“Behold I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.” Mark 1:2-3

February 2014

MISSION STATEMENT:
St. John Greek Orthodox Church is dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

VISION:
The church shall seek to fulfill its mission by:
1. Embracing the Spiritual Life of the Orthodox Church through regular prayer, worship, and frequent participation in the sacraments.
2. Supporting the Church through stewardship of time and talent and sacrificial giving.
3. Providing a welcoming, caring, loving environment.
4. Having its members exemplify Orthodox Christian character and morals.
5. Supporting ministries that facilitate the overall mission of the Church
6. Exemplifying commitment to community service and charitable outreach.
7. Creating an environment which encourages members to grow in their faith.

Father Stavros’ Message

I happened to be in a store a couple of days BEFORE Christmas and I was shocked to see Valentine’s Day materials more prevalent than Christmas materials. I guess the store felt that it had made all its money on Christmas items and needed to focus its attention on the next commercial day on the calendar. As we were preparing to celebrate one of the most HOLY days of the year, the Nativity of Christ, the commercial holiday spirit had already transitioned away from Christmas and into another season of commercialism.

So I started thinking about the meaning of the word “holiday” as we go from one holiday to another, from Christmas to New Year’s Day to Valentine’s Day to St. Patrick’s Day in March. A consultation of “Wikipedia” (who needs an encyclopedia anymore when we have an online one at the click of a button—as an aside, I remember as a child owning a set of Encyclopedia Britannica and hauling that whole set to college so I wouldn’t have to go to the library anytime I needed some encyclopedia information—my son will never own a set of encyclopedias, by the time he goes to college, his whole life will probably fit on a thumb drive) reveals the following information about the word “holiday”:

The word holiday comes from the Old English word hāligdæg (hālig “holy” + dæg “day”). The word originally referred only to special religious days. In modern use, it means any special day of rest or relaxation, as opposed to normal days away from work or school.

A holiday is a day set aside by custom or by law on which normal activities, especially business or work, are suspended or reduced. Generally holidays are intended to allow individuals to celebrate or commemorate an event or tradition of cultural or religious significance. Holidays may be designated by governments, religious institutions, or other groups or organizations. The degree to which normal activities are reduced by a holiday may depend on local laws, customs, the type of job being held or even personal choices.

The concept of holidays has most often originated in connection with religious observances. The intention of a holiday was typically to allow individuals to tend to religious duties associated with important dates on the calendar. In most modern societies, however, holidays serve as much of a recreational function as any other weekend days or activities.
It seems that in the modern usage, holidays are anything but HOLY days—rather than being days of reflection, they are days off or days of social and recreational activity, without any religious connotation whatsoever. Even day set aside as “Patriotic holidays” like Fourth of July are nothing but social. I mean, who sits around the BBQ reflecting on the Declaration of Independence?

Holidays have also become days of obligation on which we center on an activity we should actually be doing all year round. Christmas has become the feast of gift-giving. We feel at Christmas that we must get gifts for those with whom we are close. We write down our lists for who we feel compelled to give gifts to. And how many times have we found a gift for someone in October and said to ourselves “I’ll save that gift for them for Christmas.” Valentine’s Day, the marquee holiday for February, is a day we focus on expressing love for people. I remember from younger years, the pressure to have “a Valentine date”, to be assured that on this commercial day, that someone “loved you”. And then, as an expression of “love” for a date, you had to buy chocolate and flowers. And what if you didn’t have a date on Valentine’s day, you would be consigned to moping around wondering, “does anyone love me?” This holiday that ostensibly celebrates “love” actually leads to sadness for many people.

Expressions of offering gifts (Christmas) and expressing love (Valentine’s Day) should not be limited to these holidays. Nor do the gifts of Christmas or Valentine’s Day need to be material gifts. Offering gifts of support and assistance are things we should be doing for others on a daily basis. Offering expressions of love and feelings towards others should also be done on a daily basis. After all, you don’t say “I love you” only once a year to those you love—that should be something we say on a daily basis.

In the Greek language, there is a word “ημερα” which refers to a “day.” There is a second word “εορτη” which refers to a Holy Day. An “eorti” is different from an “imeras.” Because when we celebrate an “eorti” we are doing so with not only social celebration, but with spiritual reflection and inspiration. On every day of the yearly calendar, there is a commemoration of a saint, making every day a “Holy Day.” There are some Holy Days that are given greater emphasis than others, for instance the feast of the Nativity. The Feast of the Nativity does not sit on a calendar as a reminder to us to give gifts to others, but as a day to remember God’s gift to us, the gift of His Son. So Christmas is really supposed to be a gift of Thanksgiving, not merely an occasion of material gift exchanging. And our recent celebration of the Holy Day of the Theophany is the day we commemorate the manifestation of God as Trinity for the first time in the history of the world. As an aside, the only American “holiday” that seems to have spiritual connotation is New Year’s Day. No, not the drinking part, but the part where we are called upon to make New Year’s Resolutions, which are based on a careful reflection upon one’s

Look In, Lift Up, Reach Out

Several months ago, I attended the national clergy retreat of our Archdiocese in Naples. I wrote an article about thanksgiving as a result of an amazing conversation that I had with another priest at the retreat. But there was far more substance to this gathering than just that one conversation. The theme of the retreat was “Look In, Lift Up, Reach Out” and during the three days I was there, we heard from several dynamic speakers about the need to do all three. We also got into small groups for several intense (and sometimes gut-wrenching) discussions on the questions posed by the speakers, many of which appear below. As we are preparing for this year’s Lenten journey (which by God’s grace will be my TENTH in Tampa, amazing where does the time go?), and I am thinking about my own need for spiritual growth, some of the things we discussed at a retreat for priests seem very appropriate for the people of our parish. And the theme, “Look In, Lift Up, Reach Out” seems to be a way to approach the upcoming Lenten Journey. If we spend February (the Triodion) looking inwardly and doing an inventory of ourselves, then we can spend March (Lent) lifting up those things to God through the expanded Lenten worship services, the sacrament of confession, and fasting; and then we will be ready in April (Holy Week/Pascha) to reach out to one another with a renewed sense of love, forgiveness, and service.

Here are some highlights of our retreat topics, each one included a series of questions that was discussed not only by the presenter but by all of us as priests in our small groups:

Look In by Dr. Nick Yphantides

If you take a few minutes and google “Dr. Nick Yphantides”, you will read the amazing story of a Greek doctor from San Diego who lost over 200 pounds. At one point in the life of this HEALTH CARE EXPERT, he weighed nearly 500 pounds. He took a year off from his practice and began a journey to weigh less and over-all wellness. His story is inspiring, certainly not typical, but it tells the journey of a man who set a weight-loss goal (and did so very publicly) and then struggled and eventually achieved it. He spoke to us about the challenges of losing over 200 pounds and changing his life and growing closer to Christ in the process.

He made some interesting comments about the health care system which he called the “sick care system.” He said that the prevalent attitude of people towards medicine and even the prevalent attitude of health insurance companies and even some medical professionals is that doctors are a sick care janitorial service, there to clean up the messes when we get sick, rather than being proactive and promoting health care and wellness, getting into good habits so we can avoid serious sickness. He said that the church in many respects is like the health care system. People go to the church in spiritual crisis rather than to maintain overall good spiritual
health. And churches offer programs for those who are experiencing spiritual illness, rather than those desiring spiritual wellness.

There were some light-hearted moments, like the video of people “driving the dog”, showing people walking the dog on its leash while driving a car. And there was another video of people taking an escalator into the gym to work out. The point of these illustrations is that we find ways to avoid the hard work of exercise—we convince ourselves that we “walk the dog” even is the dog runs aside our car. And we say we go to the gym even if we go there just for a smoothie or never break a sweat.

Dr. Yphantides share with us some serious statistics, like the average child in America spends 8 hours a day in front of a screen—TV, video game, I-pad, computer or cell phone. And many adults are substituting food for intimacy in their marriages. He spoke about the “Smart Phone” being smarter than us and how we put more focus on our phones than on our personal health and even intellectual stimulations. And he said “you wouldn’t dump garbage on the altar table or in the church, but we all spend a great deal of time dumping garbage on ourselves by the way we eat and the way we behave. And he asked us to contemplate some serious questions:

What areas of your own personal health do you struggle with? Lack of fitness, extra weight, physical inactivity, high stress levels, smoking, dietary habits, chronic illness, excessive drinking, others

Do you think these struggles have an impact on your abilities and capacity to serve in your work and to serve your family?

Lift Up—Fr. Maximos of Simonopetra
When I was studying at the seminary, Dr. Nicholas Constanza was one of the most well-spoken people around the school. Though he didn’t teach at the Seminary—he was a professor at Harvard—he was around the school a lot, worshipping with us in the chapel and giving lectures on campus frequently. Years later, the former Dr. Constanza felt a call to the monastic life and lived for ten years in the Monastery of Simonopetra on Mount Athos, receiving the monastic tonsure and name Fr. Maximos. Fr. Maximos is still the well-spoken professor I remember. He is also a living icon, a man of humility, poised but humble, confident but not pretentious. The questions that he asked us, which I share with you below, cut to the heart of each of us as Christians and as priests. Read over this list. Starting asking yourself these questions. Carefully evaluate your answers. I know in evaluating these questions relating to my own life was very humbling:

Living in the Present
Am I truly present to myself, to God, to others? Is it hard for me to stay focused? Do I have clarity of mind and spirit? Am I easily distracted? What do I spend my time thinking about? To what kinds of places (persons, things) does my mind wander? Do I daydream, indulge in fantasies? Do I spend time mulling over the past (regret, anger) or worrying about the future (fear, anxiety, stress)?

