

# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

# *THE MESSENGER*

“Behold I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.” Mark 1:2-3

## November 2013

### MISSION STATEMENT:

St. John Greek Orthodox Church is dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

### VISION:

The church shall seek to fulfill its mission by:

1. Embracing the Spiritual Life of the Orthodox Church through regular prayer, worship, and frequent participation in the sacraments.
2. Supporting the Church through stewardship of time and talent and sacrificial giving.
3. Providing a welcoming, caring, loving environment.
4. Having its members exemplify Orthodox Christian character and morals.
5. Supporting ministries that facilitate the overall mission of the Church
6. Exemplifying commitment to community service and charitable outreach.
7. Creating an environment which encourages members to grow in their faith.

## Father Stavros' Message

**We are Rapidly Approaching an Important Decision in the Life of our Community**

*Please take time to read what follows: It is one of the more important messages I have written!*

### Introduction-An Incredible Week in the Life of our Community

The week of September 29-October 6 was an incredible week in the life of our community. On Sunday, September 29, church attendance was a standing-room only crowd. We had congregational singing—everyone sang together. The choir sat out in the pews, ala a flash mob at the mall, and led the congregation in offering the responses to the Divine Liturgy. It took over 25 minutes for Communion to be distributed. Following Divine Liturgy, we had a pre-teen retreat. There were approximately 30 pre-teens and 30 parents who attended this retreat, many from our parish, and some from neighboring parishes. The retreat was outstanding—Mary Ann Konstas (on-line safety), Maria Xenick (Modesty), Dory Passalaris (Manners) and myself (choices) each made a presentation to boys, girls and parents (separate presentations for each group). There were many questions and concerns raised by all the groups. And everyone agreed that we just scratched the surface in ministering to this group—pre-teens and parents. I commend everyone who participated in this retreat—I'm sure

there were not many churches of any denomination that had such an event on that Sunday. Kudos to everyone for coming together to talk about really important issues. For those who don't have pre-teens, you'd be astounded to know that lots of behavior that we associate with teenagers and college students is filtering down to our pre-teens. They may not be doing it, but they know about it and some of their peers are doing it.

During the week of September 29-October 6, SEVENTY-SEVEN people participated in one of the small group Bible Studies. That is an incredible number! For the first five weeks of small groups, the attendance has been 72, 67, 73, 77 and 69. It's incredible to think that this new ministry we didn't even have two months ago is now drawing an average of 70+ people each week. There is obviously a great need for this type of ministry.

On Monday, September 30, I finished the fall installment of the Orthodoxy 101 class. Twelve people took the class this time around, and from this

Rev. Fr. Stavros N. Akrotirianakis, Priest

2418 W. Swann Avenue, Tampa, FL 33609-4712

Office Phone: (813)876-8830 • Fax (813) 443-4899

E-mail: [officestjohgoctampa@gmail.com](mailto:officestjohgoctampa@gmail.com)

Website: <http://www.greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com>

group, five of the participants were non-Orthodox and are considering joining our church.

(As an aside, in the past 5 weeks, I've had a service BEFORE each Sunday liturgy—On September 15, it was TWO forty-day blessings for babies; on September 22 a Chrismation, on September 29, October 6 and October 13, each had a 40 days blessing for a baby. Throw in two baptisms—October 4 and October 12—and a wedding—October 3—and you can see that there is lots of new life in our community.)

On Sunday, October 6, the church was again standing room only (it has been this way since Sunday school started on September 8, and I commend everyone for coming each week, for coming on time, and for bringing your children to Sunday school). Again it took about 25 minutes to distribute Holy Communion. After church, I hosted a luncheon and discussion for college students, something I hope to make a regular ministry. Our first gathering had modest attendance (seven people) but it's a base we hope to build on. And on that Sunday evening, we had a GOYA meeting with 18 teenagers in attendance.

So, if you add the number of people who came to an event besides liturgy the week of September 29-October 6, it is well over 120. And that's amazing! It shows not only a great need for these kinds of ministries, but a spiritual maturity in our community, that we are eager to learn and to grow spiritually and to do so not only during the Divine Services but outside the context of them as well.

### **Where we were in 2004 and where we are now**

The church has certainly changed since 2004. On my first Sunday in 2004, we had two altar boys. On an average Sunday, we now have 12. Thanks to your generosity, we are about to purchase a few additional robes to accommodate our additional boys. We are also going to purchase a couple of extra processional candles for them to carry during the Liturgy. At my first GOYA meeting, there were less than 10 teenagers in attendance. At the three meetings we've had this school year, we've had 25, 27 and 18 attend. On my first Sunday, it took less than 10 minutes to give Communion, and for a Sunday Liturgy, we used to cut 4-5 Prospora (loaves of bread). The church was also half-empty. As we finish 2013, the church is standing-room only on most Sundays, it takes over 20 minutes for Communion to be distributed and we're using 8-9 loaves of Prospora each week. When I did my first Bible study, there were 5 people there. Now there are 70 people attending a week-day Bible study. And while I do not lead all the Bible studies, I am still involved in researching the material, distributing it to the group leaders, and going over with them how to use the material. I also visit each group once every six weeks, or an average of one group a week, and field questions as requested by group leaders. When I first arrived in 2004, there were about 70 children in Sunday school. That now numbers about 150. There were not even 10 teachers. Now the number is close to 20. The first Messenger was about 4 pages. Now it exceeds 20, with small font. I hope you are seeing a pattern here—our church is a lot bigger in both population size and number of ministries. And this is a positive.

### **What hasn't changed**

While many things have changed for the better, some things have remained the same. We still rely on the festival to make our operating budget. And while stewardship has improved, there is still a long way to go. We still

cannot fund all of our ministries and pay our bills on stewardship. We're still relying on people outside of our community patronizing our festival, buying our pastries, and we're still nickel-and-diming parishioners with fundraisers and other things just to make the church go.

### **Of those you gave me, I lost not one**

In John 18:9, Jesus says, as He is being arrested, "Of those You gave me, I lost not one." He says this in reference to His Disciples, His followers, that He loved, and that He protected, so that none was lost or harmed, even as He was going toward His Passion and Death on the Cross. That verse has profound meaning in my life as an Orthodox priest. No one is perfect. No priest is perfect. But each priest strives to have a perfect record when it comes to his people. And each priest, undoubtedly fails. An airline pilot wants to have a perfect record when it comes to landing planes—if he fails to land the plane correctly, almost certainly he and his entire plane of passengers will perish. A surgeon also strives to have a perfect record, because when he doesn't, someone is injured or dies. The same goes for firefighters, police officers, soldiers, etc. When a priest, and by extension, his community, makes a mistake, it is not an earthly life that is at stake. It's eternal life that is at stake. If one of our young people doesn't come to know God, and leaves from the church, that is a soul that is potentially lost. If a person has a rough life, and gives up on the love and mercies of the Lord, again, that is a soul that is potentially lost. Many times in the Bible, Jesus gives the visual description of a herd of sheep. The shepherd is herding the sheep in the pasture, to the safe haven of the sheep pen. He does not want wild animals to attack the sheep. He makes sure there is no wolf hiding among the sheep or getting into the pen. The only way to safely enter the pen is by a narrow door, so the sheep go in one at a time and no predatory animal is among them. Jesus tells us that sometimes the sheep get lost and the shepherd goes and finds them and then has great joy over finding the lost sheep. Using His teaching about the sheep and the shepherd, the sheep of the church are each of you, the souls that comprise the flock. The shepherd is the priest, the one who is charged with caring for and protecting the flock. Sheep are not racehorses, to be whipped and prodded to do the bidding of the jockey. The priest is not the jockey, who beats on the faithful to make them go where he wants them to go. The sheep have a destination, the sheep pen, where they wish to go, because it is a safe haven. It is the job of the shepherd to direct and protect his sheep.

The sheep pen is heaven itself, the destination where we all wish to go, the safe haven where we wish to spend eternity. The pasture is this life—we venture through the pasture and its fields seeking the safe haven of the sheep pen. The wolves are all the influences and people that discourage our Christianity. Temptations are like wolves, who often times appear in sheep's clothing. When a sheep gets lost, the shepherd is supposed to find the sheep and lead the sheep back to the herd, so that all can get to the sheep pen together.

I take that verse "of those you gave me, I lost not one," I take that very seriously. I know that my personal salvation is going to depend, in large part, on how I live out this verse in my ministry, in my priesthood. It is probably inevitable that some people will leave the church no matter what I do. And it is also probably inevitable that someone might leave the church because of something I do or say. Again, no one is perfect. Most certainly I am not. Several years ago, one of my spiritual children, a young woman from summer camp, took her own life. This wasn't just anybody, but someone I knew, someone I had spoken to on several occasions. Each year on Holy Thursday, as I read the above verse from scripture in the second Gospel, I ask the Lord

for forgiveness because of those He gave me, she is no longer with us. I don't know if I could have done anything different there to get a different outcome, I'll probably never know. But it stays with me.

And as I look at our pre-teens and our teens and our parishioners, I often-times think what are we doing to make sure that of those we have, we lose not one. I oftentimes wonder is that a goal that other people share in, or is it just my thought.

### So, here's where the "rubber meets the road"

- Our church is more than double the size it was when I got here in September 2004. Everything has increased at least two-fold, if not more.
- The day, however, still has only 24 hours, the week still has but seven days.
- More people are calling on the church for spiritual assistance.
- More people are calling on their priest, for spiritual guidance, and this is a GREAT THING!!!
- There are lots of things I want our church to do better and there are lots of new programs I'd like to see us do.

Let me give a few examples:

1. I offer pre-marital counseling to each couple who gets married. It is not required, but strongly suggested. I generally offer two sessions of pre-marital counseling, for a total of 4-5 hours. The Archdiocese has a new pre-marital counseling program that is would like me to do—It takes about 10-12 hours per couple to complete. It's a good program. And I think 10-12 hours of time is not out of line for a couple we hope will be married forever. 10-12 hours for a 50 year investment of time is not that much.
2. When you have 27 teenagers attend a GOYA meeting, it is not possible to have a great discussion—there are so many people that not everyone gets a fair turn at speaking. The age range is so great that I either talk to the older teens and talk over the young, or talk to the young and the older ones are bored.
3. We need to expand ministries to college students, to get ourselves onto college campuses in Hillsborough County, and I simply do not have the time to do this.
4. There are Orthodox inmates at the county jail almost all the time. These are people who have done wrong, who are going to come out of jail at some point. Is there any spiritual support for people who have made mistakes, even big ones, that landed them in jail? Again, there is no time to do this.
5. Visitation of the sick is something that many people should be involved in, not just the priest. There are people in the community who are shut-ins, in nursing facilities. I visit them, but not as often as I wish I could. Again, there is no time.

On the subject of time and how I spend my time, in 2012, I logged the following:

215 services and sacraments

223 visitations

198 people who came to confession

28 pre-marital counseling appointments

430 appointments for counseling, sacrament set-up, or other pastoral concerns that are brought to me in the office.

This is in addition writing the Messenger, administrative responsibilities, meetings with the Parish Council and other ministries, preparing sermons, teaching classes, preparing for retreats, and still finding time to pray for the community.

***The church has grown to the point where the needs of the people cannot be met by one priest. Certainly, if you take the pastoral dimension out of the weekly task list, things would get done. But putting in the pastoral dimension, and realizing that some appointments take a few minutes, but depending on the material, sometimes a few hours, this is where the bulk of the time is and should be going.***

### The church is at a point where we need to bring another full-time ministry person on board.

We have lots of people who are helping, and that is good. But you can't rely on volunteers for everything. We also can't expect a volunteer to coordinate the volunteers. We need someone who is here full-time, and someone who is trained in church work and Orthodox theology, to be able to function in lock-step with me in administering and ministering to this parish.

