

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 2020

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

Pastoral Guidelines related to Covid-19

The Messenger goes to the printer on the 15th of each month for the following month. The calendar of events may or may not be reflective of what we will do in the month of October. As we have been doing each month, we lead off *The Messenger* with some pastoral guidelines relate to Covid-19.

It is safe for 85 worshippers plus 10 workers to be in the church at one time and still be social distancing. Because the number of worshippers has exceeded 85 each weekend, we will continue to celebrate the Divine Liturgy on Saturdays and Sundays. If the rule on social distancing should change during the month of October, the Saturday Divine Liturgies will be cancelled.

We celebrate Paraklesis every Wednesday (it will be at 6:00 p.m., except for on October 21 when it will be at 10:00 a.m.) and will continue to do so until we are able to come all together and worship. If this happens during October, the Wednesday Paraklesis services will be curtailed. On the Wednesday after we are all able to congregate for the first time, we will celebrate a Holy Unction Service to pray for the continued healing of the world.

Until the pandemic is over and we hear otherwise, we will continue to utilize SignUpGenius in order to attend the Divine Liturgy and other services. We will continue to check temperatures and seat people according to social distancing guidelines. We will continue to ask that people not congregate after services.

Beginning in October, you may sign up for any Sunday or any other service where you wish to worship. Also, if you are able to worship not on a Sunday, please do so, so that we can reserve Sunday for those who can only worship on Sundays. If you sign up and can't make a service, please take your name off the list as soon as you know you can't attend, so make room for others to come. We want all services to have as many people as possible, up to 85. **Also, the crew who helps outside at the check-in table will leave the outside table to worship at 10:15 a.m. We ask that if you are attending the Divine Liturgy, that you please be courteous and arrive on time. If you arrive after 10:15 a.m., please knock on the side door and someone will come outside to assist you. However, no one will be admitted to the church during the Gospel and the sermon as this is disruptive. This is approximately 10:20-10:30 a.m. Thank you for your cooperation on this.**

For those who are not able to worship in person, we will continue to live-stream all services. We will also continue to provide Sunday school materials for our children, our teens, and our adults on-line until this pandemic is over.

The latest information will always be available on our website and through constant contact. Both our Metropolis and parish protocols for coming back to church safely are on our website. Thank you for your patience in filtering through all of our constant contacts. It is really the most effective way to communicate news and comments during this time.

Finally, a big thank you for the large crew of volunteers who assist in order to make sure we are safe at every service—the nursing ministry, the welcome ministry, the ushers, the altar servers, and the guest chanters. Everyone has done a great job coming together to make sure we can offer regular worship, as well as these extra services in a way that is safe.

Rev. Fr. Stavros N. Akrotirianakis, Priest

2418 W. Swann Avenue, Tampa, FL 33609 Office: (813) 876-8830 Email: office@stjohntpa.org

Website: <http://www.stjohntpa.org>

Father Stavros' Message

Haven't We All Had Enough of Our Masks? (And not the Covid ones)

Every year during the month of October, masks are a big topic of conversation, especially for our kids, as they make their plans for what they will dress up as for Halloween. Masks will again be the topic of conversation this year, as Halloween most likely will be cancelled, and we will continue to debate the efficacy and effectiveness of wearing masks in the fight against Covid-19. I don't know anyone who likes wearing the masks we wear around town these days. Some of us wear them out of genuine concern for others. Some of us wear them to be compliant with the law. And some of us wear them very begrudgingly. I read somewhere recently that masks take away some of our humanity. When we can't see other people's smiles, or the countenance on their faces, it takes away a big part of our relationships with one another. We certainly hope that our country continues to trend in the right direction with the coronavirus and that we won't be needing to wear masks for much longer, at least not the Covid ones.

Let's talk about Halloween masks for a moment. What is the benefit of wearing a Halloween mask? For many, it's just fun to dress up and pretend to be something or someone you are not. A mask also conceals identity. I highly recommend the movie "Wonder" to you—it is about a boy with a facial deformity. And he says that his favorite day of the entire year is Halloween, because that's the day he gets to wear a mask and just fit in with everyone else. No one recognizes him with a mask on, and therefore no one bullies him or ridicules him.

Non-Covid masks, therefore, do two things. They allow us to hide who we really are, as well as letting us pretend to be someone we are not. Metaphorically speaking, there is a systemic problem in our society, because mask wearing is not restricted to Halloween, or even to covid-19. We all wear masks, to some extent, every day of our lives.

Every time we try to be something we are not, it's like we are wearing a mask. That includes every time we sin. Because sin is not who we are, nor who God created us to be. We were created to be like God—loving, kind, forgiving. We were created to be in union with God, and sin is when we break our union with God, even if only for a few moments.

Masks also allow us to pretend to be people we are not. Many people put on a mask to attend church each Sunday (again, we are not talking about the Covid ones), in the sense that they show up to worship, despite a life beset with significant moral failures, or blinding rage, or no real concept of Who Christ is. Many people in the world wear a "mask" with a huge smile on it, despite that fact that under the mask there is no smile, just a sense of brokenness.

In a sense, we encourage people to wear masks to conceal who they really are. Why? Because we've made being vulnerable into a statement of weakness, rather than a statement of strength. Because we're eager to share someone's secrets, rather than assure others it is safe to confide in us. And thus we have a society of mask wearers. Some wear the masks as a way of protecting themselves. It is easier to wear a lie than deal with the truth. Some wear it out of a sense of compliance—they somehow think everyone but them is cool and collected, as



if everyone has to wear a mask of happiness, whether they are unhappy or not. And some wear their masks begrudgingly—they are angry, hurt, or lost because they have no one to confide in. They feel alone and trapped.

It's time to take the masks off. (Again, not the Covid masks—we'll take those off when the pandemic is over). No, it's time to take the masks of our inauthentic lives off, and instead be authentic with one another. As an aside, when His Grace Bishop Sevastianos was in our parish on August 23, he asked people to remove their masks for two seconds so we could see one another. People smiled with joy because they could actually see one another. When the masks were removed, there was joy. It's time to take the metaphorical masks we wear off, so that we can truly "see" one another.

Another movie involving masks is called "The Man in the Iron Mask." This movie is about twins who looked exactly alike. One of them becomes the king of France. And he orders the other one to be imprisoned within an iron mask, so that no one will ever see his true face and know who he truly is. It's an entertaining movie, for sure. But for many people, that movie is real life. They never let anyone see who they truly are, for fear that they won't be accepted, or that they will have to confront their own truth. It seems safer just to leave the mask on.

We've all seen how hard it is to talk with a mask on. We've all had the experience of getting light-headed because we've worn the mask too long. And we've all struggled to fully understand someone, or fully express ourselves because the masks have deprived us of seeing one another. We all know these feelings, sadly, all too well. And we all know what it is like to hide behind some kind of mask, afraid to express our true selves.

If we all agree this is a problem, the hiding behind the metaphorical masks, then why can't we all agree to work on the solution, which is creating environments where it is safe to be honest and vulnerable, where we can lean on each other for

support and encouragement, and trust one another to help carry the burden rather than share our weaknesses with others? I remember one year at summer camp, I sat and talked with one of the older cabins. This cabin had gotten very close over the course of the week. They had rapport, trust, and genuine caring for one another. On the last day of camp, one of them complained, “when I get back into the real world, I won’t have anyone that I can really talk to, I won’t have anyone who I can be the genuine me with.” And then all of them started making the same complaint. I then said to them, “Do you realize that you all can be the solution to this problem? Since you all agree that everyone has this problem, of needing a place to be the genuine you, and if everyone believes they are capable of being the good and genuine friend each needs, can’t you each be part of the solution to this problem?”

The same goes for each of us. I would hope we all agree that we’re tired of the metaphorical masks we all seem forced to wear. We all crave places where we can be honest and vulnerable. We are all capable of providing these safe spaces for one another. After all, it doesn’t require an advanced degree to be able to hold a confidence or offer a sympathetic ear. It doesn’t take any kind of training to be kind or loving. All it takes is desire.

When the Covid pandemic is over, I plan to make some changes, for my own good and the good of those around me. I’ll wash my hands longer and more often. I’ll be more quick to stay home when I don’t feel well. And I’ll be more cognizant

of the people around me. I’ll think more of the “good of the other” than I used to.

In this time of wearing Covid masks, I hope we will each give some thought to the other masks that we all wear, and think of ways that we can be more kind, more genuine and safer people, so that we can create spaces where people can be more honest and more vulnerable, where they can remove their masks of insecurity, trusting that they will find people who can keep a confidence and who can provide a shoulder to cry on, and an encouraging word.

Halloween is supposed to be a fun day where people get to dress up and pretend to be people they aren’t. Halloween should be celebrated one day a year, not on every day of the year.

We all hate the Covid masks. We’re all tired of them. When the day comes that we can finally take them off, let’s not keep on our other masks. Let’s take those off too.

We will have a better quality of life when the Covid masks come off. We will have a more complete experience of one another when they are removed. The same is true for the other masks we wear, or that we feel forced to wear, or that we force others to wear. If we can get to a point where everyone’s “masks” can come off, we will have a much better quality of life and a much more genuine experience of one another.

+Fr. Stavros

Interested in Joining the Prayer Team?

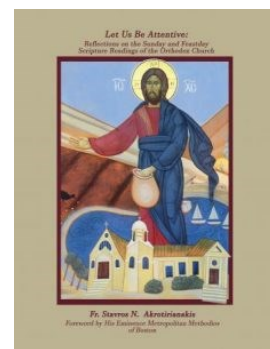
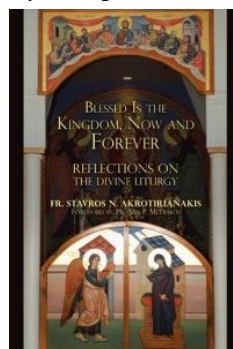
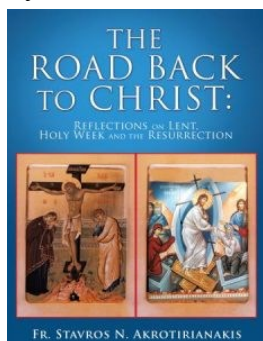
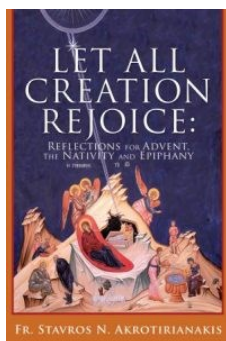
Over **2799** people have! The Prayer Team is a daily message that Father Stavros has been writing for more than 5.5 years! Each day, a scripture verse, a reflection written by Father, and a prayer are emailed to the Prayer Team via Constant Contact. If you would like to join the Prayer Team, please email Charlie at chambos@stjohntpa.org and ask him to add you. If you receive the daily emails already and want to add a friend, please email Charlie or follow the link at the bottom of the daily emails to do so. If you want to forward to a friend, please use the “forward to a friend” option. Also, make sure frstav@gmail.com has been added to your contacts so that these emails stay in your Inbox rather than going to the Junk or Spam folders.

**The Prayer Team has a new dedicated website: PrayerTeam365.com
Check it out! Search by topic and grow in your faith today!**

Father Stavros has authored four books that are available both in the bookstore and on-line. They are entitled:

Let All Creation Rejoice: Reflections on Advent, the Nativity and Epiphany
The Road Back to Christ: Reflections on Lent, Holy Week and the Resurrection
Blessed is the Kingdom, Now and Forever: Reflections on the Divine Liturgy

Let us Be Attentive: Reflections on the Sunday and Feastday Scripture Readings of the Orthodox Church



From the Mailbag

I get asked all kinds of questions about all kinds of topics related to our faith and its application to life. I've learned that if one person has a question, there are probably many other people who have the same question. This month (and perhaps in future months), I'll address some questions that people have sent to me. The following questions are from a zoom seminar I did with college students from several parishes across the country this past summer.



Q: How do we preserve our faith through hardships, the current situation included?

There have been several periods of hardship in the last two thousand years of Christianity. Not only have there been periods of plague and pandemic, but there have also been periods of persecution. The church and her faithful has survived these periods with two things—faith and creativity.

First, let's address faith. Faith is what has brought the church through persecution. For the first three centuries, the church was underground. It was a persecuted church. The only time the church came out from underground was when a Christian was caught and executed publicly. This is the only time people actually saw "the church." And during those first three centuries, the church grew by a rate of 40% per decade. That's because people saw the faith of these Christians, who were willing to die for Christ and it was inspiring. Faith, by its definition, means not fully seeing or fully comprehending something. We have faith in God, because we cannot fully see or fully comprehend God. And during this period of the pandemic, we also need faith, because we cannot fully comprehend how this is all going to end, or when. It takes faith to believe even amongst all this unrest that has gone on now for months. In the span of our lives, this is just a blip. But now that we are in it, six months feels like an eternity, and we don't know if we are just about done or whether it's going to get worse.

Second, creativity. God gave us minds that are creative, like His. We are able to creatively solve problems. Thankfully, during this pandemic, there hasn't been one service where we were not able to participate virtually. Yes, there were a couple of months where no one was allowed to physically enter the

church. And we can't all come each Sunday, and there are some of us who are not comfortable coming (and there is no problem with that whatsoever), but there isn't anyone who can't tune in virtually as often as they'd like. We've still got more of our ministries going, including Bible study, Young at Heart, Women's Bible Study, Griefshare, GOYA and Sunday school going virtually. In fact, we have more people participating in Bible study because they don't have to commute. We have people who are not from our parish, who live out of state participating in some of our ministries via zoom. That's awesome! Sunday school will require some creativity and participation by parents, just like our Holy Week journey did. But it can be done.

So as for how we can preserve ourselves through hardships, it takes faith and creativity.

Q: What will church look like post COVID? What are your views on the new normal of what church will be like?

The easy answer is, I don't really know. No one really knows when, how and what will happen when this is over. I hope there will be a day when we are able to gather all together for worship, filling the pews as we have done in the past. I hope we will be able to once again have the coffee hour, the Greek Festival, GOYA retreats, and the other social things we enjoy. When and how that happens, I have no idea.

I'm honestly concerned that if we don't all come back until sometime in 2021, that will make for an entire year that some people didn't attend church. Will they be out of the habit? Will they come back? I'm guessing that some people who are on the fringe of church participation will probably never come back. I'm guessing that some people will come back stronger than ever, because they have missed it so much.

What I do know is that our faith—what we believe—will not change. And our practice of the faith—the sacraments and services—these will not change either. In our parish, I plan to continue to foster a sense of generosity. Our core values are not going to change either—Love, Worship, Community, Learning, Service.

The church has survived plagues, wars, and persecutions, most lasting much longer than this current crisis. I believe that the church will survive, and in some ways, I think it will be even better. In some ways, it will be challenging. I'm proud of how our community has responded to this crisis. Whether it is people coming forward to chant who never have, or people joining in with the ushers and greeters, our nursing ministry stepping up and having someone participate at EVERY service (we're talking 18-20 services a month) to keep everyone safe, our community raising \$5,000 to help feed the hungry; these are all awesome things we've done. People are also stepping up through the 12 Disciples Program to pray for one another. I hope we'll continue that as well.

More questions on the next page...

Q: How, in times like this, can we stay closer to God when we are so separate from the church? How can we fix our strained relationship with God?

Much of life boils down to choices. We make a choice to have a relationship with God, and with other people too for that matter. We make a choice in the kind of relationship we want to have. We make a choice in the time we spend cultivating our relationships. How do we stay close to God in any circumstance, pandemic or not? The simple answer is: we spend time with Him. I rarely miss a Sunday of worship, though occasionally I do, when I'm on vacation. In my mind, I always mark the Sunday as a special and unique day. If I can't attend church, I make sure that during the hours when the service is being held, I am quiet. I either read the Bible, or when possible, I tune in to an on-line service. I rarely miss celebrating Liturgy on a feastday, but occasionally, there are some minor feast days that we will not celebrate here. On days like that, I tune into another service, and have it on in the background, if I cannot fully be engaged in the service. I will always stop for the Gospel and the Creed, as well as the Great Entrance and the Consecration.

