

THE MESSENGER

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

*"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*

October 2017

VISION:

Love God, Love your neighbor and spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ as an Orthodox Christian community.

MISSION:

The mission of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is to welcome and serve people with love, truth, joy and peace, and to create an environment that encourages all to seek salvation through Orthodox Christianity.

CORE VALUES:

Love, Worship, Community, Learning, Service

Father Stavros' Message Thoughts in the Aftermath of Hurricane Irma

The big news story for September, if not for all of 2017, in our community was Hurricane Irma. As I write this message one week after she roared through town, it seems almost surreal that this really happened. We've seen many news reports about the extensive damage the hurricane brought to other parts of our state and the Southeast—thoughts and prayers are with people in Marco Island, Naples, Miami, Jacksonville, Charleston, Atlanta, and many in the Tampa Bay area who suffered major losses to property. Our continued thoughts and prayers are with people in Texas and Louisiana as they recover from Hurricane Harvey. It was pretty surreal that two weeks after offering our prayers for Hurricane Harvey, we were saying our prayers for our own town and our own homes. Obviously, the first emotion I feel writing this message is gratitude to God for protecting our home, our church, and our city from catastrophic loss.

I have always believed that there are lessons to be learned in just about anything that happens in life. The hurricane gave all of us pause to think about things and I want to share some of the things I have thought about in the wake of Hurricane Irma.

Stuff is just "stuff"—This was probably the biggest thing I thought of. Our family decided we'd feel safer to leave our home and go to a hotel. We figured a bigger building was more likely to weather the storm better. And let's be honest—who wasn't a little concerned when the news showed a category four hurricane heading right for us. Yes, it missed us, yes, it wasn't a category four. We know that now. We didn't know that before.

Before leaving our house, we put lots of things away. We didn't know what shape our house would be in when we returned. There was a possibility it could have been damaged. If that were not a possibility, we wouldn't have left at all. So, we left with some sense of concern. We packed food and water, clothes and toiletries, and a few belongings into one of our cars. What I found interesting was what we chose to take and what we chose to leave behind. We didn't take any pictures with us—there are plenty of family pictures that others have. Pictures were not deemed irreplaceable items. Same thing with clothes, dishes, and furniture. All can be replaced. I took my computer, all the flash drives I have stored work on over the years, a few icons that have been in our family for many years, a couple pieces of jewelry and that's pretty much it. When we looked at what was truly irreplaceable, there really wasn't that much. So, our stuff for the most part is just "stuff"—and stuff can be replaced. Our greatest concerns were for our personal health and safety and that of the people we know in this area. Because, as our governor said, stuff can be replaced, people cannot be replaced.

And if stuff is stuff, and most of what we own wasn't valuable enough to save, that begs the question of why do we as a society work so hard to obtain stuff which isn't really worth that much anyway? It really is a puzzling question. Because we all work hard, with the idea of financial gain in order to enjoy material gain, of materials that in an evacuation we'd just leave behind anyway. And sadly, while working so hard to gain the money to buy the stuff that we don't really need anyway, we sacrifice the time we should be spending on the human rela-

tionships that really do matter—with our spouses, our children, our parents, our friends, and serving others.

Security is an illusion—Most of us try to keep a good security net underneath ourselves. We want financial security. We want material security. Security of any kind is just an illusion. There are people who died as a result of Hurricanes Irma and Harvey. There are people who lost homes to these hurricanes. None of them thought last month or last Christmas that they would not finish 2017 alive or in their homes. We can get all the security we want, but a strong enough storm can destroy a house, or if one is the wrong place, can destroy a life.

The only thing we can truly possess is faith. Faith is something you can have, and that you can build upon, that no one can take away and no storm can destroy. Faith is hard to lose, and even if you lose a measure of it, it is easy to be rebuilt. This is one of the things that makes our faith so awesome.

The light of Christ cannot be extinguished—A couple of days before the storm hit Tampa, we decided that we should prepare the church in case there was flooding in South Tampa as many weather services were predicting. We moved altar boy robes, and vestments and liturgical vessels to higher ground. We shut off the power (to prevent a power surge) and closed every interior doorway in case windows shattered. The last thing I did before leaving the church was to put a new 7-day vigil candle on the altar table. This candle, which we call the “Akimiton Fos,” the “Light that never sleeps,” represents Christ, the true Light who can never be extinguished. This vigil candle stands in front of the Tabernacle on the altar table and the Tabernacle contains the Body and Blood of Christ, Holy Communion, and stands on the altar table at all times. The Vigil Candle has been on for the thirteen years I have been here without interruption. Every few days, we change the candle. Even when I go on vacation, I arrange for the candle to be changed so that the light burns continuously. With all the lights and all the candles in the church extinguished, I took a picture of the altar table with the one Light still burning. I also said a prayer, praying that within seven days I could return safely to church before the flame burned out. It turns out that I came back to church five days later, and when I entered the altar, the flame was still burning. Someone also asked me if I removed the Communion from the church, “in case something happens.” I said that I didn’t because there have been countless times that natural disasters have befallen churches with the altar table remaining intact. Hurricane Katrina damaged much of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in New Orleans but the tabernacle and the Communion on the altar remained intact. The Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral in San Francisco was leveled by an earthquake in 1989. Yet the Tabernacle did not move from the altar. And St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Northridge, California was severely damaged in 1994 in an earthquake and the altar table stayed intact. As I wrote to the community, Christ does not evacuate His Church. Nor does He leave us in our lives, even in their toughest moments. Despite the chaos in our town around the time of Hurricane Irma, I felt a sense of calm, which came through prayer, and faith, and trust that God’s guiding hand was going to be with us, regardless of the outcome of the storm.

We are not lucky, we are blessed—Many people have said how “lucky” we are in Tampa to have been spared the full wrath of Hurricane Irma. I prefer to think that we are not lucky

but blessed. Luck is when you throw the dice, hoping for a good outcome. We didn’t throw anything. Many people carefully prepared for the storm. Many people got on their knees to pray for themselves and others. God’s loving hand protected our city and our area by and large, from the devastating storm. Sure, there is some sense of “we dodged a bullet” but more than that, I am just thankful to God that we got through the storm with no loss of life in our community and minimal loss of property.

The Hurricane in the Context of a Divine Liturgy—We celebrated a Divine Liturgy on Tuesday, September 12, less than two days after Hurricane Irma roared through our state, and less than two hours after the power came back on in our church. The word “Eucharist” in Greek is “Eucharistia” which means “Thanksgiving.” There is no better way to thank God than by celebrating the Eucharist. And there was no more appropriate way to thank God for preserving us during the storm than by celebrating the Divine Liturgy. As I prayed the Divine Liturgy that evening, I had one of the more focused Liturgies that I have ever celebrated. Because it seems that almost every line of the Liturgy could be related to the storm. Just reflecting on the opening petitions brought many things to mind:

For the peace from Above and the salvation of our souls—I prayed for the peace of God to be present into every life that suffered some kind of upheaval because of the storm.

For this Holy house, and those who enter it with faith, reverence and the fear of God—I thanked God for preserving our church in one piece.

For our country, the President and all those in civil authority—I prayed for the first responders who were putting their lives in danger to help save lives of others.

For this parish and city, every city and country—I prayed for our city, as well as other cities that suffered losses in the storm. I prayed also for other cities like Atlanta that were still getting pounded by the storm at that moment. I also thought about people who live in Houston who are still suffering the effects from Hurricane Harvey.

For favorable weather—Obviously, this was an easy one. I prayed for no more bad weather to come to us or anyone else.

For travelers by land, sea and air, the sick, the suffering—I prayed for those who were returning home from the far places that they had evacuated to.

For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger and necessity—I prayed for help for anyone in need as a result of the hurricanes.

I could go through the Divine Liturgy, every line, and tell you how it related to the storm. My point in sharing this is to say that you can take the Divine Liturgy, a service that included the same prayers virtually every time out, a service that you might consider “generic” or “general,” but that you could apply each petition and prayer to a specific instance. In this case, we offered the Divine Liturgy and connected its prayers and petitions to Hurricane Irma. Similarly, the Divine Liturgy could be connected to someone who is sick or who is grieving. This is yet another reason why the Divine Liturgy is so awesome! The

prayers and petitions of this “general” service can be connected to any person and any need. And specific needs can be brought forward under the umbrella of this all-encompassing service we call “The Divine Liturgy.”

Don’t feel guilty—do something! - After the Divine Liturgy on September 12, in lieu of a sermon, I asked the people present if they had any thoughts to share. Again, remember the raw emotion you felt the day after the storm. Many of us still didn’t have electricity. There was a lot of debris all over. Stores and restaurants were closed. Life was anything but normal. So, people shared their thoughts, their fears, and their relief. And several people said that they felt guilty, that our area of the state was spared while many other areas suffered serious damage.

I have always believed that guilt is kind of a useless emotion. If you feel guilty about something, change that something and you won’t feel guilty. So, if you feel guilty that you have so much (because you suffered little or no damage) and others have so little (because they suffered major damage), the solution is to take from your abundance and to share with those who have lost. If you give from what you have to help others, you will have less guilt.

I once read a story about a man who was supposed to go on an airplane going to a tennis tournament. He got stuck in traffic and missed the flight. The plane he was supposed to have been on crashed and everyone died. He had tremendous guilt because he was supposed to have been on that plane. He realized that he should have died. And he used that moment as a time to turn his life around and use his guilt to help others, which is what he did with greater fervor for the rest of his life.

I feel like we are in the same position. We are blessed to have come through the storm relatively unscathed. I would like to think that we could use this opportunity as a jumping off point for something greater than us, and greater for our parish. Of course, that is up to each individual, to decide whether this experience will change you, or whether you are back to business as usual before you even get this issue of *The Messenger*.

I’m very proud of some of our people—In the days following the storm, several people approached me asking how they could help, and if there were people in our community who needed help. After we put out a letter to the community, telling our parishioners that there were several people willing to help out with hurricane cleanup, I did hear from several parishioners who wanted some help, mostly clearing debris from their yards. And then I put some parishioners who were in need together with parishioners who volunteered to help clean up. And several yards got cleaned up, and hopefully several people became better acquainted because of this experience. THIS is why we have our church, to help people. Some of the help is helping others understand the Gospel, or to get closer to Christ. And some of the help is by DOING what Jesus said to do, not just listening to it. Jesus told us to love our neighbors. And what a great thing that neighbors helped neighbors, and people from our community who didn’t even know each other, came together to help some of our people who were in need. There were also several parishioners who opened their homes to people who had not power and people who were evacuated. Another great example of being a church community. On September 16, we again had a full contingent of people sign up for Com-

munity Outreach. And as I write this message, 75 people have signed up for the “Feeding Children Everyone” outreach initiative sponsored by Philoptochos, that will have fed 20,000 people before you get this issue of the Messenger. TWENTY THOUSAND PEOPLE!!! This is what the church is all about—people helping people, and giving glory to God in the process. Again, it’s not just people helping people, but people helping people and in so doing, bringing Christ to the people.

The Church is About Bringing Christ to People through Acts of Love—There are some misconceptions about the mission of the church and how it is carried out. First, the church is NOT just the priest. The Church is every member of the body of Christ. The same Gospel, the Great Commission, is read over each person at their baptism. This means that each person, not just the priest, is commissioned to “*make disciples of all nations. . . teaching them to do all that I have commanded you.*” (Matthew 28:18-19) The work of sharing the Gospel with others falls on everyone who is a Christian. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus tells us “*Let your Light so shine that others may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*” This means that we are all called to witness to the Gospel through good works, works that are not ends to themselves or a means to earthly reward, but works that glorify God and bring others to Him. And these works are works of love and charity. Therefore it is incumbent on each Christian to do works of love and charity.

Thus the work of the church is simple to define—spread the Gospel through teaching and acts of charity and love. The work of the church is not, however, limited, to things that take place at 2418 Swann Avenue. We are not only called to love others because we are members of a certain ministry. I’m not called to love just the parishioners of St. John. We are all called to love everyone, and to be able to assist or minister to everyone. I was recently at a hospital visiting a parishioner when someone in the next room asked me whether I could come in and visit when I was done with our parishioner. When I came into the room, they asked me “Are you a Catholic priest?” I said, “No, but prayer is prayer and I’m happy to pray for you and speak with you.”

