*

ALL DONATIONS ARE WELCOME

FOR ASSISTANCE IN DESIGNING A PERSONALIZED PLAN

OR TO SET UP A MONTHLY PAYMENT SCHEDULE

please call or email

Cheryl Pandelis 702 338-1601
cheryl.pandelis@outlook.com

Nitsa Filios 702 595-6888
nitsalv@aol.com

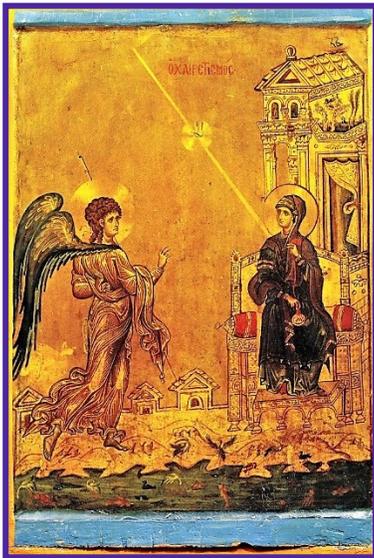
THANK YOU!

From Father Seraphim

The Orthodox Church is as alive as any organism that on Earth. It has a loving Father (The Godhead of the Holy Trinity) and a pure Mother (The Holy Theotokos); it sorrows and rejoices; it both fasts and feasts. The Church's heart beats in the steady rhythm of its major feasts, all of which the Theotokos plays a major part: "When we speak of Christ we cannot ignore her who gave Him flesh, and when we speak of the Panagia, we are referring to Christ at the same time." (Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos) Within the time of our greatest fasting period, Great Lent, we find the feast of *the Annunciation of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos on March 25*. The icon of the Annunciation allows us to witness the frozen second when by the power of the Holy Spirit the Divine Nature was united with our human nature in the womb of the Panagia in the Person of Jesus Christ – for it did not take hours or days.

God perfectly recognizes our fallen nature's need for tangible reminders, miraculous encounters and warm tears that are the fuel for flames of commitment to Him. Icons are a perfect example of this use of the physical world to aid man's spirituality: We need icons. Each icon, each moment depicted by the iconography of the Twelve Great Feasts, encompasses the entire story of salvation in all its fullness; each feast hints at the climax – the Cross of our Savior.

When the *Panagia* (Greek for *All-Holy*) is depicted, she reveals her subjection to and acceptance of the will of God by the bowing of her head. However, this gentle tilt of her head represents more than just the acceptance to be the pure and unbreakable vessel of our Lord. It also shows the willingness of the Theotokos to not only give herself up completely for God and the human race, but also to endure great tribulations. At the moment she bent her neck, she symbolically accepted the sword that would pierce her soul at the sight of her Son being raised upon the Cross as sacrifice for the sins of the world. (See *Luke 2:35*.)



Perhaps the most profound portrayal of these more somber elements within the Feast of the Annunciation is found in an icon from Mount Sinai. It portrays the Archangel pausing to ponder his extraordinary message and how to best announce it to Mary. Despite the solemnity of the Mount Sinai icon, the whole scene is suffused with a warm golden light that colors the earth, the sky, the buildings, and even the figures themselves. This distinctly reveals the protection, safety, and comfort of God in such an intense moment for both heaven and earth. At the same moment that she accepted the upcoming trials, the Virgin also gloriously gained at a close and organic connection with the Baby entering her womb. Thus, the Church receives this moment of Divine and Human conception as a celebration of all conceived human life and unequivocally stands for the sanctity of every single person in the womb – for our own Lord and Savior consented to embrace even the fragile and microscopic embryonic state of our most vulnerable unborn brothers and sisters. The Theotokos had from her youth experienced the presence of God everywhere around her. Now, however, she was in communion with God in *body and blood*, while at the same instant her Son was sitting on the throne of God united with His Father and the Holy Spirit blessing His mother and her name from generation to generation.

The Theotokos' face is reflective and reflects the image of God; the holy Mother contemplates the beautiful burden she has just accepted, while God is giving up His only Son to the human condition and certain death. To stand before any icon with inner attention is to place our soul and body into a weightless and seemingly empty space; it is the simplest and most effective way in which humans are able to experience and be reminded of God's wonderful presence and saving will. The Annunciation is the primary image we turn to in order to be reminded of and witness the love and humility of He Who condescended to enter the human race and save us from death.

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos,

Father Seraphim

Youth and Family Ministries

Church School

First, I would like to congratulate our Folk Dancers on a job well done at FDF. The work that the kids put in is truly remarkable. They should all be so proud of themselves.

