

**Parish Priest:**  
**Retired Priest in Residence:**  
**Retired Priest in Residence:**  
**Bookkeeper:**

Rev. Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038  
Rev. Fr. Stratton Dorozenski 813-876-8830  
Rev. Fr. John Stefero 678-637-4425  
Debbie Bowe 813-876-8830

**Parish Council:**

John Zelatis, President 813-727-2271  
Euripides Panos, Vice President 813-352-3972  
Marilyn Sandborn, Secretary 813-760-6289  
Gary Ward, Treasurer 813-846-3898  
Jim Armstrong 954-295-6665  
Amin Hanhan 813-846-2957  
Nick Katzaras 863-581-2430  
Suzanne Pileggi 813-244-5855  
Alexis Scarfogliero 813-892-1599  
Marcelle Triantafilou 612-396-5026  
Mike Xenick 813-340-8737

**12 Disciples**

**AHEPA:**

**Altar Angels:**

**Bible Study:**

**Bookstore:**

**Choir:**

Mathew Balasis 727-421-7376  
Thomas Sakaris, President 201-819-2319  
Kalliope Chagaris 813-789-4134  
Fr. John Stefero 678-637-4425  
Pres. Denise Stefero 678-464-4833  
Tara Swartzbaugh, Director 813-313-0439  
Ruth Losoviz, Organist 727-688-2782  
Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038  
Greg Melton 813-967-2074

**College Ministry:**

**Community Outreach:**

**Dance Groups:**

H XAPA MΑΣ, Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668  
Maraquet Edquid 813-422-8963  
ΠΑΡΕΑ, Marina Choundas 813-877-6136  
Genie Carter 813-363-2362  
ΠΑΝΗΓΥΡΙ, Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668  
Elena Ketchum 813-229-0144  
Gary Ward 813-846-3898  
Sandra Pappas 813-785-3747  
GOYA: Michael & Bessie Palios 813-523-0346  
Hope/Joy: George & Zackie Ameres 813-245-3813  
Joy Tweens Maraquet Edquid 813-422-8963  
Men's Fellowship: Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038  
Nursing Ministry: Marcelle Triantafilou 612-396-5026  
Photography Ministry: Karina Findlay 813-476-9632  
Philoptochos: Katherine Sakkis 813-309-1073  
Stewardship: Chris Kyrus 757-672-1920  
George Mitseas 813-748-1220  
Vickie Peckham 813-758-3102  
Pete Trakas 813-505-2193

**Sunday School:**

**Ushers**

**Veterans/1st Responders**

**Welcoming Ministry:**

**Women's Bible Study:**

**Young Adults**

**Young at Heart:**

**Youth Protection:**

Fr. John Stefero 678-637-4425  
Maria Xenick 813-765-3587  
Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis 813-876-8830  
Aris Rogers 813-309-5525  
Dora Morgan 813-613-3738  
Suzanne Pileggi 813-244-5855



## St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church



**December 3, 2023**

**Icon of Zephaniah the Prophet**

**Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis (Proistamenos)**

**Fr. Stratton Dorozenski (Retired Priest In Residence)**

**Fr. John Stefero (Retired Priest In Residence)**

**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

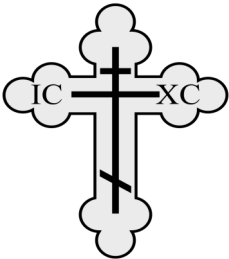
14th Sunday of Luke; The Holy Prophet Sophonias (Zephaniah); Holy Martyrs Agapius and Seleucius

**Resurrectional Apolytikion:**

The stone that had been sealed before Your tomb by the Judeans and the soldiers guarding did watch over Your pure and sacred Body. O Savior, the third day You arose, and unto all the world did You give life. Whereby all the heavenly powers did proclaim that You are the Giver of Life: Glory unto our Resurrected Christ; Glory unto Your Kingdom; Glory to Your dispensation, O You Who alone loves all.

**Apolytikion of St. John:**

The memory of the just is observed with hymns of praise; for you O Forerunner the witness of the Lord is sufficient. You have proved to be truly more venerable than the prophets. Since you were granted to baptize in the river, the One Whom they proclaimed. Therefore, you strove for truth, proclaiming with joy the Good News, even to those in Hades: that God was manifested in the flesh, and takes away the sins of the world, and grants to us His great mercy.