There are so many people who are desperate for some love, some encouragement, and even just an ear to listen or a shoulder to cry on. There are no special skills needed to minister to people like this. Just a heart that is filled with God’s love and a desire to share it. When Jesus told His disciples not to worry what they were going to say, that God would provide the words, He wasn’t talking about when you haven’t prepared for something and you expect God to fill in the blanks despite you not being prepared. He was talking about the times when you are witnessing for Him, in ways that you didn’t plan, that when you take a chance to shine His Light on someone else, He will fill your mind, your heart, and your mouth with the right words. So, don’t just look for ways to witness for Christ amongst our parishioners, or just with other Orthodox people, or even other Christians. And don’t think that witnessing for Christ necessarily involves carrying a Bible or even quoting it. Witnessing for Christ happens each time we share a gesture of love and kindness with someone else. And believe it or not, we have dozens, if not more, opportunities each day to share something positive. A greeting, a smile, a nod of the head, a word of thanks, a word of encouragement, a helping hand to open a door or to carry something.

Deny Yourself, Take up Your Cross and Follow—In Mark 8:34, Jesus tells us, “*If any man wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.*” As I mentioned in church the Sunday that we read this passage, the Sunday after the hurricane, Jesus isn’t telling His followers that to be a Christian means that one has to be miserable. He doesn’t tell us to deny ourselves happiness, or food, or sleep, or to live a life of physical deprivation. Rather, He is telling us to gain control of ourselves, that many times a day, we are confronted with decisions that will honor or dishonor Him. Many times, the decisions of dishonor towards God are more attractive than the ones that honor Him. To deny ourselves means to give up on doing the things that dishonor God—gossiping, cursing, stealing, coveting, lying, imposing, losing patience, etc.—and to talk in ways that are loving and encouraging, to be content, to be honest, to be truthful, to be patient.

The act of being a true Christian brings with it the greatest risk as well as the greatest reward. What greater reward can there be than eternal life in the kingdom of heaven! However, what greater risk can there be than being willing to deny ourselves, take up the cross and follow, even it means following all the way to death.

We have been “conditioned” it seems to live a life of acquisition, rather than denial. Thus the idea of denying oneself is antithetical to who we are. Certainly the idea of denying ourselves at the very minimum takes us out of our comfort zones. To take up the cross is a sacrifice. For the various crosses of life are heavy. And to follow means to cede control, to give up one’s own will in order to submit to the will of God. Again, in a society where personal rights are seen as the greatest hallmarks of freedom, it is ironic that the greatest freedom, salvation, comes through a suppression of one’s own will in order to follow the will of God.

So if we are to be what God wants us to be, then we have to base our focus on denial of self, taking up His cross, and following, loving Him, and serving others along the way.

Taking a Blessing from God for Everything—When a bishop comes to our parish to offer the Liturgy, you will notice that each priest who serves is constantly bowing to the Bishop, asking for his blessing before and after each line of the Liturgy. This might seem a little “over the top,” asking for so many blessings and so often. The purpose of this is that asking for blessings before offering a line of the Divine Liturgy maintains good order, especially when multiple priests are serving. It makes sure that two people don’t sing at the same time or cut one another off. It also shows authority and obedience, the authority of the bishop and the obedience of the priest serving under him.

I’ve often thought that this ritual of constantly asking for blessings is a good metaphor for how we should be in life. If I ask God for His blessing many times a day, before each event I do, imagine how different my life would be. If I ask for His blessing as I get in my car to drive, I’d like to think I wouldn’t then start the car and drive like a maniac. If I ask for His blessing before a difficult encounter with someone, I’d like to think that the encounter will go smoother. And if we get in the habit of asking for His blessings throughout the day, as we go about doing our various tasks and having our various conversation, I’d like to believe that we’d all do a lot better in our lives if we

slowed down a few times a day to ask for His blessing. The entire time it would take to ask for these blessings would probably take less than five minutes in an entire day, but imagine how doing that could change your life and the lives of those around you. And our prayer asking for a blessing could be a one-line prayer:

Lord, be with me in the thing I am about to do.

Lord, let Your name be glorified in this conversation.

Lord, strengthen me during this challenge.

Lord, give me the words when I don’t have any.

Notice, that none of these prayers asks “Lord, help me to really stick it to this person,” or “Lord, give me the words to tear this person down,” or “Lord, help me to be a good liar.” If you are not in the habit of asking God for His blessings, start with this month of October.

Asking for His blessings sets in motion the same things it does for the priest when he asks the blessing from the bishop—it set God as Lord and Master, the authority over our lives, and it sets us in a posture of humility and obedience.

Two Important Decisions in the Life of our Parish—During the month of October our parish will make two important decisions. We have a Parish Assembly meeting on Sunday, October 29, at which two important things will take place, as they do each year. First, we will pass a budget for 2018. Our budget says a lot about the kind of community that we want to have. The budget will include increases for some ministries. The reason for this is that we don’t want to charge for ministries. We are going to try to get away from the nickel-and-dime mentality that afflicts many Orthodox and other Christian parishes. The budget will also include money set aside to give to charities. I am so thankful that in our budget for 2017, we included \$2,000 for relief for natural disasters. This allowed us to send \$1,000 for Hurricane Harvey relief and \$1000 to Hurricane Irma relief in addition to what parishioners gave us for each one. We didn’t need to have a meeting or do a fundraiser. The money had been set aside specifically for this purpose, and when the time came, the church sprang into action quickly. We also have supported this year, through our budget—International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), Matthew 25 (feeding the hungry in Tampa Bay), Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM), Holy Cross School of Theology, Saint Basil’s Academy, the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC), and of course a large donation to LifePath Hospice from our festival proceeds.

Something else you’ll see when the budget gets mailed out is an amount of money budgeted for a part-time second priest. There is no question that our community has had a need to additional clergy for many years. The line for Communion alone on Sundays warrants this. There is also a line of more and more people seeking counseling and confession, sick people who need more frequent visits and programs that would benefit from the presence of a priest that I don’t get to as often as I’d like or as I should, because there is only one of me and many more of you (and growing).

And of course, to do this, the amount of money we need to raise on stewardship will go up as well. How we vote on this

budget and how generous (or rather, how Christian we are with our stewardship, remembering that the suggested amount of Old Testament giving is a tithe or ten percent of what one has) we are in funding the budget, says a lot for the kind of church we want to have and our understanding of the mission of the church.

After Hurricane Irma, I read that the Carnival Cruise Ship line was going to send several ships on rescue missions to the Caribbean, to areas hardest hit by the hurricane, to evacuate people and to assist people. Metaphorically, the church is like one of these big ships that is supposed to be constantly assisting and rescuing people who are drowning in the storms of life and to bring them into the safe harbor of Christ's love. However, we can't sail a ship that is filled with holes or needing major maintenance. A ship like this is a liability, and is not in a position to help. Our church has some holes that need patching—namely our \$1.1M mortgage and our physical plant. The sooner we can alleviate these things, the stronger and more ready our ship will be for the rescue missions that are needed.

Meeting our budget, which includes money for ministries and outreach, is a large step towards shoring up the ship so that we can sail it effectively and frequently, to reach those who are in trouble.

The second decision that we are making in the month of October is who will be nominated for the Parish Council in 2018. Again, this is a serious decision and it will affect how our church functions in 2018 and into the future. A "maintenance" minded Parish Council plays not to lose, plays almost in fear, maintains the status quo, lives on past history, and is process minded. A "mission" minded Parish Council sees the church as the boat, and works hard to keep the boat in good condition, and to sail it joyfully and purposefully into the dangerous waters to rescue others, confident of its integrity. Confidence in the integrity of the church, however, is not the end goal. It is not even the strongest means to the end. The end is bringing Christ to people. The church is the vehicle by which we do that.

Year after year, people decide to run for the Parish Council. Some are qualified and some are not. Some come in to speak with me about running, even asking a blessing to run. And many do not come into speak with me, they certainly don't seek any kind of blessing to run. As I mentioned earlier, getting a blessing for the bishop in a Liturgy creates a good sense of order, which in turn, leads to a good sense of Christ. Running without any input or blessing from the priest can create disorder

and disharmony in the Parish Council and in the parish. I'm asking then, if you are thinking about running for the Parish Council, please make an appointment and come see me before October 29, and let's talk about it.

Conclusion—Yes, all of these thoughts danced in my head during and after the storm. The biggest thing I hope you will take away from my message this month is that there are a lot of storms in life—there are hurricanes of nature, there are "hurricanes" of failure, of strife, of sadness, of stress, and many more. Just as we boarded up our homes and prepared our church for the storm, we need to constantly prepare our hearts to be safe from the storms of life. We do this through prayer, fasting, worship, confession, repentance. Because there are "storms" constantly and each person experiences them in a different way, it is the role of each Christian to be ready to go on rescue missions, bringing the Light of Christ, the true shelter from the storm, to everyone. Jesus says in Matthew 11: 27-30 *"Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

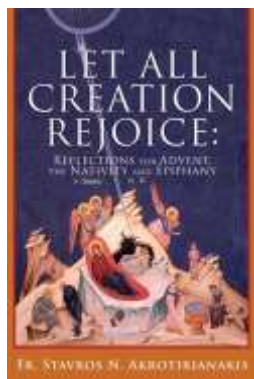
Our church is supposed to be the vessel that carries us through the storms of life to the safe haven of heaven, where people find rest from the storms in this life, on the journey to everlasting life. And in order to do that, we need passengers who wish to make the journey—faithful Christians who know the mission and who wish to fulfill it—spreading the Gospel and showing love for others through acts of charity and service. We need a ship that is strong enough to ferry us—that is our church and its ministries supported through your stewardship. And we need a crew that will sail the ship—the priest, and a Parish Council of individuals who share this understanding and vision.

In September, we thanked God that we survived what could have been a catastrophic storm. We thank God for protecting us. In October, we will evaluate both the ship and the crew, and I pray that we will put both in the best position possible to "rescue" as many people as possible and bring them aboard, sailing us and them to the harbor of salvation.

Let's not feel guilty. But let's be productive with our church! We are not lucky. We are blessed!

With love in the Lord,

+Fr. Stavros



Let all Creation Rejoice: Reflections for Advent the Nativity and Epiphany

This book is a series of short daily reflections on the scripture readings of Advent, the Nativity and Epiphany, to be read between November 15 and January 7.

Order your book today at www.xulonpress.com/

Interested in Joining the Prayer Team?

Over 940 people have! The Prayer Team is a daily message that Father Stavros has been writing for more than 2 years! Over half of our parish receives it daily, as well as many people outside of our parish. Each day, a scripture verse, a reflection written by Father, and a prayer are emailed to the Prayer Team via Constant Contact. If you would like to join the Prayer Team, please email Charlie at charlie.hambos@gmail.com and ask to add you

Liturgical Schedule for October 2017

Sunday, October 1 **2nd Sunday of Luke**
Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. Luke

Ushers: Nick Kavouklis, George Trimikliniotis, Peter Theophanous

Welcome Ministry: Greeters: Elaine Halkias, Donna Hambos; Ambassador: Skip Higdon; Caller: Sandra Pappas

Get Acquainted: Maria Xenick Mike Xenick

Coffee Hour: Choir

Tuesday, October 3 **Paraklesis Service** 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, October 8 **3rd Sunday of Luke**
Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. John

Ushers: Ron Myer, Jim Armstrong, John Alexander

Welcome Ministry: Greeters: Maria Karounas, Debbie Kavouklis; Ambassador: Edie Kavouklis;

Caller: Katherine Sakkis

Coffee Hour: Philoptochos

Sunday, October 15 **Sunday of the 7th Ecumenical Council**
Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. Matthew

Ushers: Brett Mourer, Josef Fenton, Amin Hanhan

Welcome Ministry: Greeters: Bessie Palios, Michael Palios; Ambassador: Jenny Paloumpis; Caller: Julie Palios

Coffee Hour: Altar Angels

Wednesday, October 18 **St. Luke**
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, October 22 **6th Sunday of Luke**
Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. Mark

Ushers: David Voykin, Ed Gerecke, Pete Trakas

Welcome Ministry: Greeters: Marenca Patrascoiu, Lisa Alsina; Ambassador: Kallope Chagaris;

Caller: Peggy Bradshaw

Coffee Hour: Sons & Maids

Monday, October 23 **St. James - Evening Liturgy**
Orthros 5:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 26 **St. Demetrios**
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.



