

The Desert



Messenger

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

Volume 16, Issue 11 St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

December 2018

**From
Father
John**

"When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly..." (Matthew 2:10)

Beloved in Christ:

During this Holy Advent Season, as we prepare for the Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, we have the unique privilege of joining in the Spirit with the Magi and following the Star to Bethlehem – for some of us, literally, as we embark on a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land; and for all of us, spiritually, as we fast, pray, confess, offer charity, and participate in the Holy Services leading up to the Great Feast of Christmas.

As you read this, I am preparing to lead a spiritual pilgrimage of 35 people to the Holy Land – and I must confess that making this pilgrimage is personally significant for me. My first visit to the Holy Land was in the Summer of 1978, when I was a youthful 19 year-old seeking the Truth, even though I was Baptized and raised in the Greek Orthodox Church. It was not enough for me to accept what my parents and parish priests and Church School teachers had instilled in me: I was at a point in my life when I wanted, and moreover needed, to see, experience and affirm my faith for myself.

Most assuredly, my initial pilgrimage to the Holy Land greatly impacted my eventual journey to the Seminary and Ordination to the Holy Priesthood. Since 1987 I have been serving as a Priest in the Greek Orthodox Church: Like those who labored to establish and nurture me in the True Faith, by God's grace I too have been His instrument in preaching, teaching, ministering, and uniting people to Christ and His Holy Orthodox Church through the Holy Mysteries.

Forty years later I am about to make my second pilgrimage – and this time as a spiritual guide – to see and experience personally where our Lord was Born and Baptized, taught and healed, was betrayed and stood trial, was Crucified and Resurrected: And my fervent prayer is that during our travels I will be one of the many vessels to bring my co-pilgrims into a deeper relationship with the True and Living God.

But even if you do not have the ability to make a literal pilgrimage to the Holy Land, we Orthodox Christians must be mindful that all of us are sojourners in this world: We are just like the nameless person who narrates *The Way of a Pilgrim* – "By the grace of God I am a Christian, by my deeds a great sinner, and by my calling a homeless wanderer of humblest origin, roaming from place to place." As Christians, our life must always be defined in relationship to the True Home toward which we are journeying, the place of our true and lasting citizenship – namely, the Kingdom of God. (*Philippians 3:20*) As described in the first century Apostolic text, *The Epistle to Diognetus*, all Christians are like spiritual refugees: "They live in their own countries, but only as aliens . . . Every foreign country is their fatherland, and every fatherland is foreign."

During this Holy Season, let us emulate the faithful Magi and follow the star – that is, the yearning of our soul – that leads us to union with the Incarnate Christ, in Whose image we are made. Regardless of where we are on our spiritual journey, as we make every effort to approach our life as a pilgrimage of faith – which is strengthened by humility and love, mercy and forgiveness, ceaseless prayer and repentance, the reading of Holy Scriptures and spiritual books, and through the renewing grace of the Holy Mysteries – we will most assuredly come to know that the Kingdom of God dwells within us.

With Love in the Incarnate Christ,

Father John



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

**Sunday, December 2/14th Sunday of Luke/
Prophet Habakkuk/St. Porphyrios of Kapsokalyvia**

Orthros: Tone Two

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:13-35

Epistle: Ephesians 6:10-17

Gospel: Luke 18:35-43

**Thursday, December 6/St. Nicholas of Myra,
the Wonderworker**

8:00 am Orthros

9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Hebrews 13:17-21

Gospel: Luke 6:17-23

**Sunday, December 9/10th Sunday of Luke/
Conception of the Theotokos by St. Anna the
Ancestor of God**

Orthros: Tone Three

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:36-53

Epistle: Galatians 4:22-27

Gospel: Luke 13:10-17

**Wednesday, December 12/St. Spyridon of
Trimythous, the Wonderworker**

8:00 am Orthros

9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Ephesians 5:8-19

Gospel: John 10:9-16

**Sunday, December 16/11th Sunday of Luke/
Holy Forefathers of Christ/Prophet Haggai/St.
Modestos, Archbishop of Jerusalem**

Orthros: Tone Four

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

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11

Gospel: Luke 14:16-24

**Sunday, December 23/ Sunday Before the Nativity
of Christ/Holy Ancestors and Prophets, especially
Prophet Daniel and the Three Youths**

Orthros: Tone Five (First Plagal)

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

Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40

Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25

Christmas Pageant follows Liturgy

**Monday, December 24/ Eve of the Nativity
of Christ**

6:00 pm Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Epistle: Hebrews 1:1-12

Gospel: Luke 2:1-20

**Tuesday, December 25/ The Nativity in the Flesh
of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ**

9:00 am Orthros

10:00 am Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Epistle: Galatians 4:4-7

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-20

**Thursday, December 27/St. Stephen the
Archdeacon and First Martyr**

8:00 am Orthros

9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Acts of the Apostles 6:8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-42

**Sunday, December 30/ Sunday After the Nativity/
Holy and Righteous Joseph the Betrothed/David
the King/James (Iakovos), the Brother of the Lord**

Orthros: Tone Six (Second Plagal)

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

Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23

**Tuesday, January 1/ Circumcision of Christ/
St. Basil the Great and his mother Emelia**

9:00 am Orthros

10:00 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Epistle: Colossians 2:8-12

Gospel: Luke 2:21-20, 40-52



***“But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman,
born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law,
so that we might receive adoption as sons.” (Galatians 4:4-5)***



Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Services



Monday, December 24

Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

6:00 pm Vespertal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Tuesday, December 25

Nativity of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ

9:00 am Orthros

10:00 am Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

*Please be prepared to receive Holy Communion at both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Liturgies.
Join us as we worship the New-Born King!*

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 2

Ushers: Gus Flangas, Mike Beeler, Bessie Stavropoulos, George Bochanis, Demetrious Asim
and John Nicholas

Fellowship: Pan-Cretans

DECEMBER 9

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

Fellowship: Daughters of Penelope

DECEMBER 16: PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Ushers: Adam Bieker, George Bochanis, Gus Flangas, Bessie Stavropoulos, John Nicholas
and Mike Beeler

Memorial: Katerina Renner (4 years)

Fellowship: Folk Dance Groups

DECEMBER 23: CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

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

Fellowship: Young Adults

DECEMBER 30

Ushers: Bessie Stavropoulos, George Bochanis, John Matsis, John Nicholas, Demetrious Asim
and Mark Karris

Fellowship: Demoleas Family



Join us for the
Annual Christmas Pageant
presented by
our Church School Children
Sunday, December 23

*"In many and diverse ways
God spoke of old to our
fathers by the prophets;
but in these last days
He has spoken to us
by a Son . . ."
(Hebrews 1:1-2)*

Parish Council Report

Great News! As announced in Church a couple of weeks ago, we were approved and now have a 501(c)(3) certification from the IRS, which will allow us to work on getting the iconographers here to complete the iconography. Our next hurdle is getting the iconographers approved by US Immigration Service, which hopefully will now go a lot smoother. It has been a long and arduous process and it looks like our efforts are finally coming to fruition. We will keep everyone informed of our progress.