Time
Am I aware of how I spent my time? Am I a responsible steward of my time?

What takes up my time? What controls my time (and thus my life)? What can I to do organize and use my time better?

Passions
What are my ruling passions? To what extent do I allow them to dominate my life? Are there parts of my soul, of my life, that I try to hide from God? From myself? Am I whole, or am I fragmented by conflicting thoughts and desires? Am I aware of an confront the darkness of my soul? Am I committed to a spiritual path? Am I committed to a life of Christian struggle? Do I obey and follow the basic practices of the Christian life (i.e. fasting)?

Prayer and God’s Grace
Am I a person of prayer? Outside of liturgical services I attend, do I pray? Do I pray with my spouse, with my children? What is the state and quality of my prayer life, of my inner relationship to God? Do my everyday actions show that I am a person who trusts in God? Do I live like someone who truly believes he is in need of God’s grace? Do I experience God’s grace in my life in a way that is meaningful and transformative? Do I long for God?

Strength
From where do I draw my strength? Am I trying to live form and on my own resources? Do I live and experience life from my head or my heart? Is my heart open to God and others, or is it narrow and closed? Is there room in my heart for others? Is there room only for those who love me (or from whom I can profit in some way, or who make me feel good) or for those who belittle and mistreat me and cause me pain?

Reach Out by Fr. Jerry Hall
Fr. Jerry Hall, a long-time priest of the Archdiocese who serves in the Midwest, taught us about the need to reach out to one another for help. In the context of his presentation, he was talking about priests reaching out to other priests, but by extension, people should reach out to one another, and most certainly people should reach out to their priest. Fr. Jerry spoke of how many of us carry our burdens in silence, and that isolation makes our burdens worse because in trying to figure things out on our own, this is where self-destructive behaviors occur, like self-medication in alcohol, drugs, etc. In our quest for happiness, often undertaken alone, we find ourselves robbed of energy because bearing a burden robs us of energy. In reaching out to another human being, in taking some accountability with another human, this is what helps us to heal. Fr. Jerry also posed a series of questions to us, which I print below:

What are some of the barriers you have to sharing a burden with a trusted friend? How do you envision yourself talking to a friend about a burden? When did I share and have a positive outcome and when did I share and have a negative outcome and how have these experiences shaped my willingness to reach out to others now? How willing am I to hear my brother’s burden? How has being open with others about your personal struggles helped you be a more effective pastor to others? Can you recall a circumstance when you took a risk to minister to someone who was hurting and experienced a positive outcome? How did you reach
out?
How comfortable are you receiving the support of others in your personal challenges?
What advice would you give to someone about the best way to reach out to you?
In the optimum conditions with a most trusted friend, what one personal burden would you share?

Now if you think the questions posed in this article are heavy, you and I would be in agreement. We examined these questions and discussed many of them in open forum. And the answers were hard to give, and hard to hear. I’m not suggesting anything of that sort here. But as we approach the HOLY DAYS of Great Lent and Pascha, in order to have a meaningful journey, we have to challenge ourselves, and a great challenge is an honest and introspective look at these questions as they relate to our own lives.

The Triodion, which will dominate February on our church calendar, is that time to look inward at our successes and our failures and evaluate where we are on our individual spiritual journeys. Lent, which will dominate March on our church calendar, is the time to lift up our needs, to recommit to prayer, to have the sacrament of confession, to dedicate more time toward healing the things that weigh down our spirits. And Holy Week and Pascha, which will dominate our church calendar in April, are the times to not only look inwardly and to lift up our needs in prayer and worship. This will be a time to reach out in genuine concern to our neighbor, to share our own struggles and hopefully find help, and to allow our neighbor to do the same.

Look in, Lift Up and Reach Out was not just the theme of a successful and memorable clergy retreat. This can be the motto of a successful church community as well. If we are continually in the habit of practicing these three things—looking in, lifting up and reaching out, we are going to have a successful community. Because the successful community is not the one that has the impressive building, or even the many programs that fill up the calendar. The successful community is the one that “bears one another burdens and so fulfills the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2) Of course we cannot bear one another’s burdens if we don’t have a handle on our own burdens and if we don’t allow others to help us carry ours.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 11:28-30 “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” The church is supposed to be like the spiritual hospital that is supposed to help us heal from our disappointments and help us carry our burdens. We are all part of the church. If you are looking in and carrying heavy burdens, come to the church and allow us (me as the priest, as well as the faithful members of the church), to help you carry them. If you are looking in and finding the burdens are light, come and help carry the burdens of others.

Going back to where I began, the purpose of the Orthodox Church is not just to march us from one holiday to the next, as we see in the mall. The goal of the church is to walk with us, where we are, as we are, each and every day. The liturgical calendar is dotted not with holidays, but with HOLY DAYS, that help us sharpen our focus in our own journey to HOLINESS. The feast of feasts is Pascha, which will fall on April 20 of this year. The church calls us each year to 10 weeks of spiritual growth, which begins for us this year on February 9 (the beginning of the Triodion), so that once we reach Pascha, we have a game plan in place for the next 40 weeks. And every year the cycle repeats itself, because every year should be a time of spiritual evaluation and reflection, spiritual growth and spiritual outreach. So, allow February to be a month where you look in, so that March can be a time that you lift up, and April can be the time that we reach out, and the stage will be set for the rest of the year for not just maintenance of spiritual things but for growth of them as well. And not only should we grow individually, but we should seek the goal to grow collectively, as a church community, brothers and sisters in Christ, helping one another carry our burdens, fulfilling the law of Christ, and helping one other attain eternal life.

With love in the Lord,
+Fr. Stavros
One day I was scrolling through my Facebook feed on my iPhone, picking through the same things I have read over and over, also rapidly waiting for any new posts, when I saw an article titled, “Why I’m Getting A Divorce in 2014,” by Jarrid Wilson. (Original link: http://jarridwilson.com/why-im-getting-a-divorce-in-2014/) I saw that a couple of my seminarian friends had liked the post and some priests had even shared it. So, I asked myself, what could this article be all about? In the meantime, I was probably (more like definitely) surrounded by family and friends who I should have been talking to face-to-face. Instead, I had my head buried in my phone looking at Facebook. I’ve even caught myself scrolling through Facebook as the first thing I do when I open my eyes in the morning. “What about praying? What about thanking God that the sun is out? Nope, that’s too hard, plus when I try to pray it seems like the static on the CRT TVs. Oh well, I’ll try again tomorrow, God please forgive me. One day at a time, Charlie.”

Anyway, back to the article, “Why I’m Getting A Divorce in 2014.” Intrigued by the title, I clicked on it (more like tapped with my finger tip) and this is what I read: “Before you start assuming I will be leaving my wife, let me just tell you that’s just simply not the case. I’m looking to leave someone else. Someone you may not know about. Someone who takes up most of my time, distracts me from spending time with my wife, and even spends time with me during the late hours of the night. Her name is iPhone 5. She’s extremely smart, funny, reliable, and keeps me up to date with all the latest trends. And although she’s always by my side, I can’t help but notice that she is keeping me from spending time with the people who matter most in my life: God, my wife, my family, and my dreams.” At that moment, I clicked the phone off and slid it away from me on the carpeted floor I was sitting on and just felt completely disgusted.

We all know that it happens to us. I know Facebook is my application drug of choice. Is that really why we spend $30 a month for a Data Plan, so I can scroll through Facebook? I’ve considered loosing the data plan but like any good addict, I make excuses like, well I need my email, I use the maps for directions and other such excuses.

I also must admit that I’m not one to post things on Facebook, I like to indulge in what other people are doing and then make myself feel like less of a person because I am not doing what other people are doing. Occasionally, I’ll post something and feel excited by comments and likes. Now, If I see something that happens to make me jealous I usually let it bother me for a second or too and then move on. I really try to keep my News Feed free of things that will make me feel bad. I enjoy the Orthodox related posts and healthy posts by friends and family.

It is usually pretty rare that I leave a session of Facebook scrolling feeling refreshed and positive. Not only that, how I feel will affect those around me. Scrolling through Facebook when surrounded by friends and family is definitely not living in the moment. Facebook is not all bad, we know when we have been looking too much. Try to minimize the things that we read that make us feel bad. Like things that you are interested in. Overall cut down on the time looking at our phones and more time with the people around us.

Jarrid Wilson calls it the “Divorce your phone movement.” This is his 2014 challenge: “Divorce your phone, your apps, your social-feeds, and engage in relationships with people that actually matter. Vow to spend a significant amount of time off your mobile-devices, unplugged, and instead get back to making personal relationships that will stand the test of time.”

