

The Desert



Messenger

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

Volume 17, Issue 2 St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

February 2019

**From
Father
John**

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Matthew 5:3)

Beloved in Christ:

As I write this meditation, our country has just endured the longest government shutdown in US history – and it seems that with each passing day both elected government officials and the citizens of our nation continue digging their heels deeper in the proverbial sand on the issue of the border wall. This impasse affected all of us, and most especially our furloughed federal workers. While my intent is *not* to focus on this political issue, the behaviors are all too familiar as we unfortunately also experience impasses in many other facets of our lives: Stalemates occur in our marriages, in relationships between parents and their children, among siblings, peers, coworkers, business partners or competitors, countries, religious groups and, sadly, even between Church members. St. Paul wisely said to the divided Church in Corinth, *“Love does not insist on its own way” (1 Corinthians 13:4)* – and his powerful words are still so relevant!

When humility is lacking we will experience divisions, and when there is an unwillingness to be humble then an emotional, physical and spiritual stalemate is inevitable. Although we are inclined to justify in our minds why we are holding our ground, usually in the name of self preservation, we become blind to the reality that the only one who benefits in these situations is Satan. St. John Climacos, who was astute in battling the devil and his legion of demons, wrote, *“Humility is the only virtue that no devil can imitate. If pride made demons out of angels, there is no doubt that humility could make angels out of demons.”*

Our Lord Jesus Christ showed us the path to glory by His own humility in His every action: His Nativity in the Flesh in a humble manger . . . His circumcision eight days after His Birth and His being offered to the Temple for a blessing by the Elder Simeon on the fortieth day, both in accordance with the Mosaic Law . . . His Baptism in the Jordan River by the hands of John the Forerunner . . . His rebuking of Satan when tempted . . . His poverty . . . His charity . . . His compassion . . . His healings on the Sabbath, for which He was continuously criticized by the religious elite . . . His riding upon a donkey into Jerusalem . . . His washing of His Disciples’ feet . . . His prayer of obedience to God the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane . . . and by His voluntary Crucifixion, Descent into Hades and Resurrection, by which we have been saved.

Having recently visited the Holy Land, I can clearly visualize the fertile hillside near the Sea of Galilee where Jesus offered His Sermon on the Mount: When our Lord opened His Mouth to offer His much beloved sermon (which encompasses three chapters in St. Matthew’s Gospel), He began with the words, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.”* As St. John Chrysostom observed, *“Christ blesses those first who become humble by choice, and not circumstance.”* Being “poor in spirit” reflects the state of our soul before God: Christ blesses those who are awestruck and tremble at His commandments, and those who are contrite and lowly-minded – this is the opposite of pride, which is the root of our separation from Him and His Kingdom. Even the manner in which our Lord presents His saving teaching – that is, by way of a blessing, rather than advice or commandment – makes it less burdensome. Love blesses . . . love invites . . . love does not insist on its own way!

(Continued on Page 2)

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

Saturday, February 2/*The Meeting of Our Lord in the Temple*

8:00 am Orthros
9:00 am Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Hebrews 7:7-17
Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Sunday, February 3/*16th Sunday of Matthew/ Righteous Symeon the God-Receiver and Anna the Prophetess*

Orthros: Tone Three
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Mark 16:9-20
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10
Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

Sunday, February 10/*17th Sunday of Matthew/ St. Haralambos the Hieromartyr/St. Anastasios, Patriarch of Jerusalem*

Orthros: Tone Four
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:1-12
Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:1-10
Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28
Artoclasia (Lekar/Eliades Family for St. Haralambos)

Sunday, February 17/*Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee/Triodion Begins/St. Theodore the Recruit*

Orthros: Tone Five (First Plagal)
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:13-35
Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15
Gospel: Luke 18:10-14

Triodion Begins: No Fasting This Week

Sunday, February 24/*Sunday of the Prodigal Son/ First and Second Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist*

Orthros: Tone Six (Second Plagal)
Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:36-53
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15
Gospel: Luke 15:11-32

Artoclasia (Koutsulis Family for the Anniversaries of Sam and Effie, and Fr. John and Presv. Maria)

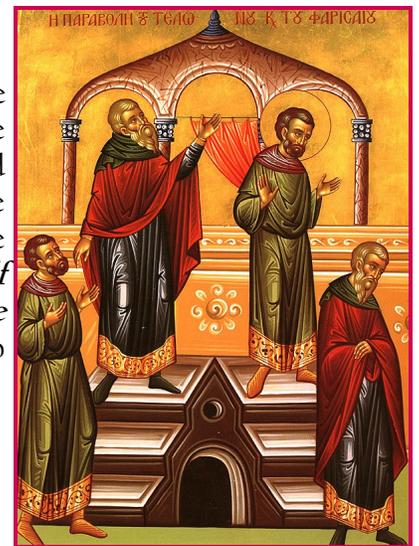
Fast on Wednesday and Friday

“Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 2:1)

From Father John (Continued from Page 1)

On *Sunday, February 17* we will begin the period of the Triodion (the Book of the Fast), in preparation for Great and Holy Lent. Appropriately, the first Sunday of the Triodion is dedicated to the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee, a brief passage in which Christ teaches, by comparing the actions of the prideful “religious man” to the repentant tax collector, the necessity of humility to enter His Kingdom: ***“Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 18:14)*** Beloved, let us cease any stalemates we have in our lives by heeding to our Lord’s teaching on and, moreover, example of humility.

