

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

September 12, 2021 - Sunday before Holy Cross

Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis (Proistamenos)
Fr. Stratton Dorozenski (Retired Priest In Residence)
Fr. John Stefero (Retired Priest In Residence)



(Above, Nativity of the Theotokos)

SYNAXARION: Apodosis of the Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary; Autonomos the Martyr; Hieromartyr Cornatus, Bishop of Iconium; Agirus, the Hieromartyr of Cornoutus, Bishop of Iconium; Daniel of Thassos; Julian the Martyr; Theodore the Hieromartyr of Alexandria

Apolytikion of the Week (Mode 3): Let the heavens sing for joy, and let everything on earth be glad. For with His Arm the Lord has worked power. He trampled death under foot by means of death; and He became the firstborn from the dead. From the maw of Hades He delivered us; and He granted the world His great mercy.

Apolytikion of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Mode 4): Your nativity, O Theotokos, has brought joy to all of the earth's habitations; because from you has shone forth the Sun of righteousness, Christ our God. And having loosened the curse from us, He gave the blessing; and He abolished the power of death, and bestowed upon us, life eternal.

Apolytikion of St. John (Mode 2): 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.

Memorials: Nicholas Paras (1 year), Demetrios Passalaris (1 year), Podromos & Paraskevoula Koutelos (40 Days)

Readings for Sunday before Holy Cross

Epistle Reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18

Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

Gospel Reading is from John 3:13-17

The Lord said, "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

*We welcome the Consulate General of Greece to our church this Sunday,
Mr. Loukas Tsokos! Welcome to our community!*

Stewardship 2021 Update

As of Wednesday, September 8, we have received 351 stewardship forms,
with a pledged amount of \$471,518 for 2021.

The Parish Assistance Program Continues (PAP)

Since May 1 2020, we have been offering a Parish Assistance Program, PAP, with BayCare Behavioral Health. The PAP program provides our parishioners access to free and confidential counseling services - offering additional support when life's challenges become overwhelming. The PAP utilizes a network of faith-based providers and are sensitive to the values and beliefs of those they serve and provide compassionate care to children, adults, parents, and seniors. Parishioners can contact BayCare to request up to three free and confidential counseling sessions from a licensed mental health professional. The BayCare helpline, 800-878-5470, is answered 24/7 by mental health professionals. Many BayCare therapists are also offering telephonic and virtual counseling sessions to help parishioners maintain their emotional wellbeing during these trying times.

Happy Birthday and Happy Nameday!

If you want to make sure we have your birthdate on file,
please call the office.

Birthdays

SEPTEMBER 12

Nicholas Alsina,
Demetrios Konstas

SEPTEMBER 14

Joshua Pyskowski,
Ryan Rindone

SEPTEMBER 15

Chyanne Clements

SEPTEMBER 16

Nicholas Matassini,
Katerina Zabetakis

SEPTEMBER 17

Mihail Kaburis, Sophia
Smith, Selena Soteriou

SEPTEMBER 18

Andrew Thatcher,
Alexandra & Christina
Gerecke

Namedays

SEPTEMBER 13

Aristidis, Cornelius

SEPTEMBER 14

Stavros, Stavroula, Theoklis

SEPTEMBER 15

Nikitas, Visarion

SEPTEMBER 16

Efimia, Lountmilla, Melina

SEPTEMBER 17

Agapi, Agathoklis, Elpida,
Olivianos, Pantoleon, Pileas,
Pisti, Sonia, Sophia

SEPTEMBER 18

Ariadni, Evmenis, Kastor,
Romylos

Upcoming Services & Events

Sunday, September 12

Sunday Before the Holy Cross

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

Altar Boys - Captains & St. Luke: Teddy Kafentaris, Andrew Thatcher, Kris Christopher, Vasilios Panos, Jonah Blankenbaker, Lucas & Liam Elly

GOYA 5:00 p.m.

Monday, September 13

Bible Study (w/ Fr. John) 6:30 p.m.

Orthodoxy 101 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, September 14

Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross

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

Altar Boys - Captains & St. John: Christos Nenos, Constantine Ameres, Zachary George, Alex Findlay, Gianni Matassini, Grayson & Gryphon Borgeas-Beech, Nathan Moran

Fri. & Sat., Sep. 17 - 18

Metropolis of Atlanta Clergy-Laity Conference

Sunday, September 19

Sunday After The Holy Cross

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

Men's Group 5:00 p.m.

Monday, September 20

Bible Study (w/ Fr. John) 6:30 p.m.

Orthodoxy 101 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, September 8 - Nativity of the Virgin Mary

Placed right after the beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year, this feastday commemorates the birth of the Virgin Mary to her parents, Joachim and Anna. It is one of the 12 Major Feast Days of the Church year.