Happily, we have so many students in our classrooms and they are eager to learn. Lent will start on **Monday, March 11**. As always, we are encouraging our students to attend at least one weekday service to make their Lenten journey more fulfilling. The Friday service is Salutations to the Theotokos – as the Youth Choir chants, it is a wonderful service for our children to participate in. Please see the worship schedule for all of the different Lenten opportunities and liturgical services.

The **OFF Lenten Mini-Retreat will be on Saturday, March 9**. The theme is “Prayer and Fasting.” All elementary-aged kids and their parents are welcome! Please let us know if you need more details or if you would like to help.

On Sunday, March 17, the Triumph of Orthodoxy, our Church School children will participate in the Procession of Icons: Please bring a favorite icon from home to carry for the First Sunday in Lent.

Also on that date, we will begin collecting for “Missions Possible.” This annual Lenten drive supports the work of the Metropolis of San Francisco Missions and Evangelism Ministry, which assists in the growth of new and existing mission parishes and provides outreach tools for all parishes. Last year our parish raised \$968.17 – our goal is to raise at least \$1,000 this year! We will have a weekly collection in the classrooms: Please have your children collect their loose change or paper money during the week to add to our bucket on Sunday, which will continue **through Palm Sunday, April 21**. The children will receive a little treat for every week that they bring money for the bucket. Missions Possible is the main funding source for the Missions and Evangelism Ministry.

Please feel free to call or e-mail me with any questions or concerns. Wishing you a blessed Lenten Journey!

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

Youth Choir News



Kudos to all the Youth Choir that showed up **early** on Sunday, February 10. We managed to sing a brand new English Doxology and I truly appreciated everybody who came early. Thank you, Parents!

The Youth Choir will have its **next practice on Sunday, March 3**. We will meet in the 4th and 5th Grade classroom **at 12:15 pm**, right after Church School. The Youth Choir will chant the Divine Liturgy on **Sunday, March 10** – please meet in the front right side **by 9:40 am** so we can chant the Doxology again with unity and full voices.

Lent is quickly approaching! The Youth Choir traditionally chants the responses to the Salutation Service to the Theotokos on Friday Evenings during Lent. This year our Friday practices will be on **March 15, 22 and 29**. Practice is **at 6:15 pm** in the 4th/5th grade classroom as the service starts at 7:00 pm. The rest of our Lent and Holy Week schedule will be sent via email.

May we all have a blessed Lenten Season. Love in Christ, Presvytera Maria

Greek Language Program

Many of our Greek School children went to FDF and won awards, and we are very proud of them!

On **Sunday, March 24** our students will be reciting their poems for Greek Independence Day. We hope you enjoy the program they have been working diligently to present to the Community.

Paula Kelesis, Greek School Director



Greek Folk Dance

Our Folk Dance family joyfully participated in the Annual Metropolis of San Francisco Folk Dance Festival February 14-18! This year's Festival was the largest ever, with over 112 groups performing! To see our children enjoying fellowship and fun with *thousands* of other Orthodox youth from other Parishes was uplifting and inspiring.

Our four groups – Elliniki Yperifania, Delfinia, Aetopoula and Liondaria – all performed beautifully and we could not be more proud of their accomplishments! We even came home with some awards! Elliniki Yperifania, our high school and college age group, won the Division I Special Achievement Award and the Senior Category Choral Award for their incredible singing. Aetopoula, our elementary age group, also won the Primary Category Choral Award for their beautiful voices! We want to thank all the directors for all four groups: Nick Barbarino, Niko Pouridis, Demetri Pouridis, Jonathan Liaos, Kyriacos Phillipou, Natalia Daskalos, Phoebe Orlando and Alexandra Liaos.

We also want to thank our community for all the love and support you showed our children, especially in the last few weeks leading up to FDF. Our Macaronada Dinner and our Preview Brunch were both wildly successful due to the support from our community, as well as the parents and families of our dancers. A special HUGE THANK YOU goes out to all the individuals who assisted with the Macaronada and the Preview Brunch, including all the chefs in the kitchen, the parents who helped serve and clean up and all those who donated their time, money and special ingredients! This Ministry can thrive when everyone works together and remains positive in support and sacrificial love. Also, a final word of thanks to Steve Likourinou who donated his talents and equipment for the sound support of our events!

We will be taking a break from dancing (but not from Christ and His Church!) for Great Lent and summer vacation. We will resume with our 2019-2020 dance program in August. Please look for registration information in *The Desert Messenger*. We are looking to grow our Ministry and we welcome all children ages 4 and up to join the fun and fellowship that dance brings.