**Kontakion:**

On this day, the Virgin Maid goes to the cave to give birth to the pre-eternal Word in an ineffable manner. Dance for joy, O you inhabited earth upon your hearing, Glorify, along with Angels and with shepherds, Him Who willed that He appear as a newborn Child, the pre-eternal God.

**Welcome to all of our Visitors** “Welcome one another just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” Romans 15:7 We pray that your worship experience with us today will be inspirational and uplifting. Please introduce yourself to an usher or a member of the Welcoming Ministry and pick-up a “welcome packet” as you exit the church. We are happy that you are with us today!

**Holy Communion** is offered only to Orthodox Christians who are in good canonical standing with the church and who have prepared through prayer and fasting. Everyone is invited to receive the Antidoron (Blessed Bread) at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

- Order for Holy Communion**—With Sunday School in session the order for Holy Communion will be as follows:
1. Choir
  2. Altar boys
  3. Sunday school teachers (who will line up in middle aisle before Communion)
  4. Sunday school students (who will line up in the middle aisle before Communion behind the teachers)
  5. Then the rest of the congregation ( side areas then the main section)

**Memorial:** Bill Nicklow ( 3 years)

# Upcoming Services & Events

<b>Sunday December 3</b>	<b>Orthros 8:45 a.m.</b> GOYA Christmas Card GOYA 1:30 p.m. Philoptochos Membership Christmas Brunch 12 p.m.– 3 p.m.	<b>Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</b>
<b>Monday December 4</b>	<b>St. Barbara</b> <b>Orthros 9:00 a.m.</b> Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	<b>Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</b>
Tuesday December 5	Women’s Bible Study 10:00 a.m.	
<b>Wednesday December 6</b>	<b>St. Nicholas</b> <b>Orthros 9:00 a.m.</b> Choir Practice	<b>Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</b>
Thursday December 7	Adult Greek School 6:00– 8:30 p.m. Young Adult Discussion 6:30 p.m.	
<b>Saturday December 9</b>	<b>St. Anna</b> <b>Orthros 9:00 a.m.</b> Young at Heart 11:30 a.m.	<b>Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</b>
<b>Sunday December 10</b>	<b>Orthros 8:20 a.m.</b> GOYA Christmas Card Parish Council Elections Philoptochos Bake Sale	<b>Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.</b>
Monday December 11	Women’s Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	
<b>Tuesday December 12</b>	<b>St. Spyridon</b> <b>Orthros 9:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.</b>

## Religious Education at St. John

<b>Monday Night Bible Study</b>	<b>Women’s Bible Study</b>
Leader: Fr. John	Leader: Fr. Stavros
December 4 : <b>Monday</b> at 6:30 p.m.	December 5: <b>Tuesday</b> at 10:00 a.m.

## WELCOME TO OUR PARISH

If you are new to the Tampa Bay area or just visiting, we would love to get to know you better.

**PLEASE TEXT THE WORD**  
**"WELCOME" TO 813-790-5950**

FOLLOW THE PROMPTS TO GIVE US  
YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION AND FROM THERE  
YOU WILL BE DIRECTED TO OUR ONLINE CONNECTION CARD

DO NOT NEGLECT TO SHOW *hospitality* TO STRANGERS.  
FOR THEREBY SOME HAVE ENTERTAINED *angels unaware.*



# MINISTRY NEWS & UPDATES

## St. John's Bookstore



Our bookstore is currently featuring a special Christmas Shop where you can find inspiring and unique items for your celebration of the Nativity of Christ. Included are Icons of the Nativity of our Lord, Christmas cards in both English and Greek, Icon Ornaments, and many other Christmas gifts you just won't find in the shopping malls. Think of us when checking off those names on your gift list. Remember to shop early for the best selection!

Have a Joyous Nativity and a New Year filled with God's richest blessings!  
Presvytera Denise and Elaina – Your Bookstore Staff

## First Annual YiaYia's Table

The Daughters of Penelope invite you to stop by at the Yiayia's table following the Divine Liturgy on Dec 10 and Dec 17. Unique, handmade, affordable Christmas gifts for teachers, home décor or gift exchanges will be available for sale. The items have been donated and all proceeds from the sale will be used to fund scholarships for deserving students in our community.

