

# The Desert



# Messenger

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

Volume 16, Issue 10 St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

November 2018

## From Father John

Beloved in Christ:

"All they ever talk about is money!" This is a common complaint by parish members, not only at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church . . . but we could honestly say at any parish of any city in the US. In his book, *Maximize*, Nelson Searcy writes, "Jesus was never afraid to talk about money. Outside of the Kingdom of God, Stewardship was His favorite subject. He spoke more about money and possessions than about faith and prayer combined." Just imagine: If Father Seraphim or I were to speak on the subject of money as often as Christ did, we would have to cover it in our homilies every third Sunday! In our parish, we dedicate one month each year – the month of November – to *literally* addressing Stewardship in our sermons . . . so it is an exaggeration to say, "All we ever talk about is money!"

The sad truth in our parish is, however, that our Stewardship is broken – and what is most disheartening is that our parish leaders are often put in the position of begging for Stewardship. As the only Greek Orthodox Church in Las Vegas – in a metropolitan area approaching two million people – we struggle to get 450 Stewards (pledging individuals or families). The reality is that we minister to many more than that – and we do so non-discriminately because, after all, we are a Church and this is the right thing to do. We do not require you to be a pledging and up-to-date Steward to visit you in the hospital, to bless your newborn infants, to counsel you when you are struggling, to pray for you when you die, or to bless your home. We even open to you our Community Center, without a fee, for your meetings, classes and social events, whether or not you are a Steward – and although we are criticized by some for doing so, as a Church it is the right thing to do.

What we may not realize – and this is the reason Jesus spoke of money so often – is that there is a very deep and critical connection between our personal spiritual life and our attitude toward money and possessions. At a crucial point in His Sermon on the Mount, our Lord taught, *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."* (Matthew 6:19-21) Relating to Stewardship, Christ is saying that when we hold back from His Church, our hearts are in the wrong place, as we are not laying up for ourselves treasures in Heaven – and further, our broken Stewardship is a reflection of our broken spirituality, as our hearts are not in full communion with our Lord.

At the conclusion of the Parable of the Talents, the Lord says to the servant who was wise with the property entrusted to him, *"You have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your Master."* (Matthew 25:21) My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, we have been richly blessed with a wonderful Greek Orthodox Church and Community in Las Vegas, Nevada – but do we fully comprehend the integral role that each and every one of us has as Stewards of the Faith? God has blessed us not only with a Church, but has blessed each of us with an ability – through our financial resources, our time as volunteers, and our unique and special talents – so that we can contribute to making His Body here alive and dynamic. Better yet, our prayerful and generous Stewardship prepares us to enter into the joy of our Master – that is, there is a Heavenly reward for us as faithful Stewards!

*(Continued on Page 3)*



## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

Thursday, November 1/*Holy Unmercenaries  
Cosmas and Damianos/St. David of Evia*

8:00 am Orthros

9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 12:27-31; 13:1-8

Gospel: Matthew 10:1, 5-8

Sunday, November 4/*5th Sunday of Luke/  
St. Ioannikos the Great/St. Nikandros of Myra*

Orthros: Tone Six (Second Plagal)

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Matthew 28:16-20

Epistle: Ephesians 2:4-10

Gospel: Luke 16:19-31

Wednesday, November 7/*Synaxis of the Holy  
Archangels Michael and Gabriel*

5:00 pm Orthros

6:00 pm Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Hebrews 2:2-10

Gospel: Luke 10:16-21

Thursday, November 8/*Synaxis of the Holy  
Archangels Michael and Gabriel (Divine Liturgy  
Celebrated on Wednesday, November 7)*

Friday, November 9/*St. Nectarios of Pentapolis  
the Wonderworker*

8:00 am Orthros

9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:9-13, 24-28

Gospel: Luke 13:31-35

*“For if the message declared by angels was  
valid and every transgression or disobedience  
received a just retribution, how shall we  
escape if we neglect such a great  
salvation?” (Hebrews 2:2-3)*

Sunday, November 11/*8th Sunday of Luke/  
Ss. Menas, Victor, and Vikentios the Martyrs/  
St. Theodore the Studite*

Orthros: Tone Seven (Grave)

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

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15

Gospel: Luke 10:25-37

Thursday, November 15/*Nativity Fast Begins*

Sunday, November 18/*9th Sunday of Luke/  
Great Martyr Plato/Martyr Romanos*

Orthros: Tone Eight (Fourth Plagal)

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

Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-7

Gospel: Luke 12:16-21

Wednesday, November 21/*The Entrance of the  
Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple/  
Thanksgiving Liturgy*

5:00 pm Orthros

6:00 pm Divine Liturgy and Artoclasia

Epistle: Hebrews 9:1-7

Gospel: Luke 8:38-42; 11:27-28

Sunday, November 25/*13th Sunday of Luke/  
Leavetaking of the Entrance of the Theotokos/  
St. Catherine the Great Martyr*

Orthros: Tone One

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

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

Gospel: Luke 18:18-27

Friday, November 30/*Holy Apostle Andrew*

8:00 am Orthros

9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16

Gospel: John 1:36-52

## Byzantine Music Class

What a wonderful turnout we have had for our weekly classes! We are continuing to learn about Sunday Orthros, the hymns and structure of the Service. Throughout the class, we will explore the meaning of various hymns. We will soon learn some hymns for the Christmas season.

Please join us for one hour of instruction on *Wednesday Evenings in the Church at 6:00 pm*. All are welcome!

In Christ, Presvytera Maria

## *SUNDAY SCHEDULE*

### *NOVEMBER 4: PARISH ASSEMBLY*

Ushers: Gus Flangas, Adam Bieker, Bessie Stavropoulos, George Bochanis, Demetrious Asim and John Nicholas

Fellowship: Philoptochos

### *NOVEMBER 11: STEWARDSHIP ALL-STARS LUNCHEON*

Ushers: Demetrious Asim, John Matsis, Mark Karris, Stacy Mavrantonis, Justina Szukiewicz and John Koutsulis

Memorials: Departed Members of the Chagares Family.

Fellowship: Stewardship All-Stars Luncheon

### *NOVEMBER 18: STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY - TURN IN YOUR 2019 PLEDGE!*

Ushers: Adam Bieker, George Bochanis, Gus Flangas, Bessie Stavropoulos, John Nicholas and Mark Karris

Fellowship: Philoptochos Autumn Bake Sale

### *NOVEMBER 25*

Ushers: Justina Szukiewicz, John Koutsulis, Adam Bieker, Stacy Mavrantonis, Mark Karris and John Matsis

Fellowship: Daughters of Penelope

## **TRADING ACCOUNT: ANOTHER WAY TO SUPPORT OUR PARISH**

Looking for ways to financially support our Parish? Have you considered offering stocks, mutual funds, or cash from your IRA accounts as your Stewardship or a general donation to the Church? Doing so will benefit the Church and you can avoid paying taxes on any capital gains.