Much Gratitude to God and you all for a beautiful year, The Folk Dance Board



GOYA ~ For Teenagers

Dear GOYANs and Parents,

It is time again for the Annual Lenten Teen Overnight Retreat! “Athletes for Christ” is the spiritual theme we will explore together in this two-day event. We pray it will prove to be a spiritual experience in our Faith, fellowship with your friends (including those from St. Paul OCA Church and our other sister Orthodox Churches), and overall fun! We will camp out in the Church on *Friday Night, March 29 and conclude in the afternoon on Saturday, March 30. We will gather together at the Church at 6:00 pm on Friday and will dismiss at 1:30 pm on Saturday.*

Remember to wear Church clothes Friday for the Salutation’s service to the Theotokos at 7:00 pm, and bring with you appropriate casual clothes, with running shoes for games on the field. Remember also to bring sleeping clothes, your sleeping bag, your pillow, a toothbrush, etc. Please RSVP with Father Seraphim at frseraphim@vegasgreekorthodox.com or (702) 768-7480 so that we can begin to get a head count and appropriately plan the meals for the participants.

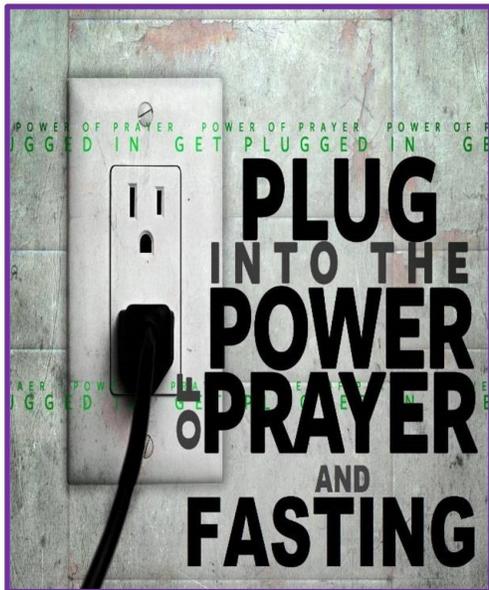
With Love in Christ, June Likourinou and Kouli Pouridis, GOYA Advisors

Orthodox Family Fellowship

The time has come again for our most anticipated Lenten Mini Retreat: This year our theme is “Prayer and Fasting.” We invite all parents, yiayias and papous to bring their little angels to enjoy the games and fun arts and crafts we have prepared for them. Through various FUN activities our kids will grow in their friendships and love as well as learn more about our Savior.

Save the date for *Saturday, March 9 from 9:00 am:* We will begin with the Divine Liturgy and Memorial for the Saturday of Souls, and then continue with refreshments and retreat activities *until 1:30 pm.* We look forward to seeing you there and sharing together the blessings we have!

In Christ, Jelena Boskovic and Amy Khuri, OFF Advisors



Prayer and Fasting

**A Lenten Mini-Retreat
For Young Children
(4-11 years old)**

Saturday, March 9

9:00 am – Saturday of Souls Divine Liturgy and Memorial

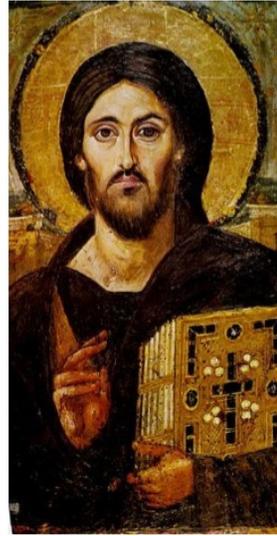
11:00 am – Light Snack in Panos Hall

11:30 am - 1:30 pm – Lessons/Confession/Craft/Outdoor Play

2019 Orthodox Teen Overnight Retreat

Athletes for Christ

“If anyone competes as an athlete, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.” (2 Timothy 2:5)



Friday, March 29 at 6:00 pm through

Saturday, March 30 at 1:00 pm

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

All Middle School and High School Students are welcome!

What to Bring:

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

Adult and Young Adult Ministries

Young Adults

Hello Young Adults of St. John the Baptist!

Thank you to all who joined us for Bowling and Dinner at McMullan's and The Orleans! We were among great company and enjoyed wonderful conversation. Continuing on our 2019 spiritual journey, we will be meeting next month at the home of Elizabeth Arbuiso *on Thursday, March 21 at 6:00 pm*. Please join us for trivia night and para. We will be doing Bible/Orthodox related trivia and . . . there will be prizes! We want to engage our young adults as well as have fun and challenge our brains! Please RSVP on the YA Facebook page or with Father Seraphim.