We recently had our Parish Assembly on Sunday, November 4, and we were able to accomplish much in a relatively short period of time. All in all, it was a very smooth and informative meeting, and we sincerely hope that we answered everyone's questions adequately. The only drawback of the meeting was, again, the relatively low attendance. We urge everyone to take the time to attend the Parish Assemblies and learn about the administration of the Church. We take great strides to maintain complete transparency and we sincerely want everyone to know how things operate. Moreover, we want to receive meaningful input and ideas to help us all do things better. Improvement is a continuous process and the more people involved in the effort, the better we can and will be.

At the Parish Assembly, we approved the 2019 Budget. A lot of effort went into preparing it. There were several meetings and several revisions made to the budget before bringing it to the Assembly and we want to specifically thank John Karas and the members of the Financial Committee, Gary Rihani and Litza Smith, for all the hard work they did in putting the budget together. Moreover, we appreciate the hundreds of hours John expended in fixing the Church's financial records. We also received a very in depth and very detailed internal audit report from the Audit Committee – Ellyn Nixon, Kitty Komashko Gott and Marina Adamy – who performed a very hard and deep look at the Church's finances and insurance. We sincerely thank them for their efforts and the hours of hard work they put into putting the report together. Also, during the meeting, we received numerous nominations for election to the Parish Council, most of which were accepted. This indicates that more of our Stewards are having a greater interest in being part of the Parish leadership. *Elections* for the Parish Council is scheduled for ***Sunday, December 16, 2018***. If you want to vote by absentee ballot, please personally stop by the Church Office to sign your name and vote prior to Elections, Monday through Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. Absentee ballots must be submitted to the Church Office ***by 5:00 pm on Friday, December 14***. We strongly encourage every Steward to vote.

We kicked off our 2019 Stewardship efforts in November, and our annual Stewardship All-Stars Luncheon was held on November 11. It was our great pleasure and privilege to honor Stephanie Demoleas, Demetri Asim, and Marika LaMancusa, for their contributions of time, talents, and treasures. We are truly blessed to have people in our community who really give of themselves to make things better for all of us.

We have written and spoken about Stewardship for many, many months, and we fervently hope that this is the year when we finally fix the Stewardship Program. By fixing the Stewardship Program, we will finally be able to move forward with a vision for the future. The Orthodox Christian Faith is one of the oldest, one of the most beautiful, and one of the most respected religions in the world. There is an Orthodox Altar which sits upon the actual site of Jesus' Crucifixion located inside the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. The Tomb where Jesus was buried and Resurrected is guarded by Orthodox monks, and is also located inside the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Also, an Orthodox Church is the entry point into and the main structure of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The Church's Altar is situated directly above the Grotto of the Nativity, the place where Jesus was born. In our own Parish here in Las Vegas, we are truly blessed with many great people, a great and caring clergy, beautiful facilities, and a tremendous Church in which to worship and exercise our faith. We need to work together to not only preserve this great heritage for ourselves but also for our children, and our children's children. Thus, when you decide on your Stewardship gift, please understand that your generosity is absolutely necessary and vital to preserve the future of our Church. We are at a critical juncture in the life of our Church. Our Stewardship has been and is broken. We therefore, all have an extremely important and solemn duty to fix it, and to protect and preserve our future. So, please look into your hearts, and make an appropriate gift.

(Continued on Page 5)

Parish Council Report *(Continued from Page 4)*

On another note, we have already set the dates for the 2019 Greek Food Festival. The dates are *Friday, September 27 through Sunday, September 29, 2019*. Please get these dates on your calendars!

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

May God Bless! Merry Christmas! Gus Flangas, Parish Council President

Stewardship and Community Outreach

Let's Fix What's Broken!

There is an alarming saying going around in our Parish, and we cannot at all deny that it is not true. What am I referring to? Well, the fact that our Stewardship is broken! Sadly, this is most definitely the truth and the majority of our community faithful can take some sort of responsibility in the brokenness. This is not a finger-pointing, or shaming: It is just an overly obvious fact. However, it is a fact that has simple solutions for how to "fix what's broken." Allow me to share a few:

Solution 1: For parishioners who have never made a pledge before (or only a very minimal one) for giving a portion of their finances to help support St. John the Baptist Church – they should start with the minimum 2% of their yearly income.

Solution 2: For parishioners who have already been giving 2%, they should increase to 4%.

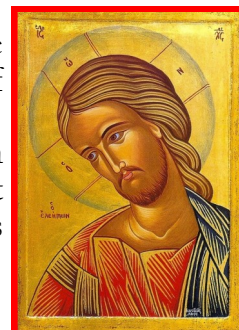
Solution 3: For parishioners who are giving 4%, increase to 6%, or double to 8%, until reaching the true prescribed "minimum" of 10% of the household's yearly income.

Solution 4: HERE IS THE BEST ONE OF ALL! Share your financial blessings at the highest percentage possible with the Church without a begrudging spirit or because of one excuse or another. Then watch how the Lord returns the gratitude!

In my heart, I know that we are truly a faithful community that has SO much potential, and I pray that we no longer live with this spiritual malady. Yes, indeed – not giving according to our means is a malady, and frankly a sin that must be overcome. Let us repent of it, give profusely, and grow into what God intends for our beloved Parish to be!

May you all have a Blessed Nativity of Our Lord!

Sincerely in Christ, Justina Szukiewicz, Stewardship and Outreach Committee



2018 Stewardship Report (as of 11/16/18)

Stewardship Gifts Pledged: \$394,018.77 (\$380,747.99 in 2017)

Stewardship Gifts Received: \$340,116.07 (\$324,409.70 in 2017)

Unfulfilled Pledge Balance: \$53,902.70 (\$56,338.29 in 2017)

Stewardship Families Pledged: 433 (428 in 2017)

Average Pledge to Date: \$909.97 (\$889.60 in 2017)

Average Pledge Needed to Cover Operating Expenses: \$2,296.58



Adult Basketball

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



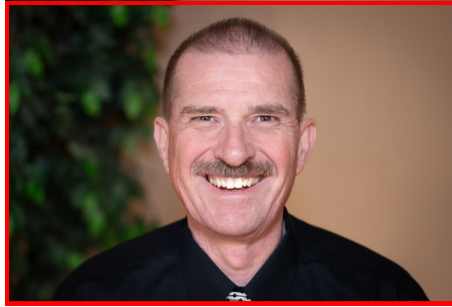
Parish Council Elections ~ 2019-20 Term

Sunday, December 16 ~ following Liturgy ~ Panos Hall Foyer

Six available positions ~ Our Nominees are:



Demetrious Asim



Karl Beeman



Spiros Filios



Mark Karras



Thomas Katsaros



John Koutsulis



Ellyn Nixon



Skip Ruffner




Justina Szukiewicz



Cleo Wilson

*All 2018 Parish Stewards
are eligible to vote!*

*For current Stewards unable to
be present on Election Day,
please call Karen
for an Absentee Ballot.*



The 2018 Annual Ladies Philoptochos Society Christmas Pastry Sale

Delicious and traditional Greek Christmas Pastries
lovingly baked and packaged in a decorated box for \$25.