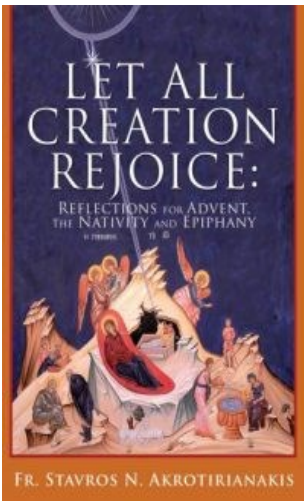
## JOY Tweens

### Sign-Up for Text Updates!

To get updates and other messages for JOY Tweens, text @783gc6 to 81010 on your mobile phone.



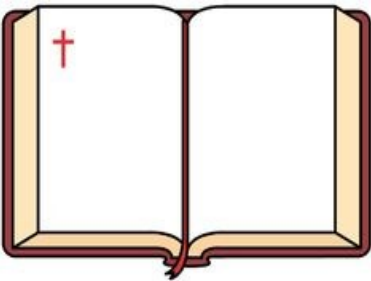
As we continue through the season of Ad-vent, I wanted to share with you a book I have written called, Let All Creation Rejoice: Reflections for Advent, the Nativity and Epiphany. The book is approximately 230 pages long. It contains a reflection to be read daily during the period of the Nativity Fast (November 15) through January 7. From November 15 through December 24, one verse of the Gospel accounts of the Nativity is examined in detail each day. It is practical inspiration written to be understood by the average Greek Orthodox Christian.  
+Fr. Stavros



Although this book is written in an easy to read style - the concepts and application are very thought provoking! My husband and I have been reading it at meal time, as our Advent meditation. Each day's readings help me turn my mind to what's really going on and important this time of year - helping me refocus, and reflect on the events surrounding the Nativity, and what they mean for me! To-day's reading, for example, reflected on the angel telling the shepherds, "Don't be afraid," and following reflections on fear in my own life. Excellent book, and now that I am enjoying this one so much, I will be ordering the Lenten reflections, too.  
-Amazon Customer

## Readings for Sunday, December 3

**Prokeimenon: Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us. Psalm 32.22,1**



**The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 5:8-19**

Brethren, walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it

becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

**The reading is from The Gospel According to Luke 18:35-43**

At that time, as Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging; and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." And he cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

## COFFEE HOUR SCHEDULE

**DECEMBER 3RD**  
YAH

**DECEMBER 10TH**  
Philoptochos

# Philoptochos News

DECEMBER 3, 2023

Thank  
You

**NATIONAL SISTERHOOD OF PRESVYTERES:**  
Thank-you to all who generously donated to our coffee on 11/19 to the benefit of of our Presvyteres in need. We were able to raise close to \$300. Thanks the many who helped with the event as well.

**BAGS OF LOVE:**  
Thank-you to our Sunday School students who helped pack of Bags of Love for the homeless and thanks to those who donated the contents, including Daughters of Penelope. We were able to make and distribute 60+ bags for the homeless in our area. Thanks to all who took them home to distribute and to chair Lisa Alsina.

## Spanakopita, Tiropita & Vasilopita Sale

Time to stock up on these traditional holiday goodies! From our freezer to yours. Make it fresh when you need it:

SPANAKOPITA/TIROPITA TRIANGLES (48) \$35 per tray  
SPANAKOPITA 2# BY THE PAN \$25  
BAKLAVA TRAY \$20  
VASILOPITA \$12

Questions or additional information contact:  
Lisa Alsina 813-728-1094

DECEMBER 10 & 17 & 31



## Turkey Gift Cards

Philoptochos is partnering with the Sunday School and Joy and Hope to provide boxes of Hope for Metropolitan Ministries. We are supplying \$15 grocery gift cards so that recipients may purchase a turkey for Christmas Dinner. Please donate a gift card from any grocery store, Publix, Walmart, Target etc. Or you may write a donation check to Philoptochos and we will purchase the cards. See any board member or Katherine Sakkis 813-309-1073

Please bring cards or donations by 12/10



### Altar Boy Schedule

#### December 3rd

Gabriel Gonzalez  
Michael Galin  
Philip Kane  
Leo Sengsouvana  
Kenny Kane  
Peter Konstas  
Matthew Barba

#### Captains

Demetri Passalaris  
Nicholas Akrotirianakis  
Nicholas Magos  
Nicholas Carter  
George Xenick  
PJ Zelatis