We are also always openly looking for families that would like to host young adults at their home. We do periodically meet out, but having meetings in the homes of our friends creates an environment of openness and love. If you are interested in hosting, or would like information on which months/dates are available, please contact Father Seraphim, Elizabeth Arbuiso, or Niko Asim. We are very flexible and thankful for your interest. In Christ, Niko Asim and Elizabeth Arbuiso, YA Advisors

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

We will come together for a night of food, music and dancing at the *Mardi Gras Gala on Saturday, March 2 at 6:00 pm* in Panos Hall. I have reserved a table for us, so please see me (Demetri Asim) for tickets. Tickets are \$50 and all proceeds benefit our Mortgage Principal.

Great Lent begins on Monday, March 11. Keeping our focus on Christ, Kali Parea will also help out at the *Pan-Orthodox Vespers* that St. John Church is hosting *on Sunday, March 17*. We will need all hands on deck for this wonderful community-wide event!

In Christ, Demetrious Asim, Kali Parea Advisor

Mr. & Mrs. - A Couples Fellowship

Because of the short and busy month of February we did not meet – however, we will resume our monthly gatherings *on Friday, March 8 at 6:00 pm at the home of Jason and Alis Lovaas*. This is a unique week in the preparation leading up to Great and Holy Lent, which begins on Monday, March 11. As we will be in the “Cheesefare” week – during which dairy is allowed even on Wednesday and Friday – we invite you to get creative with cheese, eggs and milk, as well as ice cream and chocolate! We will have a wonderful gathering and discussion before setting out together on the journey through the 40 days of Lent toward Holy Week and the Resurrection.

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



Adult Basketball



Join us for a pick-up basketball game *every Monday at 7:00 pm (8:00 pm during Lent, following Great Compline) in Panos Hall*. Please call *Nate Dallas at (347) 364-0313* for more information, or to be included in our Facebook group.

Byzantine Chant Class

We have introduced Byzantine chant notation and are slowly learning how to read this form of music. Due to the busy Lenten service schedule, we will continue our Wednesday classes after Pascha. However, if anybody wishes to meet separately with me for a few lessons, please feel free to contact me. You are welcome and encouraged to join us at the chanter's stand to read the Psalms during Lent and Holy Week. Thank you!

In Christ, Presvytera Maria

Forerunners - The Seniors of St. John the Baptist

Thank you to Las Vegas Metro Officer Niko Kelesis, who spoke at our February Luncheon and was extremely informative and on target with all the information and tips he gave us on safety in and out of our homes. We look forward to inviting him back later on in the year for an update. Also, a big thank you to all the Forerunners who donated goodies for our Fellowship last month.

Monday, March 11 marks the beginning of Lent: *Kali Sarakosti* to all. As the second Monday falls on the first day of Lent, please note that we have moved our Forerunners Luncheon **to Monday, March 18 at 11:30 am**. Our Master Chef Sam and his crew will be preparing a special Lenten meal. Father John will speak to us about the Lenten Season. As usual, we will have door and raffle prizes as well as Bingo.

Important item to note: The Forerunners will be hosting fellowship **on Sunday, March 17**, the day prior to our luncheon, and we kindly ask that everyone contributes Lenten, fast-friendly items for that day.

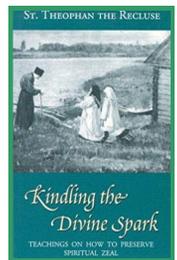
If you have not paid your membership of \$10 for the year of 2019 as yet, please do so at our March meeting. We welcome any ideas for future luncheons. Our prayers, love and good wishes to all who are in hospitals, facilities or homebound. **Love in Christ, Victoria Xikis for the Forerunners**

Orthodox Bookstore

This month we are featuring *Kindling the Divine Spark* by Saint Theophan the Recluse. This volume of instructions examines many essentials of the spiritual life, including: How the heart is purified, inner suffering, spiritual zeal, how to pray, and mystical union with the Lord.

“Obedience is animated by love. Obedience is the renunciation of one’s own activities and reasoning – our most precious actions. One must have great strength to gain mastery over himself and deny himself these things. With strength of will one can, of course, overcome himself, and firm determination succeeds in this. However, as long as this determination works alone, acts of obedience are like the cracking of dry branches. Only love can powerfully add sound flexibility to obedience. Love is ready to sacrifice everything, is not sparing of labor, does not take into account loss of time, effort or means.”