Quantities are limited.

Guarantee your order by pre-ordering and pre-paying.

**Complimentary logo for those who order 40 boxes or more,
as well as 10% discount and free delivery.**

Send your order and check made payable to:

Ladies Philoptochos Society, attention Christmas Pastry Sale
5300 El Camino Rd. Las Vegas, NV 89118

Name _____

Day _____ Cell or Evening Phone _____

Email _____

Number of boxes _____ x \$25 _____

Check enclosed _____

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

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

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

Thank you!

Philoptochos News

My Dearest Sisters of Philoptochos,

The holiday season is upon us! This year has flown by! As we prepare for Christmas, let us create room in our hearts and minds for the Holy Nativity of our Lord.



This past month the Philoptochos was very busy! On November 2 and 3 we had our pastry baking days. Thank you to our incredible team that came out to bake our Christmas pastries! A special thank you to our lead bakers, Eleni Kakavulias, Kiki Mavrantonis and Marika LaMancusa. The pastries came out delicious! We cannot forget the wonderful men who assisted: George Kakavulias, Sam Koutsulis and Stacy Mavrantonis. Our youth loved doing the powder sugar and the pastry cups. We had over 30 beautiful ladies that worked tirelessly with such great enthusiasm. I am really grateful to all of you! Now let us sell all the pastries!

On November 4, we celebrated the Patron Saints of Philoptochos, Cosmas and Damianos. We took up a collection and hosted a fellowship to benefit the charities of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Thank you to Estella Nicholas who did an incredible job with the fellowship, with the assistance of Benita Beeman, Jennifer Santamaria and Farolyn McSweeney.

Thank you to my beautiful board for all their help with our Autumn Bake Sale, and especially to our chairwomen Rahel Kiflezgi, Christina Snow, Adrienne Snow and Stephanie Rosenthal! We are grateful to all our parishioners for supporting our worthy cause.

Below you will find our upcoming and exciting Philoptochos events:

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

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

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

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

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

IMPORTANT PHILOPTOCHOS DATES FOR 2019:

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

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

Sunday, January 13 – Vasilopita Cutting

Sunday, January 20 – Philoptochos General Meeting

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

Sunday, February 10 – Departed Members Memorial

Sunday, February 24 – Kids 'N' Cancer Fellowship and Collection

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

Monday, March 11 – Lent Begins

Sunday, April 21 – Palm Sunday Luncheon

(Continued on Page 9)

Philoptochos News *(Continued from Page 8)*

IMPORTANT DATES (Continued):

Thursday, April 25 – Red Egg Dyeing

Friday, April 26 – Holy Friday and Epitaphios Decorating

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

Sunday, May 12 – Mother's Day

Sunday, May 19 – Bartsas Memorial

Monday, May 20 – President's Dinner

I would like to wish you a Christmas filled with love and joy!

With Love in Christ, Vicky Palivos, Philoptochos President

Our Community Registry

Baptized into Christ: Na Mas Zisi

Rosalia, daughter of Allan Harrison and Angela Rigoud on October 27, 2018.

Godparents: Angie Harrison and Christine Schildmeyer.

Iakovos (Jimmy), son of Jimmy and Monci Hoadrea on November 18, 2018.

Godparents: Thomas and Angeliki Fleetwood.

Chrismation

Charitina (Kaaren) Kragerud on November 9, 2018. Sponsor: Cheryl Konstantina Pandelis.

Marriages: Na Zisetel

Tanner Grutz and Athena Wirtz on October 28, 2018. Koumbara: Alexandra Matsis.

Ryan Semerad and Alexandria Layton on November 3, 2018. Koumbaros: Michael Layton.

Fallen Asleep in the Lord: Eternal Memory!

Peter Mikelis on October 19, 2018. Funeral on October 30. Burial in St. Petersburg, FL.

Victoria Harris on November 4, 2018. Funeral on November 12.



COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD

2018 Christmas Card Submission Form

Name & Phone or Email:

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

Donation: \$20 per family - Deadline: Sunday, December 9, 2018

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





Let's celebrate the spirit of Christmas!

All children and families of our community are welcome to participate in our annual event!

Please invite us into your home to spread some Christmas cheer!

Christmas Caroling

We will sing traditional Greek and English Christmas carols and the program will last approximately 15 minutes.

If you would like to have the carolers come to your home, please fill out the following and return to any Folk Dance Board Member or the Church office by December 2, 2018

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Friday, December 7, 2018

OR

Saturday, December 8, 2018

(Please circle one date)

****You will be contacted 3 days prior in order to confirm the time we will arrive****

Questions? Contact Sia Dalacas at aeconomy@hotmail.com or 951-285-4970

ALL PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT THE GREEK FOLK DANCE MINISTRY

YOUR SUPPORT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!



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

October 15, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

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

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

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

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

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

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

On behalf of the Ladies Philoptochos Society Panagia Chapter.

Your sisters in Christ,

Vicky Paltvos, President
Ladies Philoptochos Society
Panagia Chapter

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

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



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

\$300,000 ONE YEAR PLAN

SUGGESTED DONATIONS

Please choose one

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

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

These are "SUGGESTED" donation plans, however

ALL DONATIONS ARE WELCOME

FOR ASSISTANCE IN DESIGNING A PERSONALIZED PLAN

OR TO SET UP A MONTHLY PAYMENT SCHEDULE

please call or email

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

Nitsa Filios 702 595-6888
nitsalv@aol.com

THANK YOU!



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

\$300,000 ONE YEAR PLAN

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

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ MOBILE: _____

EMAIL: _____

DONATION AMOUNT: \$ _____

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

CHECK* Number: _____ Date: _____

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

Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

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

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

ALL DONATIONS ARE WELCOME

FOR ASSISTANCE IN DESIGNING A PERSONALIZED PLAN

OR TO SET UP A MONTHLY PAYMENT SCHEDULE

please call or email

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

Nitsa Filios 702 595-6888
nitsalv@aol.com

THANK YOU!