If you would like to contact me, please e-mail me at Charlie.hambos@gmail.com or my address is 50 Goddard Avenue, Box 016, Brookline, MA 02445.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Altar Boys Captain(s)</th>
<th>Ushers</th>
<th>Coffee Hour</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, February 2</td>
<td>Presentation of Christ in the Temple</td>
<td>Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Captains and St. Luke (Christos Nenos, Dean Mitseas, Nicholas Katzaras, James Katzaras, Nicholas Yotis)</td>
<td>Nick Kavouklis, Perry Katsamakis, Peter Theophanous</td>
<td>Philoptochos Missions</td>
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<td>Sunday, February 9</td>
<td>Beginning of the Triodion—Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee</td>
<td>Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Captains and St. John (Alexios Diniaco, Nicholas Alsina, Thomas Shearer, Antonio Bavaro, William Sotiropoulos)</td>
<td>Gregory Tisdale, Demetrios Halkias, George Trimikliniotis</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
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<td>Monday, February 10</td>
<td>Feast of St. Haralambos</td>
<td>Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Sunday, February 16</td>
<td>Second Sunday of the Triodion—The Prodigal Son</td>
<td>Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Captains and St. Matthew (Karter Lenardos, Gregory Koutroumanis, Harry Koutroumanis, Brigham Sibley, Benny Hidermichel, James Kavouklis)</td>
<td>Brett Mourer, Christopher Kavouklis, Amin Hanhan</td>
<td>Sunday School</td>
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<td>Saturday, February 22</td>
<td>First Saturday of the Souls</td>
<td>Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Sunday, February 23</td>
<td>Third Sunday of the Triodion—The Last Judgment—Meatfare Sunday</td>
<td>Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Captains and St. Mark (John Karamitsanis, Lukas Karamitsanis, Andrew Mellon-Lynn, Dominic Garcia, Demetri Karounos, Grayson Borgeas)</td>
<td>David Voykin, Ed Gerecke, Pete Trakas</td>
<td>Choir Brunch</td>
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<td>Saturday, March 1</td>
<td>Second Saturday of the Souls</td>
<td>Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Sunday, March 2</td>
<td>Fourth Sunday of the Triodion—Forgiveness Sunday—Cheesefare Sunday</td>
<td>Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Captains and St. Luke (Christos Nenos, Dean Mitseas, Nicholas Katzaras, James Katzaras, Nicholas Yotis)</td>
<td>Mike Trimis, George Mitseas, Chris Kavouklis</td>
<td>Glendi Dancers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, March 3</td>
<td>Clean Monday-Kathara Deftera-Beginning of Great Lent</td>
<td>Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
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Forgiveness Vespers 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday, March 5
9th Hour 5:30 p.m.
Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00 p.m.

Friday, March 7
Salutations to the Virgin Mary—1st Stanza 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 8
Third Saturday of the Souls
Orthros 9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Memorial Service at the Conclusion of the Liturgy

Sunday, March 9
First Sunday of Lent—Sunday of Orthodoxy
Orthros 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. John (Alexios Diniaco, Nicholas Alsina, Thomas Shearer, Antonio Bavaro, William Sotiropoulos)
Ushers: Florin Patrasciou, Kevin Fentress, John Alexander
Coffee Hour: AHEPA/ Daughter’s of Penelope

Monday, March 10
Great Compline 5:30 p.m.

Services in February

Presentation of Christ—February 2—(we will celebrate Liturgy on Friday evening, February 1, at 6:00 p.m. for this feastday)—The Presentation of Christ is a major feastday of the church and commemorates the day, 40 days after the Nativity, when Christ was brought to the temple when He was 40 days old. According to the Law of Moses, every male child was brought to the temple on its 40th day, together with a sacrifice of pigeons or turtle doves by the parents, and the child was “consecrated Holy to the Lord.” Mary and Joseph brought the infant Jesus to the temple on His 40th day, because it was the law to do so. In the temple was a priest named Simeon, who was an older man, who had been promised by God that he would not die until he saw the Christ. When Simeon saw the baby Jesus, he knew in his heart that this was the Lord’s Messiah. He took the child in his arms and prayed “Lord, now let your servant depart in peace according to Your word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light to enlighten the Gentiles and for glory to Your people Israel.” This prayer is recited over every child in the Orthodox Church when they are brought to church for the first time when they are 40 days old. That’s where this beautiful tradition comes from. February 2 is indeed a special day for all parents and all young children.

St. Haralambos—February 10—St. Haralambos was a Saint of the first century and lived in Greece. He was a priest who was martyred. Our parish has a special connection to St. Haralambos since his relics were interred in our altar table when the church was consecrated in 1986.

Saturday of the Souls—It is a Tradition in the Orthodox Church to offer prayers for the souls of all of our loved ones who have departed this life, in the hope of the Resurrection to Eternal Life. There are four Saturdays of the year that are dedicated specifically to this purpose. They are three Saturdays before and at the beginning of Lent and the Saturday before Pentecost. Everyone is encouraged to submit the names of their loves ones to be commemorated at the services. And you are all encouraged to attend one of these services (and bring Kolyva—boiled wheat) if you are able, as a way of honoring the people in your family who have passed away in church once a year. This year, the Saturdays of the Souls fall on February 22, March 1 and March 8

Special Liturgy to be held at Garden of Memories Mausoleum for the 2nd Saturday of the Souls—March 1—On Saturday, March 1, we will hold the Divine Liturgy at the Garden of Memories Cemetery at 4207 E. Lake Avenue in East Tampa. We will have Orthros at 9:00 a.m., Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m., and a memorial service at the end of the Liturgy. After Liturgy is concluded, Father Stavros will visit the graves of the relatives of all attendees of the Liturgy.

Forgiveness Vespers—The Period of Great and Holy Lent begins on Monday, March 3, a day called Clean Monday, or “Kathara Deftera” in Greek. Vespers is the service that ends one day and begins another, so Lent actually begins with a Vespers service on Sunday evening, March 2. We will
celebrate the Vespers of Forgiveness and beginning of the Great Lent on Sunday evening, March 2, at 6:00 p.m. This service lasts about an hour and marks the beginning of Great Lent, which is announced during one of the hymns mid-way through the service. During this hymn, the priest changes vestments from white to purple, the lights in the church are dimmed and the mood of the service becomes somber. In fact, it is the opposite of the Resurrection Service on Easter, where everything begins dark and goes to light. The service concludes with a prayer of forgiveness being read over the congregation and the exchange of mutual forgiveness among the members of the congregation. This service is an especially appropriate way to begin the Lenten season, and for those who attended last season, is one of the most moving services of the church year.

Canon of St. Andrew—The Penitential Canon of St. Andrew will be read from 10:00-11:00 a.m. on Monday, March 3 as we begin Great Lent. The Canon, in its entirety, takes hours to read. We will read and chant an abridged version of this Canon on Clean Monday. Service books for this service will be available in the narthex.

Sunday of Orthodoxy Icon Procession—If anyone has new icons that have not been blessed, please bring them to church on Sunday, March 9, the Sunday of Orthodoxy, and place them in the windows of the church. They will be blessed with Holy Water during the service.

SUNDAE OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE—February 9—The focus this Sunday is on the Gospel of Luke 18:10-14, in which two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, an externally decent and righteous man of religion, and the other was a publican, a sinful tax-collector who was cheating the people. Though the Pharisee was genuinely righteous under the Law, he boasted before God and was condemned. The publican, although he was truly sinful, begged for mercy, received it, and was justified by God. . There is NO fasting this week, in preparation for our great journey.)

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON—February 16—On this Sunday in the preparation for Great Lent, Orthodox Christians are read Christ’s parable about God’s loving forgiveness (Luke 15:11-24). They are to see themselves as being in a foreign country far from the Father’s house and to make the movement of return to God, where we truly belong. The parable gives assurance that the Father will receive them with joy and gladness in their journey through Great Lent, their journey home.

JUDGMENT SUNDAY/MEATFARE SUNDAY—February 23— Judgment Sunday is also called Meatfare Sunday because it is the last Sunday, according to the fasting canons, that the faithful eat meat before Easter. During the following week, we do not fast on Wednesday and Friday (except for meat, of course). On this Sunday, we call to mind something that has not even happened yet: the Second Coming of Christ. Our Lord has promised us that He will come again, “to judge the living and the dead, and His Kingdom will have no end” (from the Nicene Creed). We call to mind the “criteria” of our entrance into Paradise, as our Lord said in today’s Gospel: “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.”

CHEESEFARE SUNDAY—FORGIVENESS SUNDAY—March 1—Cheese-Fare Sunday is the last day in which dairy products are allowed. The Monday after Cheese-Fare Sunday is the official beginning of the Great Lent; this Monday is also called Clean Monday (Kathara Defera). On Cheese-Fare Sunday the Church commemorates the sending away of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Paradise. Adam and Eve were in complete harmony with God, nature and themselves. They were tempted by the devil and they agreed to eat from the tree of knowledge, in order that they themselves might become gods. The result was fatal; they were cast out of Paradise and sin came into the world. The Holy Fathers selected this event to remind us of our obligations to God and about the laws of fasting and Christian behavior (Matthew 6:14-21).
Parish Registry

**Chrismation**—Lindsey (Elia) Giancola was received into the Orthodox Church through the sacrament of Chrismation on Sunday, December 15. Popi Haralambis was her sponsor. Congratulations!

**Chrismation**—Jessie John Lubberts was received into the Orthodox Church through the sacrament of Chrismation on Sunday, December 22. Helen and Rob Brinkman were the sponsors. Congratulations!

**Baptism**—John Kladis, son of Theodore and Amy Kladis, was baptized on Sunday, December 15. Mike and Maria Xenick were the Godparents. Na Sas Zisi!

**Baptism**—Carlie (Anastazia) Calamunci, daughter of Christopher and Crystal Calamunci, was baptized on Sunday, December 22. Maria Diveris was the Godmother. Na Sas Zisi!

**Wedding**—John Cory Scott and Jennifer Klimis were married on Saturday, January 4, 2014. Christina Klimis was the Koumbara. Congratulations!

Introducing the 2014 Parish Council

The 2014 Parish Council Members are as follows: Alkis Crassas, President; Carole Fotopoulos, Vice-President; Diane Trimis, Secretary; Dante Skourellos, Treasurer; Members—Nicholas Antonakakis, Skip Higdon, David Voykin and Mike Xenick. The Parish Council will be reviewing our various committees and asking for help from members (those who have indicated an interest on their stewardship forms) to staff these committees to do the work of our parish. Congratulations for our new officers and a big thank you in advance for the important work that the entire board will be undertaking this coming year.

