SYNAXARION: Forefeast of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; Ignatius the God-Bearer, Bishop of Antioch; Our Righteous Father Philogonius, Bishop of Antioch; Holy Father John of Kronstadt; John the New Martyr of Thassos

Resurrectional Apolytikon (3rd Mode): Let all things above in heaven rejoice, and let all things below on earth be glad. With all the might and strength of His arm, an eternal deed the Lord did perform. Beneath His feet He has trampled down death by death, and first born of the dead has He become. From the womb of Hades has He delivered us, and to all the world has granted His great mercy.

For the Forefathers (2nd Mode): Magnificent are the accomplishments of faith! The holy Three Servants greatly rejoiced, as they stood in the fountain of fire, as if beside the still waters; and the Prophet Daniel appeared to be a shepherd of lions, as if they were sheep. At their entreaties, O Christ God, save our souls.

Apolytikon of St. John the Baptist can be found on page 24 of the Divine Liturgy Book.

Kontakion: On this day, the Virgin Maid goes to the cave to give birth to the pre-eternal Word in an ineffable manner. Dance for joy, O you inhabited earth upon your hearing, Glorify, along with Angels and with shepherds, Him Who willed that He appear as a newborn Child, the pre-eternal God.

Memorial Service: Michael Zak (40 Day); Panagiotis Alithinos (10 years); Evangelos Stilianos Alithinos (55 years)
Epistle Reading is from Hebrews 11:9-10; 32-40;

BRETHREN, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundation, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets - who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated - of whom the world was not worthy - wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Gospel Reading is from Matthew 1:1-25

The book of the Genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthath, and Matthath the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus, for he will bear all their sins. "For the child is yours and the child of your wife, by the promise of Me it shall be called. It will be called Emmanuel," which means, "God with us." When the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus, for he will bear all their sins. "For the child is yours and the child of your wife, by the promise of Me it shall be called. It will be called Emmanuel," which means, "God with us."

Answer these thought provoking questions about today’s Gospel Reading in the adult and teen Sunday school lesson. Click HERE.

Click here to Download this Week’s Children’s Word from MyOCN.

Happy Birthday and Happy Nameday!

If you want to make sure we have your birthdate on file, please call the office.

Birthdays
Kyra Frey (December 22)
Christos Tsetsekas (December 23)
Gregory Dimas (December 24)
Lacee Richardson (December 25)

Namedays
Ignatios - Dec 20
Julia & Thermitoldis - Dec 21
Arastasia, Natasia, Zoikos - Dec 22
Nifon - Dec 23
Ahmet, Evgenia - Dec 24
Baltzar, Bethlehem, Christina, Christos, Chrystalla, Emmannouela, Emmannuel, Gaspar, Hrisavgri, Hrianaou, Hysra, Melhor - Dec 25
Constantinos, Josef, Panagiotis - Dec 26
Upcoming Services & Events

Sunday, December 20  Sunday before Nativity Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday, December 22  St. Anastasia Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
       DAY OF PRAYER  11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday, December 23  Royal Hours of the Nativity 9:30-11:00 a.m.
Thursday, December 24  The Nativity of Christ Great Vespers 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 9:30-11:00a.m.
       Orthros 5:30 p.m. Divine Liturgy 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 27  St. Stephen the First Martyr Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Monday, December 28  20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**Stewardship 2021 Update**

As of Monday, December 14, we have received 75 stewardship forms, with a pledged amount of $115,893.00 for 2021. Don’t forget to fill out your form and send it into the office!

**Thank You To Our Christmas Donors**

This year, despite being in the midst of a pandemic, we were moved by the generosity of our parishioners in helping out this Christmas season as we received $2,620. Thank you to everyone for banding together this difficult year and bringing some joy into this Nativity Season!