From Father Seraphim



Growing up in the modern era of media and entertainment allows us often to be deceived. During these winter months, we are being met by real-life renditions of the popular “Santa Claus” and our families can often begin to think that “Jolly Old Saint Nick” is nothing more than a fairy tale; nothing more than a make-believe, overweight, white-bearded director of elves who makes sure everyone gets “what they wanted” for Christmas. How did our Fourth-Century Saint, Wonderworker and Bishop of the Orthodox Church get reduced to a once-a-year commercialized Coca-Cola drinker living at the North Pole and making corporate America money year after year?

In 1822 Clement Clarke Moore, an Episcopal minister, wrote a long Christmas poem for his three daughters entitled “An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas.” Moore’s poem, which he was initially hesitant to publish due to the frivolous nature of its subject, is largely responsible for our modern image of Santa Claus as a “right jolly old elf” with a portly figure and the supernatural ability travel thought tight spaces and who bestows copious gifts. In 1881, political cartoonist Thomas Nast drew on Moore’s poem to create the first likeness that matches our modern image of Santa Claus. His cartoon depicted Santa as a rotund, cheerful man with a full, white beard, holding a sack laden with toys for lucky children.

The historical St. Nicholas was a monk, priest, and bishop born sometime around 280 AD in Patara, near Myra in modern-day Turkey. Much admired for his piety and kindness, he gave away all of his inherited wealth and traveled the countryside helping the poor and sick. His feast day is celebrated on the anniversary of his repose, *December 6*.

A close look at the differences between the jolly man in red and our Orthodox bishop reveals to us our current state of being deceived. Are we celebrated a great feast day or amusing ourselves to death? A comparison between the two illustrates for us the differences between worldly and Christian culture – of which we are called to live in the latter for all twelve months of the year.

Santa Claus, as we stated, has a characteristically fat appearance. The icon of St. Nicholas, however, reveals a man who knew what it meant to fast. The round girth of Santa Claus speaks of our cultures’ obsession with self-indulgence. Throughout the “holiday season” we hear the cry ring out “eat, drink, and be merry.” All through December many are seen feasting and gorging on holiday favorites, gatherings and parties. In contrast, the Orthodox Christian observes the Nativity Fast beginning November 15 until Christmas and enjoys a period of feasting from the Nativity of Christ until the Eve of Theophany (January 5, a strict fast).

We also notice a difference in what each man carries. While Santa Clause carries a large sack of goodies slung over his shoulder, St. Nicholas is seen holding a Gospel. That simple brown bag of Santa reveals our society’s preoccupation with entertainment and acquisition of things. From children to the elderly the same words are proclaimed after Christmas: “What did you get?” The Bishop’s Gospel book, however, tells us that the more appropriate question is “What did you give?” For the Lord says within those pages: *“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)*

This comparison is not meant to declare a war against gift giving, social gatherings and holiday traditions; it is instead a reminder that a light heart can and should be paired with a pious mind. We cannot let the seasonal customs become “the Trojan Horse” that brings selfish attitudes devoid of virtue into our homes. We can and should still enjoy the beautiful Christmas trees, the joy of gift giving and the love we can share with each other at parties and gatherings, while combining them with prayer, fasting and charity. Through the prayers of the true St. Nicholas, may we keep the holy and authentic spirit of Christmas alive.

With Love in Christ,

Father Seraphim

Youth and Family Ministries

Church School

Blessed Nativity!

I want to wish you a wonderful Advent! I am sure we are all excited about all of the activities going on. This is a perfect time to get involved and meet great people and make lifelong friends. We have so many ministries for all ages, so please get your kids involved.

We will have our annual Christmas Pageant on *Sunday, December 23*, following Divine Liturgy in the Church. The actors will be in costumes, and all other participants will wear their "Sunday best." We will have a mandatory Pageant Rehearsal on *Sunday, December 16* during Church School. Over the next few weeks we will be practicing the hymns during class, which Presvytera Maria taught before leaving on her pilgrimage to the Holy Land. It is important to make sure your children are in class so they can learn them for the Pageant.

Save the Dates:

Sunday, December 23: Christmas Pageant

Sunday, January 6: Family Worship Sunday for Theophany and Great Blessing of Water

Sunday, January 13: Family Worship Sunday for the Cutting of the Vasilopita (St. Basil Bread)

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

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

Youth Choir News



Due to my taking the pilgrimage to the Holy Land the first two weeks of December, we will neither have practice, nor will we sing a Sunday Divine Liturgy. We will practice Christmas music in the Church School classrooms so we can prepare for our Christmas Pageant on *Sunday, December 23*. We will chant the Divine Liturgy on *Sunday, January 13*.

Have a Blessed Nativity Season!

Love in Christ, Presvytera Maria

Orthodox Family Fellowship

In October our beautiful families had a wonderful overnight camping trip at Cave Lake State Park in Ely, NV, bringing home memories that will last a lifetime. In November we went ice skating at the Las Vegas Ice Center.

On *Saturday, December 15 at 4:00 pm* we will meet at the home of Imtisal Khoury, who is graciously hosting a potluck dinner and fellowship. After, we will continue our annual and traditional visit to the famous Ethel M Chocolate Factory, where we will enjoy Christmas lights and enjoy their worldwide famous hot chocolate and desserts. Please



bring your favorite side-dish, salad, dessert, or drinks as we end the year with a wonderful event!

All families are ALWAYS welcome to join us at any time. Look out for the new exciting events we are preparing for 2019!

In Christ, Amy Khuri and Jelena Boskovic, OFF Advisors

*"Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,
Who gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age . . ."
(Galatians 1:3-4)*

GOYA ~ For Teenagers

Dear GOYAN's and Parents,

We look forward to having our annual Christmas Tree-trimming Party in Panos Hall at the end of November! This year we will have a potluck and even more fun and games, so please bring your favorite dish and bring an ornament to decorate our St. John the Baptist Parish Tree!

We want to advise you of a change in our schedule – we will be holding GOYA Night in December on *Sunday, December 16* instead of on the usual second Sunday of the month. Please mark your calendars accordingly.

Finally, we will be having a Christmas Party at June and Steve Likourinou's Home on *Saturday, December 29 at 6:00 pm*. The photo-scamper hunt will be celebrated this day as well, so if you are able to chaperone or drive please RSVP so we can facilitate this very enjoyable event.

Wishing you a peaceful celebration of Christmas!

