

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
Michael & Bessie Palios 813-523-0346
George & Zackie Ameres 813-245-3813
Maraquet Edquid 813-422-8963
Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038
Marcelle Triantafilou 612-396-5026
Karina Findlay 813-476-9632
Katherine Sakkis 813-309-1073
Chris Kyrus 757-672-1920
George Mitseas 813-748-1220
Vickie Peckham 813-758-3102
Pete Trakas 813-505-2193
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

Sunday School:

Ushers

Veterans/1st Responders

Welcoming Ministry:

Women's Bible Study:

Young Adults

Young at Heart:

Youth Protection:



St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church



December 24, 2023

Eve of the Nativity of Christ

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

Sunday before Nativity; Eve of the Nativity of Christ;
Eugenia the Righteous Nun-martyr of Rome and those with her

Resurrectional Apolytikion:
When the tidings of the Resurrection from the angel was proclaimed unto the women disciples, and our ancestral sentence also had been abolished, to the apostles, with boasting did they proclaim: that death is vanquished evermore and Christ our God is risen from the dead, granting to the world His great mercy.

Apolytikion for Forefeast of the Nativity:
As she carried in her womb what she conceived without seed, Mary went to Bethlehem with elder Joseph to enroll, for they were of the house and the lineage of David. The time arrived for her to give birth to her Child; but then there was no place in the inn for them. Therefore the grotto served as a luxurious royal palace for the Queen. And Christ the Lord is born, to raise the image which was formerly fallen

Apolytikion For the Fathers:
Magnificent are the accomplishments of faith! The holy Three Servants greatly rejoiced, as they stood in the fountain of fire, as if beside the still waters; and the Prophet Daniel appeared to be a shepherd of lions, as if they were sheep. At their entreaties, O Christ God, save

our souls.

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:

- Choir
- Altar boys
- Sunday school teachers (who will line up in middle aisle before Communion)
- Sunday school students (who will line up in the middle aisle before Communion behind the teachers)
- Then the rest of the congregation (side areas then the main section)

Upcoming Services & Events		
Sunday December 24	Orthros 8:45 a.m. NO SUNDAY SCHOOL Vespers 4:00 p.m. Orthros 5:30 p.m.	Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Monday December 25	Nativity of Christ Orthros 8:45 a.m. OFFICE CLOSED	Divine Liturgy 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday December 26– Friday December 29	Office Closed	
Saturday December 30	St. Anysia Orthros 9:00 a.m.	Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Sunday December 31	Orthros 8:45 a.m. NO SUNDAY SCHOOL	Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Monday January 1	New Year’s Day Orthros 8:45 a.m. Office Closed	Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday January 3	Choir Practice	
Thursday January 4	Royal Hours 9:30 a.m. Philoptochos Board Meeting at 7:00 p.m.	
Friday January 5	Vesperal Liturgy 9:00 a.m.	
Saturday January 6	Theophany (St. Nicholas Cathedral in Tarpon Springs) Vespers 6:30 p.m.	
Sunday January 7	St. John Orthros 8:30 a.m. Feastday Luncheon	Hierarchical Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Religious Education at St. John

Monday Night Bible Study	Women’s Bible Study
Leader: Fr. John	Leader: Fr. Stavros
RESUMES BACK ON January 8 : Monday at 6:30 p.m.	RESUMES BACK ON January 9: Tuesday 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. HEBREWS 13:2

MINISTRY NEWS & UPDATES

St. John's Bookstore

Children's Christmas books that play "O Little Town of Bethlehem", "Silent Night", and "Joy to the World" - 50% off. Hard cover books for your younger friends and family members. Flip the switch, press the star, and your child can sing along with the beautiful and traditional Christmas carols. Still time to purchase for your Christmas giving list.

Ladies Philoptochos Society

SOLD OUT

A sincere thank-you to all who patronized our recent sale of Spanakopita, Tiropeta, and Vasilopeta. We sold out in record time! Your support helps Philoptochos fund its many philanthropic projects locally, nationally, and world-wide. You make a difference. A special thank-you to Lisa Alsina and her team for their dedication and hard work in making this such a resounding success. May God be with you throughout Christmas and the New Year.