**Will Join Us to Stand Guard Over the Tampa Bay Area?**

At a military base, certain soldiers guard the base at night, while the other soldiers are sleeping, so that the soldiers who are sleeping can sleep peacefully, known that others are guarding them. In the Tampa Bay area, the Greek Orthodox Clergy have committed to celebrating Divine Liturgy in at least one church for the forty days of the Nativity Fast. (A tradition known as the Forty Liturgies of the Nativity Fast). Each week, there will be a certain day (or days) in which our parish will be the only parish celebrating the Divine Liturgy in this area. It is as if we are standing guard spiritually over this area, and it is really an honor to do this. We are calling the Holy Spirit down on the Tampa Bay area every day for forty days, and on many of those days, this will only happen at St. John. **So will you join me in standing guard over the Tampa Bay area this week?** This week, our unique liturgical day is December 22. Orthros will be at 9:00 a.m. with Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.

**Welcome Fr. John and Pres. Denise Stefero—**

We warmly welcome Fr. John and Pres. Denise Stefero to our community. They are not new here, as their children are members or our parish and they have visited with us many times. Now officially retired, Fr. John will be serving in our parish on a regular basis, together with Fr. Stavros and Fr. Stratton. He will also be working with us on a part-time basis and will be integrating into our community in the new year. Welcome Fr. John and Pres. Denise!

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

**December 20-26**

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1

Many times we speak of faith as believing in what we can’t see. Let’s talk about the things we can see. Even though we may see well, what we see is confusing. I can see problems, but I am still confused as to why God allows them. Faith is not just about what we can’t see, but what we can see but can’t understand. Many times I have used the image of the puzzle, that life is like a huge puzzle that covers, for example, our whole church property. If I’m in the church sanctuary, I can’t see that part of the puzzle that is on the soccer field or in the gym. I can only see a very small piece of the puzzle. God has given me (and each of us) a piece of the puzzle to place into the tapestry of humanity, into His plan for salvation for all of us. For some of us, that piece is plain looking. For some of us, it has many colors. But for all of us, our piece is worth something, because without each piece, the puzzle can’t be complete. Faith is when we show up and put our piece in the puzzle, even when we can’t understand why our piece looks the way it does, or when we don’t fully comprehend what the puzzle looks like.
Update and Announcements

Sunday School continues — Please do this with your children. There will be a video presentation for pre-school through sixth grade. There is a sheet of questions for teens and adults.

Click here for the 2020 Virtual Christmas Pageant!

Click here for the 2019 Christmas Pageant!

Tuesday, December 22, St. Anastasia — St. Anastasia lived in the late third century and was martyred on December 25, 304. She is the patron saint of pharmacists, as she was gifted in making medicines, which she distributed to those who were ill.

Tuesday, December 22, Day of Prayer — We’re going to have a “Day of Prayer” in our church on Tuesday, December 22, from 11:00 a.m. (after the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy) until 9:00 p.m. for people to stop in and pray. Fr. Stavros, Charlie and Alex (at least one of them at all times) will be in the church if you need someone to pray for you. If you haven’t been to church in a while and would like to stop in during the Christmas week, or if life is moving too fast and you just want to slow down for a few hours and come sit in the church, this day is for you.

Wednesday, December 23, Royal Hours of Christmas 9:30-11:00 a.m. — The service of the Royal Hours consists of Prayers, Hymns, Psalms and Old Testament prophecies that foreshadow the coming of Christ on Christmas. Also read are the Gospel passages of the feast of Christmas. There is no Holy Communion at this service. Rather, it is a service of quiet meditation in anticipation of the Nativity. We will hold this service from 9:30-11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 23. We will celebrate the entire service by candle-light. This will be a wonderful and peaceful way to usher in the Feast of the Nativity. The service will be conducted in English.