***Ideally, we need a second priest!*** How wonderful it would be if we had another clergyman here. Yes, it could cut the time it take to distribute Communion in half. But it would also allow us to offer more ministries, and to offer more depth in the ministries we have. We would have an additional teacher at the GOYA meetings, an additional person to visit the sick, an additional pastor to share the teaching and counseling load with.

***A sad truth—the day after the pre-teen retreat, the appropriate pastoral response would have been a personal phone call to each parent participant, to follow up and see how the church can serve the pre-teens and their parents. Time constraints meant that a cursory email went out to everyone, and that was it. No one—not me, not a volunteer—had time to make a personal phone call to everyone.***

If we are going to administer this parish properly, and take seriously the message of Christ, "Of those you gave me I lost not one," we are going to have to get some full-time paid ministry help to make this happen. Ideally, this would be a second priest. However, a second priest is an expensive proposition, and there is a shortage of priests in our country right now. That is a whole different issue, why it is so difficult to find men who are willing to answer the call to be a priest.

### Here is a reasonable half-step—a pastoral assistant

As you may or may not know, someone who graduates from the seminary and wishes to be ordained as a priest, if he is going to get married, he must get married prior to ordination. So, there are men who get out of the seminary who cannot get ordained yet because they are not married. There are a group of people who are theologically trained and ready to serve the church on a full-time basis, but not ready to be ordained. Additionally, there are women who graduate from the seminary who cannot be ordained ever, obviously. Yet, they have theological education and also desire

to serve the church on a full-time basis. So, while getting a second priest should be our aim, getting a “pastoral assistant” is a good first step towards bringing needed help to our church without the same financial obligations we would have to get a second priest. A pastoral assistant makes significantly less than an ordained priest.

So, what would a pastoral assistant do, specifically?

1. Provide depth—in the context of a GOYA meeting, both I and the pastoral assistant would attend the meetings, and would split the group up for age-appropriate discussion. If there is an emergency requiring a priest, the pastoral assistant can run the meeting without me. Last year, I had to cancel a GOYA meeting because of a funeral.
2. The pastoral assistant would also provide depth in other areas, such as being a back-up chanter (so we don't have to bring someone in when the chanter goes on vacation. As the pastor, me, takes on additional work (see pre-marital counseling example above), the pastoral assistant can take things off the pastor's plate that don't require the pastor, allowing me to focus on more priest-specific things with the pastoral assistant doing things that do not require a priest.
3. Starting new programs—there are other programs I would like to see become part of our church but at present do not have time start anything new. I can hardly maintain what I have going on at present.

The key to the church is RELATIONAL MINISTRY—building relationships with people in order to help them deepen their relationship to Christ. And whether this means visiting a sick person, going to the football game of one of our GOYAnS, meeting with a college student, conducting a class, or just being an additional resource for counsel and conversation, if we are going to GROW our church, it is going to be through personal and relational ministry. If we had had a pastoral assistant at the time of the pre-teen retreat, on September 30, the next day, the pastoral assistant would have made those 30 phone call, or that pastoral assistant could have done some of my work and I would have made those calls. In either case, those calls would have been made. And we would do a lot better in not losing even one.

## **We now have more sheep, so we need more shepherds to care for them.**

Again, to speak in concrete terms, it's probably a \$80K proposition to have an assistant priest, once you total up salary, health insurance, car allowance, cell phone, etc. The package for a pastoral assistant would probably be \$50K. This includes salary, health benefit, payroll taxes, etc. This means we have to take up the budget \$50K in order to make this happen. Which means we need to take our stewardship up significantly.

And the good news is, we have a potential candidate for be our pastoral assistant, Charlie Hambos. His Eminence will have the final say as to whether Charlie can come here, but if we can't commit the funds in the budget, there is no point in even asking.

In November December, we have three significant events in the life of our parish.

November 8-10—our annual Greek Festival—obviously we need everyone's help to make this a success. But we also need luck when it comes to weather, patrons eager to spend money, and other gimmicks that we can't

control. Even if we have the most successful festival ever, and I hope we do, it is still not right that we are budgeting for other people to buy our food in order to keep the church doors open. There is no other Christian denomination that pays its bills this way. The festival should be for fun, not for stress. And the proceeds of the festival should be “gravy” not a vital cog in just keeping our doors open.

December 1—The Fall Parish Assembly Meeting—where we pass the budget for 2014. Your vote at this meeting will set the tone for next year, and whether we will be the needed help in our church in the form of a pastoral assistant. This meeting will be held after church on that Sunday. So please come and please vote with your presence and your voice that you are ready for the community to move forward.

December 8—Stewardship Sunday—as it stands right now, if we don't have a good festival, we don't have enough money to pay for the expenses we have, let alone incur new ones. Your stewardship for next year is going to have the biggest effect on whether we can bring a new person aboard as a full time minister or not. There will be a stewardship message in next month's Messenger, but we all need to look deep within our hearts, and our wallets to see what kind of church it is we want. In order to take our church to the next level, we ALL need to make a commitment to sacrificial stewardship and to offer it promptly. December 8 is stewardship Sunday, the day we are asked to make our stewardship commitment for the following year. Let us all come together on THAT Sunday, December 8, and make our commitment together!

*Do we want a church that can barely maintain what it has, or one that is growing?*

*Do we want to not even lose one, or are we okay with people leaving the flock?*

I challenged us at the beginning of the fall to “Just Say YES!” to things concerning our church. I asked that we all say “YES” when it comes to arriving at church on time. And many more are doing this. I asked that we all say “YES” when it comes to singing in church and many more people are doing this.

In November and December, I'm asking you to look deep in your heart, and then deep in your pocket, and take our parish stewardship from where we are to “a whole different level.” I ask that you prayerfully and reflectively ponder on your stewardship so that we can raise our stewardship from \$300K to \$400K in ONE STEWARDSHIP CYCLE, so that we can:

- a. Afford to bring a pastoral assistant aboard
- b. Not need to be stressed out about our festival—we can truly do it for fun and community building.
- c. Make sure that of those we have, we lose not one!

This is the path that I want our church to take! This is the path the Christ wants our church to take! Will you join me in working and contributing for our church to go down this path!

I certainly hope the answer is YES!

With love in the Lord,

+Fr. Stavros

# Why are there so many Liturgies in November and December?

By Fr. Stavros

The word "Liturgy" means "the work of the people." The primary act of the Liturgy is the Eucharist. The word "Eucharist" comes from the Greek "Epharistia" which means "Thanksgiving." The word "Eucharist" also contains "Charis" meaning "grace" and "Hara" meaning "joy." So the celebration of the Eucharist combines thanksgiving, grace and joy. Thanksgiving, grace and joy and the guideposts to a successful Christian life. If our life's journey is supposed to take us to the gates of heaven for entrance into the heavenly kingdom, having a good sense of thanksgiving and joy, combined with God's grace, is the best way to proceed. Not only does the Liturgy provide an opportunity to meditate on these three things, it affords us a taste of God's Kingdom itself, filled with grace and joy. It's our opportunity to thank God for what we have, and to ask for assistance in healing the things we don't have. Holy Communion is an encounter with the living God, as the Lord touches us not only spiritually but physically, in the sacrament of Holy Communion. In early church communities, every DAY began with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. I recently spoke to a brother priest who told me that he does Liturgy in his community on Sunday and at LEAST TWO other days during the week, not only for the people, but for himself, so that he can experience thanksgiving, grace and joy. I told this other priest that I do many liturgies (not as many as he does), and that this year in November, I actually will be celebrating Liturgy every day of the festival—for the Archangels on November 8, St. Nectarios on November 9 and a Sunday, on November 10. The priest said to me that HE ALWAYS DOES LITURGY during the festival, regardless of what days it falls. He says he like to start the long days of the festival with the thanksgiving, grace and joy that can only come from the Divine Liturgy.

If your life is lacking in thanksgiving (gratitude), grace and joy, a great way to grow in all three is at the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and other days. No longer does the church celebrate liturgy every day. And this is not because it can't. It is still done in monasteries. But in most parishes, where there is only one priest, one chanter and a far flung congregation, it is not practical. If our church had 3 priests, many chanters and most parishioners could walk to church, this would be a different story.

We celebrate Liturgy according to the Liturgical Calendar. We celebrate Liturgy every Sunday, in honor of the resurrection of Christ. Up until about 100 years ago, liturgy was celebrated each Saturday, in honor of the dead, and this is when memorial services were done. The tradition of doing memorial services on Sunday is a compromise and has only been done for just over a hundred years. There is also a tradition of having liturgy on Wednesdays and Fridays, in thanksgiving for the betrayal and death of the Lord. There are also several other days commemorating major saints in the church and events in the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary and each of these is observed with the Divine Liturgy. Now, unless one of these dates calls on Wednesday, Friday or Saturday, the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday liturgies are for the most part not done, certainly not in Tampa. We do, however, celebrate the Divine Liturgy on the days that the church has Traditionally marked

with a celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Notice how I capitalized "Tradition". The means that around the world, the Divine Liturgy is held on these days. In November, these days include:

November 8	Feast of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel
November 9	Feast of St. Nektarios (modern day saint of the 20th century and patron saint of cancer patients)
November 13	Feast of St. John Chrysosom (author of the Divine Liturgy, patron saint of priests)
November 21	Feast of the entrance of the Virgin Mary in the Temple (major feast day)
November 25	Feast of St. Katherine
Thanksgiving	—if Eucharist means Thanksgiving, then how can we not celebrate the Eucharist in conjunction with Thanksgiving?
November 30	Feast of St. Andrew, first called of the Apostles
December 4	Feast of St. Barbara
December 6	Feast of St. Nicholas
December 9	Feast of St. Anna
December 12	Feast of St. Spyridon
December 24-25	Feast of the Nativity

According to the "liturgical calendar", the guidebook for when weekday services are celebrated, there were not a lot of feasts commemorated with Divine Liturgy in September and October. Hence, we did not have many weekday liturgies. That picks up in November, December and January. I encourage you, especially people who are not working during the day, to attend the Divine Liturgy as often as you can. It will give you hopefully a sense of gratitude, joy and grace. I find there is a great power at work during the Divine Liturgy, especially on weekdays. They have a different feeling than Sundays. First, not as many people are there. Secondly, without the long communion line, the service goes faster, usually just over an hour. Third, the people who are there really want to be there—they aren't there for a memorial service or some other family obligation. I enjoy celebrating these services and I'm looking forward to the next segment on the calendar which calls for us to be doing more of them. With an additional priest hopefully sometime in the near future, we can do even more. I'm finding that there is a great desire in this community to worship, which is a great thing. I scheduled some extra services in September—a Paraklesis and a Holy Unction—and both were well attended, testifying to the point that people really have a desire to worship and frequent opportunities to do so fill a need, and bring great thanksgiving, grace and joy. Please review the calendar each month and please attend as many services as you can! In doing so, we not only honor God and His saints, we honor ourselves, but accepting the gifts that God affords us through the Liturgy—Thanksgiving, Grace and Joy!!!