Until next month, God willing, ICXC NIKA - Constantine Frangakis and the Bookstore Team



Kokkos Scholarship

The Scholarship Committee for the Kokkos Scholarship Fund is pleased to announce that applications will be available at the Church Office beginning **Monday, March 4**. If you wish to receive your application via email, please contact Karen at karen@vegasgreekorthodox.com. The applications must be returned **on or before Friday, April 15**. Late and/or incomplete applications will not be considered.

The eligibility requirements were established by Fofa Kokkos in her Last Will and Testament, which stipulates that two high school graduates of Greek descent within the St. John Community be selected, who are enrolled for higher education to a college or university. Two scholarships will be given, and the amounts this year are \$1,500 each. The students must have an outstanding scholastic record and be in financial need. Also, parish involvement by the students at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is also a factor in evaluating the applicants. Please contact the Church Office for more information at **(702) 221-8245**.



The AHEPA Las Vegas Chapter 341 invites you to join us **on Tuesday, March 5 at 6:30 pm in Kokkos Hall**. We are seeking to fill **all** Executive Board Positions: President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. The Agenda includes: Membership, Conference Attendance, Greek Independence Day, and the Golf Tournament.

Thank you, Kouli Pouridis, Chapter President
pouridis5@cox.net or **(702) 604-0885**