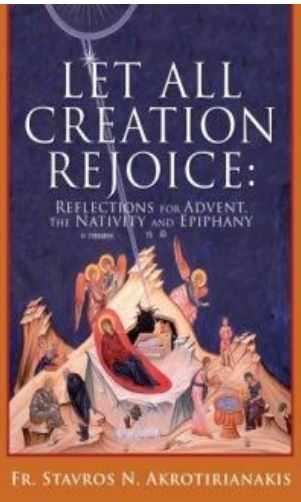
JOY Tweens

Sign-Up for Text Updates!

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



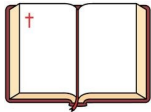
As we continue through the season of Advent, I wanted to share with you a book I have written called, Let All Creation Rejoice: Reflections for Advent, the Nativity and Epiphany. The book is approximately 230 pages long. It contains a reflection to be read daily during the period of the Nativity Fast (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 24

Prokeimenon: Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers. Daniel 3.26,27



The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:9-10; 32-40

BRETHREN, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundation, whose builder and maker is God.

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets - who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated - of whom the world was not worthy - wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

The reading is from The Gospel According to Matthew 1:1-25

The book of the Genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT
ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY?
PLEASE JOIN US FOR A FOUR WEEK COURSE

Orthodoxy 101

BEGINS IN JANUARY & OFFERED BY
FR. STAVROS N. AKROTIRIANAKIS, PARISH PRIEST

WHY SHOULD I ATTEND ORTHODOXY 101?

· 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

WHEN WILL THE CLASSES BE HELD?

* MONDAY, JANUARY 22
A TOUR OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH: WHAT WE SEE AND WHAT IT MEANS

* MONDAY, JANUARY 29
INTRODUCTION TO THE SACRAMENTS- BAPTISM, CHRISTMATION, CONFESSION, MARRIAGE, UNCTION

* MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5
THE DIVINE LITURGY – A "TEACHING" LITURGY

* MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12
ORTHODOX TRADITIONS – FASTING, ICONS, PRAYER AND LIVING AN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN LIFE

WHAT FORMAT CAN I EXPECT?

A RELAXED ATMOSPHERE WITH PRESENTATIONS, INTERACTIVE DISCUSSIONS, AND LOTS OF TIME FOR QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

CLASSES WILL BE HELD FROM 6:30-8:30 P.M. IN THE CHURCH SANCTUARY.

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 THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH · 2418 W. SWANN AVENUE · TAMPA, FL · 33609



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, if you have any questions.

The classroom will be on the 2nd floor of the Bridge Prep Academy School Building, Room 205.

Beware of Emails or Text Messages Asking for Gift Cards

This is a common and very scary thing that is happening. People who are impersonating as Fr. Stavros have been emailing people and asking them to buy gift cards, scratch off the back to reveal the code, take pictures of the code and email them the pictures. Fr. Stavros would never under any circumstances ask for a gift card via email. If you receive an email like this, please call Fr. Stavros immediately. Many people these days are falling victim to scams like these. Please double check and even triple check any emails or phone calls that ask for money even if it looks real.

Any questions? Please contact the office.

Coffee Hour Schedule

December 24th– AHEPA

December 31st–
Photography/ Bookstore/
MOMS

St John needs all hands on deck for Gasparilla on January 27!

Every year we've opened our parking lot to attendees of the Tampa Bay Gasparilla Festivities. This has been a successful undertaking for years and we are thankful for all who have helped in years past!

To run this event, we are asking for your help once more!

We are looking for a new person to chair this event, as our past chairperson is unable to fill that role this year. He is, however, willing to help a new chairperson understand what is involved in this. If you are willing to chair this event, please contact Fr. Stavros. As for

everyone else, even a few hours of volunteering is a great help to make this a safe, fun and profitable event. A sign-up genius along with details will be forthcoming through email and the bulletin.



Liturgical Notes

Services for the Nativity – Sunday, December 24
We will celebrate Divine Liturgy as normal, on Sunday, December 24 at 10:00 a.m., preceded by Orthros at 9:00 a.m. It is hoped that those with young children and those who do not drive at night will take advantage of this morning Liturgy. Because December 24 is a Sunday, the order of service in the morning is called “Sunday Before the Nativity” and the hymns and Scripture readings reflect that. If you come to worship on Sunday morning, we hope that you will also either in the evening of the 24th or the morning of the 25th to the actual Nativity Divine Liturgy.

