

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*

May 2018

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

Christ is Risen!

Χριστὸς Ανέστη!

As I write this message towards the end of Bright Week (Renewal Week), I hope that you will feel renewed in your souls, as I am in mine, for the beautiful journey of Holy Week that we have just completed. By the time you receive this edition of *The Messenger*, we'll be three weeks post-Pascha but still greeting each other with the Paschal greeting. Even though this year's journey will fade into the recesses of memory and off the front burner, I hope that you'll remember some of the things that happened in Holy Week this year.

One Word Sermons

Each service had a one-word theme to the sermon. I have listed each one, along with a few words highlighting the word, hopefully jogging your memory on the importance of these seventeen words.

Saturday of Lazarus - **Change** - *John 11:27-Martha said to Jesus "Yes, Lord; I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, He who is coming into the world."*

We know the story of Mary and Martha, recounted in Luke 10, when Jesus visits their home and Martha is running around stressed out about serving. Jesus seems to scold her, that she is anxious and troubled about many things but that Mary has chosen the one needful thing. On Saturday of Lazarus, Martha says to Jesus *"Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, He who is coming into the world."* (John 11:27) When it really counted, Martha got it right. She confessed Jesus as the Christ at great peril to herself. Martha is proof positive that we are all capable of change and spiritual growth.

Palm Sunday - **Engaged** - *John 12:17-18 - The crowd that had been with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet Him was that they heard He had done this sign.*

This is our parish's one word for 2018. The crowd on Palm Sunday wasn't really engaged. *"The reason why the crowd went to meet Him, was that they heard He had done this sign."* (John 12:18) The crowd heard about Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. They came probably out of curiosity, most of them. Because this same crowd turned on Jesus five days later demanding that He be crucified. This is a reminder to us that we need to be engaged in our faith, to have a firm grounding in it. So that when the crowd turns against Christianity, we stay with Christ.

Palm Sunday Night - **Faith** - *Matthew 25:10 And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with Him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut.* On Palm Sunday Night, we had the procession of the Icon of Christ the Bridegroom, led by our Bridegroom Maidens. The story of the maidens tells us that five were foolish and five were wise. The foolish maidens did not have extra oil. The wise maidens had oil, but didn't share it with the foolish ones. Why? Because the oil represents the faith. And while we can tell others about our faith, faith is ours to possess for ourselves. The lesson here is to have enough faith at all times, so that if the bridegroom comes, we are ready.

Holy Monday Morning - **Focus** - *Psalm 127:1 - Unless the Lord builds the house, in vain do the builders toil.*



The Gospel on Holy Monday morning talks about the end times. The lesson is to remain focused on Christ regardless of the distractions, and that if our focus is not on Him, then anything we do or build is done or built in vain.

Holy Monday Evening - **Stewardship** - *Matthew 25:14-15* - *For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability.*

The service focuses on the parable of the Talents, Matthew 25:14-30. Everyone has a talent. Our talent is supposed to be used to honor God and serve one another. Our talent is not just our abilities, but our talent also represents our life. God doesn't expect us only to be good stewards of our gifts but of our very lives.

Holy Tuesday Morning - **Habits** - *Matthew 25:37* - *Then the righteous will answer Him, "Lord, when did we see Thee hungry and feed Thee, or thirsty and give Thee drink?"*

The Parable of the Last Judgment talks of those who ran to feed the hungry and those who didn't. To serve or not to serve was a habit for each. What each didn't realize was that they were serving or failing to serve the Lord Himself. It's important that service become a habit for each of us.

Holy Tuesday Evening - **Repentance** - *Matthew 9:13* - *Go and learn what this means "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice." For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."*

Repentance means changing our orientation to look more inwardly at our own hearts and souls. This service shows the contrast between Judas and a sinful woman. Judas, a disciple,

betrayed the Lord. The sinful woman, turned her life towards Christ through repentance. The lesson here is it's not where you start but where you finish, that is important to Christ.

Holy Wednesday Morning - **Faithfulness** - *Matthew 24:45* - *"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing.*

The Gospel lesson Holy Wednesday morning is very short—it talks about the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. Because we wanted each message to be positive, the word of the service was faithfulness. We have to always be faithful to the Lord, and resist the temptations to betray Him through our actions.

Holy Wednesday Evening - **Healing** - *Psalms 51:10* - *Create in me a clean heart, o God, and renew a right spirit within me.*

Only God can create things. Man can make things. When our hearts are broken, or need to be recreated in God's image, God can do that. God can recreate them. This service of Holy Unction, through its healing prayers, asks God to recreate new and clean hearts in each of us, and to renew our spirits.

On Holy Wednesday night, we also prayed for Christina Drisko, a young woman who was battling cancer. No one had any way of knowing that she would pass away only four days later. While we prayed for God's will to be done, His miracle for Christina was not going to be restored health, but rather entrance into His Kingdom. Continued prayers for her family. May her memory be eternal!

Holy Thursday Morning - **Communion** - *I Corinthians 11:25-26* - *"Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."*

For as often as you eat this Bread and drink the Cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Holy Thursday morning commemorates the Institution of the Eucharist, which is central to our faith, and which sustains us in our Christian lives. We are supposed to receive Communion often.

Holy Thursday Evening - **Surrender** - *John 10:11 - I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.*

Holy Thursday evening's service began a 28 hour vigil of prayer and worship in our church. We've never had continuous prayer for that long. The procession of the crucified Christ afforded us an opportunity to remember Christ surrendering His life for us. It also afforded us each an opportunity to pray before His Cross and to come and surrender something to Him.

Good Friday Morning - **Vigilance** - *Matthew 26: 40-41 - And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and He said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak."*

In the middle of our church's vigil, the service of the Royal Hours provided us an opportunity to remember the few who stood vigil at the cross of Christ. We are reminded that we have to remain vigilant in our lives and not abandon Christ or our Christian faith in difficult times.

Good Friday Afternoon - **Remember** - *Philippians 2: 5-11 - Have this in mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

In this sermon, I talked about the value of learning multiplication tables. We all learned our times tables through repetition. But learning these things is not useful unless we apply them to real life settings. For an example, 7 hamburgers that cost \$4 each will cost a consumer \$28. That's the value of 7×4 . We learn about our faith through repetition. Thus, the Holy Week journey each year. However, the information we learn isn't useful unto itself. We are supposed to apply what we learn to how we live and how we serve others.

Good Friday Evening - **Hope** - *Psalms 130:5-6 - I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord.*

When all hope seems lost, we must place our hope in the Lord. And if we have all things but no hope in salvation, then those things are just things.

John 15:5-7 - I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in Him, He it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If a man does not abide in Me, He is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.



The decorated tomb of Christ was beautiful. But it was also "dead." The beautiful flowers will only remain beautiful for a little while, since they are separated from their stems and life. Likewise, we cannot be spiritually alive unless we abide in the Lord.

Matthew 7:13-14 - Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

One of the most important rituals in Holy Week is passing under the Epitaphios. This ritual prefigures when we pass away from this life. We stand outside the church, in the stress of the world. Through the doors of the church, we see that it is light, peaceful and beautiful. There is a narrow way to enter, the narrow door, under the tomb of Christ. If we enter through the narrow gate, when we pass from this life, we will enter eternal life. However, we have to pass through the narrow gate, which means we need to be in line, which means we need to have heard the message and gotten into the line.

Holy Saturday Morning - **Expectations** - *Romans 6:11 - So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

God has expectations of us—He expects us to live dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. We have expectations of Him—that our life will lead to eternal life. Holy Saturday morning also provides us a brief history of salvation, from the creation to the Second Coming.

Anastasi - **JOY** - I have printed this entire sermon following this article.

Agape Vespers - **Go** - *Matthew 28:19-20 - 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.

The end of the Holy Week journey is not supposed to be an ending but a new beginning. And we are supposed to GO and do something with the information we've received and the renewal we've experience. We are supposed to go and spread the good news.

Many Thanks

I want to first express my thanks to everyone for a beautiful and memorable Holy Week journey in 2018:

First and foremost, I am thankful to Charlie Hambos, our Pastoral Assistant, who is fulfilling that role in every way that it can be fulfilled. He provides so much assistance so that when I as the Pastor step in front of the altar, so much of the background stuff is all set. Charlie does a great job chanting, interfacing with all of our ministries, and filling in all of the many blanks. He really has become the glue that holds a lot of our operation together.

The choir did a fantastic job throughout Lent and Holy Week. I am thankful for their many hours of practice which made for a flawless celebration of the liturgical services. Thank you to Artie Palios and to our entire choir.