THANK YOU

Stewardship is something we speak of a lot in our church. We talk about the need for people to step forward to give—time, talent, treasure. We talk about the need for us to learn what it means to truly serve God and God's church. Most churches pay a priest and many pay for some support staff—office help, custodial help, perhaps a pastoral assistant. But much of the work that happens in parishes is done by volunteers—teaching Sunday school, singing in the choir, serving in the altar, putting on the festival, being an usher, chaperoning the GOYA, and many, many other things that allow the ministries of our church to flourish, the Gospel to be preached and the number of Christians to increase.

I want to recognize and thank FIVE people who for six-plus years have offered their stewardship of time and talent to the Parish Council—Katherine Sakkis, Bill Manikas, Alexandra DeMaio, Despina Sibley and Byron Nenos. During the past six years, among other things, they facilitated the transition between St. John Day School and Smart Starts, relieving the church from an untenable financial burden. They instituted new programs like the Parish Picnic, the Christmas and Easter receptions, and revived our Greek Independence Day program. They also fixed a lot of things involving our physical plant—New flooring and carpeting in the Church, new Air conditioning units, repair and restoration of our iconography as well as repair of our stained glass windows. They also oversaw maintenance and repair in the Kourmolis Center and major repairs to all buildings in our complex.

Most important, our church has experienced unprecedented growth over the past several years. Stewardship has increased steadily, the church is filled with people, the calendar is filled with programs, the festival blueprint was expanded and improved. The success of so many events is contingent on what happens behind the scenes before the event, the unseen hours and efforts put forth to make things come together in the fashion that they do. So I am grateful for all the behind the scenes work that allowed the final products to be things that were fun, meaningful and memorable.

The job of the priest is to administer the parish and oversee all of its programs. The job of the Parish Council is to assist the priest so that this gets done—the Parish Council makes sure that the buildings are in good order, that the finances are in good order, protects the legal and fiduciary interests of the parish and its parishioners. And I sincerely thank Katherine, Bill, Alex, Despina and Byron for a LONG and PRODUCTIVE time on the Parish Council. I thank them for giving me the tools, the back up and the support I need to do my job as the priest, for helping me to create an environment which allows this parish to be the successful and thriving Christian community that it is today.

With love and gratitude,

+Fr. Stavros
Small Group Bible Study Update

Our Small Group Bible Studies will resumed in January. If you haven’t been part of one of these groups, please come and join one. They are on different days, at different times and in different parts of town, with the hope that we can accommodate everyone who wants to participate. Days and locations and contact information is below. For questions about small groups, please contact Fr. Stavros or any of the group leaders. New members are welcome at any time. Your non-Orthodox friends and neighbors are also welcome to participate—we have several who come to small groups. If we are going to grow our church, it is going to be from outside our church. Please feel free to invite not only your fellow parishioners but your non-Orthodox neighbors and friends to join us.

Women’s Group (for adult women of any age)
Location: Meets at the home of Debbie Kavouklis, 3315 Jean Circle, Tampa, FL 33629—Debbie lives in South Tampa, a mile or so from the church.
Group Leader: Debbie Kavouklis—you can email Debbie at dkavouklis1@verizon.net, or call her at 690-0155.
Meeting time: Tuesday mornings from 10:00-11:00 a.m. (coffee and refreshments at 9:30 a.m.)
February meeting dates: February 4, 11, 18 and 25

Men’s Group (for adult men of any age)
Location: Kourmolis Center
Group Leader: Group Members rotate who leads each week. For more information, however, please email Fr. Stavros at frstav@gmail.com or contact him at 813-394-1038.
Meeting time: Wednesday mornings from 7:00-8:00 a.m.
February Meeting dates: February 5, 12, 19 and 26

South Tampa Mixed Group (for any adults)
Anyone can attend this group but obviously this will be most convenient for those who live in South Tampa
Location: Home of Helen and Ken Cauthorn, 3922 W. Palmira Avenue, Tampa, FL 33629. Helen's Number is 813-505-1059 and her email is hcauthorn@chubb.com
Group Leader: Bessie Paliós—Her email is bmp1126@yahoo.com, and her cell number is 813-523-0347. If you are going to attend this group, please RSVP to Ellen, Bessie and Fr. Stavros

Meeting time: Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m.
February meeting dates: February 4, 11, 18 and 25

North Tampa Mixed Group (for any adults)
Anyone can attend this group but obviously this will be most convenient for those who live in North Tampa, Lutz, Land O’Lakes, Wesley Chapel and Carrollwood
Location: Home of Michael and Artemis Conner. They live in Lutz near George Steinbrenner High School off of Lutz Lake Fern. Their address is 5524 Reflections Blvd, Lutz, Fl 33558. Their number is 813-920-4404 and Michael's cell is 813-784-0182. Michael's email is conner.mike.01@gmail.com, and Artemis' email is artemisia004@yahoo.com. Please contact them before you attend the first meeting to get the gate code to their community.
Group Leader: Michael Conner
Meeting time: Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m.
February meeting dates: February 4, 11, 18 and 25

East Tampa Mixed Group (for any adults)
Anyone can attend this group but obviously this will be most convenient for those who live on the East side of town—Riverview, Brandon, Valrico, Seffner, Lakeland
Location: Home of George and Donna Hambos—They live in Valrico at 2604 Herndon Street, Valrico, FL 33596. Their home number is 813-651-9226 and Donna's cell number is 813-843-8412, and Donna's email is dhambos@msn.com
Group Leader: Donna Hambos
Meeting Time: Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m.
February meeting dates: February 4, 11, 18 and 25

Young Adult Group (for adults ages 18–40)
Location: Homes of group members, this one rotates, contact group leader for location each week
Group Leader: Mary Ann Konstas, who can be reached at 813-215-9862 or at mapkonstas@gmail.com. Please contact Mary Ann if you are interested in joining this group so she can tell you where the next meeting will take place.
Meeting time: Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m.
February meeting dates: February 5, 12, 19 and 26
COMMUNITY NEWS

Epiphany in Tarpon Springs - On Monday, January 6, two young men from our parish dove for the cross in Tarpon Springs at the annual Epiphany celebration. We are so proud of Thanasi Halkias and Nicholas Kavouklis, for representing our parish!

Visits of Archbishop Demetrios- His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America made a visit to our parish on Sunday, January 5. He celebrated the Divine Liturgy and the blessing of the waters on the eve of Epiphany, assisted by Fr. Stavros, Archdeacon Panteleimon Papadopoulos and Deacon Eleftherios Constantine. A delicious lunch was enjoyed by all after the service. Special thanks to the Parish Council for hosting the luncheon and to the Hambos family for their excellent cooking.

St. John Feastday-On January 6-7, we celebrated our annual Feastday of St. John the Baptist, the Patron Saint of our Parish. On January 6, His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios presided over the Vespers, assisted by Fr. Stavros, Fr. James Paris (Clearwater), Fr. Soteri Rousakis (St. Petersburg), Fr. Vasilios Tsourlis (New Port Richey), Fr. Michael Marcantoni (Clearwater) and Deacon John Pantelis (St. Petersburg). Mary Nenos offered an Artoklasia, and also decorated our icons of St. John. The Philoptochos sponsored a reception following Vespers. On January 7, His Eminence officiated at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, assisted by Fr. Stavros, Fr. Emmanuel Hatzidakis (Retired), Fr. James Paris, Fr. Soteri, Fr. John Bociu (Sarasota), Fr. Gregory Trakas (Palm Harbor), Fr. Michael Marcantoni, and Deacon John. The Parish Council sponsored a luncheon following the Liturgy. Special thanks to the Hambos family for cooking an excellent lunch! Thank you to all those who helped make our Feastday a success!

Successful College Retreat- On Monday, December 16, 18 college students from the Tampa Bay area gathered for a retreat led by Fr. Stavros. The subjects discussed included challenges college students face, how to maintain your Orthodox faith while in college and how to discuss Orthodoxy with those who are not Orthodox. We will definitely be having other events for college students in the near future.

Father Stavros will be out of town February 4-6 to attend the clergy Syndesmos at the Diakonia Center in South Carolina. His Eminence asks that the priests of this Metropolis come together for a few days each spring and again each fall, to spend time together in prayer, fellowship and learning, as well as to be able to work in our small committees and to work with His Eminence. Father Stavros will be doing preparation work on summer camp during this time period, as well as attending the other events and presentations.

Special Message from George and Cindy Xenick- We send our many thanks to our family and friends who sent us cards with their Best Wishes and Love for our 50th Anniversary, which we celebrated on Sunday, December 29th. Father Stavros read a “special” Anniversary Prayer with us and our family on the same spot we stood on the Solea on our Wedding Day. It was a wonderful day spent with our children and grand children. God has truly Blessed us!

Get Acquainted Sunday, February 2- In an effort to get to know one another better, we are going to continue our “get acquainted Sundays” one Sunday of each month. We will have nametags and markers in the entry way of the Kourmolis Center and will ask that each person put one on during coffee hour and introduce yourself to at least one person that you do not know. This will serve to help us increase our fellowship and sense of community. Our “Get Acquainted Sunday” for February will be Sunday, February 2.

Get Daily Bible Readings Sent to your Email or Phone - One of the best ways to start each day is by reading from the Bible. There are prescribed readings for every day of the year in the Orthodox Church. You can go on the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America website at www.goarch.org, go into the search box and type in “Receive Daily Readings,” follow the prompts and have this valuable resource sent right to your phone or email. Reading the Bible is so important and for those of us who don’t make the time or are lazy to reach for the Bible, have the readings sent in a way that is easy to remember. Spend some time this new ecclesiastical year in God’s Word, the sacred Scriptures!