# Liturgical Schedule for November

Sunday, November 3      Orthros 8:45 a.m.      Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  
Altar Boys: Captains and St. Matthew (Karter Lenardos, Gregory Koutroumanis, Harry Koutroumanis, Brigham Sibley, Benny Hidermichel, James Kavouklis)  
Ushers: Florin Patrasciou, Kevin Fentress, John Alexander  
Coffee Hour: Young Adults

**Early Liturgies because of the Greek Festival—Divine Liturgy will be held on November 8, 9 and 10 but will begin one hour earlier because of the Greek Festival.**

Friday, November 8 Feast of the Archangels  
Orthros 8:00 a.m.      Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, November 9      Feast of St. Nectarios  
Orthros 8:00 a.m.      Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, November 10      Orthros 7:45 a.m.      Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m.  
Altar Boys: anyone attending may serve  
Ushers: Nick Kavouklis, Perry Katsamakis, Peter Theophanous  
Coffee Hour: No Coffee Hour because of Greek Festival

Wednesday, November 13      Feast of St. John Chrysostom  
Orthros 9:00 a.m.      Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, November 17      Orthros 8:45 a.m.      Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  
Altar Boys: Captains and St. Mark (John Karamitsanis, Lukas Karamitsanis, Andrew Mellon-Lynn, Dominic Garcia, Demetri Karounos, Grayson Borgeas)  
Ushers: Gregory Tisdale, Jason Pill, George Trimikliniotis  
Coffee Hour: Philoptochos

Thursday, November 21      Feast of the Entrance of the Virgin Mary into the Temple (Ta Eisodia)  
Orthros 8:45 a.m.      Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, November 23      Orthros 8:00 a.m.      Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, November 24      Orthros 8:45 a.m.      Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  
Altar Boys: Anyone attending may serve  
Ushers: Brett Mourer, Christopher Kavouklis, Amin Hanhan  
Coffee Hour: Young at Heart

Monday, November 25      Feast of St. Katherine  
Orthros 8:45 a.m.      Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, November 27      Evening Divine Liturgy for Thanksgiving  
Orthros 5:00 p.m.      Divine Liturgy 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 30      Feast of St. Andrew  
Orthros 9:00 a.m.      Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 1      Orthros 8:45 a.m.      Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  
Altar Boys: Captains and St. Luke (Christos Nenos, Dean Mitseas, Nicholas Katzaras, James Katzaras, Nicholas Yotis)  
Ushers: David Voykin, Ed Gerecke, Pete Trakas  
Coffee Hour: Andrew and Adrienne Trakas and Family

Wednesday, December 4    Feast of St. Barbara  
Orthros 9:00 a.m.            Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Friday, December 6    Feast of St. Nicholas  
Orthros 9:00 a.m.            Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 8    Orthros 8:45 a.m.            Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  
Altar Boys: Captains and St. John (George Hambos, Alexios Diniaco, Nicholas Alsina, Thomas Shearer, Antonio Bavaro)  
Ushers: Mike Trimis, George Mitseas, Chris Kavouklis  
Coffee Hour: Sunday School—Luncheon

Monday, December 9    Feast of St. Anna (Conception of the Theotokos)  
Orthros 9:00 a.m.            Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, December 12    Feast of St. Spyridon  
Orthros 9:00 a.m.            Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

## Feastdays in November

### Why we are celebrating Liturgy on these weekdays

#### **November 8 - Feast of the Archangels**

This feast commemorates the Archangels Michael and Gabriel and all of the “bodiless powers” of heaven, all of the angels.

#### **November 9 - Feast of St. Nectarios**

St. Nectarios is a “modern day” saint, a saint of the 20th Century, (Died in 1920, Canonized as a Saint in 1960), who was a bishop in Greece. St. Nectarios is the patron saint of cancer patients and is considered one of our “healing” saints, meaning that we invoke his intercessions when we are praying for those who are sick. Cancer sufferers and survivors are urged to attend this Liturgy in order to pray for continued healing through the Intercessions of St. Nectarios. Father Stavros has oil from the tomb of St. Nectarios in Aegina, Greece, with which he will anoint the faithful in attendance at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on November 9

#### **November 13 - Feast of St. John Chrysostom**

St. John Chrysostom lived in the 4th Century. He was a Bishop of the Church and is recognized as one of the Three Hierarchs (together with St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory the Theologian). He received the title “Chrysostomos,” meaning “the Golden Mouth,” for his great ability in oratory. St. John Chrysostom authored the Divine Liturgy that we celebrate on most Sundays. Therefore, we offer the Divine Liturgy on this day in honor of St. John Chrysostom.

#### **November 21 - Entrance of the Virgin Mary**

The Entrance of the Virgin Mary (Ta Eisodia) Commemorates when the Virgin Mary entered into the Temple at age two to begin a life of service to God, in preparation for the awesome role she would play in the history of humanity

as the Theotokos. This is one of the 12 Major Feastdays of the Orthodox Liturgical Year.

#### **November 25 - Feast of St. Katherine the Great Martyr**

St. Katherine was born in Alexandria, Egypt in the third century. She was very wise and eloquent, successfully arguing for Christianity in the face of tyrannical rulers and philosophers. She was martyred in the year 305 and her relics were taken by Angels to Mount Sinai where they were discovered many years later. St. Katherine has the title “Pansophou” the “All-Wise.”

#### **November 27 - Evening Liturgy for Thanksgiving**

In Greek the word for Thanksgiving is “Eucharistia,” so the Holy Eucharist is the “Holy Thanksgiving.” As we celebrate Thanksgiving with turkey and the Dallas Cowboys on Thursday, set aside Wednesday to receive the Holy Thanksgiving. As is our custom at St. John, we will celebrate Divine Liturgy for Thanksgiving on Wednesday, November 27 at 6:00 p.m.

#### **November 30 - Feast of St. Andrew**

St. Andrew is the first-called of the Apostles. He is also the patron saint of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

# Small Group Bible Study Update

As was mentioned in Father Stavros' message, our first week of small group Bible Studies kicked off with 70+ people attending each week. Anyone is welcome to join a group at any time. Comments from group members appear below. Our remaining fall schedule is as follows:

## **Women's Group (for adult women of any age)**

**Location:** Meets at the home of Debbie Kavouklis, 3315 Jean Circle, Tampa, FL 33629—Debbie lives in South Tampa, a mile or so from the church.

**Group Leader:** Debbie Kavouklis—you can email Debbie at dkavouklis1@verizon.net, or call her at 690-0155.

**Meeting time:** Tuesday mornings from 10:00-11:00 a.m. (coffee and refreshments at 9:30 a.m.)

**Fall meeting dates:** November 5, 19; December 3 and 10 (No Women's Bible Study on November 12 and 26)

## **Men's Group (for adult men of any age)**

**Location:** Kourmolis Center

**Group Leader:** Group Members rotate who leads each week. For more information, however, please email Fr. Stavros at frstav@gmail.com or contact him at 813-394-1038.

**Meeting time:** Wednesday mornings from 7:00-8:00 a.m.

**Fall meeting dates:** November 6, 13, 20 (no group on November 27); December 4, 11

## **South Tampa Mixed Group (for any adults)**

Anyone can attend this group but obviously this will be most convenient for those who live in South Tampa

**Location:** Home of Ellen Karaku, 4610 S. Ferdinand Avenue (South Tampa near Dale Mabry and Bay to Bay), Tampa, FL 33611. Ellen's home number is 813-835-0691 and her cell number is 813-240-3687. Her email is ekaraku@verizon.net.

**Group Leader:** Bessie Palios—Her email is bmp1126@yahoo.com, and her cell number is 813-523-0347. If you are going to attend this group, please RSVP to Ellen, Bessie and Fr. Stavros

**Meeting time:** Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

**Fall meeting dates:** November 5, 12 19 (no group on November 26); December 3, 10

## **North Tampa Mixed Group (for any adults)**

Anyone can attend this group but obviously this will be most convenient to those who live in North Tampa, Lutz, Land O'Lakes, Wesley Chapel and Carrollwood

**Location:** Home of Michael and Artemis Conner. They live in Lutz near George Steinbrenner High School off of Lutz Lake Fern. Their address is 5524 Reflections Blvd, Lutz, FL 33558. Their number is 813-920-4404 and Michael's cell is 813-784-0182. Michael's email is conner.mike.01@gmail.com, and Artemis' email is artemisia004@yahoo.com. Please contact them before you attend the first meeting to get the gate code to their community.

**Group Leader:** Michael Conner

**Meeting time:** Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m. (Note: This Change to Tuesday evening is a recent change)

**Fall meeting dates:** November 5, 12, 19 (no group on November 26); December 3 and 10

## **East Tampa Mixed Group (for any adults)**

Anyone can attend this group but obviously this will be most convenient to those who live on the East side of town—Riverview, Brandon, Valrico, Seffner, Lakeland

**Location:** Home of George and Donna Hambos—They live in Valrico at 2604 Herndon Street, Valrico, FL 33596. Their home number is 813-651-9226 and Donna's cell number is 813-843-8412, and Donna's email is dhambos@msn.com

**Group Leader:** Donna Hambos

**Meeting Time:** Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

**Fall meeting dates:** November 5, 12 19 (no group on November 26); December 3, 10

## **Young Adult Group (for adults ages 18-40)**

**Location:** Homes of group members, this one rotates, contact group leader for location each week

**Group Leader:** Mary Ann Konstas, who can be reached at 813-215-9862 or at mapkonstas@gmail.com. Please contact Mary Ann if you are interested in joining this group so she can tell you where the next meeting will take place.

**Meeting time:** Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

**Fall meeting dates:** November 6, 13 (service project/retreat the week of the 20th, no group on November 27); December 4, 11, 18

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# What people are saying about Small Group Bible Study Ministry

Each week I look forward to our Wednesday morning bible study. The group study and discussions have allowed me to enhance my knowledge of my faith, provides me with a better understanding of the Bible and has allowed me to become closer with other members in the group. I pray that this will become a permanent part of our church community and will continue to grow with new members from one week to the next.

~Chris Kavouklis, Wednesday morning men's group

Much thanks go out to Donna and George Hambos for their leadership and the use of their beautiful home for our Bible Group. We have met new friends and have learned the way of life that the Lord has taught in his teachings. I must say that we are a FAMILY now and have learned ways of life within the group. Excitement is filled when we meet and exchange our ideas on the studies put forth. Satisfaction is met when we leave and have taken our learnings and set them forth in everyday life. I cannot leave without saying that the food also plays a role in our GROUP. A great job by all in gratifying our hunger. Thanks to all. God Bless All

~Peter and Judy Zeban, Tuesday evening East Tampa Group

I am very delighted to be a part of this small group ministry. Meeting other Greek Orthodox Christians and being able to share our faith with each other has brought me great joy. I especially liked it when you came to visit after we had met as a group for a few weeks and opened up a questions/answers session. I did not realize that you were so educated and informed about religion. There are a lot of things about being Orthodox that we don't know and these small groups are a great way to learn more about our Faith, meet other Christians and grow in Christ. Thank you for going through with this.

~Nick Laliotis, Tuesday evening North Tampa Group

"I am loving the Men's Small Group Wednesday mornings for a few reasons... First, getting up and meeting from 7:00AM-8:00AM makes it really difficult to be late to work. Also, I've grown up in St Johns my entire life and I feel like I am just 'getting to know' the fellas I've seen at church this whole time, which is a great feeling. I love the fact that we are growing as a group, talking, opening up, and learning about Christ and his teachings from his word, and learning and supporting each other more each week. It is great

that we invite and host people outside of our Church community as well!"

~Alex Skijus, Wednesday morning Men's Group

Thank you for your enthusiasm and effort in creating the Bible Study groups. It has become an enriching experience for Toula and I and the highlight of our week. We especially, like the intimate small group format, which has allowed us to connect with other members of the church and form friendships and a fellowship that otherwise, might not have occurred. We appreciate the structured lesson plan that you have presented, because it stimulates meaningful discussions about our faith and a deeper understanding of the Bible. More importantly, it provides an opportunity to freely express ourselves in a safe environment and discuss intimate feelings and thoughts about our faith and other personal issues.