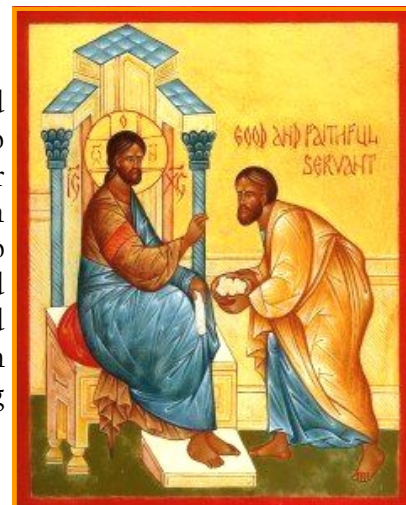
For this very purpose, the Parish Council has set up a trading account with UBS. If you are interested in offering a donation this way, please contact the Church at (702) 221-8245 and ask to speak to John Karas. He will work with you to get your generous Stewardship or general donation processed.

### *From Father John (Continued from Page 1)*

The decision is ultimately ours to make: We either live for Christ and His Church . . . or we do not. We can make excuses about why we choose to be stingy toward the Church or to not give at all: However, let us remember that in the end we do not have to answer to our Parish Priests, Parish Council or Stewardship Committee members – rather, we have to answer to the One Who brought us into being, blessed us with all we have, and established a Church for our sanctification. When we have genuine faith and gratitude to God, there is no room for excuses – only a desire to please Him and listen to Him, which is manifested in our willing and loving Stewardship.

With love in Christ,

*Father John*



## Parish Council Report

As we move into the Holiday Season and toward the end of the current year, it is time to take a realistic and hard look at our Church, its future in terms of Stewardship and finances. This is an extremely urgent and critical situation and everyone needs to fully appreciate both the scope and magnitude of what it takes to operate our Church and where we are failing. As everyone knows, Stewardship is supposed to fully finance the operations of the Church. This would leave the revenue from the annual Greek Food Festival to provide funds strictly for capital improvements. Unfortunately, our Stewardship contributions are failing miserably and thus, harming the present reality and future vision of our Church. If the comments in this letter seem repetitive of previous articles, it is because the Stewardship shortfalls continue to remain a problem that many Parishioners are simply ignoring. We cannot stress enough the dire need to comprehend and urgency needed to address these issues; otherwise, we are going to have to make some very difficult and heart wrenching decisions that will ultimately adversely affect us all going forward and worshiping in our chosen Holy Orthodox Faith. WE CAN NO LONGER CONTINUE ON THE PRESENT PATH WHICH WE ARE ON. SOMETHING NEEDS TO CHANGE AND CHANGE NOW! For over twenty years, there have been extensive efforts by many to improve the Stewardship situation in our Church; however, for some reason, we remain at virtually the same level year after year – and this is despite the fact that many more Orthodox people are residing in our growing Metropolitan Area. We urge you to read on.

Here is the alarming reality facing our Church: For the past two decades, we have been falling way short in financing the operations of our Church and unfortunately, we seem to be getting worse. As alluded to above, Stewardship continues to be a struggle and we need to fix this yesterday. Sadly, without the Food Festival, we simply would not be able to make ends meet. Of particular importance: In the last three months, this year's Festival proceeds were used to cover almost a hundred thousand dollars of shortfalls in the operating budget. After paying our annual Archdiocese Commitment of \$122,787, and the mortgage for the year, there is *absolutely nothing left* from the Festival to fund any capital projects for the Church or to fix any unscheduled maintenance items. Despite herculean efforts and unrelenting appeals by Stewardship Committees, Parish Councils, Clergy, and many other concerned Parishioners regarding Stewardship, it appears that there is only a small minority of Parishioners who truly care and worry about keeping the Church's doors open. Many Parishioners want to put their heads in the sand and pretend things are fine and take the attitude of, "Why should I worry? Someone else will take care of it." This is extremely disheartening for us as a Parish because it takes a collective effort on everyone's part to have a Church, and truthfully, it also takes money.

Here are the numbers in a nutshell: Presently, it takes approximately \$950,000 a year to operate our Church. This figure includes expenditures for Clergy compensation, employee salaries, health insurance, other insurance, utilities, water, cleaning and general maintenance of Church/Office facilities and grounds, Church Ministries, Archdiocese Commitments, Metropolis Commitments, Clergy Laity Events, Church supplies (including but not limited to candles), office supplies, equipment leases, and many, many other items. This \$950,000 figure does not include capital expenses for such things as paying the mortgage for the year, repairing the roofs, repairing parking lots, repainting the Church and Community Center, repairing the Church grounds, or redoing the floors in Panos and Kokkos Halls, or expanding our facilities. Many of these items are going to need to be completed in the next few years. Stewardship is supposed to cover all of the \$950,000 in operating expenses; however, in the past couple of decades, it has only covered roughly 35% to 42% of the operating expenses.

To illustrate the Stewardship numbers, let's look at last year which ended December 31, 2017. Stewardship receipts were around \$380,635 with 440 Stewardship families contributing. This left a shortfall of around \$569,365 for simply operating the Church, and equates to Stewardship only covering roughly 40% of the operating budget. The average contribution by each Stewardship family was only around \$865. This is alarming because the level of giving in our Parish is less than 1.5% of the median income in the Las Vegas Metropolitan area. The Uniform Parish Regulations suggest that Parishioners give 10% of their income for Stewardship. We are by no means suggesting that anyone has to contribute 10% of their income. We only mention it to provide some perspective.

*(Continued on Page 5)*

## Parish Council Report *(Continued from Page 4)*

The sad thing is that with 440 families contributing, it would only take an average Stewardship contribution of around **\$2,159** to fully fund the Church operating expenses. Sadly, this simple fact continually fails to resonate with and eludes the vast majority of our Parish. Another troubling aspect of the situation is that we have several hundred more families on our Church lists and many more who are not on our lists, which receive sacraments and other services from our Church, and who for some reason or another, choose not to contribute financially.

To cover last year's shortfall in operating the Church, we had to rely on other income sources, such as funds received from passing the trays, candle sales, donations, fund raisers, C&E revenues, Nasri Academy rental revenue, and Bookstore sales. Regrettably, these income sources still failed to cover the shortfall and we were thus left covering the remaining shortfall with funds received from the Festival. Stating the obvious, using Festival funds in this manner left and leaves the Church a very limited amount of funds to use for capital expenditures. Although the Church has always managed to pay its bills despite the perpetual shortfall in Stewardship, it has come at a very steep price. We are left with little to no funding to properly maintain and improve our facilities. Plainly speaking, this absolutely affects our present and future viability. The scary thing is that in the very near future, we are going to need to make some very significant repairs to the Church and the Community Center, and we are not going to have the necessary funds to complete them if something does not radically change soon with Stewardship.