Tuesday, September 14 - Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross

The Elevation of the Holy Cross is one of the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church, and is one of the two feast days which is held as a strict fast. St. Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine the Great, discovered the Holy Cross on this day in 325 AD where it lay buried in the dust of the centuries in Golgotha. Exactly where the Cross was discovered, there was also found basil, a fragrant plant undiscovered at the time. For the next 300 years, the Cross stayed in the possession of the Christians in Jerusalem, but the city was captured by the Persians in 614 AD and the Cross fell into their hands. It was later recovered by the forces of the Byzantine Empire.

Fifty-Two Verses in Fifty-Two Weeks: The Bible Project September 12-18

*For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.
John 3:17*

On the Sunday before the Holy Cross, the Gospel reading at the Divine Liturgy is very short, John 3: 13-17. It contains the well-known verse of John 3:16, which summarizes Christ's ministry. The next verse is also significant. It speaks of Christ as an optimist, that His desire is for us to be saved and not condemned. And this not only means that we should be saved for eternal life, but that we should feel joy in this life. So much of the world revolves around shame. We are shamed for what we do and what we don't do. We are shamed for what we think. And we carry the burden of shame for what we have done. Christ doesn't want us to live like people who are under a sentence of condemnation. He wants us to live freely, as people who have been saved from condemnation and shame. We rid ourselves of shame by being aligned with God. The more we have of God, the less room there is for shameful behavior and shameful feelings about past behavior. Prayer and worship will help keep us away from shameful behavior, while confession, repentance and the grace of God (received through prayer and worship) will take away guilt and shame from past failings.

Do you have a heart for Service, Prayer, and Fellowship? Then you won't want to miss this special day!

On Saturday December 4th, 2021, St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is teaming up with Christ the King Catholic Church for a day of Service, Prayer, and Fellowship.

The day will begin with **serving** at Metropolitan Ministries, assisting in preparing food and assembling food items in their warehouse. Afterwards both of our communities will meet at Christ the King for **prayer** led by parish leaders and followed by **fellowship**, with a cookout sponsored by Christ the King!

This is a great opportunity to grow in communion with one another and demonstrate Christian service to those in need around our community. All are welcome!



**We are in need of at least 25 volunteers to serve alongside Christ The King's 25 volunteers.
If you are interested in volunteering at this special day of Service, Prayer, and Fellowship, please visit**

<https://metromin.volunteerhub.com/lp/stjohnngreekorthodox/>

Please refer any questions to Greg Melton (813-967-2074 or gmelt12@gmail.com).

Update and Announcements

Blessing of Ministry Heads — On Sunday, September 12 we will pray for all of our Ministry Heads here at St. John. We ask that all Ministry Heads make sure to attend Divine Liturgy on September 12 so Fr. Stavros may bless you on the solea during Liturgy!

Monday Night Bible Study Fr. John will lead a study focused on "The Beatitudes" (Matthew 5:1-16) beginning Monday evening, Sept 13th at 6:30 pm. The 1st session will focus on how and why Jesus gave us these beautiful verses, how they relate to the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, and why they are called the Beatitudes. A handout in a question-and-answer format will be provided to each participant as the study unfolds. Join us in person or on Zoom!

Orthodoxy 201 (The Deep Dive) - You've experienced Orthodoxy 101, now there's an opportunity to experience more treasures of our rich faith! Orthodoxy 201 will be offered by our Pastoral Assistant, Alex Limberatos, following the completion of Orthodoxy 101. Alex graduated from Holy Cross with a Masters of Divinity and has a passion for teaching on Orthodox spirituality. All are encouraged to continue on into Orthodoxy 201, even if you've taken Orthodoxy 101 in years past, as new topics will be covered. The dates and topics are as follows:

October 11: Iconography, the Cross, and Symbols
October 18: Metaphysics, Angels, Demons, and Saints
October 25: Prayer & Ritual
November 8: The Human Person (Mind, Body, Spirit)

St. John's Bookstore — Now available in our bookstore and recommended by Alex Limberatos: The Religion of the Apostles - Orthodox Christianity in the First Century by Rev. Fr. Stephen DeYoung. Alex comments: *"In my ministry I've found that there are many unasked questions in regard to angels and saints. The Religion of the Apostles is a thorough book that not only answers our holy curiosities but also commends us towards conducting our lives in a holy way. Fr. Stephen reminds us of the "vacancy" in heaven (through the fall of angels) which invites us into co-rulership with our God over His creation."* See this and many other titles in our bookstore.

Women's Bible Study will begin again on Tuesdays, September 21 @ 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday Night Book Study will resume in October. James Harritos will be leading the Tuesday Night Book Study. More information forthcoming, stay tuned!