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



Greek Folk Dance

The folk dancers have been very busy practicing their dance suites in preparation for FDF! We look forward to sharing our hard work with everyone at our annual Preview Luncheon, to be held on *February 10, 2019*. In the meantime, we would like to thank all those who helped out with our first ever Vegas Golden Knights Viewing Party! What a wonderful event it was and we could not have put it all together without the support of all those who helped set up, serve and clean up, those who helped on the technology end, those who donated food items, and those that donated raffle prizes. Everyone who attended had a great time!

Our next event is our annual Christmas Caroling, which will take place *on December 7 and 8*. We would like to invite all members of the community, both young and old, to participate in this annual event. We will be singing both Greek and English Christmas Carols and traveling across the Las Vegas Valley spreading cheer. Please consider inviting us to your home or business to experience the carols. A sign up sheet is in this issue of *The Desert Messenger* (see Page 10), or sign up by contacting the Church Office.

Finally, we are planning a Glendi with LIVE GREEK MUSIC on *February 9, 2019*. Please mark your calendars as this is always a fun event.

Merry Christmas to all!

Much Gratitude, The Folk Dance Board

Greek Language Program



The last day of the first semester of Greek School is on *Tuesday, December 18*. We will have a Christmas Party and our annual book exchange. Please see Sia for more information. We will enjoy the Christmas break and resume on *Tuesday, January 8*.

I inadvertently left out one of my teachers last month; I want to thank Helen Spyropoulos for giving her time in teaching Greek School as well.

We have had a wonderful first semester. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas. Get ready for more learning in the second semester.

Paula Kelesis, Greek School Director

“For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not man’s gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”
(Galatians 1:11-12)

Adult and Young Adult Ministries

Young Adults

Dear Young Adults,

Thank you to everyone who came out for our Friendsgiving extravaganza! It was a beautiful and memorable event and a good time was had by all. And thank you to Rahel Kiflegzi, who graciously hosted this gathering in her beautiful new home.

To continue in the holiday spirit, please join us for our December Christmas Party! We will conclude 2018 with a festive gathering at Niko and Demetri Asim's home, on *Friday, December 28 at 6:00 pm*. Everyone, please bring a side dish, a \$10 maximum gift to exchange, and please wear your favorite Christmas sweater! RSVP with Father Seraphim or Niko Asim so we can prepare for an accurate headcount. We look forward to seeing you there!

In Christ, Niko Asim and Elizabeth Arbuiso, YA Advisors

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

Please mark your calendars for our Kali Parea holiday luncheon on *Sunday, December 30 at 1:00 pm*. We will gather at Yassou Greek Grill Café (7871 W. Charleston Blvd., Las Vegas), which is owned by our very own Peter Papas! Please RSVP with Demetri Asim (702) 210-4056.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas!

In Christ, Demetri Asim

Mr. & Mrs. - A Couples Fellowship

We want to thank John and Marcie Karas for their hospitality in November as we met at their home for a beautiful night of food and fellowship.

This month we will gather at the home of Thymios and Roulla Carabas on *Sunday, December 9 at 6:00 pm* for discussion, dinner and fellowship together. Please bring a fast-appropriate side dish, salad, dessert or drinks, as we will still be in the Holy Nativity Fast. Please RSVP with Father Seraphim or Roulla, and we hope to see you there! Merry Christmas!

In Christ, Father John, Father Seraphim, and their Presvyteres



Forerunners - The Seniors of St. John the Baptist

Praying that everyone enjoyed Thanksgiving with family and friends.

Our November Luncheon was lovely. Master Chef Sam and his crew treated us to a very tasty lunch which included rice pudding for dessert. Faye did an outstanding job in decorating our raffle table, and Ruth gave us more information regarding the Shoebox Project. A pleasant surprise was our Bishop Ilia joining us for lunch. He spoke to us regarding the founding of Kokkos Hall.



Our Christmas Luncheon will be held on *Monday, December 10 in Kokkos Hall at 11:30 am*. A delicious fast-appropriate menu is being prepared along with holiday goodies. Our own Teddy Kaye will entertain with Christmas Carols and other favorites. There also will be door prizes, a few Christmas raffle prizes, and a visit from St. Nick who will distribute gifts. If you will be attending, we ask that you purchase a "secret Santa gift" not to exceed \$10.

We wish you all a joyous Christmas filled with love and peace as we celebrate the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. We ask that you remember our seniors who are either homebound, or in hospitals or other facilities. Please take the time to visit them or give them a call.

Χρονια Πολλα και Ευτιχες το Νεον Ετος ~ Best Wishes for the New Year!

Love in Christ, Victoria Xikis, Forerunners Co-Chair

Notes from the Choir Loft



In preparation for the Christmas services, we will have two 30-minute rehearsals immediately following Liturgy on *Sundays, December 2 and 9*. Please plan to attend, so we are prepared to sing on *Monday, December 24* for the Christmas Eve service, as well as the following Sunday Liturgy. Thank you for your dedication and service to the Choir!

Athena Mertes, Choir Director

Pan-Arcadians

Dear Parish of St. John:

The Pan-Arcadians wish to thank you for your generous donations of \$350 during Fellowship Hour on Sunday, July 15.

The President of the Annunciation Cathedral in Manila, Philippines has confirmed he received our donation, which will be put toward fixing the roof of their Church.

Thank you! Jon Caredis, Pan-Arcadian President



The AHEPA Las Vegas Chapter 341

As we approach the end of the 2018 calendar year I would like to offer my sincere gratitude for everyone who participated and assisted in our events.

We will not be meeting in December but will resume our regular monthly meetings in January. Please let me know if you are interested in joining the AHEPA Chapter, either as a member or as Board Member (all positions are currently available – President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary) as well as several Committee

Chair appointments.

Wishing You a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

May this Christmas bring you and your family the promise of a better tomorrow full of love and joy.

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

TRADING ACCOUNT: ANOTHER WAY TO SUPPORT OUR PARISH

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

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

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works . . ."
(Ephesians 2:10)

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

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

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

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

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

RSVP

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Please reserve _____ seats at \$40 each for the

Philoptochos Christmas Party \$ _____

**As we are grateful for all our blessings, we should not
forget those less fortunate.**

**This Christmas, your donation will provide food
for the hungry in Las Vegas.**

Please offer an additional donation in support.



SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, March 2, 2019 in Panos Hall

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

All Proceeds Benefit the Mortgage Principal Payoff



***Congratulations to our
2018 Stewardship
All-Stars:
Demetrious Asim,
Stephanie Demoleas and
Marika LaMancusa.
God bless them for their
faithful contributions of
time and talents to
St. John the Baptist
Greek Orthodox Church.***



Christmas Shopping at the Bookstore!
Many new and exciting items to choose from!
Something for everyone and every budget!



