Mission Statement:

St. John the Baptist 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

A Word of Thanks, November Highlights and Being the Church

I am continually inspired by the work of our community. At our recent 60th Anniversary celebration, as I said in the hall during the luncheon, the Metropolitan commented to me how nice it was to see the church so full for the Divine Liturgy and the hall so filled for the luncheon. And I joyfully responded to him that our church is filled every Sunday, and the hall is filled every Sunday after church as well. It has become common place for people to be standing in the aisles of the church and it is not uncommon for the hall to still be filled with people at 1:30 p.m., well after the Divine Liturgy is over. Not only do we have activities, like the Daniel Plan, Greek dance practice, and meetings of different organizations, we have people who just enjoy sharing fellowship, kids who run around and play, and an overall tenor of joy. For this, I thank God, and I thank you. Of course, community life is not without its challenges, some of which we will encounter this month, and some of which I will write here, but overall, the community is on a good trajectory, and I thank God and I thank YOU for that.

Our 60th Anniversary Weekend was a resounding success. We had a beautiful banquet and dance on October 8 and a magnificent Divine Liturgy with our Metropolitan and wonderful luncheon on Sunday, October 9. Many thanks goes to many people who made this weekend a successful. We thank His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios for being with us for the entire weekend, and for his prayer and inspirational words at the banquet and at the Divine Liturgy. Edie Kavouklis was the overall chairperson of the weekend’s events and we thank her, and her executive committee of Despina Sibley, Carole Fotopoulos and Debbie Kavouklis for leading the events of the weekend. Roy and Anna DeJesus produced the slide show of our 60 year history, as well as the welcome video on our parish’s website. Thank you to Katherine Sakkis and Mary Nenos and others who supplied photographs of our history. Bill Manikas gave historical support through his book on the history of our parish. Jeanie Nenos was in charge of the decorations. South Tampa Sugar Momma provided the theme-oriented cookies. Kalliopi Chagaris and Engie Halkias were our greeters and check-in people at the banquet. Charlie Hambos provided video support at both events. John Demas and the Omega Project provided our music. Monica Gjerde was in charge of the programs and general support. Thank you to the ministry heads who set up displays on the tables so we could see a visual history of our community. Carole Fotopoulos was our food manager for the Sunday brunch. We thank also the many people who came to set up and clean up. The ”Taste of St. Johns” for Sunday Brunch was provided by Tony Fotopoulos (ABC pizza), Dan Bavaro (Bavaro’s Restaurant), Alkis Crassas (EVOS) and Steve Lenardos (Culver’s). Thank you to the youth choir for their special choral presentation at the luncheon. Thank you to Olya Clifton who photographed the banquet on Saturday night. And thank you to EVERYONE who attended these events and made
I want to share a prayer team message with you. For those who don’t know what the “prayer team” is, it is a group of over 700 people who receive daily messages like this from me and who have pledged to pray for me and for our church on a daily basis. If you ever want to be added to the prayer team, just email me or Charlie and we’ll add you.

BE THE CHURCH

So Peter was kept in prison; but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

Acts 12:5

I scheduled a Paraklesis service for a random Wednesday night in early October. There was no reason in particular, other than I looked at the calendar for October, which was a light month for weekday services and decided I wanted to have an additional weekday service. I didn’t know if anyone would come, or if anyone would offer names of people to be prayed for at the service.

Interestingly enough though, in the several days before this service, I had several prayer requests from outside of our church community—from a young man in college whose fraternity brother had recently committed suicide; from a young woman who was having an important interview; from someone who had been called upon to help a victim of a sexual assault; and from a family whose father was having serious surgery. So, by the time the service began, I had a list of people to pray for. Surprisingly, there was a large number of people in church, who all brought not only names but specific needs to be prayed for.

Earlier that same week, someone called me and just asked me to pray with them over the phone. I used to actually think this was awkward, as if God couldn’t hear prayer over a phone. I texted mutual friends and asked them to pause for a moment and to pray. Within minutes several texts of encouragement and prayer had come for this person.

My friends, this is the work of the church. When there is a need, the church must respond in three ways—first with prayer, second with encouragement, third with tangible help. And who is the church? The church is the people. When a person has a need, the people must respond with prayer, with encouragement and with help. It is not the priest alone who does these things. The church building doesn’t do these things. The by-laws of the church do not offer prayers.

I often become discouraged because we obsess about DOing church rather than BEING the church. We are good at lighting candles, cooking gyros and arguing about our rights as parishioners. The church, however, is not by-laws, buildings, budgets and bureaucracy. The church is the people—praying, encouraging and helping.

I actually recorded voice memos on my phone of the various people I prayed for who are not from my parish. I texted them the audio files of these prayers, so that people could hear them in their far flung cities. And then I get messages back saying that these gestures meant a lot. I’m not saying this to brag so please don’t read it that way. Whatever I did didn’t change the situations I was praying about. What it did was let people know that they were not alone. That God is watching over them. That the church, the people, are praying for them. And this in itself is a powerful thing, the knowledge that one is not alone. This is one of the reasons Christ gave us the church. He said in Matthew 18:20 “where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them.”

Pray. Encourage. Help. This is what the church is all about. We need to shift the paradigm from “doing church” to “being the church.”

Lord, thank You for the gift of the church. Thank You for giving us a place to grow in faith. Help us to include the people of the church community so that no one feels alone. Help us to reach out to those in need. Give us the courage to ask for prayer from others. Give us the courage to answer that call to pray with others, give us the words to say to offer comfort. Help us to understand what it means to be the church and give us the courage to be the church rather than to just do the church. Lord, be with people who are in urgent need of prayer today—those who grieve the loss of people who have committed suicide, victims of sexual assault, people who are nervous about exams and interviews, people who are facing serious medical crises. Be with all those who need you. Send ME to those who need you. Bring those who need you into my life. And give me the wisdom, the love and compassion to be the church to them. Amen.

Be the church!

I want to expand on the message by highlighting several things that are happening in the month of November, and how they give us the opportunity to “BE the church.”

Liturgical Services

Outside of Great Lent, the highest number of services are held in November, December and January. The Church prescribes certain days on which a Divine Liturgy is to be held. And many of these day occur in November. Why hold Divine Liturgy so often, especially when only few will attend? The first answer is that it is Tradition to hold Divine Liturgy on these days. For centuries the Church has offered the Divine Liturgy for the Archangels, for St. Matthew, for St. Katherine and for St. Andrew, and who are we to change that? Second and most important, the number one thing that the Church does is gather to celebrate the Eucharist. This is the most unique thing about our church community. So, we gather frequently to celebrate Christ in the Eucharist, to remember what He did for us, and to receive strength through receiving Him in Holy Communion. Many of the weekday services ARE actually decently attended, as more and more people come to understand the importance of receiving Holy Communion as often as possible. There will be 13 Divine Liturgies in November as well as a Holy Unction service. More and more I am actually seeing a need for prayer, not only for our community, but for myself. I challenge EACH of you to make it a goal to attend one Divine Liturgy in November that is NOT on a Sunday.
The Festival
Is the Festival DO-ing church or BE-ing church? This is debatable. It is “doing” the church if we only view it as an opportunity to make money. It is doing church if the money we make at the festival is needed just to keep the church in business. The bad news is that the festival is still needed in order to make ends meet here financially. The good news is that each year we rely less on the festival for financial viability. Now, if we get to a point where we no longer need the festival to pay our bills and we could invest the proceeds of the festival entirely to ministries and charities, then the festival would strictly be an example of BE-ing the church. So, this is the goal. And in the interim, we have an opportunity to BE the church by the way we act among others during the festival. If we are friendly, welcoming and encouraging, then we are BE-ing the church. If we come with energy and enthusiasm, then we are BE-ing the church. If there are moments at the festival that we can use for evangelism, then we are BE-ing the church. And I’m not just talking about the church tours. A simple “God bless you for being here” gets the name of God in conversation.

Stewardship
During the month of November, you will be receiving stewardship information. It should hit homes the week after the festival. Stewardship Sunday is on December 4. That is the day that ideally everyone brings their stewardship form to church, so that we can all pledge our commitment to the church for next year on the same day. By the time you receive the next issue of The Messenger you will have most likely already decided on your stewardship offering for 2017.

This annual decision you make regarding stewardship is a very important one, because it reflects two things. It reflects our sense of gratitude. After all, in our offering of stewardship, we are not giving, but rather giving back from what God first gave us. Stewardship should reflect sacrifice, joy and gratitude. It should reflect an acknowledgement of thanksgiving to God. It should reflect something that is sacrificial, the first fruits rather than the left overs. And it should reflect joy, not only obligation. If your stewardship is made with sacrifice, joy and gratitude, then it is made properly.