With love in Christ,

“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” (2 Timothy 3:12)

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 3

Ushers: Justina Szukiewicz, John Koutsulis, Adam Bieker,
 Stacy Mavrantonis, Mark Karris and John Matsis
 Memorials: William Flangas (40 days), Albert Flangas (4 years);
 Spiros Plentzas (2 years)
 Fellowship: Ladies Philoptochos Society

FEBRUARY 10

Ushers: Adam Bieker, Spiros Filios, Gus Flangas, Bessie Stavropoulos,
 John Nicholas and Skip Ruffner
 Memorial: Philoptochos Departed Members
 Fellowship: Folk Dance Luncheon and FDF Preview

FEBRUARY 17

Ushers: Demetrious Asim, John Matsis, Mark Karris, Stacy Mavrantonis,
 Justina Szukiewicz and John Koutsulis
 Fellowship: Forerunners, the Seniors of St. John the Baptist

FEBRUARY 24

Ushers: Gus Flangas, Skip Ruffner, Bessie Stavropoulos, Spiros Filios,
 Demetrious Asim and John Nicholas
 Fellowship: Ladies Philoptochos Society - Kids 'N' Cancer

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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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:
 Nate Dallas

Forerunners:
 Vicki Xikis

Orthodox Bookstore:
 Constantine Frangakis,
 Paisios & Mary Pursell

Greek Food Festival: Gus Flangas

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

Photography: Bill Bruninga



*For 60 years
 our Parish has
 been here for
 our Youth . . .*

**St. John the Baptist
 Youth and Family
 Ministries**



*It's up to you
 parents to
 make sure
 your kids are
 here with us!*



Please Join Us For an Evening of
Dinner and Dancing

Macaronada Glendi

Featuring Live Musicians from Greece

\$20

Kids Under 5 are Free

Panos Hall

Saturday, February 9, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

Cash Bar

All Proceeds to Benefit Greek Folk Dance Ministry

Parish Council Report

We just had our first Parish Council Meeting for the new year, and have set forth three major priorities for the coming year as well as the priorities for the coming years. **Our first priority is, of course, Stewardship.** We fervently hope that this is the year when we finally fix the Stewardship Program, which would allow us to address other pressing issues that have been neglected for over the past decade. Specifically, our facilities are aging and in desperate need of significant repairs and a major overhaul. Because we keep diverting funds away from these very important necessities – due to using the monies to cover the operating costs of the Church – things are only going to get worse with our facilities. As a community we really need to finally get Stewardship on track.

Our second priority is to continue replacing the roof on the Community Center. Every time it rains, we have significant flooding in the Kitchen and Storage areas. Recently, we started having leaks into the Library. Thank God, with Father John's roof appeal, Paul and Brandi Hamilton quickly and generously donated \$40,000 to re-roof these areas. Additionally, we received \$10,000 from George and Sarah Markantonis and \$5,000 from Mike and Effie Lekar for the roof replacement. Thanks to the generous donations, we are now in the process of getting bids to replace the roof as needed.

Our third and final priority is to fix the parking lot. Our parking lot is in disrepair. There are so many wide cracks on the southern parking lot that we could lease it out for the filming of an earthquake movie. We not only need to fix the parking lot, but to stripe it as well.

Another priority we will need to address in the very near future is repainting the interior and exterior of the Church and Community Center. The exteriors are starting to fade and show wear from the weather, and the interiors are starting to show significant wear and tear. On the exteriors, there are a lot of cracks in the stucco and stucco coming loose, and on the interiors, there are several cracks forming inside the Church on the ceiling leading up to the dome and in other places. These things need to get fixed along with the repainting effort before they get worse.

We will also need to redo the floors in Panos and Kokkos Halls. We refinished them a couple years ago, but they need to be redone again – not only for appearance purposes, but also to preserve them. The biggest issue we will need to address in about a year is the A/C and heating systems. Our systems are old and breaking down more and more. We have been able to repair them for the most part; however, in little over a year, we will not be able to obtain Freon any longer which will make repairing the A/C systems virtually impossible. Stating the obvious, we will have to change them out and, needless to say, this will be a significant expense. Not to keep harping on the same thing over and over again: If our Stewardship Program was working as it should, we could address these issues with minimal hardship, one by one.

Another issue that needs to get fixed ASAP is the Kitchen. It is a perpetual mess: We do a deep cleaning and in matter of a couple of weeks, it is a complete mess again. The biggest problem is that many people who use the kitchen do not seem to care about cleaning up after they are done. **We implore you: If you use the kitchen, please leave it better than you found it.** We are in the process of dealing with some huge issues pertaining to the Kitchen. Once these issues are resolved, we are going to do a mass sterilization cleaning of the entire Kitchen, Storage areas and Halls. As part of this process, we will take everything not bolted down out of the Kitchen, the Storage areas, and Halls, and do a full sterilization cleaning of them before putting them back. We are also in the process of doing a full purge of many items in the Storage areas; we will be throwing out or giving away a lot of stuff that has just been occupying space for several years.

As many of you have undoubtedly heard, we have a rodent problem on our property. We have been working extensively with an exterminator to remedy the problem. This may take a few more weeks. As a more permanent solution to the problem, we have obtained a couple of "working cats." The cats are presently being kept in a cage on the Church property and will remain caged for 30 days. The purpose of doing this is to acclimate the cats to their new home; at the end of this 30-day period, they will be allowed to roam the property and do their thing. Please note that these are "feral cats" and may not be friendly. Please tell your kids to leave them alone and not to chase them around to try to pet them or pick them up. If the cats want to interact, they will come to you, not the other way around. **Also, please note that these cats will most likely scratch and bite, so again, please inform your kids accordingly.**

(Continued on Page 6)

Parish Council Report *(Continued from Page 5)*

Pertaining to the Iconography, we are still waiting for the US Immigration Service to send someone out from their Southern California office to verify that we are a Church. Please understand we all think this is ludicrous; however, for whatever reason, it is a requirement that needs to be fulfilled. Once this inspection is completed, we can then hopefully get the Iconographers their appropriate visas. It has been almost two years, and the end of this ordeal is now in sight. Keep praying!

We have scheduled our next *Parish Assembly on Sunday, March 24* in Panos Hall, shortly after the Liturgy. We strongly urge you all to attend, learn about the operation of our Parish, and provide input into the governance and betterment of our Parish. **Improvement is a continuous process and the more people involved in the effort, the better we can and will be.**

With everything going on, please bear in mind that we have set the dates for the 2019 Greek Food Festival: **Friday, September 27 through Sunday, September 29.** 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 extremely important. Please get involved as we move forward to make our Church better.

May God Bless! Gus Flangas, Parish Council President



Baptized into Christ: Na Mas Zisi

Maximus, son of Theodore Tzortzis and Sara Luna, on December 29, 2018.
Godparent: Vivi Baldwin.

Marriage: Na Zisetel

Polyvios Mantas and Alexandra Spirtos on December 31, 2018.
Koumbaroi: Bryan Taxopoulos and Irene Skarlatos.

Fallen Asleep in the Lord: Eternal Memory!

William Gus Flangas on December 23, 2018. Funeral on January 5.