While worship is an important and essential expression of our faith, it is not the only one. Sadly, there are people who worship on Sundays and do not give a thought to prayer, Scripture, or God the rest of the week. Even when we are not in a pandemic, most of us are separate from church on days that are not Sunday. This is why daily prayer and reading of Scripture is essential. Worship is the pinnacle of prayer because it is lengthy and complete, and offers us a chance to receive Christ in the Eucharist, something that generally is not done outside of worship. However, we should have a daily expression of prayer and Scripture, not for a long period of time necessarily, as we do when we worship, but for a period of time. We should also open up the Scriptures and read, if not in an orderly fashion (like reading an entire book of the Bible), we can read in a random fashion. One great tool you can use in studying the Bible is the "Bible Gateway" website, where you can put in any word and read passages related to that word. Sometimes I'll put in a word that summarizes my feelings and read passages related to that. That word might be "frustrated" or "anxious" or "joyful". Then I go to the Bible and read passages related to that.

As for fixing a strained relationship with God, there are a couple of ways to go about this. First, and most simply, repent. Repent means to change. That doesn't necessarily mean radical change. Change can be subtle. For instance, for one who never prays, start by praying today. That is repentance, change. For one who uses foul language a lot, don't use it today. That is repentance, change.

For one who is struggling with serious and habitual sin, a talk with a priest or the sacrament of confession are good places to start. We are not meant to walk in our spiritual journey alone. That's why we have priests to help us along the way.

Most important, our journey with God, like any journey, requires a roadmap, a plan. If you are electing to not worship in person right now, make a plan for virtual worship. If you are worshipping in person, make a plan for how many times per month you are going to worship. Make a plan for when you are going to pray and read Scripture. Make a plan regarding generosity and service to others. And then live by that plan. We use plans regarding helping our children navigate through their activities. We use plans for our finances. We use plans for lots



of things. We should use plans for our spiritual growth as well.

Q: If you have a spiritual father, are you only allowed to go to him for confession, marriage, baptism, etc.

The term "spiritual father" is very misunderstood and overused. Traditionally, the "spiritual father" is a specific person with whom we make our confessions. Most of us have a primary care physician who takes care of our medical needs, or at least is the overall director of them. We go to our primary care physician for regular sickness as well as yearly checkups. The primary care physician may refer us to a specialist, like a cardiologist or a neurologist, etc. for very specific problems. So our primary care doctor is not the only doctor we see, but is the primary (first) doctor we see. The "spiritual father" is the priest to whom we go to for confession. This person may or may not be our parish priest. A parish priest may not have the blessing to hear confession, or a person may just click better with someone else. The priest who hears your confession is your choice. One should go to his or her parish priest for sacraments. A person who is a member of our parish should have their sacraments done in our parish—marriage, baptism, etc. Many people in our parish utilize me as their spiritual father. And many people outside of our parish utilize me for that role as well. There are people in our parish who go to someone outside of our parish for confession, and that is fine. The point is that we should all be going to confession at least once a year, not only to confess our sins and receive absolution, but so that we can receive some guidance as well. My spiritual father lives in San Francisco. He has been my spiritual father for 20 years now. Occasionally, when we have not been able to see each other, with his blessing, I have gone to confession to someone else. But generally, once a year, I either see him out there or he sees me in Florida. And in between confessions, we talk about my spiritual life as well. The "misuse" of the term spiritual father is people who do not go to confession and use that term to describe their priest. I am parish priest to everyone who is a member of our parish. I am only "spiritual father" to those who



engage with me in the sacrament of confession.

One more note on “spiritual fathers.” A “spiritual father” should not be looked at as a “spiritual guru.” He is not some kind of spiritual master and his children are not his servants. A “spiritual father” should also not attempt to control his “spiritual children.” There have been many abuses of this power with spiritual fathers who want to meddle in many aspects of the lives of their spiritual children. My spiritual father is the person I confess in front of; he is a gentle guide and motivating teacher. He is also a friend, who knows how to be both honest and kind, honest in that he tells me what needs correcting, and kind in that he does so in a way that is gentle and encouraging, not intimidating or demeaning.

Q: How do I persevere through prayer and stay committed to a prayer routine?

The simple answer is, you just do it. Same way we get committed to a diet or any kind of new routine. The practical answer is, set a time for it, so that it occurs in the same way each day. Each of us has routines—when I get up in the morning, I pray, I shave, brush teeth, wake up Nicholas, have breakfast, etc. I have a routine at night also, when I go to bed. Our lives are built on routines, whether we like to admit that or not. So, we make prayer part of our “routine.” And we commit to doing that whether we are into it or not. When I wake up in the morning, whatever mood I’m in, I always brush my teeth, as an example. If I’m super busy and super rushed and have a million thoughts on my mind, I never forget to brush my teeth. I’m never too busy to brush my teeth. None of us are. Prayer has to become a basic thing in our lives, something we do without fail, something we are never too busy to do, but also something that we enjoy. We may not “enjoy” it every time, but when we do it and it becomes a habit, we start to see the benefits of prayer, and then it becomes something we enjoy.

I recently read a great story on prayer:

Once a man was asked “What did you gain by regularly praying to God?” The man replied, “Nothing. . .but let me tell you what I lost: anger, ego, greed, depression, insecurity, and fear of death.” Sometimes the answer to our prayers is not gaining but losing; which ultimately is a gain.

Prayer is a good habit we should all be doing. Because there is so much to lose, as the story says, and so much to gain.

Q: What is the church’s view on DNR’s? What is the church’s views on life support machines? Should we keep people on life support machines?

The human being is composed of mind, body, and spirit (soul). The body and mind are measurable and tangible. The soul is not. The soul is tied to the mind. That is because we are a rational faith. A person can’t receive Holy Communion if they are unconscious. Because receiving Holy Communion is a conscious decision. Our faith is not irrational and superstitious, at least it is not supposed to be. Genesis 2:7 describes the creation of man in this way: “Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed in to his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” The word in Septuagint Greek that has been translated as “breath” is the word “Pneuma” which is properly translated as “spirit.” For instance, we call the Holy Spirit, “Tou Agiou Pneumatou.” The mistranslation of this word “breath” has changed the definition of what a life is. If life is breath, then a human being is alive at birth, and is dead when they stop breathing. If life, however, is connected to spirit, then a human being is alive from conception, where a soul is present, until the soul is absent from the body, which we believe happens when a person is brain dead. If the mind is dead, then the spirit has left, along with the mind.

Now, as to these questions, the church allows DNRs, which is a “Do not resuscitate” order. This order lets nature take its course when a person stops breathing. Another way to put it is that it lets God decide that life is over, rather than us trying to cheat death. Now, I’ll qualify this with a DNR should be used when someone is terminally ill. We should not use a DNR for simple surgeries or instances where someone could stop breathing and could successfully resume life if resuscitated. An otherwise healthy person who has some trauma that causes them to stop breathing but where recovery is possible should be resuscitated. A DNR is generally for a terminal situation. I encourage people to make their plans as far as a DNR goes so that their wishes are followed if they stop breathing.

As for keeping someone on life support, there are three things to consider. First, this is a very personal decision. I have never told someone they HAD to remove someone from life support. I’ve let people come to this conclusion on their own. Second, if a person is brain dead, meaning diagnostic tests reveal no brain activity, a machine can keep a person breathing, but in our understanding of life, the soul has left the body and the body should be left to die. So, there is no sin in removing life support at this point, as life, as we define it, is over. If someone wants to wait 24 hours and repeat a test to see if there is brain activity, there is nothing wrong there either. Third, I’ll use the word “recoverability.” If there is a way for someone to recover aspects of life which make life “livable,” then life support should remain. For instance, if a healthy person gets into a car wreck, and is on life support, but their organs are good and they can recover, there is no need to disconnect life support. However, if a person is terminally ill, there is little to no brain activity, and there are in a position where there will be no recovery, it is not only permissible, but a loving gesture to let someone go. If you have questions about this, please call me directly. I’d be willing to discuss this important subject before it becomes an issue for anyone.

Have more questions and want to see them answered in future issues of *The Messenger*. Email them to Fr. Stavros at frstav@gmail.com.

Liturgical Schedule for October 2020

Saturday, October 3	Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Sunday, October 4	2nd Sunday of Luke Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday, October 7	Paraklesis 6:00 p.m.
Saturday, October 10	Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Sunday, October 11	Sunday of the 7th Ecumenical Council - St. Philip the Deacon Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday, October 14	Paraklesis 6:00 p.m.
Saturday, October 17	Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Sunday, October 18	St. Luke the Evangelist Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Prayer for Medical Professionals at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy
Wednesday, October 21	Paraklesis 10:00 a.m.
Thursday, October 22	St. James (Evening Liturgy) Orthros 5:00 p.m. Liturgy of St. James 6:00 p.m.
Saturday, October 24	Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Sunday, October 25	6th Sunday of Luke Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Monday, October 26	St. Demetrios Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday, October 28	Protection of the Holy Theotokos (Oxi Day) Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Paraklesis 6:00 p.m.
Saturday, October 31	Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Sunday, November 1	Sts. Cosmas and Damian Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. **Daylight Savings Ends Set your clocks back one hour



Opt-in on *The Messenger* - In an effort to be more environmentally conscious, we will be mailing *The Messenger* **ONLY** to those who ask. If you wish to receive *The Messenger* by mail, you certainly may. We just ask that you indicate on your stewardship form, or let the office know, that you wish to receive *The Messenger* by mail. We will no longer be mailing *The Messenger* unless you ask us to.

Liturgical Notes for October 2020

Divine Liturgy on all the Saturdays of October - In order to facilitate people being able to worship on a weekly basis, we will celebrate Divine Liturgy on all the Saturdays of October.

Paraklesis to be celebrated every Wednesday - We will continue to celebrate Paraklesis every Wednesday until the end of this crisis, at which point a Holy Unction service will be offered to mark the end of this crisis. In October, Paraklesis will be offered on Wednesday, October 7, 14, and 28 at 6:00 p.m., and on Wednesday, October 21 at 10:00 a.m.

****Should the restrictions change in October and allow for all of us to worship together, the Saturday and Wednesday services will be discontinued.**

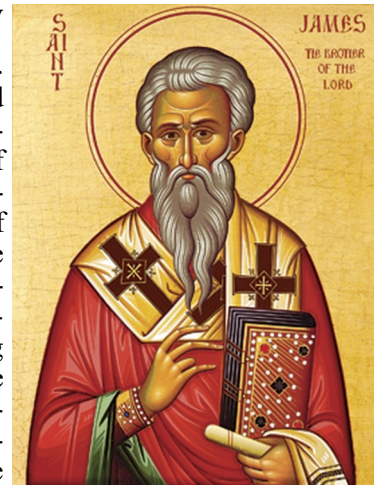
Saturday, October 3- St. Dionysios the Areopagite - St. Dionysios converted to Christianity after hearing St. Paul preach in Athens, becoming one of the first Athenians to convert. He later became the first bishop of Athens, who was later martyred for his faith.

Sunday, 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 18 - 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 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.

Thursday, October 22 - 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 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 Thursday, October 22 at 6:00 p.m. (Orthros at 5:15 p.m.)



Monday, 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 be put in prison. A man named Nestor befriended Demetrios in prison. The Emperor went to the arena to see his favorite gladiator, Lyaios 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 Lyaios, 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 Monday, October 26, at 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, October 28 – Feast of the Holy Protection of the Virgin Mary (Oxi Day) - (Mostly) GREEK Liturgy

October 1 has been celebrated for many centuries as the feastday of the Holy Protection of the Virgin Mary. October 28, 1940, is observed in Greece as Oxi Day, the day the Greeks said “no” to the Axis powers who were trying to invade Greece. Since 1940, the church of Greece moved the feast of the Holy Protection of the Virgin Mary (Agia Skepi) to October 28, to coincide with Oxi Day. In other jurisdictions, it is still celebrated on October 1. Because many of us have our roots in Greece, celebrating the Holy Protection of the Virgin Mary on October is something that has great meaning. In trying to serve the many and diverse needs of our parish, we get requests periodically to do more Greek in the services. Our use of Greek in worship reflects a congregation that by and large does not speak Greek. Making an effort to accommodate these requests, occasionally a weekday Divine Liturgy will be scheduled that will be celebrated *mostly* in Greek. October 28 will be one of these. Based on the turnout, we can schedule more in the months to come.



Sunday, November 1 – Feast of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, the Unmercenary Healers

Sts. Cosmas and Damian are the Patron Saints of the Philoptochos, as they went from place to place healing people and not taking any money for their services. Sts. Cosmas and Damian (called the Agii Anargyri) are also saints we pray to for intercession when we are sick, and are also patron saints of doctors (in addition to St. Luke).



Counting the Wins in our Community

We like to celebrate people in our community who are doing wonderful things both inside and outside of our community. If you have had a significant “win” in your life, please let us know so we can share that. We’ve got some amazing people who do amazing things in our parish.

Parishioners are encouraged to send us “wins” from your personal lives, so that we can celebrate with you as a community. This month’s win is a Community Win for all of us. Because of your generosity, we are able to put in **\$2,500** into the budget each year for disaster relief. We budget **\$500** for five disasters each year, so that when a disaster strikes, we can send money quickly to International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) for immediate relief. This month, we were able to send **\$1,878** for disaster relief for the Beirut explosion, **\$575** for the fires on the West Coast and **\$745** for relief from Hurricane Laura on the Gulf coast. **GREAT JOB ST. JOHN!** Your generosity has allowed us to nearly **\$3,200** to people who are in desperate need of humanitarian relief.



Need a Mask? We have many!

Through the generous donation of a few parishioners, we have reusable cloth masks available. We are thankful especially to Paula (Sakellaris) Weinburg, who made and mailed many of them from Virginia.

If you need a mask, please contact the church office and we can arrange to get you one. Thank you also to the many parishioners who have made and donated masks to us.



St. John the Baptist Community News

Parish Registry

Wedding - Robert Justin Papadakis and Kyleen Marie Carpenter were married on August 21. Rex Garrison and Maria Nicole Mason were the Sponsors. Congratulations!

Funeral - Michael Phillips passed away on March 26. His funeral was held on September 5. May his memory be eternal!

Condolences to Peter Spanos, on the passing of his mother, Mary Spanos, on September 5. May her memory be eternal!

Orthodoxy 101 to be held in early 2021 - Because of the pandemic, we are going to postpone the fall installment of Orthodoxy 101. We will hold the next Orthodoxy 101 class in February, 2021.

Zoom Meetings of Other Ministries to be scheduled - We will be contacting other ministries, with the goal of having a zoom meeting once a month during this pandemic, just to check in with everyone. Fr. Stavros will be contacting groups like the Choir, Welcoming Ministry, Philoptochos, etc. in order to schedule short meetings just to check in and afford everyone the opportunity to say hello to one another.

GOYA - We will have two GOYA gatherings in October: **Sunday, October 4** - Regular GOYA Meeting—from 5:00-6:30 p.m. Please come on time. We will have a short service and a discussion. **Saturday, October 24** - Liturgy and service project. All GOYAns are encouraged to come to Liturgy on Saturday, October 24 at 10:00 a.m. After Liturgy, we will be assembling gift boxes for our college students. Please bring \$10 worth of snacks to this event, and we will be sending them to our college students.

Altar Boys - Until the end of the pandemic, we will not be having altar boy groups. We will reconstitute all the groups at the end of the pandemic.

Men's Group - The Men's Group will meet on Sunday, October 25 IN PERSON at the church at 5:00 p.m. Stay tuned for more details. All men of the community are welcome to participate.