Vigil of the Nativity
A “vigil” in the Orthodox Church is where two or more services are connected in order to create a long period of worship. For the Nativity this year, we will hold such a “vigil.” You may attend some of all of it, come early and leave, or come only for the Divine Liturgy, whatever you wish.

Great Vespers of the Nativity—4:00 p.m.
The Vespers of the Nativity includes Old Testament Prophecy Readings, eight of them that begin with Genesis 1:1, the creation of the world, continue with readings from Isaiah and Jeremiah that have some of the more popular prophetic verses that foretell the coming of the Messiah. The sunset will occur during the Vespers service. This is traditional, as Vespers ends one day and begins another. With the setting of the sun, we will begin the feast of the Nativity.

Orthros of the Nativity—5:30 p.m.
Orthros is usually celebrated in the morning. It tells the story of a saint or feastday in hymns. The Orthros of the Nativity has dozens of hymns that tell the Biblical account of the Incarnation. During both the Vespers and Orthros, the church will be illumined only by candlelight.

Great Doxology—6:45 p.m.
The Feast of the Nativity marks the only time in human history that the night became brighter than day with the appearance of the multitude of angels. At 6:45 p.m. the choir will sing the Great Doxology, the hymn that ends nearly every Orthros service. We hear the choir sing this hymn on Sundays. It’s the first hymn they sing. It is the hymn of the angels from the Nativity. How appropriate it will be to hear the Doxology on the feast of the Nativity, as the lights come on in our church and “night becomes like day.”

The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great—7:00 p.m.
The centerpiece of our Nativity Feast is, of course, the Divine Liturgy. When the Nativity falls on a Sunday or Monday, we celebrate the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great as the Nativity Liturgy.

Monday, December 25 – Nativity of Christ
We will celebrate Divine Liturgy on Christmas morning. Since we are blessed now with more than one priest at the altar, we are able to celebrate additional Christmas Liturgies.



Wishing our "church family" at St. John's a very joyous Nativity and a New Year filled with God's richest blessings.

Food Pantry Update

The St. John Food Pantry helps support our existing Ministry Food Drives along with Metropolitan Ministries, Feeding Tampa Bay, Bridge Prep and others in need!

Every little bit helps! One donation at a time YOU can help us help OTHERS to tackle hunger in our community! It's as easy as 1,2,3 ...

- 1) Look for our dedicated drop off location in the entrance area of the Church Hall.
- 2) Mark your calendars for the First Sunday of Each Month as our primary collection day (but donations are welcome anytime).
- 3) When you attend a Ministry Meeting bring a food item from the list below.

Lastly, we accept grocery store gift cards in the church office.

Thank you for your support and thinking of the St. John Food Pantry one item at a time! If you have any questions or know of someone in need (we can create meals in a bag to go) please contact Sandra Pappas at

813-785-3747.

Requested Food Pantry Items


- ☐ Canned fruits and vegetables
- ☐ Canned beans (all varieties)
- ☐ Canned Meat

(including Vienna sausage, spam, chicken, and tuna)

- ☐ Cans of soup
- ☐ Cereal/ Boxes of Milk

- ☐ Instant mashed potatoes
- ☐ Jell-O/Pudding
- ☐ Macaroni & cheese
- ☐ Oatmeal
- ☐ Pasta
- ☐ Peanut Butter & Jelly (in plastic jars)

- ☐ Ramen noodles
- ☐ Rice
- ☐ Spaghetti sauce
- ☐ Dry goods
- ☐ Paper towels
- ☐ Toilet paper



Requested Food Pantry Items

- (including Vienna sausage,
spam, chicken, and tuna)**

- ☐ **Instant mashed potatoes**
- ☐ **Jell-O/Pudding**
- ☐ **Macaroni & cheese**
- ☐ **Oatmeal**
- ☐ **Pasta**
- ☐ **Peanut Butter & Jelly (in plastic jars)**

- ☐ Ramen noodles
- ☐ Rice
- ☐ Spaghetti sauce
- ☐ Dry goods
- ☐ Paper towels
- ☐ Toilet paper