~Dr. Telly Courialis, Tuesday evening North Tampa Group

The bible study has been a true blessing and will bring our church members much closer. We are making connections and sharing beautiful discussions about our faith, challenges and God's many blessings.

~Sandra Pappas Ward, Women's Tuesday morning group

I thank the Lord for my small study group. We are fortunate and diverse in the East Tampa Group. We have children who join us for our quick dinner. Then as we study our Orthodox Bible, we have all ages, with considerably unique views: teens, young adults, middle aged, senior aged (me). The life experiences, the love of the Holy Word, the shared and uplifting prayers, and the graceful direction of our leader---all are truly beautiful. The openness, honesty, humor, and intelligence we each bring to our group discussions are a huge help to me in my journey in Eastern Orthodoxy. What could be more satisfying than the words of the Holy Bible to ponder and share with each other in such a welcoming setting? I look forward to Tuesday evenings and I read my Bible even more since I have joined this group. It inspires me to search more, appreciate more, and respect others more.

~ Martha Kapetan, Tuesday evening East Tampa Group

Don't Take our words for it—come see for yourselves!

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

**Greek Festival-Volunteers Needed**-As we all know, the Annual St. John Greek festival will be held November 8-10. Everyone's help is needed to make this festival a success. The festival hours are Friday, November 8 from 11:00 a.m.-midnight; Saturday, November 9 from 11:00 a.m.-midnight and Sunday, November 10, from 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Please note that Divine Liturgy will be held from 9:00-10:15 a.m. on Sunday, November 10. Help is also needed on November 6 and 7 for festival set-up and on November 11 for clean-up. A final sign-up day will be on Sunday, November 3, so please sign up to work at the festival on that day if you haven't already. If for some reason, you do not sign up to work at the festival, just ask for Betty Katherine Palios and she will direct you where to work.

**Get Acquainted Sunday, November 3**-In an effort to get to know one another better, we are going to continue our "get acquainted Sundays" one Sunday of each month. We will have nametags and markers in the entry way of the Kourmolis Center and will ask that each person put one on during coffee hour and introduce yourself to at least one person that you do not know. This will serve to help us increase our fellowship and sense of community. Our "Get Acquainted Sunday" for November will be Sunday, November 3.

**Our 8th Annual Advent Retreat will be held on Saturday, November 23**-The topic of this retreat will be: "The Good News: Why the Bible is Important and How to Read It." It will be held from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 23. Please see enclosed flyer.

**Welcome Debbie Bowe, our new secretary**- Debbie Bowe is our new parish secretary. When you call or stop by the office, please say hello, introduce yourself and welcome Debbie to our parish. Also, please be aware that Debbie will be contacting you for parish business as well. Some background on Debbie—she is originally from Pittsburgh, PA; is a long-time resident of South Tampa. She has four daughters ranging in age from 19-35, as well as four grandchildren. Her youngest daughter graduated Robinson High in 2012 and is now attending USF. She has 5 brothers, is a member of Peninsular Christian Church, and is a Steelers' Fan. Welcome Debbie!

**Constant Contact and Email Updates**—Our church is using "constant contact" for email blasts, especially notices about funerals and other time-sensitive information. We have sent out several email blasts over the summer. If you have NOT received one from the office, please call or email the office and make sure that the email address we have on file for you is current. And when you change your address, please keep us up to date.



Scan to like St. John on Facebook  
[facebook.com/StJohnGOCTampa](https://facebook.com/StJohnGOCTampa)

St. John has a Facebook page. Please "like" our page and suggest it to your friends. Announcements are put on their frequently and we will also be posting photos in the near future.

**Parish Assembly**-The Fall Parish Assembly will be held on Sunday, December 1, following Divine Liturgy. An agenda will be mailed in advance to all members in good standing. Primary topics include the 2014 budget as well as nominations for Parish Council and Audit Committee and Election of an Election Committee. Parish Council Elections are Sunday, December 15.

**Office Closed for Thanksgiving**-The Church office will be closed for Thanksgiving on Thursday, November 28 and Friday, November 29.

**JOY/HOPE November service projects**-We are once again sponsoring a Fall Food Drive – please see the enclosed flyer with the list of items needed. There are MANY ways to help this project – you can donate food, gift cards, or your tie in sorting the items. Please help us reach our goal of donating 50 boxes for families in need! This project is not only for JOY/HOPE but to all members of our community!

Please consider join us on Monday, November 25 from 3:30 – 6:30 p.m. at Metropolitan Ministries to work in their Holiday Tent. We will be delivering our items as well as helping to sort food there. We will meet at church at 2:30 to load up our items and drive together! What a great way to start your Thanksgiving week by helping others! An email sign up will be coming soon.

**Community Outreach Update**-Parish Wide Community Service Projects for the Holidays

Thank you to everyone who continues to support our Community Outreach ministry to serve the homeless and those in need. Thank you to the Joy/Hope ministry for collecting toiletries that will support the First Presbyterian Church's clothes closet. In addition to supporting First Presbyterian Church's breakfast for the homeless on the 3rd Saturday of each month, in November and December we will have opportunities to work in the Metropolitan Ministries' Holiday Tent.

On November 25 from 11am-2pm, we will need 15 volunteers to help distribute food to families in need for Thanksgiving in the Metropolitan Ministries Holiday Tent just north of downtown Tampa . Volunteers in the Holiday Tent do a wide variety of tasks, including sorting canned goods, assisting families with registration on the computer, or walking families through the food shopping area (just to name a few). This is a great opportunity for families with children over the age of 8. Last year, approximately 30,000 families were served in the Holiday Tent with food for Thanksgiving. The Joy/Hope "Boxes of Hope" food drive supports the families who come to the Holiday Tent.

Please also save the date to volunteer in the Metropolitan Ministries Holiday Tent for Christmas on December 22nd from 2:00pm- 4:30pm. We will need 50 volunteers on the 22nd (which will be right after church). You won't want to miss this fun church-wide opportunity to give back and get in the Holiday spirit!

If you would like to get more information about these events or to sign up, please contact Betty Katherine Palios at [bettypalios@gmail.com](mailto:bettypalios@gmail.com) or 813-468-1596. You can go to the online sign-up page directly by going to: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4EA8AE2DAB9-community1>

### **PURCHASE LIGHTNING TICKETS AND SUPPORT OUR CHURCH**

One of our parishioners is donating a number of their Tampa Bay Lightning Hockey Tickets to our CHURCH. They are great seats in the lower corner valued at \$122 each (Section 104, Row P, Seats 15-18). They are:

Sat. Nov. 2nd 7:00 - Lightning VS. St. Louis - (Up to 4 tickets) \$75 each  
Thurs. Nov. 7th 7:30 - Lightning VS. Edmonton - (Up to 4 tickets) \$50 each  
Thurs. Nov. 14th 7:30 - Lightning VS. Anaheim - (Up to 4 tickets) \$50 each  
Thurs. Dec. 5th 7:30 - Lightning VS. LA Ottawa - (Up to 4 tickets) \$50 each

+++Checks can be made Payable to St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church. If you are interested in any of these tickets please call the office (876-8830) or stop by. First come, first serve, and if the tickets are not purchased within two days of the game they will be returned to our donor.

**Altar Boy Robes**—Thank you to those who donated toward the fund for the new altar boy robes. We were able to raise \$3,500 and order three new sets of robes (a total of 6 new robes and 18 stoles), which should be here by Christmas. Thank you again for your generosity."

**Get Daily Bible Readings Sent to your Email or Phone**-One of the best ways to start each day is by reading from the Bible. There are prescribed readings for every day of the year in the Orthodox Church. You can go on the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America website at [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org), go into the search box and type in "Receive Daily Readings," follow the prompts and have this valuable resource sent right to your phone or email. Reading the Bible is so important and for those of us who don't make the time or are lazy to reach for the Bible, have the readings sent in a way that is easy to remember. Spend some time this new ecclesiastical year in God's Word, the sacred Scriptures!

**Scholarship Opportunities**- St. John's Greek Orthodox Church is pleased to announce the AHEPA and Daughters of Penelope Scholarship Committee are now accepting applications. The scholarship's purpose is to promote, encourage, and advance education at the college, university and graduate school levels. Please contact Edie Kavouklis at 813.758.0305 or Marina Paras at 813.966.9527 for additional information. The deadline for submission is November 30th, 2013.



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# Festival as a Community Building experience

Hopefully you will receive this issue of the Messenger before our Greek Festival begins November 8-10. We all know that the festival is important for financial reasons—it is the biggest single fundraiser we have in our church community! We all have a lot to do with the raising funds—whether it is selling festival tickets, donating something, or buying a raffle ticket. But the biggest source of revenue from the festival comes from our patrons. So, we don't want to put all of our focus on money because most of the money we cannot control. Here are some other things you can do for the festival that will be a great help:

## THE OBVIOUS—

1. Buy a raffle ticket
2. Give the festival tickets you received to your friends and neighbors and send the church a check to cover the cost.
3. Donate towards the cost of the food expense
4. Eat lots of food and spend lots of money during the festival weekend

## And now for the SHOULD BE OBVIOUS

1. Pray for the success of the festival. For those who are able, attend Divine Liturgy each day of the Festival and offer your prayers.
2. Introduce yourself to parishioners during the festival who you do not know well. This is a great opportunity to get to know other people.

3. Keep all interactions positive—both with co-workers and festival patrons. Give praise, not criticism. If you need to correct someone or disagree, do it with respect and kindness.
4. Watch your language—profanity is not necessary when expressing ourselves. In an area full of Orthodox Christians, and visitors who are watching Orthodox Christians, we should not be using profanity, so keep the language clean.
5. Don't overindulge in alcohol—there is no need to ever overindulge in alcohol. We want our work environment to be alcohol-free. But if you are not working and want to have a drink, make sure it is one or two drinks, not more than that. Again, we are Christians, and people will be looking at what kind of Christians we are.

Let's put the best face forward for our community, both in our church community and for the greater Tampa community. Let's use the festival not only as an opportunity to make money but to model Orthodox Christian behavior to our visitors and to make new friends among ourselves. This is an opportunity to grow and strengthen the community!

They will know we are Greeks by our food and dance!

They will know we are Christians by our love, our character, our behavior!

## Reach up and Bring a Piece of Heaven to Earth

By Charlie Hambos

Having the opportunity to learn about all aspects of Christian Orthodoxy in the classroom is truly a great blessing. However, the things I learn outside of the classroom on my own spiritual journey seem to have more of an impact on my life and how I want to share our faith with others than what I learn in the classroom. Based on personal life events and other related factors I like to take several weeks in a row to explore the topic through the lens of Orthodoxy. I'll think about music in the church. I'll think about things happening in the world and how Orthodoxy can respond.

My latest area of exploration is related to the unseen warfare that Christians fight on a daily basis. Especially if they are aware of the Enemy and all his little minions who poke, prod, tempt and tare down ever part of our being. It is something I have always been interested in. I remember one of the monks on the 60 Minutes special on Mt. Athos standing in a grove speaking about the unseen war that he was fighting. This is in fact what they do there on Mt. Athos. I am talking negative thoughts, sadness, temptations, worry, the little thoughts that say that you will never be successful at what you are trying to do, the little thoughts that are laughing at you when you wake up on Sunday morning to go to church. These are bad thoughts that don't allow us to thrive in our life towards Christ.