#### December 10th

**Captains Only**  
Demetri Passalaris  
Nicholas Akrotirianakis  
Nicholas Magos  
Nicholas Carter  
George Xenick  
PJ Zelatis

### SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS & TOPICS

December 3rd  
Stewardship



December 10th  
The Nativity

If you do not receive our weekly Sunday School Constant Contact every Friday afternoon, please e-mail Vickie Peckham to let her know.  
Her e-mail address is [vickiepeckham@gmail.com](mailto:vickiepeckham@gmail.com)

### Liturgical Notes

#### Monday, December 4 - St. Barbara and St. John of Damascus

We celebrate the feastday of St. Barbara, a martyr for Christ who was martyred by her own father. On the same day, we celebrate the feastday of St. John of Damascus, a hymnographer of the church who also was a strong defender of iconography.



#### Wednesday, December 6 - St. Nicholas

We celebrate the feast of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of travelers. He lived in the fourth century. The tradition of Santa Claus is derived from St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, who was giving gifts to those less fortunate.

**Prayer List:** Lord Jesus Christ, Physician of our Souls and Bodies, visit and heal your servants: Mathew Balasis, Melissa Romero, Sandra Reyes, Miltiadis, Larry Maas; Konstantinos Triantafyllopoulos; Kostadinou Booras; Michael I, Anna Maria & Thomas Reilly; Jim Armstrong, Calliope Herman; Delaney & Alexis Johnson; Ron & Linda Ledet; Helen & Mike Mitchell; Marcelle T., Joanna & Yenay R., Carlos R., Elena, Ricky & Michael Gordenina, Tina Chakonas, Felix R., Ivco; George Joseph; Anna, Stavroula, George, Pam, and Liz; Christopher Labatos; Eva Coppalla; Christopher; Christopher; Peter Nenos; Patrick Carroll; Ourania Tziotis, Irina, Marina, Yuri, and Christophoros; Ashley Snyder; Evangelos & Caroline Critkas; Christine Alex, June, Lillian Thomas; Scotty; Desi Serriera; Ashley Kladakis; Dora Kallas, Kathy & Andrew Bouzinekis; Anastasia; Virginia Georgiou, Toulia Tsaros, Nellie Pringle, Yolanda Webb, Angela Bougas, Ron, Jason Vickers, Rex Garrison, Ann Demas, Christina Noel Kouzes Houck, Evangeline Xeroteris, Ashley Henderson, Natalie Henderson, Chris, Debbie, James, Avery, Lily, Jacob, Jesse, Ann, Rosario, Alissa, John, Angela, Joey, Christine Scourtes, Steven, Phyllis, John Zelatis, Reagan, Peter Zaharis, Alexandra Ferrarolis, Leon & Despina Botham, Cindy Xenick, Mary Ellen Evdemon, Marie Sofia Panagopoulos, Maria Hursey, Chris Vamvakias, Mike Trimis, Michael Romero, George Hambos, Dean Kondilis and Family, Bill and Nancy Manikas, Patricia Costello, Ekaterina & Anna S. Dora K., Debbie P., Mary V., David V., Don Payne, and all victims of war, terrorism, crime, natural disaster, and all of whom we are unaware.





St. John is responsible to have 6 volunteers sign up each month.  
**Have a heart, lend a hand, and make a difference.**

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH 2023**


OUR SCHEDULE FOR THE REMAINING MONTHS OF 2023 IS AS FOLLOWS:

**SATURDAY  
 DECEMBER 16.  
 TIME: 8:00 AM - 10 AM  
 PLACE: TAMPA HOPE  
 3704 E. 3RD AVENUE  
 TAMPA, FL. 33605**



 **Sign up via SIGNUP GENIUS**





**Join us on Saturday, December 9th for Our  
 Young at Heart  
 Christmas Breakfast and Gathering**

Orthros 9:00 am  
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 am  
 Breakfast 11:30 am

Followed by Gift Exchange and Christmas Caroling

Please bring a wrapped gift with a \$10 value that is appropriate for both male or female. Be considerate when choosing your gift and purchase something that you yourself would be happy to receive.  
*Breakfast will be catered so no need to bring a dish - \$10 per person*

Reply no later than December 3rd  
 Dora Morgan, Diane Trimis, Presvytera Denise


**COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Our Community Outreach ministry has secured dates with Metropolitan Ministries to volunteer to help with the annual Holiday Tent for the needy.