We Live-Stream every service!
www.greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com

Sunday, October 29 **7th Sunday of Luke**
Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. Luke

Ushers: John Christ, Byron Nenos, Chris Kavouklis

Welcome Ministry: Greeters: Helen Cauthorn, Carole Fotopoulos; Ambassador: Elaine Halkias;

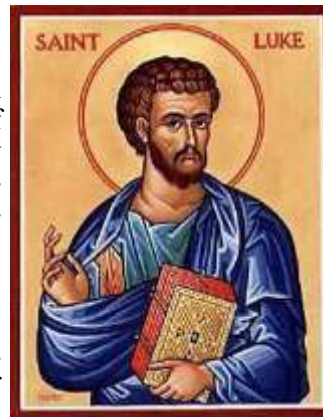
Caller: Christene Worley

Coffee Hour: AHEPA's Founders Day Luncheon

Liturgical Notes for October

Tuesday, October 3 - Paraklesis Service

In an effort to offer an additional opportunity to worship in what is an otherwise light liturgical month, we will have a Paraklesis service on Wednesday, October 4 at 6:00 p.m. Anyone in need of prayer, or wanting to come and pray for others, is welcome to join us. Please bring a list of any names you wish to have commemorated to church that night. Paraklesis will also afford us an opportunity to come together to pray for hurricane victims and victims of natural disasters that have occurred in the past couple of months. Thank you.



Wednesday, October 18 - Feast of St. Luke

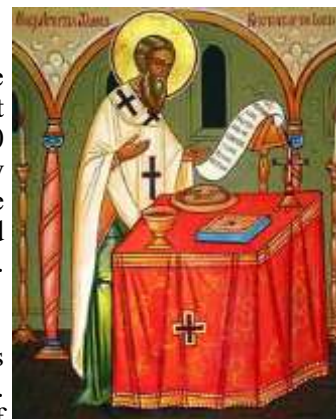
St. Luke was one of the Four Evangelists, along with Sts. Matthew, Mark and John. He was an artist, writer and doctor and is probably one of the most intelligent of all the saints in the history of our church.

Sunday, October 22 - Special Prayer for Medical Personnel

St. Luke, Apostle, Evangelist and also Physician, has his feastday celebrated on October 18. In conjunction with this, as he is the patron saint of doctors, we are going to offer a prayer for everyone in the medical field on Sunday, October 22 (Sunday closest to October 18), at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. All doctors, nurses, dentists, researchers, students and anyone connected to the medical field is encouraged to attend.

Monday, October 23 - Liturgy of St. James - Evening Liturgy

The Orthodox Church celebrates four different Divine Liturgies throughout the liturgical year. The most prominent is the Divine Liturgy written by St. John Chrysostom, which is celebrated almost every Sunday and on most feast days. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is celebrated 10 times a year—on the eve of Christmas, the eve of Epiphany, on the five Sundays of Lent, Holy Thursday morning, Holy Saturday morning, and on the feast of St. Basil, which is January 1. The Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is celebrated on Wednesday and Fridays of Great Lent and the mornings of Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday and Holy Wednesday. The Divine Liturgy of St. James is celebrated only once a year, on his feastday, which is October 23.



The Divine Liturgy of St. James is the oldest of the Divine Liturgies and is also the longest. It was written around 70 A.D. making it the oldest Eucharistic service in the entire Christian world. Among the interesting things about this service is that by the end of the first century, the structure of the Liturgy we celebrate today was already loosely in place. The Divine Liturgy begins not in the altar, but in the Narthex of the church, as was the custom of the early church. The priest and faithful enter the church together from the narthex, and the next part of the service is conducted on the solea, with the priest facing the people. The priestly prayers, while very long in the liturgy, reveal a beauty and completeness which would later be shortened by St. Basil and even more by St. John Chrysostom. The most unique part of this service comes at the reception of Holy Communion. This is the only Divine Liturgy that has become the custom for the faithful to receive Holy Communion in separate elements, in similar fashion with how the clergy commune. The communicants first receive the Holy Body of Christ in their hands and consume it, and then drink from the Holy Chalice. This is a special beautiful tradition which will be continued at St. John the Baptist, and it is encouraged that all who attend this service fast beforehand and prepare to receive Holy Communion at this Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy of St. James will be held on Monday, October 23 at 6:00 p.m. (Orthros at 5:00 p.m.)

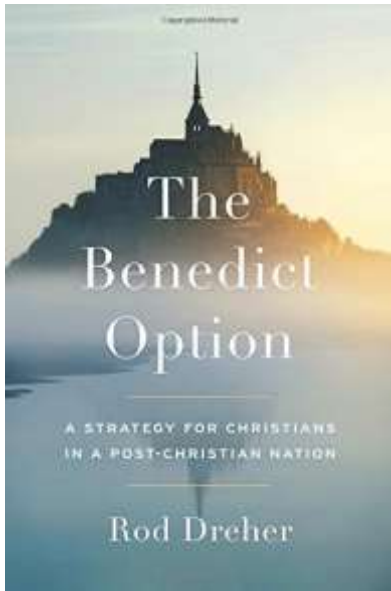


Thursday, October 26 - Feast of St. Demetrios

St. Demetrios was born into a wealthy and distinguished Christian family in the Greek City of Thessaloniki in the late 3rd century. Demetrios was noted for his wisdom, and was a good speaker and polished orator. St. Demetrios was also a distinguished soldier. Thessaloniki was known for popular gladiatorial games which attracted the local pagans. Travelling with the Emperor Galerius after a military victory, Demetrios stopped in Thessaloniki, where many pagans, who were jealous of his successful life, denounced him as a Christian before the emperor, who ordered Demetrios put in prison. A man named Nestor befriended Demetrios in prison. The Emperor went to the arena to see his favorite gladiator, Lyaaios and offered a reward to whomever could defeat him. Nestor accepted the challenge, and through the prayers of St. Demetrios, defeated the giant. When Nestor refused to kill Lyaaios, because he had been helped by the "God of Demetrios," the Emperor ordered that both be killed. This occurred in the year 306. We commemorate St. Demetrios on October 26 and St. Nestor on October 27. We will celebrate Divine Liturgy for St. Demetrios on Thursday, October 26, at 10:00 a.m.

Going Back in Time for Greater Faith in the Future

By Charlie Hambos



Sitting on the balcony of my Airbnb Shared Room, looking over the skyline of Caen, France, the clock struck Noon and all the church bells started ringing. These were big, beautiful churches. I could probably see 5 or 6. At that point, I had 45 minutes to pack up my stuff and walk to the train station for the third leg of my trip to the Loire Valley, Land of the Chateaux. Let's rewind to my first morning at this Airbnb. The hosts so graciously invited me to eat breakfast every morning before I went on our way, exploring the Normandy

Region. The question finally came from the host who also spoke German and French, "So, Charlie, what do you do?" I replied, "I work for the church." "I work for the Greek Orthodox Christian Church in Tampa, Florida." "I'm on my way, to becoming a priest." The host, hesitantly, "That is interesting, why would you want to do that?" I replied, "Because, if I don't become a priest at some point in my life, God is not going to be very happy with me, when I go see Him." Not much of a response was elicited from that one. I asked if anyone went to church anymore in France. They said, no, not really. To be honest, I didn't go to any church for a service either, while I was there so I can not confirm or deny that no one goes to church, but I heard it from most people I asked. I got my luggage, headed down stairs, walked into the kitchen and said, "The church bells are ringing, it's time for me to go." The host, chuckled and said, yup, you're right about that. They were super nice people and I am grateful for their hospitality.

I somehow missed the 12:45 p.m. direct train to Tours even though I was at the platform, but I was able find another way, going back to Paris and then to Tours. Bringing only one book, "The Benedict Option," by Rod Dreher. It was referred to me, by a local ministry leader that our church partners with to feed the homeless breakfast in Downtown Tampa. On the cover, happens to be the church of Mt. St. Michel, which was a magical place. An abbey dedicated to the Archangel Michael built on a mountain, which finds itself completely separated from the mainland, and then at low tide, surrounded by a mud flat which stretches for miles. I had the opportunity to go and it was amazing but at the same time a little weird because it is no longer an active monastery. It's used but not like it's original intent.

Anyway, the book, reintroduces the way of life at a monastery in Norcia, Italy. The book begins with a chapter on the systematic way, Christianity, not only in the United States, but in the west has been pushed out of western society with what the author calls, "five landmark events over seven centuries that rocked Western civilization and stripped it of its ancestral faith." The first happened in the Fourteenth Century and it was, "the loss of belief in the integral connection between God and Creation—or philosophic terms, transcendent reality and mate-

rial reality." Basically, this event made the core beliefs of God creating the world and all of creation pointed back to Him; that society was grounded in the idea that they were to seek a higher calling. There was a major focus change from God to man. Humanism and other school of thoughts started to wreak havoc on these core beliefs and it started to spiral out of control from there. The second major event was "the collapse of religious unity and religious authority in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century." Surely, Martin Luther had some very good points and the religious authority were not doing a very good job at leading their flocks or providing a good role model. However, it caused many to loose respect of religious authority, leaving everyone up to their own devices on how to interpret scripture and what to believe, which, in general, is not a good thing. The third major event, was "the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, which displaced the Christian religion with the cult of Reason, privatized religious life, and inaugurated the age of democracy." The big-wigs of the Enlightenment tried to use reason as a foundation for the culture and denounced the foundation of the past. This was also the time when science and technology began to be used in order to force man's will upon nature. This age also brought about what seems to be a blessing, separation of church and state, but it may not be the greatest blessing after-all because the separation of the secular and the sacred shouldn't even be an option. The fourth major event, was "the Industrial Revolution and the growth of capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries." The Industrial Revolution ruined the farming way of life. Money became the major factor in human relationships. The Romantic era sparked the ideas of passion and individualism. The two World Wars of the twentieth century severely made people question their faith and God. Finally, the fifth major event that puts us where we are today, is the sexual revolution, which launched desire, and was the final straw for Christianity.

Now, before we take a closer look at the eight sections of St. Benedict's Rule of Living, broken down for us by the author, we need to say a few things. No, this is not an Orthodox Christian writer, but does acknowledge Orthodox Christianity more than most of his contemporaries. St. Benedict was a monk in the 6th Century which means, before the Great Schism, so he is recognized as a saint in the Orthodox Christian Church and he is commemorated on March 14. St. Benedict's Rule of Living is very close if not identical to many of the Cenobitic Orthodox Monasteries around the world. The author seems to neglect areas like Mt. Athos or the thriving monastic communities in Russia and Romania. The book is very much centered on Western Christianity and it's demise. As Orthodox Christians, we are considered Eastern Christianity. We never experienced a Dark Ages or a Renaissance. However, the book does give us good insight into the Christian landscape of the United States, where we practice. In a very harsh statement, but probably true, Mollie Ziegler Hemingway, senior editor of The Federalist, in her review, states, "An insightful and optimistic plan of action for Christians who are starting to realize just how hostile American culture is to their faith." As Americans, we would probably deny this statement as we always tend to believe that we live in a Christian Nation, or one that was. Just something to keep in mind. Finally, I have not finished the book. What we have talked about is only the first few chapters.

Now, to get to the meat of what the The Benedict Option has to offer. First, we are seeing that many Christian Church communities of all denominations, including Orthodox Christian churches, aren't really thriving as true Christian Communities. Since this is the case, the book proposes a minor exodus to create a community like that of St. Benedict. Christ has to be at the center of the community and the foundation for everything it does. Then, Christ has to be the center of one's life and then everything else is built upon it. Our life can not be compartmentalized. The author breaks St. Benedict's Rule of Living into the following eight tenets.