Christmas Cards
Icons of all sizes and prices
Extensive children's selection
Orthodox books and music
Censors, prayer ropes, crosses and much, much more!
Including St. Anthony's Monastery famous estate-made hot sauce!

Come support your Church while making your gift purchases!
All proceeds benefit St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
Stop by and see what we have and say hello!

Your volunteer Bookstore staff:
Constantine Frangakis, and Mary and Paisios Pursell

Church Account Summaries ~ October 2018

Nevada State Bank Accounts	September Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	October Ending Balance	Notes
General Operating Account (GOA)	\$29,658.01	\$32,982.12	\$52,037.21	\$19,818.49	\$74,678.86	\$20,179.99	
Community and Education (C&E)	\$6,696.44	\$5,000.00		\$1,000.00	\$9,060.68	\$1,635.76	
Greek Food Festival (GFF)	\$352,150.37	\$9,453.72	\$55,239.16	\$345,620.80	\$30,187.91	\$41,034.54	
Designated, Restricted & Other (DR&O)	\$289,775.50	\$5,910.00	\$8,799.00	\$3,245.77	\$20,437.35	\$280,801.38	
Folk Dance Group	\$14,827.68	\$2,914.37		\$44.00	\$381.92	\$17,316.13	
Mortgage Account	\$62,539.22				\$5,201.14	\$57,338.08	
Designated Funds	September Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	October Ending Balance	Notes
Bookstore	\$8,484.35		\$1,664.00	\$3,282.26	\$8,000.00	-\$1,133.91	\$8K taken to make payroll & pay bills
Ornaments	\$1,077.41					\$1,077.41	
Restricted Funds	September Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	October Ending Balance	Notes
ICON	\$254,258.20	\$1,650.00	\$50.00			\$255,958.20	
Library Account	\$1,470.77					\$1,470.77	Account owed \$21,000. Funds used to make payroll and pay bills in 2015
Giving Tree	\$5,450.91					\$5,450.91	
Building Fund	\$17.08	\$25.00				\$42.08	
\$300,000 One Year Plan	\$0.00	\$4,235.00	\$7,085.00		\$11,320.00	\$0.00	Funds collected/sent for Mortgage
Youth Choir	\$3,069.82					\$3,069.82	
Church School	\$1,306.37					\$1,306.37	
Three Priests	\$14,058.23				\$1,080.86	\$12,977.37	
Altar Servers	\$440.00					\$440.00	
GOYA	\$142.36					\$142.36	
Designated, Restricted, and Other Total	\$289,775.50	\$5,910.00	\$8,799.00	\$3,282.26	\$20,400.86	\$280,801.38	
Other Funds	September Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	October Ending Balance	Notes
Kokkos Scholarship Fund	\$63,903.04	\$1,616.36				\$65,519.40	Account Value

Oct 2018 Candles **\$5,574.13**
Oct 2018 Trays **\$3,647.00**
Total Oct Candles & Trays **\$9,221.13**