**Metropolitan Ministries Holiday Tent 2023  
 2609 N Rome Ave, Tampa, FL 33607**

St John the Baptist GOC is requesting 12 amazing volunteers for both the Thanksgiving and the Christmas events.

Below are the dates, times and sign up website for St John the Baptist GOC.  
 It is imperative that each St John volunteer pre-registers for this opportunity as any unfilled slots are released 2 weeks prior to our scheduled dates.



**Christmas Holiday: Thursday December 21— 2:00 to 6:00 PM**  
**Sign-up Link:** <https://metromin.volunteerhub.com/vv2/lp/stjohnngreekorthodox/>



**Love to take photos? Come join our Photo Ministry!**

It's a fun and creative way to serve and to show the community all the beautiful services and wonderful activities we have here at St. John.

All abilities are welcome. Please call or text  
 Karina Findlay at  
 (813) 476-9632.

**Adult Greek School**

Will restart on Thursdays at 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.  
 You all will do the "Registration" for the 1st Session and pay only for the "Half of the Session", because you missed half of it (6 lessons): \$75 for the parishioners and \$87 for non Parishioners. Write the check on my name: Magdalini Myer and the memo line: for Adult Greek School. Call me at my cell phone: (813) 523-5771 or email [aspis69@aol.com](mailto:aspis69@aol.com), if you have any questions.  
 The classroom will be on the 2nd floor of the Bridge Prep Academy School Building, Room 205.

**Young Adult Dinner/Discussion-Thursday, December 7**

Our young adult group meets once a month for dinner/discussion (and other times for fellowship and service). The meeting for December will be on Thursday, December 7, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. All young adults, ages 18-40, are invited to participate. We will be having a monthly discussion based on some set topics. The Topic for December is “Keeping Christ in Christmas—The Nativity and Why It Matters.” Group Members use What’s App for communication. Please contact Aris Rogers to be added to our what’s app for young adults at 813-309-5525.



**Veterans/1st Responders  
 Ministry:**

**Will sponsor the following event!**

Collection for the US Marines' program "Toys for Tots."  
 Please deposit *brand new toys in the original packaging* in the three boxes in the church hall. We will collect toys through at least December 3rd.  
 These will be distributed to needy families in our local area.

**Thanks,  
 Fr. John**





## St Johns Pageant Rehearsal and Youth

# Christmas Party

Saturday

16

December

Kourmolis  
Hall

10:30 am: Speaking Parts Rehearsal

11:15 am: All Participants Rehearsal

12pm: Lunch

12:30 pm: Boxes of Hope Service Project, Crafts & Party

RSVP to Zackie Ameres at 813.245.3813



## Hope & Joy Fall Food Drive

Through- Sun, Dec 16<sup>th</sup>.

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

Metropolitan Ministries' Holiday Tent helps 50,000+ families in need for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Let's help them meet this years goal of 1,763,000 pounds of food.

Please join St. John's Hope & Joy children's ministry in providing a meal to families in need through Metropolitan Ministries. Make this your family project and help us put together Boxes of Hope filled with the items needed for a Christmas holiday dinner. There are many ways you can help provide a Box of Hope:

- Shop for any of the items below and bring to church **Through- Sun, Dec 16<sup>th</sup>.**
- Donate \$25 or more (cash/ check/ gift card) for a Box of Hope-
- Checks payable to Metropolitan Ministries

### BOX OF HOPE contains:

<b>Gift certificate for a turkey or ham</b>	<b>2 cans of black beans</b>
<b>1 box of cereal (hot or cold)</b>	<b>2 cans of cranberry sauce</b>
<b>2 cans of fruit</b>	<b>1 bag of dried beans</b>
<b>1 jar of peanut butter</b>	<b>1 box or bag of rice</b>
<b>2 cans of vegetables</b>	<b>1 can or packet of gravy</b>
<b>2 cans of yams</b>	<b>1 box dessert mix</b>
<b>1 bag or box of stuffing</b>	<b>1 package cookies or pastries</b>
<b>1 box of potatoes</b>	<b>1 family box of Jell-O/Pudding</b>

Only non-perishable food donations please. **Call Zackie Ameres at 813-245-3813 or email at [zackiec@yahoo.com](mailto:zackiec@yahoo.com) with any questions.** Thank you!

*"He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will reward him for what he has done." Proverbs 19:17*