**We implore every Parishioner in the most urgent of terms to take action and help become part of our solution.** Our present and future viability depends on us working together. We ask and urge those individuals and families who are not contributing to Stewardship, to now do so, and further ask and urge those who are already giving to reassess their level of giving and think about giving more: not grudgingly, but with joy and in a way that is appropriate to their level of income. The question has often been asked: "What do I get for being a Steward in the Church?" The most important answer is that you receive many tremendous gifts such as a place to worship God in your chosen Faith; a place to receive the Sacraments; Clergy to administer the Sacraments, and to tend to the spiritual growth and needs of our Parishioners; and a place to find Fellowship. Stewardship also helps fund other gifts such as the various Church Ministries, Adult and Youth Choir, Church School, Greek School, GOYA for teenagers, Folk Dance Groups, Orthodox Family Fellowship, Young Adults, Kali Parea, Senior Forerunners, Sports, an Orthodox Bookstore, Adult Study, and so much more. Stewardship is our way of showing our gratitude to God for His rich blessings to us, giving back to Him by supporting His Holy Church, and willingly participating in the ministries, our Parish events, and most importantly, the sacramental and liturgical life. Please look to your hearts, pray, and find inspiration to help the present and future financial situation of our Church. **Thank you and God Bless!**

Gus Flangas, Parish Council President

### 2018 Stewardship Report (as of 10/16/18)

Stewardship Gifts Pledged: \$382,795.72 (\$381,757.40 in 2017)  
 Stewardship Gifts Received: \$308,644.69 (\$304,554.78 in 2017)  
 Unfulfilled Pledge Balance: \$74,131.03 (\$77,202.62 in 2017)  
 Stewardship Families Pledged: 422 (423 in 2017)  
 Average Pledge to Date: \$904.23 (\$902.50 in 2017)  
 Average Pledge Needed to Cover Operating Expenses: \$2,104.95



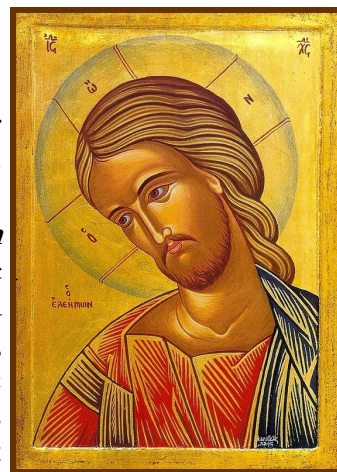
### *Adult Basketball*

Join us for a pick-up basketball game *every Thursday at 7:00 pm in Panos Hall*. Please call *George Karvounidis at (702) 339-8955* to be added to the basketball email list.

## Stewardship and Community Outreach

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Glory to God for all things. Although Stewardship is our way of life, our Parish dedicates the month of November to Stewardship as a way of reminding us of the importance of being merciful and sharing our blessings with one another. May we all prayerfully reflect on the blessings He has bestowed upon us and, *on Stewardship Sunday, November 18*, let our pledge mirror the importance we give to financially support our Parish and show mercy to one another. Our blessed financial support enables our Parish Priests to offer the sacraments, visit the sick, help the grieving, spiritually nourish the souls of all of us, and help prepare those who are about to fall asleep in the Lord for eternal life. Our gifts to Father John's Discretionary Fund enable him to help our fellow sisters and brothers in Christ when they are dealing with misfortune and are in need of a helping hand.



In the Lord's Sermon on the Mount, He stated: *"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."* (Matthew 5:7) The Greek word for almsgiving is *eleēmosynē*, and it literally translates to "mercifulness." In English, to show mercy and to give alms are two different things. Yet, in Greek, they are expressed from the same verb *eleein*. So, one important example of being merciful would be in the giving of alms to those in need. However, is this all it means to be merciful? Of course not.

The Lord showed us many examples of mercy when He laid out who would inherit the Kingdom and those who would not when He told the parable concerning the separation of the sheep from the goats in *Matthew's Gospel (25:31-46)*. Those who will inherit the Kingdom of God showed mercy by feeding the hungry, giving drink to those in need, taking in strangers, clothing the naked, and visiting those who were sick and in prison. When we show these acts of mercy we are, in fact, giving these things to the Lord.

St. Nikolai Velimirovich tells the following story of a man who became merciful to the poor: *"Once in Church I heard a priest say that whoever gives to the poor, gives into the Hands of Christ Himself. I didn't believe it, for I thought, 'How can this be, when Christ is in heaven?' However, I was on my way home one day and I saw a poor man begging, and the face of Christ shone above his head! Just then a passerby gave the beggar a piece of bread, and I saw the Lord extend His Hand, take the bread, and bless the donor. From then on, I have always seen Christ's Face shining above the beggars. Therefore, with great fear I perform as much charity as I can."* (Prologue of Ochrid, Reflection for September 18)

The above example of mercy is a physical means of being merciful. Other physical ways of being merciful could include helping people get to a doctor's appointment, attend Church, pay bills, help with housework, find a job, get medical help for an addiction, and so on. The list of opportunities to offer physical mercy is nearly limitless.

However, there are also many spiritual acts of mercy we can perform which will be received by the Lord just as in the story by St. Nikolai. Some examples: Just as we can physically feed and give drink to the poor, we can also feed them spiritually through missionary work or supporting Orthodox missionary programs, such as the Orthodox Christian Mission Center. We can pray for people, bring them holy water, and request the Priest to give them Holy Communion and Unction. We can console the grieving and the dying, raise our children in a Christ centered life, and not return evil for evil.

St. John Chrysostom noted in a homily that when the Lord says, *"Blessed are the merciful,"* He is not just talking about those who give money, but those who likewise are merciful in their actions toward others. He goes on to say: *"For the way of showing mercy is manifold, and this commandment is broad."* (The Gospel of Matthew, Homily XV) When the Lord completes this commandment with *"for they shall obtain mercy,"* it is important to understand that the mercy we give as men and women is reciprocated by the Lord's mercy toward us; for His mercy is far greater than any mercy we could ever show toward one another. Let us then strive to be merciful to one another in thought, word and deed, in obedience to the Lord's commandment, and so receive the Divine mercy of God in our lives as well!

Stewardship and Community Outreach Committee

**The Priests, Parish Council and the  
Stewardship & Community Outreach Committee  
Invite You to Join Us for the Annual**

# **Stewardship**



# **Luncheon**

**Honoring Demetrious Asim,  
Stephanie Demoleas  
and Marika LaMancusa**

**Sunday, November 11  
Following Divine Liturgy  
Panos Hall**

**Join us as we pay tribute to three MVPs . . .  
Most Valuable Parishioners!**

**Free-Will Offering**

## Philoptochos News

My dearest Sisters and Brothers of Philoptochos,

We are off to a great start with goals and hopes for a productive and rewarding year.