ORTHODOXY STRONG - STEWARDS 2018

Abraha, Dessadegn and Ghebregzi, Adiam	Chomakos, George+ and Nikki	Fleetwood, Thomas and Melissa	Howard, William and Willie
Adamy, Marina	Chomakos, Jeremy and Romina	Floyd, Charles and Maria	Hristopoulou, Spiridoula
Alex, Steve	Chondrakis, Dimos and Kragerud, Kaaren	Fotopoulos, John and Barbara	Hunter, Zach and Krystle
Alexander, Eleni	Christian, Clair and Chloe	Foster, Kyle and Maria	Iteen, Robert and Sophia
Alhayek, Majd and Areen	Christou, Andreas and Toni	Fountas, Constantinos	Jandete, Johanna
Anastasakis, Mark and Elaine	Ciulla, Anthony and Kleri	Frangakis, Christos and Anastasia	Kachikis, Paul+ and Ernestine
Anastasiou, Andrew and Kathleen	Ciulla, Dina	Frangakis, Constantine	Kakavulias, Christina
Andary, Oscar and Carnation+	Cokotis, Julie	Frangakis, John	Kakavulias, George and Helen
Andrews, Catherine	Collins, David	Frangakis, Sophocles and Tara	Kakavulias, John and Elizabeth
Andrews, Chris and Pamela	Cominos, Ted	Franzi, Jack	Kambouris, Litsa
Andrews, George	Conger, William and Alexia	Garza, Evarardo and Eliades, Eleni	Kanellopoulos, Theodore
Andricopoulos, Margo	Connors, Christopher and Angela	Gauvin, Chad and Marissa	Kanis, Constantinos and Katie
Anthony, Stavros and Bernadette	Costacos, John	Geiger, Dan and Dora	Karas, John and Marcie
Anton, Mike and Carol	Costas, Charles and Louise	Generales, John and Arlene	Karris, Mark and Suzanne
Arcamuzi, Georgia	Costuros, George and Marsha	George, Elias and Saladino, Maria Veronica	Katopodis, Efstratios
Arhontas, Ted and Gousias, Viki-Marie	Cosulas, Fr. Basil and Presv. Samantha	Geiger, Dan and Dora	Katris, Nick
Aristides, George and Diana	Cotsilis, Jenny	George, Louis	Katsaros, Thomas and Sharon
Asim, Demetrious	Coutris, Angela	George, Pete and Georgia	Kelesis, Paula
Asim, Niko	Crist, Adam and Kanistra	Georges, Sam	Kiflezgi, Rahel
Austgen, Harold Max	Dalacas, Dimitri and Athanasia	Georgis, John and Kaliopi	Kinard, Panorea
Bacon, Ken and Dianne	Dalacas, Eleni	Georgoulakis, Mary Ellen	Kleanthis, George and Zanetta
Bagis, Eleni	Dalacas, Georgia	Geronikolaou, Constantine	Kofinas, Maria
Balaouras, Panos and Helen	Daniel, Azieb	Ghebream, Daniel and Ghermay, Selam	Koliambas, Eleni
Balason, Anna	Daskalos, George and Voula	Gialketsis, Bill and Shelli	Konsolakis, Eleni
Baldwin, Richard and Vivi	DeMangus, Joanne	Gialketsis, Julie	Kordogiannis, Prodromos and Bell, Mary
Balodimas, James	Demolas, Maria and Nour, Reza	Gialketsis, Steve	Kordogiannis, Christina
Barbarino, Demetra	Demoleas, Spero and Grace	Gialketsis, William	Koroni, Tara
Bartzos, Sam and Eugenia	Demoleas, Stephanie	Giouzelis, Anastasia	Kostopoulos, Georgia
Beeler, Mike and Carolyn	Demopoulos, Vasiliki	Gianakoulis, Nick and Magda	Koultouridis, Christos and Wise, Jolene
Beeman, Karl, Sr. and Benita	Desta, Yonas and Girmay, Amy	Gideon, Sara	Kountanis, Panagiota
Belch, George	Diamantis, Filippas	Goodman, Robert and Linda	Kourlos, Georgia
Berendji, Jim and Vivian	Dimitri, Patricia, Martha and Janet	Gott, C. Thomas and Kitty	Koutsulis, John and Eileen
Bernier, Micah and Alissa	Dominguez, Eric and Amalia	Gousdovas, Nikos	Koutsulis, Sam and Effie
Berta, Irene	Doskas, Athanasios and Anastasia	Grabovoi, Daphne	Koutsulis, Sam
Bicos, Andriana	Dounis, Dina	Gruber, Ernest and Zoe	Kratky, Frank and Constance
Bieker, Adam and Cassie	Dounis, Georgia	Grutz, Tanner and Athena	Kunard, Derek and Theofania
Bieker, Georgea	Dounis, Kiki	Gutierrez, Connie	Kypreos, George and Lesley
Birtas, Helen and Ann	Dudunakis, Michael	Hadzoglon, Christos	Kypreos, Peter and Geri
Bland, Robert and Maria	Earl, Christine Michaelides	Hall, Elizabeth	Kypreos, Sophia
Bochanis, George and Enid	Eliades, Artemisa	Hall, Yvonne	Lagomarsino, Sophia
Borzeka, Stephen	Eliades, Gregory and Maria	Hamilton, Mary	Lamancusa, Lisa
Boskovic, Jelena	Eliades, Harry and Agapi	Hamilton, Paul and Brandi	Lambros, Kyriacos and Mary
Bratta, Georgene	Eliades, Katerina	Harrison, Allan and Angela	Lapi, Anisa
Britten, Ronald and Carol	Eliades, Peter	Harrison, Angie and Schildmeyer, Christine	Latelle, Penny
Brown, Faye	Eliakis, John+ and Atsuko	Hayes, Tulla	Lathouris, Evan and Vicki
Bruninga, Bill and Erin	Eliakis, Peter and Glenda	Hemmers, Oliver and Pantelas, Anne	Lazarakis, John and Panagiota
Bucy, Brent and Elaine	Eliakis, Varthie and LeeAnn	Henderson, Jimmie Laverne	Lechner, Sofia
Campbell, Paul and Victoria	Eliopoulos, Goldie+	Henneforth, Rula	Lekar, Caroline
Capre, Julio and Betty+	Eyler, John and Elizabeth	Hertberg, Jennifer	Lekar, Michael and Effie
Carabas, Stephen and Linda	Eyler, Fr. Paul and Presv. Ilean	Hetzal, David and Joanne	Lemper, Brian and Betsy
Carahalios, John and Jillian	Farmakis, Nikolaos and Laura	Hoadrea, Jimmy and Monci	Leonis, Nick and Sophia
Caredis, Jon and Marjorie	Fenlason, Nathan and Zmina, Jennifer	Hondros, Catherine	Leonis, Tishe
Carrico, William and Alexandra	Filios, George and Nitsa	Hondros, Christina	Leventis, Naomi
Carter, Maria	Filios, Spiridon and Eleni	Hondros, Christopher and Darlene	Leventis, Nicholas and Christina
Chachas, Bessie	Fischer, Bob and Cheryl	Hondros, Fr. John and Presv. Maria	Lewis, Foula
Chachas, James	Fitzgerald, Norman and McCullen, Sandra	Hondros, Paul	Liaos, Jim and Tina
Chagares, Kiki	Flangas, Bill and Marilyn	Hoover, Patrick and Pauline	Liaos, Steve and Francine
Chandrinis, Alexia	Flangas, Gary and Amanda	Houlis, Ila and Debbie	Liaos, William and Irene
Chanos, George	Flangas, Gus and Tamara		Likourinou, Angie
Chanos, Jennifer			Likourinou, Steve and June
Chomakos, Dean and Tammy			Litsos, Nicholas and Catherine
			Loughton, Dustin and Rena

STEWARDS 2018

Lovaas, Jason and
Dokakis, Alis
Makris, Apostolos
Malamatos, Kindina
Maland, Tim and Donna
Malpee, Mack and Kalliope
Maniatakos, Ted and Maria
Manolakos, Catherine
Manos, Constantine and
Michele
Mansour, Muna
Manteris, Arthur and Sue
Margaretis, John and Lucila
Markakis, Catherine
Markakis, Sandy Kiriaki
Martinaitis, Louis and Audra
Matsis, John and Rebecca
Mavrantonis, Stacy and Kiki
Mavroidis, Demetrios and
Debra
Mavros, Debbie
Mavroudis, Frank
McManus, Jeanette
McKinney, Michael and
Mersene
McSweeney, Farolyn
Melton, Donald and Susan
Menegato, James
Mertes, Patrick and Athena
Minas, Arthur and Ewa
Mitchell, Thomas
Moffett, Todd and
Eliopoulos, Tina
Monoyudis, Jim and Julie
Mulopulos, George and Jenny
Murray, Christopher and
George, Veneta
Myers, Stella
Neocleous, Plato
Nesheiwat, Mark
Neisheiwat, Peter and
Ohan, Ida
Newell, Ronald and Maria
Nicholas, John and Estella
Nichols, George and Tereza
Nichols, Stella
Nikitas, Milissa
Nikolopoulos, Nick and
Dimitra
Nixon, John and Ellyn
Oara, Ruben
Olmsted, Travis and Marilyn
Orlando, Alleck and Jennifer
Osborn, Pearl
Pahigiannis, Nikon
Paikos, Thomas and Elizabeth
Palivos, Peter and Vicky
Pallis, Paul
Pan-Arcadians
Pandelis, Cheryl
Panos, William and Jeanne
Papas, Peter and Rita
Papas, Christian and Nicole
Papas, Louis and Magaly