There is something we need to do. We need to institute a no-fly zone to these self-defeating thoughts. Wake up every morning and say, "Today, there is a no-fly zone in effect for self defeating thoughts." Then ask God to help you seal off the runway. Many writers on Orthodox asceticism and spirituality look at thoughts as airplanes flying in the air. If we ignore them, there isn't a problem. But, if we pay attention to them we create an airport and they begin to land.

So this is what was happening. For a long, long time I couldn't shake these thoughts. Every day is a new day. I am nowhere near mastering it but I know that I need to continually call upon the name of God to tell Him that I am not in control. Apologize, for thinking I was in control and give control back to Him. WARNING: THIS IS NOT EASY TO DO. Every moment of every day we must

remind ourselves to do this.

Getting back to calling upon the name of God frequently. St. Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, "Always be joyful; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks; this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." We must pray constantly. Now, how can we do this? We hear it all the time. Pray. Pray. Pray. It never seems like we get the tools to pray. Do we pray extemporaneously? Do we pray with certain words? How are we supposed to pray constantly? The Orthodox Christian faith has a tool for us to use. It is called the Jesus Prayer. "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have mercy on me." Sometimes, "a sinner" is added to the end. This is a prayer that we can say all the time. This is a prayer that as we repeat it, we are stretching our hands up to heaven so that we can take a piece back to earth and thus bring a piece of earth back to heaven. St. Paul didn't just tell the Thessalonians to pray constantly. He also told the Christians in Rome, Ephesus and Colossae. Thus, we must listen to the words of St. Paul because he is also talking to the Church of Tampa, the Church of Florida, the Church of the U.S. and the Church of the world.

The Jesus Prayer has been used for a long time in Spiritual warfare. What I have offered here is barely the tip of the iceberg in terms of how powerful this tool is. A quick Google search of "The Jesus Prayer" can attest to that. It is particularly useful to close the runway to the bad thoughts that are flying around. Who wouldn't want to reach up to heaven and bring a little piece back down to earth? Look around, do you see heaven? Do you see the peace of Christ? Reach your hands up to heaven, bring a piece down, set your minds at peace with the Jesus Prayer. Say it slow or say it fast. Take it one day at a time.

As I am in my last year at Holy Cross, my church family at St. John's is always in my thoughts and prayers. Your support for me over these last couple of years has been more than incredible. It has been a rich blessing. Thank you. If you would like to contact me, please e-mail me at [Charlie.hambos@gmail.com](mailto:Charlie.hambos@gmail.com) or my address is 50 Goddard Avenue, Box 016, Brookline, MA 02445.

### Meeting Schedule for November

Sunday	November 3	College Student Lunch/Discussion	After Liturgy	Library
Tuesday	November 5	Young at Heart	11:30 a.m.	Floridian Hotel
Sunday	November 17	AHEPA/Daughters	After Liturgy	Zaharias Room
Sunday	November 17	GOYA	5:00 p.m.	Kourmolis Center

### STEWARDSHIP UPDATE (AS OF OCTOBER 15)

	October 15, 2013	October 15, 2012
Number of Steward Families	289	283
Total Pledged	\$316,868	\$279,291
Total Collected	\$224,849.74	\$252,049

*For those who have pledged this year, thank you for your generous support of St. John Greek Orthodox Church. For those who have not pledged, please send in your pledge form today. Extra forms are available in the church office. Remember, the church relies on your generosity to not only keep its doors open, but to offer its many ministries. We all benefit from the church. We must all do our part in support of our church!*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF ST. JOHN GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

*Looking ahead, stewardship packets for 2014 will be mailed towards the end of November. Stewardship Sunday is December 8.*

### Parish Registry

**Baptism-** Abraham Fessamaie, son of Michael and Feven Fessahaie, was baptized on Friday, October 4. Godparent was Yamanne Negash. Na Sas Zisi!

**Baptism-** Aaron Zegowitz, son of Steven and Eritra Zegowitz, was baptized on Sunday, October 13. Godparent was William Vazquez. Na Sas Zisi!

**Chrismation-** Amy Kafantaris was received into the Orthodox Faith through the sacrament of Chrismation on Sunday, September 22. She took the name Nektaria for her Orthodox name. Debbie Nicklow is her Godmother. Congratulations!

**Wedding-** Michael Cantonis and Rebecca Hallum were married on Thursday, October 3. Sponsor was Spiro Cantonis. Congratulations!

**Condolences** to Victoria Melton and family, on the recent passing of her mother, Stella Miller. May her memory be eternal!

**Condolences** to Martha Kapetan, whose sister in law Karen Jo Munson Kapetan recently passed away in Michigan. May her memory be eternal!



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# MINISTRIES

## HOPE/JOY

**HOPE/JOY Thanksgiving Food Drive—"Boxes of Hope"**—Our Hope/Joy is sponsoring a food collection drive during this Thanksgiving season. Please bring donations on November 3, 10, 17 or 24 so they can be delivered before Thanksgiving. (See enclosed flyer)

## BIBLE STUDY

WITH DR. BILL MANIKAS

Dr. Bill's Bible study is held on Monday nights from 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the administration building at the church. The group will be concluding the Gospel of John which was begun in the spring. Anyone is welcome to attend the Bible Study. Bible study dates for November will be Mondays, November 4, 18 and 25. (No Bible Study on November 11—Festival Recovery Day).

## GOYA

**November Meeting**—The GOYA Meeting for November will be held on Sunday, November 17, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. Dinner, as always, will be provided.

## PHILOPTOCHOS

Philoptochos would like to thank all contributors to the Holy Cross Scholarship Fund. They recently received \$520 of donations from parishioners for this cause.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Thank you to everyone who continues to support our Community Outreach ministry to serve the homeless and those in need. For those who don't know, we serve breakfast at First Presbyterian Church on the third Saturday of each month from 8:00-10:30 a.m. Upcoming dates are Saturday, November 16 and Saturday, December 21. For more information or to sign up to serve one Saturday, please contact, please contact Betty Katherine Palios at [bettypalios@gmail.com](mailto:bettypalios@gmail.com) or 813-468-1596.

## YOUNG ADULTS (YAL)

The Young Adults resumed Bible study/small group on Wednesday August 21st. Bible study will be held every Wednesday at 6:30pm and dinner will be provided. The meeting place will vary each week. Even if you have not been able to make prior meetings, join us if you can! To be added to the email list for this and other YAL events, please contact Mary Ann Konstas at [mapkonstas@gmail.com](mailto:mapkonstas@gmail.com) or 813-215-9862. Most announcements regarding this group go out through email, so please contact Mary Ann to be added to the email list.

## YOUNG AT HEART

The Y.A.H's September 3rd meeting included lunch at a local downtown Tampa restaurant and a visit to the University of Tampa for the "Language of Jewelry" exhibit. Everyone had a wonderful time! We want to extend our warmest thanks to Cindy Xenick for her assistance and guidance which made the event an exceptional experience.

Our October monthly meeting was held in the Zaharis room and included a terrific Pot Luck Feast, the celebration of several October birthdays, and was filled with fun and fellowship. Fr Stavros visited us, offered a prayer, and encouraged our efforts with his supportive words of wisdom. We were also blessed with some wonderful new members and visitors who added to our joyful afternoon. The month of October also includes a special event on The Mystery Train Ride in Ft Myers.

The November monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday the 5th at 11:30 AM in the Floridian Hotel in downtown Tampa. If you would like to enjoy the afternoon lunch event with us, please contact Mary Nenos (813 935-2096) or Nick Antonakakis (813 477-6639) as soon as possible so that we may include you in the reservation count. The meeting agenda will include planning for the February 22nd Apokriatiko Glendi/Dance and November birthday wishes. We also look forward to seeing everyone at our next coffee hour after the Divine Liturgy on November 24.

December's joyful time of year will find our group celebrating together at the Christmas Show in Hudson Florida's Dinner Theatre.

Upcoming events will include a trip to the Monastery in Ocala. Look for the date and details in a future Sunday Bulletin.

Our most gratifying experience this year could not have been accomplished without the support of so many friends of our Y.A.H. With your love and contributions we were able to raise the total funds necessary to restore the stained glass window of St Paraskevi and the commemorative plaque was recently added.

We hope the words on the inscription encourage you as much as you have encouraged each one of us: **"The Spirit Gives True Faith, Light, and Love."**

## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS:

Thank you for the great start to our 2013-2014 Sunday School year. We've had record attendance thanks to all the teachers, parents, and children who are committed to our program.

We would like to welcome Katryna Demetriou to our Sunday School Staff. She will be assisting Betty Palios in our 7th and 8th Grade class.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Students who had PERFECT ATTENDANCE for the month of SEPTEMBER:

Pre-School: Adriana Catrone and Teddy Kafantaris

Kindergarten: Gianni Bavaro, Maria Nicklow, Katerina Sotiropoulos

1st Grade: Calliope Kafantaris, Maria Palios, George Xenick, Panagiotis Zelatis

2nd Grade: Isabella Browne, Zach Chandler, Makis Crassas, Helen Fentress, John Nicholas Krinos, Yiannis Laliotis, Demetris Passalaris, Toulia Trakas, Kaitlin Zelatis

3rd Grade: Maria Bavaro, Peter Chandler, Panagiota Laliotis, Gennaro Scarfogliero, Vasili Sotiropoulos, Yanni Trimikliniotis

4th and 5th Grade: Antonio Bavaro, Angelina Krinos, Andrea Stingulescu, Elizabeth Xenick

6th Grade: Eirene Courialis, Sophia Crassas, Artemis Xenick, Nicholas Yiotis

7th and 8th Grade: Christina Apockotos, Savvas Ferekides, Sophia Krinos, Christos Nenos, Brigham Sibley

High School: Vasili Courialis, Nedi Ferekides, Arianna Krinos, Larissa Krinos

For this school year, we will acknowledge students with perfect attendance on a monthly basis. Every student should be able to achieve this goal at least once. We will keep track of Perfect Attendance for the year and award those students at our Graduation Ceremony.

We are very excited about our Weekly Topics that each classroom will include into their curriculum/program this year. The topics for the month of OCTOBER were THE CREED, THE BIBLE, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, and MAKING MORAL CHOICES. We would like to thank Fr. Stavros for providing the teachers with weekly information about each topic.

We would like to sincerely thank the Mellon-Lynn Family for supporting our SUNDAY SCHOOL STAIN GLASS WINDOW PROJECT. Donations from their mother's, Keriacoula Mellon, one year memorial luncheon went toward this project. May her memory be eternal.

Our children sang beautifully at our first two YOUTH SUNDAY SERVICES. On September 22nd our Sixth Graders made the Prospora for this service and Andrew Mellon-Lynn read the Epistle. Our 4th and 5th Graders made the Prospora for the Oct. 14th service and Nicholas Kavouklis read the Epistle. The congregation of St. John's is truly blessed to have such wonderful children.

The Sunday School collecting travel size toiletries for our own food pantry and to First Presbyterian Church's Homeless Ministry for the Month of September. Thank you so much for making this needed project such a success.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, suggestions, or comments regarding St. John's Sunday School Program. Parents: If you do not receive our weekly e-mails about our Sunday School Program, please contact Vickie Peckham at 406-5626 or e-mail her at rpeckham@tampabay.rr.com.