On October 2 we had our first Philoptochos General Meeting. It was well attended and we covered many topics.

Following are our exciting and upcoming Philoptochos events:

**\*Saturday, November 3** – Pastry Baking Day in the Kitchen at 8:00 am. We are grateful to Eleni Kakavulias, Kiki Mavrantonis and Marika LaMancusa, who once again accepted to be in charge of baking our Christmas cookies. Please come and help us as we need many hands on this important day!

**\*Sunday, November 4** – Saints Cosmas and Damianos Collection and Fellowship to benefit the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The philanthropies of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, such as Baluki Hospital and Nursing Home, schools, shrines and parishes, are supported through this commitment. Please be generous in your contributions! Estella Nicholas will host the Fellowship for the Patron Unmercenary Saints of Philoptochos.

**\*Sunday, November 4** – Christmas Card and Christmas Pastries Pre-Sale. Once again Andrea Takas is in charge of our Community Christmas Card. We appreciate all her help! Please fill out the form and return it with your payment to Andrea. Also help us sell all our Christmas pastries by filling out the pre-order forms – this is our biggest fundraiser!

**\*Don't forget to set your clocks back on November 4!**

**\*Sunday, November 18** – Autumn Bake Sale and Christmas Décor Sale. Get your baked goods for Thanksgiving at our Autumn Bake Sale! Please see Rahel Kiflezgi, our energetic chairwoman, to offer your baked goods. Adrienne Snow and Stephanie Rosenthal are in charge of our Christmas Trees project. Buy a beautiful hand-decorated Christmas Tree for your home or for a wonderful gift!

**\*Saturday, December 1** – Pastry Packing Day. Amanda and Tamara Flangas are once again our wonderful chairwomen for our pastry packing day! *Please sign up and help us on that day as we need many, many hands!*

**\*Sunday, December 2** – Pastry Pick-up Day. Please pick up your Christmas pastries after Church services.

**\*Wednesday, December 12** – Philoptochos Christmas Party. Jelena Boskovic is our creative chairwoman for our Nativity Holiday Party at Martini's **at 6:00 pm**. The cost is \$40 per person and includes a three-course meal with soft drinks and wine. Spouses are welcome. Please make your reservation with your payment early as seating is limited. Please contact Jelena at **(917) 684-1329** or email her at [ellenabosk@gmail.com](mailto:ellenabosk@gmail.com).

We are also pleased to announce the 60th Anniversary Celebration of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church. Each of us is called to participate and prayerfully give from our precious resources to pay off the mortgage of our Church, where true faith in God, and the voice of Orthodoxy and our Hellenic culture are presented in the wholesome, positive and healing light of Christ. Please mark your calendars for the weekend of **November 8, 9 and 10, 2019** for this historic and one-of-a-kind event.

The *Reverse Advent Calendar* is a way of helping people with limited resources over Christmas. It entails putting one item of food aside each day over the Christmas season. Let us all start this great project now, so we can spread some joy during the holidays. All the baskets will go to a senior housing community. Please deliver your basket **by December 20** at Kokkos Hall. For any additional information please contact Geri Kypreos at **(702) 378-7900**.

### IMPORTANT PHILOPTOCHOS DATES FOR 2019:

**Sunday, January 6** – Holy Theophany and St. John the Baptist Name Day Luncheon

**Monday, January 7** – St. John the Baptist Divine Liturgy

**Sunday, January 13** – Vasilopita Cutting

**Sunday, January 20** – Philoptochos General Meeting

**Sunday, February 3** – Go Red for Women/Carnations and Membership Event

*(Continued on Page 9)*

## Philoptochos News *(Continued from Page 8)*

### IMPORTANT DATES (Continued):

*Sunday, February 10* – Departed Members Memorial

*Sunday, February 24* – Kids ‘N’ Cancer Fellowship and Collection

*Saturday, March 2* – Mardi-Gras Gala, sponsored by Philoptochos and Pan-Arcadians

*Monday, March 11* – Lent Begins

*Sunday, April 21* – Palm Sunday Luncheon

*Thursday, April 25* – Red Egg Dyeing

*Friday, April 26* – Holy Friday and Epitaphios Decorating

*Sunday, April 28* – Pascha Sunday and Agape Picnic: Wine Wagon and Pastries Sales

*Sunday, May 12* – Mother’s Day

*Sunday, May 19* – Bartsas Memorial

*Monday, May 20* – Presidents Dinner

Please join us in participating and supporting all our events!

With Love in Christ, Vicky Palivos, Philoptochos President



## ANNUAL LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS AUTUMN BAKE SALE



Delicious baked cookies, cakes, pastries and decorated Christmas Trees  
will be available for sale.

**Sunday, November 18, 2018**

**12:00 pm ~ after Divine Liturgy**

Please join us in this fundraising event to benefit our local charities.

If you have any questions, please call Rahel Kiflezgi (702) 376-5728.

### *Our Community Registry*

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

Mariam, daughter of Peter and Ida Nesheiwat on October 20, 2018. Godparent: Mark Nesheiwat.

#### *Chrismation*

Gabriel (Cesar) Zapata on September 30, 2018. Sponsor: Evangelia Zervou.

#### *Marriages: Na Zisete!*

Derek Anthony Kunard and Theofania Mavrantonis on October 7, 2018. Koumbaros: Nicholas Asim.

Zachary Hunter and Krystle Susmani on October 13, 2018. Koumbara: Angelina Susmani.

Tsegaye Michael Alemu and Hanna Amare on October 14, 2018. Koumbara: Atle Tessema.

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

George Chomakos on October 10, 2018. Funeral on October 25.

## Notice of Parish Assembly Sunday, November 4

### Following the Divine Liturgy in Panos Hall

#### AGENDA:

- Call to Order/Opening Prayer
  - Election of Assembly Chair
    - Approval of Minutes
- Stewardship Report & 2019 Stewardship Commitment Drive
  - Greek Food Festival Report
    - Financial Review
  - Approval of 2019 Budget
- Internal Audit Report (for 2017)
  - CPA Audit (for 2016)
- Election of 2019 Audit Committee
- Iconography Update & 501(c)(3) Status
- Elect Nominations/Election Committee
- Nominations for Parish Council 2019-20
- Proposed Immediate and Future Priorities
  - Closing Prayer/Adjournment

*Everyone is encouraged to attend, although only Pledged Stewards for 2018 may vote. Please see a Stewardship Committee Member or call the Church Office to become a Steward.*

## Photo Directory

All Stewards of Saint John the Baptist are invited and highly encouraged to participate in our new Church Photo Directory. It has been ten years since we last published a Directory. Look around to see all of the changes that have occurred: New families with children. There have been many weddings, and many of the children have grown up in front of our eyes into young adults. Our community is growing and changing, and this is the perfect opportunity to capture these changes and know who your fellow parishioners are.