Constant Contact Emails- Our parish utilizes Constant Contact as a way of staying in touch with parishioners, particularly on subjects that are time sensitive, i.e. funerals, special events, and last minute announcements. To keep you apprised of news in our parish, we will probably be sending out 1 (and no more than 2) message per week. This is an effort not to clog your inbox but to keep you informed of the goings on in our parish.

Scan to like St. John on Facebook facebook.com/StJohnGOCtampa

St. John has a Facebook page. Please “like” our page and suggest it to your friends. Announcements are put on their frequently and we will also be posting photos in the near future.
Orthodoxy 101

Orthodoxy 101 Class to begin in February-Fr. Stavros offers this class a few times per year, in spring and in fall. This will be the SAME CLASS so no need to take it again if you already have. This will be a three-week course of study on Monday nights to make people aware of the basics of being an Orthodox Christian. Who should attend the Orthodoxy 101 class?
~ Interfaith couples—this will help the non-Orthodox person understand more what is going on in our church when they attend.
~ Anyone who is considering joining our church. Going forward, this class will be a requirement for those who wish to join our Orthodox faith.
~ New converts to Orthodoxy—For those who recently joined our church and who want to know a little bit more about it.
~ Anyone who wants to know more about the basics of our faith, or who wants a refresher course in the basics of Orthodoxy is encouraged to attend.

The classes will be part lecture, part discussion, with lots of time for questions and answers. The three sessions will be done as follows:

Monday, February 10  A Tour of the Orthodox Church: What we see in the Church and what it means
Monday, February 17  Orthodox Spirituality—The Seven Sacraments and the Divine Liturgy
Monday, February 24  Orthodox Traditions—fasting, icons, prayer and separating Theology from "yiayialogy" (what our grandparents taught Us wasn’t always right)

Classes will be held on these three Mondays from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and will be held in the CHURCH Sanctuary.

Leave the Church in Your Will

Part of our life’s legacy is the inheritance we leave our children. By leaving an inheritance, a part of us lives on through them. When preparing your will, you should consider leaving money to our church—this is the church of your children and part of their future can be positively impacted by leaving some of your inheritance to the church. The ability of the church to spread the Word of God is facilitated by everyone’s stewardship. By leaving a portion of your inheritance to the church in your will, you remain a steward in perpetuity, but more importantly, you help cement a solid financial future for the church for your children and your grandchildren. If you are interested in leaving the church in your will, please contact Russell Sibley (church member) at rsibleylaw@gmail.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Mortgage rates are at record lows.
Please call me and mention this ad, 10% of the commission will be given to the church.
Philoptochos News

Happy New Year! PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS! The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society was founded in 1931, by His All Holiness the late Patriarch Athenagoras I, and is one of the largest women's philanthropic and religious organizations in America! We invite all the women in our Parish, ages 18 to ?? to join us as we continue to minister to the Orthodox faithful who may be in need of our services.

Here are the many commitments and obligations our Annunciation Chapter helps throughout our Metropolis of Atlanta: Clergy Education, Disaster Relief, Orthodox Christian Fellowship, OCMC/ Missions, Youth Camps and Retreats, St. Basil's Academy, HC/HC, Scholarships for Seminarians, and discretionary funds for the poor and those who are in desperate need of our assistance.

Our 2014 Membership Drive has begun and will continue until April 30, 2014! PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR MEMBERSHIP TEA AT THE HOME OF ANA AND BRETT MOUER ON, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2014 immediately after Divine Liturgy.

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**Philoptochos Missions Sunday—February 2**

As they do every year, Philoptochos is going to sponsor its 3rd Annual Missions Sunday to support overseas Orthodox missions. Kenny Kidd from the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) in St. Augustine will be with us on Sunday, February 2. He will offer the homily and then Philoptochos will sponsor a luncheon to benefit Missions work, with all proceeds going toward the Mission Center.

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**PHILOPTOCHOS MEMBERSHIP FORM 2014**

The Annunciation Chapter #501 of Philoptochos, St John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, would like to invite you to join us in our mission of outreach for the 2014 Membership year (January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014).

| Name __________________________________________ |
| Street Address __________________________________________________________ |
| City __________________________ State_______ Zip________________________ |
| Home Phone ______________Cell ______________Work__________________ |
| E-mail address ________________________________________________________ |

Please return form and $30 check payable to Philoptochos to: Melissa Krinos, 8728 Hickorywood Lane, Tampa FL 33615 or to the Philoptochos mailbox in the church office.

...for I was hungry and you gave Me food; for I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. ...in as much as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”

Matthew 25: 35-36, 40
JOY PRE-TEEN RETREAT
FEBRUARY 9

On Sunday February 9 from 12:30 -3:00, St. John Greek Orthodox JOY invites all pre-teens and their parents to join us for a follow up workshop: Choices: How to make Godly decisions. We will spend an afternoon in discussion, activities, and prayer. Our first session was held in September and the response was so great, we added a second workshop. Please join us, even if you were unable to attend the first one! Lunch will be provided. Please email Maria Xenick at mpxenick@gmail.com to register.

BIBLE STUDY
WITH DR. BILL MANIKAS

Bible Study is held each Monday evening from 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the administration building. Newcomers are welcome to join us. Dr. Bill Manikas leads the Bible study, which meets every Monday night.

JOY/ HOPE

Sunday, February 3—SOUPER Bowl of Caring! Join us in support of this nationwide youth initiative to stop hunger in this country. We encourage the entire community to please bring a non-perishable food item or monetary donation to church on Super Bowl Sunday, February 3.

YOUNG AT HEART

Young At Heart Meeting-The Young At Heart meeting for January will be Tuesday, January 14 at 11:00 a.m. More details to follow. For more information on our group, contact Nick Antonakakis (813-477-6639) or Mary Nenos (813-935-2096).

Apokreatiko Glendi—Mark Your Calendars for Saturday, February 22, 2014—The Young at Heart will have their Annual Apokreatiko Glendi! We look forward to a wonderful time, great food, live band and prizes awarded for the best costumes!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Thank you to everyone who continues to support our Community Outreach ministry to serve the homeless and those in need. For those who don’t know, we serve breakfast at First Presbyterian Church on the third Saturday of each month from 8:00-10:30 a.m. Upcoming dates are Saturday, February 15 and Saturday, March 15. For more information or to sign up to serve one Saturday, please contact, please contact Betty Katherine Palios at bettypalios@gmail.com or 813-468-1596.

GOYA

GOYA Meeting-The GOYA Meeting for January will be Sunday, February 9, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. Dinner, as always, will be served. 29 GOYAns came to our January meeting. New members are welcome!

GOYA Lock-in February 15 at 6:00 p.m.—our GOYA will be hosting a lock-in on Saturday, February 15, beginning at 6:00 p.m. We are inviting GOYAns from area parishes to come together for an evening of fun, fellowship, worship and discussion. If you are interested in attending, please let Elaine Halkias know by February 10. You can reach her at 813-629-1843 or nybagel2@msn.com
**YOUNG AT HEART NEWS**

As we end 2013 and begin a New Year, St John's Young At Heart reflects back on our many accomplishments that were made possible by the support of so many parish members. We shared many times of fun & fellowship and accomplished blessed goals.

Entering 2013 with less than a month to put together the Apokriatiko Glendi Dance, a “handful” of Y.A.H women worked tirelessly, enlisted the help of Y.A.H friends, and pulled off this amazing feat. With the support of the community, it was a great success and this really encouraged us to enthusiastically continue with the ministry. As the year progressed we enjoyed hosting “Coffee Hour” many times and with these combined efforts we were able to donate to the restoration of the stained glass window for Agia Paraskevi - “Paid In Full”. In addition we hosted one of the Lenten evening suppers, made a donation to the Festival’s “Food Fund”, and donated gift cards for the Thanksgiving baskets. We were able to purchase new flatware for 144 settings, 16 new round tablecloths, and 8 rectangular ones to be used in future church functions. Our current project is focused on providing funds for the upgrading of the new security system in the Kourmolis Hall.

We are very busy now preparing for the 2014 Apokriatiko Glendi Dance! It will be held on Saturday evening February 22, 2014 in the church hall. There will be dinner, dancing, live music, a gift basket raffle, and prizes for the best costumes. So come one, come all to share in a happy, fun event before the start of Lent! We thank you from the bottom of our hearts and pray for God’s love and blessings on each one of you.

Nick Antonakakis, Chairman of Young at Heart

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**SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS:**

January was another busy month for our Sunday School. It began with the honor of having Archbishop Dimitrios of the Americas participate in our Divine Liturgy. What a wonderful opportunity for our children to see the leader of all the Greek Orthodox Churches in the United States in our Tampa parish.

The following Sunday all of our Sunday School students received a piece of Vasilopita along with their lesson about St. Basil. We would like to thank Melissa Krinos for baking this special bread for us.

We would also like to thank Father Stavros for providing the teachers with an informational outline to support our weekly topics. Our topics for January were:


We also had our YOUTH SUNDAY on Jan. 26th. The children sang beautifully, our Epistle Reader did a fine job and the Proskophora was delicious as usual. Our children are truly great stewards.

We would like to thank all of our Church families for supporting our CEREAL DRIVE which took place during the month of January. We can always count on our generous families to support the less fortunate.

