

# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

# *THE MESSENGER*

“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

## September 2013

### MISSION STATEMENT:

St. John Greek Orthodox Church is dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

### VISION:

The church shall seek to fulfill its mission by:

1. Embracing the Spiritual Life of the Orthodox Church through regular prayer, worship, and frequent participation in the sacraments.
2. Supporting the Church through stewardship of time and talent and sacrificial giving.
3. Providing a welcoming, caring, loving environment.
4. Having its members exemplify Orthodox Christian character and morals.
5. Supporting ministries that facilitate the overall mission of the Church
6. Exemplifying commitment to community service and charitable outreach.
7. Creating an environment which encourages members to grow in their faith.

## Father Stavros' Message

On September 1, I will mark my 9 year anniversary as the priest of St. John. I am so thankful to God for this wonderful ministry that I enjoy here in Tampa. I am thankful to all the people who help and assist in my ministry and all the people who have shared the joys and sorrows of this journey over the years. I hope by His grace to be here for many years into the future. Once we pass September 1, it will mean it will be my TENTH go around with every event in the life of our parish—On September 14, I will celebrate my nameday for the 10th time in this parish, WOW! The number 10 in the Bible represents a tithe, the amount of something we are supposed to give to God. If I live to be 100, a tithe of my namedays will have been spent in this parish.

As we go through the next year, it will be the tenth go around with the festival, stewardship, parish council, as well as Christmas, Holy Week, etc. As I reflect on the nine years I've spent here, I am very pleased with many aspects of the ministry at St. John—we have so many beautiful and talented people in our congregation, people who were strangers 9 years ago that today I count as some of my closest friends. We have many children in our Sunday school, our ratio of baptisms to funerals is very favorable, we've got an awesome choir and chanter, and many other positive things. We also have some challenges—they are the same challenges that every church community

faces—like keeping things new and fresh, getting people more committed, keeping the thinking positive, and of course, we have challenges with our finances. It is my hope this coming year to address some of these challenges, so that next year, when God-willing I enter the second decade of ministry in Tampa, we are more equipped to thrive, rather than survive. To that end, we are unveiling a few new programs for the new Church Year (yes, the church begins its new Ecclesiastical year on September 1, rather than on January 1. So, we have some new programs and we hope our members will make some “new church year resolutions.” The message is a little lengthy this month but please read through—this is a pretty complete outline on where I'd like to see our church community go this year. First we will address the “power of positive thinking”, by unveiling a new campaign for the fall called:

### JUST SAY ‘YES’

At a recent gathering of our youth adult group, I was asked the following question: “At a time when most churches are not growing and it seems that the Christian faith is weakening, how do you get the church to grow and the faith to thrive?” A great question! Almost immediately, three words flew

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out of my mouth: "JUST SAY 'YES!'" Reflecting on the history of the church, the church has always grown and the faith has spread because people have said "YES"! When Jesus Himself was in agony as He anticipated His impending death on the Cross, He prayed for God to take away His cup of suffering. Yet, ultimately, He said "Not my will, but THY will be done." (Luke 22:42) In other words, He said YES. When Jesus called the first disciples and said "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men," (Matthew 4:19) their response wasn't "We're too busy," or "we're too dumb," or "we're not sure we can make the commitment," it was YES, and they followed. Following Pentecost, each Apostle said YES to taking the Christian message to a different part of the world.

Most of us are familiar with the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes (Matthew 14:14-21) feeding the five thousand people (not counting women and children). Jesus asked the crowds if there was anyone who had something to eat. Imagine if you had one loaf of bread that you brought for yourself, and here was someone asking if you had some food you could share. You'd have to think you'd get a morsel of bread back at best if you offered the loaf to be shared among so many people. But yet, someone (or a few people, we are not told) stepped forward and said "YES, here is some food." And with that small, but sacrificial offering, Jesus made a miracle that not only fed 5,000 men, AND fed women and children, but there were also TWELVE BASKETS OF FOOD LEFT OVER. The leftovers exceeded the original offering. And this is what happens when we say YES to the Lord. We get it all back, and more!!! And that goes for when we spend time in prayer and worship, when we give generously through our stewardship, when we go out of our way to help someone. We get it all back and more! On the other hand, we learned in elementary school math that zero times anything is still zero. So this miracle that was made possible by the Lord's blessing, was also made possible through the courage and generosity of those who offered the loaves and the fish. For, had nothing been offered, there could have been no miracle. Miracles happen in our church every day. They happen, however, through the blessing of the Lord, in tandem with our offering to Him through the Church.

Under threat of death, the early Christians still said "Yes, we believe" and many lost their earthly lives and gained heaven because of it, at the same time inspiring other people to follow after Christ. The church grew by 40% per decade when it was under persecution. That rate is astounding—how could a church in secret grow? The only time the church was public was when there was an execution of a Christian. This inspired many non-believers to join the underground church, reasoning that if people could DIE for the Christian faith, than the Christian faith must be very worthwhile. Throughout the centuries, men have answered YES to the call to the priesthood, and the faithful have said YES to establishing, maintaining and growing church communities. People say YES every day when they decide to pray, worship, tithe, give sacrificially, live according to the commandments and offer help and assistance to their neighbors.

So, what stops us from saying yes?! Is it our lack of faith? Is it our peers, whose ridicule we risk if we show our faith? If we want to take "the next step" in our community, it will happen when we ALL "JUST SAY YES!"

"Yes", by definition, is a positive sentiment, an affirmative statement. "Yes" generally leads to positive growth and enthusiasm, which in turn breeds more growth and enthusiasm. "No", by definition, is a destructive sentiment, a negative statement. "No" leads to decline and negativity, which in turn breeds greater decline and more negativity. Simply put, the church grows when we say "YES" and in general it declines when we say no. The Gospel is spread through positive sentiment and encouragement, not negativity. And so the tone we want to set in OUR church (and yes, it is our church, it is shared with our Lord Himself, together with all the people who call St. John their spiritual home) is one of positive energy and enthusiasm. This is how we will

grow Christ's Church, this is how we will spread His Gospel, this is how we will grow our parish of St. John in Tampa.

Why is it important to grow? Some people are uncomfortable with the idea of growing, either numerically by adding people to our community, or even growing in our individual faith. On a practical level, if we are not growing, we are going to become complacent. And if we become complacent, we will decline. This is true in business, it is also true in marriage, parenting and so many other things, including spiritually. It is also important for our church to grow because Christ commanded us to baptize all nations—the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) tells us the Christ expects every member of the church to be not only a member, but a recruiter of new members. And, most importantly, if the Good News of Christ is really such Good News to us, we should want to share it—Good news travels fast. We eagerly share how proud we are of our children, we eagerly share about our summer vacations, why shouldn't we eagerly share about our faith? Perhaps we've never been encouraged. Perhaps we just don't know how to.

Again, in this small group session, I offered to the participants, that if EVERYONE connected to our community did TWO EASY things, our church would be the strongest church community around. What are those two things?

1. Commit to coming to church ON TIME and come EVERY SUNDAY. If everyone came to church every Sunday, there would be over 1,000 people in attendance. Why do we not have 1,000 people here every Sunday and why don't they come on time? Because many of them do not say YES when asked the question—can you commit to coming to church each Sunday, and on time?

2. Commit to serving the hungry through our Community Outreach ministry at Metropolitan Ministries ONCE A YEAR! No, not once a month, or once a quarter. If EVERYONE took part in this ministry, 1000 people divided by 20 a week, that would cover 50 Saturdays of the year. This would mean that 20 people from St. John would be a presence at this ministry of charity each week. (We currently participate one Saturday of the month, which is good, but could be better.) How would that reflect on our church? How would that reflect the Gospel of Jesus Christ present and leading our church?

Notice that neither of these two things involves money. These are really two EASY things—come to church each Sunday and come on time, and work three hours a year in this community outreach ministry. Imagine if we had 1,000 people in church every Sunday, and on time. We'd need to expand our church, for one thing. We'd have probably double the number of students in Sunday school, (and because each student would get here each Sunday, they would be more likely to learn more about our faith and our church and less likely to leave the church in college or in adulthood) and with greater numbers would come naturally increased stewardship. We wouldn't have to preach finances (which I don't like doing), they'd increase almost automatically. If we were to have a presence at Metropolitan Ministries (or some other charity) on a weekly basis (we do on a monthly basis at present), we would be a real presence in our town. Everyone would know that the Greek Orthodox Church of Tampa is about more than the Greek festival—we'd be known for our charity rather than our food.

The Orthodox Church seems to tout itself about being the "best kept secret in America." We are the best kept secret because we are secretive. By and large, we choose not to share our faith. And even when we do, we share it in a way that makes it hard for outsiders to embrace. As an example, we invite people to worship in a language that they, and we also, do not understand. An old Protestant hymn says, correctly, "They will know we are Christians by our Love." We live in an age where there isn't enough love—people don't love people, and people don't love God. When we say YES to worship and to

charity, we show our love for both God and our fellow man.

SO, we are starting a campaign this fall called “Just Say YES”—On Sunday, September 8, we’re going to kick off our Just Say YES campaign by handing our magnets to take home to display on your refrigerator, which will serve as a daily reminder to you to Just Say YES to the things of God (see quiz below). We will also be handing out car magnets—people put all kinds of political and athletic endorsements on their cars, why not something about our church. Both the fridge and car magnets are going to say “Just Say YES” and have the name of our church on them. They are sure to catch someone’s eye in your driveway, in the parking lot at work, or in the pick-up line at school, and this will be a great chance to witness for your faith by saying “I

say YES” when it comes to things about Christ and His Church. And through a series of sermons over the upcoming months, we’ll work on transforming our community into a place where YES is one of the most-often heard words.

It’s like that saying goes: “Watch your thoughts, for they become words. Watch your words, for they become actions. Watch your actions, for they become habits. Watch your habits for they become character. Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.”

If we learn to say yes with our thoughts and our words, that will translate into actions, habits, and character and profoundly shape the destiny of our community.

**So, here is a quiz—look it over and see how your do. Count up the YES answers and the NO answers. And for each NO, ask yourself why this is a NO answer and not a YES answer.**

1. Can you commit to coming to church every Sunday? (or at least 80-90 percent of the time?)	YES	No
2. Can you commit to coming to church on time?	YES	No
3. Can you prepare to receive Holy Communion on a regular basis?	YES	No
4. Will you volunteer at the festival	YES	No
5. Will you be positive in working at the festival	YES	No
6. Will you commit to speaking positively about our faith to at least one person who is not Orthodox in your life?	YES	No
7. Will you commit to cutting down on gossiping about other people	YES	No
8. Can you commit to praying 5 minutes a day?	YES	No
9. Can you commit to reading the Bible, either through your own directed study or by getting the daily readings on your phone/email?	YES	No
10. Will you commit to increasing your financial pledge next year	YES	No
11. Do you believe that Christian giving should be “sacrificial”	YES	No

As we begin a new church year, and my tenth year of ministry, I am going to set forth some POSITIVE Goals for the year that I’d like to see our church do. These goals may seem lofty, though I don’t think they are. But I want to focus on achieving each of them, and being positive along the way. Here are some of the goals:

- 1. **Continued Positive Growth in Attendance**—we have a full church just about every Sunday. Of course, it is not full at ten o’clock when Liturgy starts. I want us each to make an effort the Just Say YES when it comes to arriving in church on time. We’re on time for everything else in life, why not for the worship of our Lord?! Goal number one: Just say YES to getting everyone here on time, and each Sunday.
- 2. **Greater Participation in the Divine Liturgy**—as you will read in this issue of the Messenger, we are placing a greater emphasis on the congregation singing the liturgy along with the choir this year. To this end, we have some new more “user-friendly” liturgy books in the pews and we will be having two Sundays in the fall where the choir will sing from the congregation and we will all sing with one voice. It is hoped that on any and every given Sunday and service, that the congregation will start singing more together, with the choir leading, rather than performing for us. This is the true spirit of Orthodox worship—a capable choir (and our choir is FANTASTIC) leading and enthusiastic congregation in singing the responses of the Divine Liturgy. Goal number two: Just Say YES to singing the liturgy all together.
- 3. **A Positive Festival**—There are going to be some changes in the festival this year, most notably a new chairperson. Katherine Sakkis did a fantastic job in chairing our festival for the past two years, and someone new will be at the helm this year. Organizational meetings will be held in September—remember the Festival is only two months away,

November 8, 9 and 10. We’ve had good festivals in the past, specifically where money is concerned. However, we haven’t yet had a festival where there haven’t been petty arguments about things like olives and feta cheese. This is my tenth festival. It is time to change that. Goal number three—Just Say YES on being positive at the festival.

- 4. **Positive growth in stewardship**—The Greek Orthodox Church is the only church I know of where we rely on other people buying our food at a festival to keep the doors open to the church. While we have had some growth in our stewardship, we still rely on the festival to get us through the year. We still have to hold on during lean months, depleting accounts and hoping to replenish them with the festival. We wouldn’t run our homes or businesses like this, so why is it acceptable to us for our church to run like this? Stewardship, for everyone, is a work in progress. Every year, it is my family’s goal to have positive growth in our stewardship contribution to the church. We view our stewardship not as an obligation, but a joy. It is an act of thanksgiving to God, faith in God, and love of God’s church. We eagerly raise it each year. And with the example of the offering of the five loaves and two fish referenced above, it seems that the more we give, the more we receive from God in return. More stewardship information will follow in ensuing months, but one thing I want to see in this budget cycle is for us to budget according to what we want to see our church do, and then raise the money to do it. Most Orthodox churches skate by with the bare minimum of what they think they can afford. So they keep the bar low—if we think it is important for our church to budget to support national ministries like our Seminary, it should go in the budget. If we think it is important for our church to make gestures of support for natural disasters, we should put that in the budget. There shouldn’t be what seems like a constant nickel-and-diming through second trays and other such things. (In fact, the Parish Council passed a motion at



our August meeting that effective January 1, 2014, we will only pass second trays for the emergency fund, all other second trays will be eliminated, and things we are asked to support during the year will be written in the budget going forward). Goal Number four—Just Say YES on increasing your stewardship.

5. **Positive growth in personnel**—It has been three years since we sent Charlie Hambos to the seminary to study for the priesthood. He'll be graduating next spring, and since he won't be getting ordained right away (he wants to get married first), I would like to see him come back as our pastoral assistant. What is a pastoral assistant? A pastoral assistant assists the "pastor" of the parish in creating and administering ADDITIONAL ministries. There are a finite amount of hours in the week, and a finite amount of work that can be done in those hours. A lot of the work that I do does not need to be done by a priest—there are a lot of administrative things, and even a lot of ministry things that don't require a priest. The Archdiocese has come out with a new pre-marital counseling program. We are being encouraged, as priests, to implement this program which will require me to spend more than double the time I am now spending with each couple. The church feels, and I agree, that we need to put more emphasis in preparing people to get married. We also need to put more emphasis on the process of baptizing people, we need more time spent on catechism, more emphasis on Sunday school, more programs with youth, more visitations for the sick. I try (and hopefully succeed) to Just Say YES to requests that come my way. However, over time, there are more requests from more people but still the same amount of hours in the week. The solution to this is to work our way up to getting a pastoral assistant and ultimately a second priest. But small steps first. We need to increase our budget next year to include money for a pastoral assistant for half the year (starting in July 2014). Then in 2015 we budget for the whole year. Then in 2016, we work up to getting a second priest. I will continue, as best I can, to Just Say YES to your requests and to do so with joy, and as much as I can, to not look at my watch when ministering to you. I hope that you will Just Say YES when it comes to a pastoral assistant, so that the pastor,

and his assistant, will have more hours (combined) to be better able to Just Say YES to you. Goal number five—Just Say YES to increasing our personnel.

So there you have it—five goals that are attainable—there is no mention of a million dollar capital campaign, or a new church complex. I'm challenging you to come every Sunday, come on time, sing, be positive at the festival, increase your stewardship, and bring in an assistant. These goals are VERY attainable. But the first step in the journey is your buy-in, your Just Say YES!

I read in a book recently that being positive is a choice. We can't keep all bad things away from us. But when challenges arise, we can CHOOSE to look at them in a positive way or in a negative way. This is a choice we each have to make. When you wake up in the morning, you can control whether your first thought is a positive one or a negative one. My first thought every day is positive—I'm training myself this way—My first thought is always, "Thank you God that I'm alive to see another day." Many people's first thought of the day is "Darn, the alarm already." Again, the first thought of the day is your choice. Even if your baby wakes you up in the middle of the night, you have a choice—you can curse that the baby got you up again, or you can be thankful you have a baby.

As the saying goes, "Some see the glass half-full, some see the glass half-empty." That's a matter of choice as well. In the Just Say YES campaign, we are seeking to see good in ourselves, in those around us, in the opportunities we have every day, in our church and in our Lord. When we all Just Say YES, the possibilities are seemingly endless. When we do not say yes, the choices become limited.

So, as we kick off a new church year, a new Sunday school year, and the tenth year of my ministry in Tampa, there are three words I want you to remember, because they are going to make all the difference this year: JUST SAY YES!!!

With love in the Lord,

+Fr. Stavros

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# Small Group Ministry Kicks off in September

For a couple of months now, you've been reading about the formation of small groups at St. John. These groups will gather once a week to study the Bible, discuss how to apply scripture to daily life, pray together and become small spiritual support groups. These sessions will last about an hour and will be discussion, not lecture, based. This is an opportunity to work side by side with each other to learn more about the faith. As group members get to know one another on a deeper level and as groups become more committed, you'll see that the groups will not only become a resource to help learn and live the faith, but through these groups, we'll eventually help "carry one another's burdens and so build up the body of Christ", as we are told to do in Galatians 6:2. And this is what the church is all about—helping one another through this life, on the journey to everlasting life.

Some FAQ's about the small group ministry:

1. **Who will lead these groups?** The groups will be led by people of the community, with guidance from Fr. Stavros. Fr. Stavros is providing the curriculum as well as training for the leaders of each group. Fr. Stavros will also visit each group periodically and be available as a resource at all times to each group.
2. **How often will the groups meet?** The groups will meet once a week, running the same schedule as the school year. That means there will be a week off at Thanksgiving, a few weeks off at Christmas, a week off for spring break and one for Holy Week, and the groups will be in recess for summer.
3. **Are we on "Greek time" or "American time" for these group meetings?** The answer is AMERICAN time—the groups will start and end on time. The morning meetings will last an hour—they will start ON TIME. Of course, if group members wish for the meeting to go longer, that will be up to each group, but they will end at the time advertised. The evening groups will last longer because they will involve eating—probably a pot luck each week, with each member bringing a small dish to share, again, this will be up to the group how this works. The evening groups are set to meet and eat at 6:30, with Bible Study from 7:00-8:00 p.m.
4. **I don't know the group leader or host. Am I just supposed to show up at the house of someone I don't know, is that okay?** YES, the group leaders are expecting to have people they don't know come to their homes. You probably want to call or email the group leader if you need information or directions but yes, you are welcome to join any of the groups.
5. **Can I bring a non-Orthodox spouse or friend to these groups?** ABSOLUTELY. One of the reasons we are starting these groups is because several members of our parish are attending Protestant Bible studies, because they have been invited by co-workers or friends. If you have a friend or co-worker who you think would benefit from small group ministry, please invite them.
6. **I don't know the Bible very well, is that a problem?** NO, not at all. In the small group, you are going to study the Bible together, by reading short passages and answering questions about how the passage relates to life in general and to your life specifically.
7. **What are the requirements to be in a group?** There are some expectations of group members:
  - a. Commit to participating every week (or nearly every week, obviously, we know people travel, kids get sick, etc., but the idea is that you will attend on a regular basis)
  - b. Respect what other people have to say. In a discussion where people are sharing experiences, they need support and validation, not judgment.
  - c. Everybody participates—when you go to small groups, it is expected that you are going to participate in the discussion. Again, this is not a lecture, or a traditional Bible study where the priest or professor gives a lecture. A group leader leads a discussion in which all group members participate.
  - d. Everybody commits to praying for the group members. The best way to bear one another's burdens is to do so through prayer. Group members will pray for one another.
8. **Which group should I join?** The one that is easiest for you to attend. I was talking to a mom the other day who is considering the women's group, but realizes that one of the evening groups is closer to her home. She can attend whichever is easier to go to. There are groups in different parts of town. If you'd rather drive farther and go to a different group, by all means do so. Just pick ONE group and stick with it.
9. **I want to host a group. Can I do so in the future?** These are the groups for fall, as well as the times. At the end of the fall, we will re-evaluate each group to see if the day, the time and the location are good. It might be that someone else in the area wants to host for the spring, and we change the location. If this goes really well, we might establish another group or two in other parts of town or on other days. But if you want to host in the future, I'm sure that request can be made.
10. **Do I RSVP or just show up?** Please RSVP to the group leader (in the case of the South Tampa group, RSVP with the host as well since they are two different people) so they know how many to expect. When you send your RSVP, please CC Fr. Stavros at frstav@gmail.com. The reason for the RSVP is that there are printed materials each group member will receive each week. We want to prepare enough. I will be coordinating this with the group leader and office staff as we get going.

So, here are the six groups, locations and leaders, as well as contact information. I ask that you please email the group leader or call them and if you email them, please CC me as well. As we are in the organizing phase of this ministry, I want to help and assist in setting this up.

These small groups will begin the week of September 8 (except for the Young Adult Group that has been meeting since August).

**The Women's Group and the Tuesday evening groups will meet for the first time on Tuesday, September 10.**

**The Men's Group will meet for the first time on Wednesday, September 11.**

**The Thursday evening group will meet for the first time on Thursday, September 12.**

### **Women's Group** (for adult women of any age)

**Location:** Meets at the home of Debbie Kavouklis, 3315 Jean Circle, Tampa, FL 33629—Debbie lives in South Tampa, a mile or so from the church.

**Group Leader:** Debbie Kavouklis—you can email Debbie at dkavouklis1@verizon.net, or call her at 690-0155.

**Meeting time:** Tuesday mornings from 10:00-11:00 a.m.

### **Men's Group** (for adult men of any age)

**Location:** St. John Greek Orthodox Church in the Administration Building in the meeting room—there will be signs the first week directing you where to go

**Group Leader:** Father Stavros for the first one but we are going to rotate this among group members. Please email Fr. Stavros at frstav@gmail.com or contact him at 813-394-1038.

**Meeting time:** Wednesday mornings from 7:00-8:00 a.m.

For this early morning group, bring your own coffee or breakfast food if you wish—we will not be providing these things.

### **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:** Home of Ellen Karaku, 4610 S. Ferdinand Avenue (South Tampa near Dale Mabry and Bay to Bay), Tampa, FL 33611. Ellen's home number is 813-835-0691 and her cell number is 813-240-3687. Her email is ekaraku@verizon.net.

**Group Leader:** Bessie Palios—Her email is bmp1126@yahoo.com, and her cell number is 813-523-0347. If you are going to attend this group, please RSVP to Ellen, Bessie and Fr. Stavros

**Meeting time:** Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

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

Anyone can attend this group but obviously this will be most convenient

to those who live in North Tampa, Lutz, Land O'Lakes, Wesley Chapel and Carrollwood

**Location:** Home of Michael and Artemis Conner. They live in Lutz near George Steinbrenner High School off of Van Dyke. Their address is 5524 Reflections Blvd, Lutz, FL 33558. Their number is 813-920-4404 and Michael's cell is 813-784-0182. Michael's email is conner.mike.01@gmail.com, and Artemis' email is artemisia004@yahoo.com. Please contact them before you attend the first meeting to get the gate code to their community.

**Group Leader:** Michael Conner

**Meeting time:** Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

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

Anyone can attend this group but obviously this will be most convenient to those who live on the East side of town—Riverview, Brandon, Valrico, Seffner, Lakeland

**Location:** Home of George and Donna Hambos—They live in Valrico at 2604 Herndon Street, Valrico, FL 33596. Their home number is 813-651-9226 and Donna's cell number is 813-843-8412, and Donna's email is dhambos@msn.com

**Group Leader:** Donna Hambos

**Meeting Time:** Thursday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

### **Young Adult Group** (for adults ages 18-40)

**Location:** Homes of group members, this one rotates, contact group leader for location each week

**Group Leader:** Mary Ann Konstas, who can be reached at 813-215-9862 or at mapkonstas@gmail.com. Please contact Mary Ann if you are interested in joining this group so she can tell you where the next meeting will take place.

**Meeting time:** Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

## **A Change of Scenery, Part 2: The Holy Mountain/Mt. Athos** **By Charles Hambos**

It was 4:30 a.m., and the air was borderline cool. The streets of Thessaloniki were quiet and only the faint orange glow from the city lights illuminated the obelisk statue and fountain in front of the ABC Hotel. Soon enough, a medium-sized bus pulled up. All you could see were the bold-faced letters spelling, ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΕΙΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ. This bus, owned by Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, would be taking my class for the two-hour ride to Ouranoupolis, "City of Heaven," where we would catch a boat to Mt. Athos.

We weren't even in Greece for a week and we were already on our way to Mt. Athos. It rarely rains in Greece, but the day we left for Mt. Athos, it rained. The skies were still gray and the rain was still falling by the time we reached Ouranoupolis. There was a possibility that the boats would be cancelled. Our only choice was to hang out at a local café, drink some frappe and have a toast (my preference: cheese and ham). Plus, frappes and toasts would not be readily available on Mt. Athos. Ouranoupolis was full of cafes and shops catering to the Greek, Russian, Serbian, Romanian Orthodox pilgrims going to and from the Holy Mountain. Our visas were acquired since Mt. Athos is an independent entity not having anything to do with the government of Greece. We waited and found out that the boats would be running and we were to catch the 8:45 a.m. slow boat, "Axion Estin." There are several fast boats, but for our group the

slow boat option was cheaper.

It had taken about an hour or so to reach Xenophontos Monastery, one of twenty monasteries on Mt. Athos, where we would be spending two nights. At this point, the thought that I was actually going to Mt. Athos was still pretty surreal. I had studied the theology of the church as well as read and heard many stories of people's experiences on the Holy Mountain. I remember being on the top deck where most of the pilgrims congregated. I was standing at the back with my arms crossed, leaning against railing. To my left was the Greek Flag of the "Axion Estin" waving proudly in the air and to the right, coming out of the water was Mt. Athos. Tears of expectation and joy ran down my face at the approaching opportunity. Am I really going? Am I going to want to leave? What am I going to see? What is the food going to be like? How about the chanting? Am I going to get any sleep at all? Are there showers? Are there toilets? These were just a few of the questions running through my mind.

The large gate at the front of the boat dropped down as the boat pulled up to a long concrete pier where at the end, a few monks were waiting to greet the visitors. Two or three stops later, it was our turn to get off. Xenophontos monastery looked pretty impressive from the shoreline. How could it not be? The monastery is over 1,000 years old. We entered the gates and were taken to



the Archontariki, the guest quarters. We were told to put our bags down and go into a sort of greeting room, where we would sign in. This is where the fun began. Soon enough, a large bowl of home-made loukoumi (chewy, sugary, tasty goodness) was placed on the table. Then small glasses of tsipouro that was made at the monastery were offered. Then glasses of fresh cold water and last but not least, cups of fresh Greek coffee. That was awesome! This kind of hospitality was the job of a few of the monks and something that would become my favorite experiences while in Greece.

We got our room assignments, four of us to a room. From what I heard, if you were to rank monasteries on a five-star scale, Xenophontos is a four-star monastery. Everything was beautiful and very comfortable, for me at least. Well, since we knew that we would be spending a lot of time at the monastery we decide to take a hike to the next closest monastery, Dochiariou, about a 45-minute hike. It doesn't do justice for me to explain the magnificence of the iconography that covers all kinds of surfaces in these monasteries. However, to walk into the gates of the monastery and look up to see a Pantokrator icon of Christ, which was painted/written more than 600 years ago, is breathtaking. It is just one icon after the other. Some of which are miracle working. The relics, which these monasteries also have, are quite incredible: whole arms, feet, skulls and vestments. To have the opportunity to venerate them is just unreal. Anyway, we looked around and soon enough we were kindly asked congregate in a big room, where we were greeted in the same fashion as before: loukoumi, tsipouro, fresh cold water and Greek coffee. The love and hospitality that these monks showed were amazing. As a classmate, said to me. This is how we should be in life. (After these experiences, I was thinking that wherever I get an office and someone schedules an appointment, I will always have some water and coffee and maybe a sweet or two at my disposal. We shall see what happens.) After that, we were taken into the big church where there were several miraculous icons and a Constantine era cross on display. The iconography the chandeliers and the overall church were incredible. We decided to hike a little further along the coast where we ran into some horses and construction, all while enjoying the picturesque landscape and crystal clear blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea. Later we returned to the monastery for dinner and a short period of rest before the all-night vigil for the feast of Sts. Constantine and Helen would commence.

Meals are a timed series of events. Come in and sit down. The food is already on the table and the cups are flipped upside down. The abbot comes in. He gives the blessing, and then we start eating but not drinking and definitely not speaking. A monk is reading the scripture. A bell rings and the cups are flipped. There is some wine and water.

Back to the services, starting between 8 and 9 p.m. we went till about 3 or 4 a.m. The experience was incredible. My class was invited to chant in the left choir. I decided to pick a spot in a stasidi (high arm chair) to enjoy the service from there. Each monk had a job: chanting, lighting candles and blowing out candles throughout the service, making sure the right hymns were being sung. Most were in the wide-sleeved exorasson but a few were in a heavily pleated cape. They were in charge of the order of the service and they would be constantly moving throughout the service. There was constant movement throughout the service and it was an honor to be able to watch. Lamps from the ceilings connected with ropes were brought down and lit. Later they would be blown out and relit again. You would have to be sure not to be underneath one of them as they came down. In fact, I saw one coming down fast and one monk pushed the other monk so he wouldn't get hit. Then I looked over at the monk who was lowering it and he was laughing. So naturally, I laughed too. At a certain point of the night, I found myself falling asleep next to a snoring monk. It was pretty cool to wake up and be in church several times. So the vigil ended and it was time to sleep for a few hours before, the Divine Liturgy

started early in the morning. We walked back to our rooms in complete darkness. Then woke up a few hours later. The chanting was incredible.