GriefShare meets every Thursday via zoom at 6:30 p.m. - It may be hard for you to feel optimistic about the future right now. If you've lost a spouse, child, family member, or friend, you've probably found there are not many people who understand the deep hurt you feel. This can be a confusing time when you feel isolated and have many questions. "Going to GriefShare feels like having warm arms wrapped around you when you're shivering." GriefShare groups meet weekly to help you face these challenges and move toward rebuilding your life. Each GriefShare session has three distinct elements: Video seminar with experts, support group discussion with focus and personal study and reflection. We will meet from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. initially via zoom on Thursdays in October—October 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29. For more information please contact Donna Hambos at 813-843-8412 or dhambos@msn.com. Books for the program will be provided. Donation for the book suggested but not required. Open to all family and friends. Griefshare remains open enrollment with support towards healing and hope. You can begin at any time. If you attended last semester and missed a day or two, you can come for those days or repeat the whole thing.

Women's Bible Study will meet on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. in October—October 6, 13, 20 and 27. We are studying the Epistle of St. James. We meet via ZOOM. Fr. Stavros leads this group. If you would like to join our women's Bible study group, please contact Fr. Stavros at frstav@gmail.com and he will add you to the Zoom link. Also, each participant will receive a link to purchase a book for this year.

Monday Night Bible Study will continue in October via zoom. The Monday night Bible study with Charlie will be held October 5, 12, 19, and 26 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. If you are not currently part of the Monday night Bible study and would like to join in, please contact Charlie at chambos@stjohntpa.org and he will add you.

12 Disciples Program - In August, we started a program called "The 12 Disciples." There are twelve pages of names that comprise all the members of our parish. Father Stavros prays for all twelve pages of names each week at Paraklesis. The idea for this program is for each "disciple" to take one page of names and pray for that group of people every day. For every twelve "disciples" who sign up, every page of people will be prayed for. We currently have over 60 "disciples" meaning that each person in this community is being prayed for by at least five people every day. If you'd like to join this program and receive a page of people to pray for, please contact either Charlie or Alex.



Using Amazon Smile to Donate to St. John - If you use Amazon Smiles, make sure to choose our church so a donation will be given to our parish every time a purchase is made. So far, since August 2017, we have made **\$864.59**. Every bit helps!

Fifty-Two Verses in Fifty-Two Weeks: The Bible Project

By Fr. Stavros

In January 2019, we began the “Fifty-Two Verses in Fifty-Two Weeks” Bible Challenge, to memorize one Bible verse per week for fifty two weeks. I will provide a verse per week (four or five per month in *The Messenger* and then repeated weekly in the bulletin). I will choose verses that are meaningful to me. You are welcome to submit verses via email to me as well, as many of you have.

Most of us don’t spend enough time in the Bible. Sadly, some of us don’t spend any time. If you want a challenge, do the following:

- Memorize the verse of the week.
- For a greater challenge, read the entire chapter of the book that the verse comes from.
- For a greater challenge, read the entire book where the verse comes from.

Another challenge to consider is to keep a journal and contemplate the verse each week. Read it, memorize it, and then contemplate it. Allow the Holy Spirit to move your mind and your thoughts and then write down those thoughts and keep them in a journal. If you do one reflection on Scripture each week, you will have the best book that could be. A book written by you, for you, guided by the Holy Spirit, who will guide your thoughts as you read the Scriptures.

Below are verses for the month of October. There is one verse for each week. I have written a few comments below each verse to get your mind going. Don’t let my thoughts be your interpretation. Contemplate the Scripture each week and let it speak to you. Let the Holy Spirit speak to you through your reflection on Scripture.

October 4-10

In God we live and move and have our being.

Acts 17:28

What a great mantra it would be if we got out of bed each morning and said this verse, in a personal way: ***In God I will live and move and have my being.*** Indeed, this verse would shape not only our behavior but our identity. We generally move and live and have our being based on material and personal needs. Our first thoughts every day are generally one or the other. We get ourselves ready, get our kids ready, and get out the door so that we can go to work. Then we stop at the store, cook dinner, maybe exercise, wind down with a drink in front of the TV and then go to bed. Some version of this represents most lives. Where is God? Often forgotten. This verse reminds us that the spiritual things are higher than both the personal and material things. And if we let the spiritual things guide us, we will do both the personal and material things better, because they are done under the umbrella of God, in Him and for Him.

October 11-17

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

John 13:35

There is ONE way that people will be able to distinguish God’s people from other people, and that is how we love one another. We might think, that is easy enough, as long as we love a lot of people, we are Christian. Or as long as we make loving gestures to other people, we are Christian. There are two specific instances where it is hard to love others. First, when someone has wronged us, it is very hard to love them. Yet, we are called to love even our enemies, even those who hate us. When we are wronged and can still love, this is something that will set us apart as Christians. The second instance where it is hard to love is when we are wounded—either when we are frustrated, angry, tired, stressed out, sick, etc. When we are compromised, not necessarily by the acts of another person, but by our own humanity, it is hard to remember to love others, because our priority becomes our own needs and feelings. If we can love everyone, even the one who has wronged us, and if we can love at all times, even when we are compromised, we are well on our way to living out this verse, which identifies love as the leading sign that we are Christ’s disciples.

October 18-24

By there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I supposed that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

John 21:25

This is a verse that one of our parishioners asked me to write on, as it is one of his favorite verses. When I reflect on this verse, two things come to mind. First, God is incomprehensible. We can learn and learn and learn, and never fully comprehend God. Just like the Bible is not an inexhaustible book about the works of God. Jesus did many other things which were not written in the Bible. What is written in the Bible is enough for us to “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:31) It is certainly a good thing to read the Bible, and to learn as much as we can about the Lord and His call for our lives. However, and this is the second thing I take from this verse, it is not an exhaustive knowledge of Scripture that makes one a good Christian. It is faith in the words of Scripture, and a willingness to obediently live by them which makes us a Christian. That is the whole point of having a Bible verse each week, and not a Bible chapter or an entire

Fifty-Two Verses in Fifty-Two Weeks continued...

book. Because even small pieces of Scripture can hold great value when applied to our lives. So, keep reading the Bible, not only for a deeper level of knowledge, but a deeper commitment of application. And even if you read only small pieces at a time, it is the application of what we read that matters the most.

October 25-31

When a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed.

2 Corinthians 3:16

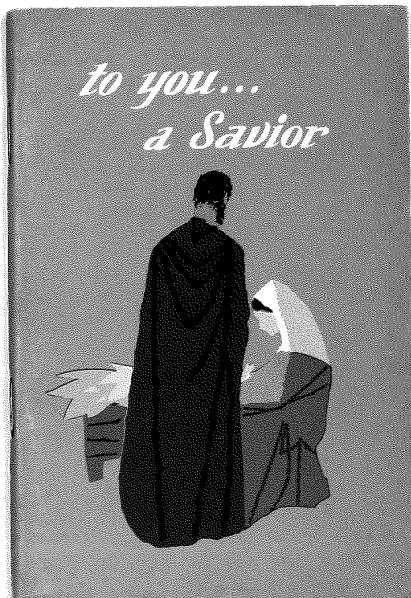
With Halloween coming this week, many people will be wearing masks, pretending to be something that they aren't. This is in the name of fun when it pertains to Halloween. However, there are plenty of people who wear a

mask all the time (not referring to Covid), pretending and wishing to be something that they aren't. In some ways we all do this. When we are rude, we are wearing a mask over our true nature, which is to love. When we sin, we are wearing a mask over our true nature which is to serve God. When we turn to the Lord and focus on Him, it is as if our veil/mask is removed and we can see the Lord more clearly. As we mark Halloween, and people wear masks, and as we go through this period of the coronavirus and are wearing masks for safety, let's remember to remove the masks that hide who we truly are—people who love God and who are committed to serving Him by loving others. This is truly who we are. Let's stop spending our time covering up who we truly are.

Prayer List: Lord Jesus Christ, Physician of our Souls and Bodies, visit and heal your servants: Kathy & Andrew Bouzinekis; Anastasia; Amanda, Andrew, Colton, Miranda, Charlotte Elizabeth, Nuha, Nabeel, Michael, Amal, John, Elaine, Olga, Virginia Georgiou, Ron Myer, Toulia Tsaros, Fr. Pat Legato, Nellie Pringle, Robert Calbi, Yolanda Webb, Angela Bougas, Tony Ekonomou, Ron, Jason Vickers, Rex Garrison, Tina Chakonas, Ann Demas, Alex Martinez, Adriana Martinez, Aaron Martinez, Christina Noel Kouzes Houck, Evangeline Xeroteris, Nichole Ross, Daniel Ross, Daniella Ross, Ashley Henderson, Natalie Henderson, Chris, Debbie, James, Avery, Lily, Jacob, Jesse, Ann, Rosario, Antonia Caffentzis, Alissa, John, Angela, Joey, Christine Scourtes, Steven, Matthew & Family, Phyllis, John Zelatis, Reagan, Peter Zaharis, Alexandra Ferrarolis, Leon & Despina Botham, Cindy Xenick, Mary Ellen Evdemon, Marie Sofia Panagopoulos, Maria Hursey, Chris Vamvakias, John Myer, Mike Trimis, Robert and Alice Stoccardo, John Alexander, Michael Romero, George Hambos, Dean Kondilis and Family, Bill and Nancy Manikas, Patricia Costello, Anastasia Smyrnakis, Ekaterina & Anna Shushaalykova, Dora Koudouna, Ana Mourer, Debbie Phelps, Mary Voykin, David Voykin, Anne Sakellaris, Denise Badrane, Sia Blankenship, Don Payne, Zhana Temelkova, Stanislava Terzieva, James, Jude and all victims of war, terrorism, crime, natural disaster, and all of whom we are unaware.

Featured Book of the St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church Bookstore:

“to you...a Savior” by St. Luke the Evangelist



This concise, little booklet retells the birth and childhood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, as told in the Gospel according to St. Luke in Luke 1:5-2:40.

The following mini-chapters are contained in this booklet: “The parents of St. John the Baptist;” “St. John’s birth foretold;” “Jesus’ birth foretold;” “The Virgin Mary visits St. Elizabeth;” “The birth of St. John the Baptist;” “St. Zechariah’s prophecy;” “The birth of Jesus;” “An angel appears to the shepherds;” “The visit of the shepherds;” “The circumcision of Jesus;” “The presentation of Jesus in the temple;” “The blessing of St. Simeon;” “The blessing of St. Anna;” and “The return to Nazareth.”

We think you will like this beautiful presentation of the Christmas message.

This booklet is available in the bookstore. We would love to hear from you, particularly what you think of it after reading it.

P.S. If there is an Orthodox Christian religious item that you would like the bookstore to order, please contact us. We are often able to get a discount as a bookstore.

Brett and Ana Mourer

~Thank You for your gifts of Stewardship ~

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Matthew 6:21

We appreciate the gifts of our loyal parishioners and wish to acknowledge each and every one! Our pledges for the 2020 Stewardship year are \$537,772 with \$408,921 collected from 384 loyal stewards of St. John. We are very grateful for your gifts.

We remain in unprecedented times but look for the silver linings like the reopening of our church doors and the ability to see one another and worship together. We pray you have found moments of peace and reflection that bring you closer to God amidst the chaos. Prayer is our foundation during these difficult days. I think we can all agree the world needs our prayers & gifts more than ever right now. We all have something to share and it's the sharing that can make a difference. Big and small gestures every day! To quote a much-overused phrase '*We are all in this together*' to celebrate that every gift truly comes from God. We remain humbled by your giving to our beloved church, it is needed and appreciated!

We lovingly remind you to recommit to our church if your name is missing from this list. We understand circumstances may have changed and will be happy to make any adjustments, as needed, to your Stewardship Gifts. Contact our church office or a member of the Stewardship committee with any questions on your commitment or renewal. Pledge forms are also available on line at <http://stjohntpa.org/2020-stewardship/>

* 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 that 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.

Abramis, John G & Nicky M., Mr. & Mrs.
Afloarei, Michael & Mariana, Mr. & Mrs.
Akrotirianakis, Stavros & Lisa, Father & Presbytera
Alastanos, Jennifer, Ms.
Alexander, John & Anetta, Mr. & Mrs.
Alithinos, Ekaterini, Mrs.
Alsina, Alexa, Ms.
Alsina, Angel & Lisa, Dr. & Mrs.
Ameres, George & Zackie, Mr. & Mrs.
Anagnost, Constantine, Mr.
Anastassiades, Andrea, Ms. & Mr. Joshua Pyszk
Anderson, Karl, Mr.
Anghelescu, Mihnea & Gabriela, Mr. & Mrs.
Apostoleres, Nicholas S. & Rosalie C., Mr. & Mrs.
Argyros, Harry & Linda, Mr. & Mrs.
Armstrong, Jim & Myra, Mr. & Mrs.
Artzibushev, Constantin, Mr.
Assimiadis, Paul, Mr.
Athan, Stephan, Mr.*
Axelrod, Scott & Christine, Mr. & Mrs.
Badrane, Denise, Ms.
Bakirdgi, Joan, Mrs.
Balasis, Mathew & Suzy, Mr. & Mrs.
Barrett, William, Mr.
Bavaro, Daniel & Anna Maria, Mr. & Mrs.
Beach, Kevin, Dr. & Heidi Borgeas, Ms.
Bedan, Matt & Christi, Mr. & Mrs.
Bedran, Rita, Ms.
Berdos, Frank & Isabel, Mr. & Mrs.*
Berdos, Niki Pauline & David Silber, Ms. & Mr.*
Bilthouse, Kevin & Carena, Mr. & Mrs.
Blackburn, Robert T. & Kathryn, Mr. & Dr.
Blankenship, Alexander, Mr.
Blankenship, Wayne & Athanasia, Mr. & Mrs.
Bougas, Constantine & Angela, Mr. & Mrs.
Bouzinekis, Andrew & Kathryn, Mr. & Mrs.
Bradshaw, Harold & Pelagia, Mr. & Mrs.
Burchill, George, Father
Calamunci, Alex & Sarah, Mr. & Mrs.
Calamunci, Catherine, Mrs.
Calamunci, Chris & Crystal, Mr. & Mrs.

Cantonis, George & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.
Capitano, Frank & Christina, Mr. & Mrs.
Cardy, Thomas & Gina, Mr. & Mrs.
Carter, John & Genie, Dr. & Mrs.
Catsikopoulos, John, Mr. & Dr. Lauren
Cauthorn, Ken & Helen, Mr. & Mrs.*
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 & Mr. Greg Thatcher, Ms.
Choundas, Peter & Adis, Mr. & Mrs.
Christ, John E., Dr.
Christodoulou, Kyriakos & Raquel, Mr. & Mrs.
Christodoulou, Mary Ann, Mrs.
Christopher, Louis & Penny Plakas, Mr. & Dr.
Christopoulos, James & Georgia, Dr. & Mrs.
Clipp, David & Michelle, Mr. & Mrs.
Clipp, David & Michelle, Mr. & Mrs.*
Colado, David & Alexandria, Mr. & Mrs.
Comminos, William & Margaret, Mr. & Mrs.
Copulos, Vasiliki, Ms.
Costas, Antonia, Ms.
Costas, Maria, Ms.
Costianes, Kathleen, Ms.
Cotterman, Sandra, Ms.
Crassas, Alkis & Aime, Mr. & Mrs.
Cyhan, Dawn, Ms.
Dalaklis, Joanne, Ms.
Daniels, Elaine, Ms.
De Maio, Alexandra, Ms.
Demas, Anna K., Ms.
Demas, John, Mr.
Demetriou, Nektarios & Peggy, Dr. & Mrs.
DeYoung, John & Jenna, Mr. & Mrs.
Diamantakes, Georgia, Ms.
Dimas, Gregory & Evelyn Patsavos, Dr. & Mrs.
Dimitrijevic-Jones, Stephen & Alina, Mr. & Mrs.
Diniaco, Peter & Rebecca, Mr. & Mrs.*
Doucas, Deborah, Ms.