To accomplish this, we are working with Lifetouch, a national photography company that specializes in Church Directories. Your family will be featured in the Directory, and just for participating, you will receive a FREE 8 x 10 portrait with the opportunity to purchase a photo package. There is no obligation on your part to purchase anything. Your portrait and one copy of the Directory are yours to keep, free of charge.

All sittings are by appointment, and the first three days for the photo shoots are scheduled for *Thursday through Saturday, November 15-17, in Panos Hall*. The photographers will be available *from 2:00 to 9:00 pm on Thursday and Friday and from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on Saturday*. There will be additional announcements in the Weekly Bulletin. You can make your appointments online at <https://booknow-lifetouch.appointment-plus.com/yjcc89m6/> or by calling Karen at the Church Office. See you in the Directory!



## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

October 15, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

By God's Grace, the Ladies Philoptochos Society Panagia Chapter is pleased to announce the **60th Anniversary Celebration of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church** in Las Vegas, Nevada. Please mark your calendars for the weekend of **November 8, 9 and 10, 2019**.

Our Church Family has experienced many blessings over the past six decades:

- 1959 - We worshipped in a meeting room at the *Elwell Hotel* and at *Christ Episcopal Church*
- 1969 - 1993 - We were baptized, married and buried in our sweet little *East Carson Avenue Church*
- 1971 - *Burning of the Mortgage, Carson Avenue Church*
- 1973 - *First Greek Food Festival*
- 1990 - *A New Beginning*, groundbreaking on El Camino Road for our new Church Campus
- 1992 - *Raising of the Dome*
- 1992 - *Thyranoixia*, Opening of the Doors
- 1997 - *Burning of the Mortgage, El Camino Road Church*
- 2003 - *Jewel in the Crown Grand Opening* of St. John the Baptist Community and Education Center
- 2005 - *Sacred Consecration* of our beloved Church
- 2005 - 2006 - *Iconography - First and Second Phases*
- 2009 - *Our Golden Heritage*, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Church Community


Sixty years! Those of us who were here from the beginning, those of us who arrived mid-way, and those of us who are new to the community are blessed with the joy of worshipping in His magnificent Byzantine Church and enjoying fellowship in our Community Center and beautiful park-like grounds.

The cost of this remarkable project has been Eight Million Dollars (\$8,000,000.00). In 2005, the outstanding mortgage on the St. John the Baptist Community and Education Center was \$800,000. 13 years later, we still owe \$300,000. It is time that we, as a Church Family, unite in purpose to pay our debt.

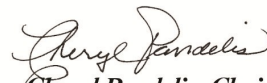
The Ladies Philoptochos Society has been entrusted with the chairmanship of the **60th Anniversary Celebration of November 8, 9 and 10, 2019**. As a forerunner to the 60th Anniversary Celebration and in order to pay our outstanding mortgage in full, we are presenting a **"\$300,000 One Year Plan"** so that a year from now we can also celebrate being debt-free. With a generous heart, please review the enclosed packet explaining how you may receive the blessing of participation.

On behalf of the Ladies Philoptochos Society Panagia Chapter.

Your sisters in Christ,

  
**Vicky Paltvos, President**  
Ladies Philoptochos Society  
Panagia Chapter

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

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

5300 El Camino Road, Las Vegas, Nevada 89118 Tel: 702 221-8245 Fax: 702 221-9167  
[www.vegasgreekorthodox.com](http://www.vegasgreekorthodox.com)



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
60<sup>TH</sup> 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  
60<sup>TH</sup> 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!**

**Food** Vegas Golden Knights **Drinks**  
**Viewing Party**

**Saturday November 10, 2018**

Panos Hall

St John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

3:00 pm (Game Time is 4:00 pm)



**VS.**



Vegas Golden Knights

Montreal Canadiens

**Raffle**

Admission: \$10 (Children under 5 Free)  
Includes: Food Item and Soft Drink

**Snacks**

We will have additional food and drinks available for purchase.  
Stay after the game for camaraderie and DANCING!

Proceeds benefit the Greek Folk Dance Ministry

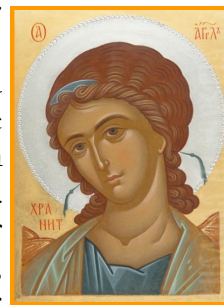
## From Father Seraphim

On **November 8** each year we commemorate – as well as contemplate – the Synaxis of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel and all the other Bodiless Powers. These “other bodiless powers” can often seem to be too mysterious of a topic to discuss (let alone get to know personally) as can also happen with the Saints, the Bible, Prayer, or any other Spiritual thing. The angels, however, in all their variations and ranks may not be as mysterious as we think: after all they are mentioned throughout Scripture 296 times. The entire Bible presents us with the reality of angels as living and active creatures of God. From Genesis to Revelation and nearly everywhere in-between we hear how they guard the tree of life (*Genesis 3:24*) and tell of what will happen in the end of days (*Revelation 1:1*). We hear how they kill the evil and wicked (*Joshua 5:13-16*) and minister to the holy (*Matthew 4:11*). They comfort and strengthen those in great sorrow and distress (*Luke 22:43*), and of course announce instruction and the “good news” of the Incarnation to the Lord’s faithful (*Matthew 2:13*).

The feast we celebrate on November 8 is called the “Synaxis,” which means the “oneness of mind” or “unity of purpose of the holy angels.” Thus we also celebrate all the angels who did not fall away from God with the Devil and instead remain now forever within the Kingdom of God. When we look at all of the references from Scripture together, we find that the purpose of the angelic beings is two-fold: To serve God by carrying out His commands; and to be a helper for man. Interestingly, both mankind and the angels share one single purpose: To worship God – with man called even further to share God’s own Divine Trinitarian Life, and become like Christ Himself. No other angel helps us more in our daily struggle to refrain from sin, grow in virtue and to worship God, than our own Guardian Angel.

Unfortunately, it seems that an excess of cute miniature statues with harps and poetic children’s nighttime prayers have made the impression on humanity that Guardian Angels cuddle our little babes and then they vanish – or are somehow less impressive or important as the child grows into adulthood. This is simply inaccurate. The Guardian Angel who is assigned to a person on their Baptismal day surely does rejoice over the playful innocence of the baby, but in no way does this awesome Guardian cease for even a day to strive to save the soul of the Christian he is assigned to guard.