Our chanters, Nick Andreadakis and Charlie Hambos, do a great job at ALL of the divine services of the church year. What a beautiful journey through the services of the Great Compline, the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, the Salutations Services, the Sunday services and all of the Holy Week services. Thank you also to the many people who served as readers at the services.

Our Light-Bearers, Elizabeth Xenick, Madeline Moran and Mia Lenardos, who played the role of the women who came to the empty tomb on Pascha and spread the Light of the Risen Christ.

Our young people played a big role in the Holy Week services:

~Many of them are now singing in the choir

~Many of our young girls served as Bridegroom Maidens at the Bridegroom Services of Palm Sunday night, Holy Monday night and Holy Tuesday night.

~Seven of our 6th grade girls took on the role of the myrrh-bearers at the Lamentations service. A special thanks to Vickie Peckham who organized both the maidens and myrrh-bearers this year

~ An "army" of altar boys served during the week and it was especially moving to see them standing guard at the foot of the Cross and at the tomb.

For the sixth year in a row, we kept "vigil" at the Cross of Christ. For many people, this was THE highlight of the week, reading Psalms at the Cross in the early morning hours. We began our Holy Thursday service of the Passion of Christ at 6:30 p.m., immediately followed by the Vigil from 10:00 p.m. until 9:00 a.m. on Good Friday, followed by the Royal Hours from 9:00-11:00 a.m. The vigil continued after the Hours until the service of the Unnailing, and then from the end of the Unnailing Service until the Lamentations. This means that there was a continuous service in our church for over 28 hours. Thank you to Charlie for organizing this again and for the many people who came at intervals throughout the night to keep vigil at the Cross. Thank you also to Mary Maas who helped lead the vigil during the day on Good Friday. If you missed this this year, plan from now to come next year!

Thank you Lisa Alsina for leading the effort to decorate the eggs. And on Pascha, thanks to Genie Carter for organizing the Easter egg hunt.

Thank you Engie Halkias and all of her helpers for decorating the church, for cleaning it between all the services, and for decorating the Kouvouklion. Thank you to all those who donated flowers during Lent and Holy Week as well.

Thank you to Tom Georgas and the ushers for having everything in good "order." Thanks to the men who carried the Epitaphios on Good Friday evening.

The Palm Sunday luncheon, sponsored by our Philoptochos Society, was well attended, enabling our Philoptochos to raise

funds for its various charities and ministries, and I am thankful to all who attended.

Our annual Sunday School retreat had over 50 participants. In addition, 20 GOYAns helped prepare the eggs, candles, and bay leaves for Good Friday and Holy Saturday. A special thanks to Debbie Nicklow for organizing the retreat this year, and to the many parents and teachers who lent a hand.

Thank you to all those who took photographs, and to Olya Clifton who leads our photo ministry - **please go to our website and click on the Flickr link to see all of the pictures from Holy Week.** Thank you to our many photographers for taking some great shots. If you want to re-live any of Holy Week, all the services are uploaded on our web page as well.

Thank you to the Parish Council for hosting the dinner after the Anastasi. Thank you to the GOYAns for hosting the Good Friday reception.

Thank you to our Welcoming Ministry for welcoming our parishioners throughout the week.

Thank you to Charlie and Deb for all the behind the scenes

work in the office.

And thank you most of all to YOU, the faithful, who came to the services. Your presence and your prayers are what make us a church. You can have beautiful music and beautiful flowers but the most important ingredient in Holy Week is beautiful people who come to pray, to worship, to relive, to remember and to renew themselves in the Light of the Resurrected Christ.

One Final Note on Holy Week: Holy Week reflects, in my opinion, the church at its best. The greatest church attendance by the most number of people occurs during Holy Week. Imagine the kind of community we could have if this many people were stewards, if this many people attended on a regular basis. Imagine the kind of witness we could give for our faith. Imagine how many people we could help. Imagine the difference we could make. Let's move from imagining to DOING. Let's strive to be that community that we are during Holy Week all year round.

With love in the Risen Lord,

+Fr. Stavros

Father Stavros' Paschal Sermon 2018

The Greek words *Hara*, meaning "joy," *Haris* meaning "grace" and *Efharistia*, meaning "thanksgiving" are all related. The person who is filled with joy is also filled with thanksgiving. For no one can feel joy and ingratitude at the same time. You may wonder how can someone who is filled with joy experience grace, something we usually think of as reserved for people who are broken. The person who is joyful can still feel the need for God's grace. Their joy comes from knowing that even though they are still a fallen person, and broken in many ways, that God's grace can heal what is infirm and complete what is lacking in them. It's God's grace that creates a clean heart and a renewed Spirit and restores the joy of salvation, as we read in Psalm 50. Joy, Grace, Thanksgiving—all are related.

Concluding our Holy Week journey that has highlighted one word themes for each sermon, the word for tonight's service is joy. We've heard this word throughout the week, even during the heavier services of the week. The night before He was crucified, Jesus spoke to His disciples about joy. We read about joy Holy Thursday night in the first of the Twelve Gospels of His Passion.

In John 16:21-22, Jesus tells His disciples *"when a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world. So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you."* There will be times of travail in every human life. There will be times when we will feel confusion, doubt, despair, even anguish. There will be times when we fall to temptation, or make a mistake. There will be rough patches in marriages, with children, with



friends, with finances, with health and in many other ways. Christ says that through Him, sorrow can be turned to joy, hearts can again rejoice, bad times can be forgotten, relationships can be restored and that no one can take joy, and by extension grace, and gratitude away from us. In Colossians 1:13-14, we read that God, *"has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."* This is joyful news indeed.

Joy is a choice. I can choose to greet each day with joy if I want to. I can choose to see the good in others. I can see a

glass as half empty or half filled. The person of joy sees what is good. The person of joy spreads joy wherever they go.

One thing I have learned this Lent is that we should embrace each day with joy. We should see each day as a gift. We should seek to make the most of each day, of each opportunity that each day brings, of each personal encounter we have during each day. We shouldn't want to waste even one of them on things that are not joyful.

You might be asking yourself "How can a person choose to be so joyful all the time? In the 'real world' how can one have this kind of joy?" The answer is, the truest expression of joy is found in God. Greeting the day with joy of the Lord will set the tone of the day. Greeting a challenge with the joy of the Lord, will always help overcome it. Joy is found in understanding that God created you special. He gave you talents and gifts that are unique to you. We will read shortly in the Gospel at the Divine Liturgy from John 1:12: *"To all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God."* This means that Christ wants each of us, no matter who we are, or what we've done, to become His children. We may differ in talents, in successes, and in many other ways, but God has the same desire for each of us, to embrace us as His children. This is also joyful news.

This evening, we have the opportunity to receive Him twice—in a few moments we will receive the Light from His everlasting Light. As we light the candles in our hands, we are invited to receive not only fire and warmth, but Christ Himself, the Light that shines in the darkness, the Light that no darkness can overtake. Wherever you are in your life tonight, if it's going well or if it's falling apart, come and receive Christ with joy. If the Light in your soul has gone out, relight it with the Light of the Resurrected Christ. And if your Light is burning brightly, receive His Light again so that it may burn even more brightly.

During the Divine Liturgy, we will again have the opportunity to receive Christ in the sacrament of Holy Communion. This opportunity is neither ritual nor routine but a special gift each time it is offered. Will you receive this Gift tonight? How about next Sunday? And the next one after that?

In one of the prayers we are supposed to offer after we receive Communion, we pray: *"May I pass from this life in the hope of eternal life, and attain to the everlasting rest, where the voices of Your Saints who feast are unceasing, and their joy, beholding the ineffable beauty of Your countenance, is unending. For*

You, Christ our God are the true joy and gladness of those who love You, and all creation praises You forever." This is God's hope for each of us—that we will pass from this life into everlasting life, and live like Adam and Eve did before the fall, in a state of everlasting joy. Partaking of Him in joy through the sacrament of Holy Communion is an integral part in our journey to salvation—Receiving Christ sustains us, focuses us, and renews joy and hope each time.

The choice to have joy is a choice we should make daily. In Psalm 118:24, we read, *"This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."* It doesn't say "this is the year, or the month, or the life, or the career." It says "This is the DAY God made for us, let us choose to have joy in it. Let us choose to have gratitude in it. Let us seek God's grace in it." It doesn't mean "live for today with no thought for tomorrow" or any other such reckless thought. It means serve God and others with your best effort TODAY. And then go do it again tomorrow. It means to spread joy today and to spread it again tomorrow. It means to be thankful today and thankful tomorrow. It means to live today and every day with purpose and focus, on loving Christ and serving others. I guarantee you that if you go out of your way each day (not each week, but each day) to intentionally serve someone else, and to spend some time with Christ in prayer, I guarantee that if you do those things, you'll come to Pascha next year with joy.

Choose joy.

Choose to spread joy.

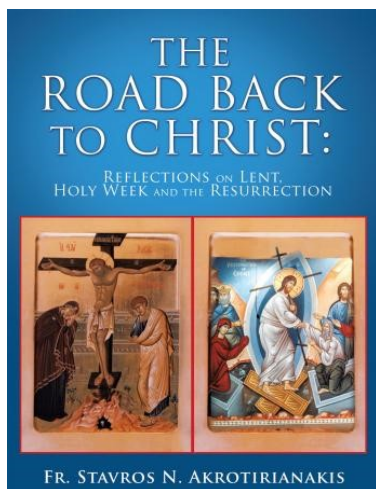
Make it a daily choice.

Sharing joy isn't just about sharing good news, but about sharing the Good News. Show people gratitude and show people love, and you'll show them Christ, you'll show them what true joy is.

I close this Lenten journey with the words of Psalm 50:

Create in me a clean heart O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the JOY of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

THIS is the DAY that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.



The Road Back to Christ: Reflections on Lent, Holy Week and the Resurrection is now on sale and available in our bookstore and online!

It is a series of daily reflections to be read from the beginning of Triodion, continuing on through Great Lent, Holy Week and the Pascha season, ending on the Sunday of All Saints (This year June 3). If you haven't picked up your copy, it's not too late to start. There are still fifty reflections post-Resurrection that are part of this book. This book costs \$18.99 and all monies taken in at the bookstore go to the church.

Liturgical Schedule for May 2018

Wednesday, May 2 **Feast of Mid-Pentecost**
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, May 6 **Sunday of the Samaritan Woman**
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains & St. Mark
Ushers: Nick Kavouklis, George Trimikliniotis, Peter Theophanous
Welcoming Ministry: Greeters: Skip Higdon, Debbie Kavouklis; Ambassador: Edie Kavouklis
Caller: Julie Palios; Getting Acquainted: Mike Xenick, Maria Xenick
Coffee Hour: Altar Angels
Bookstore: John & Anetta Alexander



Tuesday, May 8 **Feast of St. John the Theologian/St. Arsenios**
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, May 13 **Sunday of the Blind Man**
Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains & St. Luke
Ushers: Ron Myer, Jim Armstrong, John Alexander
Welcoming Ministry: Greeters: Michael Palios, Bessie Palios;
Ambassador: Maria Koutroumanis; Caller: Vickie Peckham
Coffee Hour: Young at Heart
Bookstore: Thom & Angie Bougas

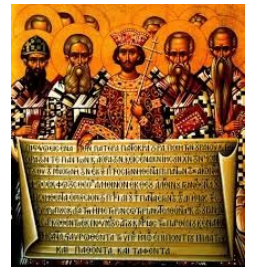


Tuesday, May 15 **Apodosis (Leave-Taking) of Pascha - Fr. Stavros' Anniversary of Ordination**
Evening Divine Liturgy
Orthros 5:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 17 **Feast of the Ascension**
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, May 20 **Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council**
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains & St. John
Ushers: Brett Mourer, Josef Fenton, Amin Hanhan
Welcoming Ministry: Greeters: Marena Patrascioiu, Tanya Robinson;
Ambassador: Katherine Sakkis; Caller: Despina Sibley
Coffee Hour: National AHEPA Day
Bookstore: Carole Fotopoulos



Monday, May 21 **Feast of Sts. Constantine and Helen**
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 26 **Saturday of the Souls**
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, May 27 **Pentecost**
Orthros 8:15 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m. Kneeling Service 11:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Anyone attending may serve
Ushers: David Voykin, Ed Gerecke, Pete Trakas
Welcoming Ministry: Greeters: Kalliope Chagaris, Carole Fotopoulos;
Ambassador: Elaine Halkias; Caller: Christene Worley
Coffee Hour: Young Adults
Bookstore: Ellen Karaku



Liturgical Notes for May 2018

The Pentecostarion - The 50 Days After Pascha

The period of 50 days between Pascha & Pentecost is referred to as the "Pentecostarion." The period of forty days between Pascha Sunday and the day of the Ascension is known as the period of Pascha (or Easter). It is a period set aside by the Church for the specific celebration of Christ's glorious resurrection. It is a celebration of "rebirth". . . .The rebirth of God's creation which surrounds us, and the rebirth of the spirit within each and every one of us! This period is not merely a ritualistic celebration but a celebration which can be seen, felt, heard and talked about. It is a very REAL celebration which CAN make our entire being jump with JOY. It is a celebration which offers us HOPE. It is a celebration which offers us the TRUE FREEDOM found only in Jesus Christ! During the 40 days of Pascha, we are to greet each other with the greeting "Christ is Risen" or "Χριστὸς Ανέστη!," to which the response is "Truly He is Risen" or "Ἀληθῶς Ανέστη!"

No Kneeling until Pentecost

It is actually the Tradition in the Orthodox Church that we not kneel on Sundays in honor of the Resurrection of Christ (exceptions being if you are receiving the sacrament of confession on a Sunday, or are present at an ordination on a Sunday). Because we do not worship on a daily basis in our church communities, priests have encouraged people to kneel on Sundays, the thought being that if we do not kneel on Sundays, that we'll never kneel in church. It is a Tradition, that for 50 days after Pascha, we do not kneel in honor of the Resurrection. The next time we will kneel after Pascha is on the Feast of Pentecost (May 27 of this year), after the liturgy, at the Vespers of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, when the priest says "Again and again on bended knees let us pray to the Lord." Until you hear that petition, do not kneel from April 8 - May 27.

Some of the remaining feasts of the Pentecostarion include:



Wednesday, May 2 - Feast of Mid-Pentecost

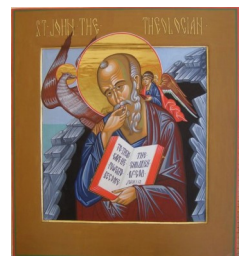
This feast day depicts Christ the teacher, foreshadows the teaching to the Samaritan Woman, celebrated the following Sunday, and it is the feast day of teachers. About the middle of the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, He went up again to the Temple and taught. The Jews, marveling at the wisdom of His words, said, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" But Christ first reproached their unbelief and lawlessness, then proved to them by the Law that they sought to slay Him unjustly, supposedly as a despiser of the Law, since He had healed the paralytic on the Sabbath. This feast is held mid-way between Pascha and Pentecost.

Sunday, May 6 - Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

Christ talks about the water of eternal life which will never make us thirst again. The woman here is St. Photini.

Tuesday, May 8 - Feast of St. John the Theologian and St. Arsenios

On May 8, we celebrate the feast of St. John the Theologian, the author of the fourth Gospel, as well as the Epistles of St. John and the book of Revelation. On the same day, we also celebrate the feast of St. Arsenios, a monk of the 5th Century.



Sunday, May 13 - Sunday of the Blind Man

The theme of LIGHT! Commemoration of the healing of the blind man which leads us to the reality of the healing of our own spiritual blindness.

Tuesday, May 15 - Apodosi (Leave-Taking) of Pascha - Father Stavros' Anniversary of

Ordination This marks the end of the Paschal Season. It is a repeat of the Resurrection Service and Liturgy of Pascha and is the last time of the Liturgical year that we sing Χριστὸς Ανέστη. We will celebrate this feast on Tuesday, May 15, with an evening Liturgy at 6:00 p.m. (Orthros will begin at 5:00 p.m. and is a replication of the Resurrection Service from Pascha).

Furthermore, Fr. Stavros was ordained to the Holy Priesthood of the Greek Orthodox Church on May 15, 1998. This will mark his 20th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. Every year, Fr. Stavros marks this anniversary by celebrating Divine Liturgy in thanksgiving for the gift of priestly ministry. This year, Fr. Stavros will celebrate Liturgy for his anniversary on Tuesday, May 15, in thanksgiving for 20 years of priestly ministry. Please come and join him in prayer that day.



Thursday, May 17 - Ascension

This marks the feast where Christ ascended to heaven, 40 days after the Resurrection, thus completing His earthly ministry.

Sunday, May 20 - Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

We pay homage to the collective triumph of the Church over false doctrine. The first Ecumenical Council authored the Creed. It took place in Nicaea in the year 325. This is why we call the Creed "The Nicene Creed." This Council also established the date of Pascha and decided on which books would comprise the Bible.



Monday, May 21 - Sts. Constantine and Helen

May 21 commemorates the feast of Sts. Constantine and Helen. St. Constantine was the emperor of the Roman Empire who decided to make Christianity the official religion of the empire. For the first time in history, the Christian church would not fall under persecution. St. Constantine also moved the capital of the Empire from Rome to Constantinople (present day Istanbul, Turkey), where he inaugurated the Byzantine Empire which flourished from 325 until 1453. He also convened the first Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in the year 325, which inaugurated what is known as the "golden age of Orthodoxy," and resulted in the writing of the Nicene Creed (edited to its current version in the year 381). St. Helen, the mother of St. Constantine, is recognized as being the person who found the true cross of Christ in Jerusalem.

She went on a pilgrimage to the Holy City and searched diligently for the Cross, finding it under a patch of Basil (Vasiliko) on the Mountain of Golgotha. Sts. Constantine and Helen have the title *Isapostolou*, "Equal to the Apostles" because of the tremendous contributions they made to the Orthodox Christian Church.

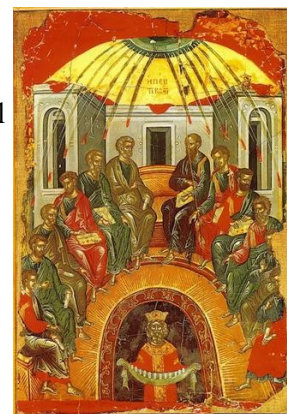
Saturday, May 26 - Saturday of the Souls

There are four Saturdays set aside during the year for us to honor our loved ones who have fallen asleep. One of them is the Saturday before Pentecost, this year on May 26. We will have Divine Liturgy and a memorial service that day. Please bring Kolyva (boiled wheat) along with a list of names of those whom you would like to have commemorated (separate sheet provided).

Sunday, May 27 - Pentecost

This feast commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles fifty days after Pascha, filling them with power, strength, wisdom and courage to spread the GOOD NEWS of Jesus Christ to the entire world. Pentecost is the celebration of the birth of the Christian Church!!!. A special Vespers Service will be held after Divine Liturgy on Pentecost (May 27), where three prayers will be offered, asking for the Holy Spirit to descend upon us as we mark this feast day. As a reminder, we do NOT kneel in church until AFTER the Divine Liturgy on Pentecost (we do not kneel at the Divine Liturgy on Pentecost) at the Vespers of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, when the priest says "Again and again ON BENDED KNEES let us pray to the Lord."

There is no fasting the week after Pentecost. However, there is a fast for the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul which lasts from the Monday after all Saints Day (June 4 this year) - June 28. So there is a 24-day fast before the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul. When Pascha falls earlier, this fast period is longer.



Sunday, June 3 - Sunday of All Saints

The period of the Pentecostarion is now complete with the commemoration of "All Saints."

**Interested in Joining the Prayer Team? Want to be more ENGAGED?
Has God called you to be one of His Disciples? Learn about the benefits
and rewards of becoming His Disciple today.**



Over 1220 people have! The Prayer Team is a daily message that Father Stavros has been writing for more than 3 years! Over half of our parish receives it daily, as well as many people outside of our parish. Each day, a scripture verse, a reflection written by Father, and a prayer are emailed to the Prayer Team via Constant Contact. If you would like to join the Prayer Team, please email Charlie at charlie.hambos@gmail.com and ask him to add you. If you receive the daily emails already and want to add a friend, please email Charlie or follow the link at the bottom of the daily emails to do so. If you want to forward to a friend, please use the "forward to a friend" option rather than simply forwarding from your email. Also, make sure frstav@gmail.com has been added to your contacts so that these emails stay in your Inbox rather than going to the Junk or Spam folders.

St. John the Baptist Community News

Parish Registry

Baptism—Sophia Joy Lindiakos, daughter of Richard and Lauren Lindiakos, was baptized on Sunday, March 18. Angela Lindiakos and Norman Gates were the Godparents. Na Sas Zisi!

Baptism—Constantinos Nico Matassini was baptized on Sunday, March 18. Peter and Erin Politis were the Godparents. Na Sas Zisi!

Baptism—Frances (Theofania) Blake Bedan was baptized on Friday, March 23. Stephanie Bassos Silvert was the Godparent. Na Sas Zisi!

Baptism—Charlotte Alexandra Calamunci, daughter of Alex and Sarah Calamunci, was baptized on Sunday, April 15. Adam and Kelly Dimitri were the Godparents. Na Sas Zisi!

Funeral—Christina (Greenbaum) Drisko passed away on Monday, April 9. Her funeral took place on Saturday, April 14. May her memory be eternal!

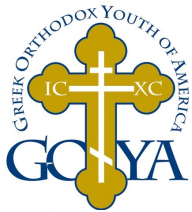
Condolences to Joann Hartung on the passing of her father, George Magafas, on March 18. May his memory be eternal!

Condolences to Katherine Sakkis on the passing of her father, Alexander Heretz, on April 13. May his memory be eternal!

Get Acquainted Sunday, May 6



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.



GOYA Meeting - Sunday, May 6 The May GOYA Meeting will be Sunday, May 6, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. Dinner, as always, will be provided.

Sun State Eastern Orthodox Junior Olympics will be on June 6-8, 2018. Planning is already underway. If you would like to help in any way please contact Dwight Forde at 727-685-9028 or Maria Koutroumanis at 813-245-3854.



Congratulations to our Graduates!

If you have a student who is graduating, please email all information to the church office by May 10 so we can include graduates in the June/July issue of *The Messenger*! **Please provide:** Name and Picture of the graduate, the institution graduating from, any degree, in the case of a college graduate, and what college the person plans to attend, in the case of the high school graduate.

Class of 18

Community Outreach - Saturday, May 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!**



Young Adult Ministry - Sunday, May 20

The YAL fellowship dinner will be on Sunday, May 20, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. Please RSVP to Charlie if you are going to attend.



And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. -2 Corinthians 8:5

The Archangel Michael Feast was prayerfully conceived by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios upon arriving in Atlanta, as the annual double feast of the Metropolis family. Since 1998, the Metropolis family comes together in Atlanta on the weekend of, prior to or following the November 8 Feast day of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel.

It is to honor and celebrate the Patron Saint of our Metropolis and the lives of two people from each parish, who are living examples of the Orthodox Christian life and journey to Theosis. By extension, this special Metropolis feast also serves as the annual Metropolis celebration and thanksgiving for all devout stewards of the faith, giving their time and talent.

This year's award winners are Cindy Xenick and Peggy Bradshaw.

Congratulations Cindy and Peggy!

PLEASE JOIN THE PHILOPTOCHOS FOR THE

END OF THE YEAR LUNCHEON

MAY 20 AT 12:30 P.M.

PALMA CEIA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

COST \$28

PLEASE RSVP TO LISA ALSINA BY MAY 16

LISAALSINA@GMAIL.COM / (813) 728-1094

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO PHILOPTOCHOS AND SEND
IT TO THE CHURCH OFFICE- "ATTENTION PHILOPTOCHOS"**



We have many parishioners in need of help!

Here is just one example. Her caregivers that come throughout the week, genuinely do love her but do not understand her language, her culture or her Orthodox Christianity. Since she is unable to get to church and needs the interaction with people of the same culture and mind. It is becoming more and more difficult to get her out of house to do some activities. We would like to propose that we help this parishioner by making a schedule of different people to spend some time with her during the week while the caregivers are home. We are looking for about an hour visit of conversation, to keep her company, speak to her about Greek culture, cooking and music. She loves to speak in Greek but, she also speaks very well in English, as well as, Italian, French and Arabic fluently. This is an open invitation to all members of our community. We are simply looking for someone to visit her on a weekly basis. We want to try to brighten her week with a visit so that way she doesn't get so lonely that she gives up the will to live. The visitors can be of any age. We have many people in our community that are in need of visits and assistance. As a part of our community and Body of Christ, it is our responsibility to take care of them and show them some love. We have many people like this. Some just need a visit and others need rides to church, or maybe a phone call or a card. If you are interested in fulfilling this need and perhaps helping organize the Visitation Committee, please contact the church office at 813-876-8830 and we can get you in contact with these parishioners and talk more about creating an outreach opportunity here at St. John's.

Stewardship May 2018 Message & Update

*“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”
Hebrews 13:16*

Christ is Risen!

We hope your Lenten journey brought peace and a sense of renewal in the days leading up to and during our beautiful Holy Week. It was a joy to not only worship together but also learn and grow together through the Discipleship Series that Fr. Stavros led every Wednesday eve after the pre-sanctified Liturgy. This was topped off with ‘Our Holy Week Journey 2018 – One Word at a Time’ and sermons each evening that truly powered up the message in every service and Gospel!

Stewardship was the WORD for Holy Monday Night which of course was intriguing to us. Fr. Stavros helped us look at Stewardship a little differently. By definition a Steward is a temporary caretaker and WE are Stewards of our Church. In 100 years none of us will be here and if we don’t do a good job taking care of our church we won’t have anything to turn over to future generations. But most importantly the message was we are Stewards of our LIFE! Fr. Stavros said ‘God gives us Today and a life that varies in years for everyone ...but we have to ask what did I do Today with what God gave me? ...was I a good Steward of my Life Today? And to break down even more ...am I a good Steward at this moment in my life? If you break your life down to moments and days and think about Stewardship it can change the way you live your life. **To be a good Steward of your life is to be a good Steward of Today because Today is a gift!**’

The Gospel Lesson of that evening, Matthew 25:14-23, was the Parable of the Talents and reminds us to use our talents for the Glory of God. To be a successful caretaker we require talents and Fr. Stavros summarized 4 key lessons from this Parable that align perfectly with what it takes to be a good Steward. **We have all been given a day to Glorify God and may not have that day tomorrow!**

4 Lessons from the Parable of the Talents

1. Everyone receives a Talent
2. God will reward us equally if we give the best effort of which we are given
3. Fear is not an excuse
4. Stewardship is not about your money or talent or gifts ...it’s about your Life!

We are deeply grateful to our loyal Stewards of St. John your gifts and talents that help sustain our church and enable us to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
May today be your day to Glorify God!

Pledge Forms are easy to complete online and also available in the Church Narthex or Bookstore. Consider making your Stewardship Donations and General Donations online via PayPal as a one time or recurring commitment.

Please let us hear from you today if you haven’t submitted your pledge form. Or visit <http://greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com/2018-stewardship/> to complete your complete your Stewardship Pledge Form and make your gift today. For any questions, please speak directly with Fr. Stavros, Sandra Pappas or Pete Trakas-Stewardship Co-Chairs. We are here for YOU!

Year to Year Comparison ~	2018*	2017*
Pledged Year to Date	\$413,442	\$376,586
Received Year to Date	\$194,514	\$184,624
Average Pledge	\$1,507	\$1,525
Median Pledge	\$930	\$830
# of Individual/Families Pledged	307	277

*YTD as of 4/12/18 & 4/18/17

Small Group Bible Study

Our Bible Studies are going in full swing. New people are welcome at any time!

Monday Night Bible Study (for everyone)

We are studying the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans

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.

Meeting Dates: May 7, 14 and 21

Women’s Group (for adult women of any age)

Location: Meets at the home of Debbie Kavouklis, 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)

Meeting Dates: May 1, (May 8 will meet at church), May 15

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 & Ellen Karaku

bmp1126@yahoo.com 813-523-0347

ekaraku@verizon.net 813-835-0691

Meeting time: Tuesday evenings from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

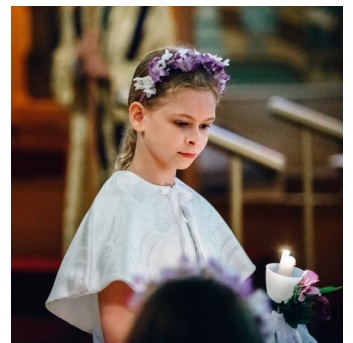
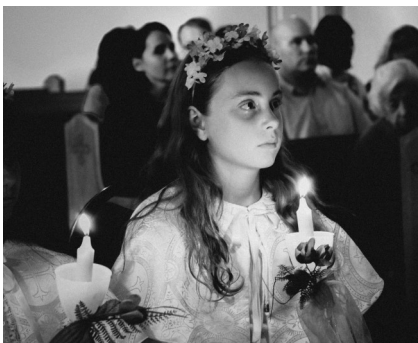
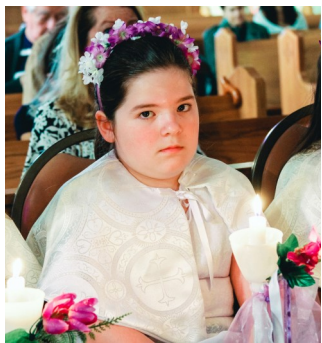
Meeting Dates: May 1, 8 and 15

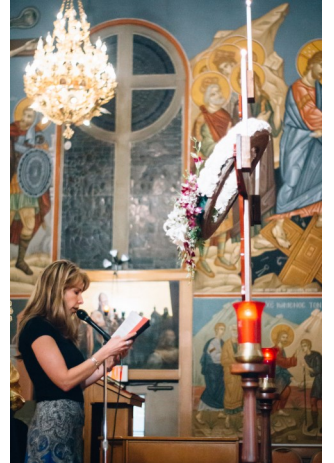
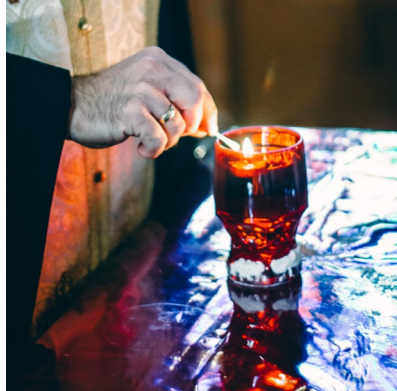
For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.

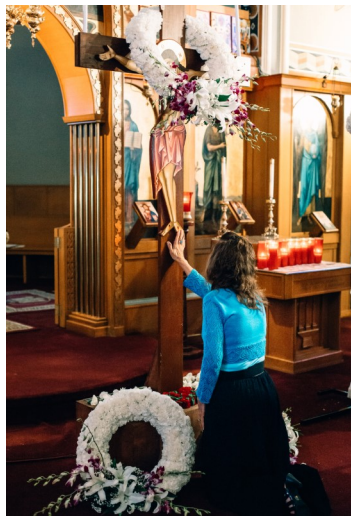
-Romans 15:4

Our Holy Week Journey 2018









Photography Ministry We thank our growing Photography Ministry for taking all of these beautiful photos. Olya Clifton is going to head this ministry. If you are interested in participating in this ministry, please contact Olya at 661-243-9352 or email her at olyacliftonphotography@gmail.com. Go online to see all of the photos from Holy Week and Pascha 2018.

Oratorical Festival Speeches Continued



The Parish Level Competition of the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival was held on Sunday, March 11. Nine of our young people participated. A special thank you Peggy Bradshaw for organizing this event each year and to the judges and everyone who assisted her.

Congratulations to all the participants – John Palios, Elizabeth Xenick, Angelina Krinos and Antonio Bavaro who were in the junior division. Harry Koutroumanis, Savvas Ferekides, Artemis Xenick, Anna Thomas and Sophia Krinos were in the senior division. Antonio Bavaro, Angelina Krinos, Artemis Xenick and Anna Thomas advanced to the district level of competition held at St. George Greek Orthodox Church in New Port Richey on Saturday, April 28. Thank you to all the adults who helped out—Nicole Mantzanas, David Voykin, and Kenny Kleanthi Henderson were the senior judges. Stavrula Crafa, Tom Georgas, Brett Mourer (Head Judge) were the junior judges. Dory Passalaris was the timekeeper. Over the next couple of months, we will be reprinting the speeches in the *Messenger*, for all to enjoy the inspirational writings of our young people. This month, we are including the three honorable mention speeches from the Senior Division. And in June/July we will include the four speeches of our finalists.



People often say, “It felt right” in order to explain their decisions. How many of our decisions factor not only our feelings but also the will and commandments of God?

By Savvas Ferekides

How often do we find ourselves watching one of those detective or criminal investigation shows when the detectives find themselves late at night with empty coffee cups sprawled across their desks? They cannot seem to figure out who committed the crime that the viewers have been watching unfold for the last hour. They seem to be at a standstill, and then suddenly one of the detectives will spontaneously announce that he has done it. He has figured out the perpetrator of the crime. Not based on much evidence, but instead because of the classic gut feeling. The moment when the detective cannot quite explain why he wants to make the decision, but instead credits his motivation to intuition or something greater.

Most if not all of us in this room are not detectives. We do not have to make these types of decisions that influence the judgment of criminals daily. However, when we think about our own lives, we do make decisions that decide our own judgment on an hourly or even minute to minute basis. We are all familiar with these decisions that we make. Do I give money to the homeless person begging on the street? Do I give a full effort on this project I have to finish? Should I give this presenter my full attention? We are faced by many decisions so often that they are easy to make. For those decisions it's easy to say that this is right, that is wrong. However, for other decisions it's more difficult. And when we are navigating life trying to choose the right path over the wrong path we often find ourselves in the shoes of the detectives that I mentioned before. We should not be that fast in deciding to ridicule their “gut feeling” technique for making such important choices. Often their gut feeling is not some spontaneous name that pops into their head. Instead, they use intuition to make their decision based upon their past experience and the facts presented to them in that moment. And so how does this help us make decisions as Christians?

Well these detectives use past knowledge and their current situation. So in the same way, we can look at the past knowledge that we hold as Christians and apply them to our own situation that we are in. This past knowledge is easily determined as the will and commandment of God. Do not steal, do not murder, obey your father and mother, love the lord your god, and love your neighbor. These commandments should be able to guide us to make the right decisions based on the situation that we are placed into throughout our lives.

Recently, my high school soccer team gained a new member that had recently moved from Africa. My teammates saw this as an opportunity to make him say funny things with his foreign accent and do things that he did not know were culturally inappropriate. I had to make the decision of if I would join my teammates in this ridicule of this new player. My past experience reminded me of what it was like to be new on the soccer team. And the commandments of God reminded me that we should love our neighbor. At this point it was easy to make the decision to forgo this treatment of my teammate and to tell the others that it was wrong.

In life, not all decisions are cookie cutter right and wrong. For example, I have many gay friends that are very present in my life. Ordinary people. There are some Christians that have taken it upon themselves to decide that all gay people should be damned to hell. However, as a Christian this decision is not so easy to make. It can be clearly found in the Bible that homosexuality is a sin. The Apostle Paul lists homosexuals in First Corinthians chapter six along with drunkards, the greedy, thieves and liars as those that will not inherit the kingdom of God. But those that are so quick to damn gays to hell would not also damn the liars and the thieves because often times that would include themselves. According to this Christians should have to struggle to determine how they would treat others. I have many classmates who make money under the table at their parents' businesses and more who know of business owners writing off non-business expenses on their taxes. How can we have a gut feeling that tells us to treat either of these situations, both those who are gay and those who lie on their taxes, any different from the other. The truth is that we should have the gut feeling that it as simple as loving your neighbor as yourself.

When faced with decisions in our Christian lives, we find ourselves searching for what is right and wrong. Hopefully we often find ourselves doing right and seldom find ourselves doing wrong. For that is what we ask for in the Lord's Prayer when we pray for guidance away from temptation and deliverance from evil. In the end if we follow the thinking of the detective and use our experiences and the commandments of God together, then we will always have this gut feeling telling us what is right and what is wrong.

Savvas Ferekides is the son of Chris and Debbie Ferekides and is in 12th grade.



What Values Cultivate Virtue in Today's Society?

By Harry Koutroumanis

What values cultivate virtue in today's society? Is it patience, reason, humility, maybe even adversity? The Israelites were once being oppressed by the Philistines and were in constant conflict with them. In the midst of this, a man named Samson

rose to the challenge and defended his people. Samson heard the call to face the adversity which opposed his nation. We as Orthodox Christians are faced with a similar situation. We live in a time where people everywhere are oppressed and subject to violence and discrimination. I believe that now more than ever, we are called to cultivate virtue that leads to things such as peacemaking, empathy, and self sacrifice because the adversity which we face awakens these virtues within us and allows us to use them. Violence is so widespread that I see it everyday, even in the simplest of activities such as soccer. I play soccer on both my school soccer team and my club team, and it is very prevalent that violence is found in both. Despite the fact violence is present, it has helped me to cultivate the virtue of peacemaking. One time both another player and I were trying to win the ball from each other, hacking at each other's feet like two Greek girls fighting over a future gambro. Eventually the ball popped out of bounds and the referee called it off of the opposing team's player. I could see the hatred in his eyes as he shoved me back in an attempt to start a fight. In that moment, I was presented with a choice. I could either shove him back and get into a fight, or I could be the bigger man and walk away. I decided that I would not instigate anything. I was able to create peace out of a violent situation, and if it wasn't for this situation and others like it, I fear that my peacemaking abilities may not have been able to mature to where they are today.

In the Gospel of John, a harlot was being sentenced to death by the Pharisees on account of adultery. Jesus says to the crowd that was gathered to stone her, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." After he said this, not one of them would cast a stone. To me, this story serves as a perfect example of how inaction in the face of violence can make those who do nothing just as guilty as those who actually "cast the stone". Each one of the people in that crowd was prepared to kill a woman just because some one told them to. Is this really how weak the judgment of us as humans has become since our fall from perfection? Did not even one of the people in the crowd stop for a second to think about how they would feel if they were stoned for their sins? In this story Christ reveals a path for us to deal with inaction, which is empathy. He simply asks each person to stop and think about their sins and if they are worthy to kill this woman for hers. I think that Christ is telling us that in the face of a violent situation, we must not be silent and hide in the shadows, but rather we must be empathetic and stand up for what we know is right in our hearts, even if it means we must stand alone.

Saint George is considered to be the greatest of all the Saints in the church because he sacrificed himself three times for his faith. At the time, Saint George was in the imperial guard order of Emperor Diocletian and was well known for being a valiant fighter. However, threatened by the growing Christian population, the pagan Emperor increased his persecution on the Christians in that area. Diocletian however tried to convince Saint George, whom he liked very much, to give up his faith, but Saint George denied him. Saint George was then tortured and killed by the Emperor, but he rose from the dead 3 times, and after the third time he was beheaded and gave up his spirit. The story of Saint George is one of self sacrifice, that is self scarce for Christ. Saint George was able to slay the wrath of an unjust emperor by sacrificing himself for what he knew was right. While Saint George was being tortured, many followed in his steps and were even killed for their faith. All it takes is one person to sacrifice themselves to face violence, and they can in-

spire thousands more to do the same.

Every single person in this room is unfortunately subject to the violence which I have described in this speech. It may assume different forms when it attacks each of us, but we still all must deal with it. I cannot, I will not, I shall not let the violence I face break me down. I will stand up to the oppressions I face everyday and use them to help me cultivate virtue as a Christian. The question is, will you? Thank you for your time.

Harry Koutroumanis is the son of Dean and Maria Koutroumanis and is in the 11th grade.



Cultivating Christian Virtues in a Violent Society

By Sophia Krinos

Have you ever felt too scared to pull the covers off in the morning? Have you ever walked into a movie theater and scanned the rows for possible threats? Each and every day the amount of people who feel this way multiplies. Why?

“17 Killed in Mass Shooting at High school in Parkland, Florida”, you read as you turn on the T.V. after work. You feel sorrow but not surprise. The devastation is not unusual – it seems every day the news offers a new tragedy. You might kneel, conduct a prayer for the victims and their families’, and then continue on with your day. This desensitization to suffering and carnage is the exact reason that regulations must change. When we begin reacting to mass killings in the news in the same way

you might respond to seeing cheese in a dairy section of the supermarket, our perspective simply must change.

As Orthodox Christians, we have responsibilities not only in the church, but in society. . Although one of our primary responsibilities is to offer the hand of God to those who need it, especially in cases like this, our efforts must extend further than the chapel. Daniel 2:37 states, ““You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory;”. This quote alludes to the fact that through God we have the power to enact transformation..

Anything that serves to lessen the senseless violence that plagues society today is serving God. But in some ways, our thoughts and prayers can only take us so far., God has placed within us many gifts that allow us to transfigure our world into what we wish to see, a world closer to heaven. Your voice may seem small now, but don’t mistake its power. I’m tired of waking up, absolutely terrified that today will be the day, that something will happen to me or to someone I love. I’m tired of being convinced to avoid the blessings of life because I am too afraid to experience them. But I can’t simply blame God – I can’t ask, “why do bad things happen to good people?”, because I have a power and a means to change my world. It is simply self-pitying to fall prey to the idea that all acts of violence are unavoidable. Voice your opinion! Speak out for what is simply common sense. Is it justified that I should go to school every day and jump at the sound of a locker slamming, scared to even leave my classroom?

Whatever your political affiliation may be, no one scorns the grief of families who have lost loved ones to violence. When the Sandy Hook shooting took 26 innocent lives, people said that if this didn’t get lawmakers attention, nothing would. Six years later and we still see the same tragedies in the news on the daily. What can we do you might ask? Speak out! If you want to effect real change, you must do it yourself. Ecclesiastes 3:1 states, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:” The time has come. Four hundred students shot in six years. Innocent lives ended too soon, others ruined.

As Christians in a modern and consistently changing world, we must change it to our liking or else risk falling prey to modern society. I believe that everything happens for a reason. Although it may seem cynical to believe that the killing of seventeen people happened for a good reason, it is clear that God is intent on telling us that the time is now. Now, we must join forces as Orthodox Christians and a society, and now we must do everything in our tragedy to prevent this violence from permeating the sinless world God created. If you were to face judgement of God at this very second, would you be proud? If the answer is no, then you must make it so. It is our primary duty to help others, and today that duty is political. Though this may have seemed like an activism speech to you, to me it is a wake-up call that we are blessed every day to be alive, and have the ability to voice our opinions. Psalm 39: 4-5 states, “LORD, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered–how fleeting my life is. You have made my life no longer than the width of my hand. My entire lifetime is just a moment to you; at best, each of us is but a breath.” Thank you.

Sophia Krinos is the daughter of Dimitri and Melissa Krinos and is in the 11th Grade.

The Great Feast of the Ascension

by Fr. Jim Paris

"I go to My Father to prepare a place for you." John 14:2

From Sacred Scripture, and enshrined and professed in our Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, we learn of our Lord's 40 day Ascension in Glory from His Holy Disciples and Apostles assembled on the Mount of Olives. Holy Scripture tells us that after His Resurrection from dead, Jesus showed Himself to His Disciples, the 12, the 70, the 500 and more, and had fellowship with them, taught them, and ministered to them for 40 days before all were assembled on the Mount of Olives and witnessed His Glorious Ascension and Enthronement at the Right Hand of the Father.

After His Resurrection, Jesus had thus showed us His Transfigured Body that was not limited by time and space, a unique Body able to go through locked doors to meet them. Thus, His Human Body was no longer encumbered or constrained, not subject to the laws of nature. His Resurrected Human Body was Transfigured and Glorified as He had presaged to His Disciples, Peter, John, and James at His Transfiguration in Glory and His Manifestation as Trinity on Mount Tabor.

This Body could not be contained by a sealed and guarded Tomb, the force and weight of the depths of the earth, the Gates and Locks of Hades, or any locked doors and windows, and yet, It was a Body to be sure, as so many witnessed. He was recognized as a Human, but a Perfect Human. He was recognized as a Man but a Divine Man; and He was recognized, known, and experienced--not as a abstract human or deity--but as a Person, Real, Historical--namely, Jesus Christ.

His Humanity was not consumed, and His Personhood was not effaced. There was clarity and reality. There was no confusion, fragmentation, separation, or division in His Personhood, in His

Manhood, or His Being Perfectly God and Man. He was the Son of Man, and He was the Son of God. He was God and Man, and yet, He was the Jesus they all knew and experienced--the Perfect Man. Moreover, He assumed all of our humanity perfectly in His Person so that through Him we may be One in Communion with God the Father and the Holy Spirit and thus be Perfect like Him as He foreordained and foreshadowed before His Crucifixion at His Transfiguration on Mount Tabor.

This can only happen by Him, through Him, and in Him and not apart from Him. In Jesus Christ, the God-Man, is the consummation and reconciliation of all things. This is why He has come down from Heaven, and this is why He has Ascended into Heaven. He has done this to accomplish all for us. He has come to save us, and now through Him, after His Three Day Resurrection from the dead, we can participate in His Resurrection, and now also, through His Ascension, we, too, can Ascend through Him and abide in Him at the Right Hand of the Glory of the Father in the Mystical Communion of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, He unites our humanity to His Divinity, our personhood to our shared humanity, and the community of humanity to the Divine Community of the Holy Trinity. On this Great Feast Day of the Ascension, we remember, we commemorate, and we re-experience what the Holy Disciples and Apostles, assembled together at the Mount of Olives saw: The Divine Ascent of Man made possible by the Divine Descent of God--the God-Man Jesus Christ Who is Ascended in Glory.

Fr. Jim Paris is the Proistamenos of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Clearwater, FL.

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/stjohngoc Tampa



MAY 2018 SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Christ is Risen!

We hope your Holy Week and Pascha experience reaffirmed and will continue to strengthen your faith in Christianity. Approximately 60 students actively participated in the many services of Holy Week and Pascha, which made the week even more special. We have over ten students who sing with the choir and sounded beautiful during Holy Week. As always our Altar Boys did a fabulous job throughout the many services. Our many Maidens for the Bridegroom Services on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday evening were adorable. And our beautiful Myrrh Bearers for the Good Friday Lamentation Service were honored to serve our Lord. An added bonus was our three teenagers; Madeline Moran, Elizabeth Xenick, and Mia Leonardos, who were the maidens that received the light at the Resurrection Service. We would also like to mention that Ariana Karounas chanted at two services as a soloist, and her brother was a reader at the Bridegroom Service. We are so proud of all of our students' devotion to our Lord.



It was fabulous to see all of our Sunday School Students participate in the PROCESSION OF THE PALMS on April 1. The Sunday School had lessons on Palm Sunday and Holy Week using The Resurrections Eggs. Our other Sunday School topics for the month of April were Holy Week Highlights/St. Thomas on April 15 and The Light of Christ/Making Faith Personal on April 29. Charlie Hambos also visited our 1st and 4th Grade classrooms this past month.

We would like to thank the families who attended the Saturday of Lazarus Service on March 31. We had a nice service, breakfast, and afterwards our children and parents helped to make over 800 crosses for Palm Sunday.

Our Holy Friday Retreat on April 6 was the best ever. The day was filled with Pascha crafts, learning activities and worship. We must acknowledge Debbie Nicklow for coordinating this event, the many people who helped out, and of course the children for making this retreat a huge success. We would also like to thank our older students for assisting our younger ones with the crafts and stations. Our teens also wrapped over 500 red eggs for Pascha. Truly we are raising such wonderful STEWARDS of St. John's Greek Orthodox Church

On April 22 our children did a fantastic job singing our church hymns during our YOUTH SUNDAY under the direction of Maria Xenick. We would also like to thank our Pre-K Students for making Prospora on that same day, under the guidance of Melissa Krinos.

Our last day of Sunday School, Graduation, and end of the year party is on May 20. We are already starting to plan for the next Sunday School year. Sunday School will start in AUGUST to compliment the public school calendar. We will let you know when these dates are finalized and when registration will take place. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TEACHER OR ASSIST IN OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM and/or if your have any suggestions on how we can improve our Sunday School Program, please e-mail Vickie Peckham at vickiepeckham@gmail.com or call her at 406-5626.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CALENDAR

Sunday, May 6

Topic: Great Commission/
Ascension

Charlie: 6th, 7th & 8th Grade
Prospora: Kindergarten
GOYA at 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 13

Youth Sunday
Topic: Pentecost
Charlie: High School

Sunday, May 20

Last Day of Sunday School
Sunday School Graduation
End of the Year Party

Greek Independence Day Luncheon 2018

Thank You to the generous donation of the Kalojiannis Family, who again donated all the food for our Greek Independence Day Luncheon (March 25), we raised over \$1,000 for our church, had some great food, and honored our ethnic holiday. Thank you also to the H Xara Mas Dancers and their instructors: Alex Demaio, Maraquet Edquid, and Bessie Palios for working hard with the dancers for the performance. Congratulations to the Greek School students for reciting and singing songs dedicated to the Independence of Greece. Congratulations also to Magda Myer for sharing her passion of the Greek Language with her students. We were also very honored to have Mr. Dimitrios Sparos, Consul General of Greece in Tampa with us and he offered some beautiful remarks complimenting our community.



The Great and Holy Friday Retreat was a Huge Success

Christos Anesti!

The Great and Holy Friday retreat this year was an amazing day spent with our church family preparing for the Triumphant Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ!

A big thank you goes out to all the children who attended the retreat! The attendance was amazing and the children were all respectful and eager to participate. The day was filled with worship, reflection on the Holy week events, Pascha crafts and fellowship. The children also participated in decorating the kouvouklion!

Father Stavros, thank you for leading us in prayer at the foot of Cross during the Service of Royal Hours and for your continual support throughout the retreat. Seeing the children with their parents gathered together in prayer and venerating the Body of Christ on the Cross was truly and inspiring way to begin the Holy Friday retreat.

Thank you Charlie, Vickie Peckham, Arty Giallourakis, Georgia Kane, Maria Xenick and Donna Trakas for each teaching a lesson on the meaning of Holy week and the Passion of Christ! The children took home a small treasure and craft from each lesson. Thank you to the 6th graders who assisted with the lessons and crafts!

Thank you to all the parent volunteers that helped with making the retreat a success! Thank you for helping with the crafts, set up and clean up. Thank you Amy Kafantaris for setting up lunch.

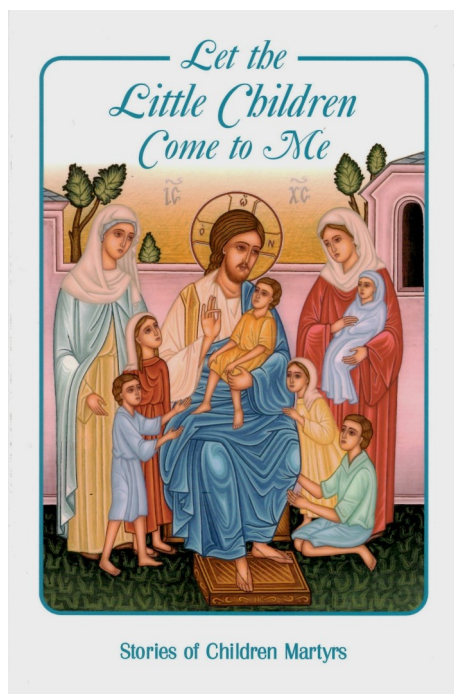
Finally, thank you to all the parents for bringing your children to the Great and Holy Friday retreat! Our children are our future...together let's continue to guide them and teach them our Orthodox faith!

With love in the Risen Christ,

Debbie Nicklow, Hope/Joy



Featured Book of the St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church Bookstore



“Let the Little Children Come To Me” (Stories of Children Martyrs)—this inspiring book will captivate you as you learn the true life stories of these innocent, resilient and faithful young people. This book is dedicated to the young Christian martyrs of every land and every time, who, through their deaths, taught us how to live. The book is for people of all ages, young and old alike.

In the daily struggles of life, seldom do we find ourselves inspired to fully live up to our Christian calling. When confronted with the pressures of this world, we are tempted to cower and bow our heads in defeat. It is then that we need a helping hand or a good role model to strengthen our feeble will.

This inspiring book can enlighten and nurture our weak souls—a book that goes beyond the shadows of death and emerges as a celebration of life. Dedicated to those who remained firm in their faith and died for the glory of God, “Let the Little Children Come to Me” is an awe-inspiring compilation of fifty children martyrs from the beginnings of Christianity to the 1900s. In these true accounts, their bold faith, which remained firm in the face of harsh torments, is brought to life throughout the pages, serving as an example to all who desire to take up their cross and follow the Lord. With their graphic realism and moving dialogue, the stories of these young, angelic warriors are an invaluable addition to any Christian’s bookshelf.

“And Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.’” (Matthew 19:14)

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:10)
This book is available in the bookstore. We would love to hear from you, particularly what you think of the book after reading it.

P.S. We hope you can join us on Sunday, May 6, 2018, for a book review. We will be discussing “Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives—The Life and Teachings of Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica.”

P.P.S. If there is any Orthodox Christian religious item that you would like the bookstore to order, please contact us. We are often able to get a discount as a bookstore.

Brett and Ana Mourer

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
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Body Wash
- 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.

Make a Plan to Amplify Your Impact

Join the St. John Legacy Society Today!

Those parishioners who include St. John Greek Orthodox Church in their estate plans will become founding members of the St. John Legacy Society, a new initiative launched to help provide for our beloved church's future. Estelle Kavakos is the first founding member – having left a bequest to our church after her passing. Estelle's daughter Christine Scourtes is the second Legacy Society member. Christine had planned to leave a gift in her estate plans, however she decided to make a significant gift to the church now during her lifetime instead of waiting.

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. After you've considered how much you'd like to leave each of your heirs, would you consider leaving what might be left over in your estate to St. John? Take care of yourself and your family, plan for your future, do everything you want to do in your lifetime – and then consider leaving what is left (or the residue) to our church. **Whatever you do, please be sure to consult your financial and legal advisors and let your family members know of your intentions.**

If you have additional questions about joining the St. John Legacy Society, contact Fr. Stavros at 813-876-8830 ext. 103 or frstav@gmail.com for more information. If you include St. John in your plans, please use our legal name as previously stated and Federal Tax ID # 59-1170684. Additionally, please let Fr. Stavros know of your plans so that we may include you as a founding member of the St. John Legacy Society and properly thank you for this very special type of stewardship.

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 Bliziotes - 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
Basil & Dorothy Nosal - Fredericksburg, VA
Nicholas & Vaso Anton - Dunedin, FL
Gerald & Deborah Galovic - Tampa, FL

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 the Baptist 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.



AHEPA FAMILY NEWS – MAY 2018

THE SIXTH ANNUAL AHEPA FAMILY TRADITIONAL EASTER FESTIVITIES 2018

WERE HELD ON EASTER SUNDAY APRIL 8, 2018 AT MACFARLANE PARK
1700 N. MAC DILL AVE. TAMPA, FLORIDA



Ahepa Family members including Ahepans, Daughters of Penelope and their family and friends, Forever Young of Tampa members and guests including Saint John Greek Orthodox Church members attended the AHEPA FAMILY TRADITIONAL EASTER PICNIC at MACFARLANE Park in Tampa on Easter Sunday. Over 60 members and guests, young and old, were present to enjoy the festivities and delicious Greek food. The young members enjoyed playing toss with footballs and baseballs flying everywhere and the youngsters enjoyed playing in the playground immediately adjacent to our shelter. The meal included roasted Greek Lamb, Greek lemon potatoes and rice, Greek Salad and appetizers including Greek sausages and Greek desserts and much more. Red Easter Eggs were enjoyed, as well as, the Greek custom of cracking the eggs. Almost everyone that attended contributed something to the event. Thank you all for making this such a memorable event and pitching in to help. The festivities ended with traditional singing of folk songs and Magda Myer doing Greek Dancing lessons and everyone joining in to the dancing. All in all it was a day that transported us to a small Greek village and the traditions that existed. Many tears bore witness to our remembering our families long past and the good times we all had.

85th Citrus District 2 Convention June 7 - 9, 2018 Marriott Hutchinson Island Resort and Marina

We are looking forward to our upcoming Ahepa Family Citrus District 2 Convention with great anticipation as we hope you are. We have prepared many interesting fun and educational activities for your pleasure. Come relax and have some fun with family and friends and enjoy the resort. Ahepa Lycurgus Chapter 12 and Daughters of Penelope Alcmæon Chapter 164 will be well represented by our officers and District Lodge officers from our chapters including Mike Trimis, Lt. Gov. of Ahepa and Ourania Stephanides, Gov. of the Daughters.



Make sure to make your reservations early and don't miss out on all of the fun!

Join today – Become a member of AHEPA Family.

PLEASE COMMEMORATE THE NAMES OF MY DEPARTED FAMILY MEMBERS IN THE SATURDAY OF THE SOULS

MEMORIAL SERVICES – May 26, 2018

~ May 2018 ~							
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
		1 WBS 10:00 a.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	2** Mid-Pentecost Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	3 Young at Heart Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.	4**	5	
6 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. GOYA 5:00 p.m.	7 Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	8 WBS @ church St. John the Theologian Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	9**	10 Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.	11**	12	
13 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Mother's Day Youth Sunday	14 Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	15 WBS 10:00 a.m. Apodosis Pascha/ Fathers' Ordination Anniversary Orthros 5:00 p.m. Liturgy 6:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	16	17 Ascension Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.	18**	19 Community Outreach	
20 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. National AHEPA day Last Day of SS YAL 5:00 p.m.	21 Sts. Constantine and Helen Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	22 Basketball 8:00 p.m.	23**	24 Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.	25**	26 Saturday of Souls Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	
27 Pentecost Orthros 8:15 a.m. Liturgy 9:30 a.m. Kneeling 11:00 a.m. AHEPA/Daughters	28 Memorial Day Office Closed No Fasting this week	29 Basketball 8:00 p.m.	30	31 Adult Greek School 6:00 p.m.			

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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)
firstav@gmail.com

Pastoral Assistant Charlie Hambos

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

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Mike Xenick, VP 813-340-8737
Gary Ward, Treasurer 813-846-3898
Sandra Pappas, Secretary 813-785-3747
George Chagaris 727-420-1920
Amin Hanhan 813-846-2957
Jimmy Konstas 813-220-7352
Catherine Mitseas 813-571-0658
Ryan Rindone 704-564-2046
Aris Rogers, II 813-309-5525
Dante Skourellos 813-765-9534

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AHEPA

Gus Paras, President 813-254-6980

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Engie Halkias 813-932-5859
Sia Blankenship 813-968-8855

Basketball

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

Bible Study

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

Bookstore

Brett Mourer 813-376-9315

Chanter

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 MASE, 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, Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668

Daughters of Penelope

Maria Zabetakis, President 813-748-7709

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 Katzaras 863-669-6739

Hope/Joy

Debbie Nicklow 813-690-0671

Junior Olympics

Dwight Forde 727-685-9028

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

Photography Ministry

Olya Clifton 661-243-9352

Philoptochos

Lisa Alsina 813-728-1094

Small Group Bible Study

South, Bessie Palios 813-523-0347
Women, Debbie Kavouklis 813-258-5571

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Gary Ward 813-846-3898

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Pete Trakas 813-505-2193

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Usher

Tom Georgas 813-985-0236

Visitation Committee

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

Welcoming Ministry

Maria Xenick 813-765-3587

Young Adult

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

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.