

THE MESSENGER

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

*"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 2017

VISION:

Love God, Love your neighbor and spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ as an Orthodox Christian community

MISSION:

The mission of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is to welcome and serve people with love, truth, joy and peace, and to create an environment that encourages all to seek salvation through Orthodox Christianity.

CORE VALUES:

Love, Worship, Community, Learning, Service

Father Stavros' Message

Without a vision, the people perish.

Proverbs 29:18

Over the past several months, a strategic planning committee comprised of a diverse cross-section of our community has been meeting in order to create a plan to propel our church forward for the next decade. I've spoken about it in church. I've written about it in the *Messenger*. And you've had the opportunity to offer your feedback on two surveys that the committee has put out. It is the desire of the community to involve everyone in the strategic planning process, since the plan will be for all of us and will be a vision for the church in which we are all members.

You'll notice above my message that the vision and mission statements of our community have changed, and a short list of core values has been added. We've had the same mission and vision statements for the past eleven years. They have been on top of every *Messenger* since then. We've referred to them to some degree in the decisions we have made over the past decade.

In gathering with our strategic team, the first question we have tackled is "why" we exist as a parish. Before getting to the more granular level of setting goals and making plans for achieving them, we have gone through a process of asking why we exist and why we need a plan. I wrote about that last month.

Having established the WHY, we then go to the "how" and this involves revisiting our mission and vision statements. Upon close review, we realized that organizations lead first with vision, then mission, and then set some core values. And so first

we re-ordered vision and mission, and then added some core values.

The vision of our church is simple. It combines the Two Great Commandments and the Great Commission. We know that the Old Testament is filled with laws and commandments. Most of us know the Ten Commandments, but there are 603 other commandments. Jesus summarized 613 commandments into two. In Matthew 22:35-40, we read:

And one of them, a lawyer, asked Jesus a question, to test Him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."

So, all the commandments in the Old and New Testaments can be summarized into two commandments, love God and love your neighbor.

The Great Commission was given to the Apostles, and by extension it is given to everyone who is baptized. It was given in Matthew 28:19-20, when Jesus said to His Disciples (and by extension to us):

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded

you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

So Christ's vision of the church is a church where people love God, love their neighbor, and where they spread the Gospel to all nations. This is the vision Christ has for the church. There really is no other vision than this.

The mission of the church then is how we are going to make that vision a reality. Our mission statement is short but purposeful. We have discussed this statement over the course of several meetings, in our group of 14 people on the committee, examining and debating each word.

*The mission of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church—*As we are about to give our mission, we first give our name. Because while the vision of the church is the vision of every church, how we are going to fulfill that vision is a product of who we are as an individual church. The corporate name of our church has always been "St. John Greek Orthodox Church." I've been told various stories about why it is "St. John" and not "St. John the Baptist," including that people couldn't decide on which St. John they wanted to name the church after. For those who do not know, there are 47 saints named "John" who are recognized by the church. It is important, therefore, to distinguish that our saint is "St. John the Baptist" (as opposed to St. John Chrysostom, St. John the Divine, St. John of Kronstadt, St. John the Hut Dweller).

*To welcome and serve people with love, truth, joy and peace—*This phrase is also carefully chosen. Let's begin with the word "*people*." Notice we did not say "parishioners" or "Orthodox people" or "Christians" but we used the word "*people*." "People" is the "all nations" that Jesus refers to in the Great Commission. We are not called, however, to merely recruit people. The work of the church is not adding numbers to the rolls. Rather, the work of the church is to serve people, and to serve all people. And before we serve, we have to be welcoming. So we are going to welcome and serve people. And the way we are going to welcome and serve them is going to be with love, truth, joy and peace.

*To create an environment that encourages all to seek salvation—*Many times we set goals that are difficult, if not impossible to attain. For instance, if I have a goal to get everyone in our community to grow in their faith, I will quickly realize that that goal cannot be achieved. Because there are some people, that no matter what a priest may do, are not going to grow in their faith. The goal that is more easily attained is to "create an environment" that encourages spiritual growth. That is a goal that is achievable. Because we can control the environment, though not how the environment is received. We can create beautiful worship services, but we cannot force people to get anything out of them. I can write thoughtful articles and prepare thought-out sermons but I can't force people to listen to them. We can have a great Sunday School program but we can't force families to pray at home. So, the mission of our church is to create an environment that encourages everyone to seek salvation. We can encourage. It's up to individual people to seek.

*Through Orthodox Christianity—*We debated whether to use this phrase in the mission statement. We are, though, an Orthodox Church, and we encourage people to seek salvation through the Orthodox way of life. Having "Orthodox Christi-

anity" in the statement reminds us that we must always seek to remain true to our theology and Tradition.

Which brings us to "**Core Values.**" Core values are words that state the most important values of the organization. In many organizations, employees are required to know the core values, and these core values are held against the decisions each organization makes. For instance, most people know the "duty, honor, country," values of the military. One of our committee members offered his company's core values as "Client first, conservatism, independence, integrity. Another member offered the core values of her company "Honesty, integrity, loyalty, service."

We debated for several meetings about our core values and we settled on five of them. The overarching value in the center of everything is **love**. As we read in I Corinthians 13, if one has faith that can move mountains but doesn't have love, he really has gained nothing. So, love is at the center. How, then, can we settle on just a handful of values? We looked at four Greek words.

Leitourgia, which can be translated as worship, prayer, praise, or liturgy. We chose **worship**.

Koinonia, which can be translated as fellowship or community. We chose **community**.

Catechesis, which can be translated as education, learning, catechism. We chose **learning**.

Diakonia, which can be translated as minister, serving, service. We chose **service**.

The goal is to make everything we do fit under one or more of these core values, and to not do anything that doesn't fit under at least one of them.

We hope that every parishioner will commit to memory our core values—love, worship, community, learning, service. So that when we talk about our church, we will lead the conversation with the values. These values will unite us into a more cohesive community, and will help us stay more focused on what the church is all about, our WHY. We are going to have our letterhead redesigned in the near future, so that the core values will be stated on every piece of stationery that goes out of the office. And of course these core values will appear in every issue of the *Messenger*.

Why a strategic plan? Why go through this exercise? Because as we read in Proverbs 29:18, *without a vision, the people perish*. And likewise, without a vision, how will we grow our community? And I'm not referring to the size of the community. If we are going to continue to grow in the image and likeness of Christ, to spread the Gospel to all nations, it's going to take an organized effort and for that we need a plan. And in order to craft a plan, we need to know first what do we stand for, what are our values.

So please stay tuned for more information from the strategic planning committee. There will be surveys and other methods by which we hope to attain the input of all parishioners. And when it comes time to execute the plan that we have all crafted, that will be a time for all of us to do our part to move our par-

ish forward. Memorize our core values, and start talking about them. When people ask what our church is all about, tell them “love, worship, community, learning, service.”

If without a vision, the people perish, well with a vision, a mission and core values, the people of our community will be set up to succeed in the long term.

Opening the Gates

Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; that I may know Him and the power of His Resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that if possible I may attain the Resurrection from the dead.
Philippians 3:8-11

On February 5, we will enter into a nineteen week period of feasts and fasts connected to the feast of Pascha, the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. This yearly journey combines preparation, introspection, narrative, joy and purpose.

There is a twenty-two day period of “Preparation” which is known as the “Triodion.” (Liturgically speaking, the Triodion is the period of time from the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, which this year is February 5, through Holy Saturday, when the canon of the Orthros is limited to “three odes” instead of the usual nine, but in contemporary terms, the Triodion is a four Sunday period with the intervening weekdays included). During this period of time, we are supposed to prepare ourselves for Great Lent and the “great fast” which goes with it. Triodion should be a time of reflection and goal setting so that Lent can be a time of spiritual growth and change.

Great Lent begins on a Monday, (this year February 27) called Clean Monday, and lasts forty days, including five Sundays. Great Lent is a period of introspection, marked by fasting, additional services, dark colors in church, and confession. Great Lent should be a time when we make positive changes in our spiritual lives. There is a saying that if you can do something for thirty days, it becomes a habit. So, making some spiritual changes to your life during Lent and doing them for forty days, should make for better habits once Lent is over. In the Orthodox Church, we don’t focus so much on giving things up or deprivation (only to get them back once Lent is over). Rather we should focus on sharpening our spiritual senses, making small changes and then striving to keep these changes in place once Lent is over.

Holy Week is an eight-day journey that allows us to relive and relearn the events of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. We relive the narrative in scriptures and in hymns and in liturgical actions, like the Procession of the Crucified Christ, the un-nailing from the Cross, and the journey to the empty tomb.

The Paschal Season is one of joy. During this time we feast

and celebrate the successful conclusion of the Lenten journey. We begin all things anew and strive to solidify the habits we began during Lent to become permanent parts of our life. The Paschal season lasts forty days, from Pascha until the feast of the Ascension.

And the final three weeks of this journey highlights three feasts—the Holy Fathers, Pentecost and All Saints Day—that define our purpose as a church. We are the church of Pentecost, continually graced by the Holy Spirit. Like the Holy Fathers, we are all called to proclaim the truth of Christ. And the goal to all become Saints is the end of the journey.

The below hymns are chanted on all nine Sundays of Triodion and Lent, beginning February 5, on the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. They remind us of God’s judgment, but also His great mercy. As we open the gates and begin our journey to the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, we must open the gates to our souls for a period of examination and growth, so that when we proclaim that Christ is Risen from the dead, we do so not only because we’ve marked another year of time, but because we’ve made the journey of repentance, the journey back to God our Father.

*Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
Open to me the gates of repentance, O Giver of Life, for early in the morning my spirit hastens to Your holy temple bringing the temple of my body all defiled. But as one compassionate, cleanse me, I pray, by Your loving-kindness and mercy.*

*Both now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.
Guide me in the paths of salvation, O Theotokos, for I have befouled my soul with shameful sins and I heedlessly squandered all of my life’s resources. By your intercession deliver me from every uncleanness.*

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your great mercy; and according to the abundance of Your compassion, blot out my transgression.
When I ponder in my wretchedness on the many terrible things that I have done, I tremble for that fearful day, the Day of Judgement. But trusting in the mercy of Your compassion, like David I cry out to You, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your great mercy.*

(From the Orthros on all Sundays of the Triodion and Great Lent, Trans. by Fr. Seraphim Dedes)

Let the journey begin!

With love in Christ,
+Fr. Stavros

The Prayer Team will celebrate its 2nd Anniversary on February 20!

For two years, Fr. Stavros has been writing a daily reflection.

It comes out every morning at 12:30 a.m. via Constant Contact. From Monday-Friday, Father writes on various topics (for February, the topics include evaluating yourself in relation to the two great commandments - February 1-3, 6-10, 13-18 - and Topics related to Great Lent - February 21-25, 27-28) and on Saturday - Sunday, Father is writing on the Scriptures of each Sunday of Triodion and Lent.

Liturgical Schedule for February

Tuesday, February 2

Presentation of Our Lord into the Temple

Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, February 5

Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee - Beginning of Triodion

Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. Matthew

Ushers: Mike Trimis, George Mitseas, Chris Kavouklis

Welcome Committee: Greeters: Debbie Kavouklis, Jeannie Nenos; Ambassador: Bessie Palios;

Caller: Maria Karounos; Get Acquainted: Christy Pessemier, Tom Pessemier

Coffee Hour: OCMC Luncheon - Philoptochos

Friday, February 10

St. Haralambos

Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, February 12

Sunday of the Prodigal Son - Second Sunday of Triodion

Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. Mark

Ushers: Florin Patrasciou, John Alexander, Tammy Christou

Welcome Committee: Greeters: Jenny Paloumpis, Sandra Pappas; Ambassador: Marenca Patrasciou

Caller: Peggy Bradshaw

Coffee Hour: Sunday School Valentines

Saturday, February 18

1st Saturday of the Souls - Memorial Service to be held at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, February 19

Judgment Sunday (MeatFare) -Third Sunday of Triodion

Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. Luke

Ushers: Nick Kavouklis, Marcus Calpakis, Peter Theophanous

Welcome Committee: Greeters: Megan Rindone, Katherine Sakkis; Ambassador: Vanessa Aviles;

Caller: Vickie Peckham

Coffee Hour: Dance Groups

Thursday, February 23

Ecumenical Prayer Service at Christ the King 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 25

2nd Saturday of the Souls - Memorial Service to be held at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. **at Garden of Memories**

Sunday, February 26

Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare)

Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. John

Ushers: Ron Myer, John Christ, George Trimikliniotis

Welcome Committee: Greeters: Kalliope Chagaris, Carole Fotopoulos; Ambassador: Genie Carter;

Caller: Christene Worley

Coffee Hour: Choir

Sunday, February 26

Forgiveness Vespers 6:00 p.m.

Great Lent Begins

Monday, February 27

Canon of St. Andrew

10:00 a.m.

Holy Unction

6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 1 **9th Hour** 5:30 p.m.
Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00 p.m.
Lenten Dinner sponsored by choir to follow in the Kourmolis Center.

Friday, March 3 **Salutations to the Virgin Mary - 1st Stanza** 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 4 **3rd Saturday of the Souls** - Memorial Service to be held at the end of the Divine Liturgy.
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, March 5 **First Sunday of Lent - Sunday of Orthodoxy**
Orthros 8:15 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.
Procession of Icons to be held at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. Matthew

Ushers: Mike Trimis, George Mitseas, Chris Kavouklis

Welcome Committee: Greeters: Lisa Alsina, Donna Hambos; Ambassador: Helen Cauthorn;

Caller: Julie Palios; Get Acquainted: Michael Palios, Bessie Palios

Coffee Hour: Altar Angels

Liturgical Notes for February

Thursday, February 2 - The Presentation of Our Lord into the Temple

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 40 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 40 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.” (Luke 2: 29-32) 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.

Wednesday, February 10 - St. Haralambos

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.

What We Celebrate on the Sundays of Triodion and Lent

Sunday, February 5 - Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

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, February 12 - Sunday of the Prodigal Son

On this Sunday in the preparation for Great Lent, Orthodox Christians are to 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.

Saturday of the Souls – Saturdays, February 18, February 25, March 4

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. There are three Saturdays at the beginning of Lent and the Saturday before Pentecost. Everyone is encouraged to submit the names of their loved ones to be commemorated at the services. Everyone is encouraged to attend one of these services (and bring Kolyva) if you are able, as a way of honoring the people in your family who have passed away in church once a year.

Sunday, February 19 – Judgment Sunday (Meatfare)

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.”

Saturday, February 25, 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., with 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. This is the fourth year that we will be doing this liturgy at the Garden of Memories. Please come and join us praying for the souls of our loved ones, as we also pray for strengthening and inspiration for ourselves.

Sunday, February 26 - Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare)

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 Deftera)*. 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).

Sunday, February 26 - Forgiveness Vespers

Great and Holy Lent begins on Monday, February 27, a day called Clean Monday, or “Kathara Deftera” in Greek. Vespers is the service that ends one day and begins another, so we will celebrate the Vespers of Forgiveness and beginning of Great Lent on Sunday evening, February 26, 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.

Guidelines for Great and Holy Lent The Lenten Services

Monday, February 27 - Canon of St. Andrew

The Penitential Canon of St. Andrew will be read from 10:00-11:00 a.m. on Monday, February 27 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.

Monday, February 27 - Holy Unction on Clean Monday

The Sacrament of Holy Unction is always offered during Holy Week on Holy Wednesday. But the sacrament can be done at any time of the year. The emphasis of this sacrament involves, spiritual healing, spiritual cleansing and repentance. What better way to begin Great Lent than the sacrament of Holy Unction. Please bring your Holy Week book to follow along. The service will be held on Monday, February 27, from 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 5 - Sunday of Orthodoxy Icon Procession

If anyone has new icons that have not been blessed, please bring them to church on Sunday, March 5, the Sunday of Orthodoxy, and place them in the windows of the church. They will be blessed with Holy Water during the service.

Mondays of Lent - Great Compline

The service of Great Compline will be read on the following Mondays of Lent—March 6, 20, 27, April 3. This service lasts about an hour and consists of Psalms and hymns of repentance. Service Books for this service will be available in the Narthex.

Wednesdays of Lent - 9th Hour and Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts (also called Pre-Sanctified Liturgy) will be held on the Wednesdays during Great Lent. This service consists of Vespers with Holy Communion that was "Pre-Sanctified" the previous Sunday. It is an opportunity to receive Holy Communion frequently during the season of fasting. The Pre-Sanctified Liturgy is preceded by the reading of the 9th Hour, a short service with penitential prayers as well as the recitation of the Creed, a pre-requisite for the reception of Holy Communion. Service books for this service will be available in the Narthex.

Following the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy each week, one of our ministries will host a Lenten Dinner

Wednesday, March 1 Choir

Wednesday, March 8 Sunday School

Wednesday, March 15 The AHEPA Family

Wednesday, March 22 Philoptochos

Wednesday, March 29 Young at Heart

Wednesday, April 5 Small Group Bible Studies

So, spend the hour you would spend cooking dinner worshipping in church and then stay for a complementary dinner. This is being offered in the hopes that more people will attend this service, and that each member of each ministry will attend at least one of these moving services.

Fridays of Lent - The Salutations to the Virgin Mary (Heretismo)

This service also lasts about an hour and is a series of prayers and devotions that invoke the intercessions of the Virgin Mary for our salvation. Service Books for this service will be available in the Narthex.

Great Opportunities This Lent

Lenten Covenant

As we have done in years past, we will offer the Lenten Covenant, a "covenant" made between you and God about your plan for spiritual growth this Lent. The Covenant will be available on our website, and as an insert in the weekly bulletin on Sunday, February 19. Please fill out one and put it in the special box in front of the church.

Sacrament of Confession

Many people have already made appointments for their confessions to be heard, many for the first time in their lives. It is confidential. It helps you re-connect with God and unburden yourself of guilt. It helps you to make a new start in your spiritual journey and is an integral part of any successful Lenten journey. If you have questions about confession, please ask. There is no better way to prepare for Pascha than to receive this sacrament. Confessions will be heard up to April 7, and then again after Pascha. Please make your appointment as soon as possible, because Fr. Stavros likes to give people whatever time they need. As it gets closer to Holy Week and more and more people are coming, He is forced to go quicker, and it is very important not to be rushed in this Sacrament.

Interested in Reading during Lenten Services

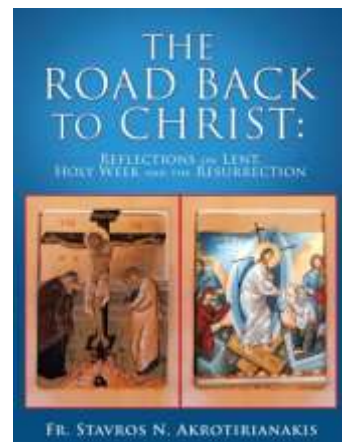
In years past, we've offered the opportunity to parishioners to read during the Lenten services on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings. If you are interested, you can sign up by calling the office and Father will tell you the times and dates that are available or email Father at frstav@gmail.com or Charlie at Charlie.hambos@gmail.com.

Adult Lenten Retreat

Our Twelfth Annual Adult Lenten Retreat will be held on Saturday, March 11, from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (Please see attached flyer). The theme of the Retreat is "Realizing My Purpose: God made each of us For a Special Reason." In addition to the subject material related to the theme, there will be ample opportunity for general questions about our faith. Please sign up by sending the attachment from the flyer to the church office by March 5 or emailing Fr. Stavros at frstav@gmail.com. This event is open to all adults in our parish, as well as surrounding Orthodox parishes of the area. Non-Orthodox friends and friends from other churches are certainly welcome.

Fr. Stavros Publishes Second Book!

The Road Back to Christ: Reflections on Lent, Holy Week and the Resurrection is now for sale! It is a series of daily reflections to be read from the beginning of Triodion (this year that is February 5) through All Saints Day (this year that is June 11). Pick up your copy today so you can begin reading it on February 5. This book costs \$18.99 and all money taken in at the bookstore goes to the church.



The Church is a Sacred Space from the Secular

By Charlie Hambos

Church is cool. Jesus is cool. Hanging out with friends is cool. Seeing amazing things in nature is cool. Everything needs to be cool in order to be attractive. If something isn't cool, then don't bother with it. In this generation, churches, businesses and many other institutions "think" everything needs to be cool in order to attract the youth and sometimes even adults. The truth is the church doesn't have to be "cool." The church shouldn't be cool because many other things in our life are cool. In fact, this generation, called the millennials (ages 18-29), don't think church should be "cool" at all. The good news is that the Orthodox Christian Church has never changed to be "cool" for almost 2,000 years. The church, our house of worship, our life as Orthodox Christians is sacred and we must not take advantage of it.

Poles by the Pew Research Center and the Barna Group investigating the Religion among millennials have shown that 59 percent of millennials with some form of Christian background have dropped out of church completely. There are many reasons for this. One reason, which was highlighted by the Barna Group, showed that for young people who don't go to church, 87 percent say they see Christians as judgmental, and 85 percent see them as hypocritical. This generation of young people is the most aware of social justice and wants to feel that they are having an impact in the world in what they do for a living.

In a Washington Post article entitled, "Want millennials back in the pews? Stop trying to make church 'cool,'" Rachel Held Evans incorporated the research from Barna and Pew Research Center as well as used quotes from fellow bloggers to get her point across. One major focus is worship. One blogger she quoted in the article, Ben Irwin, wrote, "When a church tells me how I should feel ('Clap if you're excited about Jesus!'), it smacks of inauthenticity. Sometimes I don't feel like clapping. Sometimes I need to worship in the midst of my brokenness and confusion — not in spite of it and certainly not in denial of it."

There is something exciting happening. It is exciting for Orthodox Christians because we know we hold the most powerful, well-rounded, sacred, all-encompassing worship known to humanity. It is called the Divine Liturgy. As Orthodox Christians we should be excited because we have what many are seeking. However, we must also take advantage of what we have and not think other forms of worship are "cooler." It is also exciting because we are going to see more and more finding the Orthodox Church and we have to be ready to welcome them. We have to be ready to share the Divine, Sacred Christianity that we cherish so deeply. If we don't, then we need to figure out what is hiding right under our noses.

The worship space is critical for Orthodox Christian worship. We have icons that surround us to remind us and teach us the life of Christ and the saints. We have the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, which is always present in the reserve sacrament on the Holy Altar. It is during the Divine Liturgy that we believe is a foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven. The building itself is then a place where Heaven meets Earth. Because of this experience and because we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, the church then extends to the people. We bring the sa-

credness from our space to the outside world. This is cool in a very awe inspiring and unexplainable way. We are talking very cool not because we made it this way but because this is the way we have been doing it since the very creation of the church.

In another research study conducted by both the Barna Group and Cornerstone Knowledge Network, in which they polled millennials from many different religious backgrounds concerning worship spaces. Questions were both in word form and picture form. Their research found that 67 percent of millennials prefer a "classic" church over a "trendy" one, and 77 percent would choose a "sanctuary" over an "auditorium." The only curveball is that 40 percent chose "traditional" and 60 percent chose "modern." The study suggests, "And herein lies a cognitive dissonance common to the young adults interviewed in the survey. Many of them aspire to a more traditional church experience, in a beautiful building steeped in history and religious symbolism, but they are more at ease in a modern space that feels more familiar than mysterious."

The research is interesting if we as Orthodox Christians were trying to find a way to attract more millennials. The truth is, we have been plugging along in the background through several generations of trends, oppression, persecution and anything else the world has to throw at us. We don't need to do anything to attract people. We just need to show them the truth. Sure we have some things to learn. Sometimes our worship can become routine for us but we need to continue to strive to "be" the church rather than just "do" the church.

Another blogger, quoted in the above Washington Post article, Amy Peterson, says, "I want a service that is not sensational, flashy, or particularly 'relevant.' I can be entertained anywhere. At church, I do not want to be entertained. I do not want to be the target of anyone's marketing. I want to be asked to participate in the life of an ancient-future community."

We believe whole-heartedly that Orthodox Christianity is the ultimate ancient-future community. The question is, "Do we feel that way?" If you don't, please contact me or Father Stavros so we can help you feel the deep roots of the faith and help you "be" the church.

Evans in the above article states, "You can share food with the hungry at any homeless shelter, but only the church teaches that a shared meal brings us into the very presence of God." As Orthodox Christians we believe that the Eucharist is the most sacred meal. We also believe that each meal is a microcosm of the meal that Jesus had with his disciples and this is where He cultivated a relationship with them and through meals we cultivate relationships with one another.

Jesus wasn't cool at all. He didn't need to be cool to conquer death. He needed to be less than cool. Church doesn't need to be cool. Church needs to be sacred. It needs to be Holy because God calls us to be holy like He is Holy not cool like he is cool. Remember what we have and take advantage of the holiness today.

Community News

Parish Registry

Baptism - Maverick Scott (Cletus) Horack, son of Scott and Rena Horack, was baptized on Sunday, January 15. Sakellaris Myles Scott was the Godfather. Na Sas Zisi!

Condolences to Thom Bougas, on the passing of his sister, Mary Ann Andros, on December 20. May her memory be eternal!

Parish Council Update

Gary Ward (2 years) and Ryan Rindone (1 year) were appointed by the Parish Council to fill two vacant seats. Officers for this year will be as follows: Alkis Crassas, President; Mike Xenick, Vice-President; Sandra Pappas, Secretary; Gary Ward, Treasurer.



Apokreatiko Dinner Dance

Saturday, February 4



The Young at Heart will have their annual Mardi Gras Ball (Apokreatiko) on Saturday, February 4 at 6:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. We hope that all will join us for a fun dinner dance. We promise lots of laughs and fun for everyone! Dinner will be catered by ABC Pizza and we are serving their delicious Greek Chicken with homemade rice pilaf, Greek salad, veggies and their home baked bread. We are providing the children under 12 with pizza and their own dining area. It is a good date night for parents and they can still have an eye on the little ones. It is all about family, friends dancing and did we mention COSTUMES? There will be judging of best costumes for all with great prizes. We are having a raffle and you will be able to choose which prize you would like to win. We can't forget to say that John Demas will be entertaining us with the wonderful music of the Omega Project and his beautiful classical guitar during dinner. Please come and join us for what we hope will bring in a good amount to put toward the church mortgage this year. See what a good cause it is for and the fun and all the love is free!!



Livestream is now available in the Nursery!

Get Acquainted Sunday, February 5



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.



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.



OCMC Mission Sunday

Philoptochos will be hosting a Chili dog luncheon to benefit O.C.M.C. Kenny Kidd, from Orthodox Christian Mission Center, will be our special guest. We will also be collecting used icons for O.C.M.C. to bring on their mission trips. If you have any icons you would like to donate please bring them to church and leave them in the box labeled icons in the foyer of the Kourmolis center. Please, no glass icons as they do not travel well.

Movie Night

Friday, February 10

Dinner 6:30 p.m. Movie 7:00 p.m.

In the Kourmolis Center

We will have dinner, movie and discussion.

Risen follows the epic Biblical story of the Resurrection, as told through the eyes of a non-believer. Clavius, a powerful Roman Military Tribune, and his aide Lucius, are tasked with solving the mystery of what happened to Jesus in the weeks following the crucifixion, in order to disprove the rumors of a risen Messiah and prevent an uprising in Jerusalem.



Go Red Sunday, February 12

February is healthy heart month. We celebrate Valentine's Day. We get our hearts ready for Great Lent. And we recognize the need to live healthier lives. As a show of support for our hearts and an opportunity to do something together, everyone is asked to wear RED on Sunday, February 12. We did this last year and it was great. See you in red on February 12.



Meeting

There will be a GOYA meeting on Sunday, February 12. For this meeting, all fathers and daughters will have a special session with Fr. Stavros. The boys will meet with Charlie and the other advisors. All GOYAns are invited to this meeting, we just invite all dads to come with their sons.

GOYA Lock-in

There will be a lock-in for our GOYAns on Saturday, February 25, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Father Stavros will be out of town February 14 - 16

Father will be attending the clergy meetings at the Diakonia Retreat 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.

Community Outreach - Saturday, February 18

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!



Young Adults Dinner

Our young adult ministry group has a monthly dinner/discussion night at the church. For February it will be Sunday, February 19, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. Please bring \$10 to cover the cost of dinner. Other events will be scheduled.

Oratorical Festival - Sunday February 19

The St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival is a public speaking contest for students in the 7th-12th grades. Our parish has had GOYAns participate in this for the past several years. It is a great opportunity to learn about our faith and get some public speaking experience. The local level competition for our parish will occur on Sunday, February 19, after the Divine Liturgy. This event is really inspiring, to hear our young people talk about their faith. Anyone is welcome to come and watch this event after church on Sunday, February 19. We will be providing a light snack and late luncheon during the tallying of the votes around 2:30 p.m. We would love to have as many people as possible there.

Christ the King Catholic Church and St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
will pray together in an

Ecumenical Prayer Service for Peace in the United States

**Thursday, February 23, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.
at Christ the King Catholic Church**

A reception will follow in the McLaughlin Center.

Let us join our Catholic brothers and sisters for an evening prayer service as we come to
together to pray for peace in the United States of America.

In the Fall, St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church will be hosting a prayer service with at our church.



*The St. John the Baptist Choir
invites everyone to*

Sunday Brunch

Sunday, February 26, 2017

***Immediately following the Divine Liturgy
in the Kourmolis Center***

\$5 per person donation

New Bibles in Pews

An anonymous parishioner donated Bibles for the pews in our church. If you ever want to just sit in church and read the Bible, please come and do so. Feel free to read the Bible during Holy Communion - the Communion line is usually long and this is a great time to dive into scripture. We all can stand to do a better job in our scripture reading.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

January was a very busy month for the Sunday School. Our topics for January were the Epiphany/St. John the Baptist, the Vasilopita/St. Basil, Sacramental Life of the Orthodox Church, and Light of Christ/Making Faith Personal. Charlie Hambos was also very busy by working with our Pre-K, Kindergarten and 1st graders and our 4th graders made Prospora on January 15 with the guidance of Melissa Krinos.

CONGRATULATIONS to Carson Barich for finding the lucky coin in the Sunday School Vasilopita on January 8. We would truly like to thank Melissa Krinos for making the Vasilopita for our Sunday School Children. The sweet bread was delicious and appreciated by all of our children. We would also like to acknowledge that Vasili Panos represented all of our Sunday School Students during the Church's Vasilopita celebration. We are so thankful that HOPE and JOY found the coin in the church Vasilopita. May God bless all the children of St. John the Baptist in 2017.

Congratulations to the five young men-Gregory Koutroumanis, Harry Koutroumanis, Savvas Ferekides, Dean Mitseas and Frankie Giallourakis-who dove for the cross at the Epiphany service in Tarpon Springs last Friday. They represented our church and our faith in a beautiful way!

On Saturday January 14, the Sunday School Teachers participated in a retreat with Fr. Stavros. The Sunday School teachers are truly blessed to have Fr. Stavros and Charlie as our spiritual leaders of our Sunday School. Our Sunday School program would not be what it is today without them. THANK YOU Fr. Stavros and Charlie for dedicating so much of your busy schedule to our Sunday School.

We also had our YOUTH SUNDAY on January 15. The children sang beautifully, our Epistle Reader did a fine job and the Prospora, made by our students, was delicious as usually. Our children are truly great stewards of St. John the Baptist.

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 reading for Pascha. Each Sunday School class will have the opportunity to participate in the important Sacrament of Confession. We will also have a Pre-Lenten Retreat and a Retreat on Good Friday.

DATES TO REMEMBER - FEBRUARY:

Sunday, February 5 Youth Sunday

Prospora (Kindergarten) Charlie: 2nd Grade
Topic: Fasting, Story of Publican and Pharisee - or
Presentation of Christ

Sunday, February 12 Topic: Prodigal Son

CONFESSION for - 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Graders
Charlie: 4th Grade
Sunday School Sponsored Coffee Hour
GOYA 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 19 -Topic: Last Judgment

Charlie: 3rd Grade
ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

Sunday, February 26

Sunday School Pre-Lenten Retreat

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,"
4. Then click on the link where it says, "Check out our live stream of the Divine Liturgy here <http://new.livestream.com/accounts/2454446>.

All of the services are available to watch at anytime.

Pictures

Go to Flickr.com and search "St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church" or go to www.flickr.com/photos/stjohngoctampa



Family Calendar for Great Lent 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
February 26 Cheesefare Sunday of forgiveness Come to church and ask forgiveness Sunday School Retreat	27 Clean Monday Great Lent Begins Holy Unction Service Great Compline No TV today	28 Call and wish your Godparents a "Blessed Lent"/Kali Sarakosti"	March 1 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Say a special prayer for sick children	2 Make a prosfora bread with your family to bring to church	3 Salutations to the Virgin Mary Make a list of 5 things you are thankful for	4 Saturday of the Souls Make a prayer list of those who have died and bring to church
5 Sunday of Orthodoxy Bring an icon from home for procession Sing Kyrie eleisons *Confession for Grade 4	6 Great Compline Help make your bed, clean up and dust your room	7 Do something nice for your mother	8 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Receive Holy Communion /Sunday School Family dinner	9 Collect some clothing or shoes to donate to a charity special to you	10 Salutations to the Virgin Mary Read a favorite Bible story with your family	11 Help your parents in the yard/garden
12 St. Gregory of Palamas Say a special prayer for your grandparents	13 Great Compline Help set the table and clean up after dinner	14 Do something nice for your father	15 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Say a special prayer for your neighbors	16 Collect some coins to bring to church on Sunday	17 Salutations to the Virgin Mary Pray the Lenten prayer of St. Ephraim together with your family	18 Read about the life of a Saint with your family Community Outreach
19 Holy Cross Take home a flower from the cross	20 Great Compline Forgive someone who hurt you	21 Do something nice for your teacher	22 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Say a special prayer for your Sunday School teachers	23 Buy and donate a food item for our St. John food pantry	24 Salutations to the Virgin Mary Come Bless the icon of Panagia	25 Annunciation Say a special prayer for those who fought for your independence
26 St John of the Ladder Take 5 minutes of silence to pray about how much God loves you Youth Sunday Confession for Grades 5&6	27 Great Compline Play with someone who feels left out	28 Draw a picture of your saint or feast day by looking at an icon	29 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Say a special prayer for your priest	30 Choose a toy you don't play with and donate it	31 Akathist Hymn/Divine Liturgy Sing Victorious Lady in your prayers one last time GOYA Lenten Retreat *Confession for kids attending retreat	April 1 Ask for God to protect your house Tell someone you hurt that you are sorry
2 St Mary of Egypt Sing Agios O Theos in Church today	3 Great Compline Be kind to someone who needs your kindness	4 Mail a card to your Godparents wishing them a Blessed Holy Week and Kalo Pascha	5 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy Say a special prayer for your friends	6 Make and bake some Lenten cookies with your family	7 Make a list of all living and dead loved ones and bring it to church for the Proskomide	8 Saturday of Lazarus Divine Liturgy Receive Holy Communion Make palm crosses
9 Palm Sunday Service of Bridegroom Replace your old crosses and have parents burn any old crosses	10 Holy Monday Bridegroom Service Read the story about the prophet Joseph	11 Holy Tuesday Bridegroom Service Read the story of Kassiani the Hymnographer	12 Holy Wednesday Come and receive Holy Unction	13 Holy Thursday Divine Liturgy 12 Gospels Service Color eggs red for Pascha, think about Jesus on the cross	14 Holy Friday Royal Hours Unnailing from the Cross Lamentations Attend Sunday School retreat	15 Holy Saturday Liturgy of St. Basil Resurrection Service Come to the early Liturgy to see scattering of bay leaves
April 16 PASCHA! Christ is Risen! You have completed Great Lent! Attend Agape vespers to light your candle					*All students are encouraged to participate in the sacrament of Confession. If they have missed their scheduled class day, please schedule an appointment or join another class day.	

~ Stewardship Update ~

And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise Steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Luke 12:42-43

Did you know the word for ‘Steward’ in Greek -“Oikonomos” translates into how the ‘house is governed.’ Imagine our beloved house of worship and active ministries without the gifts of Time, Talent and Treasures from the loyal Stewards of St. John to the Glory of God! As Fr. Stavros recognized many ministry leaders and parishioners on Vasilopita Sunday, it was evident how much time goes into governing this house and how many give back. We want you to ‘feel at home’ and, in some cases bring you back into God’s House to feel the connection with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Stewardship can help us make that connection.

**Stewardship is caring for the needs of others.
Stewardship is offering one’s self to God as He offered Himself to us.
Stewardship is what a person does after saying
“I believe...” as proof of that belief.
*Williams and McKibben in Oriented Leadership***

Please take time today to become a Steward of St. John the Baptist. We have a ways to go based on the over 350 individual/families that pledged last year. Each of us can contribute to our parish in our own way depending on our God given talents and to the best of our ability. Our goal is to achieve 100% participation by the end of February! We need the support of every parishioner to continue the good works of our church.

Stewardship	2017
Pledged	\$311,851.⁰⁰
Average Pledge	\$1,662.⁰⁰
Median Pledge*	\$900.⁰⁰
# of Parishioners (Families) Pledged with a completed form	195
# of Parishioners (Families) that have given a Stewardship Check without a form+	21

*Pledge amount in the Middle – ½ of Stewards pledge higher & ½ lower

+ Pledge forms and current contributions are required to meet the Uniform Parish Regulations (UPR) of our Archdiocese as well as our local by-laws, which enable participation at Parish General Assembly Meetings, Nominations and Voting for Parish Council in December.

On behalf of the Stewardship Committee we thank-you for your support of God’s Church in Tampa. Please feel free to share your thoughts to the office email - officestjohnngotampa@gmail.com or speak directly with Fr. Stavros, Sandra Pappas or Pete Trakas -Stewardship Co-Chairs. We are here for YOU!

St. John the Baptist Feastday

On January 6-7, we celebrated our annual Feastday of St. John the Baptist, the Patron Saint of our Parish. On January 6, Fr. James Rousakis presided over the Vespers Service, assisted by Fr. Stavros, Fr. Jim Paris (Clearwater), Fr. Soteri Rousakis (St. Pete), Fr. Gregory Edwards (New Port Richey), Fr. Sampson Kasapakis (Tarpon Springs), Fr. Andrew Pavlakos (Clearwater) and Dn. John Pantellis (St. Pete). On January 7, His Grace Bishop Sevastianos of Zela officiated at the Divine Liturgy, assisted by Fr. Stavros, Fr. Jim Paris, Fr. Athanasios Haros (Tarpon Springs), Fr. John Bociu (Sarasota), Fr. Sampson Kasapakis, Fr. Andrew Pavlakos and Deacon John Pantelis. Mary Nenos offered an Artoklasia at both services and decorated our icons of St. John. The Philoptochos sponsored a reception following Vespers. 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!

News from St. John Legacy Society

The Easiest Way to Make an Impact

A Gift in Your Will or Living Trust

Interested in helping our beloved St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church well into the future but feel overwhelmed by the thought of writing another check or giving up your assets today? A simple, flexible and versatile way to ensure we can continue our work for years to come is a gift in your will or living trust, known as a charitable bequest. This special kind of gift entitles you to become a member of the St. John Legacy Society.

By including a bequest to St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in your will or living trust, you are ensuring that we can continue our mission for years to come. Your gift also entitles your estate to an unlimited federal estate tax charitable deduction.

If you have additional questions on updating your will or are considering adding a gift to St. John, 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 and Federal Tax ID # 59-1170684. Additionally, please contact Fr. Stavros at 813-876-8830, (email 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.

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

Demitrius & Katherine Klimis - Boardman, OH
Mary Spanos - St. Augustine, FL
Bessie Bliziotis - 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

Small Group Bible Studies

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.

February Meeting Dates: February 6, 13, 20

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.

February Meeting Dates: February 7, 14, 21, 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)

February Meeting Dates: February 7, 14, 21, 28

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.

February Meeting Dates: February 7, 14, 21, 28

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.

February Meeting Dates: February 1, 8, 15, 22

Talent Search

3rd Annual Greek Orthodox Youth Talent Show of Tampa Bay

GET READY FOR SHOWTIME

Sunday, February 19, 2017 6:00 p.m.

Palm Harbor University Theater

For Info & Auditions (727)741-4125

For Parish Liaison Information Email goyotalent@yahoo.com

All Proceeds Benefit the Panaghia Chapel at the Diakonia Retreat Center, Salem, NC

Hosted by Saints Raphael, Nicholas & Irene Greek Orthodox Church, Palm Harbor

For tickets call Charlie Hambos at 813-876-8830 or Charlie.hambos@gmail.com.



AHEPA FAMILY NEWS

FEBRUARY 2017



ANNUAL AHEPA FAMILY OF TAMPA SAINT JOHN DAY DINNER



AHEPA members including Supreme President of AHEPA, Andy Zachariades; Supreme Secretary of AHEPA, Carl Hollister; Supreme Governor Gus Paras and Greek Consul General Adamantia Klotsa and other AHEPA members.

On January 7, 2017, the AHEPA Family of Tampa hosted the "St. John Day" Dinner/Social at the Floridan Hotel in downtown Tampa. It was a wonderful event, as members of Supreme and Grand Lodges were in attendance as well as other dignitaries.

Guests included the Supreme President of AHEPA, Andy Zachariades; the Supreme Secretary of AHEPA, Carl Hollister; the Grand Vice President of the Daughters of Penelope Eva Jean Fomalont; Grand Governor Zone III Kathy Papadimitropoulos; and Greek Consul General in Tampa, Florida, Adamantia Klotsa. In Attendance were also District Lodge members from the Ahepa and Daughters of Penelope Citrus District 2 Lodges; Marina Paras, DOP Citrus District 2 Governor and Ourania Stephanides, DOP Citrus District 2 Lt. Governor, Past District Governors of Citrus District 2 and other Districts and Past Supreme Lodge members and other dignitaries.

Gus Paras, AHEPA Supreme Governor Region 1 was the Master of Ceremonies and welcomed the members who had traveled from many states including New Jersey, Ohio, Colorado, New Mexico and from Canada to the Tampa Bay Area. He spoke to the guests about the long history of the Daughters and AHEPA in Tampa and their many accomplishments.

Members of AHEPA including Ron Myer, Vice President, Tom Sakaris, Secretary and the Daughters of Penelope including Chris Frazier, President; Maria Zabetakis, Secretary and Elena Paras Ketchum did an outstanding job of coordinating and acting as hosts and hostesses of this beautiful evening.



Members of the Daughters of Penelope including left to right: Kathy Papadimitropoulos, Cynthia Hollister, Zachariades, Marina Paras, Nicky Stamoulis and Eva Jean Fomalant

TAMPA SONS OF PERICLES PARTICIPATE IN EPIPHANY CROSS DIVING



Orthodox Christians celebrate Epiphany on **January 6 of each year**, in remembrance of the baptism of Jesus Christ in the water of the Jordan River 2000 years ago. Following tradition, the Greek community of Tarpon Springs established that January 6 of each year was to be celebrated with the sanctification of the waters and the immersion of the cross in Spring Bayou on "Cross Day" or "Epiphany."

Young men from Greek Orthodox communities in the area dive for the cross on that day and the diver who retrieves the cross is blessed by Archbishop Demetrios for the coming year.

Four members of the Sons of Pericles of Tampa participated this year!

Members of the Sons who participated were Savvas Ferekides, Greg Koutroumanis, Harry Koutroumanis and Dean Mitseas. Also a fifth diver from Tampa was Frankie Giallourakis. Savvas Ferekides, President of the Sons said, "It was an honor to participate in diving for the Cross, we all were very excited as the day and hour approached. We will consider this a highlight event of our life and look back on it with pleasure."



Please join us for the Twelfth Annual Lenten Retreat

At St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in Tampa

Realizing My Purpose: God Made Each of Us for a Special Reason

Saturday, March 11 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Retreat Leader: Fr. Stavros N. Akrotirianakis

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

2418 Swann Avenue~Tampa, FL~33609

813-876-8830

Schedule:

9:00 a.m. *Divine Liturgy*
10:00 a.m. *Refreshments*
10:30 a.m. *Introductory Remarks: Fr. Stavros*
11:00 a.m. *Session One: Why Did God Create, and Why Did He Create Us?*
12:00 p.m. *Session Two: Finding Your Purpose and How to be less Frustrated*
1:00 p.m. *Lunch*
1:45 p.m. *Session Three: Answering other "Why" Questions – Why evil? Why Suffering? Why Christ?*
2:45 p.m. *Closing Prayer*

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 or email this information to Fr. Stavros at frstav@gmail.com by **March 6** We look forward to seeing you there!

Name: _____ Name of Spouse: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Why Are You Angry?

By Fr. Barnabas Powell

A friend of mine recently confided “Father, I’m angry.” When I asked him what he was angry about, it was telling to watch him struggle with the reason for his anger. He simply responded “I’m angry about everything! Wow, everything? As we talked, he finally began to express how angry he was at how his life had turned out. He used phrases like “If only I had” and “If only I hadn’t” and he confessed that most of his anger was directed at himself. He wasn’t satisfied with his job, his wife, his children, his relationship with God. This young man was angry! I had to confess to him that I had had periods in my own life when I was angry in this very same way.

Aristotle wisely said: “*Anybody can become angry – that is easy, but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose, and in the right way – that is not within everybody’s power and is not easy.*” We also read in scripture “*Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath*” (Ephesians 4:26). Psychologists tell us that anger is never a primary emotion; that it is an emotion that is always in reaction to a previous emotion or unfulfilled expectation. And the power of anger is a neutral emotion depending on how it is acted upon. If our anger fuels us to change in a positive way then the anger is good fuel. But, if our anger is driven inward and locked away or explodes outward and harms others, then the very same tool meant to provide us fuel for positive action becomes poison that corrodes our soul.

I think of this often when I see myself angry at someone else or even **angry with God**. Before this anger can be positive fuel, we first must look beyond the temptation to **the blinding power of anger** to it’s source: **Why am I angry?** And why am I angry at this person or situation or even God? Unless we explore these issues, most likely our anger will cause harm to us and others and we will miss the mark of being angry but not sinning.

Look at our Scripture Lesson today from that amazing book of Genesis:

And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them. Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever”- therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.” And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and

his countenance fell. The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.” Genesis 3:21-4:7

First, please note a **phenomenally important revelation!** This revelation alone will cure the false anger we may feel toward God! Look at **WHY** God sends our father and mother out of the Garden. He sent them out of the Garden **not to punish them**, but **to protect them** from an even worse fate of eating from the Tree of Life and live forever in the hellish state of separation from God, their Loving Creator! And look also; our parents had **tried to cover themselves** with leaves, but our Loving Creator **offered the first sacrifice** so that our parents’ nakedness could be covered. Their attempts to cover themselves failed, but our Loving Creator **covered them Himself**.

No wonder **Cain had no excuse** to not know about the proper sacrifice to offer God! Cain’s anger was **rooted in his insistence on having things his own way** and God saw how caustic to Cain’s soul this willful missing the point had on Cain’s life. To be sure, it was so caustic; it was so destructive, that it became the motivation for the first murder!

Notice God’s loving wisdom offered to Cain: sin is crouching at the door of Cain’s life! And **the ONLY remedy** for this dangerous moment in Cain’s life is to learn to **MASTER it!**

As we journey through Great Lent, my dearest, **the motivation** of our fasting, our increased prayers, our frequent attendance at services all lies in **learning to MASTER our desires** so that they won’t master us. It is never about getting God to love us or be happy with us or even reward us. All of these motivations **contain the poison of anger towards God** if He doesn’t do what we expect Him to do for us. But if our lenten journey can be motivated by the wise insight of **mastering our own hearts**, then we can always run into God’s presence with confidence and joy that the Father truly loves us and desires only our salvation.

Today, as you fast and pray and give alms in your lenten journey, are you willing to harness the power of anger to heal, or are you all too often mastered by anger and made a slave by it? It’s time to embrace the wisdom of Great Lent to empower your soul to master your desires and make you Orthodox on Purpose!

Fr. Barnabas Powell is the Proistamenos for Sts. Nicholas, Raphael and Irene in Cumming, GA.

A Really Good Transformation Story.

Anonymous

A few weeks ago (in between my beloved *Law & Order* reruns) I happened to see a really charming film called *Miss Congeniality*. Sandra Bullock plays an FBI agent who goes undercover into the sordid world of beauty pageants. The trouble is, she's a slob and a tomboy who has to become a contestant. With a lot of help from Michael Caine, she is metamorphosed into a self-poised and elegant beauty queen right before our very eyes.

There are many stories like this throughout folklore, literature, and film. Another one that comes to mind is the 1963 film *Cat Ballou*. Here a perpetually drunken former gunslinger named Kid Shelleen, played by Lee Marvin, goes through the arduous task of returning to his former glory. The film goes to great lengths to illustrate his conversion. In a climactic moment, we see Kid Shelleen prepare for the showdown by cleaning up (literally, by taking a bath) and ceremoniously vesting in dashing cowboy gear, replete with black chaps, silver brocade vest, and silver spurs.

By these examples, among countless others such as the quintessential Cinderella, it seems we humans are fascinated by a really good transformation story.

Now's a pretty good time of year to think about transformation. The days are getting longer, and we're yearning to see the first signs of new life. We're starting to plan spring cleaning projects (think about it: we don't call it "autumn" cleaning). Some of us are becoming concerned about getting back into that bathing suit, and the New Year is rife with diet pill and treadmill advertising. Seems everyone is jumping onto the transformation bandwagon.

Well, I'm here to tell you that transformation is HARD. If you've ever denied yourself a cookie only to find that the needle has not moved on the scale, you know what I mean. And the transformative time of Great Lent is no exception.

With its additional (and long) services, fasting, almsgiving, and confession, what's the point of this struggle and hardship during Lent? To answer that, we first need to remind ourselves of the relationship between Lent and the ultimate goal of the Lenten journey, Holy Pascha.

Pascha is, in short, Victory over Death — the beginning of a new and everlasting life. This same victory over death was given to each one of us at our baptism when we were, as St. Paul says, "buried with Christ... unto death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead we also may walk in newness of life." (Remember Kid Shelleen's bath and fancy new duds?) Death for us is now a passage, a Passover, or a Pascha into the Kingdom of God. For Christians, death, itself, is a transformation.

"Such is the faith of the church," explains Father Alexander Schmemmann in his book, *Great Lent, Journey to Pascha*. But Father Schmemmann goes on to say: "Is it not our daily experience, however, that ... in fact we live as if Christ did not rise from the dead, as if that unique event had no meaning whatsoever for us? All this because of our weakness ... We may from time to time acknowledge and confess our various 'sins,' yet

we cease to refer our life to that new life which Christ revealed and gave to us. Indeed, we live as if He never came."

Apparently, Father Schmemmann agrees: transformation is HARD. And making the transformation we received at baptism stick is a life-long process. This, Father Schmemmann concludes, is why we NEED Great Lent. This is why we need to fast, to give alms, to stand through impossibly long Lenten services throughout our seven-week journey.

Unfortunately many people, at best, merely go through the motions of Lent. At worst, some even turn their noses up at it. We've all heard people say: "It's the same thing every year." Or, "What difference does it make to God if I don't eat meat?" And "The services are so long; besides, we know how the story ends, we've seen this movie before."

These people miss out on an inner transformation — what is described as the "bright sadness" of Lent. This bright sadness only comes about when we look beyond fasting, almsgiving, and attending services as formal obligations. Rather, it is our presence and mindful participation in these activities that allow the power of Great Lent to soften our hearts and help us recover the vision of a new life.

Father Schmemmann explains: "Little by little we begin to understand, or rather to feel, that this sadness is indeed 'bright,' that a mysterious transformation is about to take place in us. It is as if we were reaching a place to which the noises and the fuss of life... have no access... no power... it is a deep happiness which comes not from a single and particular reason but from our soul having... touched 'another world'... We understand (now) that it is simply impossible to pass from our normal state of mind made up almost entirely of fuss, rush, and care, into this new one without first 'quieting down,' without restoring in ourselves a measure of inner stability."

This is the transformative power of Great Lent. But it takes effort on our part. Woody Allen once said: "Eighty percent of life is just showing up." When we "show up," the hard part is basically over. Think about how many times you just haven't wanted to get out of bed and go to work in the morning. But you do, and once you're there most days go along pretty easily.

The ending of any film isn't meaningful, and certainly isn't much fun, if you don't follow the plot from pretty early on. This year, Meatfare Sunday occurs on February 19 and Clean Monday — the official start of Great Lent — begins on February 27.

Will we mindfully take part in the transformation? Will we experience the "bright sadness" of Great Lent? Will we feel the joy that comes only at the end of a long journey of sacrifice and discipline, and standing for hours at a time?

Here's the good part: You don't need to come dressed in chaps and silver spurs. You don't need Michael Caine to give you lessons in posture. You just need to show up — body, mind, and soul. The transformative power of Lent will do the rest. And the Prince of Peace will carry you to His Kingdom.

The Historical and Orthodox Saint Valentine

By Dr. Alexandros Kyrou

Now a commercialized holiday celebrating modern Western courtship and romance, the ancient Christian origins of Saint Valentine's Day are largely forgotten. The actual Orthodox liturgical Feast Days of Valentinus (Greek)/Valentinus (Latin) commemorate two Early Christian saints, Saint Valentine the Presbyter of Rome (July 6) and Hieromartyr Valentine the Bishop of Intermna (Terni), Italy (July 30). Although the historical records for these two saints are not complete, and what we do know about their lives has often been subjected to considerable confusion, their martyrdoms are well known to us. Because of their refusal to renounce their faith in Christ, both Valentines were imprisoned, tortured, and executed around 270, during the persecution of Christians under the Roman Emperor, Claudius II.

Because they shared the same name, were contemporaries, resided near each other in central Italy, and ultimately, shared similar fates, the two Valentines' personal histories were intermingled and conflated over the centuries, producing inconsistencies and puzzlement in many accounts of their lives. What most sources indicate, however, is that Bishop Valentine was renowned during his lifetime as a healer of the sick and blind, while Valentine the Presbyter would become notable in the historical memory of Christians, originally both Eastern and Western, as a courageous steward of marriage. Indeed, because of his connection to the sacrament of marriage, it would be the latter Valentine, the Presbyter from Rome, who would serve as the inspiration for the Late Medieval Western literary foundations for what would by the nineteenth century evolve into today's popular, secular Valentine's Day.

According to the most common narrative, Presbyter Valentine, a priest in Rome, drew the ire of Emperor Claudius by ignoring the imperial ban against allowing men who had not fulfilled their military obligations to the Empire to marry. Remaining loyal to his moral commitment and beliefs as a Christian priest, Valentine refused to compromise the sanctity of marriage to the will of the state. In defiance of imperial edict, Valentine continued to unite and bless Christian couples, which were legally barred from marrying. This association with young Christian beloveds became the muse over several centuries for an increasingly fictionalized, romantic expropriation and reconstruction of Saint Valentine in the West, one that has led to the modern Saint Valentine's Day. Indeed, the memory of Saint Valentine became so distorted and uncertain over the centuries, that the Roman Catholic Church ended its commemoration and veneration—traditionally associated with mid-February in the West—of him as a calendar saint in 1969, effectively surrendering the historical Valentine to his appropriation and exploitation by Western popular culture.

As in other matters of reverence and faith, the Orthodox Church's veneration of Saint Valentine remains immutable. Secularization in the West accounts in large part for the Papacy's move to discard the memory of Saint Valentine's martyrdom in the face of commerce and frivolity, but Orthodoxy still honors Saint Valentine, the Presbyter from Rome, for his martyrdom—and as for all its saints, the Orthodox Church honors St. Valentine as a model of the life in Christ.

For Orthodox Christians, Saint Valentine's Day is most fully understood as a celebration of romantic love and of God's love. Indeed, Valentine was willing to sacrifice his life not for Eros but in order to sanctify and make whole the union of young couples through the blessing of God's love. Demonstrating our love for God and reaching our fulfillment in Christ through our relationships with our spouses, families, and communities, is a way of life that is at the heart of Orthodoxy. By living a life in emulation of Christ, Saint Valentine shared this fundamental truth of Orthodox Christianity with the world, one that is more beautiful and lasts longer than flowers and cards—it is eternal.

Dr. Alexandros K. Kyrou is Professor of History at Salem State University, where he teaches on the Balkans, Byzantium, and the Ottoman Empire.



Do You Need a Heart Transplant?

By Rick Warren

"The fear of human opinion disables; trusting in God protects you from that" (Proverbs 29:25 MSG).

If you're going to get control of anger in your life, you must base your identity in Jesus, understanding that he loves you unconditionally, that you are his, that you are valuable, and that he has a purpose and plan for your life.

If you build your identity on anything else, you'll struggle with insecurity your whole life. You can build your identity on your job, but you can lose your job. You can build your identity on how good-looking you are, but you may lose your good looks. You can build your identity on the person you married, but he or she is going to die. You can build your identity on being popular, but you're not always going to be popular.

If you build your identity on anything that can be taken away from you, you're going to be insecure, and insecurity is at the root of your anger. Until you start feeling secure about yourself, people are going to be able to push your buttons. When you know who you are and whose you are, people can't push your buttons. They can't get to you. Anger and insecurity go together. The more insecure you feel, the angrier you feel.

The Bible says in Proverbs 29:25, *"The fear of human opinion disables; trusting in God protects you from that" (MSG).*

When you get angry, your mouth just reveals what's inside your heart. A harsh tongue reveals an angry heart. A negative tongue reveals a fearful heart. A boasting tongue reveals an insecure heart. An overactive tongue reveals an unsettled heart. A judgmental tongue reveals a guilty heart. A critical tongue reveals a bitter heart. A filthy tongue reveals an impure heart.

On the other hand, an encouraging tongue reveals a happy heart, a gentle tongue reveals a loving heart, and a controlled tongue reveals a peaceful heart.

You know what you need to get rid of your anger problem? You need a heart transplant. Fortunately, God specializes in heart transplants. It's called salvation! God gives you a brand new heart and a brand new identity. You don't have to find your identity in your job or your bank account or your good looks or your relationships, because you find your identity in what God says about you.

Jesus can heal the three things that cause anger: hurt, frustration, and fear. Jesus can heal your hurting heart with his love. Jesus can replace your frustrated heart with his peace. Jesus can replace your insecure heart with a heart full of his strength and love.

If you pick up a crying baby and hold it close so that it feels warm and secure, it stops crying. It stops being angry. When you feel secure and accepted in Jesus Christ, your anger is going to dissipate.

Maybe you need to pray this prayer today: "Dear God, I admit I have a problem with my anger. I let other people push my buttons, I get even, and I don't think before speaking. I'm asking for your help. Help me to reflect before reacting. Help me to learn to release my anger appropriately. I want to find my identity in you. I surrender myself completely to you. Come into my life. Save me. Amen."

PLEASE COMMEMORATE THE NAMES OF MY DEPARTED FAMILY MEMBERS IN THE SATURDAY OF THE SOULS MEMORIAL SERVICES - February 18, February 25, March 4

In Memory of

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

****You only need to write the first name of each person. Please mail to the church office by February 15.**

~ February 2017 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1** MBS 7:30 a.m. OCF @ USF 7:45 p.m.	2 Presentation of Christ Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. YAH 11:30 Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.– 8:30 p.m.	3**	4 Young at Heart's Apokreatiko Glendi
5 Orthros 8:30 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Youth Sunday Get Acquainted Sunday Souper Bowl Sunday OCMC luncheon AHEPA Valentines Baskets	6 Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Orthodoxy 101 6:30 p.m.	7 WBS 10:00 a.m. EBS 6:30 p.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	8 MBS 7:30 a.m.	9 Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.– 8:30 p.m.	10 St. Haralambos Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. MOVIE Night- Risen 6:30 p.m.	11
12 Orthros 8:30 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Wear RED Sunday GOYA 5:00 p.m. SS Confession 1-3rd AHEPA Valentines Baskets	13 Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	14 WBS 10:00 a.m. EBS 6:30 p.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m. Clergy Meetings	15** MBS 7:30 a.m. Clergy Meetings OCF @USF 7:45 p.m.	16 Clergy Meetings Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.– 8:30 p.m.	17**	18 Community Outreach 1st Saturday of Souls Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
19 Orthros 8:30 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Oratorical Festival AHEPA DOP mtg YAL 5:00 p.m. Talent show-Palm Harbor 6:00 p.m.	20** Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	21** WBS 10:00 a.m. EBS 6:30 p.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	22** MBS 7:30 a.m.	23** ECUMENICAL Service at Christ the King 630 p.m. Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.– 8:30 p.m.	24**	25** 2nd Saturday of Souls Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. (at cemetery) GOYA Lock-in
26** Orthros 8:30 Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Sunday School Pre-Lent Retreat Forgiveness Vespers 6:00 p.m.	27** Clean Monday Canon of St. Andrew 10:00 a.m. Holy Unction 6:00 p.m.	28** WBS 10:00 a.m. EBS 6:30 p.m. SBS 7:00 p.m.				

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

2418 W. Swann Avenue

Tampa, FL 33609-4712

Office: (813) 876-8830 Fax: (813) 443-4899

officestjohnngoctampa@gmail.com

www.greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com

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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, VP 813-340-8737

Gary Ward, Treasurer 813-846-3898

Sandra Pappas, Secretary 813-785-3747

George Chagaris 727-420-1920

Carole Fotopoulos 813-982-0947

Jimmy Konstas 813-220-7352

Catherine Mitseas 813-571-0658

Ryan Rindone 704-564-2046

Aris Rogers, II 813-309-5575

Dante Skourellos 813-765-9534

Office Staff

Monica Gjerde, Office Manager 813-876-8830

officestjohnngoctampa@gmail.com

Debbie Bowe, Bookkeeper

debstjohnnpa@gmail.com fax: 813-443-4899

Adult Greek School

Magda Myer 813-909-2327

AHEPA

Gus Paras, President 813-254-6980

Altar Angels

Engie Halkias 813-932-5859

Sia Blankenship 813-968-8855

Basketball

Perry Katsamakias 516-403-3118

Jimmy Konstas 813-220-7352

Bible Study

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

Bookstore

Bill Manikas 813-960-3679

Chanter

Nick Andreadakis 813-516-6081

Choir

Artie Palios, Director 813-831-1294

Ruth Losovitz, Organist 727-688-2782

Community Outreach

Betty Katherine Katsamakias 813-468-1596

Dance Group

H XAPA MAE, Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668

Bessie Palios, 813-523-0347

Maraquet Edquid 813-422-8963

Parea, Marina Choundas 813-877-6136

Anna Maria Bavaro 732-239-9085

Panigyri, Vanessa Aviles 813-221-2194

Daughters of Penelope

Chris Frazier, President 813-661-2290

Finance Committee

Gary Ward 813-846-3898

Food Pantry

Anetta Alexander 813-758-2689

Gasparilla Parking

John Kokkas 727-992-4615

GOYA

Maria Koutroumanis 813-245-3854

Kara Kataras 863-669-6739

Hope/Joy

Amy Kafantaris 727-743-1297

Debbie Nicklow 813-690-0671

Junior Olympics

Bryon 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 Alsina 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 Kavouklis 813-258-5571

Stewardship

Sandra Pappas 813-785-3747

Pete Trakas 813-505-2193

Sunday School

Vickie Peckham 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.