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# The Ten Commandments of Friendship

1. Speak to people — there is nothing as nice as a cheerful word of greeting.
2. Smile at people — it takes seventy-two muscles to frown and only fourteen to smile!
3. Call anyone by their name — the sweetest music to anyone's ear is the sound of their own name.
4. Be friendly and helpful — if you would have friends, be friendly.
5. Be cordial — speak and act as if everything you do is a real pleasure.
6. Be genuinely interested in people — you can like everyone if you try.
7. Be generous with praise — cautious with criticism.
8. Be considerate of the feelings of others — it will be appreciated.
9. Be thoughtful of the options of others.
10. Be alert to give service — what counts most in life is what we do for others!

## Recognition of a Gift received via a trust

A kind person who wishes to remain anonymous passed away recently. She was not a member of our parish but a member at one of the area churches who had visited our church in the past. She left a lot of her estate to a combination of several churches, including ours, as well as our Seminary. We were both surprised and blessed that our church received this gift of \$23,000. That's the good news. The bad news—thankfully we received that money because we didn't have enough money to pay our own bills that month. Every contribution to the church counts not only in the eyes of the church, but the eyes of God. Let us work hard to learn the value of generosity.

## Leave the Church in Your Will

Part of our life's legacy is the inheritance we leave our children. By leaving an inheritance, a part of us lives on through them. When preparing your will, you should consider leaving money to our church—this is the church of your children and part of their future can be positively impacted by leaving some of your inheritance to the church. The ability of the church to spread the Word of God is facilitated by everyone's stewardship. By leaving a portion of your inheritance to the church in your will, you remain a steward in perpetuity, but more importantly, you help cement a solid financial future for the church for your children and your grandchildren. If you are interested in leaving the church in your will, please contact Russell Sibley (church member) at [rsibleylaw@gmail.com](mailto:rsibleylaw@gmail.com). Thank you for your consideration.

**Friends of St. John**—Some of you who receive The Messenger do not live in the Tampa Bay area or are members of other Greek Orthodox parishes. We would like to ask for your support of our parish as a "Friend of St. John". Your contribution as a "Friend" will help offset the cost of mailing The Messenger, among other things. Being a "friend" does not make one a steward of St. John or afford membership rights and responsibilities, but gives one who is a member elsewhere, an opportunity to make a gesture of financial support to our parish. If you are interested in being a "Friend of St. John", please fill out and return the form below. Thank you for your consideration of our parish.

---

### FRIENDS OF ST. JOHN

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to be a "Friend of St. John". I am enclosing a contribution in the amount of:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$50      \_\_\_\_\_ \$100      \_\_\_\_\_ \$200      \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Please mail this form and check to: St. John Greek Orthodox Church 2418 Swann Avenue, Tampa, FL 33609



**The Following Several Small Articles are from our recent Pre-Teen Retreat on Making Godly Choices—while geared specifically towards pre-teens, this information is useful to people of all ages.**

## **Does Teaching Modesty Harm My Daughter's Body Image?**

### **5 Tips To Keep Your Modest Mothering Healthy**

Cultural backlash against the concept of modesty has never been greater! Let me tell you how you can use it for good in your daughter!

1.) Start early to send a clear message about the clothing, not her body. One reason I recommend teaching modesty to 8-12 year olds is so that we begin before your daughter's body develops. This keeps the message clear: some clothes are bad. Her body is not. It is very, very, very good and a wonderful masterpiece created by God! Spend a lot of time in her 8-12 years helping her learn that her body is beautiful, and prepare her to embrace the changes that will come!

2.) Keep the conversation focused on clothes, not her body and use questions to empower her. Some of the harmful messages focus on words like "butt", "boobs" and "belly." These aren't something to be ashamed of, and are a part of the masterpiece God has woven together in your daughter. Instead focus your conversation about the clothing. Think: "shirts," "pants", and "hemlines," not body parts.

3.) Use questions to empower and train your daughter to make good decisions. Remember, she's only going to live this one out if you've internalized the decision making process. If you just make rules and force her to conform, you have failed to train her hear. Let me see if I can demonstrate how you use tip number 2 and number 3 together. . . "That shirt seems like it's not quite right. What do you think might be making it look like it doesn't fit?"

"Are those pants giving you enough room to move around comfortably or are they restricting you because they're too small?"

4.) Be creative, not legalistic. Throw out the hard and fast rules. "One piece only swim suits." "Two inches above the knee." "Shorts must go to the tip of your fingertips." These rules don't work! First of all, every girl's body is different. Second, If you've been to one of my live events, you know we teach the Truth or Bare Fashion Tests. These are silly tests that let a girl go through the process of deciding for herself if her outfit is modest. One example of our test is the "Raise & Praise." We invite you to try it now. Raise your hands up in the air as if you're praising God during a really good worship time. Now, check yourself to see if your belly is exposed. If it is, maybe you need a shirt that fits a little better!

5.) Tell her that these are family preferences, not God's rules. Modesty is not really addressed much in the Bible. And where it is, clothing is a very small part of it. God focuses the modesty conversation on our hearts, not our bodies or our clothing. Be sure to tell your daughter that your conversation about modesty is based on your family preferences with a heart to honor God, but don't confuse her by telling her that your modesty guidelines (or mine) are God's rules. They're not. And one day, she'll figure that out and wonder if his rules matter, too.

At the end of the day, a healthy modesty message is really about protecting your daughter's heart and exposing it fully to the world. Sometimes clothing gets in the way when we focus on it, and not what matters!

## **Learning More About our Faith -**

### **Saying our Names when we receive Communion**

**(Father Stavros provides outlines to the Sunday school classes each week as an aid to their lessons. Every month, some of his comments will appear in the Messenger under "Learning More About our Faith" so that not only we have an idea what our children are learning, but we can learn a little more ourselves.)**

I have noticed that many people do not say their names when they receive Holy Communion. It is a Tradition that you say your name when you receive Holy Communion (I say MY OWN NAME when I receive Communion) as a way of presenting ourselves to God with the name with which we were baptized. We all receive a name at baptism/chrisamation, and that is the name with which we present ourselves at all of the sacraments. By saying our name at Holy Communion, we are presenting ourselves to God as voluntary participants in His Holy Mysteries. There is a second and more practical reason--the priest may not know our name. Or he might even forget our name. How is that possible that the priest can forget our names? I'll give you a concrete example. Years ago, we had a parishioner who was very sick and was going out of town frequently for cancer treatments in Houston because that was the only place that could treat his cancer. He could never make it to the end of the liturgy because his declining health, so he would receive Communion, and would give me literally a two second update--i.e. I'm going to Houston this week, or treatments are going well, etc. One Sunday he came to Communion, received and said to me, "I need

to see you this week, I'm going to die before next Sunday." Of course I was in shock. If the next person in line had been my wife, I probably wouldn't have remembered her name, because I was shocked by what I had just heard. And he did die the following Saturday. Anyway, you never know what will be on the priest's mind when he is giving Communion. Because there are so many people who receive (it has been taking me 20-25 minutes to distribute Communion, hint, hint, this is why we need a second priest, one of many reasons), I have not been stopping people to ask their names, I just keep going without saying a name, which deprives people of a personal encounter with Christ, by name. So please say your name when you come and encourage your children and remind them to say their names when they go to receive Holy Communion.

# How to Make Godly Decisions

By Dr. Dale A. Robbins

God's Word is the Christian's guide for making godly, successful choices in life. The Bible says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalms 119:105). Before you make decisions, compare your desires to what the scriptures say, and ask yourself the following questions:

## 1. Would you be able to ask God to bless it?

Would your decision be something that you can take before God with a good conscience and ask Him to bless? Or is it something that you know the Lord would not be enthused about? "The blessing of the LORD makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it" (Proverbs 10:22).

## 2. Could you thank Him for it?

Would your decision be something that you can openly express gratefulness and thankfulness to God? Or would it be something which would seem inappropriate to thank Him for? "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. 3:17).

## 3. Would it be to God's Glory?

Would your decision be something that can bring Glory and honor to the Lord? Ask yourself how the Lord would be lifted up or blessed by your plans. "...whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

## 4. Would it be of the world?

Would your decision be an indulgence upon worldly, carnal appetites or lusts? "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

## 5. Would it be a stumbling block to others?

How would your decision affect the lives of your brethren in Christ? Even if you don't feel it's wrong, could it offend or harm the sensitive faith of those who don't share your convictions? "...beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak" (1 Cor. 8:9).

## 6. Would it be a weight or hindrance?

Would your decision be something that would drag down your Christian life or influence you toward disobedience? "...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

## 7. Would it please God or man?

Whom do you hope to please by your decision? Will it bring pleasure to God, or will it appease self or man? "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men" (Col. 3:23).

## 8. How would the Devil react?

Would your decision or actions be considered a victory or a defeat by the Devil's forces? Would Hell celebrate your choice as a fulfillment of Satan's desires, or would the enemy be angry and disturbed? "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world" (1 Peter 5:8-9).

## 9. What would the consequences be?

What kind of long-term ramifications would you have to face for your decision? Remember, God will forgive sin and poor judgment, but you may

have to live with the results of your decision for the rest of your life. "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

## 10. Would it edify you?

Would your decision or actions bring you closer to God or pull you farther away? Will it edify (build you up) in the Lord, or will it weaken your confidence of the Lord's strength in your life? "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify" (1 Cor. 10:23).

## 11. Would it serve the right master?

Will your decision require you to yield to the demands of someone or something other than Christ? Will it cause you to compromise your submission and obedience to Jesus? "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).

## 12. Would His indwelling presence agree with it?

Would your decision bring peace to your inner man, or would it create discomfort or distress? Is your choice directed by the promptings and leading of the Holy Spirit, or by the appetites of the flesh? "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth..." (John 16:13). "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

## 13. Would you want to be doing this when Jesus Returns?

Would you want to be doing this when Christ comes again? If Jesus would appear to inspect your decision or actions, would you be embarrassed or delighted? Would His presence make you comfortable or insecure? "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matt. 24:44).

## 14. Would it promote love?

Would your decision or actions express love and harmony, or would it reflect retribution, jealousy or injury to your neighbor? "Owe no one anything except to love one another... Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13:8, 10).

## 15. Have you sought the Lord about it?

The Lord promises to give leadership and direction to our life. Consult Him in prayer. Remember, God will never speak something to our heart that contradicts his written Word. "In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths" (Prov. 3:6). "There are many plans in a man's heart, Nevertheless the Lord's counsel; that will stand" (Prov. 19:21).

## 16. Have you sought Godly counsel or advice?

Ask the advice of those who live Godly lives and have a track record of experience and wise decision making. Avoid the counsel of those whose Christian life is questionable or who have experience of failure in making sound decisions. "Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Prov. 11:14). "Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly..." (Psa. 1:1).

# Parish Council Elections

As the month of November rolls around, it will be time to start thinking about Parish Council Elections. On December 1, we will hold our fall Parish Assembly and open up nominations for the Parish Council. This year, there are five (5) positions coming up for election for a two-year term. According to the Parish By-laws, nominations for the Parish Council will be closed following the Parish Assembly Meeting on Sunday, December 1. If you wish to be nominated for the Parish Council, please plan to attend the meeting on Sunday, December 1 and have someone nominate you, or send a letter to Fr. Stavros by Wednesday, November 27 (office closed on November 28-29 for Thanksgiving) stating your wish to be nominated for the Parish Council and he will read it at the meeting and have someone nominate you. Parish Council Elections will be held on Sunday, December 15, following Divine Liturgy. A mailing to all eligible voters will occur following the close of the nominations period which will have the names of the candidates, a picture of each candidate and a statement by each candidate.