Before we get into them, let's read this portion from the book, "People who are anxious, confused, and looking for answers are quick to search for solutions in the pages of books or on the Internet, looking for that 'killer app' that will make everything right again. The Rule tells us: No, it's not like that. You can achieve the peace and order you seek only by making a place within your heart and within your daily life for the grace of God to take root. Divine grace is freely given, but God will not force us to receive it. It takes constant effort on our part to get out of God's way and let His grace heal us and change us."

The first is **Order**. There must be a certain order to our lives, our beliefs and the way we worship. "If we don't have internal order, we will be controlled by our human passions and by the powerful outside forces who are in greater control of directing liquid modernity's deep currents." God is the beginning and end of everything we do. That is everything. Work, play, church etc...

The second is **Prayer**. Like St. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray without ceasing." The author says, "Strictly speaking, prayer is communication, either privately or in community, with God. More broadly, prayer is maintaining an unfailing awareness of the divine presence and doing all things with Him in mind." Prayer is a struggle but it is a necessity. Prayer is not easy. If we all did our day-to-day things with Christ in mind, this would be prayer and we would all be better people. The third is **Work**. Work is necessary. All work, whether it's doing the laundry, mowing the grass or what we do to get a paycheck can all be done in a way that glorifies God. St. Benedict says, "Idleness is the enemy of the soul." If our work, is only about paying the bills and disconnected from our spiritual, this is a great error. The author says, "The work must serve not ourselves but God and God alone."

The fourth is **Asceticism**. One of the most famous ascetic practices of the church is fasting. Jesus also did this. The author says, "Asceticism is an antidote to the poison of self-centeredness common in our culture, which teaches us that satisfying our own desires is the key to a good life. The ascetic knows that true happiness can be found only by living in harmony with the will of God, and ascetical practices train body and soul to put God above self." Probably one of the most difficult practices but one of the most rewarding if it is accomplished. We also have to celebrate small victories in our spiritual struggle because they lead to bigger ones.

The fifth is **Stability**. Moving around too much in our spiritual lives is not healthy. Yo-yo dieting with our spiritual lives is also not healthy. We will only produce small, unhealthy fruit. The author says, "A tree that is repeatedly uprooted and transplanted will be hard pressed to produce healthy fruit." We are

always on the move in multiple areas of our life. We need some type of stability and we need to allow the roots to grow deep.

The sixth is **Community**. Another result of us always moving around besides poor fruit, is not being able to develop a sense of community. We are all out to get what we want for ourselves and forget about the other. The author says, "The consumerist approach to the community of believers reproduces the fragmentation that is shattering Christianity in the contemporary world. In Benedictine monasteries, however, monks are always aware that they are not merely individuals who share living quarters with other individuals but are a part of an organic whole—a spiritual family." This is also very true of a church community where many people travel great distances to join in worship and activities of the church. A community works together to produce things for the Glory of God. Our society is full of lonely and isolated people because of the lack of community and deep spiritual friendships and support.

The seventh is **Hospitality**. All of these previous tenets allow the community to work together very closely. The goal is also to open up to those on the outside as well. The author says, "According to the Rule, we must never turn away someone who needs our love. A church or other Benedict Option community must be open to the world, to share the bounty of God's love with those who lack it." Everybody is created in the image of God, inside and outside the community. Many people outside and some inside are not aware that they are created in the image of God and thus are devoid of His love. We must share the love.

The eighth is **Balance**. Rules are rules. Most of the time we think they are constricting but, in fact, they are freeing. One of the monks, interviewed by the author says this, "Brother Francis put it like this: If a community relaxes its discipline too much, it will dissolve. But if it is too rigid, it will make people crazy. 'If you want to judge a community, you need to see what their fruit is,' he said. 'Are they growing? Are they cheerful? Are they happy? Are they doing good and helping people? Look at what a community produces to see what kind of balance they have.'" Most of us have a hard time balancing our day to day life, let alone, our spiritual life.

These eight tenets of St. Benedict's Rule, are a lot, yet simple and complex. None of it will work if Christ is not the center of the situation or only a part of one's life. This book has a lot of insights and I look forward to discovering more.

Going back to Caen, the morning before I left, the host told me to go to the Sunday Morning Market. France is famous for these markets and they are all over the country. It's a combination Flea Market, Farmer's Market, the only difference is the sheer amount of food. Between the fresh cheeses, meats, seafood, bread and freshly prepared dishes on the spot, it was enough to drive me crazy. When I came back after the visit to the market. The host asked me how I like it and I said I loved it. She said the markets, even though they have been around for many years, have replaced the church community. Many people go, they hang out and enjoy each others company. "Whenever you get your own church," the host said, "you should make a market for your parishioners." She's never seen a coffee hour but, I think she has a pretty good idea. Christ has to be in the center. Not the change purse.

Community News

Parish Registry

Funeral - James Karounos, passed away on Saturday, September 16. Funeral services were held on Thursday, September 21. May his memory be eternal!

Get Acquainted Sunday, October 1



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.



Community Outreach - Saturday, October 21

St. John the Baptist's Community Outreach will be serving breakfast to the Homeless at the First Presbyterian Church in Downtown Tampa from 8:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The church is located at 412 Zack Street. The entrance is on Polk Street. Grab a cup of coffee and come help us!

We love to see new and old faces!



Meeting on Sunday, October 15



Our Regular GOYA meeting for October will be Sunday, October 15, from 5:00-8:00 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. (Notice the later end time). We are going to be doing a seminar for both parents and teens on "Let Your Light Shine." We had Forty-Five GOYAns for our August meeting and Thirty-Nin for our September Meeting! So, come and be part of this awesome group. Parents are welcome. Dinner is always served. Please come on time, as we will serve dinner promptly at 5:00 p.m.

Volleyball Tournament October 6-8

St. Stefanos Greek Orthodox Church in St. Petersburg is sponsoring a volleyball tournament from October 6-8. Our GOYAns will be attending. Please contact Maria Koutroumanis or Kara Kataras for more information.

HOPE / JOY NEWS

Welcome to HOPE & JOY! For the families that are new to our community HOPE (Hellenic Orthodox Primary Education) is the ministry for children grades K-2nd while JOY (Junior Orthodox Youth) is the ministry for children grades 3rd-6th. Here at our parish we combine the Hope & Joy ministries. Participating in the Hope & Joy ministry allows our children to build a strong bond with their Orthodox friends and lays out the foundation and tradition of our Orthodox faith through worship, fellowship and service. The bond they create now with each other and our Lord, Jesus Christ, will guide them and strengthen them throughout their lives. In partnership with our Sunday school, Hope & Joy ministry looks forward to having a great year! In Christ, Debbie Nicklow 813-690-0671

Hope & Joy 2017-18 Calendar...Mark your calendars and save the dates!

Sunday, October 22: Fall Harvest Celebration

Sunday, November 19: Boxes of Hope

Saturday, December 9: Sunday School Christmas Party & Program Rehearsal

Friday, January 19: Pizza and Movie night

Sunday, February 4: Souper Bowl of Caring

Wednesday, February 28: Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

Friday, April 6: Holy Friday Retreat

Philoptochos October Outreach: Annual Diaper Drive and More For the Alpha House

Alpha House of Tampa offers homeless pregnant women and mothers with young children and their babies safe housing and the tools they need to become self-sufficient and effective parents! Please support the DRIVE by donating the following items: **Diapers of all sizes, other baby items such as Shampoo, Lotion, Baby and Toddler Food, Formula and Personal Care items for the Moms.**

There will be a large box in the Kourmolis Center for you donations starting Sunday, October 1. We will be collecting items until Sunday, October 29.



Matthew 5:14-16

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Choices: Let Your Light Shine!

A workshop for pre-teens and their parents

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church invites all pre-teens and their parents to join us for an afternoon of discussion, activities, and prayer.

Sunday, October 8, 2017

1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**lunch served at 12:30 p.m.*

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church 2418 Swann Avenue Tampa, FL 33609

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take

For more information or to RSVP, please email or call Maria Xenick – mpxenick@gmail.com, (813)765-3587



Hope/Joy Fall Harvest Celebration

Sunday, October 22nd

4:00 – 6:00 PM

At the Day School Lunch Patio
(between church and administration building)

All children Pre-K through 6th grade are invited to join us for an afternoon of fun, food and fellowship!

Come in costume

(please no witches or devils)

Dinner will be served!

Games, crafts & prizes for all!



Kindly R.S.V.P. by October 16th

to Debbie at Debbienicklow@hotmail.com or text 813-690-0671

Volunteers welcome GOYAns, parents, friends please sign up to help!

Young Adults Dinner

We will have our monthly dinner/discussion on Sunday, October 8, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. All young adults ages 18-40 are welcome to join our group. Please RSVP to Fr. Stavros by October 5 and bring \$10 for dinner. New members are always welcome.

~ Sunday School News ~

What a great start to the 2017-2018 Sunday School year. We've had record attendance in September in spite of cancelling church on September 10 due to Hurricane Irma. We want to give thanks to all the teachers, parents, and children who are committed to our Sunday School program.

Yeah!!!! All the class pictures were taken on September 24 and should be up on our bulletin board. Please stop by and take a look at our beautiful students. We would like to thank Olya Clifton for being our photographer.

September was a busy month. Our Topics for the month were the SIGN OF THE CROSS and THE CREED. Charlie Hambos presented the Church Vessels to our 4th graders and our kindergarten students so far this school year. Our 1st and 2nd Graders learned about and made 15 loaves of Prospora for our Church on September 17. We would like to thank Melissa Krinos for directing this program for our children year after year. The congregation of St. John the Baptist is truly blessed to have such wonderful stewards in our children.

Our first YOUTH SUNDAY SERVICE of the year took place on September 24. The students in 1st-6th grade sang the Liturgical Hymns beautifully with the choir. Ten of our older students have joined the choir and we are very proud of them. Our music program is thriving and we need to thank Maria Xenick for that. We would truly like to thank our High School students for doing a fine job reading the Epistle on all of our Youth Sundays.

Dates to Remember

Sunday, October 1

Sunday School Topic: The Bible
Charlie: 3rd grade (Vessels)

Friday, October 6 - Sunday October 8

GOYA St. Pete Volleyball Tournament

Sunday October 8

Sunday School Topic: The Church Building
and the Sacred Vessels
Charlie: Pre-K (vessels)
PRE-TEEN RETREAT after Sunday School

Sunday, October 15

Youth Sunday (6th-8th Grade Music at 11:50
Charlie: 1st Grade (Vessels)
Prospora: 3rd and 4th grade
GOYA Meeting 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, October 22

Sunday School Topic: Ten Commandments
Charlie: 7-8th (Vessels)
Fall Festival (HOPE/JOY)

Sunday, October 29

Sunday School Topic: Liturgy/Holy Communion
Charlie: High School (Vessels)



Scholarship Opportunities

St. John 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](tel:813.758.0305) or Marina Paras at [813.966.9527](tel:813.966.9527) for additional information. The deadline for submission is December 1, 2017.

St. John the Baptist is on Social Media!

Sermons on Youtube Channel Each Sunday

Father's sermons each Sunday are available on our YouTube channel. Just go to YouTube and type in "St John GOC Tampa" and you'll find them. If you miss a sermon or wish to hear a sermon again, you'll find it there!



Do you Like our Facebook page?

Like our page and suggest it to your friends. Announcements are posted frequently so you are up to date with everything going on at St. John the Baptist. You can find our page at StJohnGOCTampa.



Live Streaming

All of our services are being video recorded and are available on our Livestream page.

To access this page

1. Go to our Church's website: greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com,
2. Scroll the mouse over the "Multimedia" tab on the menu bar,
3. Click "View Liturgy,"
4. Then click on the link where it says, "Check out our live stream of the Divine Liturgy here <http://new.livestream.com/accounts/2454446>.