Stewardship is an offering to the Lord. It is not given towards a goal or in relationship to anyone else. This is why last year we didn’t target a stewardship goal. We also didn’t advertise the average pledge amount. Because the pledge is made to the Lord.

The second thing our stewardship says, both individually and collectively, is how well we understand the mission of the church. If the mission of the church is to spread the word of God, then we can’t be content with just keeping the doors open. We have to pledge the resources so that the church can thrive and not merely survive, so that it can have the people, the tools and the ministries to bring more and more people to Christ. If this is not our understanding of the church, I would ask what then is our understanding of the purpose of the church? And not only we need the financial resources, we need the manpower to serve, to teach, to sing and to help in the furthering of the Gospel.

Tithing
There is an article in this issue of The Messenger about tithing. Please take a few minutes and read it. And realize what would happen if every church in the world tithed. Poverty would be wiped out. In the month of November, we are going to have the Presidential election. Why is politics so polarizing? It actually has to do with tithing. No one disputes that government should take care of our roads and schools, military defense and natural resources. The biggest arguments in politics have to do with social welfare—minimum wage, helping the disadvantaged, immigration, etc. In Acts 6:1-4, we read:

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said “It is not right that we should give up preaching the Word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, filled of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.”

What is learned here, among other places in Scripture, is that the daily distribution of food to the widows, the orphans and the neglected was a big part of the mission of the church. It wasn’t an afterthought. It was a daily ministry. Our budget is roughly $700,000. And it is estimated that the average stewardship pledge represents about 2.5% of the net income of our parish. In stewardship, we will raise about $440,000 in 2016, which is a new record. However, if each of us tithed 10% of our income, our stewardship would go to $1.7M, and we wouldn’t need the festival or any other fundraising. Then imagine if we took 10% of $1.7M, or $170K, and gave that away to charity. That would be a significant amount of outreach. And imagine if every Christian in every church gave 10% of their income to the church and if every church gave 10% of their income to charity, the church would stamp out poverty and we wouldn’t have the political acrimony that we have, at least not as much of it.

Obviously, we can’t control other Christians or other churches. We do have a large say, however, in our church. Imagine what kind of church we would have if we all tithed. Imagine the kind of witness we would have if community outreach of some kind was a daily occurrence.

First things first, though. The Church carries a heavy debt. The former school our church operated closed its doors in 2012. It also left us with a debt well in excess of one million dollars. The church is saddled with this debt. The current charter school pays a little bit on the mortgage every month. However, at the current level of payment, it is going to take 25+ years to pay off the mortgage. While that is a help, it is not a solution. The solution comes from stewardship. If we meet our budget on stewardship, then our festival and the rent we receive on the school could have us debt free in 5-10 years. The debt handicaps our church. It prevents thoughts of expansion of buildings and ministries. It prevents us from BE-ing the church that the Lord has called us to be.

Don’t misunderstand. We’ve made great strides in improving stewardship. However, there is still much room for improvement. If everyone gave even 3% of their income to stewardship, we’d wipe out our debt in a couple of years.

Retreat on December 3
Every year during Advent and Lent, I offer a retreat for adults. This year’s retreat topic is “Encouragement.” Encouragement,
as I have written, is something we all need and something we can all give. This retreat will offer you solid ideas of how to encourage others, how to feel encouraged in your life, and how to get your life in sync with the life God called you to have. See enclosed flyer for more information. The retreat will be on Saturday, December 3, from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. It will begin with the Divine Liturgy, it will have opportunities for discussion and questions, interactive activities and much more. If you are interested, please read the enclosed flyer and contact the church office to RSVP.

Advent and Thanksgiving
By the end of November, we will have made decisions on two holidays. Advent, the forty day season of Lent that precedes the Nativity, begins on November 15. The holiday season has become stressful for most people. Shopping, traffic, decorations, cards, gift-wrapping, holiday dinner, and debt dominate the season, so much so that Christ is often left out of Christmas. In the few days before Advent starts, decide what kind of Christmas you want to have this year. Make plans to pray more, read the Scriptures, go to an extra service or two, join the prayer team, etc., so that you can have a more meaningful and less stressful Nativity season. And as for Thanksgiving, come worship at our annual Thanksgiving Liturgy. But most importantly, approach Thanksgiving with a thankful and grateful heart.

There are so many opportunities to BE the Church. Let us stop being content with DO-ing Church and move to becoming the Church that Christ called us to BE.

With love in the Lord,
+Fr. Stavros

Fr. Stavros has had a book published!

Let all Creation Rejoice: Reflections for Advent the Nativity and Epiphany

This book is a series of short daily reflections on the scripture readings of Advent, the Nativity and Epiphany, to be read between November 15 and January 7.

If you are interested in purchasing this book, you can find it at Xulon Press.

The Prayer Team continues and now at 20 months it is still continually growing. The Prayer Team is a daily reflection that Fr. Stavros sends out to any one who wishes to receive it. It comes out each morning at 12:30 a.m. via Constant Contact. From Monday - Friday each week, Father writes on various topics. For September, the topic has been encouragement. In October, there will be a different subject. On Saturday-Sunday, he writes reflections on the Divine Liturgy. If you are interested in joining the prayer team, send a one-line email to either Fr. Stavros or Charlie and they will add you to the daily email list.
The Big Difference Between a Peacemaker and a Peacekeeper
By Charlie Hambos

Perusing a weekly email from RelevantMagazine.com, appeared a headline, “God Called us to Be Peacemakers, Not Peacekeepers: It’s important for Christians to know the difference.”

We may think to ourselves, what is the difference? In fact there is a very big difference. In one of the Beatitudes stated by Jesus Christ during the Sermon on the Mount, He says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God (Matthew 5:9).”

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a peacemaker is one who makes peace especially by reconciling parties at variance. Got it? Good! A peacekeeper on the other hand is one who preserves peace, especially between hostile states, communities and individuals. We can argue that both of these are active things however, a peacemaker actually tries to resolve conflict rather than simply preserve peace. It would be a complete error to say that peacekeeping is simple, just ask the United Nations. In the article, the author says, “Peacekeepers and peacemakers can actually be considered complete opposites of one another.” He cited examples of the most southern whites being complicit with segregation, while on the other hand civil rights activists had to “disturb the peace in an effort to make room for real peace.” We don’t need to look any further than the recent news to see modern day examples, however, please be aware of the biased media.

Christ did the same thing. Rather than working out a deal with those doing business in the temple, He just flipped the tables and trashed the place.

One of our many active tasks as Christians is to be peacemakers. Within our churches, we would rather keep the stay silent than talk about our problems: things that are hurting us, things that are ruining our relationships, things that keep us from God. Rather, as the article states, we sometimes keep a false sense of peace.

Instead of avoiding conflict, like a peacekeeper, as Christians, we must confront it in a Godly manner and in a way pleasing to Him.

As humans we have many reasons for conflict: disapproval, jealousy, selfishness, pride, when something wrong is done to us and differences we have with one another. We are all going to have conflict. It is inevitable and it is a part of our human nature. In St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans 12:17-19, he gives us a good idea as to what we need to do even in conflict. “Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. We must value each and every relationship we have. If there is conflict in a relationship, the goal is restoration, even if there is a risk for more conflict.

Here are some practical steps to becoming a peacemaker. First, we must pray. We must be humble. We must completely empty ourself of our own desires and allow God’s desires to take control. A peacemaker must desire to understand. James 1:19-20 says, “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” In our own Orthodox iconography, the facial features say it all. The eyes are large so that we can see things from different points of view, especially those we are in conflict with. The mouth is small so we don’t interrupt and don’t attack unnecessarily. The ears are large to show us that we need to have the heart to listen.

The devil, Satan, the Evil One, the author of all lies, destroyer of all relationships and #1 perpetrator of hurtful conflict doesn’t understand one major thing. That is humility. We must seek unity through humility as in St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians 2:1-5: “Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”

Now, we may say, when is it time to be a peacemaker when there is conflict. Is there something that is happening that is dishonoring to God? Is there something that is happening which is causing self-affliction both emotionally and physically? Is there something that is hurting a relationship? If the answer is yes to any of those questions, then it is time to speak up. It is time to make a confrontation but peacefully and truthfully with love.

How do we confront someone or a situation in a Godly way? First, we must pray. We pray for the other person or the situation. We pray for guidance and for peace and for understanding. We pray for patience and for wisdom in the situation or the confrontation. We must also seek advice from mentors and leaders who have experience in peacemaking. We must choose a proper place and a proper time. Sometimes, we may need to have someone with us. We must make the confrontation in person. These days, we are quick to send an email or shoot a text and allow the conversation to sputter into complete and utter disaster. We must plan our words accordingly ahead of time. The words must be factual, truthful and loving. It is ok to share the pain, discomfort and hurt that is being done. Sometimes wounds have to be reopened in order to fix properly. During the confrontation, we must be aware of our tone of voice and body language making sure it is peaceful and open to dialogue. It must be a dialogue, we have to ask for their perspective and most importantly listen intensively to their point of view. Finally, we must trust God with the ending.

All in all, as Christians, we need to create spaces within our community and churches for people to share their hurts, pains, grievances without any fear of retaliation or judgment. As Christians, we also must engage with the people we have differences and conflicts with in order to pursue peace. That is what Christ did and that is what Christ wants us to do. He said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” Go in peace and not in pieces!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, November 6</td>
<td>7th Sunday of Luke&lt;br&gt;Orthros 8:45 a.m.  Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Altar Boys:</strong> Captains and St. Mark&lt;br&gt;<strong>Ushers:</strong> David Voykin, Ed Gerecke, Pete Trakas&lt;br&gt;<strong>Welcome Committee:</strong> Greeters: Marenca Patrasciou, Vanessa Aviles; Ambassador: Megan Rindone&lt;br&gt;<strong>Caller:</strong> Vickie Peckham; <strong>Get Acquainted:</strong> Tom Pesseimer, Christy Pesseimer&lt;br&gt;<strong>Coffee Hour:</strong> Young at Heart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, November 8</td>
<td>Feast of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel&lt;br&gt;Orthros 9:00 a.m.  Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, November 9</td>
<td>St. Nektarios&lt;br&gt;Orthros 9:00 a.m.  Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, November 11</td>
<td>St. Menas - Tampa Greek Festival Kick-Off&lt;br&gt;Orthros 8:00 a.m.  Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, November 12</td>
<td>St. John the Merciful - Tampa Greek Festival&lt;br&gt;Orthros 8:00 a.m.  Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, November 13</td>
<td>St. John Chrysostom - 8th Sunday of Luke - Tampa Greek Festival&lt;br&gt;Orthros 7:45 a.m.  Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m.  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Altar Boys:</strong> Anyone Attending May Serve&lt;br&gt;<strong>Ushers:</strong> Mike Trimis, George Mitseas, Chris Kavouklis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, November 16</td>
<td>St. Matthew&lt;br&gt;Orthros 9:00 a.m.  Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Holy Unction:</strong> 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, November 20</td>
<td>9th Sunday of Luke&lt;br&gt;Orthros 8:45 a.m.  Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Altar Boys:</strong> Captains and St. Luke&lt;br&gt;<strong>Ushers:</strong> Florin Patrasciou, Mike Kavouklis, Tammy Christou&lt;br&gt;<strong>Welcome Committee:</strong> Greeters: Katherine Sakkis, Lisa Alsina; Ambassador: Helen Cauthorn&lt;br&gt;<strong>Caller:</strong> Christene Worley&lt;br&gt;<strong>Coffee Hour:</strong> Tampa Greek Festival Appreciation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, November 21</td>
<td>Entrance of the Virgin Mary into the Temple (Ta Eisodia)&lt;br&gt;Orthros 9:00 a.m.  Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, November 23</td>
<td>Evening Liturgy for Thanksgiving&lt;br&gt;Orthros 5:00 p.m.  Divine Liturgy 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, November 25</td>
<td>St. Katherine&lt;br&gt;Orthros 9:00 a.m.  Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, November 27</td>
<td>13th Sunday of Luke&lt;br&gt;Orthros 8:45 a.m.  Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Altar Boys:</strong> Anyone Attending May Serve&lt;br&gt;<strong>Ushers:</strong> Nick Kavouklis, Marcus Calpakis, Peter Theophanous&lt;br&gt;<strong>Welcome Greeters:</strong> Genie Carter, Kalliope Chagaris; Ambassador: Ewana Forde; <strong>Caller:</strong> Carole Fotopoulos&lt;br&gt;<strong>Coffee Hour:</strong> AHEPA’s Founders Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, November 30</td>
<td>St. Andrew&lt;br&gt;Orthros 9:00 a.m.  Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Liturgical Notes for November

Tuesday, November 8 - Feast of the Archangels
This feast commemorates the Archangels Michael and Gabriel and all of the “bodiless powers” of heaven, all of the angels.

Wednesday, November 9 - Feast of St. Nectarios
St. Nectarios is a “modern day” saint, a saint of the 20th Century, (Died in 1920, Canonized as a Saint in 1960), who was a bishop in Greece. St. Nectarios is the patron saint of cancer patients and is considered one of our “healing” saints, meaning that we invoke his intercessions when we are praying for those who are sick. Cancer sufferers and survivors are urged to attend this Divine Liturgy in order to pray for continued healing through the Intercessions of St. Nectarios. Father Stavros has oil from the tomb of St. Nectarius in Aegina, Greece, with which he will anoint the faithful in attendance at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on November 9.

Friday, November 11 and Saturday, November 12 - Liturgy on ALL DAYS OF THE FESTIVAL
The Divine Liturgy can be celebrated any day of the year except Good Friday. As we have done in the past three years, which also coincides with the three best festivals we have ever had, we will be celebrating the Liturgy all three days of the Greek Festival, to ask the Holy Spirit to come down upon us and upon the Holy Gifts on what is an important weekend in the life of our parish. The Divine Liturgy on November 11, 12, and 13 will begin at 9:00 a.m., preceded each day by Orthros at 8:00 a.m.

Sunday, November 13 - Feast of St. John Chrysostom
St. John Chrysostom lived in the 4th Century. He was a Bishop of the Church and is recognized as one of the Three Hierarchs (together with St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory the Theologian). He received the title “Chrysostomos,” meaning “the Golden Mouth,” for his great ability to speak. St. John Chrysostom authored the Divine Liturgy that we celebrate on most Sundays. Therefore, we offer the Divine Liturgy on this day in honor of St. John Chrysostom.

Wednesday, November 16 - Feast of St. Matthew the Evangelist
St. Matthew is the author of one of the four Gospels. It is customary to celebrate the Liturgy on the feast days of the Four Evangelists, reading from their respective Gospels on their respective feastdays.

Wednesday, November 16 - Holy UNCTION for the beginning of Advent at 6:00 p.m.
The forty day period of Advent begins on November 15. It is a period of fasting and reflective preparation. In America, Advent is marked by a period of shopping, decorating and parties, none of which really help us prepare spiritually to celebrate the great feast of the Nativity. As we have done in past years, we will hold a Holy Uction Service as we begin the period of Advent—it will be on Wednesday, November 16, beginning at 6:00 p.m. Please bring your Holy Week book as the service will follow what is in the Holy Week book for Holy Wednesday evening.

Monday, November 21 - Feast of the Entrance of the Virgin Mary into the Temple
The Entrance of the Virgin Mary (Ta Eisodia) Commemorates when the Virgin Mary entered into the Temple at age two to begin a life of service to God, in preparation for the awesome role she would play in the history of humanity as the Theotokos. This is one of the 12 Major Feastdays of the Orthodox Liturgical Year.

Wednesday, November 23 - Evening Liturgy for Thanksgiving
In Greek the word for Thanksgiving is “Eucharistia,” so the Holy Eucharist is the “Holy Thanksgiving.” As we celebrate Thanksgiving with turkey and the Dallas Cowboys on Thursday, set aside Wednesday to receive the Holy Thanksgiving. As is our custom at St. John, we will celebrate Divine Liturgy for Thanksgiving on Wednesday, November 23 at 6:00 p.m.

Friday, November 25 - Feast of St. Katherine the Great Martyr
St. Katherine was born in Alexandria, Egypt in the third century. She was very wise and eloquent, successfully arguing for Christianity in the face of tyrannical rulers and philosophers. She was martyred in the year 305 and her relics were taken by Angels to Mount Sinai where they were discovered many years later. St. Katherine has the title “Pansophou” the “All-Wise.”

Wednesday, November 30 - Feast of St. Andrew
St. Andrew is the first-called of the Apostles. He is also the patron saint of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.
Is there anyone new to Tampa who needs a place to go for Thanksgiving?

Michael and Artemis Conner are opening their home to any new families or people new to the community who do not have family to spend Thanksgiving with. With so many new people in our community, if you would like to have a great meal and meet some new people, please contact Michael (813-784-0182) or Artemis (727-278-9568) Conner.

Community Outreach - Saturday, November 19

St. John the Baptist's Community Outreach will be serving breakfast to the Homeless at the First Presbyterian Church in Downtown Tampa from 8:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The church is located at 412 Zack Street. The entrance is on Polk Street. Grab a cup of coffee and come help us! We love to see new and old faces!

Save the Date

St. John the Baptist will be volunteering at the Metropolitan Ministries Holiday Tent on Sunday, December 18 at 1:30 p.m.

Meeting on Sunday, November 20

The November GOYA meeting will be Sunday, November 20, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the Kourmoulis Center. Dinner, as always, will be provided.

Young Adult Ministry

Our young adult ministry group has a monthly dinner/discussion night at the church. For November, it will be Sunday, November 6, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. Please bring $10 to cover the cost of dinner. Other events will be scheduled. Please check the weekly bulletin or church website for more details.
Hope/Joy Fall Food Drive

"HOPE starts with a MEAL.  HOPE starts with YOU!"

"During the Holiday Season, a box of food turns into a Box of Hope.  Your family can be part of that hope by providing a family of four with food for the holidays.  One family reaching out to another."

Please join St. John the Baptist’s Hope/Joy ministry in providing a meal to families in need through Metropolitan Ministries.  Make this your family project for the month of November and help us put together 60 Boxes of Hope filled with the items needed for a Holiday dinner.  There are many ways you can help provide a Box of Hope.

- Shop for the items below, bring the food to church by Sunday, November 20th for the kids to assemble the Boxes of Hope during Sunday school.
- Donate $25 (cash or gift card) for a Box of Hope.
- Come to church on Sunday, November 20 and help fill the boxes – every age is welcome – even the smallest child can help sort cans!

**BOX OF HOPE contains:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 turkey or $15 gc for turkey</td>
<td>2 cans of black beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 box of cereal (hot or cold)</td>
<td>2 cans of cranberry sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cans of fruit</td>
<td>1 bag of dried beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 jar of peanut butter</td>
<td>1 box or bag of rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cans of vegetables</td>
<td>1 can or packet of gravy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cans of yams</td>
<td>1 box dessert mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bag or box of stuffing</td>
<td>1 package cookies or pastries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 box of potatoes</td>
<td>1 family box of Jell-O/Pudding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Items will be collected during the month of November through Sunday, November 20.  There will be a collection bin in the hall for the food.

"He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will reward him for what he has done."

Proverbs 19:17
Thank you for the great start to our 2016-2017 Sunday School year. Were having record attendance thanks to all the teachers, parents, and children who are committed to our program. We will keep track of Perfect Attendance for the year and award those students at our Graduation Ceremony. Currently there are over 40 students with Perfect Attendance.

The Sunday School Topics for the month of October were: READING THE BIBLE, THE CHURCH HIERARCHY, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND HOLY COMMUNION-DIVINE LITURGY-WORSHIP. We would like to thank Fr. Stavros for supporting our Sunday School and Charlie Hambos for his visits to our classrooms. This month he conducted lessons about our Church Vessels in our Kindergarten, First Grade, Fourth Grade, and Middle School classrooms. Our THIRD Graders also learned about and made Prosporosa for our church on October 16th under the direction of Melissa Krinos.

The Pre-Ten Retreat took place on Sunday, October 2 and was a huge success for our students and parents in 4th-7th grade. This retreat was also presented for our GOYANS that same evening. A special thank you to Maria Xenick, who organized this pre-teen retreat and was a presenter, along with Father Stavros, Charlie Hambos, and Dory Passalaris.

His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios visited us on Sunday, October 9 for our 60th Anniversary Celebrations. After the luncheon on that Sunday, he stated that "OUR YOUTH STOLE THE SHOW." We are so proud of our students for singing so beautifully during The Divine Liturgy. It was very kind of His Eminence to praise our children and to give each of them an Icon of Jesus before his sermon. Our students also did a fabulous job singing to our parishioners during the 60th Anniversary Luncheon. We would like to thank Maria Xenick for directing our music program and our pianists, Pam Irwin and Ruth Losoviz.

We hope you liked our SUNDAY SCHOOL display board titled, "Sunday School...Then and Now", that was created for our 60th Anniversary Celebration. Also don't forget to check out our new class pictures for the 2016 and 2017 School Year, which are on our Bulletin Board.

Sunday School November Calendar

**Sunday, November 6**  -  Youth Sunday
Charlie 3rd Grade (Vessels) Prosporosa (1st Grade)

**Sunday, November 13**  -  Tampa Greek Festival
No Sunday School Classes

**Sunday, November 20 Topic: Charity/Thankfulness**
Boxes of Hope Assembly after church GOYA 5:00 p.m.

**Sunday, November 27**  -  No Sunday School Classes

Pre-Ten follow up
Our fourth annual Pre-Teen Retreat was held on October 2. Over 65 pre-teens and parents participated. The subject of the retreat was “Encouraging one another and building up one another.” Session topics included presentations on integrity, authenticity, modesty, and spirituality. Thank you to Maria Xenick for being the overall chairperson for this event, and to Maria, Dory Passalaris and Charlie, who along with Father Stavros gave four presentations to the group. The same sessions were held in the evening at the GOYA meeting for GOYAns and Parents, with over 65 people in attendance for this event as well.

Our Food Pantry is very active helping people near and far in the Tampa Community.

Here are some special requests we have:
- Pasta
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Tomato sauce/chopped tomatoes etc.
- All kinds of white flour
- Canned Tuna
- Canned Chicken
- Gluten Free Foods and Flours
- Cereal
- Whole wheat rice and pasta
- Men's and Women's razors and shaving cream (travel size)
- Toothbrushes
- Gift cards in any amount for Publix, Walmart or Save-a-lot

All food items offered are accepted. Thank you for supporting those who need it the most.
For more info and questions about our Food Pantry please contact Anetta Alexander at 813-758-2689 or exchange2861@yahoo.com.
Please join us for the Tenth Annual Advent Retreat

Therefore Encourage One Another And Build Each Other Up
I Thessalonians 5:11

Do you feel like your spiritual life suffers during the hectic holiday season?
Do you feel like you aren’t getting enough out of prayer and worship!
Come join us in reviving your spirit as a community just in time for Christmas!

Saturday, December 3  9:00 a.m. — 3:00 p.m.
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
2418 W. Swann Avenue ~ Tampa, FL ~ 33609-4712 ~ 813-876-8830
Retreat Leader:  Father Stavros Akrotirianakis

9:00 a.m.  Divine Liturgy
10:00 a.m. Refreshments
10:30 a.m.  Session One  Who I am and Who God Intends for Me to Be
11:30 a.m.  Session Two  Taking Our Role as Encourager Seriously
12:30 p.m.  Lunch
1:30 p.m.  Session Three  How God and the Church Encourage Us
2:30 p.m.  Closing Prayer

There will also be ample time throughout the day to ask questions pertaining to prayer and worship as other general questions about our faith and our church.

Cost is $15 per person. Lunch will be provided.

Adults only please.

******************************************************************************
Please return this registration form by mail or take it to the Church Office by November 28.
We look forward to seeing you there!

Name: ________________________________________________________________
Home Phone: _________________________    Cell Phone: _____________________
Email: _________________________________________________________________
Address: ______________________________________________________________

Will you be attending with other family members?  ________ If yes, please list: ________________________________
The St. John the Baptist Tampa Greek Festival is November 11, 12 & 13, 2016!

This is our largest fundraiser and provides an opportunity to unite as a Parish to support our Festival. It is not too late to Volunteer, Promote & Support our Festival! Help showcase our Orthodox Faith as well as the food & dancing. Join the Orthodox Powered Army with your Orthodox Positive Attitude for this fun filled weekend! OPA!

How Can You Help?

Support the Raffle
This year, we are raffling off a brand new car plus great secondary prizes

**GOAL: Sell or purchase 2 Raffle Tickets**
Make checks payable to St. John Greek Orthodox Church. If you wish to buy/sell the raffle tickets online and pay with a credit card, visit tampagreekfestival.com. (Great opportunity for distant relatives!!)

Volunteer – We have over 1,200 Volunteer Slots to fill
Sign up to volunteer at TampaGreekFestival.com or contact Sandra Pappas at tpagreekfestival@gmail.com or 813-785-3747.

**GOAL: Volunteer for at least two shifts.**

Entry Tickets – Share with friends and family
Start supporting the festival by handing out entry tickets ($2 each).

**GOAL: Try to give away or sell as many tickets as possible and reimburse the church.** Make checks payable to St. John Greek Orthodox Church.

Promote - Facebook, Flyers, Yard Signs
Visit the Tampa Greek Festival FB Page and Share the posts with friends and family on Social Media. Hang a poster at your local businesses or place a yard sign in your neighborhood.

**GOAL: Share 2 FB Posts from Tampa Greek Festival and put up a Yard Sign**

On Monday, November 7 we need 5 people to help lay the Gym Floor for the Festival. If you are able to make it, please let the office know at 813-876-8830. We will start at 9:00 a.m. Thank You!

**Festival Hours**

Each day will we start with Liturgy.
Orthros 8:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m.

**Friday, November 11 – Sunday November 13, 2015**

**Friday & Saturday:** 11:00 a.m. – Midnight
**Sunday:** 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Festival Committee

Overall Chair: Alkis Crassas
acrassas@gmail.com; 813-690-3867

Purchasing: Theo Camene
tcamene@gmail.com; 727-482-1302

Advertising/Marketing/IT
Theo Panopoulos
tp2@me.com; 248-867-3697

Buildings & Grounds:
Mike Xenick
m xenick@gmail.com; 813-340-8737

Food & Beverage: Dan Bavaro
dan@bavarofoods.com; 732-239-7273

Finance: Gary Ward
gward2020@gmail.com; 813-846-3898

Public Relations: Maria Alithinos
iacmaria@msn.com; 813-784-2006

Vendor Sales: Florin Patrascoiu
florinp@gmail.com; 813-817-4070

Volunteers: Sandra Pappas
spappas11@gmail.com; 813-785-3747

Admissions: Vickie Peckham
vickiepeckham@gmail.com; 813-758-3102

Baking Prefestival: Edith Mitchell
johnpm2@hotmail.com; 813-962-0551

Bar: Theresa Smyrnakis-Rodriguez
tsmynakis@southernwine.com; 813-892-3570

Bookstore: Bill Manikas
Hillstpete@gmail.com; 813-960-3679

Choir: Artie Palios
jpalios1@tampabay.rr.com; 813-831-1294

Church Tours: Charlie Hambos
charlie.hambos@gmail.com; 813-876-8830

Dance Group Η ΧΑΡΑ ΜΑΣ: Alex De Maio
alexandra.demaio@libertymutual.com; 813-340-9668

Dance Group Η ΧΑΡΑ ΜΑΣ: Maraquet Edquid
maraquet@gmail.com; 813-422-8963

Dance Group Parea: Marina Choundas
mchoundas@foley.com; 813-877-6136

Dance Group Parea: Anna-Maria Bavaro
annamariabavaro@gmail.com; 732-239-9085

Dance Group Pangiyri: Vanessa Aviles
vanessaaviles@outlook.com; 813-417-4364

Decorating: JoAnn Hartung
jshartung55@gmail.com; 727-432-0228

Greek Market (Bakaliko): Tammy Christou
tammychristou@gmail.com; 813-957-0835

Gyro Grill-Outside: Byron Nenos Jr
byron@nenoslaw.com; 813-789-0729

Inside Gyro: Ari Georgiou
ageo_1967@yahoo.com; 813-841-7236

Kafenio: Chris Ferekides
ferekide@gmail.com; 813-468-1442

Kids Area: Alexis Scarfogliero
ascarfo gliero@hotmail.com; 813-920-9085

Live Music: John Demas
johndemas@verizon.net; 813-240-5199

Loukoumades: Engie Halkias
813-932-5859

MC/Announcements: George Fellios
gfellios@gmail.com; 813-495-7562

Parking: Brett Mourer
bamourer@gmail.com; 813-376-9315

Pastries: Lisa Alsina
aalsina@tampabay.rr.com; 813-728-1094

Printing/Graphics: Maria Fentress
mariafentress@hotmail.com; 732-921-1575

Salad Production: Debbie Kavouklis
dkavouklis1@verizon.net; 813-690-0155

Social Media: Charlie Hambos
charlie.hambos@gmail.com 813-876-8830

Social Media: Deano Kastis
deano@nakedfitfoods.com; 407-719-6500

Take-Out: Amin Hanhan
hanhanamin@aol.com; 813-846-2957
~ Stewardship Update ~

We thank the entire St. John the Baptist Community for your continued gifts of Time, Talent and Treasures to the glory of God! Stewardship is part of a Christian lifestyle that is expected by God as a loving way to give back to God for thanks of what He has given us in life. Stewardship in the Orthodox Faith is to live and practice the teachings of Jesus Christ and the actions in our daily lives confirm our beliefs in our faith.

This month we hear from our giving Altar Angels regarding their Time & Talent to keep our church reflecting the Glory of God. We also introduce Legacy Stewardship with the St. John Legacy Society! Legacy giving is a way to provide a planned gift that constitutes both a legacy to generations yet unborn and a final testimony of the belief in our Orthodox faith.

We lovingly remind everyone to review & fulfill your Stewardship Commitment for 2016, as we approach year-end. We begin a new Stewardship Year in December with our Stewardship Sunday – December 4, 2016 as an opportunity to come together as a community to reaffirm our commitment to God.

It is never too late to complete a Stewardship Pledge Form and we welcome new members in 2016. We now have pledge forms available online and in the Church Narthex and Office. When you give to God, you discover what God gives to you! We also welcome you to become a ‘Friend of St. John the Baptist’ if you live out of town.

Online Payment Options are available for Stewardship, General or Ministry Donations, located on the Donate Tab of our Church Website. Many of our Stewards have taken advantage of submitting their pledge form online and set up systematic payments for Stewardship. And don’t forget online banking as an easy and convenient option for automatic payments if you chose not to use PayPal.

We love hearing from our parishioners. If you would like to share a Testimonial regarding your calling to Stewardship, please contact Sandra Pappas (Stewardship Co-Chair) at spappas11@gmail.com or call 813-785-3747.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stewardship Summary</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pledged for Year*</td>
<td>$432,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collected for Year</td>
<td>$343,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Parishioners/Families Pledged</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*We require a completed Pledge Form to be considered a Steward of St. John the Baptist.

Thank You to all of Our Friends!

Barbara Akrotirianakis - Whittier, CA
William J Camarinos - Alexandria, VA
Richard & Mickie Bass - Asheville, NC
Jason & Kelly Bangos - Clearwater, FL
Nicholas & Anna Karnavas- New Port Richey, FL
Michael Kapetan - Ann Arbor, MI
Perry & Fay Stamatiades - Asheville, NC
Melvin & Violet Tamashiro - Kaneohe, HI
Wesley & Melissa Thompson - Clearwater, FL
Demetrios & Katherine Klimis - Boardman, OH
Mary Spanos - St. Augustine, FL
Bessie Blziotes - Palm Cost, FL
Suzanne Alvarez - Tampa, FL
Lazarus & Maria Kavouklis - Tarpon Springs, FL
William & Kane Chapman - Palmetto, FL
Lillian Thomas - Highland, IN
Kathleen Mendez - Ponte Vedra, FL
Theodora Poletis - Baltimore, MD

Friends of St. John the Baptist - 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 by being a “Friend of St. John the Baptist”. 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.

Thank you for your consideration of our parish.

Friend of St. John the Baptist:

Name: ____________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________
Phone: ____________________ Email: ____________________

I wish to become a Friend of St. John the Baptist. I am enclosing a contribution in the amount of:

_______ $50  ______$100  ______$200  ______Other

Please mail this form and check to: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church 2418 W. Swann Ave Tampa, FL 33609
Did you ever wonder how it is that the Church is so beautiful every time you attend a service? A group of women called the Altar Angels are behind the scenes making sure that the Church is always clean and beautifully decorated during special Feast Days. This group is very special to me because I have been there from the day it was formed.

Several years ago, I was at Church one Sunday with my husband Demetri. That day there was an article in the bulletin about two new members of the community who had volunteered to clean the Church each week. I sought them out and introduced myself. I told them that I would like to help but that I did not drive. Immediately, Jean Jolly offered to pick me up each week. From that point on, I worked alongside Jean and her husband Jim.

Over the years, the Altar Angels group has grown. At one time or the other, many members of our community have pitched in, particularly during the Nativity and Pascha seasons. The Altar Angels are Rita Bedran, Sia Blankenship, Dorothy Bush, Kalliope Chagaris, Skip Higdon, Jean Jolly, Pamela Nolen, Helen Reader and myself. We are proud to serve our Church each week. We vacuum, organize the service books, dust, remove wax from the carpet and pews and remove trash. During the Great Feast days and Great Lent, the Altar Angels, assisted by many, many members of the community work hard to decorate the Church.

The Altar Angels are honored to work inside our magnificent Church. We often talk about the effect on us of being able to worship as we work. Sometimes it seems as if the Angels are there guiding our stewardship. If you would like to help this special group from time to time please contact Engie Halkias at 813-932-5859. We welcome new faces!

---

Make a Plan to Amplify Your Impact

Join the St. John Legacy Society

Those parishioners who include St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in their estate plans will become founding members of the St. John Legacy Society, a new initiative we are launching to help provide for our beloved church’s future. If you would like to extend your stewardship of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church of Tampa to make a lasting impact, there are several gift arrangements to choose from.

Whether you would like to put your donation to work today or benefit our church after your lifetime, you can find a charitable plan that lets you provide for your family and at the same time supports St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church. If you have additional questions on updating your will or are considering adding a gift to St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, please contact Fr. Stavros at 813-876-8830 or frstav@gmail.com or call Debbie Gavalas at 813-505-8901 for more information. Please be sure to seek advice from your financial and legal advisors, and discuss your charitable plans with your family.

If you include St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in your plans, please use our legal name as previously stated and Federal Tax ID # 59-1170684. Additionally, please contact Fr. Stavros at 813-876-8830 or frstav@gmail.com or Debbie Gavalas at 813-505-8901 so that we may include you as a founding member of the St. John Legacy Society and properly thank you.
What Would Happen if the Church Tithed?
How giving 10 percent could change the world.
By Mike Holmes

The church of today is not great at giving. This isn’t exactly news. But it is a statistical fact:

- Tithers make up only 10-25 percent of a normal congregation.
- Only 5 percent of the U.S. tithes, with 80 percent of Americans only giving 2 percent of their income.
- Christians are only giving at 2.5 percent per capita, while during the Great Depression they gave at a 3.3 percent rate.
- Numbers like that can invoke a lot of guilt, which isn’t really the point. The larger point is what would happen if believers were to increase their giving to a minimum of, let’s say, 10 percent. There would be an additional $165 billion for churches to use and distribute. The global impact would be phenomenal.

Here’s just a few things the Church could do with that kind of money:

- $25 billion could relieve global hunger, starvation and deaths from preventable diseases in five years.
- $12 billion could eliminate illiteracy in five years.
- $15 billion could solve the world’s water and sanitation issues, specifically at places in the world where 1 billion people live on less than $1 per day.
- $1 billion could fully fund all overseas mission work.
- $100 – $110 billion would still be left over for additional ministry expansion.

Those are some amazing numbers. The truth is: Giving is a heart issue, not a money issue. So why don’t we give?

The real problem when it comes to our giving is not about money. Not really. Actually, the Bible says it’s about our eyes. Rather, it’s what Jesus called “the evil eye.” He said it like this.

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matthew 6:21-23 KJV)

The term “evil eye” is a Jewish term. Whereas a “good eye” in Judaism refers to good will, benevolence and being genuinely happy when others prosper, the evil eye is quite the opposite. The person with an “evil eye” feels distressed when others prosper, rejoices when others suffer, loves their money and would do nothing in the way of charity.

So when Jesus spoke about the eye, He was speaking to a largely Jewish audience who knew what He was talking about. They knew a “good eye” was a generous person and an “evil eye” was a stingy, sour Scrooge.

The truth is: Giving is a heart issue, not a money issue. When Paul spoke about the legendary giving of the Macedonian church he urged the Corinthian church to prove their love like the Macedonians proved theirs:

“But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.” 2 Corinthians 8:7-8

Then he took it a step further and talked about the highest standard in love and giving:

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.” 2 Corinthians 8:9 NLT

God has always had a special place for radical givers.

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7

The full power of tithing is found in grace and not in fear - it’s something we get to do rather than something we have to do. So, what does cheerful giving actually look like? Here are a few suggestions. But I will warn you: This isn't for those satisfied with ordinary or normal:

1. Start Tithing: Based on the statistics, the Church could really do some wonderful things if we just started tithing consistently. But keep in mind: when you start tithing know there is a difference between the law of tithing and the grace to tithe. The full power of tithing is found in grace and not in fear - it’s something we get to do rather than something we have to do.

2. Teach Tithing: This is a very delicate subject and has the power to split churches down the middle. This is why people water it down so much or resort to threats. But tithing is a subject that, with some tact and wisdom, can actually make for a great sermon.

3. Take Tithing to the next level: Tithing is just the foundation. Giving that really changes the world is that which is over and above what's required.
Small Group Bible Study

Small group Bible Studies are now underway. These groups gather once a week to study the Bible, discuss how to apply scripture to daily life, pray together and become small spiritual support groups. These sessions are discussion based, not lecture based. This is an opportunity to work side by side with each other to learn more about the faith. As group members get to know one another on a deeper level and as groups become more committed, you’ll see that the groups will not only become a resource to help learn and live the faith, but through these groups, we’ll eventually help “carry one another’s burdens and so build up the body of Christ,” as we are told to do in Galatians 6:2. And this is what the church is all about—helping one another through this life, on the journey to everlasting life.

Monday Night Bible Study (for everyone)
We will be studying Hebrews
Location: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in the Administration Building meeting room
Group Leader: Charlie Hambos
charlie.hambos@gmail.com, 813-843-8471
Meeting time: Monday evenings from 6:30–8:00 p.m.
November Meeting Dates: November 7 and 28

Women’s Group (for adult women of any age)
Location: Meets at the home of Debbie Kavouklis, Debbie lives in South Tampa, a mile or so from the church. 3315 Jean Circle, Tampa, FL 33629
Group Leader: Debbie Kavouklis
dkavouklis1@verizon.net, (813) 690-0155.
Meeting time: Tuesday mornings from 10:00-11:30 a.m. (9:30 a.m. for coffee and refreshments)
November Meeting Dates: November 1, November 8 (Liturgy at the church), November 15 and 29

Men’s Group (for adult men of any age)
Location: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in the Administration Building in the meeting room
Group Leader: Father Stavros for the first one but we are going to rotate this among group members. Please email Fr. Stavros at frstav@gmail.com or contact him at 813-394-1038.
Meeting time: Wednesday mornings from 7:30-8:30 a.m.
For this early morning group, bring your own coffee or breakfast food if you wish—we will not be providing these things.
November Meeting Dates: November 2, 9, 16, and 30

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: At the Church in the Library
Group Leader: Bessie Palios
bmp1126@yahoo.com, 813-523-0347.
Meeting time: Tuesday evenings from 7:00-8:30 p.m.
November Meeting Dates: November 1, 8, 15 and 29

East Tampa Mixed Group (for any adults)
Anyone can attend this group but obviously this will be most convenient to those who live on the East side of town Riverview, Brandon, Valrico, Seffner, Lakeland
Location: Home of George and Donna Hambos 2604 Herndon Street, Valrico, FL 33596
Group Leader: Donna Hambos
dhambos@msn.com, 813-843-8412
Meeting Time: Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m.
November Meeting Dates: November 1, 8, 15 and 29

St. John the Baptist is on Social Media!

Sermons on Youtube Channel Each Sunday
Father’s sermons each Sunday are available on our YouTube channel. Just go to YouTube and type in “St John GOC Tampa” and you’ll find them. If you miss a sermon or wish to hear a sermon again, you’ll find it there!

Do you Like our Facebook page? Like our page and suggest it to your friends. Announcements are posted frequently so you are up to date with everything going on at St. John the Baptist. You can find our page at StJohnGOCTampa.

Live Streaming - All of our services are being video recorded and are available on our Livestream page.
To access this page
1. Go to our Church’s website: greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com,
2. Scroll the mouse over the “Multimedia” tab on the menu bar,
3. Click ”View Liturgy,”
All of the services are available to watch at anytime.
PHILOPTOCHOS SHOE DRIVE LUNCHEON

The Philoptochos Annual Shoe Drive Luncheon for Chester Elementary School will be held on December 4, 2016 in the Church Hall following Liturgy. Many of the children at this school are needy and cannot afford gym shoes which eliminate them from participating in the class. All proceeds go to buy shoes for the children. We will accept brand new, never worn, gym shoes if you happen to have some you would like to donate for the children but prefer monetary donation so that we can keep the shoes similar for all the children. We look forward to seeing you on Sunday, December 4 and thank you in advance for your donation.

St. John Greek Orthodox Church - Christmas Ornament $8.00
Spanakopita will be on Sundays, November 20, Sunday, November 27 & Sunday, December 4

~Save the Date~

Philoptochos Christmas Brunch
Sunday, December 11 at 1:00 p.m. Palma Ceia Golf and Country Club
Local Scholarship Opportunities
The AHEPA family of Tampa is pleased to announce the AHEPA and Daughters of Penelope Scholarship Committee is now accepting applications for 2016 scholarships. The scholarships purpose is to promote, encourage and advance education at the college, university and graduate school levels. Please contact Edie Kavouklis at 813.758.0305 or Marina Paras at 813.966.9527 for additional information and applications. The deadline for submission is December 1, 2016.

District Scholarship Opportunities
Citrus District 2 AHEPA Scholarships
Every winter scholarship applications are distributed to AHEPA family members and district chapters. Applicants must be members of the AHEPA family or children of Ahepa family members. Those eligible to apply are graduating high school seniors and college/university undergraduates. Scholarship applications are ranked by a selection committee and are based upon merit primarily. However, other achievements are also taken into consideration. Scholarship forms and information is available at http://www.ahepad2.org/district-forms/d2-scholarship-form/ Please contact Gus Paras at 813.598.5212.

Citrus District 2 Daughters of Penelope Scholarships
The Daughters of Penelope Citrus District 2 awards scholarships to two recipients. The applicant must be a high school graduate, an undergraduate at college level or enrolled in graduate school. The applicant must be female, have either a current member of the immediate family or legal guardian in the Daughters of Penelope or the Order of Ahepa or be a Maid of Athena, in good standing for a minimum of two years. Endorsement is mandatory from the local/nearest Daughters of Penelope Chapter. Scholarship forms and information is available at http://worknotes.com/FL/District2/DOP/apt44.aspx Please contact Marina Paras at 813.966.9527 for additional information.

National Scholarship Opportunities
AHEPA's commitment to education has been well documented throughout its history. Over $4 million is endowed at the local, district and national levels toward the use of scholarships and a half-million dollars is awarded annually. Thousands of young men and women have benefited as recipients of AHEPA scholarships at these various levels. The most famous recipient, perhaps, is ABC News' Host of This Week, George Stephanopoulos. There are many National Scholarships which are available. Additional information will be provided about the many AHEPA and Daughters of Penelope scholarships. Please contact Gus Paras at 813.598.5212 for additional information.

Founders Day
The AHEPA family will celebrate Founder’s Day again this year with a mnimosino in Church on November 27. There will be a presentation featuring the history of Ahepa and the Daughters of Penelope in Tampa in the Kourmolis Center after the church services and refreshments will be provided. Everyone is invited to attend.

Scholarship Dinner
The Annual Scholarship Dinner will be held at the Floridan Hotel on December 17, 2016. This event will include the annual scholarship awards ceremony at which the 2016 scholarships will be awarded to the recipients. Everyone is invited to attend and congratulate our winners. Tickets will be available for purchase in the Kourmolis Center and from members beginning in the first week of November. Put the date on your calendar and plan to attend and support the youth of our community.
How Skipping Church Affects Your Children

By Micah Anglo

In a Q&A, Carl Trueman was asked about why churches today are losing their young people. Typical answers to this question range from things like the temptations of this world or the irrelevance of the church - your typical answers. But Trueman makes a keen and convicting connection between our parenting and apostasy.

“The church is losing its young people because the parents never taught their children that it was important. I think that applies across the board. It applies to family worship, and it also applies to whether you are in church every Sunday and what priority you demonstrate to your children church has on a Sunday. If the sun shines out and their friends are going to the beach, do you decide to skip church and go to the beach? In which case, you send signals to your children that it is not important.” (Carl Trueman)

Now we know that artificially taking your kids to church neither bestows salvation nor guarantees it. God is obviously not honored by external religious acts without heart worship. This type of legalism is not the subject of this discussion. This is about parenting and the weight of the responsibility behind how they prioritize their time and lifestyle choices for their families.

Parents makes choices all the time for their families. As they decide on what takes priority in family, every choice is carefully observed and taken into the heart of their children. Yes, they are watching you, and they are learning from you.

Maybe the reason why our children have no love for Christ is due to the fact that we as parents do not show any love or passion for Christ, evidenced by how we prioritize our time both on Sundays and during the week. When television, sports, school, hobbies even family itself are elevated to a place of idolatry and replace the vital Christian responsibilities, then we tell our children that Christ is secondary to all these things. We tell our children that it is not necessary to take up your cross and die to yourself daily in order to follow Christ. We tell them that you only have to live for Christ when it’s convenient for you. We tell them it is okay to sacrifice time with your all-satisfying Savior if something “more fun” or “more important” comes along (sarcasm indicated by quotation marks if you didn’t catch that). And this sounds like a clear path to apostasy if you ask me.

Let’s evaluate where our hearts are by observing our choices. Do you prioritize the local church? Do you prioritize the worship of Christ in your home and on Sundays? Do you prioritize serving Him and worshiping Him in the contexts of school and work? This doesn’t mean that you can’t ever miss a Sunday or that you can’t have any extracurricular activities. Instead, it is a sobering reminder that we shouldn’t put the things of God at the bottom of the priority list, because it tells our children that Christ is at the bottom of our priority list. And the God of this universe does not belong there.

My prayer is that we all would improve in this area. But beware, maybe we don’t see this because Christ isn’t a priority in our lives. And if He isn’t a priority in our lives, then our children will know and follow suit. Watch.
Dad’s Heartbreaking Photo Goes Viral After Son Writes These 2 Words on School Project

After seeing his son’s heartbreaking response on a school project, Bob Cornelius shared an important plea for his son.

You may remember a few weeks back, a Florida State football player saw an autistic boy sitting alone at the lunch table. He sat with him, someone snapped a picture and the gesture went viral. In a world where social media is king, and one thing in someone’s day can quickly make them known by millions of people around the world, it’s awesome that we have the power to share good new-things that make our hearts happy. We’re able to start conversations about autistic kids, bullies and a whole spectrum of other things that were never talked about so publicly before.

Bob Cornelius did just that. As he explains below, his youngest son Christopher is on the autistic spectrum. After looking at a piece of paper that Christopher filled out at school, Bob took to Facebook to share the paper and heartbreaking message with the world.

“No One”

For those of you who don’t know, my youngest son, Christopher, is on the autistic spectrum. I went to his back to school night on Thursday and took a picture of one of his projects displayed on the wall, one of many cute little cards that all the kids in his class had filled out. It asked him to list his favorite foods, sport, TV shows etc. I took the picture hurriedly, and didn’t notice all the answers he had filled out at that time. It was only after I got home that something stood out upon closer review.

Do you guys remember, a couple of weeks ago, the massive amount of press that the Florida State Football player got when he sat down at the lunch table with an autistic boy that was eating alone? That player didn’t know the boy was on the autistic spectrum when he sat down with him... he just saw a boy eating lunch all by himself and decided to join him. A teacher snapped a picture of the moment and it went viral. That’s what made the story great... it wasn’t staged... it was just a real moment of human kindness.

The follow up to that story was that the boy no longer ate alone; that the other kids NOW we’re sitting with him and patting him on the back. That boy now had “friends” and everything was right with the world.

Something that wasn’t right was fixed, and tied up neatly with a pretty little bow of kindness and understanding. Where were those kids prior to this child being thrust into the spotlight? We know where they were: they’re in the picture: sitting at other tables, ignoring him. If that football player had not sat down next to that child, and if it hadn’t become a national news story, that kid would still be sitting by himself today.

And it’s not their fault... that’s the saddest part. They were clearly not taught to embrace and accept the differences of others. Not by their teachers, which would have been nice, had they thought to do so, but by their parents. I don’t mean to imply that parents that don’t have this conversation with their kids are bad people, but only that somewhere in between working, soccer practice, and homework, it never occurred to them to have this particular conversation. I’m sure that if Christopher were typical (that’s the word we use instead of “normal” in our world of ‘Holland’, for our developmentally delayed children), I would have not had this conversation with him either.

Christopher’s brothers have had many, many sleepovers over the years, obviously in front of him, and it has not gone unnoticed.

“Can I have sleepover?” Christopher has asked.
“Sure, buddy... with whom?” As a response, he would flap his arms and stim instead of answering. He didn’t have an answer because he didn’t have a name.

Because he didn’t have a friend.
He’s never had a friend.
Ever.
He just turned eleven.
And because he’s had no friends....there was no one to invite.

And I don’t have a solution. I don’t have an answer. The reality is that I have to rely on the compassion of others to be incredibly understanding in order just to sit next to him, attempt to engage him, and make him feel included.

My son is very smart and has a great sense of humor. Every adult that meets him is drawn to him. However, because he needs the input, he will spontaneously flap his arms and make loud, guttural sounds from time to time. It draws a lot of attention in public. If you’re not used to it, it’s normal to feel embarrassed, as you will have all the eyes in the room upon you. He will ask the same question fifty times in a short period of time (His latest is “What time do you go to bed?” and “What’s your address?”).

I typically have to tell servers in restaurants just to give him the restaurant’s address... as once he has a satisfactory answer, he will usually move on.

Like I said, there’s no easy answer for this... at the end of
the day it comes down to compassion, empathy and understanding.

But mostly empathy. Not from you guys, but from your children. As far as I know, (save for one time), Christopher’s classmates have never overtly cruel to him. What they have done, however, is exclude him. And frankly, I understand this. His classmates are delayed as well, but most not as much as Christopher. They are figuring out how to interact socially every day, and because Christopher cannot engage them in a typical way, he gets left behind…excluded.

Until Thursday, I didn’t know how aware he was of this divide, as he does not often talk about his peers. I should not have been surprised as he makes his wants (but not his emotional needs) very clear….but I was. Mostly, I suppose, because I had never seen him put it down on paper. For the first time, it was staring me in the face.

I guess I’m sharing this because asked to list his friends he wrote “no one”. Never have five letters cut so deep, and they weren’t even directed at me….it was just an overly simplistic statement that spoke volumes.

And because I know him so well, and because I have pretty good handle on him after raising him for eleven years, I know this disconnect makes him feel lonely, and it makes him sad.

Usually, I have to figure out what Christopher is trying to say, as his manner of speaking is very straightforward; very black and white.

This time I did not. It’s clear to me that he desperately wants to be part of the group, but his challenges make it difficult for his peers to do so.

The only solution I can come up with is to share this with you and ask that you have a conversation with your kids. Please tell them that children with special needs understand far more than we give them credit for. They notice when others exclude them. They notice when they are teased behind their back (a lot of times “behind their back” is right in front of them because they think the ‘different’ child doesn’t understand). But mostly they are very much in tune when they are treated differently from everyone else.

Trust me when I tell you this hurts them. Even if it’s not obvious to you and me.

For the first time ever, I’m going to ask for two favor, here, on Facebook.

One: Share this post on your time line. Awareness and empathy are the only solutions I can come up with.

Two: Speak with your children. Show them the video of the Florida State Football player. The Internet is full of feel-good stories about a special needs child being included. Remember the special needs child that was put in the basketball game for the last few minutes of the final game of the season? Very recently, there was the prom king who gave his crown to a special needs classmate.

These stories are newsworthy because they are unusual. We are not used to hearing about kids being kind to those that are different and unique.

I not so naive that I think this post is going to change the world. But, if, by sharing this, I can make you think about having a conversation with your children about empathy, about going out of their way to include those that are different from everybody else, especially if it goes against the group mentality, especially if it’s not socially poplar (I’m not so old that I don’t remember that this takes bravery, socially, in the middle and high school world), then I will feel like Christopher’s voice has been heard.

Because even though he can’t say it, he wants to be included. He wants a voice, that, at the moment, he doesn’t have. And he needs help to find his voice. And the child that will finally reach out to him, that will help him, that will include him, will be the kindest child I have ever had met.

And that child will be Christopher’s first true friend. Thanks for listening.

Sincerely,
Christopher’s Dad
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Youth Sunday Get Acquainted Sunday AHEPA DOP Meeting YAL 5:00 p.m. The Daniel Plan Η ΧΑΡΑ ΜΑΣ Parea</td>
<td>Festival Prep Pastitso Making Bible Study 6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>1 WBS 10:00 a.m. EBS 6:30 p.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m. Pastitso Making</td>
<td>2** MBS 7:30 a.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Panigyri Dance Practice 6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>3 YAH 11:30 Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>4**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8 ** Archangels</td>
<td>9** MBS 7:30 a.m. St. Nektarios Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Archangels</td>
<td>9** MBS 7:30 a.m. St. Nektarios Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Archangels</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Archangels</td>
<td>9** MBS 7:30 a.m. St. Nektarios Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Archangels</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>11 ** Orthros 8:00 a.m. Liturgy 9:00 a.m. Tampa Greek Festival</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15**</td>
<td>Orthros 7:45 a.m. Liturgy 9:00 a.m. Tampa Greek Festival No Sunday School</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>WBS 10:00 a.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>16** MBS 7:30 a.m. St. Matthew Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Holy Unction 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>17** Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m. Parish Council 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>18**</td>
<td>19** Community Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17**</td>
<td>Orthros 7:45 a.m. Liturgy 9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>16**</td>
<td>Holy Unction 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18**</td>
<td></td>
<td>17**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19**</td>
<td></td>
<td>18**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20**</td>
<td>Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. GOYA Meeting Boxes of Hope</td>
<td>19**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21**</td>
<td>Entrance of Virgin Mary Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>20**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22**</td>
<td>Basketball 8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>21**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23**</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Liturgy Orthros 5:00 p.m. Liturgy 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>22**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24**</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Office Closed</td>
<td>23**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25**</td>
<td>St. Katherine Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Office Closed</td>
<td>24**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26**</td>
<td></td>
<td>25**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27**</td>
<td>Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. AHEPA Founders Day Memorial No Sunday School</td>
<td>26**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28**</td>
<td>Bible Study 6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>27**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29**</td>
<td>WBS 10:00 a.m. EBS 6:30 p.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>28**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30**</td>
<td>MBS 7:30 a.m. St. Andrew Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>29**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30**</td>
<td></td>
<td>30**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
2418 W. Swann Avenue
Tampa, FL 33609-4712
Office: (813) 876-8830  Fax: (813) 443-4899
officestjohngoctampa@gmail.com
www.greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

Timetable of Services

Sundays: Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.
Weekdays: Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Parish Priest  Rev. Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis
813-876-8830 (Office)  813-394-1038 (Cell)
frstav@gmail.com

Pastoral Assistant Charlie Hambos
813-876-8830 (Office)  813-843-8471 (Cell)
Charlie.hambos@gmail.com

Parish Council
Alkis Crassas, President  813-690-3867
Mike Xenick, Vice President  813-340-8737
Sandra Pappas, Secretary  813-785-7477
Ed Gerecke, Treasurer  813-239-4306
George Chagaris  727-420-1920
Carole Fotopoulos  813-982-0947
Skip Higdon  813-831-9021
Catherine Mitseas  813-571-0658
Byron Nenos  813-789-0729
Despina Sibley  813-758-0520
Dante Skourellos  813-765-9534

Office Staff
Monica Gjerde, Office Manager  813-876-8830
officestjohngoctampa@gmail.com
Debbie Bowe, Bookkeeper
debbtjohnptpa@gmail.com  fax: 813-443-4899

Adult Greek School
Magda Myer  813-909-2327

AHEPA
Ron Myer, President  813-523-5583

Altar Angels
Engie Halkias  813-912-5859
Sia Blankenship  813-968-8855

Basketball
Perry Katsamakis  516-403-3118
Jimmy Konstas  813-220-7352

Bible Study
Charlie Hambos  813-843-8471

Bookstore
Bill Manikas  813-960-3679

Chantor
Nick Andreadakis  813-516-6081

Choir
Artie Palios, Director  813-831-1294
Ruth Losovitz, Organist  727-688-2782

Community Outreach
Betty Katherine Katsamakis  813-468-1596

Dance Group
H.XAPA.MAE, Alexandra De Maio  813-340-9668
Bessie Palios, Maraquet Edquid  813-523-0347
Parea, Marina Choundas  813-877-6136
Anna Maria Bavaro  732-239-9085
Pangyri, Vanessa Aviles  813-221-2194

Daughters of Penelope
Edie Kavoulakis, President  813-758-0305

Finance Committee
Gary Ward  813-846-3898

Food Pantry
Anetta Alexander  813-758-2689

Gasparrilla Parking
John Kokkas  727-992-4615

GOYA
Maria Koutroumanis  813-245-3584
Kara Katsaras  722-643-5634

Hope/Joy
Amy Kafantaris  727-743-1297
Debbie Nicklow  813-690-0671

Junior Olympics
Bryan Nenos  813-789-0729

MOMS
Mary Ann Konstas  813-215-9862
Lindsey Skourellos  813-503-7845

OCF
Charlie Hambos  813-843-8471

Oratorical Festival
Peggy Bradshaw  727-244-1374

Philoptochos
Lisa Alisina  813-728-1094

Small Group Bible Study
East, Donna Hambos  813-843-8412
Men, Fr. Stavros  813-394-1038
South, Bessie Palios  813-523-0347
Women, Debbie Kavoulakis  813-258-5571

Stewardship
Sandra Pappas  813-785-3747
Pete Trakas  813-505-2193

Sunday School
Vickie Feckham  813-406-5626

Usher
Tom Georgas  813-985-0236

Visitation Committee
Charlie Hambos  813-843-8471

Welcome Committee
Maria Xenick  813-765-3587

Young at Heart
Carole Fotopoulos  813-982-0947
Mary Nenos  813-935-2096

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 10th of each month. You may send announcements to the church office through email.

“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.