In preparation for nominations and elections, please keep in mind the following:

1) Regarding eligibility to be a candidate for the Parish Council: Uniform Parish Regulations (UPR) Article 18, Section 1:

## PARISHIONERS

Section 1: Every person who is baptized and chrismated according to the rites of the Orthodox Church is a parishioner. The religious, moral and social duties of a parishioner are to apply the tenets of the Orthodox Faith to his/her life and to: adhere to and live according to the tenets of the Orthodox faith; faithfully attend the Divine Liturgy and other worship services; participate regularly in the holy sacraments; respect all ecclesiastical authority and all governing bodies of the Church; be obedient in matters of the Faith, practice and ecclesiastical order; contribute towards the progress of the Church's sacred mission; and be an effective witness and example of the Orthodox Faith and Traditions to all people.

A parishioner in good standing practices all the religious and moral duties as described in this Section 1. At a minimum, a parishioner in good standing must: be eighteen years of age or over; be current in his or her stewardship and other financial obligations to the Parish, abide by all the regulations herein stated and the Parish Bylaws; and cooperate in every way towards the welfare and well being of the Parish. (Stewardship is recommended to be ten percent (10%) of one's annual income as stated in Holy Scripture to help meet the financial obligations of the Parish, the Metropolis and the Archdiocese.)

2) Regarding Election of Parish Council: UPR Article 25, Section Two  
Section 2: A candidate for the Parish Council must be a parishioner in good standing of the Parish for at least one (1) year immediately preceding the date of the election and must live his or her life in accordance with the Faith and canons of the Church. The Priest determines whether the Parishioners are in canonical and financial good standing as specified in Article 18, Sections 1 through 3.

Section 3: Candidates for election to the Parish Council shall be nominated in accordance with the provisions of the Parish Bylaws.

A. All candidates shall attend a seminar conducted by the Priest prior to the election at which the Priest shall discuss and explain to the candidates the Uniform Parish Regulations, and the significance of the affirmation of office.

B. At the discretion of the respective Hierarchy, such seminar may be held locally or regionally, provided that candidates are given appropriate advance notice and more than one reasonable opportunity to attend the seminar in a location within close proximity to the applicable Parish..

*Note from Fr. James Rousakis, Vicar of Western Florida--Once again the Florida Western conference will hold the annual Parish Council candidate training session on Saturday, November 23, 2013, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Clearwater, FL, and will be held in the Gym. New candidates (those who have not served on the Parish Council) are mandated to attend and will receive the Metropolis certificate, signed by the Vicar that they attended. This certificate will be given to the parish priest to be filled with the Metropolis for ratification of elections.*

C. In the event that an otherwise eligible candidate(s) cannot attend the scheduled seminar(s) for justifiable cause, the Priest shall meet privately with such individual(s) to provide the seminar.

D. At the conclusion of the seminar all candidates must sign a statement acknowledging that they understand the Regulations and will abide by them and the affirmation of office. If a candidate for the Parish Council does not attend a seminar and sign the statement, his/her name shall be deleted from the list of candidates.

~ AS WE HAVE DONE IN YEAR'S PAST, ALL PARISH COUNCIL CANDIDATES, regardless of whether they have served before or not, will be required to meet with Father Stavros prior to December 4, for a one hour meeting at the office at a time of their choosing. Any candidate who does not attend this one-hour appointment will be taken off of the ballot. There will be no exceptions. The reason for this is to establish a good working relationship between priest and potential parish council member, and to understand what is involved in being a Parish Council member at St. John. This meeting with Fr. Stavros will address the particular needs and expectations of a Parish Council member at St. John.

~Each candidate is asked to write a half a page on why they want to run for the Parish Council and to supply a recent photograph that is able to be photocopied well. The statement and photo need to be to the church office no later than Wednesday, December 4.

Thank you for your interest in being a Parish Council candidate. If you have any questions on any of the above, please feel free to contact me at any time.  
+FR. STAVROS

## *Hope/Joy November Project*

### *Fall Food drive for families in need*

Won't you join us in providing food this holiday season to families in need? Please see the list below of items that are needed to fill a complete box for a family. This year, we will be providing food for our own St. John food pantry as well as for the Tampa Bay community. Our goal this year is to fill 50!

How can you help?? You may choose to participate in any number of ways:

- *Take an empty box home with you the next few weeks and bring it back on Sunday November 24 filled with all of the items on the list.*
- *Pick up any amount of items over the next few weeks and bring them on Sunday November 24 and we will sort them and fill the boxes for you.*
- *Donate a grocery store gift card in the amount of \$15 for a family to purchase a turkey or ham.*
- *Donate any amount of cash you would like and we will purchase the gift card or any other items needed to completely fill our boxes.*
- *Stay on Sunday, November 24 and help fill the boxes – every age is welcome – even the smallest child can help us sort cans!*
- *Please involve your children. They can help you check off the list, sort or count items, even make a Happy Thanksgiving card.*
- *Join us on Monday November 25 to deliver the food we collect and work a shift at Metropolitan Ministries. See sign up for more information.*

**Any size donation is acceptable – no amount is too small.** Our goal this year is to fill **50 boxes**. Please help us reach that goal!

Items will be accepted any time during the month of November through Sunday November 24. Items will be delivered on Monday, November 25.

**Collect all of the items below for a full Box of Hope: (Bold items are needed most)**

- |                                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>1 turkey or gift certificate</b>  | 1 bag or box of stuffing mix      |
| <b>1 box of cereal (hot or cold)</b> | 1 can or box of potatoes          |
| <b>1 can of fruit</b>                | 3 cans of black beans             |
| 1 loaf of fresh bread                | 2 cans of cranberry sauce         |
| 4 cans of vegetables                 | 1 can or packet of gravy          |
| 2 cans of yams                       | 1 box of dessert mix              |
| 1 bag or box of dried beans          | 1 package of cookies or pastries  |
| 1 bag of rice                        | 1 family box of Jell-O or pudding |

*“Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink,” Matthew 25: 34-35*





Please join us for the Eighth Annual Advent Retreat

**The Good News:  
Why the Bible is Important and How to Read It**

*Do you feel like your spiritual life suffers during the hectic holiday season?*

***Come join us in reviving your spirit as a community just in time for Christmas!***

**Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.**  
St. John Greek Orthodox Church  
2418 W. Swann Avenue~Tampa, FL~33609-4712  
813-876-8830  
Retreat Leader: Father Stavros Akrotirianakis

- 9:00 a.m.     *The Divine Liturgy – come into the church for service, registration after*
- 10:00 a.m.    *Registration/Refreshments*
- 10:30 a.m.    *Session One   Where Did the Bible Come From?*
- 11:45 a.m.    *Session Two   Why is the Bible Important?*
- 12:45 p.m.    *Lunch*
- 1:30 p.m.     *Session Three How We should read the Bible, and how it is read in Church*  
*There will also be ample time throughout the day to ask questions about pertaining to the Bible as well as other general questions about our faith and our church.*
- 2:30 p.m.     *Reading of the Christmas Gospels and Closing Prayer*

**Cost is \$15 per person. Lunch will be provided.**

**Adults only please.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Please return this registration form by mail or take it to the Church Office by  
**December 2!** We look forward to seeing you there!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be attending with other family members? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please list:

\_\_\_\_\_



# List of Pledged Stewards for 2013— as of October 15, 2013

List of Pledged Stewards 2013— as of October 15, 2013

Akrotirianakis, Fr. Stavros & Lisa  
 Abramis, John & Nicky  
 Alexander, John & Anetta  
 Alikakos, Maria  
 Alithinos, Maria & Kathy  
 Alsina, Angel & Lisa  
 Ambrozy, Edward & Philip  
 Anagnost, Deno  
 Andreadakis, Nicholas & Doris  
 Andros, George & Maria  
 Antonakakis, Nickolas & Judith  
 Argyros, Harry & Linda  
 Armstrong, James & Myra  
 Assimiadis, Paul  
 Axelrod, Christine  
 Badrane, Denise  
 Bakirdgi, Joan  
 Balasis, Matthew & Suzy  
 Bedran, Rita  
 Betinis, Giovanna  
 Blackburn, Robert & Kathryn  
 Blakenbaker, James & Michelle  
 Blankenship, Wayne, Athanasia, & Alexander  
 Borgeas, Heidi & Ken Beach  
 Bouglas, Constantine & Angela  
 Bradshaw, Pelagia & Harold  
 Brown, Chrysanthi  
 Bush, Dorothy  
 Calamunci, Alex  
 Calamunci, Catherine  
 Calamunci, Chris & Crystal  
 Cantonis, George & Maria  
 Carter, John & Georgia  
 Christine Katsekis  
 Cauthorn, Ken & Helen  
 Chagaris, George & Kalliope  
 Chakonas, Ethel Athena  
 Charalabakis, Terry  
 Cherpelis, Basil & Alyssa Zwarych  
 Choundas, Marina & Greg  
 Thachter  
 Choundas, Peter  
 Christodoulou, Louis & Maryann  
 Christou, Tammy  
 Circello, Vincent & Tamera  
 Colado, David & Alexandria  
 Colado, Mary & Hector  
 Conner, Michael & Artemis  
 Cotterman, Sandy  
 Courialis, Telly & Toula

Crassas, Alkis & Aime  
 Cunavelis, Frances  
 Cunavelis, John  
 Dalaklis, Joanne  
 DeJesus, Roy & Anna Tataris  
 De Maio, Alexandra  
 Demas, Anna  
 Demas, John  
 Diamantakes, Georgia  
 Diamantides, Melpo  
 Dimas, Gregory & Evelyn Patsavos  
 Diniaco, Peter & Rebecca  
 Doucas, Deborah  
 Drossos, Patricia  
 Edquid Marc & Maraquet  
 Eggleston, Charles & Catherine  
 Evdemon, Stan & Maryellen  
 Fallieras, George N.  
 Fallieras, Lauren  
 Fallieras, Nicholas & Susan.  
 Farkas, John  
 Fellios, George  
 Fentress, Andrew Kevin & Maria K.  
 Ferarolis, Alexandra  
 Ferarolis, Stamatis & Cheryl  
 Ferekides, Christos & Debbie  
 Forde, Dwight & Ewana  
 Fotopoulos, Anthony & Carole  
 Frazier, Chris  
 Frinmenko, Mary  
 Gallos, Peter & Vasiliki  
 Gallos, Spiros  
 Garcia, Mark & Anastasia  
 Garcia, Richard & Stamie  
 Garos, Victoria  
 Georgas, Thomas & Janet  
 Georgiou, Aristos & JoAnna  
 Georgiou, Speros & Eleanor  
 Gerecke, Edward & Terri  
 Gombos, Jack & Harriet  
 Gorter, Maria  
 Halikoytakis, Alex  
 Halikoytakis, Michael  
 Halkias, Evangeline  
 Halkias, George & Elaine  
 Hambos, George & Donna  
 Hanhan, Amin & Gloria  
 Hartsfield, Christine  
 Hartung, Mark & JoAnn  
 Harvie, Andrew & Krista  
 Harvie, Evan  
 Henderson, Nickollet & Kenneth  
 Higdon, Skip  
 Hoppenstand, Anna  
 Horack, Scott  
 Horrigan, Paulette  
 Iraklianos, Michael  
 Irwin, Jon & Pam  
 Jacobsen, Anne  
 James, Arthur  
 Jennewein, Georgia