The next few month will be busy as usual for the Sunday School. Our older students are preparing for the Oratorical Festival and everyone is getting ready for Pascha. Each Sunday School class will have the opportunity to participate in the important Sacrament of Confession. And we will also have a Pre-Lenten Retreat and a Retreat on Good Friday.
### Stewardship Update

**January 15, 2014**

**Stewardship Goal**  
$400,000

**Amount Pledged**  
$284,782

**Number of Pledged Families**  
169

**Average Pledge**  
$1,685

Thank you to all those who pledged in 2014!

If you have not made a pledge for 2014, please do so today! As you can see, we are well ahead of last year’s pace but we are still very short of our goal, so please help put us over the top today but making your 2014 pledge for St. John! If you need a pledge form, please contact the church office and we’ll be happy to send one.

### A Reflection on Stewardship

*by Fr. Michael Diavatis*

Stewardship is not merely a “money thing”. Proper understanding of “Stewardship” is based upon a proper understanding of who God is, who we are, and the relationship we have with God, each other and creation.

The word for “Steward” in Greek is “Oikonomos.” The roots of this Greek word are “Oikos” (house) and “nomos” (law). Essentially it means how the “house is governed.” As proper Christian understanding sets forth (and even common sense mandates), we will not take anything with us when we die, so in essence, we do not truly own anything material. If we are not the true owners, who is? Certainly It is the Triune God, who created all things visible and invisible, Who not only sustains all creation, but indeed all things belong to God. So who are we? We are not only His creation, but because of His great love for mankind, we are His children by grace, and since we are His children we are also His heirs.

Everything good comes from God, who is the “treasury of good thing” and “the Father of Lights” as the priest proclaims toward the end of the Divine Liturgy. It is God who bestows upon us every blessing and good thing. But why? So we can be rich towards ourselves/ Certainly not. We are the recipients and guardians of “good things” in order to take care of our own needs, to provide for others who are in need, and also to perpetuate His work in this world, which is the preaching of His Holy Gospel and salvific work of His holy Church. This is indeed our calling and responsibility, and a manifestation and indication of our love for God and of love for each other, which is the whole point of Christianity (Luke 10:27).

I know everyone values the Church to some degree. Let’s not take our Church for granted, but give of yourself to God, not only for yourself, but for those who love you. For when you come to Church you also make others happy and glad. Your mothers and your fathers, your yiayias and your papous, your family and your koumbaroi, your sons and daughters, friends and even strangers rejoice and are uplifted when the Church is full. Come to Church this Sunday, pray with us and dine with us. For as St. John Chrysostom says in his Paschal Homily, “The table is fully laden: let all enjoy it. The calf is fattened: let none go away hungry!”

I pray that our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, Who is the Treasury of good things, the Father of Lights and the Giver of all good things, will bless each and every one of us for the salvation of our souls.

Fr. Michael Diavatis is the Proistamenos of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Asheville, NC.
The Lenten Covenant

This year will be the 8th year we offer the program of the Lenten Covenant at St. John. Each year, those who participate say that they get a lot out of this program. A “covenant” is a promise. God has made covenants with us. In the Old Testament, He makes the first Covenant with Abraham, to be the God of Abraham’s descendants. The sign of this Covenant is circumcision. In the New Testament, God replaces the Old Covenant with a New Covenant, which is baptism and Holy Communion. If you are baptized and have received Holy Communion, then you have a Covenant relationship with God—you are part of the Covenant between God and His people. The Lenten Covenant is a promise between us and God—it is a promise to do certain things during Lent so that one can grow spiritually during Lent, with a promise to change one thing after Lent has ended so that spiritual growth continues during the year. The Lenten Covenant will help us in keeping the lifelong Covenant relationship we have with God by giving us a short-term covenant by which to evaluate our standing in the lifelong Covenant.

How does the Lenten Covenant Work

Below there is a form that lists a menu of plans to help in a Lenten Goal of growing closer to God this year. The menu includes fasting, prayer, worship, reading the Bible, reading a theology book, going to confession, changing one bad habit, and the one that is most important, a goal for once Pascha is over. The menu offers several levels of commitment for each area. Each area is important—it is important that you fast, pray, worship, read scriptures, go to confession, and change a bad habit if you are going to get something out of this Lent. But if you’ve never fasted before, the covenant offers different levels of difficulty. So if you’ve never fasted, perhaps you should check the easiest level. If you’ve mastered the first level, perhaps this year you challenge yourself with the second level. If you’ve never read the Bible, don’t commit to reading the whole Bible during Lent—that is a huge commitment. Commit rather to something smaller like reading a chapter a day, or perhaps reading the Gospels, something that is challenging but attainable. If you’ve never worshipped in church on a day that isn’t Sunday, don’t commit to every service during Lent, but commit to one service per week, or even commit to one of each of the Lenten services, which would be three extra services over the six weeks of Lent. Regarding confession, how many hours of your life have you spent alone with an Orthodox priest to talk about your salvation? If you are over age 20 and the answer is zero, perhaps you need to think about changing that this Lent. If you are over age 60 and the answer is zero, you’ve got even more incentive. Think about how many hours a year you spend watching television, or listening to music, going to movies, doing yardwork, gossiping on the phone—it adds up to hundreds of hours each year, thousands of hours over a lifetime. And then think about how many hours you’ve spent in your whole life talking about your salvation, about repentance, with an Orthodox priest. Sadly, for many people, the answer is zero. This could be the year you change that.

So, if you decide to do the Lenten Covenant, do the following:

1. Fill out the survey which follows.
2. Make two copies of it for each person in your household that is going to participate.
3. Put one copy in a place at home where you can see it, on the refrigerator, by your bedside, in your Bible.
4. Take the other copy of the covenant and place it in an envelope.
5. Seal the envelope and write your name and address on the envelope.
6. Bring the envelope to church on Sunday, March 2, and place it in a box that will be in front of the icon of the Virgin Mary on the solea of the church.
7. The box will be kept locked, the only person with the key will be Fr. Stavros.
8. FATHER STAVROS WILL NOT OPEN THE ENVELOPES OR READ THEIR CONTENTS—these will remain private. Father Stavros will merely jot down the names on the envelopes to pray for these people throughout Lent, to pray that they will make good on their covenants. This is my commitment to you.
9. The box will remain in the church until the Resurrection Service on Easter as a reminder to you each time you come to church that you have a covenant or promise to God.
10. After Easter, your envelope will be mailed to you in your self-addressed envelope, as proof that the envelope was never opened, and as a way for you to see how you did.

Lenten Covenant for Children (Older children should fill out the regular form)

Things I promise to do this Lent (Check all that you wish to do):

- Pray every day
- Say prayers every morning
- Say prayers every evening
- Say prayers at meals
- Come to church each Sunday
- Receive Communion each Sunday
- Go to confession during Lent
- Read a short passage from the Bible each day
- Be nicer to my parents
- Be nicer to my brother/sister
- Try harder in school
- Do my chores without being told
- Be more helpful at home
- Not say any bad words
- Share more

PRAYER: Lord help me to be successful in keeping the promises I have made. Help me to grow in my faith and love You more this Lent. Help me to be a nicer person and a better Christian. Amen.

______________________ Sign your name
The Lenten Covenant

Check as many as apply under each topic. You should (but need not) answer every topic. This is a matter of your own conscience and areas where you want to grow spiritually.

1. Concerning my prayer life, each day I will commit to:
   _____One 5-minute period of un-interrupted prayer
   _____One five minute period every morning of un-interrupted prayer
   _____One five minute period every evening of un-interrupted prayer
   _____One five minute period each morning AND evening of un-interrupted prayer
   Other: Write in here

2. Concerning Worship
   _____I’ll commit to attending Divine Liturgy each Sunday
   _____I’ll commit to attending ONE additional service each week during each week of Lent
   _____I’ll commit to attending AT LEAST 1 Compline, 1 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy and 1 Salutations Service
   _____I’ll commit to attending AT LEAST ONE Saturday of the Souls
   _____I’ll commit to attending the Forgiveness Vespers March 2
   _____I’ll commit to preparing and receiving Holy Communion at least once a week during Lent.

   Concerning Holy Week, I’ll commit to:
   _____Every Service
   _____Every Evening Service
   _____One service each Day
   _____Specifically Holy Thursday—the Passion of Christ
   _____Other (write in here)

3. Concerning Fasting, I’ll commit to:
   _____Level One Fast from meat on Wednesday and Fridays and during Holy Week
   _____Level Two Fast from meat and fish on Wednesdays and Friday and during Holy Week
   _____Level Three Fast from meat the entirety of Lent and Holy Week
   _____Level Four Fast from meat and fish the entirety of Lent and Holy Week
   _____Level Five Level Four and eliminate dairy products during Holy Week.
   _____Level Six Level Four and eliminate dairy products on Wednesdays and Fridays and during Holy Week
   _____Level Seven Level Four plus eliminate dairy products during all of Lent and Holy Week
   _____Level Eight Level Seven plus eliminate oil and wine during Holy Week
   _____Level Nine The Strict Fast-no meat, fish, dairy products, wine or oil during the entirety of Lent
   _____I can’t fast from food for health reasons. I will give up the following: (Write answer here)

   **Note-alcohol should be consumed at a very minimum during Lent, and abstained from totally if possible. Also, activities should be curtailed, socializing a little more sedate, no dancing and loud music. During Holy Week, all unnecessary activities aside from work and children should be curtailed, so that we can focus on the Holy Days of the Passion of Christ.

4. Concerning reading the Bible, I’ll commit to:
   _____Reading one chapter a day from some book
   _____Reading the four Gospels
   _____Reading the Psalms
   _____Other (Write in)

5. Concerning confession,
   _____I’ll commit to going once during this Lenten period either to Fr. Stavros or another Priest
   _____I’ve been recently to confession and don’t feel the need to go at this time.
   _____I don’t believe in going to confession
   _____I’ll get more information on this sacrament and then make a decision.