Thursday, December 24, Services for the Nativity — There are traditionally two Divine Liturgies celebrated in connection with the feasts of Christmas, Epiphany, and Pascha. On December 24, in the morning, we will celebrate the Great Vespers of Christmas followed by the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great. The Vespers of Christmas includes Old Testament Prophecy Readings. It is hoped that those with young children and those who do not drive at night will take advantage of this morning Liturgy, which will be celebrated on December 24 with Vespers at 8:45 a.m. and Divine Liturgy from 9:30-11:00 a.m.

On the evening of the 24th, the church will be open for a time of silent prayer beginning at 5:00 p.m. Orthros will be celebrated at 5:30 p.m., followed by the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom at 7:00 p.m. From 5:00-6:45 p.m., the church will be illuminated only by candlelight. The Feast of the Nativity marks the only time in human history that the night became brighter than day with the appearance of the multitude of angels. If you wish, come to church at 5:00 p.m. and you’ll be here for sunset, when day becomes night. However, be here at 6:45 p.m., to hear the Doxology, the hymn the angels sang that first Christmas, as night becomes day. Many of you have made a tradition of coming to church for this vigil of prayer and the Orthros and Liturgy and many people who have done so have commented to me how powerful the celebration of Christmas was for them.

Donated Medical Equipment — A parishioner recently donated a bedside commode (no bucket), a walker (no wheels), a cane with a 4-footed base, and arms to fix to a commode or wall to assist in sitting/rising. If anyone is interested in these please contact the church office.

When God Is Not There, a Book Study on Suffering — “The world we live in has been called a ‘vale of tears’, a ‘place of weeping’ — perhaps with good reason. This book records simple events and conversations, all the while grappling with difficult questions. Its aim is to convey the sense of the discreet yet persuasive presence of the true God precisely in situations where He is not visible: in pain, in disability, in the tragedies of life, in inexorable death, as this comes across in true events and is reflected in the lives of real people.” Alex Limberatos will be hosting a Zoom Book Study on Tuesday Nights at 6:30 p.m. starting January 26 in six sessions. If you are interested in joining, please email Alex at alex@stjohntpa.org or call the office phone. Books will be provided.

My Word 2021 — For the past two years, we’ve encouraged parishioners to identify one word that will shape their year. With 2020 now a month away, it’s time to start thinking of the word that will define you in 2021. It is also time to start thinking of a word that will define our parish for 2021. If you have an idea for a word for our parish for 2021, please send it to Fr. Stavros at frstav@gmail.com. Towards the end of December, he will send out a request for individual words to define you for 2021.

Prayer List: Lord Jesus Christ, Physician of our Souls and Bodies, visit and heal your servants: Kathy & Andrew Bouzinekis; Anastasia; Amanda, Andrew, Colton, Miranda, Charlotte Elizabeth, Nuha, Nabeel, Michael, Amal, John, Elaine, Olga, Virginia Georgiou, Ron Myer, Tsaros, Fr. Pat Legato, Nellie Pringle, Yolanda Webb, Angela Bougas, Tony Ekonomou, Ron, Jason Vickers, Rex Garrison, Tina Chaconas, Ann Demas, Alex Martinez, Adriana Martinez, Aaron Martinez, Christina Noel Kouses Houck, 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 Scourtes, Steven, Matthew & Family, Phyllis, John Zelatis, Reagan, Peter Zaharis, Alexandra Ferrarolis, Leon & Despina Botham, Cindy Xerico, Mary Ellen Evdemon, Marie Sofia Panagopoulos, Maria Hursey, Chris Yamvakias, John Myer, Mike Trimos, Robert and Alice Stoccardo, John Alexander, Michael Romero, George Hamos, Dean Kondilis and Family, Bill and Nancy Manikas, Patricia Costello, Anastasia Smyrnakis, Ekaterina & Anna Shushaulykova, Dora Koundoula, Ana Mourer, Debbie Phelps, Mary Voykin, David Voykin, Anne Sakellaris, Denise Badrane, Sia Blankenship, Don Payne, Zhanaka Temelkova, Stanislava Terzieva, James, Jude and all victims of war, terrorism, crime, natural disaster, and all of whom we are unaware.
The Forty Liturgies of the Nativity Fast