STEWARDS OF THE FAITH ~ 2019

Adamy, Marina	Dalacas, Dimitri and Athanasia	Houlis, Ila and Debbie	Monoyudis, Jim and Julie
Anastasakis, Mark and Elaine	Dalacas, Eleni	Howard, William and Willie	Mulopulos, George and Jenny
Anastasiou, Andrew and Kathleen	Dalacas, Georgia	Hunter, Zach and Krystle	Myers, Stella
Andary, Oscar	Daskalos, George and Voula	Iteen, Robert and Sophia	Neocleous, Plato
Andrews, Catherine	Demoleas, Stephanie	Kachikis, Ernestine	Nicholas, Christina
Andrews, Chris and Pamela	Demopoulos, Vasiliki	Kakavulias, Christina	Nicholas, John and Estella
Andrews, George	Diamantis, Filippas	Kakavulias, George and Helen	Nichols, George and Tereza
Andricopoulos, Margo	Dominguez, Eric and Amalia	Kakavulias, John and Elizabeth	Nixon, John and Ellyn
Anthony, Stavros and Bernadette	Doskas, Athanasios and Anastasia	Kambouris, Litsa	Olmsted, Travis and Marilyn
Anton, Mike and Carol	Dudunakis, Michael	Kanis, Constantinos and Katie	Oustian, Ararat and Juliette
Arbuiso, Elizabeth	Earl, Christine Michaelides	Kapla, Mary	Pallis, Paul
Aristides, George and Diana	Eliades, Gregory and Maria	Karalias, Petros and Constance	Pan-Arcadians
Asim, Demetrious	Eliades, Harry and Agapi	Karas, James	Pandelis, Cheryl
Asim, Niko	Eliades, Katerina	Karas, John and Marcie	Panos, William and Jeanne
Athens, Maria and Centers, Scott	Eliades, Peter	Karris, Mark and Suzanne	Papas, Peter and Rita Papas, Christian and Nicole
Bacon, Ken and Dianne	Eliakis, Peter and Glenda	Katopodis, Efstratios	Pappas, Antonia
Balason, Anna	Eliakis, Varthie and LeeAnn	Katsaros, Thomas and Sharon	Pappas, Libby
Balason, Voula	Eyler, John and Elizabeth	Kelesis, Paula	Pappas, Rita
Balaouras, Panos and Helen	Eyler, Fr. Paul and Presv. Ilean	Kofinas, Maria	Pappas, Stella
Balodimas, James	Filios, George and Nitsa	Kokkinis, Peter and Jennifer	Paul, Janet,
Barbarino, Demetra	Filios, Spiridon and Eleni	Koliambas, Eleni	Payan, Luis and Eleni
Beeler, Mike and Carolyn	Fischer, Bob and Cheryl	Kontos, Diana	Pelletier, Michael
Beeman, Karl, Sr. and Benita	Flangas, Marilyn	Kostopoulos, Georgia	Pertsinides, Irene
Berendji, Jim and Vivian	Flangas, Gus and Tamara	Kountanis, Panagiota	Petro, Aleko and Georgia
Bernier, Micah and Alissa	Fleetwood, Thomas and Melissa	Koupais, Mario and Cheri	Petrou, James and Penelopi
Berta, Irene	Foster, Kyle and Pierro, Maria Elena	Koupais, Pat	Philippou, Demetrios and Luanne
Bieker, Adam and Cassie	Frangakis, Christos and Anastasia	Koutsulis, John and Eileen	Pierro, Joe and Rhonda
Bieker, Georgea	Frangakis, Constantine	Koutsulis, Sam and Effie	Pierro, Joseph and Christine
Birtas, Helen and Birtas, Ann	Frangakis, John	Kypreos, George and Lesley	Politis, Pantelis and Dimitra
Bizani, Katia	Frangakis, Sophocles and Tara	Kypreos, Peter and Geri	Polimerou, Angeline
Bledsoe, Lori	Frantzen, Robert	Lamancusa, Lisa	Poulos, Christine
Bochanis, George and Enid	Franzi, Jack	Lambros, Kyriakos and Mary	Pouridis, Kouli and Para
Booth, Brian and Effi	Garza, Everardo and Eliades, Eleni	Lavelle, Eleissa	Powers, Russell and Rebecca
Boskovic, Jelena	Gauvin, Chad and Marissa	Lavine, Frederick	Punsalan, Basil and Sophie
Bougalis, Nickolaos	Gekakis, George	Lekar, Caroline	Pursell, Robert and Mary
Britten, Ronald and Carol	Generales, John and Arlene	Lekar, Michael and Effie	Radosta, Athena
Brown, Faye	George, Peter and Georgia	Leonis, Nick and Sophia	Ramos, Fr. Seraphim and Presv. Olenka
Bruninga, Bill and Erin	Georgoulakis, Mary Ellen	Liaos, Jim and Tina	Rigas, Anthony and Mary
Capre, Julio	Ghebreab, Daniel and Ghermay, Selam	Liaos, Steven and Francine	Rigas, Evie
Carabas, Stephen and Linda	Gianoukakis, Andrew and Anna	Liaos, William and Irene	Rihani, Gary and Linda
Carahalios, John and Jillian	Gideon, Sara	Likourinou, Angie	Rodis, Dimitri
Caredis, Jon and Marjorie	Gott, C. Thomas and Kitty	Likourinou, Steve and June	Rosenthal, Joseph and Stephanie
Carrico, William and Alexandra	Gousdovas, Nikos+	Litsos, Nicholas and Catherine	Rotas, Beatrice
Carter, Maria	Green, Todd and Susan	Loughton, Dustin and Rena	Ruffner, Skip and Kathy
Chachas, Bessie	Gutierrez, Connie	Lovaas, Jason and Dokakis, Alis	Sakkas, Georgios and Stavropoulos, Bessie
Chachas, James	Gutierrez, Daniel	Malamatos, Kindina	Salon, Janelle
Chagares, Kiki	Hadzoglon, Christos	Maniatakos, Ted and Maria	Salonikis, Valentinos and Sophia
Chandrinou, Alexia	Hamilton, Mary	Manos, Constantine and Michele	Santamaria, Jennifer and Robert
Chanos, Jennifer	Hamilton, Paul and Brandi	Mansour, Muna	Savvas, Savva
Chomakos, Dean and Tammy	Hastings, Teri and Audra	Manteris, Arthur and Sue	Schildmeyer, Christine
Chomakos, Jeremy and Romina	Hayes, Tulla	Margaretis, John and Lucila	Serafim, George and Tzeleki, Roxani
Chondrakis, Dimosthenis and Kragrud, Kaaren	Hemmers, Oliver and Pantelas, Anne	Markantonis, George and Sarah	Serpentini, Athanasia
Christian, Clair and Chloe	Henneforth, Rula	Matsis, John and Rebecca	Setian, Gary and Marie
Cokotis, Julie	Herman, Marin and Diane	Mavrantonis, Stacy and Kiki	Skalkotos, Nikolas and Georgia
Collins, David	Hertberg, Jennifer	Mavroidis, Demetrios and Debra	Skandros, Stephanie
Cominos, Ted	Hoadrea, Jimmy and Monci	Mavros, Debbie	Snow, Adrienne
Conger, William and Alexia	Hondros, Catherine	Mavroudis, Frank	Snow, Clifford and Christina
Costuros, George and Marsha	Hondros, Christina	McKinney, Michael and Mersene	Snowden, Robert and Niki
Cosulas, Fr. Basil and Presv. Samantha	Hondros, Chris and Darlene	McManus, Jeanette	Staubs, Douglas and Anastasia
Cotsilis, Jenny	Hondros, Fr. John and Presv. Maria	McSweeney, Farolyn	Stefanatos, Michael and Tami
Crist, Adam and Kanistra		Mitchell, Thomas	
		Moffett, Todd and Eliopoulos, Tina	
		Molina, Adriana and Elhamy, Kirillos	