Pappas, Constantine and Karina
Pappas, Rita
Pappas, Stella
Paschalis, Evangelos and Maria
Paton, Mia
Payan, Luis and Eleni
Pelletier, Michael
Pendleton, Patricia
Pentogenis, Katherine+
Peratikos, Tony
Pertsinides, Irene and
Arbusio, Elizabeth
Petersen, Todd and Diane
Petro, Aleko and Georgia
Petrou, James and Penelopi
Philippou, Demetrios and Luanne
Philoptochos Society
Pierro, Joe and Rhonda
Pitts, Anton and Athena
Platis, Anna
Plentzas, Ruth
Polimerou, Angeline
Politis, Pantelis and Dimitra
Poulos, Christine
Pouridis, Kouli and Para
Pournatzis, Petros and
Menegatos, Angelic
Powers, Russell and Rebecca
Prifti, Teuta
Punsalan, Basil and Sophie
Pursell, Robert and Mary
Radosta, Athena
Ramos, Fr. Seraphim and
Presv. Olenka
Raptis, Presv. Evonne
Rifakes, John
Rigas, Evie
Rihani, Gary and Linda
Rodis, Dimitri
Rodis, Sophia
Rosenthal, Joseph and Stephanie
Rotas, Beatrice
Rouvas, John and Keri
Ruffner, Skip and Kathy
Salon, Janelle
Salonikis, Valentinis and Sophia
Santamaria, Jennifer
Savas, Christina
Savvas, Savva
Senior Forerunners
Serpetini, Athanasia
Setian, Gary and Marie
Shaffer, Travis and Veneta
Simpson, Bryan and Julie
Sirhan, Michael and Khuri Imtisal
Skalkotos, Nikolas and Georgia
Skandros, Stephanie
Skaris, John and
Spyropoulos, Helen
Smith, Kathleen
Snow, Adrienne
Snow, Clifford and Christina
Snowden, Robert and Niki
Soursos, Helene

Sparangis, Helen +
Sparkuhl, Alex and Antoinette
Spirtos, Nick
Spotti, Peter and Alexandra
Staubs, Douglas and Anastasia
Stavropoulos, Bessie
Stavropoulos, Terry and Niki
Stefanatos, Michael and Tami
Stenos, Louis
Stevens, Charles and Mary
Stransky, Mark
Stransky, Jack and Gladys
Szukiewicz, Alex
Szukiewicz, Eric
Szukiewicz, Joseph and Jennia
Szukiewicz, Joseph
Tafoya, Steven and Irene
Takas, Andrea
Tasios, Ramona and Pete
Thanos, Nick and Victoria
Thompson, Maggy
Tiliakos, Rosemarie
Tobin, Jean
Thome, Tony and May
Tringas, Chris and Bridgette
Tsefasilase, Tiebe and
Ghbremariam, Tsehaye
Tsiralidis, Kosmas and Katerina
Tsolis, Christos and Panagioula
Tsolis, Panagioti
Tzelalis, Antonia
Tzelalis, Steve
Tzortzis, Maria
Varinos, Nick and Kiki
Velimorivic, Nikolaj and Maja
Vervilos, James and Anna
Vlahos, Thomas+ and Demas, Rita
Wadlow, Nicholas and Pamela
Walker, Michelle
Wallace, Robert and Katerina
Walter, Vernon and Alice
Weisman, Diane
Welles, Brigitte
Wilcox, Thalia
Wilkerson, Chuck and Kristina
Williams, Anthony and Anna
Wilson, Steven and Cleo
Wixom, Penelope
Womack, Karl
Womack, Kimberly
Wood, Nadine
Wronski, Chuck
Xerogianes, Nick and Nikki
Xikis, Victoria
Zaferatos, Ted
Zakis, Dino
Zakis, Erika
Zakis, Victoria
Zarkos, Nick and Dina
Zarras, Nick and Chery
Zervou, Evangelia
Zimmerman, Paul and Angela
Zmina, Stephen and Cynthia
Zotos, Angela

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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

Rev. Father John Hondros
frjohn@vegaskgreekorthodox.com

Rev. Father Seraphim Ramos
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Karen Rawlinson
Administrative Assistant

John Karas
Acting Bookkeeper

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Constantin Petriuc & Ramona Tasios
Maintenance & Grounds

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

Telephone: (702) 221-8245
www.vegaskgreekorthodox.com

Parish Council: Gus Flangas

Philoptochos: Vicky Palivos

Stewardship & Community Outreach:
Justina Szukiewicz

Choir: Athena Mertes

Chanters & Youth Choir:
Presvytera Maria Hondros

Church School: Eileen Koutsulis

Altar Servers: Father John

GOYA:
Kouli Pouridis & June Likourinou

Orthodox Family Fellowship:
Jelena Boskovic & Amy Khuri

Young Adults:
Nicholas Asim & Elizabeth Arbuiso

Greek Folk Dance: Sia Dalacas

Greek School: Paula Kelesis

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

Kali Parea: Demetrious Asim

Adult Basketball:
George Karvounidis

Forerunners:
Vicki Xikis & Faye Brown

Orthodox Bookstore:
Constantine Frangakis,
Paisios & Mary Pursell

Greek Food Festival: Gus Flangas

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

Photography: Bill Bruninga



DECEMBER 2018 ~ IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD

Sunday

Monday



Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

2 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am Adult Choir Practice 12:30 pm Folk Dance	3 7:00 pm Adult Basketball	4 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes 6:15 pm Folk Dance	5	6 St. Nicholas 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	7	1 9:00 am Philoptochos Pastry Packing in Kokkos Hall 8 Folk Dancers Caroling 12/7-8
9 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am Adult Choir Practice 12:30 pm Folk Dance 6:00 pm Mr. and Mrs. at Thymios and Roulla Carabas' Home	10 11:30 am Forerunner Luncheon in Kokkos Hall 7:00 pm Adult Basketball	11 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes 6:15 pm Folk Dance	12 St. Spyridon 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 6:00 pm Philoptochos Christmas Party at The Martini	13	14	15 4:00 pm OFF Potluck at Imtisal Khoury's Home followed by Ethel M Chocolate Factory
16 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 11:30 am Parish Council Elections 12:30 pm Folk Dance 5:00 pm GOYA Night in Panos Hall	17 7:00 pm Adult Basketball	18 5:00 pm Greek Language Classes 6:15 pm Folk Dance 6:30 pm Parish Council Meeting in Library	19	20	21	22
23 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 12:30 pm Folk Dance Church School Pageant	24 Christmas Eve 6:00 pm Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil the Great	25 Nativity of Christ 9:00 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy	 26 Church Office Closed 12/25-26	27 St. Stephen 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	28 6:00 pm Young Adults Christmas Party at Niko and Demetri Asim's Home	29 6:00 pm GOYA Christmas Party and Scavenger Hunt at Likourinou Home
30 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 12:30 pm Folk Dance 1:00 pm Kali Parea at Yassou Greek Grill	31	1 Circumcision of Christ/St. Basil 9:00 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Church Office Closed				

The Desert Messenger

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

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THE DESERT MESSENGER

The Way of the Lord

*Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave
where she will give birth
in a manner beyond understanding
to the Word, Who is in all eternity.
Rejoice therefore universe,
when you hear it heralded:
With the angels and the shepherds
glorify Him, Who chose to be seen
as a newborn Babe,
the Pre-eternal God.
(Kontakion Preceding the Nativity)*

Christ is Born: Glorify Him!