It is a custom in certain Orthodox Churches to celebrate the Divine Liturgy for all forty days of the Nativity Fast. These tend to be larger parishes with multiple clergy and large congregations. As we bring this chaotic 2020 to a close, we have decided in the Tampa Bay area to celebrate the Forty Liturgies of the Nativity Fast in our area, so that at least one parish is celebrating the Divine Liturgy each day. With this flyer, you’ll find a calendar of who is celebrating, as well as information should you wish to attend in person or virtually. We hope that you will avail yourselves of the opportunity to worship more frequently during this period of the Nativity Fast.

We will celebrate 23 of these Divine Liturgies at St. John. If you wish to attend Divine Liturgy in person or virtually, the opportunity is there to do this for 40 days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sundays - Every Church</th>
<th>Saturdays - Tampa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 16 - Tampa</td>
<td>Dec. 7 - Tampa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 17 - Sarasota</td>
<td>Dec. 8 - Sarasota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 18 - Tarpon Springs</td>
<td>Dec. 9 - Multiple Churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 19 - Tarpon Springs</td>
<td>Dec. 10 - Tarpon Springs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 20 - Palm Harbor</td>
<td>Dec. 11 - Palm Harbor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 21 - Multiple Churches</td>
<td>Dec. 12 - Multiple Churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 23 - Tampa</td>
<td>Dec. 14 - New Port Richey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 24 - Tampa</td>
<td>Dec. 15 - Multiple Churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 25 - Multiple Churches</td>
<td>Dec. 16 - Clearwater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 26 - Tarpon Springs</td>
<td>Dec. 17 - Multiple Churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 27 - Sarasota</td>
<td>Dec. 18 - Clearwater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 30 - Multiple Churches</td>
<td>Dec. 21 - Sarasota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 1 - New Port Richey</td>
<td>Dec. 22 - Tampa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 2 - Tampa</td>
<td>Dec. 23 - Tarpon Springs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 3 - Palm Harbor</td>
<td>Dec. 24 - All Churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 4 - Sarasota</td>
<td>Christ is Born! Glorify Him!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FORTY LITURGIES FOR THE NATIVITY FAST
in the Tampa Bay Area Churches

Holy Trinity Clearwater
Fr James T Paris, Proistamenos
Fr William Damaskos, Ephimerios
409 S. Old Coachman Road
Clearwater, Florida 33765
727-799-4605
Website: https://www.htclearwater.com/
Livestream: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwTJxf0XHrz3vjnIqdbV6S6w
Sunday Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Weekdays Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

St. Nicholas Cathedral Tarpon Springs
Fr Athanasios Haros, Dean
Fr. Simeon Pardalis, Ephimerios
36 North Pinellas Avenue
Tarpon Springs, Florida 34689
727-937-3540
Website: https://stnicholastarpon.org/
Livestream: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfY4msBzlpI&feature=emb_title
Sunday Orthros 7:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m.
Weekday Orthros 8:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m.

St. John the Baptist Tampa
Fr Stavros Akrotirianakis, Proistamenos
2418 W. Swann Avenue
Tampa FL 33609 USA
813-876-8830
Website: http://stjohnampa.org/
Livestream: https://livestream.com/accounts/2454446
Sunday Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Weekday Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

St. Barbara Sarasota
Fr John Bociu, Proistamenos
7671 N. Lockwood Ridge Road
Sarasota, FL 34243
941-355-2616
Website: https://sarasotaorthodox.com/
Facebook Live Broadcasting of Services
Sunday Orthros 8:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.
Weekday Orthros 8:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m.