Paul Fyssakis on December 29, 2018. Funeral on January 8.

Louise Adams on January 13. Funeral on January 17.



New Adult Study with Father John

Churchianity vs. Christianity

By Metropolitan Anthony Bloom

*Join us every Wednesday 7:00 - 8:30 pm
in Kokkos Hall*

This book is available in our Bookstore

THE LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY
AND PAN ARCADIANs

INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR THE 2019

Mardi Gras Gala

Saturday, March 2 at 6:00 pm

Panos Hall

Adults \$50 Children 6-12 \$15 Children 5 & Under Free

Table of 10 \$450 *Tickets Available at Sunday Fellowship or Church Office*

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

All Proceeds Benefit the Mortgage Principal Payoff

Philoptochos News

Dearest Sisters and Brothers of Philoptochos,

I pray that all of you are having a great new year with your families and loved ones.



On January 6 following the services of Holy Theophany, we concurrently celebrated our Parish Name Day with a beautiful luncheon. Special thanks to Dora Hart, Geri Kypreos, Alis Dokakis Lovaas, Tami Stefanatos, Anastasia Stefanatos, Nitsa Filios and all the ladies that assisted the Parish Council with setting up and serving the food at the luncheon.

On January 13 we had the cutting of the Community Vasilopita and collection for St. Basil Academy. A big thank you to Dora Hart and Yiota Kaponikolou for making and providing the three large Vasilopites. They were delicious! Two of the Vasilopites were cut and distributed by Father John to representatives of our Parish ministries, and the remainder was distributed to the entire congregation at the conclusion of the service. Thank you to Yiota and Alis for holding the baskets. Sincere appreciation is extended to all the individuals for their love and generosity! Our thanks are also extended to Litza Smith, the hostess of the Fellowship, as well as our Fellowship coordinators, Benita Beeman, Jennifer Santamaria and Farolyn McSweeney, for doing such a wonderful job! Last but not least, we thank our wonderful Pete Eliakis for baking and donating 12 beautiful Vasilopites for Philoptochos to sell during Fellowship.

On January 20 we had our first General Meeting of the new year. It was full of renewed hope and goals for wonderful upcoming projects so we can continue to grow.

FEBRUARY EVENTS:

- *Sunday, February 3 – Membership Drive Fellowship and “Go Red for Women.”* February is when we celebrate National Heart Awareness Month which helps raise awareness about heart disease. According to The American Heart Association®, heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. Be especially good to your heart this month and make some positive changes for a healthier you. *Please wear red for heart awareness.*

Membership Drive Fellowship: We closed 2018 with 127 members and we already have several new members and pledges for 2019. Let us keep growing our amazing organization! We need to empower our small army of women to continue helping the poor, the hungry, the aged, the sick, the unemployed, the orphaned, those with disabilities and the victims of disasters. The Ladies Philoptochos Society will honor and welcome all new members. As Greek Orthodox Christian women we are provided the opportunity to participate in Christ's work here on earth. Please join and become a “Friend of the Poor!”

- *Sunday, February 10 – Departed Philoptochos Members Memorial.* At the conclusion of the Liturgy, a Memorial Service with Kollyva will be held for our beloved departed Philoptochos Members. All Philoptochos women are asked to come to Church appropriately dressed and sit in the first three pews on the right side. We will have a table with pictures and mementos, so please provide the Philoptochos Board with any photos you have (either printed or digital). Let us remember that *these women* preserved and delivered to us the sacred trust given to them by God to care for the poor, the young, the elderly, the sick, the orphaned and the widowed.

- *Sunday, February 24 – Kids ‘n’ Cancer Fellowship.* The mission of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos Kids ‘n’ Cancer Ministry is to provide support for children afflicted with cancer and other life-threatening diseases. The Kids ‘n’ Cancer Camp Agape Ministry offers a life-changing, all-expense paid experience for children and their families. It provides opportunities for enjoyment, learning, and building self-esteem and confidence in a safe setting. The kindness and caring that surrounds them offers an ideal environment for therapy and healing. Our Philoptochos ladies will take up a collection and host a Kids ‘n’ Cancer Fellowship. Please be generous!

On Saturday, March 2 at 6:00 pm, Philoptochos and the Pan Arcadians are hosting a *Mardi Gras Gala* – please save the date and plan on joining us! (See Flyer on Page 7.) We are planning a fun evening for all of you with great food, live music, dancing and much more! All of us are encouraged to wear costumes and get ready to dance. Tickets are \$50 per person, and all proceeds benefit the Mortgage Principal Payoff.

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Philoptochos News *(Continued from Page 8)*

We are also pleased to announce the *60th Anniversary Celebration of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in Las Vegas!* Each of us is called to participate and prayerfully give from our precious resources to help pay off the mortgage of our Church. Our Church is where we gather to pray and worship, to grow in our Orthodox Faith, to receive God's grace and healing, to welcome others into the Faith, to do outreach and acts of philanthropy, and to carry on our cultural traditions. Please contact Cheryl Pandelis and Nitsa Filios, our Mortgage Payoff Chairwomen, to offer your pledge! And please mark your calendars for the weekend of *November 8, 9 and 10 for our 60th Anniversary Celebration events.*

ADDITIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS DATES:

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

Monday, March 11 – Lent Begins

Sunday, April 21 – Palm Sunday Luncheon

Thursday, April 25 – Red Egg Dyeing

Friday, April 26 – Holy Friday and Epitaphios Decorating

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

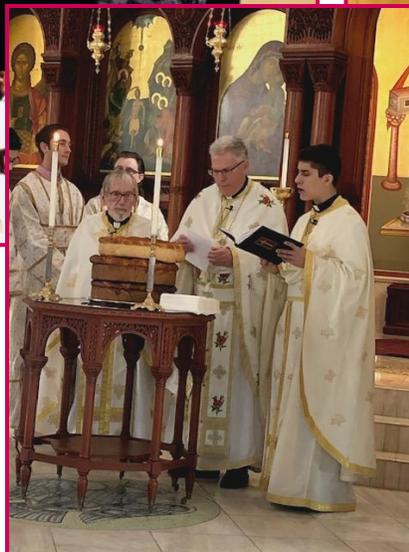
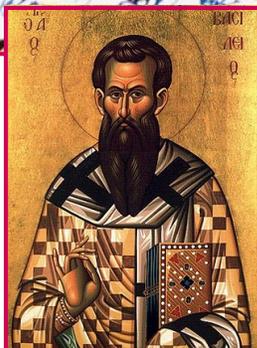
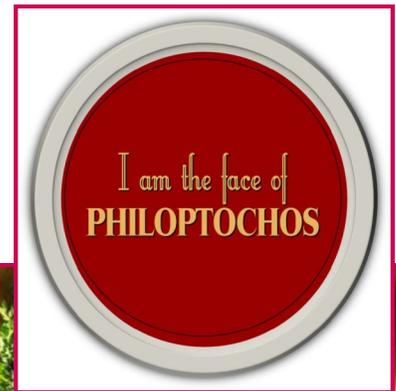
Sunday, May 12 – Mothers Day

Sunday, May 19 – Bartsas Memorial

Monday, May 20 – President's Dinner

I look forward to seeing you to all our events!

With Love in Christ, Vicky Palivos, Philoptochos President



Stewardship and Community Outreach

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Glory to God for all things! By God's grace our Parish successfully navigated the financial challenges that seem to beset us every year. While the challenge to meet our financial obligations grows each year, 2018 turned out to be the best year for Stewardship in our Parish in the past 14 years, and probably ever. The total gifts received in Stewardship from our Parishioners exceeded \$405,500 – an increase of nearly \$25,000 over 2017.

Thanks to the clear and concise presentation of our Parish Council President, Gus Flangas, which laid out the financial challenges our Parish faces, a noticeable number of our parishioners increased their 2018 Stewardship. They prayerfully looked into their hearts and increased their giving from between \$50 to \$2,000. Since the beginning of 2019 many of these same parishioners have offered a larger portion of their first fruits by pledging as much as 33% more in 2019 than they did in 2018. These members of our Parish are the ones offering more of their first fruits of labor and they will be rewarded according to His grace: *“Honor the Lord from your righteous labors, and offer Him the first fruits from the fruits of your righteousness, that your storehouses may be filled with abundance of grain, and your winepresses may gush with wine.” (Proverbs 3:9-10)*

As our facilities continue to age, we can no longer afford to put off necessary repairs to the Church and the Community Center. The basic operating budget for 2018 was \$1,004,466. While the financial Stewardship received grew, it still only covered approximately 40.38% of this budget, which is pretty much in line with what Stewardship has covered over the past decade or longer. At this moment, the roof in the kitchen must be replaced and the cost for this is estimated at \$40,000. By God's grace, following Father



John's appeal, a few parishioners immediately stepped up and donated the necessary funds to repair this roof. Unfortunately, the necessary revenue stream needed to facilitate other major repairs that have been put off are not available to the Parish at this time. Only through the increased giving of the members of our Parish will we be able to make the necessary repairs to our facility and continue meeting the spiritual needs of His flock.

For those who have pledged for 2019 and lovingly and prayerfully increased their pledge, may the Lord's blessing be with you and your family. For those who have not yet pledged, we ask that you please look into your hearts. Feel the love God has for you and return more of the first fruits of your labor. Make a concerted effort to increase your pledge, working toward the goal of returning to the Lord a tenth of the gifts He has bestowed upon you – for everything we have was given to us by Him and without Him we would have nothing. I pray we will all take to heart what St. Paul entreats us to do – that is, to sow bountifully so that we may reap bountifully. *(2 Corinthians 9:6)*

In Christ, Stewardship and Community Outreach Committee

“Take delight in all things that surround us. All things teach us and lead us to God. All things around us are droplets of the love of God – both things animate and inanimate, the plants and the animals, the birds and the mountains, the sea and the sunset and the starry sky. They are little loves through which we attain to the great Love that is Christ. Flowers, for example, have their own grace; they teach us with their fragrance and with their magnificence. They speak to us of the love of God. They scatter their fragrance and their beauty on sinners and on the righteous.” (St. Porphyrios, Wounded by Love)



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 Paliros, 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

Everyone is searching for love. St. Gregory the Theologian, in his *Oration on Pascha*, says that “God was not content to contemplate Himself.” He wanted others to share in His goodness and life, so He called all things into being from nothing. Last of all came man, created uniquely in the Divine Image of God, Who “*is love.*” (1 John 4:8) We were made for love and for no other reason. Christianity is thus the greatest love story in the history of the universe, for when we had fallen away from God out of self-love, the deception of the Devil, and a fixation on the created world, we could no longer see God face to face or “*walk with Him in the garden of paradise.*” (Genesis 2:8) We were separated by an impassible chasm of our own making and the God Who loves us could not stand it to be so. What was God to do? He went looking for His beloved and “*He bent the heavens and came down.*” (Psalm 18:9) Not finding Adam and Eve on Earth, in His humility God went down searching for them, even in Hades. Christ entered the mystery of death and once again in the darkness of the underworld, Adam and Eve heard the same footsteps they had once enjoyed in Eden and knew that their imprisonment to the Devil was finally over.

Why start with such a “big picture” of the human race, sin, God and creation . . . when talking about love during this romantic month of Valentine’s Day, which is replete with hearts, balloons and chocolates? It is because we all truly do “just want love” and many times we do not know where to look. If we first acknowledge like Blessed Augustine that “the heart is restless until it rests in God,” then maybe we would not have to spend a large part of our lives flitting desperately from so many “little loveless loves” and come to know the only One Who loves mankind. Jesus Christ is the ultimate desire of all desires, and the Saints who experienced the lightning flashes of His Divine Light and indescribable love wandered about the earth for the rest of their life unable to be swayed by any temporal beauty. What sunset, painting, or beautiful body could compare to the ecstasy of Divine Grace? St. Silouan of Mt. Athos, for example, saw the risen Christ walk out of the icon in the iconostasis and he said of this experience that the Face of Christ was so sweet, so radiantly tender and beautiful that if Jesus had remained before him for even one more second, his soul would have left his body and he would have departed this life then and there in the Church.