It will be our Guardian Angel whom we will see when we breathe our last and open our eyes to the eternal spiritual world. They who understand the voiceless language of our souls have been listening to us our entire life. They have never left our side, even when we sin and distance ourselves from God’s grace. **Read that again!** Now, think for a few moments about the gravity of this! Our angel has seen every secret good we have ever done, and also every sin committed discreetly. Yet, he does not shame us nor abandon us, neither does he laugh at us (as do the fallen angels when we fall prey to their schemes). Perhaps until now you have never spoken a single word to him, never shared your thoughts, hopes, joy, sorrows and fears with him. Our Guardian Angel is a spirit like our soul, therefore our soul can easily relate to and commune with our Angel. St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain writes: “*In this life, both the innocent and the guilty, the righteous and the sinners, live together, and after death, they are all buried alike. But then, the righteous will be separated from the sinners by the Angels . . . We must have reverence for the Angels, and certainly for your Guardian Angel. Ask your Angel to separate you from the sinners on that day and to bring you to the right of Jesus. Be obedient to the inspirations your Guardian Angel sends you to help you in virtue.*”



What can we do to celebrate this Holy Feast? First of all, we can come to the Divine Liturgy, celebrated this year in anticipation on **Wednesday evening, November 7**. Before coming to Holy Confession we can ask our Angel to help us remember our falls in order to do everything we can in preparation to become both clean and forgiven. Whoever says with complete faith to their angel, “You are my protector! Take my outstretched hand!” will neither fear the threats of man nor the circumstances of their life. Let us strive to conscientiously honor our Guardian Angel and strive against sin. Then, when we depart for the age to come we will have a sure helper, protector, and advocate against the demons, and also before the Throne of God at the time of our final judgment.

With Love in Christ,

*Father Seraphim*

## Youth and Family Ministries

### Church School

Hi Everyone!

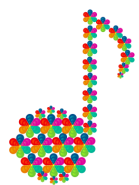
We are off to a great year with an enthusiastic group of students eager to learn about our beautiful Orthodox Faith. Again this year the Community Center will remain locked during Church School for the safety of our students. If you arrive late please enter through Panos Hall Foyer or, if your child has an outside door in their classroom, he or she can go directly to that door.

We have so many ministries that your kids can get involved in! Take a look at *The Desert Messenger* to see what the groups are doing; the kids always have a great time at the events. Don't forget about our amazing Bookstore, which has a nice selection of books for all ages. Many of our teachers use the Bookstore for our own teaching resources and we encourage our families to do the same to reinforce what is learned in the Church School Classroom, as the home is the "First Church."

**Save the Dates:** *Sunday, November 25 is Family Worship (no classes); Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 23, in the Church immediately following Liturgy.* If you have any questions, please contact me.

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

### Youth Choir News



Dear Youth Choir Members,

New singers have joined our ranks! We will continue with our weekly 15 minute practices on Sundays after Church School at 12:15 pm in the 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Classroom. We will be chanting the Divine Liturgy on *Sunday, November 11*. Please be on the right side of the Church *by 9:40 am* so we can start Liturgy with full voices.

With Love in Christ, Presvytera Maria

### Orthodox Family Fellowship

For November we are going to go ice skating together. We will meet on *Saturday, November 17 from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm at the Las Vegas Ice Center, South Rink (9295 W. Flamingo Road, Suite 130, Las Vegas)*. Skate rental is \$10 for two hours; for children 5 and under the cost is \$6. Refreshments and drinks are also available for purchase at the rink. We had a great turn out last time, and we hope to see you there again this month!

In Christ, Amy Khuri and Jelena Boskovic, OFF Advisors

### GOYA ~ For Teenagers

Dear GOYANs,

Thank you to everyone helping out, participating in, and supporting the overnight camping trip at the end of October.

**November GOYA Night Sunday:** Join us on *Sunday, November 11 at 5:00 pm in Panos Hall*, and come share all we are thankful for together! There will be food, games and fellowship!

On *Thursday, November 29*, join us for our annual *GOYA Tree Trimming Party!* We will gather *in Panos Hall, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm*. This will be a potluck, so please bring your favorite dish. Please also bring ornaments to decorate our exquisite St. John the Baptist Christmas Tree! Bring your family and friends for an evening of fellowship and cheer!

Happy Thanksgiving! Be safe and kind.

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



## Greek Folk Dance

Our dancers are hard at work learning traditional folk dances from many different regions of Greece! We are preparing our dance suites for the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Greek Orthodox *Folk Dance and Choral Festival (FDF)*, which will take place *February 14 – 17, 2019 at the Ontario Convention Center in Ontario, CA*. A big thank you to all the volunteer directors and all the parents who have already put in so much time and effort this year to keep these wonderful traditions alive.

We are changing things up this month: We have decided to have a more family friendly event than our Wine Experience. All Parish members are encouraged to join us for a *Vegas Golden Knights Viewing Party on Saturday, November 10, starting at 3:00 pm* (Game starts at 4:00 pm) *in Panos Hall*. The cost is \$10 per person – children under 5 years are free – and includes a food item and soft drink. There will be additional food and drinks available for purchase. Following the game, we will enjoy more camaraderie and dancing! Please join us and support our Greek Folk Dance Ministry.

Also, please mark your calendars for *Christmas Caroling!* The dancers in our ministry will be travelling around town spreading holiday cheer on *December 7 and 8*. We would love to come to your home, business, or Christmas party to share our traditional Greek and English Christmas Carols. Any questions? Please email [Stjohngreekdance@gmail.com](mailto:Stjohngreekdance@gmail.com).

Much Gratitude, The Folk Dance Board

## Greek Language Program



Greek School students and teachers jumped right into the fall semester. We recently had our Halloween Greek costume party at which the children and adults dressed up as a mythological or traditional Greek person. Everyone had a good time and they all learned some Greek history and culture, along with enjoying some treats!

Thank you to all the teachers new and old who make this program viable! Thank you to Sia Dalacas, Katerina Eliades, Vasileios Bavidelos, Maritza Kelesis, Harriet Lampronikos, George Serafim and Roxani Tzeleki!

Please note: There will be no class the week of Thanksgiving (*Tuesday, November 20*). Enjoy your time with family and give thanks to God for all your blessings!

Paula Kelesis, Greek School Director

Our Altar Servers enjoyed an unplanned reunion on Sunday, October 7, with His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos, Father Matthew and his sons, Thomas and Peter, and Matthew Castillo.



## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

Rev. Father John Hondros  
[frjohn@vegaskgreekorthodox.com](mailto:frjohn@vegaskgreekorthodox.com)

Rev. Father Seraphim Ramos  
[frseraphim@vegaskgreekorthodox.com](mailto:frseraphim@vegaskgreekorthodox.com)

Karen Rawlinson  
Administrative Assistant

John Karas  
Acting Bookkeeper

Mara Braun  
Catering & Events

Constantin Petriuc & Ramona Tasios  
Maintenance & Grounds

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

Telephone: (702) 221-8245  
[www.vegaskgreekorthodox.com](http://www.vegaskgreekorthodox.com)

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:  
George Karvounidis

Forerunners:  
Vicki Xikis & Faye Brown

Orthodox Bookstore:  
Constantine Frangakis,  
Paisios & Mary Pursell

Greek Food Festival: Gus Flangas

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

Photography: Bill Bruninga

# Adult and Young Adult Ministries

## Young Adults

For those who came out to our Sushi Night in October, thank you for an unforgettable evening of fun and fellowship! We are on a “roll” with the great ideas for Young Adults.