Douglas, Dean, Mr.*
Doxas, Joan, Ms.
Edquid, Marc & Maraquet, Mr. & Mrs.
Edwards, Jeffery, Dr. & Mrs. Christina Cardy
Eggleston, Catherine, Mrs.
Ekonomou, Anthony & Diana C., Mr. & Mrs.*
Elly, Jonathan & Jenivieve, Mr. & Mrs.
Evdemon, Stanley & Mary Ellen, Mr. & Mrs.
Fallieras, George, Dr.
Fallieras, Lauren, Ms.
Fallieras, Nicholas & Susan, Dr. & Mrs.
Fellios, Alexander, Mr.*
Fellios, George & Zeina, Mr. & Mrs.
Ferarolis, Alexandra, Ms.
Ferekides, Christos & Debbie, Dr. & Mrs.
Findlay, Karina, Dr. & Mr. Andrew Findlay
Forde, Dwight & Ewana, Mr. & Mrs.
Fotopoulos, Anthony & Carole, Mr. & Mrs.
Frantsvog, Eric & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.*
Frazier, Chris, Ms.
Freeman, Eugene & Jacqueline, Mr. & Mrs.*
Frey, Carlos & Sophia Sorolis-Frey, Mr. & Ms.*
Galini, Mary, Ms.
Gallo, Vasiliki, Mrs.
Garcia, Rick & Stame, Mr. & Mrs.
Gavalas, Debbie, Mrs. & Mr. Robert Ritchie
Geis, Jeffrey & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.*
Genever, Robert & Stacy, Mr. & Mrs.
Georgas, Thomas & Janet, Mr. & Mrs.
George, Michael & Peggy, Mr. & Mrs.*
George-Malatin, Gabrielle, Mrs. & Mr. Michael Malatin
Georgiou, Arista, Ms.
Georgiou, Speros & Eleanor, Mr. & Mrs.
Gerecke, Alexandra, Ms.
Gerecke, Christina, Ms.*
Gerecke, Ed & Terri, Mr. & Mrs.
Giallourakis, Michael & Artemise, Mr. & Mrs.
Gombos, Harriet, Mrs.
Gorter, Maria, Ms.
Grapsas, Constantine & Irene, Mr. & Mrs.

Gregory, Daniel & Alicia, Mr. & Mrs.*
 Guarino, Paul & Harriet, Mr. & Mrs.
 Guzman, Alexandria, Mrs. & Mr. Steven
 Hakim, Fady & Mrs. Mary Guirguis, Mr.
 Halikoytakis, Michael & Edith, Mr. & Mrs.
 Halkias, Chris, Mr.
 Halkias, Demetrios & Camille, Mr. & Mrs.*
 Halkias, Evangeline, Mrs.
 Hamann, William & Alexandra, Mr. & Mrs.
 Hambos, Charlie, Mr.
 Hambos, George, Mr.
 Hambos, George & Donna, Mr. & Mrs.
 Hampers, Dean & Valerie, Mr. & Mrs.
 Hanhan, Amin & Gloria, Mr. & Mrs.
 Hartsfield-Molina, Christie & Mr. David, Dr.
 Hartung, Mark & JoAnn, Mr. & Mrs.
 Harvie, Evan & Brittany, Mr. & Mrs.
 Heilman, Anthony & Theresa, Mr. & Mrs.
 Henderson, Kenny & Nickollet, Mr. & Mrs.
 Higdon, Skip, Mrs.
 Hoff, Eleni, Mrs.
 Horack, Scott & Rena, Mr. & Mrs.
 Horton, Maria, Mrs.
 Hunter, Pauline, Ms.
 Iakovenko, Anastasiia, Ms.
 Ioannidis, Theodore & Sharon, Mr. & Mrs.
 Iraklianos, Mike, Mr.
 Irwin, Jon & Pam, Mr. & Mrs.
 Jacobsen, Paul, Mr.
 James, Arthur M & Abby, Mr. & Mrs.
 Jennewein, Robert & Georgia, Mr. & Mrs.
 Jewtushenko, Raissa, Ms.
 Johnson, Aphroditis, Mrs.
 Johnston, Angela, Ms.
 Kabougeris, Pete & Voula, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kaburis, Kathy, Mrs.
 Kaburis, Mihail, Mr.
 Kafantaris, Michael & Amy, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kalojiannis, Nicholas & Alicia, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kane, Lance & Georgia, Dr. & Dr.
 Kapetan, Martha, Ms.
 Kappiris, Stanley & Erin, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kargakos, Joan Williams, Mrs.
 Karoutsos, George, Mr.
 Karoutsos, Thomas & Sheena, Mr. & Mrs.
 Karpelenia, Loretta, Presbyteria
 Katsadourous, Konstantin & Katherine, Mr. & Mrs.
 Katsamakias, Perry & Betty Katherine, Mr. & Mrs.
 Katsaros, Andreas & Stacey, Mr. & Mrs.
 Katsifis, John & Thomas, Mr.
 Katsouli, Paulina, Ms.
 Katzaras, George & Angelina, Mr. & Mrs.
 Katzaras, Nick & Helen, Mr. & Mrs.
 Katzaras, Stefan & Kara, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kavouklis, Nicholas & Edie, Dr. & Mrs.
 Kazanis, Deno & Barbara, Dr. & Dr.*
 Kelly, Brian, Mr. & Mrs. Amanda Cotterman*
 Kent, Thomas & Jennifer, Mr. & Mrs.*
 Kickish, Robert & Rosalia, Dr. & Mrs.
 Kladakis, Manuel & Cynthia, Mr. & Mrs.*
 Kladis, George & Charlene, Mr. & Mrs.
 Klimis, Christina, Ms.
 Klimis, Manuel & Jenny, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kokkas, John, Mr.
 Kolovos, Demetrios & Dr. Eleni Markoutsas, Mr.
 Konstas, Demetrios & Mary Ann, Dr. & Mrs.
 Korakis, Alexandros & Louise, Mr. & Mrs.
 Koudouna, Anthony, Mr.
 Koudouna, Dora, Ms.
 Koutroumanis, Dean & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.
 Krajacic, Joseph & Alyssa, Mr. & Mrs.
 Krasias, Yianni, Mr.
 Kremydas, Nick & Pauline, Mr. & Mrs.
 Krinos, Dimitri & Melissa, Mr. & Mrs.
 Krinos, John & Sue, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kwasny, Foti & Fatin, Mr. & Mrs.
 Kyrus, Chris & Katherine, Dr. & Dr.
 Labatos, Angelika, Ms.
 Labatos, Anthony, Mr.
 Laliotis, Panagiota, Mrs.
 Laliotis, Stavros & Adriana, Mr. & Mrs.
 Langas, Dimitrios & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.
 Lappas, Christos & Ms. Alexandria Echeva, Mr.
 Larino, Michael & Amanda, Mr. & Mrs.
 Laskey, Fred & Coleen, Mr. & Mrs.
 Lenardos, Peter, Mr.
 Lenardos, Steven & Melissa, Mr. & Mrs.
 Leontsinis, Nicole, Ms.
 Letobarone, Domenic & Melanie, Dr. & Dr.*
 L'Hommedieu, Tim & Tia, Mr. & Mrs.
 Limberatos, Alexander & Alexandra, Mr. & Mrs.
 Limberopoulos, Chris, Mr.
 Lucas, Velina, Ms.
 Maas, Mary, Ms.
 MacLaury, Kathryn, Ms.
 Makris, Christina, Ms.
 Makris, Dean & Ashley, Mr. & Mrs.
 Malacos, John G. & Lucy A., Mr. & Mrs.
 Maltezos, Chris, Mr.
 Mameri, Diana, Ms.
 Mangarides, Markos &
 Mrs. Ekaterini-Petranellis, Mr.
 Manikas, William & Nancy, Dr. & Mrs.
 Mantzanas, Chris & Nicole, Mr. & Mrs.
 Markowski, Katina, Mrs.
 Martinez, Alexander & Andriana, Mr. & Mrs.
 Marylis, Speros & Orsalia, Mr.
 Mason, Rex Garrison & Maria Nicole, Mr. & Mrs.
 Matassini, Nicholas G. & Christina, Mr. & Mrs.
 Meadows, Alexander & Elishia, Mr. & Mrs.
 Mekras, Demosthenes & Luisa, Mr. & Mrs.
 Mellen, Andrew, Mr.
 Mellon, Andria, Ms.
 Melton, Greg & Victoria, Mr. & Mrs.
 Melton, Jaime, Ms.
 Menendez, Noah & Sara, Mr. & Mrs.
 Michos, Sylvia, Ms.
 Milonas, Alyssa, Ms.
 Milonas, Taso & Thay, Mr. & Mrs.
 Mitchell, John & Edith, Mr. & Mrs.
 Mitseas, George & Catherine, Mr. & Mrs.
 Moran, Andrew & Stefanie, Mr. & Mrs.*
 Morgan, Theodora, Ms.
 Moshos, Doukissa, Ms.
 Mourer, Brett & Ana, Mr. & Mrs.
 Mueller, Jeffery & Melinda, Mr. & Mrs.
 Myer, Ronald & Magdalini, Mr. & Mrs.
 Naum, Dean & Sandra, Mr. & Mrs.
 Nenos, Byron & Jeanie, Mr. & Mrs.
 Nenos, John & Kate, Mr. & Mrs.
 Nenos, Mary, Mrs.
 Nenos, Peter, Mr.
 Nenos, Vasilius, Mr.
 Nicklow, Tom & Demetra, Mr. & Mrs.
 Nicolaou, Christos & Dee, Mr. & Mrs.
 Nolas, George S. & Cheryl, Dr. & Mrs.
 Olsen, Scott & Elphida, Mr. & Mrs.
 Orlando, Gabriella, Ms.
 Pahoumis, Sofia, Ms.
 Palios, George & Julie, Mr. & Mrs.
 Palios, Michael & Bessie, Mr. & Mrs.
 Paloumpis, Laura, Ms.
 Paloumpis, Tom & Jenny, Mr. & Mrs.
 Panopoulos, Theodoros & Marisa, Mr. & Mrs.
 Panos, Euripides & Denise, Mr. & Mrs.
 Papadakis, Alec & Lauren, Mr. & Mrs.
 Papadakis, Justin & Kyleen, Mr. & Mrs.
 Papadopoulos, Kyriakos, Mr. &
 Mrs. Lucy Melkumova
 Papaefstathiou, Louis & Joanna K, Mr. & Mrs.
 Papakosta, Peter & Vasiliki, Mr. & Mrs.
 Papatarios, Christopher & Jennifer, Mr. & Mrs.
 Pappas, Paul & Georgia, Mr. & Mrs.
 Parker, Ryan & Mrs. Alexa Koulouris-Parker, Mr.
 Passalaris, Isidoros, Mr.
 Passavanti, Robert & Debbra, Mr. & Mrs.
 Patellis, Theophilos, Dr. & Mrs. Maria Dorkfy
 Patrascoiu, Florin & Marenca, Mr. & Mrs.
 Payne, Suzanne, Mrs.
 Peckham, Richard & Victoria, Mr. & Mrs.
 Perdicas, Ernest & Nancy, Mr. & Mrs.
 Perry, Christian & Athina, Mr. & Mrs.
 Peters, Alexandra, Ms.
 Phillips, Thomas & Georgia, Mr. & Mrs.
 Phillips, Thomas, Mr.
 Pierroutsakos, Alex & Valerie, Mr. & Mrs.*
 Pileggi, Suzanne, Ms.
 Plakas, Theodore & Kyriakoula, Mr. & Mrs.
 Pliego, Michelle, Ms.
 Preston, Joshua & Marian, Mr. & Mrs.
 Price, Bradley & Gerri, Mr. & Mrs.
 Prodromitis, Theo, Ms.
 Prokos, Fran, Ms.
 Quinn, Toula, Ms.
 Reader, Jimmy & Helen Bennett, Mr. & Mrs.
 Rindone, Ryan & Megan, Mr. & Mrs.
 Robinson, Tanya, Mrs.
 Rodriguez, Roberto, Mr.
 Rogers, Sr., Aris, Mr.
 Rose, Maryann, Ms.
 Ross, Nicole, Mrs.*
 Roussos, Archie & Eleftheria, Mr. & Mrs.
 Roussos, Basileios & Anna, Mr. & Mrs.
 Roussos, Nicholas, Mr.
 Roy, Perry & Alysa, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sakaris, Thomas & Barbara, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sakellaris, Anne, Mrs.
 Sakkis, John & Katherine, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sample, Anonymous, Mr.
 Samuel, Calvin & Vivian, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sandborn, Marilyn & Steve, Mrs.
 Santana, Robert & Alexandra, Mr.*
 Sarantos, Pete & Ann, Mr. & Mrs.
 Scarfogliero, Alexis, Mrs.
 Schad, Barbara, Ms.
 Scott, Jennifer, Ms.
 Scourtes, Christine, Mrs.
 Sengsouvana, Say & Sarah, Mr. & Mrs.
 Serbanos, Michael & Patricia, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sermier, Eustace G & Bennette, Dr. & Mrs.
 Sibley, Chace, Ms.
 Sibley, Russell & Despina, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sinadinis, Gregory & Mary, Mr. & Mrs.
 Skijus, Alexander, Mr.
 Skijus, Steven & Ellen, Mr. & Mrs.
 Skourellos, Dante & Lindsey, Mr. & Mrs.
 Skourellos, Michael P & Shirley A., Mr. & Mrs.
 Skoures, William & Egli, Mr. & Mrs.
 Smith, Thomas & Dr. Golfo Alexopoulos, Dr.
 Soteriou, George & Selena, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sotiropoulos, Bill & Jenny, Mr. & Mrs.
 Sotiropoulos, Paul & Terri, Mr. & Mrs.
 Spanos, Peter, Mr.

Speegle, Maria, Mrs.
Spencer, Wayne & Pauline, Mr. & Mrs.
Spirides, Frances, Ms.
Spirides, Harry G., Mr.
Stacy, Stephanie, Mrs.
Stavropoulos, Jane, Ms.
Steele, Elliott & Dianne, Mr. & Mrs.
Stephanides, Christos, Mr.
Stephanides, Marios & Ourania, Dr. & Mrs.
Stilian, Douglas & Bridget, Mr. & Mrs.
Stratigakos, Helen & Judge Daniel Sleet, Ms.
Stratigakos, Louis & Georgia, Mr. & Mrs.
Stroud, Rick & Mrs. Valerie Panou, Mr. & Mrs.
Syros, Terri, Ms.
Tedrick, Matthew & Ellen, Mr. & Mrs.*
Temelkova, Zhana, Ms.
Theophanous, Peter, Mr.
Thomas, Larry & Tina, Dr. & Mrs.
Tisdale, Greg, Mr.
Trakas, Andrew & Adrienne, Mr. & Mrs.
Trakas, Peter & Donna, Mr. & Mrs.
Triantafyllou, Marcelle, Ms.
Trimis, Michael & Diane, Mr. & Mrs.

Tsampouris, Christos & Sara, Mr. & Mrs.
Tsibris, John, Dr.
Tsongranis, Stephanos, Mr.
Tziotis, Michele & Andreas, Dr.
Valaes, Demetrios & Lynn A., Mr. & Mrs.
Voisey, Richard & Katherin, Mr. & Mrs.
Voykin, David & Amy, Mr. & Mrs.
Voykin, Mary H, Mrs.
Vukmer, Daniel & Sheila, Mr & Mrs.
Walling, Jacklyn, Ms.
Ward, Gary, Mr. & Ms. Sandra Pappas
Westmoreland, Jim & Joanne, Mr. & Mrs.
Whaley-Oster, Susan & Mr. Stephen Oster, Mrs.
Whallen, Petrina, Ms.
Wiel, Nick, Mr.
Williams, Jason & Alexandra, Mr. & Mrs.*
Worley, Christene, Ms.
Xanthopoulos, Joe & Margaret, Mr. & Mrs.
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.