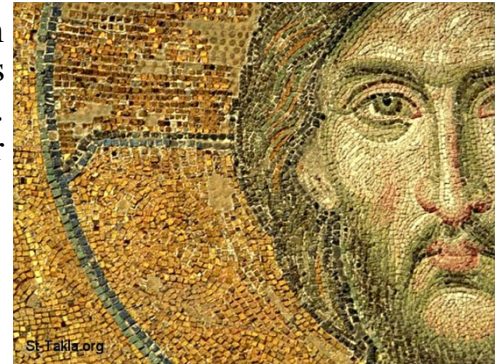
Looking For Volunteers for Welcome Ministry - We are looking for greeters and callers for the Welcome Ministry! Please contact the office if you are interested in helping out!

Prayer List: Lord Jesus Christ, Physician of our Souls and Bodies, visit and heal your servants: Ashley Snyder; Nick, Helen, George, & Elina; Evangelos & Caroline Critkas; Constantinos & Kalotina Klimis; Christine Alex, June, Lillian Thomas; Scotty; Desi Serriera; Ashley Kladakis; Dora Kallas, Kathy & Andrew Bouzinekis; Anastasia; Amanda, Andrew, Colton, Miranda, Charlotte Elizabeth, Nuha, Nabeel, Michael, Amal, John, Elaine, Olga, Virginia Georgiou, Ron Myer, Toula Tsaros, Fr. Pat Legato, Nellie Pringle, Yolanda Webb, Angela Bougas, Tony Ekonomou, Ron, Jason Vickers, Rex Garrison, Tina Chakonas, Ann Demas, Alex Martinez, Adriana Martinez, Aaron Martinez, Christina Noel Kouzes Houck, Evangeline Xeroteris, Nichole Ross, Daniel Ross, Daniella Ross, Ashley Henderson, Natalie Henderson, Chris, Debbie, James, Avery, Lily, Jacob, Jesse, Ann, Rosario, Antonia Caffentzis, Alissa, John, Angela, Joey, Christine Scourtes, Steven, Matthew & Family, Phyllis, John Zelatis, Reagan, Peter Zaharis, Alexandra Ferrarolis, Leon & Despina Botham, Cindy Xenick, Mary Ellen Evdemon, Marie Sofia Panagopoulos, Maria Hursey, Chris Vamvakias, John Myer, Mike Trimis, Robert and Alice Stoccardo, John Alexander, Michael Romero, George Hambos, Dean Kondilis and Family, Bill and Nancy Manikas, Patricia Costello, Anastasia Smyrnakis, Ekaterina & Anna Shushaalykova, Dora Koudouna, Ana Mourer, Debbie Phelps, Mary Voykin, David Voykin, Anne Sakellaris, Denise Badrane, Sia Blankenship, Don Payne, Zhana Temelkova, Stanislava Terzieva, James, Jude and all victims of war, terrorism, crime, natural disaster, and all of whom we are unaware.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS & UPDATE	
Sunday, September 12	Sunday, September 19
Topic: The Lord's Prayer	Topic: Sign of the Cross
	Procession of the Holy Cross

Orthodoxy 101 Class will Begin in September

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. The classes will be part lecture, part discussion, with lots of time for questions and answers.



Who should attend the Orthodoxy 101 class?

- Interfaith couples. This will help the non-Orthodox person understand more about what is going on in our church.
- Anyone who is considering joining our church. Going forward, this class will be a requirement for those who wish to join our Orthodox faith.
- New converts to Orthodoxy. For those who recently joined our church and who want to know a little bit more.
- Anyone who wants to know more about the basics of our faith, or who wants a refresher course in the basics of Orthodoxy is encouraged to attend.

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

Monday, September 13

A Tour of the Orthodox Church: What we see in the Church and what it means

Monday, September 20

Orthodox Spirituality—Introduction to the Sacraments

Monday, September 27

The Divine Liturgy - *This will actually be 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.*

Monday, October 4

Orthodox Traditions - Fasting, icons, prayer, and separating Theology from “yiaiyalogy.”



Please sign up with Fr. Stavros at frstav@gmail.com, so he has enough materials for everyone. There is no charge for this class.

St. John Greek Orthodox Church Adult Greek School

Want to Learn Modern Greek?



Teacher born, raised, and educated in Greece with 22 years of experience teaching the Greek language. Adult classes for beginners taught @ St. John Greek Orthodox Church (2418 W. Swann Ave, Tampa, FL 33609). Classes are held at 6-8:30pm on Thursday evenings, starting on September 30, 2021. 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) 523-5771, aspis69@aol.com or the church office at (813) 876-8830