Speaking of great ideas, our next feast together is the highly anticipated *Annual Friendsgiving Celebration!* Mark your calendars for *Sunday, November 18 at 5:30 pm* at Rahel Keflezgi's house.

If you have never been to a St. John the Baptist Young Adult Friendsgiving Feast, we just ask that you bring your favorite Thanksgiving side dish, or dessert. Rahel and Elizabeth will be providing the turkey and drinks. We ask everyone to share their side dishes on the Facebook page, so we know who is bringing what and do not get too many double-dishes. Last year's Friendsgiving Feast was so successful, that we accept the challenge and look forward to an even more fruitful one this year.

All this is for your own benefit and joy, *“So that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:15)*

In Christ, Niko Asim and Elizabeth Arbuiso, YA Advisors

## Kali Parea - “Good Company” for the 40+ Crowd

At press time, we are looking forward to a wonderful Name Day Party at Demetri Asim's house!

For the month of November we are going to be attending the *Stewardship All-Stars Luncheon* together on *Sunday, November 11*. It is a free-will offering, and we will all sit together. Please come out and support our very own ministry leader, Demetrios Asim, who was chosen as one of our Stewardship All-Stars!

We hope to see you there!

In Christ, Catherine Manolakos

## Mr. & Mrs. - A Couples Fellowship

Dear M&Ms,

We definitely missed getting together officially in September, and we were so grateful to get back on track with October's meeting graciously hosted by the Nixons at their home!

This month we look forward once again to being together on *Saturday, November 17* at the home of John and Marcie Karas, where dinner and discussion will *begin at 6:00 pm*. As we will have entered the period of preparation for the Holy Nativity of Christ, please bring a fast-appropriate side dish, salad or dessert – drinks are also welcome.

Please contact Marcie or Father Seraphim for questions, directions, or to RSVP with what you will be bringing. We look forward to seeing you there! Father John, Father Seraphim, and their Presvyteres



The Las Vegas AHEPA Family wishes everyone a Very Happy Thanksgiving. Thank you to everyone who attended the OXI Day event and a special thank you to our presenters.

AHEPA will NOT be meeting in November – please take this time and enjoy your family and friends! Please consider becoming a Board Member – Board Positions are available.

Thank you, Kouli Pouridis, AHEPA Chapter President  
[Pouridis5@cox.net](mailto:Pouridis5@cox.net) or (702) 604-0885

## Forerunners ~ The Seniors of St. John the Baptist



How wonderful to see new faces joining us for our first Senior Luncheon on October 15. Master Chef Sam and his crew prepared a great lunch which was enjoyed by all. During lunch, Elvis Presley arrived with a Birthday Cake singing "Happy Birthday" (and another famous Elvis tune) to Father John. Surprising all was entertainer extraordinaire Dimos Chondrakis. Dimos emceed our door and raffle prizes, as well as closing with "Love Me Tender." Our thanks to Dimos for making Father John's 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday very special.

Ruth Plentzas also took time to speak regarding the Shoebox Project, a charity project benefitting homeless teens. She will be adding more information at our next meeting. Thank you all for attending and a special "thank you" to all who helped make it possible.



Our next Forerunners Luncheon gathering will be on **Monday, November 12 at 11:30 am** in our new home – **Kokkos Hall**. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us.

Get well wishes to Nick Katris and Mike Beeler. Looking forward to having you back with us soon.

A special tribute to a wonderful friend, George Chomakos, who recently fell asleep in the Lord. For years, George answered our phones before and during our Festival, and this is in addition to the many other things he quietly did for our Church. He will be missed by all of us. May his memory be eternal!

As always, our love, prayers and good wishes to all who are homebound or in hospitals or other facilities.

Love in Christ, Victoria Xikis, Forerunners Co-Chair



## Notes from the Choir Loft




Thank you to everyone for your beautiful singing on National Church Music Sunday! What a wonderful Hierarchical Liturgy and special blessing from his Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos!

We will begin rehearsing for the Christmas services in December. As always, we welcome new voices.

Athena Mertes, Choir Director

*"Sing to the Lord, bless His Name!" (Psalm 96:2)*





## The 2018 Annual Ladies Philoptochos Society Christmas Pastry Sale

Delicious, traditional Greek Christmas Pastries

Lovingly baked and packaged in a decorated box for \$25.

Quantities are limited. Guarantee your order by pre-ordering and pre-paying. **Complimentary logo for those who order 50 boxes or more.**

Send your order and check made payable to the  
Ladies Philoptochos Society, attention Christmas Pastry Sale.

5300 El Camino Rd. Las Vegas, NV 89118

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Day \_\_\_\_\_ Cell or Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Number of boxes \_\_\_\_\_ x \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Or please call Karen at the Church Office - 702-221-8245 to pay by credit card

Orders will be ready for pickup at St. John Church on Sunday, December 2, 2018,  
following Divine Liturgy.

Your generous contribution is greatly appreciated. It benefits the many ministries we support  
in the St. John community, the Las Vegas community at large and around the world.

Thank you!

**The Ladies Philoptochos Society  
cordially invites you to the**

**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY**

**Wednesday, December 12, 2018  
6:00 pm**

**The Martini  
1205 South Fort Apache  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89117**

**Please RSVP by December 5 to  
Jelena Boskovic at  
[ellenabosk@gmail.com](mailto:ellenabosk@gmail.com)  
or call (917) 684-1329**

**RSVP**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ seats at \$40 each for the

Philoptochos Christmas Party \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**As we are grateful for all our blessings, we should not forget those less fortunate.  
This Christmas, your donation will provide food for the hungry in Las Vegas.  
Please offer an additional donation in support.**

Feed the Hungry Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make your check payable to:  
Ladies Philoptochos Society and mail it to  
Saint John Greek Orthodox Church**



**Adult Study  
with  
Father John**

*Resuming with  
The Acts of  
the Apostles*

*Meets  
Wednesdays  
7:00 - 8:30 pm  
in Kokkos Hall  
on November 7  
and 14*

*Bibles available in  
our Orthodox  
Bookstore*

**COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD**

**2018 Christmas Card Submission Form**

Name & Phone or Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Your Name as you wish it to appear on the card (names only - no greeting, please):

*Donation: \$20 per family - Deadline: Monday, November 26, 2018*

*Please submit form & payment to Philoptochos c/o St. John Church.*

## Orthodox Bookstore

Hello from the Bookstore!