All of the services are available to watch at anytime.

Pictures

Go to Flickr.com and search "St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church" or go to www.flickr.com/photos/stjohngoctampa



Save the Date



The Annual St. John the Baptist Greek Festival is Coming Soon!

November 10, 11 & 12, 2017

We will unite as a Parish to support our Festival. Help is needed in many ways leading up to and during the festival. Everyone doing something (big, small or somewhere in between) makes our festival a success!
This is our opportunity to showcase our Orthodox Faith as well our food, dancing and Kefi!

~4 Things to Know About Festival~

Raffle:

This year, the Grand Prize winner can choose between a brand new BMW (or other select vehicles) or \$20,000 cash. Three winners will receive \$1000 in cash and six winners will receive new iPad minis.

GOAL: Sell or purchase 2 tickets by October 31. Make checks payable to St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church. If you wish to buy/sell the raffle tickets online and pay with a credit card, visit tampagreekfestival.com. (Great opportunity for distant relatives!!)

Volunteer:

Sign up to volunteer at TampaGreekFestival.com or contact Sandra Pappas at tpagreekfestival@gmail.com or 813-785-3747.

GOAL: Volunteer for at least two shifts.

Entry Tickets:

Start supporting the festival by handing out entry tickets (\$2 each).

GOAL: Try to give away or sell as many tickets as possible and reimburse the church. Make checks payable to St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church.

Sponsor:

This year, we are offering exciting new ways to sponsor or advertise during the festival. Advertise your business to the South Tampa demographic or just send warm wishes to a loved one. To order or for questions, contact theo Panopoulos at 248-867-3697 or TGFads@gmail.com.

See our website for details at TampaGreekFestival.com/Sponsor.

GOAL: Sell/buy just one ad.

Pastry Baking Days

Thursday, October 19 - Koulourakia

Wednesday, October 25 - Finikia and Kourabiedes

Monday, October, 30 - Emergency Backup Date



What Stewardship means to me...

You can see and feel the true Love of Christ that Aris Rogers carries in his heart, after speaking with him for just a few minutes. Aris sets an exceptional example as a faithful servant of Christ in all that he says and does. Serving regularly on the Altar aside Fr. Stavros and recently serving on the Parish Council bringing many gifts and words of wisdom to every discussion. And a recent recipient of the 30 under 30 award by the Orthodox Christian Network; in their first annual initiative to recognize young Orthodox leaders that demonstrate exceptional Orthodox Christian Values. We believe Aris was the perfect choice for this award! We sincerely thank Aris Rogers for his dedication to our church and his time to prepare this thoughtful message of 'What Stewardship Means to Me.'

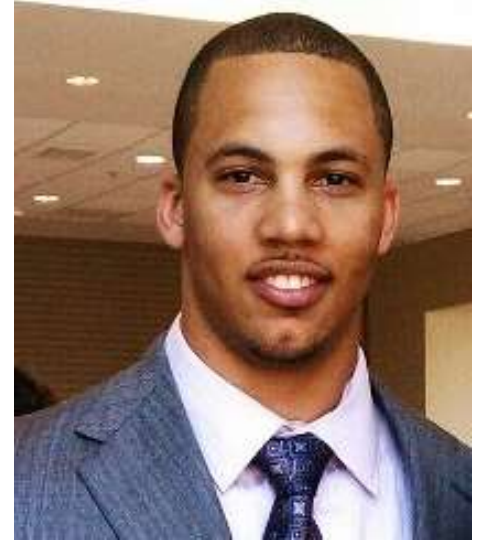
One of the ways we as Orthodox Christians offer worship and commune with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is through our stewardship. We are all given gifts, talents, skills, resources, etc. from our Creator (For every good and perfect gift is from above – James 1:17). We in return glorify the Lord by utilizing these blessings to fulfill the Lord's work here on Earth. After all, He is the Creator of all things, so whatever good thing we do possess is His, not ours. We therefore must handle and utilize these gifts responsibly. Essentially, that is what being a good steward means to me. It is a perpetual act of worship with all of our being and all that we have been given.

But, I think in order to become a good and faithful steward, we must first realize the gifts we have been given. Every one of us has been given so many gifts and sometimes we don't even realize it. The time we have on this Earth is a gift. Like Fr. Stavros mentions, we are not entitled to live on this Earth for a specific duration of time. So the fact that we get the opportunity to see this day or any other day is a gift from above and as good stewards of the time we have, we ought to offer our time to furthering the Kingdom of God here on Earth and communing with the Lord continually in prayer and worship.

Additionally, we have been given unique talents that enable us to make an honest living, but with these unique talents come a choice. We can either use them for selfish gain and ambition or to be used as a witness for Jesus Christ in the world and furthering the kingdom of God. Of course, the latter is the example of a good steward. However, that is not always the easy choice in a self-indulgent, materialistic society. But, when we humble ourselves and meditate on the fact that everything we possess is a gift from God, it puts life back into perspective. We have created nothing. God has created everything and is the Originator of everything. Even what we think we created originated from Him. It may appear that man is the innovator of many things when we look at the societal and technological advancements that have been accomplished at the hands of man, but it is God who gave/gives those hands the breath, time, talents, physical and mental capacity to create such phenomenal advancements. The fruits of our labor can all be traced back to Him as the Creator. Therefore all things are His. We are simply vessels for His glory. That is why it is so important that as the Church we utilize our unique talents collectively to further the kingdom of God here on Earth. So, if we are gifted with the ability to communicate, organize, heal, budget, plan events, cook, litigate, etc. we have a responsibility to use those gifts to assist the Church in the collaborative effort to minister the Gospel and bring healing to those in darkness.

Often times a gift we have been given from God will beget more gifts if we use it responsibly. For instance when we utilize our talents diligently in our careers, we are rewarded with an income to sustain our well-being on this Earth, or a promotion, or a raise in income, or other rewarding career opportunities. Those are all gifts given to reward us for our diligence, yet we still have a responsibility. For to whom much is given, much is required (paraphrased Luke 12:48). So, yes, we can enjoy the fruits of our labor with thanksgiving, but we still must not forget that those subsequent gifts are still in fact a gift from God that must be used responsibly for His purpose. They are still all His for He is the Creator and Originator of all. That is why we pledge a portion of our income to His Church each year. It's another means of worshipping the Lord with the blessings we have received. It's our way of prayerfully communicating to God that: "While my hands labored and I received this blessing, I know that all that I have is a gift from You alone so I humbly give this portion back to You with thanksgiving to help further spread the love that You have so generously bestowed upon me, that you may be glorified by all. Amen." Giving back to our Lord's Church monetarily should not be a burden. Matter of fact, as we receive more abundantly we ought to be eager to give back to our Lord and His Church more abundantly. It ought to be something joyful. It ought to be another form of prayer that we use to grow in our relationship with Christ and find healing for our souls.

Overall, that is what stewardship means to me. So I pray that we will all be compelled to utilize our gifts, talents, and resources for the glory of God and exemplify what it means to be good stewards of the blessings that have been so graciously bestowed upon us from our Creator. Amen.



Aris Rogers, II - Parish Council Member

~ Stewardship Update ~

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God' Hebrews 13:16.

The recent threat of Hurricane Irma and the ongoing Hurricane Season have us all in a heightened state of stress and taking stock of everything in our lives. The definition of Stewardship: supervising or taking care of something, such as an organization or property has taken on a very personal meaning the last month. As we surveyed our properties and things it was surprising how little of it really mattered when we planned our exits and filled things into waterproof boxes, our cars or suitcases

The experience was a humble reminder that each of us has received grace-gifts from God. And “as each has received a gift,” we are to “use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Peter 4:10). We are given these gifts for the “progress and joy” of one another’s faith (Philippians 1:25). In the end our possessions don’t matter!

At St. John we appreciate the gifts from our loyal Stewards. We thank each and everyone of you for sharing your gifts from God and your choice of sacrificial giving to help move us closer to the ultimate goal of our Stewardship program - to fund 100% of our annual operating budget through stewardship and other donations. We strive to encourage and motivate purposeful ‘giving from the heart’ and acknowledge Stewardship is our ultimate calling as Christ followers.

We hope you enjoy a heartfelt message this month from Aris Rogers, II recent recipient of the 30 under 30 award by the Orthodox Christian Network. This was their first annual initiative to recognize young Orthodox leaders from a diverse range of communities in North America that demonstrate exceptional Orthodox Christian Values. We will continue this series and look forward to more personal messages as we move closer to the start of a new Stewardship Year – kicking off with Stewardship Sunday on December 3, 2017.

Little of This & That.....

- We have over 68 individuals/families that pledged in 2016 but have not made any commitments this year. We miss you! It is not too late to pledge - we encourage you to do so today! It is the commitment of stewardship that allows our church to continue doing the good work of Christ. We will be sending email reminders during the months of October to encourage pledges.
- Please ensure you’re on track for the year. We will be providing summary statements in October. If your circumstances have changed and you’re unable to fulfill your pledge, please contact the church office or Fr. Stavros directly and we will adjust our records.
- **Coming soon:** Fall Parish Assembly October 29, 2017 and Parish Council Elections in November. In order to participate in these meetings and have your voice heard, please ensure you’re up to date on your Stewardship commitment 30 days prior to the date of each meeting. Weekly, Monthly and Quarterly by end of selected term. Annual pledges are due by June 30th and Semi-Annual calls for half payment by this date with the remainder by the end of the year according to our By-Laws.

Please visit our website to complete your Stewardship Pledge Form and make your gift today. For any questions, please speak directly with Fr. Stavros, Sandra Pappas or Pete Trakas Stewardship Co-Chairs. We are here for YOU!

Father Stavros will be out of town from October 10-12 attending required meetings for clergy at the Diakonia Retreat Center.

Year to Year Comparison ~	2017*	2016*
Pledged Year to Date	\$404,836	\$430,321
Received Year to Date	\$337,007	\$324,169
Average Pledge	\$1,305	\$1,300
Median Pledge	\$650	\$600
# of Individual/Families Pledged	310	341

*YTD as of 9/16/17 & 9/21/16

St. John Legacy Society

Please consider including St. John Greek Orthodox Church in your estate plans.

Please consider becoming a founding member of the St. John Legacy Society by leaving what might be left over in your estate to St. John once you’ve provided for your family. For more information about this new dimension to stewardship, please contact Fr. Stavros at 813-876-8830 ext. 103, or email at frstav@gmail.com or contact Debbie Gavalas at 813-505-8901 to learn how you can have an impact on our church. Whatever you do, please be sure to consult your financial and legal advisors and let your family members know of your intentions.

~ Thank You for your gifts of Stewardship ~

We appreciate the gifts of our loyal parishioners at St. John and which to acknowledge each and every one!

According to the St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Tampa FL By-Laws, one must have completed a pledge form AND be 'current' in their pledge (for this year and last year) to vote at the Parish Assembly Meetings (Fall meeting scheduled for October 29, 2017) and Parish Council Elections (Date TBD in December).

* Indicates receipt of a Stewardship Check without a completed pledge form. Our office will be happy to forward a pledge package and the form can also be completed on-line. Keep in mind pledges in writing help us adequately plan financially for our church and also bring voting privileges, which are critical to support the mission of our church.

It is our hope the EVERYONE on our mailing list provides gifts of stewardship or becomes a Friend of St. John the Baptist, for those who do not live in Tampa.