STEWARDS OF THE FAITH - 2019

Stenos, Louis
 Stransky, Mark
 Stransky, Jack and Gladys
 Szukiewicz, Alex
 Szukiewicz, Joseph and Jennia
 Szukiewicz, Joe
 Tafoya, Steven and Irene
 Takas, Andrea
 Taxopoulos, Bryan and Irene

Thanos, Nicholas and Victoria
 Thompson, Maggy
 Thompson, Steve and Aliko
 Tohme, Tony and May
 Tsarouhas, Maria
 Tsiralidis, Kosmas and Katerina
 Tsolis, Panagiote
 Turman, Maria
 Tzelalis, Steve

Wadlow, Nicholas and Pamela
 Wallace, Robert and Katerina
 Walter, Vernon and Alice
 Waterhouse, David and Aleighzja
 Wilkerson, Chuck and Kristina
 Wilson, Steven and Cleo
 Womack, Karl
 Womack, Kimberly
 Wood, Nadine

Wronski, Chuck
 Xerogianes, Nick and Nikki
 Xikis, Victoria
 Zaferatos, Ted
 Zamir, Talor and Michelle
 Zimmerman, Paul and Angela
 Zmina, Stephen and Cynthia

2019 Stewardship Report (as of 2/22/19)

Stewardship Gifts Pledged: \$328,786 (\$282,397 in 2018)
 Stewardship Gifts Received: \$113,172 (\$82,613 in 2018)
 Unfulfilled Pledge Balance: \$215,614 (\$199,784 in 2018)
 Stewardship Families Pledged: 281 (254 in 2018)
 Average Pledge to Date: \$1,170 (\$1,078 in 2018)
 Average Pledge Needed to Cover Operating Expenses: \$3,661

Average Pledge needed to cover operating expenses with:

- 300 Families - \$3,295
- 400 Families - \$2,471
- 500 Families - \$1,977
- 350 Families - \$2,824
- 450 Families - \$2,197
- 550 Families - \$1,797

Church Account Summaries - January 2019

Nevada State Bank Accounts	December	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
General Operating Account (GOA)	\$13,266.50	\$94,003.12	\$26,576.09	\$37,323.20	\$56,217.45	\$40,305.06	
Community and Education (C&E)	\$8,060.51			\$1,000.00		\$7,060.51	
Greek Food Festival (GFF)	\$11,333.81	\$341.00	\$15,044.00	\$540.06	\$15,022.28	\$11,156.47	\$15K from GOA to pay down line of credit
Designated, Restricted & Other (DR&O)	\$276,850.91	\$59,050.00	\$5,620.65	\$574.06	\$14,763.48	\$326,184.02	\$45K deposit for roof
Folk Dance Group	\$17,358.72		\$152.75	\$1,562.96	\$340.00	\$15,608.51	
Hellenic Historical Society	\$3,200.94					\$3,200.94	
Mortgage Account	\$46,935.80				\$5,201.14	\$41,734.66	Monthly Mortgage Payment
Designated Funds	December	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
Bookstore	\$5,141.76	\$80.00	\$1,919.00	\$528.02	\$181.83	\$6,430.91	
Ornaments	\$1,077.41					\$1,077.41	
Restricted Funds	December	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
ICON	\$253,975.70	\$15.00				\$253,990.70	
Library Account	\$1,470.77					\$1,470.77	Account owed \$21,000. Funds used to make payroll and pay bills in 2015
Giving Tree	\$6,450.91	\$2,000.00				\$8,450.91	
Building Fund	\$42.08	\$6,930.00	\$1,565.00		\$7,420.00	\$1,117.08	\$7,210 Flangas memorial added to \$300K 1 Yr Plan. Other \$300 misc donation. \$1075 more to mortgage in Feb.
\$300,000 One Year Plan	\$0.00	\$5,025.00	\$2,136.65		\$7,161.65	\$0.00	Funds collected/sent for Mortgage
Youth Choir	\$2,989.18					\$2,989.18	
Church School	\$1,306.37					\$1,306.37	
Three Priests	\$3,814.37			\$46.04		\$3,768.33	Customs on candles
Roof Appeal	\$0.00	\$45,000.00				\$45,000.00	
Altar Servers	\$440.00					\$440.00	
GOYA	\$142.36					\$142.36	
Designated, Restricted, and Other Total	\$276,850.91	\$59,050.00	\$5,620.65	\$574.06	\$14,763.48	\$326,184.02	
Other Funds	December	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January	Notes
	Ending Balance					Ending Balance	
Kokkos Scholarship Fund	\$60,859.77					\$60,859.77	