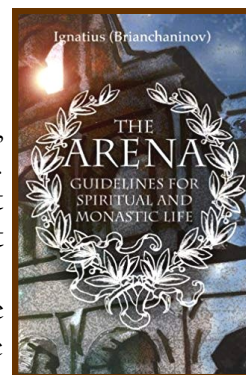
*The Arena* was written for monastics by Saint Ignatius Brianchaninov. However, the wonderful spiritual lessons and counsels are useful and applicable for all Christians. Please take the time to stop by the Bookstore to look at this title and other excellent Orthodox books that soothe the soul and help guide us toward salvation in our sweetest Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Also, we have many excellent choices for young children and young adults. The world offers many false and fantastic "heroes," but we have the true and real heroes of the Church to inspire us in the Saints. Please consider introducing the lives of the Saints to our young, impressionable Orthodox children. Their young minds will be formed with dignified thoughts and concepts that will build their characters and help to prepare them to navigate the confusing waters of our present times.

An excerpt taken from Chapter 43, *The Arena - Concerning the Fallen Angels*:

"In order to stand firm against fallen spirits, we need to see them. A struggle is possible only with an opponent who can be sensed by feelings of body or soul. When an enemy is invisible, when his weapons are invisible, when no sensation of feeling gives evidence of his presence and activity, then he is equivalent to a non-existent enemy. Then what battle can there be? Spirits, invisible to our bodily eyes, are visible to the eyes of our souls, to our mind and heart. But the holy fathers who had obtained purity and perfection saw the spirits with their bodily eyes as well. For us who cannot see the fallen spirits with our bodily eyes, it is necessary to learn to see them with the eyes of the soul."

Until next month, God willing, ICXC NIKA, Constantine Frangakis, Bookstore Director



## Church Account Summaries ~ September 2018

Nevada State Bank Accounts	August Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	September Ending Balance	Notes
General Operating Account (GOA)	\$13,087.06	\$29,287.90	\$228,586.15	\$159,675.60	\$81,627.50	\$29,658.01	
Community and Education (C&E)	\$2,996.44	\$4,700.00		\$1,000.00		\$6,696.44	
Greek Food Festival (GFF)	\$40,999.48	\$535,214.17	\$272,426.91	\$197,391.79	\$299,098.40	\$352,150.37	
Designated, Restricted & Other (DR&O)	\$292,912.55	\$3,619.00	\$6,107.87	\$5,756.16	\$7,107.76	\$289,775.50	
Folk Dance Group	\$14,327.68	\$225.00	\$275.00			\$14,827.68	
Mortgage Account	\$5,326.68		\$62,413.68		\$5,201.14	\$62,539.22	
Designated Funds	August Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	September Ending Balance	Notes
Bookstore	\$5,666.52	\$3,619.00	\$6,107.87	\$2,607.76	\$4,301.28	\$8,484.35	
Ornaments	\$1,077.41					\$1,077.41	
Restricted Funds	August Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	September Ending Balance	Notes
ICON	\$254,271.31				\$13.11	\$254,258.20	
Library Account	\$1,470.77					\$1,470.77	Account owed \$21,000. Funds used to make payroll and pay bills in 2015
Giving Tree	\$5,450.91					\$5,450.91	
Building Fund	\$17.08					\$17.08	
\$300,000 One Year Plan	\$0.00					\$0.00	Mortgage Paydown Campaign
Youth Choir	\$3,069.82					\$3,069.82	
Church School	\$1,306.37					\$1,306.37	
Three Priests	\$20,000.00			\$4,500.00	\$1,441.77	\$14,058.23	Altar Candles, & Narthex Painting
Altar Servers	\$440.00					\$440.00	
GOYA	\$142.36					\$142.36	
<b>Designated, Restricted, and Other Total</b>	<b>\$292,912.55</b>	<b>\$3,619.00</b>	<b>\$6,107.87</b>	<b>\$2,607.76</b>	<b>\$4,314.39</b>	<b>\$289,775.50</b>	
Other Funds	August Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	September Ending Balance	Notes
Kokkos Scholarship Fund	\$58,169.84	\$5,733.20				\$63,903.04	Account Value

Sep 2018 Candles **\$3,602.00**  
 Sep 2018 Trays **\$2,150.00**  
**Total Sep Candles & Trays \$5,752.00**



# NOVEMBER 2018 ~ IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD

*Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday*

<b>4</b> 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <b>Parish Assembly</b> 12:15 pm Youth Choir 2:00 pm Folk Dance	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes 6:15 pm Folk Dance	<b>7</b> 5:00 pm Orthros 6:00 pm Divine Liturgy <b>(Holy Archangels)</b> 6:00 pm Byzantine Music Class 7:00 pm Adult Study	<b>1 Ss. Cosmas and Damianos</b> 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 7:00 pm Adult Basketball	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 8:00 am Philoptochos Pastry Baking in the Kitchen
<b>11</b> 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Youth Choir Chants</i> <b>Stewardship All-Star Luncheon</b> 2:00 pm Folk Dance 5:00 pm GOYA Night in Panos Hall	<b>12</b> 11:30 am Forerunner Luncheon in Kokkos Hall	<b>13</b> 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes 6:15 pm Folk Dance 6:30 pm Parish Council Meeting in Library	<b>14</b> 6:00 pm Byzantine Music Class 7:00 pm Adult Study	<b>15</b> 7:00 pm Adult Basketball	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 1:30 pm OFF Ice Skating at Las Vegas Ice Center 6:00 pm M&Ms at John and Marcie Karas' Home
<b>18 Stewardship Sunday</b> 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 12:15 pm Youth Choir 12:30 pm Folk Dance <i>Autumn Bake Sale</i> 5:30 pm YA Friends- giving at Rahel's Home	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 6:15 pm Folk Dance	<b>21 Entrance of the Theotokos in Temple/ Thanksgiving Liturgy</b> 5:00 pm Orthros 6:00 pm Divine Liturgy & Artodasia No Adult Study	<b>22 Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25 St. Catherine</b> 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy <i>Family Worship</i> 12:30 pm Folk Dance	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes 6:15 pm Folk Dance Practice	<b>28</b> No Adult Study	<b>29</b> 6:00 pm GOYA Tree Trimming Party in Panos Hall	<b>30 Holy Apostle Andrew</b> 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	
<div>Church Directory Photo Sessions in Panos Hall: 11/15-16 2:00-9:00 pm; 11/17 10:00 am-5:00 pm</div> <div>Church Office Closed</div> <div>Father John on Holy Land Pilgrimage 11/28-12/11</div>						

# *The Desert Messenger*

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

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
LAS VEGAS NV  
PERMIT NO. 98

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

POSTMASTER : DATED MATERIAL - PLEASE EXPEDITE



THE DESERT MESSENGER

## *The Way of the Lord*

*Happy  
Thanksgiving*



*O give thanks to the Lord,  
for He is good,  
for His steadfast love  
endures forever. . . .  
It is He Who remembered us in our  
low estate,  
for His steadfast love  
endures forever;  
and rescued us from our foes,  
for His steadfast love  
endures forever.  
O give thanks to the God of heaven,  
for His steadfast love  
endures forever.  
(Psalm 136:1, 23-26)*