Akrotirianakis, Stavros & Lisa, Fr. & Pres.
Abramis, John G & Nicky M., Mr. & Mrs.
Alastanos, Jennifer, Ms.
Alexander, John & Anetta, Mr. & Mrs.
Alithinos, Ekaterini, Mrs.
Alsina, Alexa, Ms.
Alsina, Angel & Lisa, Dr. & Mrs.
Anagnost, Constantine, Mr.
Andreadakis, Nicholas & Doris, Dr. & Mrs.
Anton, Alex & Kristen, Dr. & Mrs.
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Badrane, Denise, Ms.
Bakirdgi, Joan, Mrs.
Balas, Mathew & Suzy, Mr. & Mrs.
Balntas, Emmanuel & Meian, Mr. & Mrs.
Beach, Kevin, Dr. & Ms. Heidi Borgeas
Berar, Eyob, Mr. & Mrs. Rezan Araya
Berdos, Frank & Isabel, Mr. & Mrs.
Blackburn, Robert T. & Kathryn, Mr. & Dr.
Blankenbaker, James & Michelle, Mr. & Mrs.
Blankenship, Wayne & Athanasia, Mr. & Mrs.
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Brown, Chrysanthi, Ms.
Burchill, George, Fr.
Bush, Dorothy, Mrs.
Camene, Theo & Eleni, Mr. & Mrs.
Cantonis, George & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.*
Capitano, Frank & Christina, Mr. & Mrs.
Caramalis, Nick & Lea, Mr. & Mrs.
Carreon, Delfin & Danae, Mr. & Mrs.*
Carter, John & Genie, Mr. & Mrs.
Catrone, Jeremy & Oliviana, Mr. & Mrs.
Cauthorn, Ken & Helen, Mr. & Mrs.
Chabra, Steven, Mr. & Ms. Freda Manuel
Chagaris, George & Kalliope, Mr. & Mrs.
Chakonas, Ethel Athena, Mrs.
Chandler, Robert & Viviana, Mr. & Mrs.
Charalabakis, Terry G., Mr.
Cherpelis, Basil & Alyssa, Dr. & Dr.
Choundas, Marina, Ms. & Mr. Greg Thatcher
Choundas, Peter & Adis, Mr. & Mrs.
Christ, John E., Dr.

Christodoulou, Louis & Mary Ann, Mr. & Mrs.
Christopher, Louis, Mr. & Dr. Penny Plakas
Christou, Tammy, Ms.
Circello, Vincent & Tamera, Mr. & Mrs.
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Clifton, Keven & Olya, Mr. & Mrs.
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Colado, Hector & Mary, Mr. & Mrs.
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Costello, Patricia, Ms.
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Crassas, Alkis & Aime, Mr. & Mrs.
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Cunavelis, John, Mr.
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De Maio, Alexandra, Ms.
DeJesus, Roy & Anna, Mr. & Mrs.
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Demas, John, Mr.
Demetrides, Spero & Theano, Mr. & Mrs.
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DeYoung, John & Jenna, Mr. & Mrs.*
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Diamantides, Melpo, Mrs.
Dimas, Gregory, Mr. & Ms. Evelyn Patsavos
Dimitrijevič-Jones, Stephen, Mr. & Ms.
Alina Morris
Diniaco, Peter & Rebecca, Mr. & Mrs.
Doucas, Deborah, Ms.
Douglas, Ron, Mr. & Ms. Irene Tataris
Dowell, Angie, Ms.
Edquid, Marc & Maraquet, Mr. & Mrs.
Edwards, Jeffery & Christina, Dr. & Mrs.
Ekonomou, Anthony & Diana C., Mr. & Mrs.*
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Fallieras, Lauren, Ms.
Fallieras, Nicholas & Susan, Dr. & Mrs.
Fellios, George & Zeina, Mr. & Mrs.
Fentress, Kevin & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.
Ferekides, Christos & Debbie, Dr. & Mrs.
Filoqi, Gjergji & Jennifer, Mr. & Mrs.
Findlay, Andrew & Karina, Mr. & Dr.
Forde, Dwight & Ewana, Mr. & Mrs.
Fotopoulos, Anthony & Carole, Mr. & Mrs.
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Garcia, Rick & Stamic, Mr. & Mrs.
Genever, Robert & Stavroula, Mr. & Mrs.
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Georgiou, Speros & Eleanor, Mr. & Mrs.
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Gerecke, Christina, Ms.
Gerecke, Ed & Terri, Mr. & Mrs.
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Halkias, Athanasios, Mr.
Halkias, Chris, Mr.
Halkias, Demetrios & Camille, Mr. & Mrs.
Halkias, Evangline, Mrs.
Halkias, George & Elaine, Mr. & Mrs.
Hambos, Charlie, Mr.
Hambos, George & Donna, Mr. & Mrs.
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Hampton, Wade, Mr. & Ms. Sasha Artiz-bushev
Hanhan, Amin & Gloria, Mr. & Mrs.
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Molina
Hartung, Mark & JoAnn, Mr. & Mrs.
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Higdon, Skip, Mrs.
Hoff, Eleni, Mrs.
Hoppenstand, Anna Evelyn, Ms.
Horack, Scott & Rena, Mr. & Mrs.
Horton, Maria, Mrs.
Ioannidis, Theodore & Sharon, Mr. & Mrs.
Iraklianos, Mike, Mr.
Irwin, Jon & Pam, Mr. & Mrs.
Ivey, Thomas & Eftyhia, Mr. & Mrs.
Jacobsen, Paul, Mr.
James, Arthur M & Abby, Mr. & Mrs.
Jennewein, Robert & Georgia, Mr. & Mrs.
Jernigan, Bobby & Andrea, Mr. & Mrs.
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Johnston, Angela, Ms.
Jolly, Jim & Jean, Mr. & Mrs.

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 Kaburis, George & Kathy, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kafantaris, Michael & Amy, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kalojiannis, Nicholas & Alicia, Mr. & Mrs.*
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 Kaplan, Elias, Mr.
 Kappiris, Stanley & Erin, Mr. & Mrs.
 Karaku, Ellen, Ms.
 Karounos, Maria, Ms.*
 Karpelenia, Loretta, Pres.
 Kartsonis, George & Kathryn, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kastis, Deano, Mr.
 Katsadouros, Konstantin & Katherine, Mr. & Mrs.
 Katsamakias, Perry & Betty Katherine, Mr. & Mrs.
 Katsaros, Andreas & Stacey, Mr. & Mrs.
 Katsouli, Paulina, Ms.
 Katzaras, George & Angelina, Mr. & Mrs.
 Katzaras, Nick & Helen, Mr. & Mrs.
 Katzaras, Stefan & Kara, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kavouklis, Chris & Debbie, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kavouklis, Michael & Irene, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kavouklis, Nicholas & Edie, Dr. & Mrs.
 Kazanis, Deno & Barbara, Dr. & Dr.*
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 Kiser, Georgeanna, Ms.
 Kladakis, John & Julie, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kladis, George & Charlene, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kladis, Theodore & Amy, Mr. & Mrs.
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 Korakis, Alexandros & Louise, Mr. & Mrs.
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 Koudouna, Dora, Ms.
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 Lambrou, James & Michelle, Mr. & Mrs.
 Langas, Dimitrios & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.
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 Laskey, Fred & Coleen, Mr. & Mrs.
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 Letobarone, Domenic & Melanie, Mr. & Dr.*
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 Lucas, Velina, Ms.
 Maas, Mary, Ms.
 MacLaury, Kathryn, Ms.
 Makris, Dean, Mr.
 Mamerio, Diana, Ms.*
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 Mantzanas, Chris & Nicole, Mr. & Mrs.
 Mason, Rex Garrison & Maria Nicole, Mr. & Mrs.
 Matassini, Nicholas G. & Christina, Mr. & Mrs.
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 Mellon, Andria, Ms.
 Melton, Greg & Victoria, Mr. & Mrs.
 Melton, Jaime, Ms.
 Melton, Stephanie, Ms.
 Merrell, Dustin & Cory, Mr. & Mrs.
 Michos, Syliva, Ms.
 Milligan, Mary, Pres.
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 Mourer, Brett & Ana, Mr. & Mrs.
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 Naum, Dean & Sandra, Mr. & Mrs.
 Nenos, Byron & Jeanie, Mr. & Mrs.
 Nenos, John, Mr.
 Nenos, Mary, Mrs.
 Nenos, Peter, Mr.
 Nenos, Vasilios, Mr.
 Nicklow, Tom & Demetra, Mr. & Mrs.
 Nicolaou, Christos & Dee, Mr. & Mrs.
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 Nolen, Pamela, Ms.
 Olsen, Scott & Elphida, Mr. & Mrs.
 O'Neal, Patrick, Mr.*
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 Paliou, Artemis, Mrs.
 Paliou, George & Julie, Mr. & Mrs.
 Paliou, Michael & Bessie, Mr. & Mrs.
 Paloumpis, Tom & Jenny, Mr. & Mrs.
 Panopoulos, Theodoros & Marisa, Mr. & Mrs.
 Panos, Euripides & Denise, Mr. & Mrs.
 Papadakis, Alec & Lauren, Mr. & Mrs.
 Papadakis, Justin, Mr.
 Papadopoulos, John & Irene, Mr. & Mrs.
 Papaefstathiou, Louis & Joanna, Mr. & Mrs.
 Papakosta, Peter & Vasiliki, Mr. & Mrs.
 Pappas, Paul & Georgia, Mr. & Mrs.
 Paras, Gus & Marina, Mr. & Mrs.
 Parker, Ryan & Alexa, Mr. & Mrs.
 Passavanti, Robert & Debbra, Mr. & Mrs.
 Patellis, Theophilos, Dr. & Mrs. Maria Dorkfy
 Patrascoiu, Florin & Marenca, Mr. & Mrs.
 Pavloulos, George, Mr.
 Peckham, Richard & Victoria, Mr. & Mrs.
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 Perry, Christian & Athina, Mr. & Mrs.*
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 Pessemier, Tom & Christy, Mr. & Mrs.
 Peters, Alexandra, Ms.
 Pierroutsakos, Alex & Valerie, Mr. & Mrs.*
 Pileggi, Suzanne, Ms.
 Plakas, Theodore & Kyriakoula, Mr. & Mrs.
 Quinn, Toula, Ms.
 Ricks, Georgia, Ms.
 Rindone, Ryan & Megan, Mr. & Mrs.
 Ritchie, Robert, Mr. & Mrs. Debra Gavalas
 Robinson, Clayton & Tanya, Mr. & Mrs.*
 Rogers, II, Aris, Mr.
 Rose, Maryann, Ms.
 Ross, Daniel & Nicole, Mr. & Mrs.*
 Roussos, Archie & Eleftheria, Mr. & Mrs.
 Roussos, Nicholas, Mr.
 Roy, Perry & Alysa, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sakaris, Thomas & Barbara, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sakellaris, Anne, Mrs.
 Sakkis, John & Katherine, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sarantos, Christos & Sara, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sarantos, Pete & Ann, Mr. & Mrs.*
 Scarfogliero, Gennaro & Alexis, Mr. & Mrs.
 Scharbach, Michael, Mr.
 Scourtes, Christine, Mrs.
 Serbanos, Michael & Patricia, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sermier, Eustace G & Bennette, Dr. & Mrs.
 Shah, Syed & Ms. Kelly Psilos, Dr.
 Sheridan, Thomas, Mr. & Ms. Eleni Piperaki*
 Sibley, Rusty & Despina, Mr. & Mrs.
 Skourellos, Dante & Lindsey, Mr. & Mrs.
 Skourellos, Michael & Shirley, Mr. & Mrs.
 Skoures, William & Egli, Mr. & Mrs.
 Smith, Thomas Dr. & Dr. Golfo Alexopoulos,
 Smyrnakis-Rodriguez, Theresa A., Ms.*
 Sorolis, Eftihia, Ms.
 Soteriou, George & Selena, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sotiropoulos, Bill & Jenny, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sotiropoulos, Paul & Terri, Mr. & Mrs.
 Speegle, Gary & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.
 Spencer, Wayne & Pauline, Mr. & Mrs.
 Spirides, Harry G., Mr.
 Stamas, Nick & Taylor, Mr. & Ms.*
 Stavropoulos, Jane, Ms.
 Steele, Elliott & Dianne, Mr. & Mrs.
 Stephanides, Christos, Mr.
 Stephanides, Marios & Ourania, Dr. & Mrs.
 Stilian, Douglas & Bridget, Mr. & Mrs.
 Stingulescu, Julia, Ms.*
 Stitt, William & Deborah, Mr. & Mrs.
 Stonestreet, John & Anastasia, Dr. & Mrs.
 Stratigakos, Helen, Ms.
 Stratigakos, Louis & Georgia, Mr. & Mrs.
 Strouboulis, George & Constandina, Mr. & Mrs.
 Tedrick, Matthew & Ellen, Mr. & Mrs.*
 Theofilos, John & Elizabeth, Mr. & Mrs.
 Theophanous, Peter, Mr.
 Thomas, John & Stephanie, Mr. & Mrs.*
 Thomas, Larry & Tina, Dr. & Mrs.*
 Thomas, Lillian, Ms.*
 Tisdale, Greg, Mr.
 Toney, Sam D. & Alice, Dr. & Mrs.*
 Touliatos, Markissa, Ms.
 Trakas, Andrew & Adrienne, Mr. & Mrs.
 Trakas, Peter & Donna, Mr. & Mrs.
 Triantafyllopoulos, George & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.*
 Trimis, Michael & Diane, Mr. & Mrs.
 Tsibris, John, Dr.
 Tziotis, Andreas & Michele, Mr. & Dr.
 Valaes, Demetrios & Lynn A., Mr. & Mrs.
 Vourloumis, Joanna, Mrs.
 Voykin, David & Amy, Mr. & Mrs.
 Voykin, Mary H, Mrs.
 Walling, Jacklyn, Ms.
 Ward, Gary, Mr. & Ms. Sandra Pappas
 Whaley, Susan, Ms.
 Worley, Christine, Ms.
 Xenick, Emanuel & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.
 Xenick, George & Cindy, Mr. & Mrs.
 Xeroteris, Evangeline, Ms.
 Yohai, Eleni, Ms.
 Yotis, William & Eleonora, Dr. & Mrs.
 Zabetakis, Maria, Ms.
 Zaharis, Constantine & Rachel, Dr. & Dr.
 Zeban, Peter & Judy, Mr. & Mrs.
 Zelatis, John P. & Denise M., Mr. & Mrs.
 Zoumberos, George & Melissa, Mr. & Dr.