6. Concerning Holy Communion, I will try to be prepared to receive
   _____Every Sunday
   _____Every Sunday and at Wednesday Pre-Sanctified
   _____At least every other Sunday

7. Concerning bad habits, here are one or two or a few bad habits I’ll watch and change this Lent
   _____Gossip
   _____Self-aggrandizement
   _____Impatience
   _____Greed
   _____Lust
   _____Disobedience
   _____Wasting time
   _____Self-pitying
   _____Not giving good effort at work/school/marriage/children
   Others: Write in here

8. One spiritual goal I want to commit to once Pascha has passed is:

   Prayer: Lord help me to be successful in this task I am about to undertake. May it be for the growth of my soul and the improvement of my spiritual life. Help me to keep all the commitments I have made. Amen.

   ________________________________Sign your name

Make a copy for yourself, place your covenant in a sealed envelope, write your name and address on front of envelope. Bring covenant to church and place it in locked box on the solea.
Pledged Stewards for 2014
(as of January 12, 2014)

Stavros And Lisa Akrotirianakis
John And Anetta Alexander
Maria Alikakos
Angel And Lisa Alsina
Alexa Alsina
Ed Ambrozy
Nicholas And Doris Andreadakis
Nick And Judy Antonakakis
Stefanos August
Pablo And Vanessa Aviles
Christine And Scott Axelrod
Suzy And Mathew Balasis
Frank And Desa Bartos
Daniel And Anna Marie Bavaro
Rita Bedran
Denise Bedrane
Athenasia Blankenship
Constantine And Angela Bougas
Pelagia K. And Harold Bradshaw
Chrysanthi Brown
Dorothy Bush
Michael li Cantonis
John And Genie Carter
George And Kalliopi Chagaris
Ethel Althina Chakonas
Robert And Viviana Chandler
John E. Christ
Michael And Arlemis Conner
Zacker And George Copulos
Telly And Toula Courialis
Alkis And Aime Crassas
Joanne Dalaklis
Alex And Sylvia P. De Maio
Anna K. Demas
John Demas
Georgia Diamantakes
Melpo Diamantides
Maria And Evangelia Dimitri
Stan And Mary Ellen Evdemon
George Fellieras
Nicholas And Susan Fallieras
Lauren Fallieras
Kevin And Maria Fentress
Alexandra Ferarolis

Christos And Debbie Ferekides
Karina And Andlen Findlay
Dwight And Ewana Forde
Tony And Carole Fotopoulos
Chris Frazier
Stamie And Rick Garcia
Debra Z. And Robert Ritchie Gavalas
Thomas And Janet George
Ed And Term Gerecke
Jack And Harriet Gombos
Miket And Margaret Halikoutakis
Alex Halikoytakis
George And Elaine Halkias
Evangeline Halkias
George And Donna Hambros
Amin And Gloria Hanhan
Christie Hartsfield
Joann And Mark Hartung
Skip Higdon
Evelyn Hoppenstand
Scott And Rena Horack
Stephanie Hord
Mike Iraklianos
Jon Irwin
Pam Irwin
Raisa Jewtushenko
Amy And Michael Kafanttaris
Nicholas And Alicia Kalojiannis
Martha Kapetan
Jim And Paula Karagounis
Ellen Karaku
Anthony And Sophie Karas
Presbytera Daniel And Loretta Karpelania
Nick And Helen Katzaras
Stefan And Kara Katzaras
Chris And Debbie Kavouklis
Nick And Edie Kavouklis
Deno And Barbara Kazanis
Theodore And Amy Kladis
John And Cathie Koch
Athanasios And Gina Komninos
Demetrios And Mary Ann Konstas
Alexandros Korakis
Irene Kostaris
Dora Koudouna
Christina Kouimanis
Melissa And Dimitri Krinos
Nick Laliotis
Melanie And Domenic Letobarone
Mary Maas
Kathryn Maclaury
Steve And Helen Maltezos
Bill Manikas
Clara Manikis
Chris And Nicole Mantzanas
Greg And Victoria Melton
Jaime Melton
George And Catherine Mitseas
Brett And Ana Mourer
Spero Moutsatsos
Melinda And Jeffrey Mueller
Mary J. And David C. Mulligan
Ron And Magdalini Myer
Mary And Peter Nenos
Byron And Jeanie Nenos
Bill Neyland
Christos And Dee Nicolaou
Artemis Palios
Betty Katherine And Perry Palios
Julie And George Palios
Michael And Bessie Palios
Tom And Jenny Paloumpis
Theodore And Marissa Panapoulos
Euripides And Denise Panos
Lauren And Alec Papadakis
John And Irene Papadopoulos
Gus And Mazina Paras
Isidors And Jolie Passalaris
Robert T And Deb Passavanti
Florin And Marencia Patrasciou
Georgia And Payne
Brad Price And Gerri Kavouklis
Ryan And Megan Rindone
Archie And Eleftheria Roussos
John And Peggy Saavedra
Katherine And John Sakiss
Michael Scharbach
Dante And Lindsey Scourellos
Christine Scourels
Michael And Patricia Serbanos
Katina And Kenneth Shanahan
Alexander Skijus
Michael P. And Shirley A. Skourellos
Peter Skourellos
Eftihia Sorolis
Sophia And Carlos Sorolis
Paul And Terri Sotiropoulos
Bill And Jenny otiropoulos
Peter Spanos
Wayne And Pauline Spencer
Jane Stavropoulos
George And Katina Stavrou
Mario And Ouriana Stephanides
Melvin And Violet Tamashiro
Elizabeth And John Theofilos
Larry And Costantina Thomas, Md
Mary J. Tingiris
Greg Tisdale
Peter Trakas
Andrew And Adrienne Trakas
Alysa Trakas
Diane And Mike Trims
John Tsbris
David Voykin
Mary H. Voykin
Gary And Sandra Ward
Mike And Marie Xenick
Evangelia Xeroteres
Victor And Lisa Yotis
William Yotis
Peter Zeban
Maria Zebetakis
Stavros And Kathy Zoumberos
SOUPER BOWL OF CARING
Sunday, February 2

February 2nd 2014 Super Bowl Sunday of course, but it is also “Souper Bowl of Caring” Sunday as well. This is a nationwide, youth-led initiative to tackle hunger across our country. Over 3000 Churches, youth groups, and other organizations will be collecting non-perishable items and monetary donations for local food banks. Several of our Sunday School students will be near the side door to collect these donations. You may bring any nonperishable food item or a cash donation. 100% of our collections will be donated to our own St. John Food Pantry and to Feeding America Tampa Bay.

**Mission Statement:**
Using the energy of the Super Bowl to mobilize youth in a united national effort to care for people in their local communities who are hungry and those in need.

**Vision Statement:**
Transform the time around the Super Bowl into the nation’s largest celebration of giving and serving.

We believe:
The idea for Souper Bowl of Caring is a gift from God
Young people have the ability to serve and should be given opportunities to lead their communities in helping others
Every dollar collected through Souper Bowl of Caring should be donated directly to a charity selected by each participating group
People of all backgrounds and beliefs can work together
Hunger and poverty have a negative impact on individuals and the communities in which they live, yet there is joy in serving and giving to those in need
The excitement and energy surrounding the Super Bowl can be used to engage young people in service while producing lasting hope for all people.

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PLEASE COMMEMORATE THE NAMES OF MY DEPARTED FAMILY MEMBERS IN THE SATURDAY OF THE SOULS MEMORIAL SERVICES—February 22, March 1 and March 8

In Memory of

____________________  _______________________  ___________________
____________________  _______________________  ___________________
____________________  _______________________  ___________________
____________________  _______________________  ___________________
____________________  _______________________  ___________________

**You only need to write the first name of each person. Please mail to the church office by February 19.**
<table>
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| Paleo of Christ  
Orthros 8:45 a.m.  
Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  
Missions Lunch  
Parish Assembly Meeting | Dr. Bill's Bible Study  
6:30 p.m. | Fr. Stavros at Clergy Meeting  
2/4-2/6  
Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.  
Young at Heart 11:30 a.m.  
Bible Study South Tampa 6:30 p.m.  
Bible Study North Tampa 6:30 p.m.  
Bible Study East Tampa 6:30 p.m. | Men's Bible Study 7:30 a.m.  
Young Adult Bible Study 6:30 p.m.  
Fast Day | Adult Greek School  
6:00 p.m. | Fast Day | 1 |
| Orthros 8:30 a.m.  
Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  
Pre-Teen Retreat noon  
GOYA 5:00 p.m. | St. Haralambo  
Orthros 9:00 a.m.  
Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  
Orthodoxy 101 6:30 p.m.  
Dr. Bill's Bible Study 6:30 p.m. | Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.  
Parish Council 6:30 p.m.  
Bible Study South Tampa 6:30 p.m.  
Bible Study North Tampa 6:30 p.m.  
Bible Study East Tampa 6:30 p.m. | Men's Bible Study 7:30 a.m.  
Young Adult Bible Study 6:30 p.m.  
No Fasting This Week | Adult Greek School  
6:00 p.m. | No Fasting This Week | 8 |
| Orthros 8:30 a.m.  
Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  
Youth Sunday  
Special PC Election  
Philoptochos Membership Tea | Orthodoxy 101 6:30 p.m.  
Dr. Bill's Bible Study 6:30 p.m. | Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.  
Bible Study South Tampa 6:30 p.m.  
Bible Study North Tampa 6:30 p.m.  
Bible Study East Tampa 6:30 p.m. | Men's Bible Study 7:30 a.m.  
Young Adult Bible Study 6:30 p.m.  
Fast Day | Adult Greek School  
6:00 p.m. | Fast Day | 15 |
| Orthros 8:30 a.m.  
Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  
Choir Brunch | Orthodoxy 101 6:30 p.m.  
Dr. Bill's Bible Study 6:30 p.m. | Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m.  
Bible Study South Tampa 6:30 p.m.  
Bible Study North Tampa 6:30 p.m.  
Bible Study East Tampa 6:30 p.m.  
Fast Day | Men's Bible Study 7:30 a.m.  
Young Adult Bible Study 6:30 p.m.  
Fast Day | Adult Greek School  
6:00 p.m. | Fast Day | 22 |
| Saturday of Souls  
Orthros 8:45 a.m.  
Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  
Apokreatiko Dance | Fast Day | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
 Choices:  
How to make Godly decisions  
A workshop for pre-teens and their parents  
PART 2!