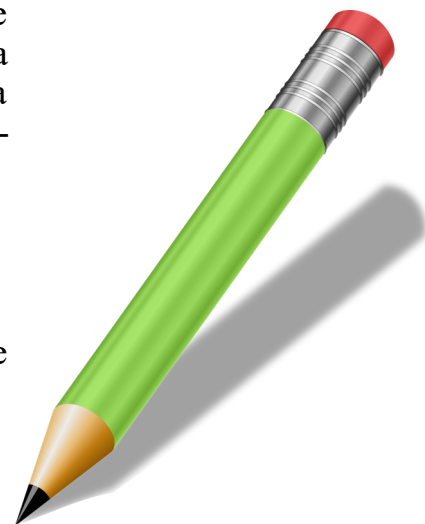
According to the St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Tampa, FL By-Laws, one must have completed a form AND be 'current' in their pledge for last year to participate and vote General Assembly Meetings, Parish Council Elections and any Special Assembly Meetings – November 1, 2020. If you have sent in a Stewardship Check and are not on the list, please contact the office so we can forward you a 2020 Stewardship Pledge Form.

Looking for Stewardship Testimonials

Testimonials from parishioners are a very effective way to encourage other people in their spiritual growth. When testimony comes from a peer, it is often more effective than when it comes even from a priest. With this in mind, we'd like to hear from you about your experience with stewardship this year.

What has it been like to be a steward during the pandemic?
Have you increased your stewardship and what has that been like?
How has your stewardship changed for the better this year?
Please also write about not only the stewardship of your finances, but the stewardship of your time, your talent, and your life overall.

You can submit this to Fr. Stavros via email at frstav@gmail.com. We'd like to receive these by October 15. If you wish to remain anonymous, please indicate that. Thank you for your consideration.



Attention All Youth Workers and Ministry Leaders

Please be aware that the 2021 renewal registration will begin in November of 2020. Many of you already complied with the new GOA guidelines this past fall 2019 and will only have to complete online training and reregister. Others will need to register, undergo a background check and complete the online training. In November, the Youth Protection Committee will e-mail all existing youth workers of their current status and requirements, including the registration form. Within a week or so afterwards, you will receive emails from Praesidium (aka: Armatus Learn to Protect) with links to complete the requirements. Please do so within ten days or the links expire. Thank you, Catherine Mitseas & Charlie Hambos



Sunday School Classes in October

It is critically important that our kids be involved in worship and religious education. This pandemic has brought some challenges to that. In September, we began a virtual Sunday school program, involving a video for pre-K through 6th grade, which is sent out every week and includes a lesson and projects for kids to do, with assistance from parents. For 7th-12th grade, there is a catechism lesson which consists of discussion questions based on the Bible reading for that particular Sunday.

The Sunday school lessons will be emailed out every Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m.

On **Sunday, October 11**, there will be a youth sermon, following Divine Liturgy.

We will also have a class each Saturday for a couple grades of our Sunday school. Kids and parents of each grade are encouraged to sign up for liturgy that Saturday, and then there will be a short lesson after the Divine Liturgy.

Saturday, October 3 Toddler—Pre-K-Kindergarten

Saturday, October 10 1st, 2nd, 3rd Grade

Saturday, October 17 4th, 5th, 6th Grade

Saturday, October 24 7th-12th Grade—GOYA will attend Liturgy and do a service project (gift baskets for college students) following the Divine Liturgy.

Sunday School Calendar

Sunday, October 4

TOPIC: The Creed

Video by Stamie Garcia

Family Project: Reciting the Creed

Sunday, October 11

YOUTH SUNDAY: Youth Sermon following Divine Liturgy

TOPIC: The Bible

Video by Vickie Peckham and Ariadne Stonestreet

Family Project: Show us your Bibles and share your favorite Bible verse.

Sunday, October 18

TOPIC: The Fruit of the Spirit

Video by Donna Trakas

Family Project: Name the 9 Fruits of the Spirit. Which one do you need to work on the most and why?

Sunday, October 25

TOPIC: The Church Building

Video by Vickie Peckham

Family Project: Make at least one of the church vessels.

TEEN CREED

Do not let your parents down, they brought you up!

Be humble enough to obey! You yourself may be giving orders someday!

Choose your companions with care, as you will become what they are!

Choose only a date who would make a good mate!

Don't show off when you drive. Drive with safety and arrive!

Guard your thoughts. What do you think that's what you become.

Be master of your habits, or they will master you!

Don't let the crowd pressure you. Stand for something or you will fall for anything.

St. John Greek Orthodox Church's Young-At-Heart Ministry

MEETING DATE AND TIME: **First Thursday of Each Month at 11:30 AM (unless otherwise posted)**

LOCATION: **ZOOM Video Conference or Zaharias Room in the Kourmolis Hall at St John Greek Orthodox Church**

Everyone is welcome.

We welcome people of all ages to join our email list as a member or a friend of YAH.

Our YAH meetings on Zoom video

This allows us to see many of us on the screen that we haven't seen in a while since we were quarantined from the Coronavirus.

Our YAH August Meeting on Zoom was a discussion on the Churches that touched our lives

We were asked to prepare a list of Churches we; 1) Grew up, 2) Married in, 3) Raised Children, 4) Moved to, 5) Vacationed and 6) visited. In addition, we asked people to share any blessing or miracles that had occurred.

- We welcomed our new member Markos Mangarides and we were all blessed when he shared how the Church touched his life in so many spiritual ways.
- We will continue with the theme how The Church Has Touched Our Lives”.



We continue to learn more about our Church Family from the Churches and locations we attended during our lives.

OUR COMING EVENTS

- October 1st **Thursday** at 11:30 am YAH Meeting using Zoom Video Conferencing and telephone.
- We will continue our discussions on the “**CHURCHES THAT TOUCHED OUR LIVES.**”

PASSED ACTIVITIES

Aug. 5th – We had our first discussion the CHURCHES THAT TOUCHED OUR LIVES.
July 2nd, 2020 – Revisited 60 years ago in the years 1960 to 1969
March 5th, 2020 - Visited St Michael Greek Orthodox Shrine in Tarpon Springs
January 2, 2020 – Lunch at the new Psomi Bakery and Restaurant
December 7, 2019 - Trip to the Show Palace Dinner Theatre featuring Elf the Musical
October 5, 2019 - Ybor City Museum State Park and lunch at the Soup Stone Grill

For more information, contact
Michael Trimis, President,
813-784-4872 (vm/t)
TrimisM@gmail.com

Mary Nenos, Vice President
813-508-5553
MaryNenos@gmail.com

St. John the Baptist is on Social Media!

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

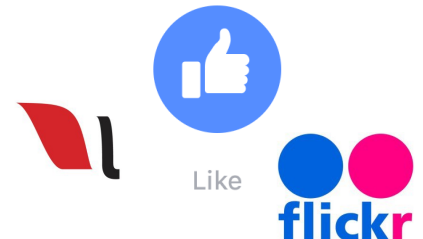
All of our services are being video recorded and are available on our Livestream page.

To access this page

1. Go to our Church's website: stjohntpa.org,
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



Through the Power of the Holy Cross

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross 2020



Prayers of Protection from the Coronavirus

www.goarch.org

A Prayer To Be Offered in the Morning

Lord our God, You who are rich in mercy, and with careful wisdom direct our lives, listen to our prayer, receive our repentance for our sins, bring an end to this new infectious disease, this new epidemic, just as you averted the punishment of your people in the time of David the King. You who are the Physician of our souls and bodies, grant restored health to those who have been seized by this illness, raising them from their bed of suffering, so that they might glorify You, O merciful Savior, and preserve in health those who have not been infected. By your grace, Lord, bless, strengthen, and preserve, all those who out of love and sacrifice care for the sick, either in their homes or in the hospitals. Remove all sickness and suffering from your people, and teach us to value life and health as gifts from You. Give us Your peace, O God, and fill our hearts with unflinching faith in Your protection, hope in Your help, and love for You and our neighbor. For Yours it is to have mercy on us and save us, O our God, and to You we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever, to the ages of ages. Amen.

A Prayer To Be Offered in the Evening

Lord Jesus Christ our God, You traveled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness.” At Your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of this virus, that we may experience Your healing love. Heal those O Lord who are suffering with this pandemic's illness. May they regain their strength and health through medical care. Heal us from our fears, which prevent nations from working together and neighbors from helping one another. Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders. Lord Jesus Christ, healer of all and physician of our souls and bodies, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow. Be with those who have died from the virus. May they be at rest with You in Your eternal peace. Be with the families of those who are sick or have died. As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. May they know Your peace. Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know Your protection and peace. Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Give them the wisdom to choose long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. May they know Your peace, as they work together to achieve it on earth. Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Lord Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare. In place of our anxiety, give us your peace. For You are the Physician of our souls and bodies Christ our God and to You do we offer glory, thanksgiving and worship together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Another Prayer, To Be Offered At Any Time

O Holy Father, God of unknown, uncreated depth, You are beyond all description and expectation. You are the Creator of all worlds, physical and metaphysical. As You are only love, in love You created everything that truly is. Through Your Son, everything has form and purpose, and through Your Spirit, everything lives and moves back toward You. O Father, we are troubled by this scourge that is infecting Your people around the world. From the ancient Fall away from You, there are many consequences that we cannot begin to understand. As traces of this pestilence are being studied in labs, we shiver at its demonic malevolence for destruction, especially of the frail and the elderly. Our hearts are open to You, loving Father; we come to You as children, meek and lowly. We beg You to help the doctors who work to find a cure. We beg You to help our leaders to put away childish things, to forget political advantage, and to be good stewards of their people. We beg You to help us to be wise ourselves and to care for human life in the least of those around us. We cry out to You as One Who did not send this plague. We cry out to You as One Who only heals and redeems. You did not send this, but we know You can destroy it. So Father, cease this plague, and turn it back to the abyss from which it came. Heal Your people, the humanity of this earth, cleanse us and strengthen us toward You. We are weak, but You are strong, and in our weakness Your strength is revealed. Help us, we beg You, in the Name of Your Son, the Great Physician, Who, together with You and our Comforter, the Holy Spirit, Are due all glory and honor, to the ages of ages. Amen.

Why Getting the Flu Vaccine this Year is More Important than Ever

Getting a flu vaccine is more important than ever during 2020-2021 to protect yourself and the people around you from flu, and to help reduce the strain on healthcare systems responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

What is Influenza (Flu)?

Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year. CDC estimates that influenza was associated with more than **35.5 million** illnesses, more than **16.5 million** medical visits, **490,600** hospitalizations, and **34,200** deaths in the US during the 2018–2019 influenza season. Flu vaccine prevents millions of illnesses and flu-related doctor's visits each year. For example, during 2018-2019, flu vaccination prevented an estimated 4.4 million influenza illnesses, 2.3 million influenza-associated medical visits, 58,000 influenza-associated hospitalizations, and 3,500 influenza-associated deaths. During seasons when the flu vaccine viruses are similar to circulating flu viruses, flu vaccine has been shown to reduce the risk of having to go to the doctor with flu by 40 percent to 60 percent

Flu Symptoms

Influenza (flu) can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Flu is different from a cold. Flu usually comes on suddenly. People who have flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle or body aches
- headaches
- fatigue (tiredness)
- some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

**It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.*

How Flu Spreads

Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by tiny droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes.

The Flu Vaccine can keep you from getting sick and can reduce the risk of flu-associated hospitalizations for children, working age adults, and older adults.

- CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses. Getting a flu vaccine during 2020-2021 will be more important than ever.
- Flu vaccines will not prevent COVID-19, but they will reduce the burden of flu illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths on the health care system and conserve scarce medical resources for the care of people with COVID-19.

Together We Can Beat the Flu

6 Tips to Stay Healthy this Flu Season



- CDC estimates that last season, fewer than half of Americans got a flu vaccine and at least 410,000 people were hospitalized from flu. Increased vaccination coverage would reduce that burden.
- Most flu vaccines protect against the four flu viruses that research suggests will be most common.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older, with rare exceptions, should get annual flu vaccine by the end of October.
- Some people who get vaccinated may still get sick. However, flu vaccination has been shown in some studies to reduce severity of illness in people who get vaccinated but still get sick.
- People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with certain chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older. Many people at higher risk from flu also seem to be at higher risk from COVID-19.
- Vaccination also is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for people at higher risk to keep from spreading flu to them. This is especially true for people who work in long-term care facilities, which are home to many of the people most vulnerable to flu and COVID-19.
- Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. People who care for infants should be vaccinated instead.

Why do I need a flu vaccine every year?

A flu vaccine is needed every season for two reasons. First, a person's immune protection from vaccination declines over time, so an annual vaccine is needed for optimal protection. Second, because flu viruses are constantly changing, flu vaccines may be updated from one season to the next to protect against the viruses that research suggests may be most common during the upcoming flu season.

Does flu vaccine work right away?

No. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against influenza virus infection. That's why it's best to get vaccinated before influenza viruses start to spread in your community.

Does a flu vaccine increase your risk of getting COVID-19?

There is *no* evidence that getting a flu vaccine increases your risk of getting sick from a coronavirus, like the one that causes COVID-19.

Can a flu vaccine give you flu?

No, flu vaccines cannot cause flu illness. Flu vaccines given with a needle (i.e., flu shots) are made with either inactivated (killed) viruses or with only a single protein from the flu virus. The nasal spray vaccine contains live viruses that are attenuated (weakened) so that they will not cause illness.

Can I get seasonal flu even though I got a flu vaccine this year?

Yes. It's possible to get sick with flu even if you have been vaccinated (although you won't know for sure unless you get a flu test). This is possible for the following reasons:

- You may be exposed to a flu virus shortly before getting vaccinated or during the period that it takes the body to gain protection after getting vaccinated. This exposure may result in you becoming ill with flu before the vaccine begins to protect you. (Antibodies that provide protection develop in the body about 2 weeks after vaccination.)
- You may be exposed to a flu virus that is not included in the seasonal flu vaccine. There are many different flu viruses that circulate every year. A flu vaccine is made to protect against the three or four flu viruses that research suggests will be most common.

- Unfortunately, some people can become infected with a flu virus a flu vaccine is designed to protect against, despite getting vaccinated. Protection provided by flu vaccination can vary widely, based in part on health and age factors of the person getting vaccinated. In general, a flu vaccine works best among healthy younger adults and older children. Some older people and people with certain chronic illnesses may develop less immunity after vaccination. Flu vaccination is not a perfect tool, but it is the best way to protect against flu infection.

Important Steps to take in addition to getting the Flu Vaccine

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw tissue in trash after you use it
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with viruses that cause flu.

Happy Birthday!

Alexios Diniaco - October 1
Andrew Roy - October 1
Penelope Kremydas - October 2
Joanna Samuel - October 3
Sophia Samuel - October 3
Ariadne Stonestreet - October 3
Declan Torres - October 3
Harry Koutroumanis - October 4
Fatin Kwasny - October 4
Olympia Stilian - October 5
Alexander Sotiropoulos - October 6
Emily Nicklow - October 8
George Bedran - October 10
Allison Kent - October 10
Jenny Klimis - October 10
Alexandros Korakis - October 10
Justin Papadakis - October 10
Mason Horack - October 11
Sheena Karoutsos - October 11
Manuel Klimis - October 12
Daniella Ross - October 12
Zoe Katsaros - October 13
Gianni Matassini - October 13
Carole Fotopoulos - October 14
Mr. Evan Kalojiannis - October 14
Mrs. Lucy A. Malacos - October 14
Mrs. Lauren Papadakis - October 14

Ms. Toula Trakas - October 14
Yiorgos Boulieris - October 15
Joey Johnston - October 15
James Christopoulos - October 17
Evangelia Frantsvog - October 17
Despina Sibley - October 17
Aaron Martinez - October 17
Sevianna Smith - October 17
Dominic Garcia - October 18
Thomas Ivey - October 18
Evangeline Xeroteris - October 18
Constantinos Matassini - October 19
Perseus Papadopoulos - October 19
Andrew Patrascoiu - October 19
Jonah Blankenbaker - October 20
Peter Chandler - October 20
Georgia Christopoulos - October 20
Michael Galin - October 23
Julianne Katsamakias - October 23
Alexandra Korakis - October 23
Daniel Kwasny - October 25
Domenic Letobarone - October 29
Stephanie Demetriou - October 30
Hannah James - October 30
Lauren Mason - October 31
Maggie Pliego - October 31

Call the office and make sure we have your Birthday.

On the Lighter Side

Q. If 2020 was a drink, what would it be?

A. Colonoscopy prep

If you take all of the marshmallows out of a box of Lucky Charms, you are left with a box of Purina cat chow.

My wife didn't order anything from Amazon yesterday so that UPS guy knocked on our door to see if we're okay.

I found the key to happiness. Stay away from idiots. ~Morgan Freeman

Someone asked me if I had plans for the fall, it took me a moment to realize they meant "autumn", not the collapse of civilization.

The Five Stages of a Greek saying goodbye

The initial goodbye

The goodbye in the kitchen

The goodbye in the living room

The goodbye in the doorway

The goodbye while you're sitting in the car with the engine running and they're still talking.

Will You Be Someone for Another?

By Max Lucado

When disaster strikes, the human spirit responds by reaching out to help those afflicted. People stand in line to give blood. Rescue teams work for endless hours. But the most essential effort is accomplished by another valiant team. Their task? To gird the world with prayer. For the most part, we don't even know their names.

Such is the case of someone who prayed on a day long ago. He went to Jesus on behalf of a friend who was sick. No one was more vital than the one who went to Jesus. John writes, "So Mary and Martha sent someone to tell Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick" (John 11:3 NCV). Someone went to Jesus on behalf of Lazarus. And because someone went, Jesus responded! Would you be someone for someone else?

Policy for Letters of Recommendation

Every year, Father Stavros gets many requests for letters of recommendation for students to get into college or for scholarships. Here are some guidelines to assist those who will be making these requests.

The person for whom the letter is being written needs to contact Father Stavros, not their parents. Please give Father at least two weeks' notice to write a letter. Please send your information to Father in an email at frstav@gmail.com.

1. Your current school, year of study, major, and career objective
2. The name of the scholarship, who it is to be addressed to, and whether the letter is to be mailed, or given to the student in a sealed envelope.
3. The kind of scholarship that you are applying for - is it for sports, or writing, or business, etc.
4. The due date of the letter
5. Some information about yourself that will be helpful in writing the letter - i.e. if the letter is for leadership, please send leadership activities.

Please do your best to support local businesses in general, and of our parishioners in particular.

Below, please find a list of small business owned and/or operated by our parishioners.

ABC PIZZA

(Owned by Anthony and Carole Fotopoulos)
1242 WEST HILLSBOROUGH AVE. TAMPA
(813) 237-3324 Take Out Only

Accustar Accounting Inc.

Fran Prokos, Founder and CEO
Tax Preparation, Business and Personal
Accounting, CFO services, Business Consulting, Business Start Ups.
Working from Home Office during Covid 19
Direct: 727-510-7378
Office: 813-886-4644
Fax: 813-888-8097
AccustarTax@gmail.com/AccustarTax@aol.com

AlexRoyEvents Music Entertainment.

Email alexroyevents@gmail.com
Ph. 813-455-2461 Website:www.djalexroy.com
Facebook: Alexandros Roy
Instagram : @djalexroy
Live Streams on Facebook and Instagram daily.

Bavaros

514 N Franklin St Downtown Tampa
813-868-4440 Bavarospizza.com
Tues-Sat 11-9pm
We offer Uber and Bitesquad for delivery and curbside pickup with call ahead ordering/payment.

Bradenton Flower Shop

(Owned by Maria Geis)
5262 East St Rd 64
Bradenton FL, 34208
941-727-4111 www.bradentonflowershop.com
bradentonflowers@gmail.com
We are taking online and phone orders for curb side pickup and no contact delivery.

Peggy Bradshaw

https://peggybradshaw.floify.com/
(727) 244-1374
Branch Manager of Van Dyk Mortgage South Tampa
3502 Henderson Blvd. Tampa, FL

George S. Chagaris, CPA, P.A.

2901 W. Busch Blvd., Ste. 405
Tampa, FL 33618-4582
(p): (813) 282-1990 e-mail: GChagarisCPA@aol.com

Homeschool Educational Resources & Usborne Books Consultant

Jenivieve Elly Jenivieve@homeschooleducationalresources.com
https://www.homeschooleducationalresources.com/
https://n10680.myubam.com/1753738
My homeschool advocacy website provides encouragement, materials, free lessons plans, and research to empower current and potential homeschooling families. As a former teacher, it's my mission to support those interested in the journey. I also offer homeschool consulting and mentoring services. Usborne Books are quality, engaging, and educational books. They are a favorite in our home and pair well with homeschool education.

John Demas - Classical Guitarist - Greek Bouzouki

813.240.5199
https://sites.google.com/site/livemusicintampa/
Instagram:https://www.instagram.com/john.demas.music/
https://sites.google.com/site/johndemasthemeoproject/

EVOS South Tampa

For other locations near you visit evos.com
Open 7 days for lunch and dinner
Order Delivery: UberEats-EVOS or evos.com

Order Takeout: EVOS/Toast app or evos.com
Text/email an EVOS gift card: EVOS eGift Cards
EVOS is locally owned and operated by the Crassas family.

Alexandra Fitos

Weichert Yates and Associates
Cell phone 813-943-6464
I am a realtor specializing in residential and commercial sales in Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pasco counties. I am currently working remotely Via virtual consulting and appointments.

JoAnn Hartung

Realtor with Fazzini Group at REMAX Realtec
Residential agent specializing in Pinellas County
727-432-0228

Markissia Touliatos Portraits and Other Fine Art

www.markissia.com
markissiat@gmail.com
727-560-8161
I am a freelance artist working from home in my own studio. I specialize in corporate and private original oil painted portraits. I do art restoration as well. I work from photographs that can be emailed to me.

Qvita Health and Wellness

Primary Care and Cosmetic Services
Peggy Demetriou, FNP, APRN-BC
2734 Windguard Circle, suite 101
Wesley Chapel, FL 33544
813-501-4130 www.qvitahealthandwellness.com

Retina Vitreous Associates of Florida

(Dr. Karina Findlay)
multiple offices throughout Tampa Bay
retinavitreous.com
(813)987-2000
Open 8:00-5:00 M-F with on call physicians nights and week-ends Retinal care and urgent ocular needs

Robinson Essentials -Young Living Essential Oils

text: 813-278-7450
www.TanyaRobinsonEssentials.com
Products for immune support, emotional support, and various other things

The Sakkis Group / KW Tampa Properties

Full service real estate with over 30 years experience
813-309-1073 ksakkis@sakkisgroup.com sakkisgroup.kw.com/

South Tampa Sugar Mama

Home baking business owned by Maria Xenick.
Custom homemade, hand-decorated cookies for holidays and special events. I operate under the Cottage Food Law of Florida, and during this time, I am also offering free delivery for contactless transactions.
maria@southtampasugarmama.com
https://www.facebook.com/southtampasugarmama/

True Life Wealth Management (Owned by Alex Skijus)

www.TrueLifeWealthManagement.com
We are a financial services business that specializes in reducing unnecessary taxes for individuals and business owners for their retirement.

Zomesa, LLC

John P. Zelatis
Accounting, Bookkeeping, Payroll, Taxes Back Office Support
15459 Martinmeadow Drive. Lithia, FL 33547
P: (813) 654-5144 F: (813) 433-2516 C:(813) 727-2271
jzelatis@zomesa.com www.zomesa.com

Take Advantage of the Parish Assistance Program

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is excited to share that, beginning May 1st, we will be offering a Parish Assistance Program, PAP, with BayCare Behavioral Health. The PAP program will provide our parishioners access to free and confidential counseling services - offering additional support when life's challenges become overwhelming. The PAP utilizes a network of faith-based providers and are sensitive to the values and beliefs of those they serve and provide compassionate care to children, adults, parents, and seniors.

Parishioners can contact BayCare to request up to three free and confidential counseling sessions from a licensed mental health professional. The BayCare helpline, 800-878-5470, is answered 24/7 by mental health professionals. Many BayCare therapists are also offering telephonic and virtual counseling sessions to help parishioners maintain their emotional wellbeing during these trying times.

Through BayCare Behavioral Health, parishes enrolled in this program allow access to services for their parishioners who are suffering from emotional turmoil that results from the challenges of everyday life which span a lifetime. The BayCare network of providers understand the importance of compassionate care and are sensitive to the values and beliefs of those they serve.

You can get more information on the BayCare Behavioral Health Community Services Program on their website at: <https://baycare.org/services/behavioral-health/our-specialties/community-health-services>

Help is available for life issues including:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Family discord
- Marital problems
- Substance abuse issues
- Behavioral issues



BayCare
Behavioral Health

Thank You to all of Our Friends!

George & Maria Andros - Birmingham, AL
Barbara Akrotirianakis - Whittier, CA
William J Camarinos - Alexandria, VA
Richard & Mickie Bass - Asheville, NC
Jason & Kelly Bangos - Clearwater, FL
Gabriel & Irene Hurst - Tampa, FL
Nicholas & Anna Karnavas - New Port Richey, FL
Michael Kapetan - Ann Arbor, MI
John & Cathie Koch - Tarpon Springs, FL
Perry & Fay Stamatiades - Asheville, NC
Melvin & Violet Tamashiro - Kaneohe, HI
Wesley & Melissa Thompson - Clearwater, FL
Demitrius & Katherine Klimis - Boardman, OH
Bessie Bliziotis - Palm Cost, FL
Suzanne Alvarez - Tampa, FL
Lazarus & Maria Kavouklis - Tarpon Springs, FL
William & Kane Chapman - Palmetto, FL
Lillan Thomas - Highland, IN
Kathleen Mendez - Ponte Vedra, FL

Theodora Poletis - Baltimore, MD
Basil & Dorothy Nosal - Fredericksburg, VA
Nicholas & Vaso Anton - Dunedin, FL
Kay Nastopoulos - Atlanta, GA
Katherine Beasley - Vero Beach, FL
Artemis & Eric Mellen - Longwood, FL
Mary Spanos - St. Augustine, FL
Charles Nastopoulos - Atlanta, GA
Pete & Carol Caldwell - Ringgold, GA
Judith Jogerst
Ms. Nadine Raheb
Victor & Cynthia Cucuz - Tampa, FL
Nicholas & Doris Andreadakis - Lititz, PA
Christopher & Georgette Tsavoussis - Dunedin, FL
Ron & Maria Gregory
John & Deanna Palmer - Greenville, SC
Emmanuel Chrysakis - Palm Harbor, FL
Tommy Koulouris - Tampa, FL
Rev. Fr. Michael Massouh - Seminole, FL

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.

Taking This Year Off from Greek Festival

As you know, we had to cancel the Greek Festival this year because of the pandemic. It is not smart or safe to offer it at this time. We look forward to having this again in 2021. With this in mind, obviously, we are not going to get a big piece of income that we receive from the Festival each year. We are encouraging parishioners to give whatever you can to help offset this loss of income. As a suggestion, consider giving what you would have spent at the Festival had you attended this year (what you would have spent on food or a raffle ticket, etc.) and we will use this money to make up for the shortfall. Thank you.



Parish Assembly Meeting – November 1

On November 1, we will have our fall Parish Assembly Meeting. At this time, we are unsure if it will be in person or via Zoom. We did have a successful Parish Assembly via zoom on August 23 and are prepared to do this again on November 1. There are two things that we will do that are critical to our parish for the coming year. The first is to pass a budget. For most of the items on the budget, there is not much to discuss. We are not going to debate whether to pay the electric bill or the sewer bill. These are fixed costs to our church regardless of how many people attend here or how much we spend or save. There are a couple of areas of the budget where there is something to discuss. These include personnel (liturgical assistance once the pandemic is over) and charitable giving. The kind of budget that we pass says a lot about the kind of parish we want to have. And our financial support of our parish through stewardship says a lot about how important spreading the message of Christ is to us individually. While the budget will reflect a certain amount for stewardship, we don't offer stewardship in order to achieve some goal—rather we offer stewardship in a prayerful and personal way which reflects our love for Christ.

Parish Council Elections in the Time of COVID-19

This is revised from what is in the print issue

We originally included information to hold Parish Council nominations. Subsequent to sending *The Messenger* to print, we received this letter (see below) from our Metropolis Chancellor, V. Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis, informing us that there will be no Parish Council Elections held in 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Those who are currently serving will each have a year extended to their term, as well as to their six years of eligibility to serve. Parish Council Elections will be held in fall of 2021. Please review the letter from the Chancellor. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Father Stavros.

September 18, 2020

To the Reverend Clergy, the Parish Council Presidents, and Parish Council Officers of the Metropolis of Atlanta:



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

I pray that this message finds you well. Out of pastoral love and guidance, His Eminence has made the decision, in concert with the 2020 Clergy-Laity Congress, to forego Parish Council nominations and elections for the coming year (unless otherwise deemed necessary by the Metropolis of Atlanta). This, the Metropolis feels, will allow the current leadership, including officers, to guide their communities through the quickly evolving circumstances of the COVID-19 era. In this way, irrespective of the remainder of the term length, every Parish Council member will serve for an additional year to ensure a smooth transitional process.

Current officers will serve an additional year, and clergy will administer the Oath of Office for all Parish Council members in early January. For the time being, Parish boards of auditors may be nominated and elected during General Parish Assemblies as usual. Additionally, provided the safety precautions are maintained, the number of parishioners needed to convene General Parish Assemblies may be constituted by both those faithful who have chosen to attend church in person, as well as those parishioners who wish to participate from their homes over video-conferencing.

Thank you for your understanding, your willingness to adapt, and your continued service to our parish communities,

Faithfully yours,

+ Very Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis
Chancellor

Inspirational Sayings

Stay away from negative people. They have a problem for every solution. ~Albert Einstein

The answer to our anxiety is not drugs, alcohol, tranquilizers or psychiatric treatment. It will be cured by yoga or some new age or eastern meditation practice. The problem is that we have lost God at the center of our lives. Once we make our love of God the primary focus of our lives and allow His grace to work through us, then no matter what circumstance we encounter in life we will be comforted and embraced in His love. All anxiety disappears. This is the aim of the Orthodox way of life—to put God first and seek the Holy Spirit. The anxieties of modern life are only symptoms of our separation from God. ~St. Paisios of Mount Athos

The Christian prays while he walks, while he talks, while he rests, while he works or reads, and, when he meditates alone in the secret retreat of his own soul, and calls upon the Father with groans that are no less real because they are unspoken, the Father ever fails to answer and draw near to Him. ~St. Clement of Alexandria

The church is a hospital, and not a courtroom, for souls. She does not condemn on behalf of sins, but grants remission of sins. ~St. John Chrysostom

A relationship [with God] must begin and develop in mutual freedom. If you look at the relationship in terms of a mutual relationship, you will see that God could complain about us a great deal more than we about Him. We complain that HE does not make Himself present to us for the few minutes we reserve for Him, but what about the twenty-three and a half hours during which God may be knocking at our door and we answer “I am busy, I am sorry” or when we do not answer at all because we do not even hear the knock at the door of our heart, of our minds, of our conscience, of our life. So there is a situation where we have no right to complain of the absence of God because we are a great deal more absent than He ever is. ~From “Beginning to Pray” by Metropolitan Anthony Bloom

You must not wage your Christian struggle with sermons and arguments, but with true secret love. When we argue, others react. When we love people, they are moved and we win them over, when we love, we think that we offer something to others, but in reality we are the first to benefit. ~St. Porphyrios the Kapsokalyvite

What would you do if you woke up tomorrow morning and all you had is what you thanked God for yesterday?

Holding a grudge is letting someone live rent-free in your head.

I thought 2020 would be the year I get everything I want. Now I know 2020 is the year I appreciate everything I have.

People that spend time looking for faults in others, should spend time correcting their own.

Your best teacher is your last mistake.

The danger of missing Church, is soon you won't miss it!

Our world is not divided by race, color, gender or religion. Our world is divided into wise people and fools. And fools divide themselves by race, color, gender or religion. ~Nelson Mandela

Don't let the shadows of yesterday spoil the sunshine of tomorrow. Live for today.

Real isn't who's with you at your celebration, real is who's standing next to you at rock bottom. ~Trent Shelton

When you fall, Satan says “Give up.” God says “Get up.”

If you don't heal what hurt you, you'll bleed on people who didn't cut you.

When you are hanging on by a thread, make sure it's the hem of His garment.

The more fake you are, the bigger your circle will be. The more truthful you are, the smaller your circle will be.

“I wish it need not have happened in my time,” said Frodo. “So do I,” said Gandalf, “and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.” ~J.R.R. Tolkien

If you're having sex before marriage, go to church anyway. If you are a drug addict trying to beat addiction, go to church anyway. If you were out drunk all night the night before, go to church anyway. If you can't quit that disgusting habit, go to church anyway. Church is a hospital for the broken, lost, empty, confused, desperate, and rejected. Every sinner has a future, and every Saint has a past. How do we break the chains of addiction and bondage? By prayer, prayer for you and prayer with you! There isn't a single person in the four walls of the church that doesn't have something they hate or regret about their past. We've all made mistakes, and will continue to, BUT His grace is enough! There's things that I'd never want to admit out loud about myself, but God knows. And He loves me none the less. So whatever you've done, whatever you're doing, whatever you will do. . . Go to church anyway, it might just change your life!

The Beatitudes of St. Paisios of Mt. Athos

1. Blessed are those who love Christ more than all the worldly things and live far from the world and near God, with heavenly joys upon the earth.

2. Blessed are those who manage to live in obscurity and acquired great virtues but did not acquire even a small name for themselves.

3. Blessed are those who manage to act the fool and, in this way, protected their spiritual wealth.

4. Blessed are those who do not preach the Gospel with words, but live it and preach it with their silence, with the Grace of God, which betrays them.

5. Blessed are those who rejoice when unjustly accused, rather than when they are justly praised for their virtuous life. Here are the signs of holiness, not in the dry exertion of bodily asceticism and the great number of struggles, which, when not carried out with humility and the aim to take off the old man, create only illusions.

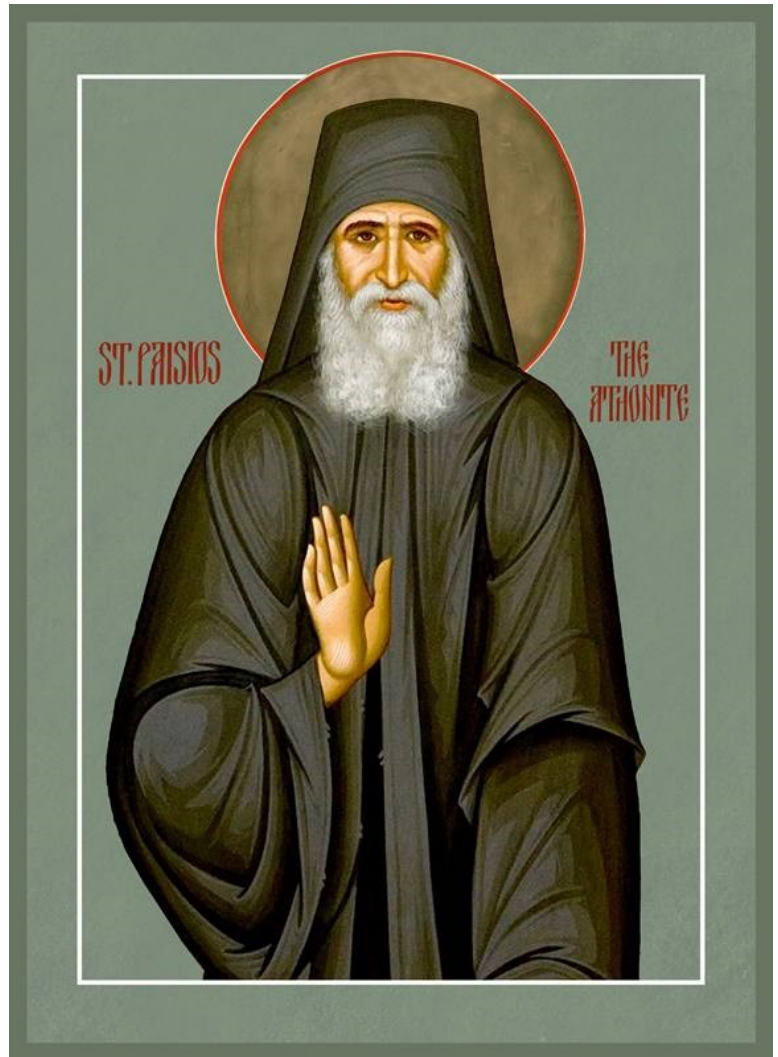
6. Blessed are those who prefer to be wronged rather than to wrong others and accept serenely and silently injustices. In this way, they reveal in practice that they believe in “one God, the Father Almighty” and expect to be vindicated by Him and not by human beings who repay in this life with vanity.

7. Blessed are those who have been born crippled or became so due to their own carelessness, yet do not grumble but glorify God. They will hold the best place in Paradise along with the Confessors and Martyrs, who gave their hands and feet for the love of Christ and now constantly kiss with devoutness the hands and feet of Christ in Paradise.

8. Blessed are those who were born ugly and are despised here on earth, because they are entitled to the most beautiful place in Paradise, provided they glorify God and do not grumble.

9. Blessed are those widows who wear black in this life, even unwillingly, but live a white spiritual life and glorify God without complaining, rather than the miserable ones who wear assorted clothes and live a spotted life.

10. Blessed and thrice blessed are the orphans who have been deprived of their parents' great affection, for they managed to have God as their Father already from this life. At the same time, they have the affection they were deprived of from their parents in God's savings bank “with interest”.



11. Blessed are those parents who avoid the use of the word “don’t” with their children, instead restraining them from evil through their holy life – a life which children imitate, joyfully following Christ with spiritual bravery.

12. Blessed are those children who have been born “from their mother’s womb”(Mt. 19:12) holy, but even more blessed are those who were born with all the inherited passions of the world, struggled with sweat and up-rooted them and inherited the Kingdom of God in the sweat of their face (Cf. Gen. 3:19).

13. Blessed are those children who lived from infancy in a spiritual environment and, thus, tirelessly advanced in the spiritual life. Thrice blessed, however, are the mistreated ones who were not helped at all (on the contrary, they were pushed towards evil), but as soon as they heard of Christ, their eyes glistened, and with a one hundred and eighty degree turn they suddenly made their soul to shine as well. They departed from the attraction of earth and moved into the spiritual sphere.

14. Fortunate, worldly people say, are the astronauts who are able to spin in the air, orbit the moon or even walk on the moon. Blessed, however, are the immaterial “Paradise-nauts”, who ascend often to God and travel about Paradise, their place of permanent abode, with the quickest of means and without much fuel, besides one crust of bread.

15. Blessed are those who glorify God for the moon that glimmers that they might walk at night. More blessed, however, are those who have come to understand that neither the light of the moon is of the moon, nor the spiritual light of their soul of them-selves, but both are of God. Whether they can shine like a mirror, a pane of glass or the lid of a tin can, if the rays of the sun do not fall on them, it is impossible for them to shine.

16. Fortunate, worldly people tell us, are those who live in crystal palaces and have all kinds of conveniences. Blessed, however, are those who have managed to simplify their life and become liberated from the web of this world’s development of numerous conveniences (i.e. many inconveniences), and were released from the frightening stress of our present age.

17. Fortunate, worldly people say, are those who can enjoy the goods of the world. Blessed, however, are those who give away every-thing for Christ and are deprived even of every hu-man consolation for Christ. Thus it is that they manage to be found night and day near Christ and His di-vine consolation, which many times is so much that they say to God: “My God, Thy love cannot be endured, for it is great and cannot be fit within my small heart”.

18. Fortunate, worldly people say, are those who have the greatest jobs and the largest mansions, since they possess all means and live comfortably.

Blessed, however, according to the divine Paul, are those who have but a nest to perch in, a little food and some coverings. For, in this way, they’ve managed to become estranged from the vain world, using the earth as a foot-stool, as children of God, and their mind is constantly found close to God, their Good Father.

19. Fortunate are those who become generals and government ministers in their head by way of heavy drinking (even if just for a few hours), with the world-ly rejoicing over it.

Blessed, however, are those who have put off the old man and have become incorporeal, managing to be earthly angels with the Holy Spirit. They have found Paradise’s di-vine faucet and drink from it and are continually inebriated from the heavenly wine.

20. Blessed are those who were born crazy and will be judged as crazy, and, in this way, will enter Paradise without a passport.

Blessed and thrice blessed, however, are the very wise who feign foolishness for the love of Christ and mock all the vanity of the world. This foolishness for Christ’s sake is worth more than all the knowledge and wisdom of the wise of this world.

- Written at the Chapel of the Holy Cross, 1972.

A Testimony from a Current Cancer Patient

Editor’s Note: Fr. George Livanos serves the All Saints Greek Orthodox Church of Canonsburg, PA. He has been there for 32 years. Overall, he has been a priest for 34 years. He is a very accomplished priest of the Archdiocese who was diagnosed with cancer a few months ago and is in a fight for his life. He posted the following on his Facebook page recently and I thought it was worthy to share with you, so we can have more empathy and compassion for those who are suffering, and that is the word, suffering with this disease. Please read, pray for Fr. George and other cancer patients, and be patient with those who have cancer.

And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' He is not God of the dead, but of the living.

I have come to realize that the chemo I take creates a Dr. Jekyll Mr. Hyde personality in me. That may sound shocking but it’s the truth... I dehydrate so much that I start losing who I am and become something I absolutely despise. I beg God and my family for forgiveness and want to share this message to let everyone know that you may see a smile on my face or hear a sparkle in my voice now and then but there are days that are way too dark which causes pain for me/us.



I’m not embarrassed to share this! It’s just the reality of the struggle and it’s important for you to know so that if you have a loved one who has cancer and goes through chemo you may be more understanding and patient knowing that when they turn into someone that is not them it is the medication and not they themselves. ~by Fr. George Livanos

Is Holy Communion Safe? If You Approach with Fear of God, Faith and Love, YES!!!

By Fr. Stavros

In light of the covid-19 pandemic, there is a lot of debate as to whether Holy Communion as it is traditionally distributed in the Orthodox Church, via one-common spoon, is safe. I am not a physician. I don't consider myself a theologian. I have served as a priest for 22 years, as a deacon a year before that, and I have been an Orthodox Christian and frequent participant in Holy Communion for all of my 48 years. This reflection is not scientific, but is based on my 48 years of faith and 23 years as an ordained clergyman.

The short answer to the question, "Is Holy Communion Safe?" the answer is YES! I believe that Holy Communion is safe. I believe that Holy Communion is the Body and Blood of Christ. And just as Christ is incorruptible, so are His Gifts to us, His Body and Blood. I believe that however they are transmitted to people is also incorruptible. I believe that if you receive Holy Communion and you are sick, that I cannot become sick if I receive after you. I believe that if I celebrate the Divine Liturgy and I am sick (as happens occasionally), that I do not make the congregation sick. If Holy Communion could transmit illness, most certainly every priest would be perpetually sick as he consumes the Gifts after each Liturgy. If Holy Communion could transmit illness, on the occasion when the priest is sick, entire congregations would become sick, and the fact is, they don't.

Saint Paul writes on the Eucharist in I Corinthians 11:

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My Body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. (I Corinthians 11: 23-26)

The operative word here, in my opinion, is the word "often." We are supposed to receive Holy Communion often, as a way to proclaim the Lord's death, and subsequent Resurrection, until His return. There is no indication here that the Eucharist poses any threat to health.

In Isaiah 6, we read of the prophet's vision of God in the temple, where one of the Seraphim takes a burning coal with tongs and sets it on the prophet's tongue and says to him, "Behold this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin forgiven." (Isaiah 6: 6-7) It doesn't say "this has touched your lips and you are more likely to get sick."

The words of the Divine Liturgy support Holy Communion being a healthy part of the spiritual life. After the Consecration of the Gifts we pray "so that they may be to those who partake of them,

*For vigilance of soul
Remission of sins
Communion of Your Holy Spirit
Fullness of the Kingdom of Heaven
Boldness before You*



Not for judgment or condemnation." (From the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom)

These are six specific reasons/benefits to receiving Holy Communion.

We pray in the pre-Communion prayers to "have mercy on me, and forgive my transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, in word and in deed, in knowledge or in ignorance, and make me worthy, without condemnation, to partake of Your pure Mysteries for the remission of sins and eternal life."

Jesus tells us to persevere in prayer. In Luke 11: 11-13, Jesus says, "What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

If Jesus has told us to ask for what we need in prayer and that He will give to us what we ask in prayer, if we are asking for forgiveness of sins and to partake of the Holy Mysteries to remission of sins and life eternal, how then will He allow us to partake of them to illness or death?

Well, there actually is a way to get sick receiving Holy Communion. Going back to I Corinthians 11, St. Paul writes, "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the Body and Blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. This is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died." (11:27-30)

If we approach Holy Communion with a cavalier or careless manner, then St. Paul tells us that we are at risk of getting sick. One of my duties as a priest is to consume the remainder of the Holy Gifts at the end of the Divine Liturgy. I have been doing this for over 23 years, and I have never thought that after putting the spoon in the chalice and into the mouths of parishioners hundreds of times each Sunday that I can get sick consuming the Gifts. Now, let's say that I carelessly forget to consume

the Gifts and they sit in the chalice for a week. They will mold. And if I consume them, I most likely will get sick. But the sickness will not be due to the Gifts and whether or not they transmit illness. It will be due to my negligence in not handling them in the reverent way that I am supposed to.

In the consecration of the Gifts, ordinary substances, bread and wine, that we can buy or make, become extraordinary substances, the Body and Blood of Christ, through the grace of the Holy Spirit. When we approach to receive them, we, the ordinary people, can become extraordinary and the extraordinary gifts enter our ordinary bodies. If we approach looking and hoping for the extraordinary, this is exactly what God imparts to us. If, however, we approach in an ordinary or pedestrian way, not seeking grace or hoping for the Gifts to affect us in an extraordinary way, they are not going to do anything for us. In fact, they may harm us, as St. Paul says.

The Divine Liturgy is the ultimate parable. To the untrained eye or the hardened heart, it is akin to a theatrical production. To the one with the humbled heart, the Divine Liturgy is the Kingdom of heaven manifest on earth in the here and now. Let's say that a person doesn't believe in God and approaches for Holy Communion, for that person, they will feel nothing. They will not feel extraordinary. To the one who has faith and a humble heart, they will not taste bread and wine but Christ Himself.