St. George New Port Richey
Fr Andrew Pavlakos, Proistamenos
9426 Little Rd
New Port Richey, FL 34654
727-868-5911
Website: http://stgeorgenpr.org/
Livestream: https://www.facebook.com/stgeorgenpr/?ref=nf&hc_ref=ARRyy5nIk-K9w0sUHVYz6rJ5l8tJ3iaMe-QBzxiTs8ZN_jk7IDipAvJiCKw86oj1DF0
Sunday Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.
Weekdays Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.

St. Stephanos St. Petersburg
3600 76th St. N.
St. Petersburg, FL 33710
727-345-8235
Website: http://www.ststepanos.org/
Livestream: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAq3S_iKnqvPzDEQ2aD_3CQ/featured
Sunday Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sts. Raphael, Nicholas, and Irene
Fr James Rousakis, Proistamenos
1100 Riviere Rd
Palm Harbor, FL 34683
727-789-5905
Website: http://www.straphael.fl.goarch.org/
Facebook Live Broadcasting of Services
Sunday Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.

St. Sophia Winter Haven
1030 Bradbury Rd,
Winter Haven, FL 33880
863-299-4532
Website: http://stsophia.fl.goarch.org/
Livestream: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCij9tz1kJNakl-BLOmDEQ
Sunday Orthros 9:15 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m.
As we approach the season of Advent, I wanted to share with you a book I have written called, *Let All Creation Rejoice: Reflections for Advent, the Nativity and Epiphany*. The book is approximately 230 pages long. It contains a reflection to be read daily during the period of the Nativity Fast (November 15) through January 7. From November 15 through December 24, one verse of the Gospel accounts of the Nativity is examined in detail each day. It is practical inspiration written to be understood by the average Greek Orthodox Christian.

+Fr. Stavros

Although this book is written in an easy to read style - the concepts and application are very thought provoking! My husband and I have been reading it at meal time, as our Advent meditation. Each day's readings help me turn my mind to what's really going on and important this time of year - helping me refocus, and reflect on the events surrounding the Nativity, and what they mean for me! Today's reading, for example, reflected on the angel telling the shepherds, "Dont be afraid," and following reflections on fear in my own life. Excellent book, and now that I am enjoying this one so much, I will be ordering the Lenten reflections, too. -Amazon Customer

*A must read for any Christian wishing to renew their spiritual life during the Christmas season.* -Amazon Customer

---

**Philoptochos Spanakopita and Tiropita Sale**

Available for purchase after Liturgy on **December 6, 13 and 20**

- **Spanakopita** or **Tiropita 28 piece tray**
  - Appetizer size
  - $30.00

- **Spanakopita 2 pound tray**
  - $20.00

There will be a limited number of pitas ordered because of the pandemic and our inability to gauge the demand.

**We will also be selling Vasilopita on Dec. 20 & 27 for $10**

For questions and concerns please contact: [Jeanie Nenos](tel:(813) 451-9116) or [Lisa Alsina](tel:(813) 728-1094).

---

**Christmas Prayer Request**

Please write down below names of people you’d like Fr. Stavros to pray for, and any specific needs that these people or you have. Fr. Stavros will pray over these names and needs on December 24. Please place this card in the basket by the baptismal font or mail it to the church office.
We are looking for families to answer questions related to their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The study involves answering interview questions during a zoom meeting in breakout rooms where parents/guardians and children can participate together or separately.
- All individuals and their family members, including children ages 12-18, are invited to anonymously participate in the interviews.
- There are no known risks or discomforts and no benefits to participation.
- Taking part in this research project is entirely voluntary, and you can stop at any time.
- Your responses will be confidential.

**Lived Experiences of the COVID-19 Pandemic for Multigenerational Families**

If you are interested in participating in our study please contact:

vanessa.elias@mymail.barry.edu  
philip.corr@mymail.barry.edu  
deborah.doucas@mymail.barry.edu

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Ruth Ban, Barry University, (305) 899-3710, rban@barry.edu

For further questions regarding the Barry University IRB, please contact:  
Jasmine Trana, (305) 899-3020, jtrana@barry.edu