We have a parishioner in need of help!

We have a parishioner that has 2 sets of caregivers taking care of her mother throughout the week. This family is proud to call St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church their community for generations. The 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. slot is filled by Medicaid with an agency. The 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. slot is private and paid her family. This schedule is only for Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. So, on Wednesday, no-one comes. In an attempt to save money, the daughter tries to work from home and care for her mom on that one day and it is extremely difficult. The caregivers that come throughout the week, genuinely do love her and have her best interest at heart. However, they do not understand her language, her culture or her Orthodox Christianity. Since she is unable to get to church most of the time, this is something which is a struggle because she needs the interaction with her friends and people of the same culture and mind. It is becoming more and more difficult to get her out of house to do some activities. Visits are made by her friends and some church members but, everyone at one point or another gets busy with their own lives.

We would like to propose that we help this parishioner by making a schedule of different people to spend some time with her during the week while the caregivers are home. We are looking for about an hour visit of conversation, to keep her company, speak to her about Greek culture, cooking and music. Really, anything that relates to her culture and upbringing. She loves to speak in Greek but, she also speaks very well in English. In addition, this wonderful lady also speaks Italian, French and Arabic fluently. This is an open invitation to all members of our community. This family is not looking for anyone to spend any money, bring anything with them or be responsible for her care. We are simply looking for someone to visit her on a weekly basis. She has been sad lately because she misses her usual routine which she is unable to do because she is getting older. We want to try to brighten her week with a visit so that way she doesn't get so lonely that she gives up the will to live. The visitors can be of any age.

We have many people in our community that are in need of visits and assistance. As a part of our community and Body of Christ, it is our responsibility to take care of them and show them some love. If you are interested in helping this specific person or would like to hear about more opportunities to visit the sick and those who are unable to make it to church please contact us. We will give you the information for this specific person, so that way the daughter can work out the scheduling.

If you are able to help out this Parishioner, please contact the office!

Thank You from Barbara Akrotirianakis (Father's mom)

Barbara wishes to thank our community for phone calls, cards and prayers, during her battle with cancer. Keep sending those thoughts and prayers, they are much appreciated!

*thank
you*

A Quick Note from Past Parishioner ...

Fr. Stavros,

I wanted to drop you a quick note to say how impressed I with where you have taken St. John's since I left Tampa ten years ago. My observations now as an outsider: The church was full! Full! 10 years ago this was not the case. We were greeted by a friendly hostess at the candle stand – genuinely pleased to see newcomers in church. You had a full roster of altar boys, their robes were smart, clean and they fit. The boys were organized, synchronized, appropriately reverent, and seemed to work as a true team. They also knew what to do and when to do it. Truthfully, I have never seen altar boys as organized as yours were on Sunday. The liturgy booklet that you created specifically for St. John's was helpful and especially useful for my girlfriend who is not Orthodox. The Sunday school is clearly in good hands as evidenced by the teachers and the way you have organized the dismissal to classes after communion. Your sermon was spot-on, as usual. This has not changed – it was great then and is great now. Choir and chanters were uplifting and wonderful. I was touched by your personal dialogue with the family that lost their child – this was a dialogue that one would only dare undertake in the presence of family, and clearly St. John's is now one big family. What a comfort it must be for that particular family at this awful time to be part of such a spiritual and supportive Orthodox community. Congratulations on yours and many others hard work under your leadership – I can tell you that from your perspective, you may not recognize the strides you have made in Tampa, but as an outsider who returns infrequently, the progress and changes are clear and impressive. You have created a beautiful Orthodox community in Tampa that you have reason to be proud of. Manny (A Visitor of St. John)

Small Group Bible Study

Our Bible Studies are going in full swing. New people are welcome at any time!

Monday Night Bible Study (for everyone)

We will be studying the Book of Acts

Location: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in the Administration Building meeting room

Group Leader: Charlie Hambos

Charlie.hambos@gmail.com, 813-843-8471

Meeting time: Monday evenings from 6:30–8:00 p.m.

Meeting Dates: October 2, 9, 16 and 30

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

Location: Meets at the home of Debbie Kavouklis, 3315 Jean Circle, Tampa, FL 33629

Group Leader: Debbie Kavouklis

dkavouklis1@verizon.net, 813-690-0155.

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

Meeting Dates: October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

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

Location: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in the Administration Building in the meeting room

Group Leader: Michael Palios

mpalios@gmail.com 813-523-0346

Meeting time: Wednesday mornings from 7:30-8:30 a.m.

For this early morning group, bring your own coffee or breakfast food if you wish.

Meeting Dates: October 4, 11, 18, 25

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: At the Church in the Library

Group Leader: Bessie Palios & Ellen Karaku

bmp1126@yahoo.com 813-523-0347

ekaraku@verizon.net 813-835-0691

Meeting time: Tuesday evenings from 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Meeting Dates: October 3, 10, 17, 24

Thank You to all of Our Friends!

Barbara Akrotirianakis - Whittier, CA
William J Camarinos - Alexandria, VA
Richard & Mickie Bass - Asheville, NC
Jason & Kelly Bangos - Clearwater, FL
Nicholas & Anna Karnavas - New Port Richey, FL
Michael Kapetan - Ann Arbor, MI
Perry & Fay Stamatiades - Asheville, NC
Melvin & Violet Tamashiro - Kaneohe, HI
Wesley & Melissa Thompson - Clearwater, FL
Demitrius & Katherine Klimis - Boardman, OH

Mary Spanos - St. Augustine, FL
Bessie Bliziotes - Palm Cost, FL
Suzanne Alvarez - Tampa, FL
Lazarus & Maria Kavouklis - Tarpon Springs, FL
William & Kane Chapman - Palmetto, FL
Lillian Thomas - Highland, IN
Kathleen Mendez - Ponte Vedra, FL
Theodora Poletis - Baltimore, MD
Basil & Dorothy Nosal - Fredericksburg, VA

Friends of St. John the Baptist - 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 by being a "Friend of St. John the Baptist." 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 the Baptist 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.

Thank you for your consideration of our parish.

Friend of St. John the Baptist:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

_____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$200 _____ Other

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

Parish Council Elections

Even though it is October, it will be time to start thinking about Parish Council Elections. **On October 29, 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, October 29. If you wish to be nominated for the Parish Council, please plan to attend the meeting on Sunday, October 29 and have someone nominate you, or send a letter to Fr. Stavros prior to the commencement of the meeting, 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 10, following the 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:

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 of this writing, there has been no regional seminar set for the Tampa Bay Area for Parish Council Candidates—there will be a two hour seminar on Tuesday, November 14, from 7:00-9:00 p.m., to be held at St. John, which each candidate will be required to attend. In the event that a regional seminar is scheduled for this year, each candidate may be required to attend that one as well.

~ Each candidate is expected to be active in the sacramental life of the church. This is covered in Article 18, section one, above. This includes the sacrament of confession. If a candidate has not been to confession in the past year, they are not eligible to run for the Parish Council. In the event your spiritual father is serving another parish, he can send a one line email to Fr. Stavros indicating your participation in this sacrament in the past year.

~All candidates for the Parish Council will be subject to a background check. Any background check that reveals a felony conviction will make a candidate ineligible to serve for ten years. Any background check revealing a conviction for financial misconduct—embezzlement, fraud, etc., will make a candidate permanently ineligible to serve on the Parish Council.

~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 November 17.

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

Fall Parish Assembly



The Fall Parish Assembly will be held on Sunday, October 29, following the Divine Liturgy. The principal agenda items will be the 2018 budget and nomination of Parish Council and auditing committee.

Welcome to the Parish Council

The Structure of the Greek Orthodox Church

For the next several months, we will be printing excerpts from a pamphlet entitled “Welcome to the Parish Council”, which has been put out by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The material covered not only relates to the work of the Parish Council but how the church is set up to run in the United States, the relationship between clergy and laity, between parish and Metropolis and Archdiocese, and between ministries and parish. It is interesting and relevant information for all to read, whether you serve on the parish council or not.

What Are The GOAA Regulations Under Which Our Parishes Function?

In Holy Scripture St. Paul wrote that in the life of the Church “all things should be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40).

The GOAA Regulations of the Archdiocese (formerly known as UPR), have evolved over the years in order to provide the structure and guidelines necessary to better meet parish needs. They are based on the Canon Law of the Church, the Charter granted by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as well as American laws governing non-profit organizations and churches.

The Regulations clearly set out the best and most appropriate ways for the Parish to operate, addressing almost every situation a Parish will encounter. For example, they provide guidelines for making major decisions such as buying, selling, and mortgaging Parish property. They also allow each individual Parish the flexibility to identify and address its own unique needs through the creation of local Parish bylaws. Such local bylaws must not conflict with the GOAA Regulations and are subject to the approval of the local Hierarchy in order to take effect.

For detailed descriptions of Church governance, policies and procedures please refer to the Regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOAA), available at the Archdiocese website: www.goarch.org/en/archdiocese/documents/

Disclosure Policy

A Disclosure Policy has been adopted by the Clergy-Laity Congress and approved by the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

All members of the Archdiocesan Council, the Metropolis Councils, and the Parish Councils are entrusted with responsibilities which affect the whole Archdiocese. Therefore, it is important that all Council Members honor that trust. This requires honesty, integrity, competence, and care in managing the affairs of the Archdiocese.

Council Members shall, by virtue of their position and while serving in their capacity, act only in the best interest of the Archdiocese. A conflict of interest may exist when the interests or concerns of any Council Member or a Council Member’s immediate family or any organization to which a Council Member has a duty, may be seen as competing or conflicting with the interests or concerns of the Archdiocese.

At the first meeting of the Council commencing a new term, (or soon thereafter), each Council Member shall state in writing, any formal affiliation as well as membership he or she has with religious entities, professional organizations, public interest groups, political organizations or business enterprises, which might give rise to a possible conflict of interest (e.g., owner, officer, director, employee, etc.). A new Council Member shall be advised of the Policy upon undertaking the duties of his/her office.

Dispute Resolution Procedures

The Clergy-Laity Congress has also established and adopted Dispute Resolution Procedures that are a part of the GOAA Regulations.