Johnson, Aphroditi  
 Joseffy, Justin & Valerie House-  
 man  
 Kabougeris, Pete & Voula  
 Kaburis, George & Kathy  
 Kafantaris, Michael & Amy  
 Kalojiannis, Nic & Alicia  
 Kane, Lance & Georgia  
 Kantzios, Ippkratis  
 Kapetan, Martha  
 Karagiannakis, Keith & Katerina  
 Karaku, Ellen  
 Karas, Anthony & Sophie  
 Maria Karounos  
 Karpelenia, Loretta & Daniel  
 Katsadourous, Konstantin & Katherine  
 Katsamakias, Perry  
 Katsifis, John & Margaret  
 Katzaras, George & Elina  
 Katzaras, Nick & Helen  
 Katzaras, Stefan & Kara  
 Kavakos, Estelle  
 Kavouklis, Chris & Debbie  
 Kavouklis, Laz & Maria  
 Kavouklis, Nicholas & Edie  
 Kladakias, Katherine  
 Kladis, George  
 Kladis Theodore  
 Koch John & Cathie  
 Kokkas, John  
 Komninos, Tom & Gina  
 Konstas, Demetrios & Maryann  
 Korakis, Alexander  
 Korakis, Alexandros & Louise  
 Korakis, Tina  
 Kostaris, Irene  
 Koudouna, Dora  
 Kouimanis, Despina & Frank  
 Bartos  
 Krinos, John  
 Krinos, Dimitri & Melissa  
 Kwasny, Foti & Fatin  
 Kyrusm Chris & Katherine  
 L'Hommedieu, Timothy & Tia  
 Laliotis, Stavros & Adriana  
 Laskey, Fred & Coleen  
 Lavdas, Steve  
 Lenardos, Steve & Melissa  
 Leontsinis, Nicole  
 Letobarone, Domenic & Melanie  
 Liakos, James  
 Liakos, Nicholas  
 Lobue, David & Tracy  
 Luter, Thomas  
 Maas, Mary  
 MacLaury, Kathryn  
 Madill, Chad  
 Maltezos, Stephen  
 Manikas, Bill & Nancy  
 Manikis, Clara & Nicholas

Martin, Tyson & Marissa  
 Matassini, Nicholas & Christina  
 McKinnon, Joseph & Christina  
 Mellon, Andria, Keith Lynn & Andrew  
 Melton, Gregory & Victoria  
 Metcalf, Maria  
 Milligan, David & Mary  
 Milonas, Lula  
 Milonas, Taso & Thay  
 Mitchell, John & Edith  
 Mitseas, George & Catherine  
 Moran, Andy & Stefanie  
 Morgan, Theodora & Christopher  
 Mourer, Brett & Ana  
 Moutsatsos, Spero  
 Mueller, William Jeffrey  
 Myer, Ronald & Magdalini  
 Nakis, Betty Ann & Emmanuel  
 Nenos, Byron & Jeanie  
 Nenos, Mary  
 Nenos, Peter  
 Neyland, Bill & Marilyn  
 Nicklow, Thomas & Demetra  
 Nicolaou, Chris & Dee  
 Nolen, Pamela  
 Nolas, George & Cheryl  
 Norcross, Diane  
 Olsen, Scott & Elpida  
 O'Malley, Rachel & Zaharis,  
 Constantine  
 Palios, Artie  
 Palios, Betty Katherine  
 Palios, George & Julie  
 Palios, Michael & Bessie  
 Paloumpis, Athanasios & Jenny  
 Panos, Euripides & Denise  
 Papadakis, Alec & Lauren  
 Papadeas, Venetia  
 Papadopoulos, John  
 Papakosta, Peter & Vasiliki  
 Papas, George  
 Pappas, Paul & Georgia  
 Passalaris, Isidoros  
 Passavanti, Anthony & Brittany  
 Osgood  
 Passavanti, Robert & Debbra  
 Patellis, Theophilos  
 Patracoiau, Florin & Marenca  
 Pavlopulos, George  
 Payne, Georgia  
 Peckham, Richard & Victoria  
 Perdicas, Ernest & Nancy  
 Piperaki, Eleni & Tom Sheridan  
 Plakas, Theodore & Kyriakoula  
 Quinn, Mary Elisabeth  
 Quinn, Toula  
 Rindone, Ryan & Megan  
 Rogers, Aris  
 Rogers II, Aris  
 Rose, Mary

Roussos, Archie & Eleftheria  
 Royack, Florian & Jeanie  
 Saavedra, John  
 Sakellaris, Leo & Anne  
 Sakkis, John & Katherine  
 Scarfogliero, Alexis & Gennaro  
 Scharbach, Michael  
 Scourtes, Christine  
 Serbanos, Michael & Patricia  
 Sermier, Eustace & Bennette  
 Shanahan, Kenneth & Katrina  
 Shearer, John & Fifka  
 Shrader, Maria  
 Sibley, Russell & Despina  
 Skourellos, Dante & Lindsey  
 Skourellos, Michael & Shirley  
 Skourellos, Petros  
 Slater, Sam & Joanna  
 Sorolis, Eftihia  
 Sorolis, Sophia  
 Sotiropoulos, Paul  
 Sotiropoulos, Peggy  
 Sotiropoulos, Vasilios & Jenny  
 Spanos, Peter  
 Spencer, Wayne & Pauline  
 Stavropoulos, Jane  
 Stavrou, George & Katina  
 Stephanides, Christos  
 Stephanides, Marios & Ourania  
 Theophanous, Peter  
 Tingiris, Mary  
 Tisdale, Gregory  
 Trakas, Alysia  
 Trakas, Andrew & Adrienne  
 Trakas, Pete & Donna  
 Trimis, Michael & Diane  
 Tsibris, John  
 Valaes, James & Lynn  
 Vasilopoulos, Kostadinos & Toula  
 Voykin, David  
 Voykin, Mary  
 Wade, Deborah  
 Wagner, Christine  
 Ward, Gary & Sandra  
 Whallen, Donald  
 Worley, Chistene  
 Xenick, Emanuel & Maria  
 Xenick, George & Cindy  
 Xeroteris, Evangeline  
 Yohai, Eleni  
 Yotis, Victor  
 Yotis, William & Eleonora  
 Zabetakis, Maria  
 Zeban, Peter  
 Zoumberos, Stavros & Kathy

**\*\*If your name doesn't appear on this list and you have filled out a pledge form for 2013, please contact the office**



# November 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. College Student Lunch/Discussion	4 Dr. Bill's Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	5 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Young at Heart 11:30 a.m. Bible Study East Tampa 6:30 pm Bible Study South Tampa 6:30 pm Bible Study North Tampa 6:30pm	6 Men's Bible Study 7:00 a.m. Festival Set Up Young Adults 6:30 p.m. Fast Day	7 Festival Set Up Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.	8 Feast of the Archangels Orthros 8:00 a.m. Liturgy 9:00 a.m. Greek Festival 11 a.m.-midnight Fast Day	9 St. Nectarios Orthros 8:00 a.m. Liturgy 9:00 a.m. Greek Festival 11 a.m.-midnight
10 Orthros 7:45 a.m. Liturgy 9:00 a.m. Greek Festival	11 Bible Study South Tampa 6:30 pm Bible Study East Tampa 6:30 p.m. Bible Study North Tampa 6:30pm	12 Bible Study South Tampa 6:30 pm Bible Study East Tampa 6:30 p.m. Bible Study North Tampa 6:30pm	13 Men's Bible Study 7:00 a.m. St. John Chrysostom Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. YAL 6:30 p.m. Fast Day	14 Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.	15 Beginning of the Christmas Fast Fast Day	16 Community Outreach Fast Day
17 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. GOYA 5:00 p.m. Fast Day	18 Dr. Bill's Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Fast Day	19 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Bible Study South Tampa 6:30 pm Bible Study East Tampa 6:30 pm Bible Study North Tampa 6:30pm Fast Day	20 Men's Bible Study 7:00 a.m. Fast Day	21 Entrance of Virgin Mary-Eisodia Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m. Fast Day	22 Fast Day	23 Orthros 8:00 a.m. Liturgy 9:00 a.m. Adult Advent Retreat 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Fast Day
24 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Fast Day	25 St. Katherine Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Metropolitan Ministreries Holiday Tent Event 11-2 Dr. Bill's Bible Study 6:30 pm Fast Day	26 Fast Day	27 Thanksgiving Liturgy Orthros 5:00 p.m. Liturgy 6:00 p.m. Fast Day	28 Thanksgiving Office Closed	29 Office Closed Fast Day	30 St. Andrew Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Oli Mazi Dance in Tarpon Springs Fast Day

# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

2418 W. Swann Avenue

Tampa, FL 33609-4712

**Office Phone:** (813)876-8830

**Fax** (813) 443-4899

stjohngoctampa@gmail.com

www.greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com

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## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

### *Timetable of Services*

**Sundays:** Orthros 8:30 a.m.      Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.  
**Weekdays:** Orthros 9:00 a.m.      Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

**Parish Priest:** Rev.Fr.Stavros Akrotirianakis

813-876-8830 (office) 394-1038 (cell)

frstav@gmail.com

**Parish Council:**

Katherine Sakkis, President 813-309-1073

Bill Manikas V. President 813-716-8185

Diane Trimis, Secretary 813-968-9038

Skip Higdon, Treasurer 813-831-9021

Nick Antonakakis 813-477-6639

Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668

Carole Fotopoulos 813-982-0947

Byron Nenos 813-789-0729

Dante Skourellos 813-765-9534

Despina Sibley 813-251-5384

David Voykin 727-415-5603

**Stewardship Chairperson:**

Bill Manikas 813-716-8185

.....

**Office Staff:**

Christine Bostrom, Operations Coordinator 813-876-8830

Debbie Bowe-Administrative Assistant 813-876-8830

**Office Fax:** 813-443-4899

**•Choir:** Artie Palios, Director 813-831-1294

Jim Leone, Organist 813-254-7844

**•Chanter:** Nick Andreadakis 813-876-8830

**•Sunday Sch.:** Victoria Peckham 813-406-5626

Maria Xenick 813-839-9897

**•Finance Committee:** Mike Xenick 813-340-8737

**•Adult Greek School:** Magda Myer 813-909-2327

**•AHEPA:** Mike Trimis 813-968-9038

**•Community Outreach:** Chairperson

Betty Katherine Palios 813-215-9862

**•Daughters:** Diane Trimis 813-220-3389

**•Food Pantry:** Anetta Alexander 863-224-3001

**•GOYA Adv.** Elaine Halkias 813-968-9129

Byron Nenos 813-789-0729

**•JOY/HOPE:** Maria Xenick 813-839-9897

**•Young Adults (YAL)** Mary Ann Konstas 813-215-9862

**•Philoptochos:** JoAnn Hartung, Pres. 727-432-0228

**•Oratorical Festival Chairperson**

Peggy Bradshaw: 727-244-1374

**•Young at Heart:** Nick Antonakakis 813-477-6639

Mary Nenos 813-935-2096

**•Jr Olympics:** Byron Nenos 813-789-0729

**•Ushers:** Tom Georgas 813-985-0236

**•Altar Angels:**

Engie Halkias, Viorica Kirby &

Sia Blankenship.

813-932-5859

**•Bookstore:** Jon & Pamela Irwin

813-679-4113

**•H XAPA ΜΑΣ Dance Group:**

Alex De Maio &

Marina Choundas

813-340-9668

813-877-6136

**•Glendi Dancers:**Jenna Mingleddorff

813-610-7365

**•Panigyri Dancers:** Vanessa Aviles

813-221-2194

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is a parish under the spiritual and ecclesiastical oversight of His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of the Metropolis of Atlanta, of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

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The *Messenger* of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is published on a monthly basis. Publication is the first of each month. Deadline for notices and announcements for the Messenger is the 15th of each month. You may send announcements to the church office or through **email to: stjohngoctampa@gmail.com**

Website: [www.greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com](http://www.greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com)

“May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father and the Communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.” From the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom