

# 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*

# October 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 Will You Vote for a Vision?

Dear Parishioners,  
Every month when I sit down to write a message, I confess that I have no idea how long it will be. Some people have told me it takes a few sittings to make it through my monthly messages. That's okay, they only come out once a month. 😊 I use this column each month to educate, enlighten and encourage. Sometimes I am passionate and other times informative. This is my chance to share with you, in a context where I can be relaxed writing, and you can be relaxed reading. There isn't the pressure of time to finish a sermon or hundreds of people watching as I am speaking. So, please take a few minutes and read what follows, offered with love and with passion for what our church is, and what it could be.

### WHY?

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16*

God made us so that we can be like Him. He sent Jesus Christ to lead us back to Him. He desires that we will share Paradise with Him. In between us and Paradise is a life on earth, where we have the choice to love Him and serve Him. Our entrance into Paradise will be preceded by a judgment of our lives by God, who will determine whether we are worthy of Paradise.

*"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." Matthew 28:19-20*

We've all been to baptisms, where we ogle over the cute baby and how cute the baptismal outfit is, and how we hope the baby doesn't cry too much, and we take cute pictures. And we forget that at each baptism, each person who is baptized receives a sacred charge, the same charge that the Apostles received from Christ, to go out and spread the message of salvation to all nations.

Why do we have a church? In order to spread the Gospel to all nations. It's a pretty simple why. Our church exists to spread the Gospel to all nations. Our church exists to help us learn what it means to love and serve Him. Our church gives us opportunities on a regular basis to do both.

What do we do in practical terms? For this question, let's look to John 1:

*In Him (the Word of God, Jesus Christ) was life and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:4-5*

A quick look at the news tells us that the world is pretty dark and we need more of the Light in it. Forget the news, however, and just look at your own life. How much could you benefit from more of the Light of Christ shining in your dark corners?

So, our WHY is to spread the Light of Christ—because He told us to, and because we need it!

### Our Church at Present

Let's talk about our church at present, by sharing some really good statistics.

~Over 1,000 people from 350 steward families are part of our

church. There are also many non-stewards who call upon the church in their times of need. That's a lot of people that our church is serving.

~Anyone who comes to church knows that our church is standing-room only every Sunday.

~We have nearly 200 students in Sunday school.

~Our total number of baptisms for 2018 is 25 and we still have three months left in the year.

~There are 52 young men who have signed up to serve as altar boys.

~Our average attendance at a GOYA meeting is 42.

~18 people signed up to take Orthodoxy 101.

~Nearly 30 people sing in the choir every Sunday.

~We support 3 weekly Bible studies.

## Our Church in 2019

On October 28, our parish will hold our fall Parish Assembly meeting, where members will be asked to vote on a budget for 2019. There will be three areas that will be debated: Stewardship (how much we think we can raise); Personnel (how many people we think we should employ); and Charity (how much money we think we should give away). At the conclusion of the meeting, we will nominate candidates for the Parish Council for 2019. And shortly after the meeting, we will kick off our stewardship campaign for 2019 where we will try to raise the amount of money we budgeted for stewardship.

**I hope that you will continue reading this message, because on October 28, we are not only going to be voting on a budget, but voting for a vision.** What does that mean? The budget and the vision of the church go hand in hand. The kind of budget we have reflects the kind of church we are. The kind of church we want to be will reflect in the budget we vote in.

*Before you read on, I found a short article that I think is so important, I want you to read it before you read the rest of my message, and I hope that you'll digest carefully what is in it, because it reflects directly on our budget, our stewardship and the kind of parish we want to be. Thom Rainer, the author, is a writer, researcher, speaker and current president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources. (So, please read the article below and then continue at the top right of this page).*

## Eight Differences between Church Giving and Church Dues by Thomas Rainer

*It is amazing to hear how church members view their tithes and offerings to their local churches. Though it's cliché to say, the attitudes of their hearts reflect the nature of their contributions to the church.*

*I recently looked at hundreds of comments on this issue on this blog and on Church Answers. The attitudes in which church members gave were easily divided into two categories: church giving and church dues. In simplest term, church giving is an act where the member lets go of the funds with no reservations. He or she truly gives the money to God through the church. Church dues, though, have strings attached. They are not as much gifts as they are membership dues to receive certain rights and perks.*

*Look at each of these sets of eight characteristics. You will likely identify most of your givers versus dues payers in your church.*

### Church Giving

*Gifts are given with a heart of gratitude.*

*The giver never speaks of the funds as "my money."*

*The giver has zero expectation of personal benefits from the church in exchange for the funds.*

*The gifts are viewed by the giver as part of his or her walk of discipleship with Christ.*

*The giver seeks no recognition, plaques, or naming privileges for the funds.*

## The Budget

During the month of October, before the Parish Assembly Meeting, you'll be receiving the budget for 2019. I hope you'll plan on studying what you receive and that you'll come to the meeting so that we can pass the budget. The budget has been carefully scrutinized, first by our finance committee, and secondly by the Parish Council, before it comes to you, based on analysis of years of activity.

**It Costs Nearly \$300,000 just to have our church here, before we have one priest, one service or one program.** If you own a house but don't live in it, there are still expenses associated with it—property tax, home owner's insurance, maintenance of the buildings and grounds, and you'd be foolish not to run the air conditioning in summer or the heat in winter. To just have our church sitting here empty costs nearly \$300,000. How is that?

When we add up the utilities, insurance, routine repairs and maintenance (not major capital improvements), stormwater fees, Metropolis expenses and the Archdiocese assessment (which will be \$88,585 by itself in 2019), the comes out to \$282,285 just to have the church here. Break that down amongst 350 families and you'll see that it comes to approximately \$800 per family just to have the church here, before we have a priest, a service or a program.

Then as you look at other expenses, such as supplies (office supplies), printing and copying (things like *The Messenger*), candles, flowers, professional fees, travel for meetings, postage, computer and internet, there really isn't much wiggle-room there. If we are going to have a church, then it requires some overhead in terms of supplies to run.

Next we arrive at ministries. Our budget projects to have \$763,911 in expenses. Remember that nearly \$300,000 of these expenses are just to have a church. We are budgeting \$15,600 for ministries—like the Sunday school, GOYA, choir, HOPE/JOY, oratorical festival, altar boys, young adults, preteen retreat, other retreats, visitation committee and Bible study. If anything, we want to raise this number, to fund additional ministries and expand the ministries we already have. We certainly shouldn't do any less.

*The giver gives with joy.*

*If the giver has any regrets about the funds, it is that he or she really wants to give more.*

*The funds are "first fruits." They are the first amounts taken out of paychecks and other sources of income.*

### Church Dues

*Funds are viewed as membership dues with entitlement benefits.*

*The giver loves recognition for the funds donated.*

*The donor withholds funds when something does not go his or her way. Indeed, the person will often attempt to persuade others to do the same.*

*Money is almost always given with expectations. It is "my money."*

*Funds are often given from what is left over rather than first fruits.*

*Donor sees money as a right to determine church spending without regard for the rest of the membership.*

*These donors love to give designated funds since they have more control over "my money."*

*Giving to the church is a source of pride for the donor.*

Kind of a sobering article, right? Even though our stewardship has come a long way, we still have a long way to go to really move our church from a "dues" mentality to a "giving" mentality.

**So now the variable expenses. What we spend in the final two categories reflects how we view our church's role.**

**Charity** - This is the amount of money that we give away. In 2018, we budgeted about \$19,000 for charitable causes. This included things like Hospice, the Diakonia Center, the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, Matthew 25 (feeds the homeless), International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry, Clergy Education Fund, Holy Cross Seminary, St. Basil's Academy, Patriarchate Charities, and by the end of this year we will give \$2,000 to natural disasters, right out of the budget. We'll send about \$1,000 in aid for relief for those hit by Hurricane Florence. All of this is in the budget, we won't have to pass a tray for any of this.

*It has been statistically verified that if every parishioner gave 10% of their income to the church and every church gave 10% of its income to charity, there would be no poverty and there would be enough money for relief from virtually every disaster.*

I would like to see our parish work toward giving 10% of our budget to charity. In 2018, we gave away 3%, or about \$19,000, to charity. For 2019, we propose to raise the amount for charitable giving to \$25,000, which is slightly less than 4%. We hope to go up one percent a year until we hit 10%.

Imagine if we gave \$76,000 (10% of a budget of \$763,000) to charity instead of \$25,000. Imagine what kind of impact that could have! Imagine if we all gave 10% of our money through stewardship. That would put our stewardship around \$1.8M and we gave 10% of that to charity—now we're talking nearly \$200,000, that's serious charity!

Back to the present—When it comes time to pass the budget, you'll be asked whether you agree with the \$25,000 amount to give to charity. Your answer will reflect your understanding of the church and of charity. \$25,000 also represents only about \$70 per family. That's doesn't seem like much, does it?

**Personnel** - This becomes a hot-button issue in many parishes. "We can save money by cutting positions" becomes the mantra, instead of "we could do more things if we had more people." In this area, fortunately, not much has changed. We budgeted for 2018 to have a full-time priest, a full-time pastoral assistant, a full-time office administrator, a part-time book-keeper and a full time maintenance worker.

We also budgeted to have a part-time second priest thinking this person would have started in the summer. The only change in this area, other than a 3% cost of living pool, is that the budget for the part-time second priest increased to what would be paid to him for a full year of working.

It should be obvious to everyone that we need more than just one priest in this community. Certainly an additional clergyman would cut in half the time it takes to distribute Holy Communion. But having another priest allows all the people to be better served, as one priest is limited—he can't be two places at once. A part-time second priest will allow for more "pastoral care"—visitations, confessions, services.

I would hope the mood of our church has only increased the desire for an additional priest. (Why not a second full-time priest, you might ask? The simple answer is—there is a great shortage of priests. Communities that require two priests are having to make it with one. There are hardly any students studying for the priesthood.

**Stewardship**, the other variable in the budget. How a parish approaches stewardship says a lot about a parish and its parishioners. Even though our stewardship total continues to increase, in many ways we are still a "dues" church, rather than a "giving" church. So, here are some statistics about stewardship that should both inspire and alarm us:

~Stewardship is at the highest level it has ever been in our parish.

~In 2004, my first year here, the stewardship total was \$120,000. In 2018, we have nearly quadrupled that, to what should end up at \$480,000.

This is positive.

What is not so positive:

~It takes nearly all year to get everyone's stewardship form in. A recent look over the list shows that many people who come to church every Sunday are still not stewards, they have not filled out a stewardship form for 2018. This is a little disturbing. Why is this? Is it lack of understanding? Have there not been enough reminders? Remember, you determine how much to give.

~We are still in a position where we have to rely on the festival for make our budget. Several people have told me that they "heard" that I want to get rid of the festival. That is not true. I want to get rid of our reliance on the festival. The truth is, without the festival, we would have to cut personnel and charitable giving, just to make ends meet. The truth is, our ability to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ is tied to the weather forecast and visitors buying our souvlaki and baklava. We wouldn't put our home mortgages or our children's school tuitions, or our car payments or our play money and make them contingent on us selling baked goods and raffle tickets outside our homes. Why do we treat our faith and our church like this?

**Ideally, we'd pay for all the operating expenses of our church out of stewardship.**

Here are some other changes in regards to stewardship. We're working to change our policy on passing trays. We want to discontinue passing trays. Why? Because we want to get away from a nickel-and-diming mentality. For too many years, the Greek Orthodox Church has been synonymous with trays everywhere we look. There is a tray to put money in for candles when we enter the church. There is a tray at the end of the service. Sometimes there is a second tray. And there is a tray in the hall for coffee hour. At St. John, we are working hard to get away from the nickel-and-diming attitude.

Several years ago, we eliminated second trays (except for the emergency fund on the last Sunday of the month) for fundraisers and disasters. These are now all covered through the budget, which is covered in large part by your stewardship.

In August, we made two other changes—there will no longer be a tray at the Sunday coffee hour. We will still have some fundraising luncheons a few times a year, but on most Sundays, it won't cost you anything to get a cup of coffee or some refreshments after church. **We want everyone to come to coffee hour, and we don't want the price of coffee to be a deterrent.**

Why do we want everyone to come to coffee hour? Why is that important?

Because in order to be a "community," we have to know everyone in the community. We are not individual consumers who come to "consume" the Divine Liturgy each week, at least we shouldn't be. We should be bearing each other's burdens, en-

couraging one another, laughing with one another, and sometimes crying on the shoulders of one another. And this isn't possible if we don't know one another. Coffee hour facilitates us getting to know one another.

The second change we made is that there is no longer a \$1 charge for small candles. I made this decision based on a conversation with one person who told me that at a time they had a serious illness and wanted to come into church and light a candle, they didn't have a dollar and didn't want to risk getting the stink-eye from someone for not putting a dollar in the basket. So, on a day when they most needed to light a candle, to plead with God to keep His fire burning in them, they had to pass on this. That will not happen again! The \$1 sign was removed that day. If you want to put in a dollar or more for candles, no one will stop you. But if you don't have a dollar or don't want to put a dollar in the tray for a candle, no one is going to look down on you either. Why? Because the candle represents the light of Christ coming into each person as we enter the church, the light of Christ which "enlightens each person who comes into the world" (John 1), not each person who put a dollar in the plate.

We'd like to get rid of all trays and have each person bring in a stewardship offering each week. That is the ideal. That's what we're working toward.

Your vote on our stewardship goal for the budget and your support of stewardship is what will make it all work. Every year that I have served here, it seems that there is about a \$100,000 gap between what we raise on stewardship and what we need to operate our parish. That \$100,000 gap is filled by the festival. Our stewardship total for 2018 will be between \$475,000-500,000. Our goal for 2019 will be \$500,000.

But what if we raised the goal made our whole budget on stewardship? What would that do for our community? First, and foremost we wouldn't have to make a \$100,000 jump in stewardship each year.

If we raised our whole budget on stewardship,

~The festival could be for fun and not for stress.

~We could do more for charity, and we could maintain the full staff outlined above.

~Any additional revenue (i.e. from a festival) could be used for needed repairs and capital improvements. It could also be applied to our debt. (which currently is about \$900,000)

While there is much more to say on stewardship, let me articulate one idea—love is not about what you get, but about what you give. A "dues" mentality (referring to the previous article) is about "getting" something for "my money." A "giving" mentality seeks to give, and give and give, because that's what real love it—it's about giving. And when we give more to the church, the church in turn is able to express more love through charity and ministry.

## Parish Council Nominations

At the conclusion of the Parish Assembly Meeting in October, we will again nominate people for the Parish Council for 2019. This is a critical decision each year, as it affects how our church will function in 2019 and beyond. A "maintenance" minded Parish Council plays not to lose, plays almost in fear, maintains the status quo, lives on past history and is process minded. A "mission" minded Parish Council sees the church as a boat, and works hard to keep the boat in good condition, and to sail it joyfully and purposefully into the dangerous waters to

rescue others, confident of its integrity. Confidence in the integrity of the church, however, is not the end goal. It is not even the strongest means to the end. The end is bringing Christ to people. The church is the vehicle by which we do that.

Year after year, people decide to run for the Parish Council. Some are qualified and some are not. Some come in to speak with me about running, even asking a blessing to run. And many do not come into speak with me, they certainly don't seek any kind of blessing to run. As I have mentioned in previous writings and sermons, getting a blessing from the bishop in a Liturgy when multiple priests are serving creates a good sense of order, which in turn, leads to a good sense of Christ. Running without any input or blessing from the priest can create disorder and disharmony in the Parish Council and in the parish. I'm asking then, if you are thinking about running for the Parish Council, please make an appointment and come see me before October 28, and let's talk about it.

## Conclusion

There is a flyer hanging in the church office which advertises many support groups sponsored by LifePath Hospice—these include adult grief support groups, suicide loss support group, loss of a child and loss of a child due to addiction support group. Some of these groups meet in South Tampa and for some of these groups, one has to go to Temple Terrace. I dream of a church community where we use our facilities to host support groups like this, so that people in South Tampa (not our parishioners necessarily, but our neighbors who live right in this immediate area) do not need to travel far—they can come right here to this church and be loved and supported. I dream of experts in these areas (again not necessarily parishioners) coming and ministering to people—this is what Christian charity is.

We cannot be as charitable when our own basic needs are not met.

So, here is the vision:

Move our parish from a "dues" approach to a "giving" approach.

Fund our entire budget off of stewardship—extra funds and fundraisers go to capital improvements and charity

Budget personnel so that the community can be adequately served.

Raise our overall charitable giving one percent a year until we are giving away 10% to charitable causes.

Put in people on the Parish Council who share this vision

Can I count on you to come to the Parish Assembly Meeting on October 28 and vote for this vision? Let me actually say it in the form of a statement—I'm counting on YOU to come on October 28 to come to the Parish Assembly and vote for this vision.

And WHY? Because this is a vision that supports Christ's commission to make disciples of all nations, and because it will help bring the Light of Christ into the dark corners of our world, starting with brightening OUR OWN lives right here in our parish.

With love in the Lord,

+Fr. Stavros

# Liturgical Schedule for October 2018

**Monday, October 1** Evening "Teaching" Divine Liturgy 6:30 p.m.

**Sunday, October 7** 3rd Sunday of Luke  
Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**Altar Boys:** Captains and St. Luke

**Ushers:** John Christ, Byron Nenos, Chris Kavouklis

**Welcoming Ministry:** Greeters: Cindy Xenick, Lisa Alsina; Ambassador: Genie Carter;

Caller: Maria Karounos; Getting Acquainted: Dwight Forde, Ewana Forde

**Coffee Hour:** Choir **Bookstore:** Brett & Ana Mourer

**Sunday, October 14** Sunday of the 7th Ecumenical Council  
Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**Altar Boys:** Captains and St. John

**Ushers:** Tammy Christou, George Mitseas, Florin Patrasciou

**Welcoming Ministry:** Greeters: Helen Cauthorn, Kalliope Chagaris; Ambassador: Carole Fotopoulos;

Caller: Christene Worley

**Coffee Hour:** AHEPA **Bookstore:** Paulina Katsouli & Zhana Temelkova

**Thursday, October 18** St. Luke the Evangelist  
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**Sunday, October 21** 6th Sunday of Luke  
Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**Altar Boys:** Captains and St. Matthew

**Ushers:** Nick Kavouklis, George Trimikliniotis, Peter Theophanous

**Welcoming Ministry:** Greeters: Elaine Halkias, Bessie Palios; Ambassador: Donna Hambos;

Caller: Betty Katsamakis

**Coffee Hour:** MAIDS/SONS **Bookstore:** Pam Irwin

**Monday, October 22** Evening Divine Liturgy for Feast of St. James  
Orthros 5:00 p.m. Liturgy of St. James 6:00 p.m.

**Friday, October 26** St. Demetrios  
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**Sunday, October 28** 7th Sunday of Luke/OXI Day  
Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**Altar Boys:** Captains and St. Mark

**Ushers:** Ron Myer, Jim Armstrong, Nick Patides

**Welcoming Ministry:** Greeters: Debbie Kavouklis, Edie Kavouklis; Ambassador: Julie Palios; Caller: Despina Sibley

**Coffee Hour:** AHEPA Founder's Day

**Bookstore:** Rita Bedran and MaryAnn Rose

**Thursday, November 1** Sts. Cosmas and Damian, the Unmercenaries  
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**Sunday, November 4** 5th Sunday of Luke  
Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**Altar Boys:** Captains and St. Luke

**Ushers:** Brett Mourer, Michael Bocnancollins, Amin Hanhan

**Welcoming Ministry:** Greeters: Marenca Patrascioiu, Tanya Robinson; Ambassador: Katherine Sakkis Caller: Helen Cauthorn

Getting Acquainted: Cindy Xenick, Maria Xenick **Coffee Hour:** Young at Heart **Bookstore:** John and Anetta Alexander

# Liturgical Notes for October 2018

## Monday, October 1 - St. Romanos the Melodist, A “Teaching Divine Liturgy”

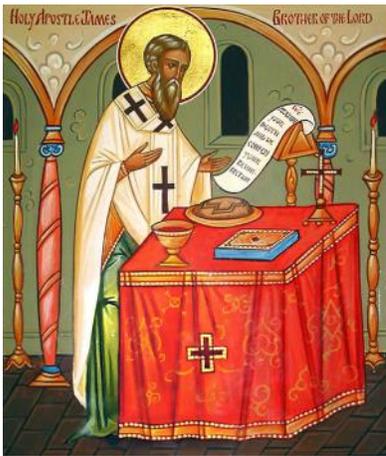
“The hymnologists of the Orthodox Church are Christians of virtue and great faith, having been endowed with musical talent as well as the power of religious inspiration. Their creations have enriched our worship services and have helped turn our souls towards God. Perhaps the greatest of all hymnologists is St. Romanos the Melodist. Many other hymnologists have written ecclesiastical hymns, but none of them inspired the Christians as much as St. Romanos.” This statement, issued by the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians concisely states the reverence, appreciation and feeling all Orthodox Christians have for St. Romanos. Please also join us for a rare opportunity for a “Teaching” Divine Liturgy starting at 6:30 p.m.

**Thursday, October 18- Feast of St. Luke** St. Luke was one of the Four Evangelists, along with Sts. Matthew, Mark and John. He was an artist, writer and doctor and is probably one of the most intelligent of all the saints in the history of our church.



## Sunday, October 21 - Special Prayer for Medical Personnel

St. Luke, Apostle, Evangelist and also Physician, has his feastday celebrated on October 18. In conjunction with this, as he is the patron saint of doctors, we are going to offer a prayer for everyone in the medical field on Sunday, October 21 (Sunday closest to October 18), at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. All doctors, nurses, dentists, researchers, students and anyone connected to the medical field is encouraged to attend.



## Monday, October 22 - Liturgy of St. James - Evening Liturgy

The Orthodox Church celebrates four different Divine Liturgies throughout the liturgical year. The most prominent is the Divine Liturgy written by St. John Chrysostom, which is celebrated almost every Sunday and on most feast days. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is celebrated 10 times a year—on the eve of Christmas, the eve of Epiphany, on the five Sundays of Lent, Holy Thursday morning, Holy Saturday morning, and on the feast of St. Basil, which is January 1. The Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is celebrated on Wednesday and Fridays of Great Lent and the mornings of Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday and Holy Wednesday. The Divine Liturgy of St. James is celebrated only once a year, on his feastday, which is October 23.

The Divine Liturgy of St. James is the oldest of the Divine Liturgies and is also the longest. It was written around 70 A.D. making it the oldest Eucharistic service in the entire Christian world. Among the interesting things about this service is that by the end of the first century, the structure of the Liturgy we celebrate today was already loosely in place. The Divine Liturgy begins not in the altar, but in the Narthex of the church, as was the custom of the early church. The priest and faithful enter the church together from the narthex, and the next part of the service is conducted on the solea, with the priest facing the people. The priestly prayers, while very long in the liturgy, reveal a beauty and completeness which would later be shortened by St. Basil and even more by St. John Chrysostom. The most unique part of this service comes at the reception of Holy Communion. This the only Divine Liturgy that has become the custom for the faithful to receive Holy Communion in separate elements, in similar fashion with how the clergy commune. The communicants first receive the Holy Body of Christ in their hands and consume it, and then drink from the Holy Chalice. This is a special beautiful tradition which will be continued at St. John the Baptist, and it is encouraged that all who attend this service fast beforehand and prepare to receive Holy Communion at this Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy of St. James will be held on Monday, October 22 at 6:00 p.m. (Orthros at 5:00 p.m.)



## Friday, October 26 - Feast of St. Demetrios

St. Demetrios was born into a wealthy and distinguished Christian family in the Greek City of Thessaloniki in the late 3rd century. Demetrios was noted for his wisdom, and was a good speaker and polished orator. St. Demetrios was also a distinguished soldier. Thessaloniki was known for popular gladiatorial games which attracted the local pagans. Travelling with the Emperor Galerius after a military victory, Demetrios stopped in Thessaloniki, where many pagans, who were jealous of his successful life, denounced him as a Christian before the emperor, who ordered Demetrios put in prison. A man named Nestor befriended Demetrios in prison. The Emperor went to the arena to see his favorite gladiator, Lyaios and offered a reward to whomever could defeat him. Nestor accepted the challenge, and through the prayers of St. Demetrios, defeated the giant. When Nestor refused to kill Lyaios, because he had been helped by the “God of Demetrios,” the Emperor ordered that both be killed. This occurred in the year 306. We commemorate St. Demetrios on October 26 and St. Nestor on October 27. We will celebrate Divine Liturgy for St. Demetrios on Friday, October 26, at 10:00 a.m.

# St. John the Baptist Community News

## Parish Registry

**Baptism**-Hazel Katherine (Christina) Dumphy, daughter of David Dumphy and Becky Costis, was baptized on Sunday, August 19. Christina Georgiadis and Anastasia Panagiotakopoulos were the Godparents. Na Sas Zisi!

**Baptism**-Robert Garrison (Argyrios) Mason was baptized on Sunday, August 19. Robert Papadakis was the Godfather. Na Sas Zisi!

**Adult Baptism**-Steven Ryan Guzman was baptized on Sunday, September 2. Dimitrios Hatzileris was the Godfather. Na Sas Zisi!

**Family Baptism**-On Sunday, September 9, we baptized an entire family. Shpetim (Nicholas), his wife, Donalda (Konstantina), and their children, Daniela (Anna) and Fabio (Panagiotis) Cara. Panagiotis Sarantos was the Godfather for Shpetim and Fabio. Anna Sarantos was the Godmother for Donalda and Daniela. Na Sas Zisi! And welcome to our parish!

**Funeral**-Mary Milligan passed away on August 28. Funeral services were held on Saturday, September 1. May her memory be eternal!

**Condolences** to Angela Johnston, on the passing of her father, Alexander Kyriakis. May his memory be eternal!

## A Rare Opportunity - A "Teaching" Divine Liturgy – October 1

We did a "teaching Divine Liturgy" in the context of the Orthodoxy 101 class earlier this year which was very well received. On Monday, October 1, Father Stavros will celebrate the Liturgy on the solea, so that everyone can see what is happening during the Liturgy. If you are not taking the whole Orthodoxy 101 class but just want to attend this evening, please feel free to do so.

For the first time ever in the history of St. John the Baptist, Father Stavros will offer a Divine Liturgy, where he will explain the mechanics and the mystery of this service which is central to our faith, worship and salvation. The service will start at 6:30 p.m.

## Get Acquainted Sunday, October 7



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, October 7** Our Regular GOYA meeting for October will be Sunday, October 7, from 5:00-8:00 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. (Notice the later end time). We are going to be doing a seminar for both parents and teens on "Let Your Light Shine." We had forty-two GOYAns for our September Meeting! So, come and be part of this awesome group. Parents are welcome. Dinner is always served. Please come on time, as we will serve dinner promptly at 5:00 p.m.

**Volleyball Tournament October 12-14** St. Stefanos Greek Orthodox Church in St. Petersburg is sponsoring a volleyball tournament from October 12-14. Our GOYAns will be attending. Please contact Maria Koutroumanis for more information.



**GOYA Service Project** - On Saturday, October 20, the GOYAns will be doing a service project to clean up the church grounds prior to the Festival. Time and details to be announced.

## Community Outreach - Saturday, October 20

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, October 21** - The YAL fellowship dinner will be on Sunday, October 21, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. Please RSVP to Charlie if you are going to attend. Dates may change. Charlie will send an email.



# Parish Nursing Ministry - Get Your Flu Shot Here on October 14

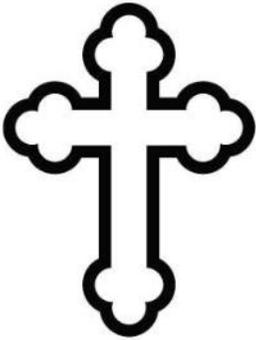
Your Parish Nursing Ministry has made arrangements with Walgreens to offer flu shots on October 14, after Liturgy during fellowship hour. Flu shots are recommended for everyone over the age of 6 months, with a few restrictions. For example, seniors and those with compromised immune systems due to medical issues are especially vulnerable to getting the flu and in some cases, end up in the hospital. Don't take that risk. At SJGOC the Walgreen's pharmacist will screen people over the age of 18. Flu shots are often covered by insurance or offered at a very low cost. You will need to bring your insurance card with you. Must be 18 years or older to receive a flu shot. So come to church, give glory to God for your health and stay healthy by getting your flu shot. God helps those who help themselves. No appointment necessary.



If you are interested in participating in this ministry or would like more information, contact Stavroula Crafa, RNC at 727-409-0686 or email at [Stavroula@crafa.com](mailto:Stavroula@crafa.com). For updates on this ministry, stay tuned to the weekly bulletin.

Calling all Parish Council member, Sunday School teachers, GOYA and young adult advisors, Philoptochos members, church greeters, and all those who know and love someone with special needs:

## Pick Up Your Cross and Follow Me Special Needs Inclusion Ministry



Please join us **Saturday, October 6** in the Kourmolis Center from 9:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m. for a workshop presented by Presvytera Toni Mihalopoulos of St. Demetrios in Chicago Illinois.

We will be learning new ways to be welcoming, supportive, and inclusive to children with special needs and their families. Lunch will be provided.

*Jesus said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for such is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 19:14*

If you would like to attend or for more information please contact  
Dante Skourellos: [d\\_skourellos@yahoo.com](mailto:d_skourellos@yahoo.com) /813-765-9534

## Orthodoxy 101 Class is underway

Fr. Stavros offers this class two times per year, in the spring and in the fall. This will be a Four-week course of study on Monday nights to make people aware of the basics of being an Orthodox Christian.

There are two classes left and even if you haven't attended up to this point, you are more than welcome to attend.

**Monday, October 1** The Divine Liturgy—We will do a “teaching” Liturgy on the solea of the church. **If you have taken the class, or if you wish to only attend THIS session, please feel free to do so. We will actually be celebrating the Liturgy on October 1 during the class, with commentary and opportunities for questions at various pauses during the service.**

**Monday, October 8** Orthodox Traditions—fasting, icons, prayer and separating Theology from “yiaiyalogy”

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

Please sign up with Fr. Stavros at [frstav@gmail.com](mailto:frstav@gmail.com), so he has enough materials for everyone.

There is no charge for this class.

**Water from the Jordan River** - Father Stavros recently received the gift of a bottle of water from the Jordan River from the site where Jesus was baptized. Some of this water will be added to the Baptismal Font at every baptism going forward, so that we will not only bless water, but will be blessing water from the Jordan River.

**Meeting of Ministry Heads, Monday, October 15** - As was decided at the calendar meeting in August, we are going to have a meeting of all ministry heads on Monday, October 15 at 6:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. Dinner will be provided. We will be following up on our discussion at the calendar meeting regarding coffee hour, as well as talking concretely about vision, stewardship and several other topics which concern the community. Please make sure that each ministry head (or at least one member of each ministry) is present. Additional ministry participants are welcome to attend. Please RSVP to the office to let us know you are coming.

**New Procedure for Holy Communion** As of printing this issue of *The Messenger*, we are still working on making the New Procedure for Holy Communion a success. Please stay tuned to the weekly bulletins and email for more info. We also appreciate all the feedback that we received throughout this process.

*Matthew 5:14-16*

*You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

## Choices: Let Your Light Shine!

### A workshop for pre-teens and their parents

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

**Sunday, October 7, 2018**

**1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

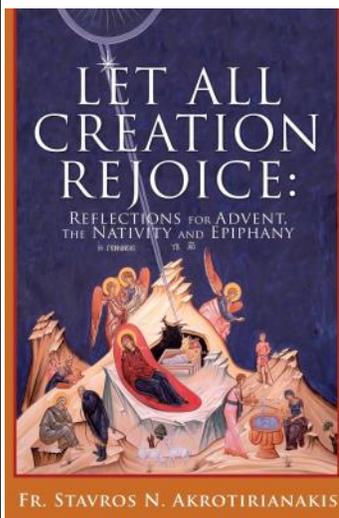
*\*lunch served at 12:30 p.m.*

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church 2418 Swann Avenue Tampa, FL 33609

*Proverbs 3:5-6*

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take*

For more information or to RSVP, please email or call Maria Xenick – [mpxenick@gmail.com](mailto:mpxenick@gmail.com), (813)765-3587



**Let all Creation Rejoice: Reflections for Advent the Nativity and Epiphany** This book is a series of short daily reflections on the scripture readings of Advent, the Nativity and Epiphany, to be read between November 15 and January 7.

Order your book today at [www.xulonpress.com/](http://www.xulonpress.com/)

**Interested in Joining the Prayer Team?** Over 1280 people have! The Prayer Team is a daily message that Father Stavros has been writing for more than 3 years! 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](mailto: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. Also, make sure [frstav@gmail.com](mailto: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.

# Hope & Joy Ministry Youth Ministry

The mission and goal of the Hope & Joy ministry is to lead our children into experiencing the Holy Orthodox Faith. Participating in the Hope & Joy ministry allows our children to build a strong bond with their Orthodox friends and lays out the foundation and tradition of our Orthodox faith through worship, fellowship and service. The bond they create now with each other and our Lord, Jesus Christ, will guide them and strengthen them throughout their lives.

In partnership with our Sunday School, here are some of the activities our Hope and Joy participate in:

Fall Harvest Celebration \* Christmas party and program  
Pre-teen Retreat \* Boxes of Hope food drive  
Movie and Pizza Night \* Souper Bowl of Caring  
Pre-Lenten Retreat \* Family Lenten Dinner  
Holy Friday Retreat  
For ALL children ages Pre-K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade!  
Hope Pre-k – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade / Joy 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade

Welcome back to all our families! Save the date: Sunday, October 21<sup>st</sup> for the first Hope/Joy event of the year! The Fall Harvest Celebration! Looking forward to another great year with our Hope/Joy youth.

In Christ, Debbie Nicklow

## Hope/Joy Fall Harvest Celebration

Sunday, October 21

4:00 – 6:00 PM

The Kourmolis Center

All children Pre-K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade  
are invited to join us for an afternoon of  
fun, food and fellowship!

Come in costume

(please no witches or devils)

Dinner will be served!

Games, crafts & prizes for all!

Kindly R.S.V.P. by October 16 to

Debbie at [Debbienicklow@hotmail.com](mailto:Debbienicklow@hotmail.com) Or text 813-690-0671

Volunteers welcome—Goyans, parents, friends—please sign up to help!

### Philoptochos October Outreach: Annual Diaper Drive and More for the Alpha House

Alpha House of Tampa offers homeless pregnant women and mothers with young children and their babies safe housing and the tools they need to become self-sufficient and effective parents! Please support the DRIVE by donating the following items: **Diapers of all sizes, other baby items such as Shampoo, Lotion, Baby and Toddler Food, Formula and Personal Care items for the Moms.**

There will be a large box in the Kourmolis Center for you donations starting Sunday, October 7 through Sunday, October 28.



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

“The Story of You” by Angela Alatzakis

This book is for parents to share with their children, but will inspire all who read it.

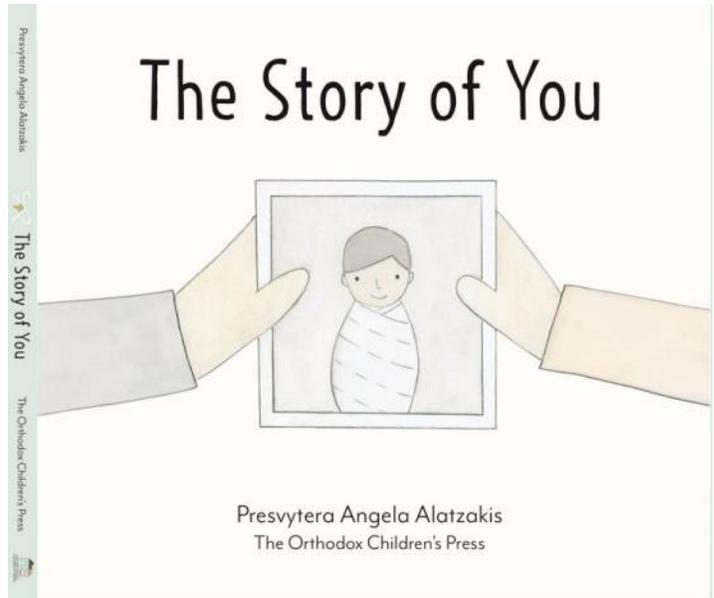
“Before you were born, we prayed, and prayed and PRAYED for you.”

“The Story of You” is a parent’s retelling to their child, of their first steps into our beautiful Orthodox Christian faith. It walks the reader through praying for them before they were born, the prayers on their first day, special naming prayers on their eighth day, their entrance into the church on their fortieth day, choosing their godparents, the steps of their chrismation and baptism, and then beyond as a member of the body of Christ.”

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. If there is an 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



**MOMS - Ministry of Mother's Sharing** The MOMS group will begin meeting once per month at church for a gathering of prayer and fellowship! Mothers of all ages and stages are welcome to join us. We will alternate morning and evening meeting times to accommodate diverse schedules. We hope you can join us! Here is the schedule:

October 3 - 9:30 a.m.

November 14 - 7:00 p.m.

December 6 - Divine Liturgy for the feast of St. Nicholas 10 a.m. with MOMS fellowship to follow.

Please contact [mapkonstas@gmail.com](mailto:mapkonstas@gmail.com) with any questions and to be sure you are on the MOMS email list.

**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](mailto:exchange2861@yahoo.com).

# October 2018 Stewardship Message

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

We are deeply grateful to the faithful Stewards of St. John and your continued support of our Church Mission and Ministries. The dedication of our parishioner time, talent and treasure help sustain our church for present and future generations! We have many new and returning parishioners after a busy summer and encourage your involvement. We have provided a list of our valued Stewards in our October Messenger.

Fr. Stavros spoke in a recent sermon about ‘Giving Back’ to the mission of the church, and our calling, to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel of this day was John 3:3-17 which in a few short powerful words summarizes our mission as Christians. We invite everyone to not only receive/consume what the church has to offer but take an honest assessment of your personal sacrifice and level of involvement. ***Are you actively involved in a ministry?*** We offer a variety of ministries that do beautiful work for the church and will continue to grow and develop as we engage more parishioners. ***Are you giving financially to the church?*** If you haven’t pledged to St. John this year it is not too late! Your sacrificial giving helps move us closer to the ultimate goal of our Stewardship program - to fund 100% of our annual operating budget through stewardship and other donations. We strive to encourage and motivate purposeful ‘giving from the heart’ and acknowledge Stewardship is our ultimate calling as Christ followers.

May God continue to multiply the gifts bestowed upon you as you offer yourself to His service and to our beloved St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, supporting one another in our growing and thriving Christian community. ***The Stewardship Committee expresses sincere appreciation and thanks for the gifts of time, talent and treasure provided by our loyal Stewards.***

Year to Year Comparison ~	2018*	2017*
Pledged Year to Date	\$433,412	\$404,836
Received Year to Date	\$342,997	\$337,007
Average Pledge	\$1,416	\$1,300
Median Pledge	\$800	\$650
# of Individual/Families Pledged/Giving	350	346
*YTD as of 9/12/18 & 9/17/17		

Please feel free to share your thoughts to the office email - [officestjohnngoctampa@gmail.com](mailto:officestjohnngoctampa@gmail.com) or speak directly with Fr. Stavros, Sandra Pappas at [spappas11@gmail.com](mailto:spappas11@gmail.com) or Pete Trakas at [ptrakas@gmail.com](mailto:ptrakas@gmail.com) Stewardship Co-Chairs. ***We are here for YOU!***

***~Coming Soon~*** Fall Parish Assembly October 28, 2018 and Parish Council Elections in November. In order to participate in these meetings and have your voice heard, please ensure you’re up to date on your Stewardship commitment 30 days prior to the date of each meeting. *Weekly, Monthly and Quarterly by end of selected term. Annual pledges are due by June 30<sup>th</sup> and Semi-Annual calls for half payment by this date with the remainder by the end of the year according to our By-Laws.*

We remain with over 52 Families that pledged last year but not this year and encourage you to complete a pledge form TODAY! The work of Christ truly depends on all of us and your pledge is a sign of a growing commitment to Christ.

Our Online Pledge Forms are easy to complete. Hard Copy forms are also available in the Church Narthex or Bookstore.

Stewardship Donations and General Donations may also be made online via PayPal as a one time or recurring commitment or setup with auto deductions from your bank account.

Visit <http://greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com/2018-stewardship/> to complete your Stewardship Pledge Form and make your gift today.

**Are we communicating effectively??? Is there something we can do better?? We would love to hear your feedback. Please email Charlie Hambos, our Pastoral Assistant, at [charlie.hambos@gmail.com](mailto:charlie.hambos@gmail.com) or call him at 813-843-8471. He would love to hear from you.**

# ~ Thank You for your gifts of Stewardship ~

We appreciate the gifts of our loyal parishioners at St. John and which to acknowledge each and every one!

According to the St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Tampa FL By-Laws, one must have completed a pledge form AND be 'current' in their pledge (for this year and last year) to vote at the Parish Assembly Meetings (Fall meeting scheduled for October 28, 2018) and Parish Council Elections (December 9, 2018).

\* Indicates receipt of a Stewardship Check without a completed pledge form. Our office will be happy to forward a pledge package and the form can also be completed on-line. Keep in mind pledges in writing help us adequately plan financially for our church and also bring voting privileges, which are critical to support the mission of our church.

***It is our hope the EVERYONE on our mailing list provides gifts of stewardship or becomes a Friend of St. John the Baptist, for those who do not live in Tampa.***

Afloarei, Michael & Mariana, Mr. & Mrs.  
Akrotirianakis, Stavros & Lisa, Fr. & Pres.  
Alastanos, Jennifer, Ms.  
Alexander, John & Anetta, Mr. & Mrs.  
Alexander, Plato & Tassa Dr. and Mrs.  
Alithinos, Ekaterini, Mrs.  
Alsina, Alexa, Ms.  
Alsina, Angel & Lisa, Dr. & Mrs.  
Anagnost, Constantine, Mr.  
Apockotos, James & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.  
Argyros, Harry & Linda, Mr. & Mrs.  
Armstrong, Jim & Myra, Mr. & Mrs.  
Artzibushev, Constantin, Mr.  
Artzibushev, Dimitri & Sonya, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
Assimiadis, Paul, Mr.  
Athanas, Stephan, Mr.\*  
Axelrod, Scott & Christine, Mr. & Mrs.  
Badrane, Denise, Ms.  
Bakiridgi, Joan, Ms.  
Balasis, Mathew & Suzy, Mr. & Mrs.  
Bavaro, Daniel & Anna Maria, Mr. & Mrs.  
Beach, Kevin Dr. & Ms. Heidi Borgeas  
Bedan, Matt & Christi, Mr. & Mrs.  
Bedran, Rita, Ms.  
Berdos, Frank & Isabel, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
Berdos, Niki Pauline, Ms. & Mr. David Silber  
Blackburn, Robert T. & Kathryn, Mr. & Dr.  
Blankenship, Wayne & Athanasia, Mr. & Mrs.  
Blankenship, Alexander, Mr.  
Bougas, Constantine & Angela, Mr. & Mrs.  
Bradshaw, Harold & Pelagia, Mr. & Mrs.  
Brannan, Meisha, Ms.  
Brown, Chrysanthi, Ms.  
Burchill, George, Fr.  
Calamunci, Alex & Sara, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
Cantonis, George & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.  
Cara, Shpetim, Mr. &  
Shehu, Donald, Mrs.  
Carter, John & Genie, Dr. & Mrs.  
Cauthorn, Ken & Helen, Mr. & Mrs.  
Celin, Edjir & Nadine, Mr. & Mrs.  
Chagaris, George & Kalliope, Mr. & Mrs.  
Chakonas, Ethel Athena, Mrs.  
Chandler, Robert & Viviana, Mr. & Mrs.  
Charalabakis, Terry G., Mr.  
Cherpelis, Basil & Alyssa, Dr. & Dr.  
Choundas, Marina & Mr. Greg Thatcher, Ms.  
Choundas, Peter & Adis, Mr. & Mrs.  
Christ, John E., Dr.  
Christodoulou Mary Ann, Mrs.\*  
Christopher, Louis, Mr. & Dr. Penny Plakas  
Christou, Tammy, Ms.  
Circello, Vincent & Tamera, Mr. & Mrs.  
Clifton, Helen M., Mrs.  
Clifton, Keven & Olya, Mr. & Mrs.  
Colado, David & Alexandria, Mr. & Mrs.  
Conner, Michael & Artemis, Mr. & Mrs.  
Corcoran, Joseph & Patti, Mr. & Mrs.  
Costas, Maria, Ms.  
Costello, Patricia, Ms.  
Cotterman, Sandra, Ms.  
Crafa, Paul & Stavroula, Mr. & Mrs.  
Crassas, Alkis & Aime, Mr. & Mrs.  
Cyhan, Dawn, Ms.  
Dalaklis, Joanne, Ms.  
Damian, Gabriela & Mihnea Anghelescu \*  
Daniels, Elaine, Ms.  
De Maio, Alexandra, Ms.  
DeJesus, Roy & Anna, Mr. & Mrs.  
Demas, Anna K., Ms.  
Demas, John, Mr.  
Demetrides, Spero & Theano, Mr. & Mrs.  
Demetriou, Nektarios & Peggy, Dr. & Mrs.  
DeYoung, John & Jenna, Mr. & Mrs.  
Diamantakes, Georgia, Ms.  
Diamantides, Melpo, Mrs.  
Dimas, Gregory, Mr. & Ms. Evelyn Patsavos  
Dimitrijevic-Jones, Stephen, Mr. & Ms.  
Alina Morris\*  
Diniaco, Peter & Rebecca, Mr. & Mrs.  
Dumphy, David & Becky, Mr. & Mrs.  
Edquid, Marc & Maraquet, Mr. & Mrs.  
Edwards, Jeffery, Dr. & Mrs. Christina Cardy  
Ekonomou, Anthony & Diana C., Mr. & Mrs.\*  
Evdemon, Stanley & Mary Ellen, Mr. & Mrs.  
Fallieras, George, Dr.  
Fallieras, Lauren, Ms.  
Fallieras, Nicholas & Susan, Dr. & Mrs.  
Fellios, George & Zeina, Mr. & Mrs.  
Fellios, Alexander, Mr.\*  
Fenton, Josef, Mr.  
Ferropolis, Alexandra, Ms.\*  
Ferekides, Christos & Debbie, Dr. & Mrs.  
Findlay, Karina & Andrew, Dr. & Mr.  
Forde, Dwight & Ewana, Mr. & Mrs.  
Fotopoulos, Anthony & Carole, Mr. & Mrs.  
Frazier, Chris, Ms.  
Frey, Carlos & Ms. Sophia Sorolis-Frey, Mr.  
Frimenko, Mary Z, Presbyteria  
Gabel, Tracey, Ms.  
Galini, Mary & Larry, Ms.  
Gallos, Vasiliki, Mrs.  
Garcia, Rick & Stacie, Mr. & Mrs.  
Gavalas, Debbie, Ms. & Mr. Robert Ritchie  
Geis, Jeffrey & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.  
Georgas, Thomas & Janet, Mr. & Mrs.  
George, Michael & Peggy, Mr. & Mrs.  
Georgiou, Speros & Eleanor, Mr. & Mrs.  
Gerecke, Ed & Terri, Mr. & Mrs.  
Gerecke, Alexandra, Ms.\*  
Giallourakis, Michael & Artemise, Mr. & Mrs.  
Gorter, Maria, Ms.  
Gregory, Daniel & Alicia, Mr. & Mrs.  
Guarino, Paul, Mr. & Mrs.  
Halikoytakis, Michael & Edith, Mr. & Mrs.  
Halkias, Athanasios, Mr.  
Halkias, Chris, Mr.  
Halkias, Demetrios & Camille, Mr. & Mrs.  
Halkias, Evangeline, Mrs.  
Halkias, George & Elaine, Mr. & Mrs.  
Hambos, Charlie, Mr.  
Hambos, George & Donna, Mr. & Mrs.  
Hampers, Dean & Valerie, Mr. & Mrs.  
Hampton, Wade & Sarah, Mr. & Mrs.  
Hanhan, Amin & Gloria, Mr. & Mrs.  
Hanhan, Marian & Mr. Joshua Preston, Ms.  
Hartung, Mark & JoAnn, Mr. & Mrs.  
Henderson, Kenny & Nickollet, Mr. & Mrs.  
Higdon, Skip, Mrs.  
Hoff, Eleni, Mrs.  
Hoppenstand, Anna Evelyn, Ms.  
Horack, Scott & Rena, Mr. & Mrs.  
Ioannidis, Theodore & Sharon, Mr. & Mrs.  
Iraklianos, Mike, Mr.  
Irwin, Jon & Pam, Mr. & Mrs.  
James, Arthur M & Abby, Mr. & Mrs.  
Jennewein, Robert & Georgia, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
Jernigan, Bobby & Andrea, Mr. & Mrs.  
Jewtushenko, Raissa, Ms.\*  
Johnson, Aphroditi, Mrs.\*  
Johnston, Angela, Ms.  
Jolly, Jim & Jean, Mr. & Mrs.  
Kabougeris, Pete & Voula, Mr. & Mrs.  
Kabouris, George & Kathy, Mr. & Mrs.  
Kafantaris, Michael & Amy, Mr. & Mrs.  
Kalojiannis, Nicholas & Alicia, Mr. & Mrs.  
Kapetan, Martha, Ms.  
Kappiris Higginson, Anastasia, Ms.  
Kappiris, Stanley & Erin, Mr. & Mrs.  
Kargakos, Panagiotis & Mrs. Joan William, Mr.\*  
Karpelenia, Loretta, Presbyteria  
Kastis, Deano, Mr.  
Katsadouris, Konstantin & Katherine, Mr. & Mrs.\*

Katsamakts, Perry & Betty Katherine, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Katsaros, Andreas & Stacey, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Katsifis, John & Margaret, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Katsouli, Paulina, Ms.  
 Katzaras, George & Angelina, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Katzaras, Nick & Helen, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Katzaras, Stefan & Kara, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Kavouklis, Chris & Debbie, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Kavouklis, Michael & Irene, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Kavouklis, Nicholas & Edie, Dr. & Mrs.  
 Kazanis, Deno & Barbara, Dr. & Dr.  
 Kelly, Brian & Ms. Amanda Cotterman, Mr.  
 Kladakis, Manuel & Cynthia, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Kladis, George & Charlene, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Kladis, Theodore & Amy, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Koch, John & Cathie, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Konstas, Demetrios & Mary Ann, Dr. & Mrs.  
 Kontzamanys, Alexis, Ms.  
 Korakis, Alexandros & Louise, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Koudouna, Anthony, Mr.  
 Koudouna, Dora, Ms.  
 Koutroumanis, Dean & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Krinos, Dimitri & Melissa, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Krinos, John & Sue, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Kwasny, Foti & Fatin, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Kyros, Chris & Katherine, Dr. & Dr.  
 L'Hommedieu, Tim & Tia, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Labatos, Angelika, Ms.  
 Labatos, Anthony, Mr.  
 Lambrou, James & Michelle, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Langas, Dimitrios & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Laskey, Fred & Coleen, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Lenardos, Steven & Melissa, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Leontsinis, Nicole, Ms.  
 Letobarone, Domenic & Melanie, Mr. & Dr.\*  
 Liakopoulos, Stephanie, Ms.  
 Limberopoulos, Chris, Mr.\*  
 Lindiakos, Richard & Lauren, Mr. & Dr.  
 Lucas, Velina, Ms.  
 Luciu, Daniel & Elizabeth, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Maas, Mary, Ms.  
 MacLaury, Kathryn, Ms.  
 Makris, Dean & Ashley, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Maltezos, Helen, Mrs.  
 Mamerio, Diana, Ms.\*  
 Mangarides, Markos & Ekaterini, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Manikas, William & Nancy, Dr. & Mrs.  
 Mantzanas, Chris & Nicole, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Martinez, Alexander & Andriana, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Mason, Rex Garrison & Maria Nicole, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Matassini, Nicholas G. & Christina, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Mekras, Demosthenes & Luisa, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Mellon, Andria, Ms.  
 Melton, Greg & Victoria, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Merrell, Dustin & Cory, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Miaoulis, George & Debra, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Michos, Syliva, Ms.  
 Milonas, Stacie, Ms.  
 Milonas, Taso & Thay, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Mitchell, John & Edith, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Mitseas, George & Catherine, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Moran, Andrew & Stefanie, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Morgan, Theodora, Ms.  
 Moshos, Doukissa, Ms.  
 Mourer, Brett & Ana, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Mueller, Jeffery & Melinda, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Murnaghan, Peter & Christina, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Myer, Ronald & Magdalini, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Naum, Dean & Sandra, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Nenos, Byron & Jeanie, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Nenos, Mary, Mrs.  
 Nenos, Peter, Mr.  
 Nenos, John, Mr.  
 Nenos, Vasilios, Mr.  
 Nicklow, Tom & Demetra, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Nicolaou, Christos & Dee, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Nolas, George S. & Cheryl, Dr. & Mrs.  
 Nolen, Pamela, Ms.  
 Olsen, Scott & Elphida, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Palios, Artemis, Mrs.  
 Palios, George & Julie, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Palios, Michael & Bessie, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Paloumpis, Tom & Jenny, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Panopoulos, Theodoros & Marisa, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Panos, Euripides & Denise, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Panou, Rick, Mr. & Mrs. Valerie Stroud  
 Papadakis, Alec & Lauren, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Papadakis, Justin, Mr.  
 Papadopoulos, John & Irene, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Papaconomou, Lambros & Deborah, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Papaefstathiou, Louis & Joanna K. Mr. & Mrs.  
 Papataros, Christopher & Jennifer, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Pappas, Paul & Georgia, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Paras, Gus & Marina, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Parker, Ryan & Alexa, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Passalaris, Isidoros & Jolie, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Passavanti, Robert & Debra, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Patellis, Theophilos, Dr. & Dorkfykis, Maria, Mrs.  
 Patrascioi, Florin & Marenca, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Peckham, Richard & Victoria, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Perdicas, Ernest & Nancy, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Perry, Christian & Athnia, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Pessemier, Eleni, Ms.  
 Pessemier, Tom & Christy, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Peters, Alexandra, Ms.  
 Pierrotsakos, Alex & Valerie, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Pileggi, Suzanne, Ms.  
 Plakas, Theodore & Kyriakoula, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Prodromitis, Theo, Ms.  
 Quinn, Toulia, Ms.\*  
 Rindone, Ryan & Megan, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Robinson, Tanya, Mrs.  
 Rogers, II, Aris, Mr.  
 Rogers, Sr., Aris, Mr.  
 Rose, Maryann, Ms.  
 Ross, Daniel & Nicole, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Roussos, Archie & Eleftheria, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Roussos, Nicholas, Mr.\*  
 Roy, Perry & Alysa, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Sakaris, Thomas & Barbara, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Sakellaris, Anne, Mrs.  
 Sakkis, John & Katherine, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Sakkis, Tasha, Ms.  
 Sarantos, Pete & Ann, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Scarfogliero, Alexis, Ms.  
 Schad, Barbara & Gerald, Mrs. & Mr.  
 Scourtes, Christine, Mrs.  
 Sengsouvana, Say & Sarah, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Serbanos, Michael & Patricia, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Sermier, Eustace G & Bennette, Dr. & Mrs.  
 Sibley, Russell & Despina, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Sideris, Harry & Catinna, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Sinadinos, Gregory & Ms. Mary Brunot, Mr.  
 Skourellos, Dante & Lindsey, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Skourellos, Michael P & Shirley A., Mr. & Mrs.  
 Skourellos, Michele, Ms.  
 Skourellos, Peter, Mr.  
 Skoures, William & Egli, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Smith, Brad & Nicolette, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Smith, Thomas & Golfo Alexopoulos, Dr. & Dr.  
 Snyder, Nicole & Jeffrey, Mrs. & Mr.  
 Sorolis, Eftihia, Ms.  
 Soteriou, George & Selena, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Sotiropoulos, Bill & Jenny, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Sotiropoulos, Paul & Terri, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Speegle, Maria & Maria, Ms.  
 Spencer, Wayne & Pauline, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Spirides, Harry G., Mr.  
 Stavropoulos, Jane, Ms.  
 Steele, Elliott & Dianne, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Stephanides, Christos, Mr.  
 Stephanides, Marios & Ourania, Dr. & Mrs.  
 Stilian, Douglas & Bridget, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Stingulescu, Julia, Ms.\*  
 Stitt, William & Deborah, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Stonestreet, John & Anastasia, Dr. & Mrs.  
 Stratigakos, Helen, Ms.  
 Stratigakos, Louis & Georgia, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Tataris, Irene, Ms.  
 Tedrick, Matthew & Ellen, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Theofilos, John & Elizabeth, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Theophanous, Peter, Mr.  
 Thomas, Larry & Tina, Dr. & Mrs.  
 Tisdale, Greg, Mr.  
 Touliatos, Markissa, Ms.  
 Trakas, Peter & Donna, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Trakas, Andrew & Adrienne, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Triantafylou, Marcelle, Ms.  
 Triantafyllopoulos, George & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.\*  
 Trimis, Michael & Diane, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Tsibris, John, Dr.  
 Valaes, Demetrios & Lynn A., Mr. & Mrs.  
 Vourloumis, Joanna, Mrs.  
 Voykin, David & Amy, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Voykin, Mary H, Mrs.  
 Vukmer, Daniel & Sheila, Mr & Mrs.  
 Ward, Gary, Mr & Ms. Sandra Pappas  
 Westmoreland, Jim & Joanne, Mr. & Mrs.  
 White, William, Mr.  
 Worley, Christene, Ms.  
 Xenick, Emanuel & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Xenick, George & Cindy, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Xeroteris, Evangeline, Ms.  
 Yohai, Eleni, Ms.  
 Yotis, William & Eleonora, Dr. & Mrs.  
 Zabetakis, Maria, Ms.  
 Zaharis, Constantine (Rachel), Dr. & Dr.\*  
 Zak, Jo Ann, Ms.  
 Zeban, Peter & Judy, Mr. & Mrs.  
 Zelatis, John P. & Denise M., Mr. & Mrs.  
 Zoumberos, Stavros & Kathy, Mr. & Mrs.

# Parish Council Elections

**E**ven though it is October, it will be time to start thinking about Parish Council Elections. **On October 28, we will hold our fall Parish Assembly and open up nominations for the Parish Council.** This year, there are six (6) positions coming up for election for a two-year term. According to the Parish By-laws, nominations for the Parish Council will be closed following the Parish Assembly Meeting on Sunday, October 28. If you wish to be nominated for the Parish Council, please plan to attend the meeting on Sunday, October 28 and have someone nominate you, or send a letter to Fr. Stavros prior to the commencement of the meeting, stating your wish to be nominated for the Parish Council and he will read it at the meeting and have someone nominate you. Parish Council Elections will be held on Sunday, December 9, following the Divine Liturgy. A mailing to all eligible voters will occur following the close of the nominations period which will have the names of the candidates, a picture of each candidate and a statement by each candidate.

In preparation for nominations and elections, please keep in mind the following:

Regarding eligibility to be a candidate for the Parish Council: Uniform Parish Regulations (UPR) Article 18, Section 1:

## PARISHIONERS

Section 1: Every person who is baptized and chrismated according to the rites of the Orthodox Church is a parishioner. The religious, moral and social duties of a parishioner are to apply the tenets of the Orthodox Faith to his/her life and to: adhere to and live according to the tenets of the Orthodox faith; faithfully attend the Divine Liturgy and other worship services; participate regularly in the holy sacraments; respect all ecclesiastical authority and all governing bodies of the Church; be obedient in matters of the Faith, practice and ecclesiastical order; contribute towards the progress of the Church's sacred mission; and be an effective witness and example of the Orthodox Faith and Traditions to all people.

A parishioner in good standing practices all the religious and moral duties as described in this Section 1. At a minimum, a parishioner in good standing must: be eighteen years of age or over; be current in his or her stewardship and other financial obligations to the Parish, abide by all the regulations herein stated and the Parish Bylaws; and cooperate in every way towards the welfare and well being of the Parish. (Stewardship is recommended to be ten percent (10%) of one's annual income as stated in Holy Scripture to help meet the financial obligations of the Parish, the Metropolis and the Archdiocese.)

## 2. Regarding Election of Parish Council: UPR Article 25, Section Two

Section 2: A candidate for the Parish Council must be a parishioner in good standing of the Parish for at least one (1) year immediately preceding the date of the election and must live his or her life in accordance with the Faith and canons of the Church. The Priest determines whether the Parishioners are in canonical and financial good standing as specified in Article 18, Sections 1 through 3.

Section 3: Candidates for election to the Parish Council shall be nominated in accordance with the provisions of the Parish Bylaws. All candidates shall attend a seminar conducted by the Priest prior to the election at which the Priest shall discuss and explain to the

candidates the Uniform Parish Regulations, and the significance of the affirmation of office.

At the discretion of the respective Hierarchy, such seminar may be held locally or regionally, provided that candidates are given appropriate advance notice and more than one reasonable opportunity to attend the seminar in a location within close proximity to the applicable Parish.

In the event that an otherwise eligible candidate(s) cannot attend the scheduled seminar(s) for justifiable cause, the Priest shall meet privately with such individual(s) to provide the seminar.

At the conclusion of the seminar all candidates must sign a statement acknowledging that they understand the Regulations and will abide by them and the affirmation of office. If a candidate for the Parish Council does not attend a seminar and sign the statement, his/her name shall be deleted from the list of candidates.

~As of this writing, there has been no regional seminar set for the Tampa Bay Area for Parish Council Candidates—there will be a two hour seminar on Tuesday, November 13, from 7:00-9:00 p.m., to be held at St. John, which each candidate will be required to attend. In the event that a regional seminar is scheduled for this year, each candidate may be required to attend that one as well.

~ Each candidate is expected to be active in the sacramental life of the church. This is covered in Article 18, section one, above. This includes the sacrament of confession. If a candidate has not been to confession in the past year, they are not eligible to run for the Parish Council. In the event your spiritual father is serving another parish, he can send a one line email to Fr. Stavros indicating your participation in this sacrament in the past year.

~All candidates for the Parish Council will be subject to a background check. Any background check that reveals a felony conviction will make a candidate ineligible to serve for ten years. Any background check revealing a conviction for financial misconduct—embezzlement, fraud, etc., will make a candidate permanently ineligible to serve on the Parish Council.

~Each candidate is asked to write a half a page on why they want to run for the Parish Council and to supply a recent photograph that is able to be photocopied well. The statement and photo need to be to the church office no later than November 17.

Thank you for your interest in being a Parish Council candidate. If you have any questions on any of the above, please feel free to contact me at any time.

+FR. STAVROS

## Fall Parish Assembly



**The Fall Parish Assembly will be held on Sunday, October 28, following the Divine Liturgy. The principal agenda items will be the 2019 budget and nomination of Parish Council and auditing committee.**

# 2018 Raffle Buy One – Sell One Together, We all Win! Goal - 700+ Tickets



## *This Year:*

**Five Prizes:**

**Car or \$20k Cash Prize**

**One \$1,000 Cash Prize**

**Three iPad Minis**

**Weekly Posted Sales**

**Updates!**

## *How To Buy:*

**Mail in Check with Raffle Stub**

**Call in Credit Card; Bring in Raffle Stub**

**Stop by Hall After Church Sept. 30 – Nov. 4**

**Watch Bulletin for New Methods to Buy –**

**We're trying to make this easy for you!**

## *Want to Learn Modern Greek?*

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church Adult Greek School



Teacher born, raised, and educated in Greece with over 20 years of experience teaching the Greek language. Adult classes for beginners taught @ St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church 2418 W. Swann Ave, Tampa, FL 33609. Classes are held at 6:00 - 8:30 p.m. on Thursday evenings, starting on September 27, 2018. This will be the first of three sessions, with each session lasting three months.

- Speak Greek
- Read Greek
- Write Greek
- Basic Grammar & More.
- Some Greek History
- Book Included in Price!!

Price per session is \$100 for church members and \$125 for non-members.

Contact Ms. Magdalini Myer: at (813) 909-2327, [aspis69@aol.com](mailto:aspis69@aol.com) or the church office at (813) 876-8830.



**The Annual St. John the Baptist Greek Festival is  
November 9, 10 & 11, 2018**

We will unite as a Parish to support our Festival. Help is needed in many ways leading up to and during the festival. Everyone doing something (big, small or somewhere in between) makes our festival a success! This is our opportunity to showcase our Orthodox Faith as well our food, dancing and Kefi!

**Things We Know:**

- ♦ **Raffle Tickets are available on-line and in the office. Starting in October we will also have a Festival Table setup for volunteers and additional Raffle Donations.**
- ♦ **We have over 1,200 volunteer slots to fill over our 3 days weekend. It takes the effort of our entire Church Community to host a successful festival. Sign up to volunteer at [TampaGreekFestival.com](http://TampaGreekFestival.com) or contact Sandra Pappas at [tpagreekfestival@gmail.com](mailto:tpagreekfestival@gmail.com) or 813-785-3747.**  
**Our GOAL: Volunteer for at least two shifts.**

**H XAPA ΜΑΣ and PAREA Dance Groups** Our Youth Dance Group will be practicing every Sunday in the Kourmolis Center immediately following Sunday School. H XAPA ΜΑΣ means Our Joy and this group is for school age children. If your children are interested dancing or if you have any questions please contact Marina Choundas at 813-877-6136 or Alex De Maio at 813-340-9668.

**PANAGYRI Dance Group** (for College Age students and older) Practices will be in the Kourmolis Center on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. Please contact Alex DeMaio at 813-340-9668 or [Alexandra.demaio@yahoo.com](mailto:Alexandra.demaio@yahoo.com).

**Help Needed on the Following Dates:**

Thursday, October 11 - Koulourakia Baking  
Sunday, October 21 - Dolmades Filling Mixing  
Monday, October 22 - Dolmathes Rolling  
Tuesday, October 23 - Domathes Rolling  
Thursday, October 25 - Finikia and Kourambiedes  
Monday, October 29 - Emergency Baking Date



# Taking the Next Step in Youth Safety

By Steven Christoforou

It's finally time to take our next step to keep kids safe.

For the past two years, Y2AM (the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America) has been hard at work developing an exciting and critical system to help keep children safe.

In early July, the Clergy Laity Congress enthusiastically and unanimously approved these new Policies for the Safety of Youth and Children.

This is an exciting time for ministry work in the Archdiocese and, to help you understand what's next, we've answered the most common questions we've received about the new Policies:

## 1. Why is youth safety important?

We can't understand youth safety if we don't first understand ministry. Ministry, as we continue to stress, is primarily about the person of Jesus Christ. It's about bringing people to the Lord and inviting them to live out their relationship with Him in the Church.

Ministry is grounded in Christ and oriented towards His Kingdom. And, to be effective, it needs to be done in a safe and healthy environment.

Scandals and distractions can undermine even the best ministry work. Abuse and traumas not only harm young people but also alienate them from the Lord. We simply cannot bring young people to the Lord if we don't first create ministry environments that are safe, healthy, and above reproach.

That's exactly what the new Policies will help us achieve.

## 2. How are the Policies different from the Youth Protection Manual?

If you've ever served as a summer camp counsellor, you're familiar with the Youth Protection Manual (the "YPM"). This was the first set of youth safety rules that the Archdiocese ever adopted.

Yet the YPM only applies to Metropolis camps and retreats. And, while an important part of ministry, these critical programs are just a small part of the full spectrum of Youth Ministry Programs and Events.

Unlike the YPM, the new Policies apply to all Youth Ministry Programs or Events across the Archdiocese (at the parish, Metropolis, and Archdiocesan levels). And they bring three key improvements to our youth work:

First, the Policies create a new category of ministry workers, called Youth Workers, who will be the only people eligible to participate in Youth Ministry Programs and Events.

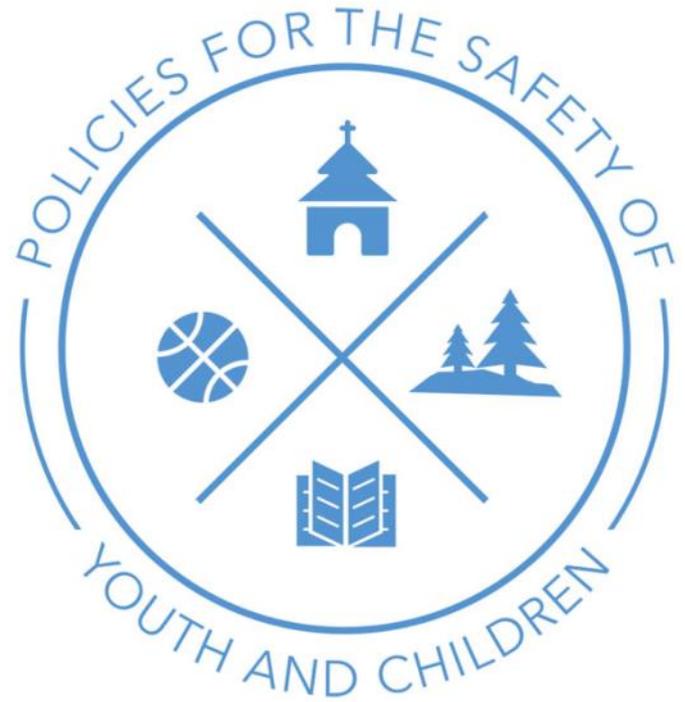
Second, the Policies set forth clear policies about how to report inappropriate behavior.

Third, the Policies establish a simple system of compliance to ensure that all Youth Ministry Programs and Events across the Archdiocese are safe, healthy, and Christ-centered.

## 3. What exactly is a Youth Ministry Program or Event?

Any program or event that is primarily held for Children or Youth is a Youth Ministry Program or Event. This includes everything from JOY and HOPE and GOYA youth groups to Sunday School, parish basketball teams, Greek schools, and parish dance groups.

If the Church is hosting a program or event for Children or Youth, then it's our job to make sure that program or event is a safe space for all participants.



## How can I become a Youth Worker?

Becoming a Youth Worker is simple. And it's a necessary first step if you'd like to participate in Youth Ministry Programs and Events.

First, you need to register (or re-register) every year with your parish. This helps us know who our Youth Workers are and how to contact them. And it makes sure that we can track the next critical steps.

Second, you need to complete online training every year. We've worked with our youth safety vendor, Praesidium, to completely redesign the online modules we used to use for summer camp training. This online course (which takes about an hour and a half to complete) is thorough, engaging, and incredibly informative.

Third, you need to successfully pass a background screen once every two years. This helps establish that all our Youth Ministry Programs and Events are safe environments staffed by reliable and trustworthy people.

Once you complete these three simple steps, you're a Youth Worker who is eligible to serve in Youth Ministry Programs and Events across the Archdiocese.

## 5. What does all this cost?

The Archdiocese is pleased to report that both the youth safety registration database and training materials are offered to all communities and parishioners in the Archdiocese free of charge. The only cost associated with becoming a Youth Worker will be the cost of the background screen.

Praesidium will be offering potential Youth Workers access to their most rigorous background screen for just about \$18 dollars. While some jurisdictions will see higher prices (given the costs associated with certain state databases), this is an incredibly affordable way to have confidence in the safety of our Youth Ministry Programs and Events.

## 6. How do I report inappropriate behavior?

The Policies cover two different kinds of reports.

First, as a matter of law, all people who have responsibility over young people are known as “mandated reporters.” Youth Workers fall into this category. If a mandated reporter sees Abuse or suspects Abuse, he or she must immediately report this to state authorities.

Again, this is a matter of law. And the Policies reflect this.

Second, there are also situations that do not rise to this level. For example, a person might witness behavior that seems inappropriate or is a violation of certain parts of the Policies. If this doesn't rise to the level of Abuse or suspected Abuse, then the Youth Worker must simply intervene to stop this behavior and report it to the Supervisor within the Youth Ministry Program or Event.

### 7. How will we track compliance?

This is a critical piece. Our challenge as an Archdiocese is not simply to adopt youth safety procedures but to demonstrate that we comply with them.

To do so, we have established a simple process that begins in the Parish.

First, the parish Administrator will prepare a roster of all the Youth Workers in the Parish. He will indicate that (a) these are the only people who are participating in Youth Ministry Programs or Events in the parish, and (b) they have all been registered, trained, and screened as required by the Policies. The Parish Administrator will then send this certified letter, signed by the Parish Priest and Parish Council president, to the District/Metropolis.

The District/Metropolis Y2AM Director will receive these letters and then prepare her own. She will prepare a roster of Parishes in the District/Metropolis and draft a letter that will indicate (a) which Parishes have submitted their certification letters, (b) that she has completed a random spot check of Parishes to ensure there are no discrepancies, and (c) that the District/Metropolis roster contains the only people participating in Youth Ministry Programs and Events in the District/Metropolis. The District/Metropolis Y2AM Director will then sign and send this certified letter to us at

the Archdiocese.

Finally, Y2AM will receive these letters and prepare our own compliance letter. We will prepare a roster of the District and Metropolises and draft a letter that will indicate (a) which District/Metropolises have submitted their certification letters, (b) that we have completed a random spot check of the District/Metropolises to ensure there are no discrepancies, and (c) that the Archdiocese roster contains the only people participating in Youth Ministry Programs and Events in the Archdiocese. We will then sign and send this certified letter to the Legal Committee of the Archdiocese.

This final certification letter will be a semiannual snapshot of our compliance with the Policies across the Archdiocese.

### 8. When do the Policies go into effect?

At the request of our Hierarchs, who are strongly committed to youth safety, the Policies will go into full effect on September 1, 2019 (the start of the new Ecclesial and Ministry Year). In the interim, we will be available to help Parishes with the registration and certification process. As of September 1, 2019, no Youth Ministry Program or Event will be allowed to function if it is not in full compliance with the Policies.

This is our pledge to Children and Youth across the Archdiocese. It is our pledge to all parents across the Archdiocese. It is our pledge to you, the faithful, who deserve to know that every Youth Ministry Program and Event across the Archdiocese is a safe place where young people can encounter our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

*Steven Christoforou is the Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. This article originally appeared in the Orthodox Observer. We are fully in compliance with the Youth Protection Guidelines of the Archdiocese and were one of the first churches to be so. Catherine Mitseas is in charge of Youth Protection at St. John. We are fully committed to the safety of our youth and our adults too.*

## 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)

**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:** October 1 (Liturgy), 8, 15, 22 (Liturgy of St. James), 29

### **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:** October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

### **South Tampa Mixed Group** (for any adults)

Anyone can attend this group but obviously this will be most convenient for those who live in South Tampa

**Location:** At the Church in the Library

**Group Leader:** Bessie Palios

bmp1126@yahoo.com 813-523-0347

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

**Meeting Dates:** October 2, 9, 16, 23 (May attend Liturgy of St. James on October 22 instead), 30

*Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:30,31*

# SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS - October 2018

What a great start to the 2018-2019 Sunday School year. September was a great month for Sunday School. We would like to welcome two new staff members to Sunday School. Stamie Garcia is returning to our 3rd Grade classroom after taking a year leave. Vivian Samuel is a new teacher who will be working with our 7th and 8th Graders. Let's welcome them both. We also want to give thanks to all the teachers, parents, and children who are committed to our Sunday School program.

Yeah!!!! All the class pictures were taken last month and should be up on our bulletin board by the time you read this article. Please stop by and take a look at our beautiful students. We would like to thank Olya Clifton for taking these wonderful pictures. Check out our 6th grade (below left) and our 7th and 8th Grade class (below right) pictures.

September was a busy month. Our Topics for the month were the THE CHURCH BUILDING, THE HOLY VESSELS, THE SIGN OF THE CROSS, THE ROLES IN THE CHURCH (THE GREAT COMMISSION), and THE LORD'S PRAYER. Charlie Hambos presented the Church Vessels and explained the Service of the Preparation for the Divine Liturgy, also known as Proskomide, to our 1st -5th graders and our High School students, so far this school year. Our 4TH and 5TH Graders learned about and made 15 loaves of Prosphora for our Church on Sept. 23rd. We would like to thank Melissa Krinos for directing this program for our children year after year. The congregation of St. John's is truly blessed to have such wonderful stewards in our children.

Our first YOUTH SUNDAY SERVICE of the year took place on September 23rd. The students in 1st-5th grade sang the Liturgical Hymns beautifully with the choir. Ten of our older students have joined the choir and we are very proud of them. Our music program is thriving and we need to thank Maria Xenick for that. We would truly like to thank our High School students for doing a fine job reading the Epistle on all of our Youth Sundays.



## October 2018 Sunday School Calendar

### **Saturday, October 6**

Special Needs Seminar  
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

### **Sunday, October 7**

Topic: The Bible  
Charlie: Kindergarten  
(Vessels)  
Pre-Teen Retreat  
GOYA Meeting 5:00 p.m.

### **October 12 - 14**

GOYA St. Pete Volleyball  
Tournament

### **Sunday, October 14**

Youth Sunday (6th-8th Grade  
Music at 11:50 a.m.)  
SUNDAY SCHOOL Topic:  
The Ten Commandments  
Charlie: 6th Grade (vessels)

### **Saturday, October 20**

GOYA Parish Clean Up Day

**Are you receiving the  
weekly Sunday School  
Emails? Let us know.**

### **Sunday, October 21**

SUNDAY SCHOOL Topic:  
The Creed  
Charlie: Pre-K (vessels)  
Prosphora: 3rd Grade  
Fall Festival (HOPE/JOY)

### **Sunday, October 28**

Topic: Liturgy/Holy  
Communion  
Charlie: 7th & 8th Grade  
(Vessels)

# What to Say to Your Teenage Son When He's Struggling (Hint: It's not "Man Up!")

By Shaunti Feldhahn

**N**ow that the new school year is upon us, I'm reminded of a woman who wrote in to ask for advice on dealing with her oldest son who was having a tough first year of high school. It involved him leaving old friends behind in middle school, trying to make new ones, figuring out what teams to try out for and navigating teachers and classes that were challenging and sometimes unfair. Thankfully, though, he was still talking to his parents about his struggles. But what she found frustrating is that all she heard was moaning and groaning. "Dramatic injustice" (her term) was all she heard out of the mouth of her teenage son. But then came the boom: he turned it around on his mom and said she wasn't even listening to him! While she and her husband were offering helpful suggestions and ways for him to "man up," all he heard was them refusing to listen to his feelings.

Oops, has it been that long since we were teenagers and said (or thought) the exact same thing about our parents? Ah, we all swore that it would never happen to us! If you don't remember, let me remind you of the number one gripe of a teenager: "My parents don't listen." And nothing has changed in that way since we were kids. I've studied thousands of today's teens, and they said the same thing.

Read on about what I discovered:

## What Listening Really Means To Teens

The good news is that our kids actually want to talk to us. They want to share things with you just as much as you want to hear them. What they're looking for from you, though, is a lot more empathy and a lot less instruction.

It turns out that, for our kids, listening means hearing and acknowledging what they are feeling about a problem, first and foremost, and long before you get to any solutions. When they say (oh-so-dramatically!) "You don't listen to me," what they mean is "You aren't hearing what I feel!" They subconsciously assume that if you so quickly share a solution, you couldn't have taken the time to understand their feelings yet.

## Studies Revealed Surprising Similarities

If you're familiar with some of my work, you'll realize this is what my husband, Jeff, and I told men about their wives in *For Men Only!* Most women need to have their feelings heard before being interested in working on a solution, so I wasn't surprised when teenage girls had the same need—but I was very surprised that teenage boys did! In fact, eight out of 10 kids we interviewed—both boys and girls—said that, before jumping in to fix a problem, they first needed their parents to hear, acknowledge and tend to the emotions behind the problem. And if that didn't happen, angst grew—and emotion and drama accelerated.



We're not sure exactly when boys grow into men who don't care as much about having their feelings heard and who say (in nice deep voices), "Just tell me how to fix it." But at least through age 17, they still need the same feelings-oriented response as girls.

## Learn What Specifically Speaks To Boys

What I assured this woman was that since her son was in his first year of high school, she still had time to track down her teenage self and get reacquainted. And for all of us with teenage children, we should try to remember how much we appreciated our friends who would just listen without trying to fix anything.

And next, we should ask our husbands or male friends what sort of empathy is specifically helpful to a boy. It will be different from what helps a girl! (When a teenage girl is upset it is usually because of feeling rejected, being bullied by mean girls who signal "no one likes you," and people talking about her behind her back—all the things that trigger a girl's inner "does anyone love me" insecurity.) But boys are different. Boys—just like their dads—have a lot of secret insecurities about being inadequate, incapable, or failing at something they try to do in front of someone else. So if your son is angry or upset about a teacher being unfair, it is likely tied to feeling stupid or inadequate—and everybody seeing it. He needs you to let him talk about how stupid and embarrassed he felt, be indignant on his behalf, and reassure him that you are proud of him.

The research was clear that most teenagers did, in fact, want to share things with their parents. The key is that we need to acknowledge that they have feelings that they want heard and be a safe, listening ear. And before we know it, we will see them sharing a lot more—and a lot more often.

*Shaunti Feldhahn is an author. She has sold over 2 million books on relationships.*

# A Note from Our Welcoming Ministry

Over the three days of our Annual Greek Festival, approximately 9000 people come to our church property. If 10% take a look at our church, attend a tour or choir presentation, that's 900 people. If 10% of those are searching for a church home, that's 90 people who may come back for more.

Imagine the Greek Festival is a first date, and we are really excited to invite our visitors to come back to meet our family and get to know us better! It is really difficult to invite people to our Divine Liturgy. For those who don't have a church home or any experience of attending church, there is no context for understanding what is happening and there is really no chance for them to participate.

For the Greek Festival, our Welcome Ministry is once again hosting a Greeter Table at the front doors of our church throughout the weekend. This way, people who are curious about our church building and our faith will be welcomed with a personal greeting, will be given the chance to ask questions, and take some materials – pamphlets, welcome folders - home with them. We will also have a couple of “docents” inside the church to answer questions for anyone visiting during a time other than our scheduled tours. We will have a sign up for anyone wanting follow up materials emailed to them: the prayer team, the messenger, the weekly constant contact messages from our parish. We will have sample materials from our bookstore as well.

We are also going to offer a chance for them to return to learn more about our faith in several different ways:

We will host a “Come and See” event for anyone who wants to get to know us better. This will be held on **Tues-**

**day, November 27.** This will be a free dinner, followed by comments and greeting by Father Stavros, and prayer time in our church. We want our most hospitable parishioners on board to welcome this group of people to our campus for fellowship and learn a little bit further about our faith. **This also gives us the opportunity to invite anyone who is seeking a church home to simply come to know us better.**

We will then send an invitation to our beautiful candlelight Christmas prayer service on **Monday, December 17th.** If you haven't been to this service, this is an opportunity during the hustle and bustle of the season to pause for some peace and quiet prayer time.

Lastly, in **February (February 4, 11, 18 and 25)** Father Stavros will host another installment of Orthodoxy 101 and these same people will be invited to experience a deeper understanding of our faith.

What do can YOU do?

INVITE your friends, co-workers, neighbors! This is a great opportunity to show them what our faith is all about in a way they can easily participate and ask questions.

**For Tuesday November 27 we need:**

Your support!

Your presence!

Welcoming our guests at a table,

Serving food,

Sitting and eating with our guests,

Answering their questions,

Introducing them to others.

We'd love to have a great crowd of our church family to help host this first ever event! If you are interested in helping in any way, please contact Maria Xenick at [mpxenick@gmail.com](mailto:mpxenick@gmail.com) or 813-765-3587.

## Policy for Letters of Recommendation

Every year, Father Stavros gets many requests for letters of recommendation for students to get into college or for scholarships. Here are some guidelines to assist those who will be making these requests.

**The person for whom the letter is being written needs to contact Father Stavros, not their parents. Please give Father at least two weeks' notice to write a letter. Please send your information to Father in an email at [frstav@gmail.com](mailto:frstav@gmail.com).**

1. Your current school, year of study, major, and career objective
2. The name of the scholarship, who it is to be addressed to, and whether the letter is to be mailed, or given to the student in a sealed envelope.
3. The kind of scholarship that you are applying for - is it for sports, or writing, or business, etc.
4. The due date of the letter
5. Some information about yourself that will be helpful in writing the letter - i.e. if the letter is for leadership, please send leadership activities.

# Thoughts on Marriage by Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick

**M**arriage is a skill. We'd probably do better at it if we stopped evaluating it with words like "happy" and start thinking of it as a project.

You don't have a good marriage on your wedding day. You've started a new project, learning a new skill that can contribute to mutual healing and growth.

That picture-perfect wedding picture is not a picture of a perfect marriage. It's a picture of a project that's just begun. It's the first day of school. It's a path of transformation.

God doesn't give us the spouses we want for our happiness and comfort. He gives us the spouses we need for our salvation.

When you discover that your spouse has qualities that challenge you, those are the areas where God is saying you need the most work.

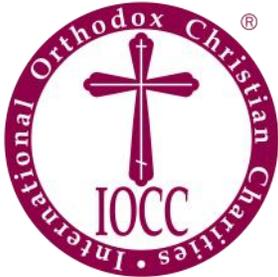
When marriage reveals our sins, we haven't "lost" anything -- that means it's working. And we get a chance to change.

And we grow to become more the likeness of the One Who created marriage.

They won't be putting any of that on a greeting card any time soon, though.

*Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick is the priest of St. Paul Orthodox Church in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, as well as the author of numerous books.*

## Join the IOCC Emergency Action Team



Are you interested in helping your neighbors get back on their feet after a disaster? When a disaster strikes, families often need help removing debris, tearing down water soaked walls, or ripping out buckled floors. In the event of a disaster in your greater community, IOCC will reach out to you to join one of our Emergency Action Teams. If you are willing to travel to a disaster affected area that is not in your greater community, please let us know that as well.

### Requirements:

You don't need to be skilled – just energetic!

You must be 18 years old or older to volunteer, but 16 and 17 year olds may volunteer if accompanied by a parent or guardian.

### Expectations:

Be able to deploy to a disaster affected area on short notice.

You must provide your own transportation to/from the Emergency Action Team location.

Go to <https://www.iocc.org/take-action/join-action-team/emergency-action-team>.

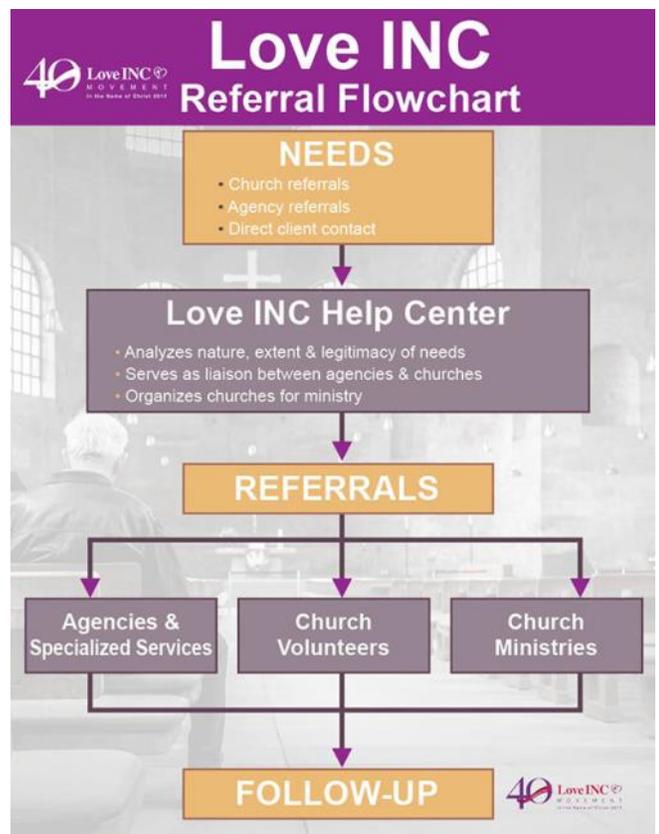
## St. John's to Partner with Love INC (in the Name of Christ)

Love INC (in the Name of Christ) networks local churches, church volunteers, and community organizations together to help people in need. Through Love INC, churches and individual Christians are mobilized to work together, across denominational lines, to provide coordinated help to struggling neighbors with basic needs such as food and clothing, to longer-term responses such as life skills training and transitional housing programs. For more information contact [lhale@loveinctampa.org](mailto:lhale@loveinctampa.org) or [www.loveinctampa.org](http://www.loveinctampa.org). Charlie Hambos is our church contact. Contact him for more info. We look forward to being a strong partner both on an individual and community level.

Breakfast Fundraiser on October 16  
from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

**Putting God on Display in Tampa**

@ The Portico, 1001 N. Florida  
Ave., Tampa, 33602.



# Additional Comments on Marriage

By Anonymous

**F**or couples so eager to call it quits and throw in the towel on your relationships because everything isn't "perfect", here is some food for thought: Lifelong commitment is not what most people think it is.

It's not waking up every morning to make breakfast and eat together. It's not cuddling in bed until both of you fall asleep peacefully at night. It's not a clean home filled with laughter and lovemaking, everyday. It's someone who steals all the covers (and snores and farts). It's slammed doors and a few harsh words at times. It's stubbornly disagreeing and giving each other the silent treatment until your hearts heal, then FORGIVENESS!

It's coming home to the same person every day that you know LOVES and CARES about you in spite of (and because of) who you are. It's laughing about the one time you accidentally

did something stupid. It's about dirty laundry and unmade beds WITHOUT finger pointing. It's about helping each other with the hard work of life!

It's about swallowing the nagging words instead of saying them out loud. It's about eating the easiest meal you can make and sitting down together at a late hour to eat because you both had a crazy day.

It's when you have an emotional breakdown and your love lays with you, holds you, and tells you everything is going to be okay and you BELIEVE them.

It's about still loving someone even though sometimes they make you absolutely insane. Loving someone is not easy, sometimes it's extremely hard; but it's amazing and comforting and one of the BEST things you'll ever experience.

## These 4 Emotions Should Ding Your Conscience

by Andy Stanley, adapted from his five-session Bible study *Guardrails, Updated Edition: Avoiding Regret in Your Life*

**W**e've all seen guardrails on the shoulder of the highway. They exist to block our cars from straying into dangerous terrain. Most days, we don't even notice them.

But if you hit a slippery patch of road or have to drive a treacherous mountain pass, you're sure glad those guardrails are there. Yes, hitting one will do some damage—a busted fender or a dented door. But without the guardrail, the damage could be catastrophic.

Highways aren't the only place guardrails are helpful. Personal guardrails can keep you from straying into dangers that could damage your marriage, your finances, or your career.

The most important guardrail is the one that protects your heart. If you don't deal with what's on the inside, it eventually makes its way to the outside. And when it does, it will not only hurt you but also the people you love most.

Let's talk about four emotions that should ding your conscience. When you feel one of them, it should be a warning sign that it's time to establish or reestablish some guardrails. They are:

**Guilt (I owe you.)**

**Anger (You owe me.)**

**Greed (I owe me.)**

**Jealousy (Life owes me.)**

Don't let these emotions fester. When you feel them, take immediate action to address the internal tension.

**Guilt** says, "I owe you because I took something from you." It creates distance and leads to keeping secrets. It seeps into your words and makes its way into your relationships.

**Anger** says, "You owe me because you took something from me. You either pay me back or I will pay you back." The problem with anger is that it leaks. It's never isolated to the relationship of its origin. If you were hurt as a kid or in that last job or in that last relationship, you carry that hurt into adulthood or the next job or the next relationship.

**Greed** says, "I owe me." It's the assumption that all you have is for your consumption. When you're greedy, the people closest to you feel like they're competing with your stuff. When you like stuff more than you like people, it's a problem. It should bother you.

**Jealousy** says, "Life owes me. Somebody else got what I deserved." And now you don't like that person. It's almost impossible to be nice to them. You resent what they have because you believe it should be yours.

When you feel these emotions—and we all feel them sometimes—you have to address them right away. These four preventative heart exercises will keep you out of a ditch.

**When you feel guilt, confess.** And don't just confess to God. If you feel like you owe someone because you took something from them, confess to that person. That kind of confession has the power to heal guilt. It's a guardrail for your heart.

**When you feel anger, forgive.** Forgiveness is identifying what was taken from you and deciding the other person doesn't owe you anymore. Identify what that person took from you. Be specific. Then decide to cancel the debt.

**When you feel greed, give.** Write some big checks (whatever "big" means to you). Give to a church. If you want to get serious, sell something precious to you and give the money away. Give as radically as you need to in order to break money's control over you.

**When you feel jealousy, celebrate.** Begin by celebrating what God has given you, and then celebrate what God has given others. Congratulate your coworker on that promotion you wanted. Be happy for the nicer, bigger house your friend just bought. Celebrate your sister's pregnancy even as you struggle with infertility. There's a fake-it-until-you-make-it aspect to that kind of celebration. And eventually, your celebration will become genuine.

So, let's stop flirting with disaster. Let's set up the protection we need. No one regrets having guardrails in place. But plenty of us look back and regret not having them.

# Community Wins



**Congratulations** to Peter and Adis Choundas on celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary!



**Congratulations** to Antonio Bavaro, who was recently awarded the rank of Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts.

*Note: We enjoy counting the wins at St. John—when you have a major milestone, please let us know so we can share the wins with our community.*

## Join the St. John Legacy Society Today!

### Make a Plan to Amplify Your Impact

Please consider including St. John Greek Orthodox Church estate plans.