The Holy Scriptures teach us that when disputes arise among the members of the faith family, they should not be tried by the civil courts, but rather resolved within the faith community.

When any of you has a grievance against another, do you dare to take it to court before the unrighteous instead of taking it before the saints?... In fact, to have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you (1 Corinthians 6:7).

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, and if anyone has a complaint against another, just as Christ forgave you, so should you also forgive. And with all these things have love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ govern your heart; for that end, you are called in One Body; and be thankful to Christ (Colossians 3:13-15).

In all disputes that involve ecclesiastical, theological, canonical, Church governance, or Church property issues and the life of the Parish or Church community, each Parish and Party shall adhere to the established Dispute Resolution Procedures. These procedures include mechanisms for resolving grievances and mediating conflicts, providing an ultimate process for the disposition of disputes.

These Dispute Resolution Procedures do not displace the Holy Canons and Traditions of the Church, but rather serve as a critical adjunct authority, providing a sole and exclusive remedy for the resolution of disputes, thereby preserving the peace in the Church.

The Dispute Resolution Procedures are posted on the website of the Archdiocese: www.goarch.org/archdiocese/documents.

What Is The Relationship Between The Priest And The Parish Council?

The Parish Priest is the representative of the local Hierarchy in the Parish and as such heads and administers the Parish. As the spiritual leader of the Parish, his priestly duties consist in shepherding the Parish entrusted to his care, directing its orderly life, preserving its unity, and keeping it faithful to its divine purpose of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ (GOAA Regulations 17:1). He and the members of the Parish Council are together responsible for the administration of the Parish. The following pastoral and theological guidelines should govern the working relationship of the Priest and the Parish Council:

Synergy

The Parish Council is comprised of the Parish Priest and the elected (or in some cases appointed) members of the Parish in good standing. Clergy and laity, working together for God’s glory, best exemplify “the unity of the faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit” described in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. Their

working together is a liturgy, from the Greek words meaning: “people and work/task.” According to Orthodox Theology and Canon Law, a priest cannot celebrate the Divine Liturgy without the laity. Indeed, the very gift of his priesthood exists not for himself, but for the sake of the laity. Likewise, the laity cannot celebrate a Divine Liturgy without a canonically ordained Priest. There is a synergy—a cooperation of clergy and laity which is expressed liturgically—which must also govern every aspect of the Parish’s life, including administration.

All persons have their own personality, gifts, and talents which they are urged to contribute like instruments in a symphony orchestra, all playing harmoniously and thus making a beautiful melody unto the Lord. This will only happen when we ask the question: “What is in the best interest of the Parish and the spiritual growth of its Parishioners?” The financial and administrative issues of the Parish should never be separated from the life and mission of the Church.

For the Parish Council to demonstrate leadership and be effective, both Parish Council members and the Priest must be supportive of each other’s ministry. The Priest is trained in Theology which includes the study of Dogmatics, Scripture, Church History, Canon Law, Liturgy, and Pastoral Care, as well as Parish Administration. By virtue of his ordination and canonical assignment by the Metropolitan, he heads and administers the Parish (GOAA Regulations 17:1) and is entrusted with the spiritual care of his parishioners. Parish Council members are elected to assist the Priest in serving and ministering to God’s People. They bring a wealth of knowledge, gifts, and talents that the priest should utilize for the purpose and mission of the Church.

The Parish is the Body of Christ, the local Eucharistic community, and the Parish Council should reflect this reality through their work. St. Paul, speaking about the ministry of both clergy and laity, says: “All of you, then, are Christ’s Body, and each one of you is a part of it. In the Church, then, God has appointed first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:27-28).

A word must be added about a misconception that occurred in the early years of our Archdiocese. It was believed that a Parish should be administered by a so-called “division of duties,” i.e. the priest should take care of all “religious matters,” and the parish council should handle “everything else.” The Parish Council cannot implement a secularized business model to handle the life, work, and ministry of the Church, as this takes away from focusing on Christ’s mission. This division of parish life into “spiritual” and “secular” spheres is not valid in Orthodoxy. Regardless if the subject is fundraising, publicity, or administration, spiritual values must underlie all decisions and policies.

For this very reason, a program of continuing adult education for laity should be an important part of every Parish. When Orthodox Christians become acquainted with the apostolic teaching, theology, history, and Tradition of the Church, their depth of spiritual commitment increases, and their understanding of Christian leadership and stewardship is rewarded with new insight. Basic decisions are then made based upon a common love and understanding of the Church and Her mission in which both the Priest and the Parish Council share.

When love and mutual respect between the Priest and the members of the Parish Council flow unreservedly, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished. The laity must look to their Priest for leadership and spiritual direction, and the Priest in turn must value the experience and leadership of the laity in areas where they are

knowledgeable. If a disagreement over the interpretation of policy should occur, the matter is referred to the Metropolitan (or the Archbishop for the Direct Archdiocesan District) for consideration and final decision. Fortunately, such instances are exceptions compared to the harmony and progress that occur when the spirit of Christian love and goodwill prevail.

Note: If there is more than one priest assigned to a parish, only the Proistamenos is officially a member of the Parish Council. It is suggested, however, that other parish clergy participate in meetings of the Parish Council so that they may become familiarized with the work and ministry of the Council. This is also recommended since the functions and decisions of the Parish Council are directly related to ministries coordinated by parish clergy. “Parish Council members are elected to assist the Priest in serving and ministering to God’s People.”

Ministry-Oriented Leadership

Because it is engaged in providing Christ-centered servant leadership, the Parish Council as a leadership team and administrative body should be “ministry-oriented.” What does this mean? The very term administration is an old Latin word that can literally be translated as “towards ministry” or “towards service.” Every activity and administrative decision of the Parish Council should encourage and facilitate ministry in the Parish.

The Parish Council should identify necessary ministries, functions, and events that will enable the life of the Parish to flourish in a spiritually healthy way. These can be further organized into related groups of ministries, i.e., youth and Christian education, mission and outreach, stewardship and fundraising, Greek education and cultural activities, etc. It is recommended that the number of ministry groupings should be equal to the number of Parish Council members minus the president and the treasurer.

In order to provide stability and uniformity to the ongoing work of the parish from year to year, these ministries may be defined in the local Parish bylaws.

The responsibility of overseeing the ministries of the Parish lies with the Parish Council. In the beginning of each year, the Priest, together with the newly elected Parish Council president, assigns each Parish Council member to a particular ministry according to his/her abilities, talents, and preferences. It then becomes the responsibility of that Council member to oversee the assigned ministry and report to the Council. Ideally, the Parish Council members act as overseers and coordinators and seek the involvement of other parishioners to chair and staff the ministries.

These individuals are chosen in consultation with the priest and the parish council president. As part of their responsibilities, the Parish Council members will bring any issues of funding to the Council, assist in developing leadership, recruit other members to the ministry, and recognize the work of those parishioners who contributed in specific ministries.

Welcoming Committee

One vital ministry that the Council should not overlook is the “Welcoming Committee” whose goal is to create a warm and welcoming culture in the community. This will greatly enhance the way that visitors are received into the church, inactive members are contacted, and new members are added into the Body of Christ. All members should feel welcomed, appreciated, and valued as part of the family.

~ October 2017 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	2 Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Orthodoxy 101 6:30 p.m.	3 WBS 9:30 a.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Paraklesis 6:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	4 ** MBS 7:30 a.m. Adult Greek Dance 7:15 p.m.	5 Young at Heart Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.	6 ** St. Pete Volleyball Tournament	7 St. Pete Volleyball Tournament
8 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Pre-Teen retreat YAL 5:00 p.m.	9 Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	10 Clergy meetings 10/10-10/12 Fr. Stavros out of town WBS 9:30 a.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	11 ** MBS 7:30 a.m. Adult Greek Dance 7:15 p.m.	12 Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.	13 **	14
15 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Youth Sunday AHEPA/Daughters GOYA 5:00 p.m.	16 Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	17 WBS 9:30 a.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	18 ** MBS 7:30 a.m. St. Luke Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Adult Greek Dance 7:15 p.m.	19 Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m. Philoptochos Board Baking Day	20 **	21 Community Outreach
22 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Prayer for Medical personnel Fall Festival Philoptochos Mtg.	23 Evening Liturgy for St. James Orthros 5:00 p.m. Liturgy 6:00 p.m.	24 WBS 9:30 a.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	25 ** MBS 7:30 a.m. Baking Day Adult Greek Dance 7:15 p.m.	26 St. Demetrios Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.	27 **	28 GOYA Service Project
29 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Parish Assembly	30 Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Baking Day - Back up date	31 WBS 9:30 a.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	Diaper Drive for Alpha House by Philoptochos throughout month of October			

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

2418 W. Swann Avenue

Tampa, FL 33609-4712

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

officestjohngoctampa@gmail.com

www.greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com

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St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

Timetable of Services

Sundays: Orthros 8:45 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) 813-394-1038 (Cell)
frstav@gmail.com

Pastoral Assistant Charlie Hambos
813-876-8830 (Office) 813-843-8471 (Cell)
Charlie.hambos@gmail.com

Parish Council
Alkis Crassas, President 813-690-3867
Mike Xenick, VP 813-340-8737
Gary Ward, Treasurer 813-846-3898
Sandra Pappas, Secretary 813-785-3747
George Chagaris 727-420-1920
Carole Fotopoulos 813-982-0947
Jimmy Konstas 813-220-7352
Catherine Mitseas 813-571-0658
Ryan Rindone 704-564-2046
Aris Rogers, II 813-309-5525
Dante Skourellos 813-765-9534

Office Staff
Monica Gjerde, Office Manager 813-876-8830
officestjohngoctampa@gmail.com
Debbie Bowe, Bookkeeper
debstjohntpa@gmail.com fax: 813-443-4899

Adult Greek School
Magda Myer 813-909-2327

AHEPA
Gus Paras, President 813-254-6980

Altar Angels
Engie Halkias 813-932-5859
Sia Blankenship 813-968-8855

Basketball
Perry Katsamakis 516-403-3118
Jimmy Konstas 813-220-7352

Bible Study
Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

Bookstore
Bill Manikas 813-960-3679

Chanter
Nick Andreadakis 813-516-6081

Choir
Artie Palios, Director 813-831-1294
Ruth Losovitz, Organist 727-688-2782

Community Outreach
Betty Katherine Katsamakis 813-468-1596

Dance Group
H XAPA ΜΑΣ, Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668
Bessie Palios, 813-523-0347
Maraquet Edquid 813-422-8963
Parea, Marina Choundas 813-877-6136
Anna Maria Bavaro 732-239-9085
Panigyri, Vanessa Aviles 813-221-2194

Daughters of Penelope
Maria Zabetakis, President 813-748-7709

Finance Committee
Gary Ward 813-846-3898

Food Pantry
Anetta Alexander 813-758-2689

Gasparilla Parking
John Kokkas 727-992-4615

GOYA
Maria Koutroumanis 813-245-3854
Kara Katzaras 863-669-6739

Hope/Joy
Debbie Nicklow 813-690-0671

Junior Olympics
Dean Koutroumanis 813-624-4620

MOMS
Mary Ann Konstas 813-215-9862
Lindsey Skourellos 813-503-7845

OCF
Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

Oratorical Festival
Peggy Bradshaw 727-244-1374

Philoptochos
Lisa Alsina 813-728-1094

Small Group Bible Study
East, Donna Hambos 813-843-8412
Men, Fr. Stavros 813-394-1038
South, Bessie Palios 813-523-0347
Women, Debbie Kavouklis 813-258-5571

Strategic Planning
Marc Edquid 813-422-8940
Gary Ward 813-846-3898

Stewardship
Sandra Pappas 813-785-3747
Pete Trakas 813-505-2193

Sunday School
Vickie Peckham 813-406-5626

Usher
Tom Georgas 813-985-0236

Visitation Committee
Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

Welcome Ministry
Maria Xenick 813-765-3587

Young at Heart
Carole Fotopoulos 813-982-0947
Mary Nenos 813-935-2096

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 10th of each month. You may send announcements to the church office through email.

“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.