St. John Greek Orthodox JOY invites all pre-teens and their parents to join us for an afternoon of discussion, activities, and prayer.

Sunday, February 9, 2014  
12:30 – 3:00

For more information or to RSVP, please email or call  
Maria Xenick – mpxenick@gmail.com, (813)839-9897

Friends of St. John:  
Some of you who receive The Messenger do not live in the Tampa Bay area or are members of other Greek Orthodox parishes. We would like to ask for your support of our parish as a “Friend of St. John”. Your contribution as a “Friend” will help offset the cost of mailing The Messenger, among other things. Being a “friend” does not make one a steward of St. John or afford membership rights and responsibilities, but gives one who is a member elsewhere, an opportunity to make a gesture of financial support to our parish. If you are interested in being a “Friend of St. John”, please fill out and return the form below. Thank you for your consideration of our parish.

Friends of St. John  
Nicholas and Barbara Akrotirianakis—Whittier, CA  
James and April Dellas  
Mary Hatzikazakis—from Bristol, TN

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FRIENDS OF ST. JOHN

Name________________________________________

Address________________________________________

Phone________________________________________ Email________________________________________

I wish to be a “Friend of St. John”. I am enclosing a contribution in the amount of:

$50 $100 $200 Other

Please mail this form and check to: St. John Greek Orthodox Church 2418 Swann Avenue, Tampa, FL 33609
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**March 6**
- Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
- Say a prayer for sick children
- Collect some clothes or shoes to donate to a charity
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some coins to bring to church on Sunday
- Choose a toy you don't play with and donate it
- Mail a card to your grandparents
- Say a special prayer for your classmates
- Bring an icon from home for procession
- Mail a card to your parents to wish them a Blessed Holy Week and Kalo Pascha

**March 7**
- Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
- Say a special prayer for the sick people in your family
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some clothes or shoes to donate to a charity
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some coins to bring to church on Sunday
- Choose a toy you don't play with and donate it
- Mail a card to your grandparents
- Say a special prayer for your classmates
- Bring an icon from home for procession
- Mail a card to your parents to wish them a Blessed Holy Week and Kalo Pascha

**March 10**
- Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
- Say a special prayer for the sick people in your family
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some clothes or shoes to donate to a charity
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some coins to bring to church on Sunday
- Choose a toy you don't play with and donate it
- Mail a card to your grandparents
- Say a special prayer for your classmates
- Bring an icon from home for procession
- Mail a card to your parents to wish them a Blessed Holy Week and Kalo Pascha

**March 13**
- Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
- Say a special prayer for the sick people in your family
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some clothes or shoes to donate to a charity
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some coins to bring to church on Sunday
- Choose a toy you don't play with and donate it
- Mail a card to your grandparents
- Say a special prayer for your classmates
- Bring an icon from home for procession
- Mail a card to your parents to wish them a Blessed Holy Week and Kalo Pascha

**March 16**
- Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
- Say a special prayer for the sick people in your family
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some clothes or shoes to donate to a charity
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some coins to bring to church on Sunday
- Choose a toy you don't play with and donate it
- Mail a card to your grandparents
- Say a special prayer for your classmates
- Bring an icon from home for procession
- Mail a card to your parents to wish them a Blessed Holy Week and Kalo Pascha

**March 19**
- Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
- Say a special prayer for the sick people in your family
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some clothes or shoes to donate to a charity
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some coins to bring to church on Sunday
- Choose a toy you don't play with and donate it
- Mail a card to your grandparents
- Say a special prayer for your classmates
- Bring an icon from home for procession
- Mail a card to your parents to wish them a Blessed Holy Week and Kalo Pascha

**March 22**
- Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
- Say a special prayer for the sick people in your family
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some clothes or shoes to donate to a charity
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some coins to bring to church on Sunday
- Choose a toy you don't play with and donate it
- Mail a card to your grandparents
- Say a special prayer for your classmates
- Bring an icon from home for procession
- Mail a card to your parents to wish them a Blessed Holy Week and Kalo Pascha

**March 25**
- Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
- Say a special prayer for the sick people in your family
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some clothes or shoes to donate to a charity
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some coins to bring to church on Sunday
- Choose a toy you don't play with and donate it
- Mail a card to your grandparents
- Say a special prayer for your classmates
- Bring an icon from home for procession
- Mail a card to your parents to wish them a Blessed Holy Week and Kalo Pascha

**April 1**
- Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
- Say a special prayer for the sick people in your family
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some clothes or shoes to donate to a charity
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some coins to bring to church on Sunday
- Choose a toy you don't play with and donate it
- Mail a card to your grandparents
- Say a special prayer for your classmates
- Bring an icon from home for procession
- Mail a card to your parents to wish them a Blessed Holy Week and Kalo Pascha

**April 4**
- Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
- Say a special prayer for the sick people in your family
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some clothes or shoes to donate to a charity
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some coins to bring to church on Sunday
- Choose a toy you don't play with and donate it
- Mail a card to your grandparents
- Say a special prayer for your classmates
- Bring an icon from home for procession
- Mail a card to your parents to wish them a Blessed Holy Week and Kalo Pascha

**April 7**
- Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
- Say a special prayer for the sick people in your family
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some clothes or shoes to donate to a charity
- Pray the Lenten prayer
- Collect some coins to bring to church on Sunday
- Choose a toy you don't play with and donate it
- Mail a card to your grandparents
- Say a special prayer for your classmates
- Bring an icon from home for procession
- Mail a card to your parents to wish them a Blessed Holy Week and Kalo Pascha
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

2418 W. Swann Avenue
Tampa, FL 33609-4712

Office Phone: (813)876-8830
Fax (813) 443-4899
stjohngoctampa@gmail.com
www.greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

**Timetable of Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sundays:</th>
<th>Orhthos 8:30 a.m.</th>
<th>Divine Liturgy:</th>
<th>10:00 a.m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekdays:</td>
<td>Orhthos 9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Divine Liturgy:</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Parish Priest:** Rev. Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis
813-876-8830 (office) 394-1038 (cell)
frstav@gmail.com

**Parish Council:**
- Alkis Crassas, President 813-690-3867
- Carole Fotopoulos, Vice President 813-982-0947
- Diane Trimis, Secretary 813-968-9038
- Dante Skourellos, Treasurer 813-765-9534
- Nick Antonakakis 813-477-6639
- Skip Higdon 813-831-9021
- David Voykin 727-415-5603
- Mike Xenick 813-340-8737

**Stewardship Chairperson:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Office Staff:</strong></th>
<th>813-876-8830</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Debbie Bowe-Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>813-443-4899</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Office Staff:**
- Choir: Artie Palios, Director 813-831-1294
- Jim Leone, Organist 813-254-7844
- Chanter: Nick Andreadakis 813-876-8830

**Sunday Sch.:** Victoria Peckham 813-406-5626
- Maria Xenick 813-839-9897

**Finance Committee:** Mike Xenick 813-340-8737
- Adult Greek School: Magda Myer 813-909-2327
- AHEPA: Mike Trimis 813-968-9038

**Community Outreach:** Chairperson
- Betty Katherine Palios 813-215-9862
- Diane Trimis 813-220-3389

**Food Pantry:** Anetta Alexander 863-224-3001

**GOYA Adv.**
- Elaine Halkias 813-968-9129
- Byron Nenos 813-789-0729

**JOY/HOPE:** Maria Xenick 813-839-9897

**Young Adults (YAL)**
- Mary Ann Konstas 813-215-9862

**Philoptochos:** JoAnn Hartung, Pres. 727-432-0228

**Oratorical Festival Chairperson**
- Peggy Bradshaw: 727-244-1374

**Young at Heart:** Nick Antonakakis 813-477-6639
- Mary Nenos 813-935-2096

**Jr Olympics:** Byron Nenos 813-789-0729
- Ushers: Tom Georgas 813-985-0236

**Altar Angels:**
- Engie Halkias, Viorica Kirby & Sia Blankenship 813-932-5859

**Bookstore:** Jon & Pamela Irwin 813-679-4113

**H XAPA MAE Dance Group:**
- Alex De Maio & Marina Choundas 813-877-6136

**Glendi Dancers:** Jenna Mingledorff 813-610-7365

**Panigyri Dancers:** Vanessa Aviles 813-221-2194

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is a parish under the spiritual and ecclesiastical oversight of His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of the Metropolis of Atlanta, of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

The Messenger of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is published on a monthly basis. Publication is the first of each month. Deadline for notices and announcements for the Messenger is the 15th of each month. You may send announcements to the church office or through email to: stjohngoctampa@gmail.com

Website: www.greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com

"May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father and the Communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.” From the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom