SYNAXARION: The The Holy Apostle Matthias; Anthony the Martyr of Alexandria; After-feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; Constantine, Patriarch of Constantinople; Euthymios the Hieromartyr, Metropolitan of Rhodes

Resurrectional Apolytikon (Plagal 4th): From above did you descend O Christ our God. For us did You endure three days in the tomb, that we may be relieved from passions in this world. You who are our resurrection and our Life: Glory to You, O Lord.

Apolytikon of the Transfiguration: You were Transfigured on the Mountain O Christ our God, showing to Your disciples Your Glory as far as they could understand; shine upon us the sinners as well, the Light of Yours, eternal, by the prayers of the Theotokos, O Giver of Light Glory to You.

Apolytikon of St. John the Baptist: The memory of the just is observed with hymns of praise; for you O Forerunner the witness of the Lord is sufficient. You have proved to be truly more venerable than the prophets. Since you were granted to baptize in the river, the One Whom they proclaimed. Therefore, you strove for truth, proclaiming with joy the Good News, even to those in Hades: that God was manifested in the flesh, and takes away the sins of the world, and grants to us His great mercy.

Kontakion of the Transfiguration of Christ: Upon the Mount, You were Transfigured and Your Disciples beheld Your Glory, as far as they were able to, O Christ our God; so that when they would see You crucified, they would know that You suffered willingly; and thus proclaim to all the world: that You are truly the One who is the Father’s Radiance
Epistle Reading is from 1 Corinthians 3:9-17

Brethren, we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and another man is building upon it. Let each man take care how he builds upon it. For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw - each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.

Gospel Reading is from Matthew 14:22-34

At that time, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately he spoke to them, saying "Take heart, it is I; have no fear." And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they entered the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

Fifty-Two Verses in Fifty-Two Weeks: The Bible Project
August 9-15

My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. Luke 1:47

As we prepare to celebrate the feast of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary, this week’s verse refers to a song of Mary known as the Magnificat, which begins with these words, “My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” We discussed this verse in a previous issue of The Messenger, when I challenged people to fill in the blanks: “My soul _________ the Lord and my spirit _________ in God my Savior.” In the midst of the pandemic, how are our souls and spirits in relationship to the Lord? Have our souls “forgotten” about our Lord, are our spirits “frustrated” at God our Savior? How we fill in these blanks is important both in good times and in bad ones. We are all going to remember the year 2020 as long as we live. Will we remember this as a year that our souls magnified the Lord, when they rejoiced in God our Savior? It is possible to do these things, even in the midst of crisis? The simple answer is, YES!
Upcoming Services & Events

Sunday, August 9  
**9th Sunday of Matthew**
Orthros 8:45 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  
Prayer for College Students at the Conclusion of the Divine Liturgy

Monday, August 10  
Bible Study  
6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, August 11  
Paraklesis Service of Supplication to the Virgin Mary  
6:00 p.m.

Friday, August 14  
Great Vespers for the Dormition of the Virgin Mary  
6:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 15  
Dormition of the Virgin Mary  
Orthros 8:45 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, August 16  
**10th Sunday of Matthew**
Orthros 8:45 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  
Prayer for School Students at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy

Monday, August 17  
Meeting of Ministry Heads 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, August 19  
Paraklesis Service of Supplication to the Virgin Mary  
6:00 p.m.

Upcoming Events with New Dates  
(different than the dates published in the August Messenger)

Sunday, August 23  
Parish Assembly Meeting at noon (via zoom)

Sunday, August 23  
Men’s Group  
5:00 p.m. (via zoom)

Sunday, August 30  
GOYA  
5:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 3  
Griefshare will be held on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, September 13  
Virtual Sunday School classes begin