This, highest of loves cost the Saints their entire life. For us who live in the world, go to grocery stores, raise children, work jobs and pay rent, mortgages and taxes – these experiences can seem like unreachable fairy tales amidst the drudgery and difficulty of our daily life. However, there is a sanctification that comes from living in the world and serving one’s spouse, children or neighbors as if they were Christ, and receiving the love of God in and through these persons. This is the fulfillment of that second of Jesus’ two greatest commandments – “*to love our neighbor as ourselves.*” (Matthew 22:39) Perhaps we are not married, but there must be someone with whom God has allowed us to come into contact that needs our love as well. In doing this we begin to taste the grace of God and smell the scent of paradise. For each of us, married or not, in order to find true and lasting love we must be willing to serve those around us with selfless love: “*Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.*” (Luke 17:33) Love ultimately means sacrifice and the words so often spoken, “I love you,” lose meaning quickly if not backed up by deeds of love and sacrifice. Indeed, God proved His eternal love for us by hanging upon the Cross for our redemption.

This Valentine’s Day, let’s not forget that all earthly beauties and joys are only sweet and lasting if they have Christ Himself as their root and source. If we forget the eternal dimension of the person we love – even if we provide an incredible meal or a romantic getaway – then we have made an idol out of what should have been an icon (an image of God’s Presence and glory). Let us love God and one another in a genuine and selfless way, so that we may find lasting satisfaction, true peace, ultimate fulfillment, and the joy that never can be taken from us.

With love in Christ,

Father Seraphim

Youth and Family Ministries

Church School

Hi Everyone!

We are back on track after the busy holiday season. What a blessing to have Theophany fall on a Sunday this year, which allowed so many of us to be able to share in the celebration of this wonderful Feast Day and especially with the Great Blessing of Water. I was so happy to see so many of our students at our annual St. John the Baptist Name Day Luncheon afterwards, along with the cutting of the Community Vasilopita on the following Sunday.

I know the folk dancers are gearing up for FDF: Many blessings for a successful competition. We are all so proud of your hard work.

Date to Remember: March 17 – Sunday of Orthodoxy with Procession of Icons.

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

Youth Choir News



The Youth Choir's participation for January's Divine Liturgy was a bit low; hopefully we will have better attendance with *all our voices on Sunday, February 10*. Please be in the front right side of the Church *by 9:40 am*. We will be having a visiting priest that day – Father Chris Kerhulas – and it would be nice for him to hear our young voices participating in the Divine Liturgy.

Practices for this month will be on *Sunday, February 3 and 24*. We will meet at *12:15 pm* in the 4th/5th Grades Classroom.

Love in Christ, Presvytera Maria

Greek Folk Dance

Please join us for our annual *Macaronda Glendi on Saturday, February 9, 6:00 pm, in Panos Hall*. (See flyer on Page 4.) Please bring the whole family to this fun event, which will feature live musicians from Greece! It will be an evening of dinner, dancing and fellowship. Tickets are only \$20 and will be available during Fellowship. Kids under 5 are free. You can also reserve a table of 10 for \$200.

Additionally, our *Preview Brunch will be on held on Sunday, February 10, in Panos Hall during Fellowship*. Please plan on staying to watch all four groups showcase their hard work over the past six months! Finally, the annual *Folk Dance Festival will be held February 14-18, in Ontario, CA*. We will be putting our best foot forward as we compete against other Parishes throughout the West Coast.

Pray for us!

Much Gratitude, The Folk Dance Board

Orthodox Family Fellowship

Thank you to everyone who came out for our movie night in January, and to Steve Likourinou for helping us set up with audio and digital support!

This month OFF will go bowling! We will meet *on Saturday, February 23, 1:00 – 3:00 pm, at the Bowling Alley in the Gold Coast Casino (4000 West Flamingo Road, Las Vegas)*. We were graciously given the discounted price of \$5 per person to cover the shoe-rental fee plus unlimited games and our reserved lanes during these two hours. Please come, bring your kids and your friends so we can create memories together – and remember to bring some money for food and beverages! We look forward to a day of fun and fellowship together and hope to see you there!

We also wish all of the OFF members who are participating in FDF much strength and safe travels.

In Christ, Jelena Boskovic and Amy Khuri, OFF Advisors

GOYA ~ For Teenagers

Dear GOYANs and Parents,

What a busy month we had in January with three events! Thank God for everyone who took down the Christmas Tree, ice skated together, and helped feed the poor at the Rescue Mission.

In February we will be meeting on *Sunday, February 24, from 5:00 to 8:00 pm, for a GOYA Movie Night!* We will be watching “God is Not Dead,” eating popcorn and enjoying the evening together – so please mark your calendars.

We would like to wish all of our Greek Folk Dancers the blessing of the Lord as they go and represent our Parish at the Folk Dance Festival in Ontario, CA this month. Please also save the date and mark your calendars for our *Teen Overnight Lenten Retreat to be held on Friday-Saturday, March 29-30.* God bless!

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

Greek Language Program



The kids are back in full swing for second semester. Teachers have been busy learning the Greek National Anthem which they will perform on *Sunday, March 24*, in conjunction with the AHEPA Greek Independence Day Luncheon.

The Greek School kids will also participate and help with the Mardi Gras Gala on *Saturday, March 2.*

Paula Kelesis, Greek School Director



Parent Points

by Fr. Chris Kerhulas
is NOW AVAILABLE!

To order, visit

frchriskerhulas.com



Parent Points Book Signing

Please join us on *Sunday, February 10* as Father Chris Kerhulas will be visiting our Parish.

Father Chris is the author of the newly published *Parent Points*, wherein he blends his 40 plus years of ministry experience with personal experience from parenting and grand parenting.

Each chapter offers stories, wisdom, and insights into life as a young person, explained in a way which their significant adults can understand. Each chapter ends with “points,” or takeaways for the reader to both meditate on and work on in their relationship with their children/youth.

Following Liturgy and prior to the Folk Dance performances, Father Chris will have a book signing and \$6 from every book sold will benefit our Folk Dance Ministry. He has been invited to FDF this year to offer workshops.

“For decades, Father Chris Kerhulas has counseled countless families, has mentored thousands of children, has been the shoulder to cry on in tragedies and, perhaps most importantly, has been the one whose youthful exuberance in life matched the young kid’s he cared so much about.

On top of the thousands and thousands of young kids and parents he’s personally helped, I’m hopeful that this book will allow him to reach even more parents and children and give them guidance to a beautiful life, together.”