This is why we are supposed to prepare in order to receive Holy Communion. And we are to approach with fear of God, with faith and with love. If we are not prepared, we should not receive. If we are approaching with fear of illness, or with skepticism, we should not receive. If there are people who don't want to receive Holy Communion at this particular time, for whatever reason, there should be no judgment over lack of

faith, or lack of preparation, or anything. Just as for any who want to receive, there should be no judgment that they are reckless.

I can say that for over 23 years, I have consumed the Gifts after every Divine Liturgy. In all likelihood, I have given Communion to someone with AIDS, with SARS, and with H1N1 and I have never had any of these things. I know for sure I have given Communion to people with the flu, strep throat, the common cold and with mouth cancer. Several years ago, I offered Holy Communion to someone in intensive care who had sepsis and was dying. They were very contagious. They left a crumb of Communion on the spoon and I removed my mask and licked it off. The nurse got mad at me for doing that. Yet, I never thought I would get sick from that, and I didn't.

I sometimes have a fear of God when I approach, wondering whether I'm really worthy to receive. But I have never approached with the fear of illness. I have always believed that I will not get sick from Holy Communion, from sharing the common spoon or the common chalice. I have always believed that. I will always believe that.

I believe Lord and confess, Lord, that You are truly the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first. I also believe that this is truly Your pure Body and that this is truly Your precious Blood. Therefore, I pray to You, have mercy upon me, and forgive my transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, in word and deed, in knowledge and ignorance. And make me worthy, without condemnation, to partake of Your pure Mysteries for the remission of sins and life eternal. Amen. (Pre-Communion Prayers)

With the fear of God, with faith and with love draw near!

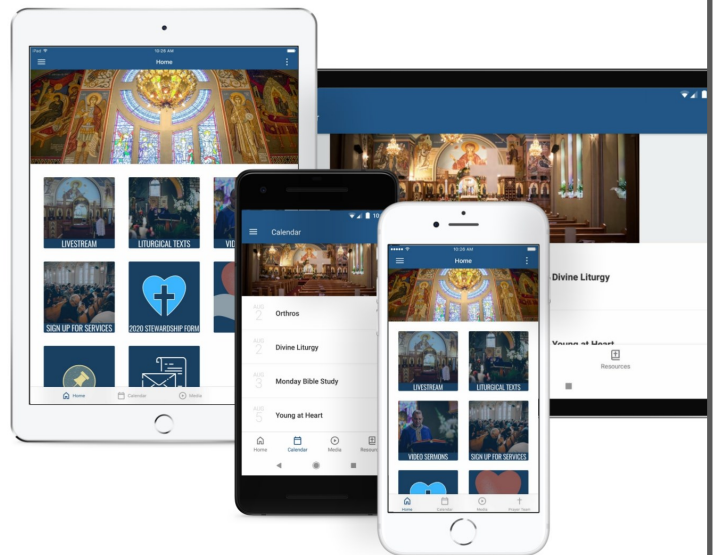
Download Our Church App Today

Available on Apple, Android and Amazon Devices



St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

DOWNLOAD NOW



Why We Can Live in Peace Even When Life Gets Tough

by Roxanne Parks (from Lifechurch)

How do we live in peace when our world seems turned upside down? We may sense deep desperation due to financial instability, marital struggles, a difficult health diagnosis, or the death of a loved one—just to name a few challenges. Our hearts are racing. We're anxious as our world spins beyond our control. We want to live in peace but instead are suffocating in our own worry and fear. But there's good news. We have a choice to find God's peace—the kind that doesn't fall to pieces in the face of the unknown.

We must tether our peace of mind to the character of God—not to our circumstances, other people, or the news!

During these days of COVID-19 and stressful news, we know one thing for sure: We are not in charge! As we wrestle with this idea, we have a significant choice to make. We can choose to look for security in people and in our circumstances. Or, we can choose to find solid ground in the only One who never changes (Hebrews 13:8). Ultimately, we must tether our peace of mind to the character of God—not to our circumstances, other people, or the news! So how do we do this? Here are a few tips to keep your heart focused on solid ground.

1. Start each day with truth from God's Word. When we start scrolling through social media or filling our minds with news, it's easy to start feeling worried and anxious about the uncertainty around us. Instead, we can start our day with never-changing, life-giving truth. And don't just read it. Memorize it! Whenever those anxious thoughts start creeping in, replace them with the truth of Scripture.

2. Align yourself with an eternal perspective. As Pastor Robert Madu reminded us, "Worry is often the byproduct of asking the wrong questions." In the middle of unrest and uncertainty, it's easy to fixate on the problems around us. But we don't have to carry the weight of our worries alone. When we come before God, we can surrender our worries and gain a new perspective. Remember that His ways are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:9), so we can replace our temporary worries with a confident future hope.

3. Do what you can do and trust God with what you can't do. Sometimes, God calls us to act and to be a part of the solution to the prayers we pray. Other times, we're called to simply surrender our worries to the only One who can fully handle them. So don't spiral downward by thinking about all the things you can't do. Take action on what you can take action on, then trust God with the rest.

4. Choose to be an instrument of love. In stressful seasons, it's not always easy to live in peace with others. People may have conflicting opinions or views, but that doesn't

change our calling to love everyone as Christ loves them. So choose to spread love and bring light. Meditate on 1 Corinthians 13 as your words to live by—especially when life gets tough.

5. Open your eyes and look for God's handprint in each of your days. Pastor Craig has often said that you'll find what you look for. If you're looking for reasons to worry, you'll easily find them. But, if you look for ways God is at work, you'll find those, too. Reflect on all of the blessings you see each day and thank God for them.

6. Limit the news and negative input. There's a balance between being informed and being overwhelmed. While it's great to stay in the know about current events and to hear from different perspectives, it's wise to limit the quantity of negative talk you ingest.

7. Start a gratitude journal. Philippians 4:6-9 has incredible wisdom about navigating worry, fear, and anxiety. One of the solutions to worry is focusing on what is praiseworthy. So now is a great time to start a gratitude journal. Think about all the things you're thankful for, and praise God for them. This simple act of obedience can yield huge results!

8. Take responsibility for your mental health. We know that prayer, gratitude, Scripture, worship, servicing, and going to church are great ways to improve your mental health. But they aren't the only options. Take inventory of your emotions. How are you doing—really? Maybe it's time for you to get vulnerable with the people in your LifeGroup. Maybe it's time to seek out a professional counselor. You can't be healthy for others unless you're healthy yourself. Don't blame the circumstances around you for the lack of peace inside you. Choose to prioritize your mental health by taking the next appropriate steps for you.

9. Worship as a way to refocus. Choosing to praise God is vital in bringing us victory now and in the days ahead. He inhabits the praise of His people (see Psalms 22:3), so if you've been feeling discouraged or overwhelmed, worship Him anyway. You just might find that it lifts your spirit.

You can live in peace even when life gets tough. Choose to anchor your soul to His promises and His truths. This is your solid ground in a shaky world. The choice is yours. Don't wait another minute. Your peace of mind is worth the effort.

Χρόνια Πολλά! Happy Nameday!

October 1

ANANIAS (Hananiah, Nino), ROMANOS (Romana, Romani), THIREZIA (Theresea)

October 2

CYPRIANOS (Kiprianos), IOUSTA (Jousta), JUSTINE (Ioustini)

October 3

DIONISIS (Dionysius, Dionysis, Dionisos, Dionysios, Dionysos, Nionios, Denis, Dennis, Denise, Sissy)

October 4

IEROTHEOS (Hierothus), KALLISTHENIS, VERINA (Verina, Vera)

October 5

HARITINI (Haritine, Tina, Hara, Charitin)

October 6

EROTIIS (Erotiis), THOMAS (Thomas, Tom)

October 7

BAKHOS, POLYCHRONIS (Polychronios), SERGIOS (Sergio)

October 8

PELAGIA

October 9

LOT

October 10

EVLABIOS (Evlambios)

October 11

Phillip (Saint Phillip of the Seventy)

October 12

ANDROMAHI (Andromahi), ANDROMAHOS (Andromahos), VALANTIOS (Valantios)

October 13

AGATHONIKI, CHRYSI, FLORENTIA (Florentia, Florence, Dia), FLORENTIOS, KARPOS

October 14

GERVASIOS, IGNATIOS, NAZARIOS

October 15

LOUKIANOS (Lucian)

October 17

ANTIGONOS (Antigonos), EFPREPIOS, HOSEA

October 18

LUKE (Loukas, Loska, Loskas, Lucas, Luke), MARINOS

October 19

CLEOPATRA (2) (Cleopatra, Kleopatra, Patra, Patroula, Cleo), FELIX, Varys, JOEL

October 20

ARTEMIOS, ARTEMIS, DIANA, GERASIMOS, HENOE (Enoe), KERASIA, MATRONA

October 21

CHRISTODOULOS, EFKRATIS, HILARION, ORSALIA (Orsalia, Orsalina, Orsaline, Orsel, Orselina, Orseline, Orsola, Orssa), SOCRATES, URSULA (Ursa)

October 22

AVERKIOS (Abericus)

October 23

JACOB (Iakovos, Jacob, Jakob), JAMES

October 24

SEVASTIANI (Sebastian, Sevasti, Sevi)

October 25

CHRYSANTHI (Hrisanthi, Hrysanthi), HRYSAPHIS (Chrisaphis)

October 26

DIMITRA (Dimitra, Dimitria, Dimi), DIMITRIOS (Demetris, Dimitris, Dimitrios, Jim, James, Mitros), GLYKON (Glykon, Glykos), LEPTINIS

October 27

LOUPPOS, NESTOR (Nestoras)

October 28

EVNIKI, VILI (Villi, Vilia), ABRAMIOS (Abrahamios, Avramia)

October 29

Anastasia, MELINA (Melitini, Melitina)

October 30

APOLLONIA, ASTERIOS (Asteris), ASTERO, KLEOPAS (Cleopas), KRONOS (Cronos), MARKIANOS (Markianos), TERTIOS (Tertios), ZINOVIA (Zenovia, Zenovios, Zinovia, Zinovios, Zelina)

October 31

ABLIA (Amblia, Amblios), APELLIS (Apelis), ARISTOVOULOS (Aristovoulos), Epimachus, NARKISOS, STRATONIKI

Community Outreach - Saturday, Oct. 17 We Want You to Serve with Us!

Hello and WELCOME! **On the third Saturday of each month**, we volunteer our time to provide for those of our community in need in downtown Tampa. We partner with Matthew 25 local charity, USF Medical School, and Metropolitan Ministries to serve breakfast, provide clothing, and care for the medical needs for our guests.

To Volunteer: Go to our Sign Up Genius, <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f48a5a62da3f49-community> or scan the QR CODE and sign up.

Place: First Presbyterian Church @ 412 Zack Street East, downtown Tampa. The entrance for volunteers is on the Polk Street side of building. **Time:** 8:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Volunteer Check-In Process:

- 1) Sign in and choose the job you want on the Duty Sheet
- 2) Prepare and wear your name tag
- 3) Don't be shy...if not sure where to go or what to do to get started, ask someone who looks like they know what they're doing.
- 4) Set up and Preparation 8-9 a.m., Serving 9-10:15 a.m., Cleanup 10:15-10:30 a.m..



Please don't hesitate to ask any questions.

Thank you and God Bless

Greg Melton 813-967-2074

gmelt12@gmail.com

~ October 2020 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Griefshare 6:30 p.m.	2 **	3 Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Toddler/PreK/K Sunday School
4 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. GOYA 5:00 p.m.	5 Stewardship Meeting 4:00 p.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m	6 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	7 ** Paraklesis 6:00 p.m.	8 Griefshare 6:30 p.m.	9 **	10 Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd grade Sunday School
11 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Youth Sunday	12 Bible Study 6:30 p.m	13 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	14 ** Paraklesis 6:00 p.m.	15 Griefshare 6:30 p.m.	16 **	17 Community Outreach Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. 4 th , 5 th , 6 th grade Sun- day School
18 St. Luke Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	19 Bible Study 6:30 p.m	20 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Parish Council 6:30 p.m.	21 ** Paraklesis 10:00 a.m.	22 St. James Orthros 5:00 p.m. Liturgy of St. James 6:00 p.m. Griefshare 6:30 p.m.	23 **	24 Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. GOYA Service Project
25 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Men's Group 5:00p.m.	26 St. Demetrios Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m	27 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	28 ** Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Paraklesis 6:00 p.m.	29 Griefshare 6:30 p.m.	30 **	31 Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

2418 W. Swann Avenue

Tampa, FL 33609-4712

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

office@stjohntpa.org

www.stjohntpa.org

NONPROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

TAMPA, FL

PERMIT NO. 461

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

Retired Priest in Residence Rev. Fr. Stratton Dorozenski
813-876-8830 (Office)

Pastoral Assistant Charlie Hambos
813-876-8830 (Office) 813-843-8471 (Cell)
chambos@stjohntpa.org

Pastoral Assistant Alex Limberatos
813-876-8830 (Office) 262-370-0586 (Cell)
alex@stjohntpa.org

Parish Council

Jim Armstrong, President 954-295-6665
Euripides Panos, Vice President 813-352-3972
John Zelatis, Secretary 813-727-2271
Gary Ward, Treasurer 813-846-3898
Demosthenes Mekras 786-417-7256
George Chagaris 727-420-1920
Amin Hanhan 813-846-2957
Nick Katzaras 863-581-2430
Edie Kavouklis 813-758-0305
Jimmy Konstas 813-220-7352
Marilyn Sandborn 813-855-8678

Office Staff

Debbie Bowe, Bookkeeper
debbie@stjohntpa.org fax:813-443-4899

Adult Greek School

Magda Myer 813-909-2327

AHEPA

Thomas Sakaris, President 201-819-2319

Altar Angels

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

Basketball

Perry Katsamakias 516-403-3118
Jimmy Konstas 813-220-7352

Bible Study

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

Bookstore

Brett Mourer 813-376-9315

Buildings & Grounds

Euripides Panos 813-352-3972

Chanter

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

Choir

Pauline Spencer, Director 813-390-1782
Ruth Losovitz, Organist 727-688-2782

Community Outreach

Greg Melton 813-967-2074

Connect Through Christ - Special Needs Ministry for Children

Dante and Lindsey Skourellos 813-765-9534

Dance Groups

H XAPA MAΣ, Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668
Bessie Palios, 813-523-0347
Maraquet Edquid 813-422-8963
ΠΑΡΕΑ, Marina Choundas 813-877-6136
ΠΑΝΗΓΥΡΙ, Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668

Daughters of Penelope

Nicole Leontsinis, President 703-585-7490

Finance Committee

Gary Ward 813-846-3898

Food Pantry

Anetta Alexander 813-758-2689

GriefShare

Donna Hambos 813-843-8412

Gasparilla Parking

John Kokkas 727-992-4165

GOYA

Michael & Bessie Palios 813-523-0346
goya@stjohntpa.org

Hope/Joy

George & Zackie Ameres 813-245-3813

Junior Olympics

Dwight Forde 727-685-9028

Men's Fellowship

Rev. Fr. Stavros N. Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038

Parish Nursing Ministry

Marcelle Triantafilou 612-396-5026

Orthodox Christian Fellowship

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

Oratorical Festival

Peggy Bradshaw 727-244-1374

Photography Ministry

Karina Findlay 813-476-9632

Philoptochos

Jeanie Nenos 813-451-9116

Stewardship

Pete Trakas 813-505-2193
George Mitseas 813-748-1220
Chris Kyrus 757-672-1920

Sunday School

Vickie Peckham 813-758-3102

Usher

Tom Georgas 813-985-0236

Welcoming Ministry

Maria Xenick 813-765-3587

Women's Bible Study

Rev. Fr. Stavros N. Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038

Young Adult

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

Young at Heart

Mike Trimis, President 813-784-4872
Mary Nenos, Vice President 813-935-2096

Youth Protection

Catherine Mitseas 813-571-0658

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.

“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.