Jan 2019 Candles **\$6,432.16**
 Jan 2019 Trays **\$3,749.00**
Total Jan Candles & Trays \$10,181.16



MARCH 2019 ~ IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

<p>3 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 12:15 pm Youth Choir Practice in 4th/5th</p>	<p>4 7:00 pm Adult Basketball</p>	<p>5 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes 6:00 pm AHEPA</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8 6:00 pm Mr. and Mrs. at Lovaas' Home</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2 Saturday of Souls 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy and Memorial 6:00 pm Mardi Gras Gala in Panos Hall</p>
<p>10 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Youth Choir Chants</i> 5:00 pm Forgiveness Vespers</p>	<p>11 Lent Begins 6:30 pm Great Compline</p>	<p>12 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes</p>	<p>13 6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy 8:00 pm Adult Study</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15 6:15 pm Youth Choir Practice in 4th/5th Class 7:00 pm 1st Salutations to the Theotokos</p>	<p>16 Saturday of Souls 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy and Memorial OFF Mini Retreat</p>	
<p>17 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Procession of Icons</i> 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. John the Baptist</p>	<p>18 11:30 am Forerunner Luncheon in Kokkos Hall 6:30 pm Great Compline 8:00 pm Adult Basketball</p>	<p>19 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes 6:00 pm Parish Council Meeting in Library</p>	<p>20 6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy 8:00 pm Adult Study</p>	<p>21 6:00 pm Young Adults at Elizabeth Arbuiso's Home</p>	<p>22 5:45 pm Adult Choir Practice in Choir Loft 6:15 pm Youth Choir Practice in 4th/5th Class 7:00 pm 2nd Salutations to Theotokos</p>	<p>23</p>	
<p>24 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Greek Independence Day</i> 5:00 pm Great Vespers of Annunciation at St. Paul</p>	<p>25 Annunciation of the Theotokos 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 8:00 pm Adult Basketball</p>	<p>26 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes 6:00 pm Philoptochos General Meeting in Kokkos Hall</p>	<p>27 6:30 pm Presanctified Liturgy 8:00 pm Adult Study</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29 5:45 pm Adult Choir Practice in Choir Loft 6:15 pm Youth Choir Practice in 4th/5th Class 7:00 pm 3rd Salutations to the Theotokos</p>	<p>30</p>	
<p>31 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Parish Assembly 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Simeon</p>						<p>Teen Overnight Retreat 3/29 6:00 pm - 3/30 1:00 pm</p>	

The Desert Messenger

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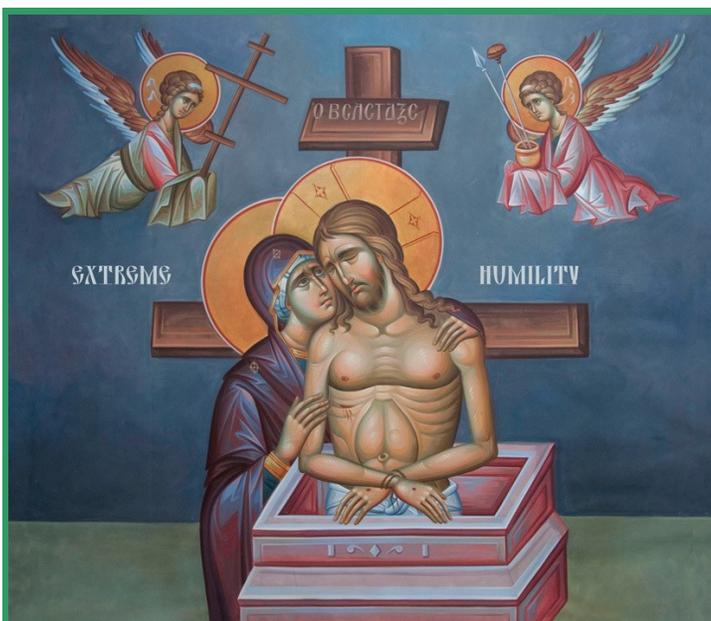
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THE DESERT MESSENGER

The Way of the Lord



Let us cheerfully begin the season of Lent, and undergo the spiritual struggles. Let us purify and cleanse our souls and bodies. As we fast from foods, let us also abstain from giving in to any of the passions, and instead delight in the virtues of the Spirit. May we persevere in them with love, and then be counted worthy to see the solemn Passion of Christ our God, and to celebrate holy Pascha with spiritual joy.

*(Sunday of Forgiveness Vespers,
translated by Father Seraphim Dedes)*