—Robert Krantz, Filmmaker

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In addition to over forty years of ministry in the Church, Fr. Chris served as youth director of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago for nearly a decade. Simultaneously, he pastored an inner-city Chicago parish that grew incredibly during his tenure, and he has served on youth commissions and led youth programs nationwide. His decades of experience working with parents and youth serve as the inspiration for his book.

For further information, multiple copies pricing, and book signings,
e-mail parentpoints@gmail.com

Adult and Young Adult Ministries

Young Adults

On Friday, February 22 at 6:00 pm, we will be gathering at McMullan's Irish Pub (4650 West Tropicana Avenue, #110, Las Vegas) to enjoy a great meal and fellowship with one another. This will also be our opportunity to ask Father Seraphim any questions we have, discuss what we are interested in knowing more about, and share what we feel might possibly help benefit other Young Adults. Better yet, this is a special non-fasting Friday, we can all the menu options together as we slowly build up to Great Lent, which starts on *March II*.

After dinner and discussion, we will head across the street and go bowling at the *Orleans Bowling Center (4500 West Tropicana Avenue, Las Vegas)*. We look forward to seeing all of our Young Adults!

In Christ, Niko Asim and Elizabeth Arbuiso, YA Advisors

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

This month we will be gathering together at the *home of Naomi Leventis* for a house blessing and potluck dinner on *Saturday, February 23 at 6:30 pm*. Please come and join us for this wonderful evening of fellowship, discussion and dining together.

Please RSVP with Naomi or Demetri for directions and to let us know if you will bring a side dish, drinks, salad or dessert. We hope to see you there!

We thank God for the progress Catherine Manolakos is making in her recovery. Please continue to keep her in your prayers. In Christ, Demetri Asim

Mr. & Mrs. - A Couples Fellowship

We would like to thank Mike and Effie Lekar for a beautiful night and dinner at their home in January. Due to a very full schedule and FDF in February, we will be taking a short break and resume with our monthly fellowship gatherings and potluck dinners in March.

Wishing you a blessed month, Father John, Father Seraphim, and their Presvyteres



Forerunners - The Seniors of St. John the Baptist

Our New Year started off with a nice turnout for our Vasilopita Luncheon. Father John cut our Forerunner Vasilopites and our three lucky coin winners were Sava Savvas, Presvytera Ilean Eyler and Bill Liaos. A tasty lunch was served, Faye Brown raffled away some very lovely prizes, and Paula Kelesis gave a year-end financial report. Paula also received approval from everyone present to donate \$1,000 on behalf of the Forerunners to the \$300,000 One Year Mortgage Burning Plan. Please mark your calendars to attend and support the Mardi Gras Gala on *March 2*, as proceeds also benefit the mortgage principal payoff.

We are excited for this month's Luncheon on *Monday, February 11 at 11:30 am*. Our very own Metro Officers, Niko Kelesis and Alex Szukiewicz, will make a presentation on "Safety In and Out of Our Homes." We will also be celebrating Valentine's Day, and Ruth Plentzas will give us a report on the success of the Partnership for Homeless Youth project.

We are hosting Fellowship on *Sunday, February 17*. Please bring goodies for all our Parish members to enjoy.

A reminder to all that if you are in need of riding on the special RTC program buses for the handicapped, Karen has copies of the information needed to apply and qualify.

At times we are not aware of our fellow senior citizens who are ill or hospitalized. If you know of anyone needing a visit or support, please call Karen at the Church Office. As always, our prayers, love and good wishes go out to all our seniors who are homebound, in hospitals or other facilities.

Love in Christ, Victoria Xikis, for the Forerunners

Notes from the Choir Loft



Great and Holy Lent begins next month! In preparation for Holy Week and Pascha, we will have rehearsals *in March on Fridays from 6:00 to 6:45 pm*, before the Salutations to the Theotokos. If you would like sing in the Choir, please feel free to join us anytime! The Lenten and Paschal seasons offer excellent opportunities to learn about the beautiful hymns that are sung during these awesome and holy days!

Athena Mertes, Choir Director

Byzantine Chant Class

We will continue our one-hour class on *Wednesdays in February at 6:00 pm*. We are continuing our study of Sunday Orthros and will start touching upon some of the hymns we sing in Lent. We welcome everybody up in the Choir Loft.

In Christ, Presvytera Maria



Before making your next Amazon purchase, pick "St John Greek Orthodox Church Las Vegas NV" as your "favorite charity." Our Church will receive .5%!

Adult Basketball



Join us for a pick-up basketball game *every Monday at 7:00 pm in Panos Hall*.

Please call *Nate Dallas at (347) 364-0313* for more information, or to be included in our Facebook group.

*"I charge you in the Presence of God . . . Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching."
(2 Timothy 4:1-2)*

Orthodox Bookstore

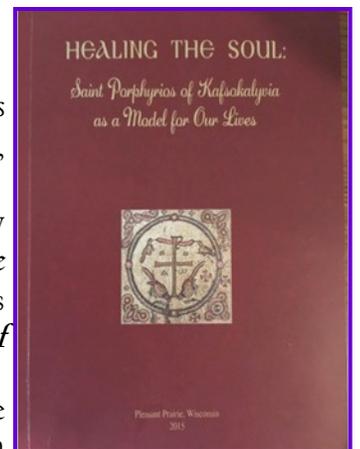
This month we are featuring *Healing the Soul: Saint Porphyrios of Kafsokalyvia as a Model for Our Lives*. This book is a follow up of this saint's very popular book, *Wounded by Love*.

Saint Porphyrios is a wonderworking saint of our time. He preached by manner of his humble words and proclaimed that Christ is everything! *Healing the Soul* is filled with his teachings interspersed with exciting stories that bring this Saint to life and help you to feel that you too can be *"wounded by love!" (Song of Solomon 2:5)*

"You are not a parent simply because you give birth, but you become a true father or mother when you help your child become spiritually reborn. Only then do you truly 'restore' your child, not when you merely lead him or her to marriage, but when you place your child on the road which leads to Paradise: when you teach him or her the value of frequent confession, to go to Church, to receive Holy Communion, to undergo spiritual *ascesis* (discipline/struggle), to cultivate abstinence, to pray, to study the Holy Scriptures, etc. If you do not succeed in saving your child, then you risk not being saved yourself." (Saint Porphyrios)

Come into the Bookstore and see this book, as well as many other spiritually beneficial titles.