Please consider joining the St. John Legacy Society by leaving what might be left over in your estate to St. John once you've provided for your family. For more information about this new dimension to stewardship, please contact Fr. Stavros at 813-876-8830 ext. 103 or email [frstav@gmail.com](mailto:frstav@gmail.com) to learn how you can have an impact on our church. Whatever you do, please be sure to consult your financial and legal advisors and let your family members know of your intentions.

## St. John the Baptist is on Social Media!

### 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](https://www.facebook.com/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](http://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](https://www.flickr.com/photos/stjohngoctampa) and search "St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church" or go to [www.flickr.com/photos/stjohngoctampa](https://www.flickr.com/photos/stjohngoctampa)



# Seeking Donations for a couple of things in the altar

We need new rugs for around the altar table-- these rugs not only cushion the feet of the celebrants, but make the carpet in the altar last longer as this is the highest traffic area in the church. They also enhance the beauty of the altar area. These rugs have the traditional Byzantine double-headed eagle on them. Cost is \$150 each. If interested in donating, please see Fr. Stavros.

Cloths for the sacraments tables/icon stand-- We are blessed to have many sets of altar covers that are used throughout the year. Two of the sets do not have all the pieces—we have pieces for the altar but not for the sacraments table or the icons stand. If you are interested in donating any of these, please contact Fr. Stavros as each piece is a different price.



## Thank You to all of Our Friends!

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

# Blessing the Fanouropita for Our Youth

Saint Fanourios is the Patron Saint of “things lost.” On Sunday, August 26, at the direction of His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios, our Philoptochos offered this beautiful annual event where Father Stavros was able to bless the cakes and all proceeds were sent to benefit the youth programs of our Metropolis. Thank you to our Philoptochos and all the faithful who made the Fanaroupites for this event.



# Welcome the Cara Family into the Orthodox Christian Faith

On Sunday, September 9, the entire Cara Family was baptized into the Orthodox faith. It was not an easy journey. Originally from Albania, they considered themselves Christians but wanted to be welcomed into the fullness of the faith. After a period of time, education, a certain level of involvement in our church and guidance from their Godparents, Panagiotis and Anna Sarantos, the whole family was baptized. This is a milestone for our parish in two ways. First, this was the first family of four baptized all at once. Second, this was the first baptism here used with some water from the Jordan River. Welcome Home Nicholas, Constantina, Anna and Panagiotis!!!



# Save O Lord Your People - Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross



# A Journey to Jamaica with the OCMC

By Ewana Forde

Saturday morning, our last day in Jamaica, we rose very early to hold one final liturgy together. This service was even more special because it started with the baptism of Anthony, one of our new friends made during the week. After we finished liturgy (held in the basement of Victoria and William Massias' home), as we gathered in the kitchen to make breakfast, Victoria turned to Anthony and told him "welcome home!" It was a beautiful moment to witness, and an awesome way to end the week.

If you didn't know, I recently had the privilege of being a member of the first Orthodox mission team to visit Jamaica. We also happened to be the 300<sup>th</sup> short-term mission team sent out by the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) since it was founded. We went for one week to conduct a children's vacation Bible school during the day and hold services and catechism in the evenings. Victoria and William, along with their four children, currently offer their home as the gathering place for St. Timothy the Apostle Orthodox Church in Kingston, Jamaica. In addition, they graciously hosted us for the duration of our visit. St. Timothy currently has about 12 members and several more catechumens who are considering becoming Orthodox. They do not yet have a church building or a priest, but they have faithful and dedicated people.

There is so much to tell you about this trip. I could probably write articles in the Messenger for several months and still not share everything with you. I decided to focus on telling you about how I believe the Holy Spirit is working to bring Orthodoxy to Jamaica by putting the right people in the right places at the right times. I am amazed by all of the unique circumstances that have taken place to bring St. Timothy's about. Some people may call these just coincidences; I call it the Lord's intervention. You can decide for yourself.

## *First, a little background—*

Jamaica is a former British colony that became independent in the early 1960's. Religion-wise, the majority of the island identifies as Christian, specifically various Protestant denominations. Much of the island is rural, and transportation can be difficult, so many people choose a church simply based on geography, and go wherever is closest and most convenient, regardless of the particular denomination. Prior to 2015, there were no Orthodox churches in Jamaica.

## *Mike McClain*

Several years ago, a Protestant man named Mike McClain had recently begun inquiring about Orthodoxy. Mike, a resident of Athens, GA, looked in the phone book one day and was pleasantly surprised to find an Orthodox church- St. Philothea in Watkinsville. He called up the priest, Father Anthony Salzman, they started speaking and meeting regularly, and Mike was eventually chrismated and joined the church. Prior to his chrismation, Mike, who travels often for business, happened to be in St. Augustine, FL and paid a visit to OCMC headquarters. He met Father Martin Ritsi, OCMC's Executive Director, and they spoke for a few minutes. Mike shared his experiences from several mission teams he had participated in through his Protestant church, specifically to the island of Jamaica. Mike



Father Anthony baptizing Anthony on our last day (with assistance from Moses)

has a particular fondness for the island and its people, and he was surprised to learn that OCMC had never sent a team there before. Father Martin and Mike discovered that they knew someone in common- Father Martin attended seminary together with Father Anthony, Mike's spiritual father.



Me and Moses selfie

## *Moses Myers*

Not long after, back in Jamaica, a man named Marlon Myers had begun studying Orthodoxy, making inquiries with various Orthodox authorities, and eventually reached out to OCMC. Father Martin remembered his conversation with Mike about Jamaica, got in touch with Father Anthony, and Marlon connected with Mike a short time later. They kept in touch regularly after that. Since Mike had recently converted to Orthodoxy himself, he was able to share his personal experience and offer some guidance. When Marlon became Orthodox in 2014, Mike served as his godparent. Marlon became Moses, named for his patron saint, Moses The Black. Moses's lay profession is a probation officer, and he spends much of his time outside of work sharing Orthodoxy with people. He carries small pamphlets with him that are printed with his story of finding the Orthodox faith, and he hands them out to everyone he meets. He also runs a Facebook group that serves as another way for people to learn about Orthodoxy in Jamaica. Moses is very gentle and soft-spoken, and I think this makes people want to listen to him.



Me meeting Moses

## *Victoria Massias*

While Moses was reaching out to Orthodox organizations in the US, a woman named Victoria was searching for an Orthodox presence in Jamaica. Originally from Ukraine, Victoria had moved to Jamaica in 2009 and married a Jamaican man,



Victoria and William with their children

William Massias (can you picture a woman speaking English with a Ukrainian/Jamaican accent? That's Victoria!). As they began raising their family, Victoria, who had grown up Orthodox, was saddened that her children did not have a local Orthodox church to attend. Through a Facebook post, Victoria and Moses found each other and began corresponding. They both took great comfort in finally finding another Orthodox person in the country. Victoria and William are very well-connected in the city of Kingston and, although William is not Orthodox, they both actively work to spread the word about Orthodoxy. In addition to hosting St. Timothy's parish in their home, they hold a weekly Bible study discussion and encourage friends, colleagues, and acquaintances to come find out what Orthodoxy is all about.

### *Metropolitan Athenagoras of Mexico*

His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras established the mission parish St. Timothy Orthodox Church in Kingston, Jamaica on April 24, 2015. His Eminence gave his blessing for this parish primarily in response to the efforts of Moses, Victoria, and their friends. Then in July 2017, Metropolitan Athenagoras became the first Orthodox hierarch to visit Jamaica. During this trip, His Eminence performed several baptisms (including Victoria and William's 2 youngest children) and celebrated Divine Liturgy. Father Anthony, Mike, Moses, Victoria, and William finally all met face-to-face and were present together for this service.

### *OCMC Team*

After Father Anthony returned from Jamaica in 2017, he began laying the groundwork for OCMC to send a mission team. Our group, in addition to offering the vacation Bible school and catechism activities, provided a much-needed boost of encouragement to the members of St. Timothy. Try to imagine having a church but no priest—how would that affect the state of your faith? Imagine only being able to participate in Divine Liturgy once every few months when a priest comes to visit—how hard would it be to feel connected to the body of Christ? Also think about no choir to sing hymns, no Sunday School, no altar boys,

etc. I'm so thankful that we had the opportunity to meet all the members of St. Timothy and to celebrate 3 liturgies together, as well as 2 Vespers and 4 Paraklesis services.

### *Moving Forward*

I think a lot about the future of St. Timothy's and of Orthodoxy in Jamaica. I don't think that Moses, Victoria, and the building of St. Timothy's all happened accidentally. All of the people involved have unique talents that perfectly serve the particular needs of the parish (Moses is evangelizing, Victoria brings everyone together and provides a place, William is very business-minded and organized, etc.). Whatever St. Timothy's has needed, the Lord has provided at just the right time. I ask myself—how will God's plan reveal itself next? We hear that His Eminence may be planning another visit soon, which would definitely be an additional blessing on the parish. We also hope that OCMC will consider sending another team next year. The members of St. Timothy's are eager to move into the next chapter of their journey together, especially concerning a clergy presence.

Hopefully you have found this article to be a compelling story. It is my hope, however, that the story does not end here with you. I pray that you have been moved to consider taking some kind of action. I wish we could all pack our bags and pay a visit to meet St. Timothy's wonderful people. Since that's not a realistic option, what *can* we do? The answer—we can pray for the success of this parish and the mission of Orthodoxy in Jamaica. You could also share some words of encouragement by visiting Moses's Facebook group [www.facebook.com/groups/orthodoxinjamaica](http://www.facebook.com/groups/orthodoxinjamaica). I sincerely thank everyone who offered their prayers and well-wishes for me while I was preparing for this trip. It was truly transforming, and—God-willing—I hope to return to St. Timothy's again someday.



Evening catechism and discussion with Father Anthony and Deacon Tikhon Cobb



Vacation Bible School

# ~ October 2018 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>Philoptochos Diaper Drive for Alpha House All month of October</b>	<b>1</b> Orthodoxy 101 6:30 p Teaching Divine Liturgy 6:30 p.m.	<b>2</b> WBS 10:00 a.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	<b>3**</b> Adult Greek Dance 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice 7:15 p.m.	<b>4</b> Young at Heart 11:30 a.m. Greek School 6:00 p.m.	<b>5 **</b>	<b>6</b> <b>Special Needs Seminar 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.</b>
<b>7</b> Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Pre-Teen Retreat Bookstore Book Review GOYA 5:00 p.m. Festival Table	<b>8</b> Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	<b>9</b> WBS 10:00 a.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	<b>10 **</b> Adult Greek Dance 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice 7:15 p.m.	<b>11 Koulourakia Baking</b> Greek School 6:00 p.m.	<b>12 ** GOYA</b> St. Pete Volleyball tournament	<b>13 GOYA St. Pete</b> Volleyball Tournament
<b>14</b> Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Youth Sunday "Bags of Love" Packaging Event Festival Table	<b>15</b> Meeting of Ministry Heads in K Center 6:30 p.m. No Bible Study	<b>16</b> WBS 10:00 a.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	<b>17 **</b> Adult Greek Dance 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice 7:15 p.m.	<b>18 St. Luke</b> Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Philoptochos Board Meeting No Greek School Parish Council 7:00 p.m.	<b>19 **</b>	<b>20 Community Outreach 8 a.m. @ First Presbyterian Downtown Tampa</b> <b>Parish Clean Up GOYA</b>
<b>21</b> Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Philoptochos General Meeting AHEPA/Daughters Hope/Joy Fall Festival Festival Table Dolmades Prep	<b>22 Dolmades Rolling Evening Liturgy for St. James</b> Orthros 5:00 p.m. Liturgy 6:00 p.m. No Bible Study	<b>23</b> Dolmades Rolling WBS 10:00 a.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	<b>24 **</b> Adult Greek Dance 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice 7:15 p.m.	<b>25 (Kourambiedes &amp; Finkia Baking)</b> Greek School 6:00 p.m.	<b>26 **</b> <b>St. Demetrios</b> Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. AHEPA Founders Parish Assembly Mtg. Festival Table	<b>29 (Emergency Baking Day)</b> Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	<b>30</b> WBS 10:00 a.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	<b>31 **</b> Adult Greek Dance 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice 7:15 p.m.			

# St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

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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

#### 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  
Amin Hanhan 813-846-2957  
Edie Kavouklis 813-758-0305  
Jimmy Konstas 813-220-7352  
Ryan Rindone 704-564-2046  
Aris Rogers, II 813-309-5525  
Dante Skourellos 813-765-9534

#### Office Staff

Debbie Bowe, Bookkeeper  
debstjohntpa@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

Brett Mourer 813-376-9315

#### Chanter

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

#### Choir

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

#### Community Outreach

Greg Melton 813-967-2074

#### Dance Group

H ΧΑΡΑ ΜΑΣ, Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668  
Bessie Palios, 813-523-0347  
Maraquet Edquid 813-422-8963  
Marina Choundas 813-877-6136  
Anna Maria Bavaro 732-239-9085  
Panigyri, Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668

#### Daughters of Penelope

Nicole Leontsinis, President 703-585-7490

#### 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

#### 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

#### Parish Nurse

Stavrula Crafa 727-409-0686  
Edie Kavouklis 813-758-0305

#### 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

#### Strategic Planning

Marc Edquid 813-422-8940  
Gary Ward 813-846-3898

#### 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

#### 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

#### Youth Protection

Catherine Mitseas 813-571-0658

*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 10<sup>th</sup> 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.