Answer these thought-provoking questions about today’s Gospel Reading in the adult and teen Sunday school lesson. Click HERE.
Friday, August 14 - Great Vespers for the Feast of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary—In the liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church, the day begins with the setting of the sun. On August 15, we celebrate the Dormition of the Virgin Mary. But the actual feast begins with the setting of the sun on the evening of August 14. An evening service, called Vespers, announces each new day. In most parishes, Vespers is only offered a few times a year. For instance, in Tampa, we do Vespers on January 6 in the evening, as the prelude of the feast of St. John the Baptist on January 7. There are a few others times of the year we offer this service as well. This year, we will begin a tradition of celebrating Great Vespers on August 14. There is a tradition of an “Epitaphios” of the Virgin Mary. Most of us know the term “Epitaphios” as it relates to Christ in the tomb. In fact, the word “Epi-Taphios” literally means “in the tomb.” On Good Friday, we lay the “Epitaphios” of Christ into the Kouvouklion, the tomb of Christ. There is a tradition of doing the same thing on August 14, laying an “Epitaphios” (icon of the Virgin Mary in the tomb) in a Kouvouklion. I’ve personally thought that the Kouvouklion should be used once a year, only for the Body of Christ, which is why we have not done this service previously. However, because of the pandemic, Felix, our maintenance man, built us a small Kouvouklion because we did not use the regular one this year. So, now we have two Kouvouklia, the regular large one and now a smaller one. We have also acquired a beautiful Epitaphios of the Virgin Mary. On August 14, this year and every year going forward, we will use the Epitaphios of the Virgin Mary and place it in the small Kouvouklion. And on Good Friday, we will utilize the large Kouvouklion for the Epitaphios of Christ. Great Vespers on August 14 will be at 6:00 p.m. We will display the Epitaphios of the Virgin Mary and the Kouvouklion from August 14-23 (which is the leave-taking of the Dormition).

Saturday, August 15 - Dormition of the Virgin Mary—This is one of the Twelve Major Feastdays of the Church Year, and commemorates the Falling Asleep of the Virgin Mary. When the Virgin Mary died, all the disciples were present, save for Thomas, who could not get there in time for the funeral. When Thomas arrived, they opened the tomb for him to pay his respects to the Virgin Mary. The tomb was found empty, save for the belt of the Virgin Mary. Her body, along with her soul, had been assumed into heaven. This shows us that those who are righteous will be taken to heaven. It is not just Christ who went to heaven, but all of us can go. The Virgin Mary was not God—she was one of us, and shows to us, in the most excellent example, of what it means to live a life of obedience to God. We honor her above every person, even every angel, as we chant, “Greater in honor than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim (Cherubim and Seraphim are two order of angels, the ones who stand closest to God), you without corruption gave birth to God the Word, and are truly Theotokos, you do we magnify.”

Liturgical Notes for this week
Update and Announcements

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

College student addresses—If you have college students or are a college student, please send your school address, phone number and email to the church office by the end of August.

Adopt a college student—We started an adopt a college student program last year. We will be contacting all those who had college students they “adopted” last year and making sure you want to continue, as well as reorganizing which students are still in college, who is new to college, who has graduated college, etc. If you would like to participate and adopt a college student, please send your name to Father Stavros and Charlie by August 15. If you were part of this program last year, you don’t have to contact us, we will be contacting you.

Parish Assembly—Sunday, August 23—The Messenger was incorrect - If you have any questions regarding your pledge payments or membership status, please contact the church office. All members in good standing shall have the right to participate and vote at meeting if they are current in pledge payment 30 days prior to the date of the parish assembly. This is the rescheduled meeting from the spring one that was postponed due to Covid-19. We will set this up via Zoom, and members in good standing will receive a zoom invite prior to August 23.

Take Advantage of the Parish Assistance Program (PAP)

Since May 1, St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church has partnered with BayCare Behavioral Health to offer a Parish Assistance Program. The PAP program will provide our parishioners access to free and confidential counseling services - offering additional support when life’s challenges become overwhelming. The PAP utilizes a network of faith-based providers and are sensitive to the values and beliefs of those they serve and provide compassionate care to children, adults, parents, and seniors. Parishioners can contact BayCare to request up to three free and confidential counseling sessions from a licensed mental health professional. The BayCare helpline, 800-878-5470, is answered 24/7 by mental health professionals. Many BayCare therapists are also offering telephonic and virtual counseling sessions to help parishioners maintain their emotional wellbeing during these trying times.

Up to three free and confidential counseling sessions.

Call 1-800-878-5470