Until next month, God willing, ICXC NIKA - Mary Pursell and the Bookstore Team



Holy Theophany 2019



Photos by Bill Bruninga



O Christ God, Who appeared and illumined the world, glory to You!



Vasilopita 2019



Congratulations to Philoptochos and the Orthodox Bookstore, the recipients of the Vasilopita coins for 2019!

The AHEPA Las Vegas Chapter 341



Our Chapter *will not be* meeting in February. The March Meeting information will be provided in next month's issue of *The Desert Messenger*.

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. Thank you.

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

Daughters of Penelope

Dear Parishioners of St. John Church,
 Thank you for your generosity during our December Fellowship Hour.

The Daughters of Penelope were able to donate \$1,000 to Father John's Discretionary Fund to help those in need in our Parish and the community at large.

Geri Kypreos, DOP President

Lent begins Monday,
 March 11, 2019

STEWARDS OF THE FAITH ~ 2019

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Adamy, Marina | Diamantis, Filippos | Karris, Mark and Suzanne | Petrou, James and Penelopi |
| Anastasakis, Mark and Elaine | Dominguez, Eric and Amalia | Katopodis, Efstratios | Philippou, Demetrios and Luanne |
| Anastasiou, Andrew and Kathleen | Dudunakis, Michael | Katsaros, Thomas and Sharon | Pierro, Joe and Rhonda |
| Andary, Oscar | Earl, Christine Michaelides | Kelesis, Paula | Politis, Pantelis and Dimitra |
| Andrews, Catherine | Eliades, Gregory and Maria | Kokkinis, Peter and Jennifer | Poulos, Christine |
| Andrews, Chris and Pamela | Eliades, Harry and Agapi | Koliambas, Eleni | Powers, Russell and Rebecca |
| Andricopoulos, Margo | Eliades, Katerina | Kontos, Diana | Punsalan, Basil and Sophie |
| Anthony, Stavros and Bernadette | Eliades, Peter | Kostopoulos, Georgia | Pursell, Robert and Mary |
| Anton, Mike and Carol | Eliakis, Varthie and LeeAnn | Kountanis, Panagiota | Radosta, Athena |
| Arbuiso, Elizabeth | Eyler, John and Elizabeth | Koupais, Mario and Cheri | Ramos, Fr. Seraphim and Presv. Olenka |
| Aristides, George and Diana | Eyler, Fr. Paul and Presv. Ilean | Koupais, Pat | Rigas, Anthony and Mary |
| Asim, Demetrious | Filios, George and Nitsa | Koutsulis, John and Eileen | Rihani, Gary and Linda |
| Asim, Niko | Filios, Spiridon and Eleni | Koutsulis, Sam and Effie | Rodis, Dimitri |
| Athens, Maria and Centers, Scott | Fischer, Bob and Cheryl | Kypreos, George and Lesley | Rotas, Beatrice |
| Bacon, Ken and Dianne | Flangas, Marilyn | Kypreos, Peter and Geri | Ruffner, Skip and Kathy |
| Balason, Anna | Flangas, Gus and Tamara | Lamancusa, Lisa | Sakkas, Georgios and Stavropoulos, Bessie |
| Balason, Voula | Fleetwood, Thomas and Melissa | Lekar, Caroline | Santamaria, Jennifer and Robert |
| Balodimas, James | Foster, Kyle and Pierro, Maria Elena | Lekar, Michael and Effie | Savvas, Sava |
| Beeler, Mike and Carolyn | Frangakis, Christos and Anastasia | Liaos, Jim and Tina | Schildmeyer, Christine |
| Beeman, Karl, Sr. and Benita | Frangakis, Constantine | Liaos, Steven and Francine | Serpentini, Athanasia |
| Berendji, Jim and Vivian | Frangakis, John | Liaos, William and Irene | Setian, Gary and Marie |
| Bernier, Micah and Alissa | Frangakis, Sophocles and Tara | Likourinou, Angie | Skalkotos, Nikolas and Georgia |
| Berta, Irene | Frantzen, Robert | Likourinou, Steve and June | Snow, Clifford and Christina |
| Bieker, Adam and Cassie | Gauvin, Chad and Marissa | Loughton, Dustin and Rena | Snowden, Robert and Niki |
| Bieker, Georgea | Generales, John and Arlene | Manos, Constantine and Michele | Staubs, Douglas and Anastasia |
| Birtas, Helen and Birtas, Ann | Georgoulakis, Mary Ellen | Mansour, Muna | Stavropoulos, Terry and Niki |
| Bizani, Katia | Ghebreab, Daniel and Ghermay, Selam | Manteris, Arthur and Sue | Stefanatos, Michael and Tami |
| Bledsoe, Lori | Gideon, Sara | Margaretis, John and Lucila | Stenos, Louis |
| Bochanis, George and Enid | Gott, C. Thomas and Kitty | Matsis, John and Rebecca | Stransky, Mark |
| Bougalis, Nickolaos | Gousdovas, Nikos | Mavrantonis, Stacy and Kiki | Stransky, Jack and Gladys |
| Britten, Ronald and Carol | Green, Todd and Susan | Mavroidis, Demetrios and Debra | Szukiewicz, Alex |
| Brown, Faye | Gutierrez, Daniel | Mavros, Debbie | Szukiewicz, Joseph and Jennia |
| Bruninga, Bill and Erin | Hadzoglon, Christos | Mavroudis, Frank | Tafoya, Steven and Irene |
| Capre, Julio | Hamilton, Mary | McManus, Jeanette | Taxopoulos, Bryan and Irene |
| Carahalis, John and Jillian | Hamilton, Paul and Brandi | McSweeney, Farolyn | Thompson, Maggy |
| Caredis, Jon and Marjorie | Hayes, Tulla | Mitchell, Thomas | Thompson, Steve and Aliko |
| Carrico, William and Alexandra | Hemmers, Oliver and Pantelas, Anne | Moffett, Todd and Eliopoulos, Tina | Tohme, Tony and May |
| Carter, Maria | Hertberg, Jennifer | Molina, Adriana and Elhamy, Kirolos | Tsarouhas, Maria |
| Chachas, Bessie | Hoadrea, Jimmy and Monci | Monoyudis, Jim and Julie | Tsiralidis, Kosmas and Katerina |
| Chachas, James | Hondros, Christina | Mulopulos, George and Jenny | Tsolis, Panagiote |
| Chandrinos, Alexia | Hondros, Fr. John and Presv. Maria | Myers, Stella | Turman, Maria |
| Chanos, Jennifer | Houlis, Ila and Debbie | Neocleous, Plato | Tzelalis, Steve |
| Chomakos, Dean and Tammy | Howard, William and Willie | Nicholas, John and Estella | Wadlow, Nicholas and Pamela |
| Chomakos, Jeremy and Romina | Iteen, Robert and Sophia | Nichols, George and Tereza | Waterhouse, David and Aleighzja |
| Chondrakis, Dimosthenis and Kragerud, Kaaren | Kachikis, Ernestine | Nixon, John and Ellyn | Wilkerson, Chuck and Kristina |
| Christian, Clair and Chloe | Kakavulias, Christina | Olmsted, Travis and Marilyn | Wilson, Steven and Cleo |
| Cokotis, Julie | Kakavulias, George and Helen | Oustian, Ararat and Juliette | Womack, Karl |
| Collins, David | Kakavulias, John and Elizabeth | Pallis, Paul | Womack, Kimberly |
| Cominos, Ted | Kambouris, Litsa | Panos, William and Jeanne | Wood, Nadine |
| Conger, William and Alexia | Kanis, Constantinos and Katie | Papas, Peter and Rita | Wronski, Chuck |
| Costuros, George and Marsha | Kapla, Mary | Papas, Christian and Nicole | Xerogianes, Nick and Nikki |
| Cotsilis, Jenny | Karalias, Petros and Constance | Pappas, Libby | Xikis, Victoria |
| Crist, Adam and Kanistra | Karas, James | Paul, Janet, | Zaferatos, Ted |
| Dalacas, Dimitri and Athanasia | Karas, John and Marcie | Payan, Luis and Eleni | Zamir, Talor and Michelle |
| Dalacas, Eleni | | Pelletier, Michael | Zimmerman, Paul and Angela |
| Demoleas, Stephanie | | Pertsinides, Irene | Zmina, Stephen and Cynthia |
| | | Petersen, Todd and Diane | |

“The Lord will rescue me from every evil and save me for His Heavenly Kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.” (2 Timothy 4:18)

2019 Stewardship Report
(as of 1/27/19)

Stewardship Gifts Pledged: \$263,430 (\$268,282 in 2018)
 Stewardship Gifts Received: \$58,951 (\$58,391 in 2018)
 Unfulfilled Pledge Balance: \$204,479 (\$209,891 in 2018)
 Stewardship Families Pledged: 223 (236 in 2018)
 Average Pledge to Date: \$1,181 (\$1,137 in 2018)
 Average Pledge Needed to Cover Operating Expenses: \$4,433

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.

Church Account Summaries - December 2018

| Nevada State Bank Accounts | November | Deposits | Transfers In | Withdraws/ Checks | Transfers Out | December | Notes |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|---|
| | Ending Balance | | | | | Ending Balance | |
| General Operating Account (GOA) | \$8,982.46 | \$43,018.29 | \$36,836.96 | \$17,771.09 | \$57,800.12 | \$13,266.50 | |
| Community and Education (C&E) | \$3,360.51 | \$5,700.00 | | \$1,000.00 | | \$8,060.51 | |
| Greek Food Festival (GFF) | \$18,690.70 | \$806.00 | \$1,155.00 | \$5,037.00 | \$4,280.89 | \$11,333.81 | |
| Designated, Restricted & Other (DR&O) | \$272,400.63 | \$7,389.00 | \$8,463.99 | \$637.47 | \$10,765.24 | \$276,850.91 | |
| Folk Dance Group | \$20,175.13 | \$3,268.23 | | \$6,084.64 | | \$17,358.72 | |
| Mortgage Account | \$52,136.94 | | | | \$5,201.14 | \$46,935.80 | |
| Designated Funds | November Ending Balance | Deposits | Transfers In | Withdraws/ Checks | Transfers Out | December Ending Balance | Notes |
| Bookstore | \$1,546.23 | \$789.00 | \$3,044.00 | \$194.97 | \$42.50 | \$5,141.76 | |
| Ornaments | \$1,077.41 | | | | | \$1,077.41 | |
| Restricted Funds | November Ending Balance | Deposits | Transfers In | Withdraws/ Checks | Transfers Out | December Ending Balance | Notes |
| ICON | \$254,118.20 | \$300.00 | | | \$442.50 | \$253,975.70 | Memorial & Lawyer Fee |
| 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 | | \$1,000.00 | | | \$6,450.91 | |
| Building Fund | \$42.08 | | | | | \$42.08 | |
| \$300,000 One Year Plan | \$0.00 | \$6,300.00 | \$4,419.99 | | \$10,719.99 | \$0.00 | Funds collected/sent for Mortgage |
| Youth Choir | \$2,991.93 | | | | \$2.75 | \$2,989.18 | |
| Church School | \$1,306.37 | | | | | \$1,306.37 | |
| Three Priests | \$3,814.37 | | | | | \$3,814.37 | |
| Altar Servers | \$440.00 | | | | | \$440.00 | |
| GOYA | \$142.36 | | | | | \$142.36 | |
| Designated, Restricted, and Other Total | \$272,400.63 | \$7,389.00 | \$8,463.99 | \$194.97 | \$11,207.74 | \$276,850.91 | |
| Other Funds | November Ending Balance | Deposits | Transfers In | Withdraws/ Checks | Transfers Out | December Ending Balance | Notes |
| Kokkos Scholarship Fund | \$65,519.40 | | | | \$4,659.63 | \$60,859.77 | Market fluctuation in Nov/Dec 2018 |

Dec 2018 Candles **\$8,051.00**
 Dec 2018 Trays **\$5,564.00**
Total Dec Candles & Trays \$13,615.00

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

Never separated from the Father's bosom in divinity, and incarnated as You willed, and held in the holy arms of the Ever-Virgin, You Who hold all things in Your Hand were given to the hands of the divine God-receiver Symeon. And therefore full of joy he cried to You, O Master, "With my own eyes, I Your servant have seen You, Lord; now You let me depart in peace."

*(Hymn of Praise, Orthros -
The Meeting of Our Lord in the
Temple, Celebrated February 2)*