During the Liturgy, right after the Gospel reading and before the Trisagion Hymn, we processed outside of the church to the dock where we would witness the full service of an adult baptism. They brought a font with water with them but the baptism would not be done inside of it. They blessed that water, added the oil and proceeded to dump it in the sea. The abbot told the young man to stand at about the point where the water was poured in. At the signal of the abbot lowering his hands, the young man submerged himself in the water. Once it was over, we processed back to the church. That was the first time I had ever seen a baptism done in its original place, within the context of the liturgy.

After Liturgy my class was brought into a formal room where we had an official audience with the Abbot of the Monastery. Water, tsipouro, chocolate and coffee were served once again. He spoke to us about the monastery and the church and the role of monasticism in the world. He was not boring and often incited lots of laughter. After it was over we had the rest of the day off. Since I was not yet used to the change in schedule, I decided to sleep for a few hours. I woke up and explored the grounds a little bit. There is a live stream of Holy Water near the shoreline of the monastery. There is a icon of St. George there. However it is not the original. The original is in the main church of the monastery and not only is it a miraculous icon but its existence is miraculous. It was originally from Constantinople. During the Ottoman occupation, several hundred years ago, the Ottomans tried to destroy the icon. They stabbed it and even tried to burn it. The Christians were able to take it and the only way it would be safe was if they threw it in the sea. A short time later, the icon landed on the shore of the monastery and there a spring of holy water formed. This is just one of the many treasures found in one of the 20 monasteries on Mt. Athos.

We were also given a tour of the modern museum of the monastery, which holds many very old icons and manuscripts. This was where I learned that the Divine Liturgy had been celebrated at this monastery for over 1,000 years and the original church is still there. Today, the main church they use is from the 1800s. After we saw the museum we had dinner and vespers. In the morning we had Orthros and Liturgy at 4 a.m., followed by a meal and then we took the fast boats back to Ouranoupolis, in order to catch the bus and have Modern Greek class in Thessaloniki that afternoon.

Our time there was too short. I really didn't feel that we were there long enough to get into the schedule of daily life. Regardless, it was a great blessing to be there at all. The landscape and life is beautiful there. For all the ladies that are feeling sad, that they cannot go to Mt. Athos, do not be weary. There are many great women monasteries and they are equally if not more hospitable than the men's monasteries. One of the first monasteries I ever went to was St. Stephen's in Meteora where I venerated the skull of St. Haralambos. I visited another one this summer and the abbess was incredible. I would not trade my experiences there and in Mt. Athos for anything else.

As I begin my last year at Holy Cross, I would sincerely like to thank everyone at St. John's Greek Orthodox Church for all of their support not only at the most recent Agape Luncheon, but at every single one and thank you also for every single interaction that we have had with one another. I have said it for many years now, you are my St. John's family and I am very proud of it. If you would like to contact me, please e-mail me at [Charlie.hambos@gmail.com](mailto:Charlie.hambos@gmail.com) or my address is 50 Goddard Avenue, Box 016, Brookline, MA 02445. My prayers are with all of you and thank you for keeping me in yours.

*Charlie Hambos is beginning his fourth and final year at Holy Cross Seminary.*

# Witnessing for Christ - By Anonymous Parishioner

Father, I want to share this story with you that happened on my recent vacation. On our last day of the trip, while leaving the hotel, I went to get the car and pull it around to the front. I was on the phone talking to a friend and there was a blind man who was walking towards the car. So I told my friend I had to go and help this guy. I got out of my car and asked if I could help him and he said he was tired of waiting for his family and he was just going to wait for them at the bus. So I walked with him and gave him some directions, like how many steps and move to the right a bit, to the where the busses picked up but they were in the sun and I asked him if we wanted to go somewhere else where there were some seats in the shade. So we turned around and just started talking. I asked him where he was from (Maryland) and if he had ever been to Universal Studios before (no) we talked about my family being from Tampa and all this stuff, so then I asked him if he liked it here. He said, "you want to know the truth?" and I said of course and he then said to me, "it isn't easy being at Universal and being blind." WOW - that hit me so hard. We continued to talk and I asked him if he minded me asking him if he had always been blind and he said no, he'd only been blind for over two years. Then we talked about the school he had to go to learn how to function as a blind person, talked about his walking stick, and how he gets

around. By this time, my family was downstairs waiting for me in the car, and we were running late, but no way I was going to cut this conversation short. So we just chatted for a few more minutes, mostly about the park and the hotel, but I hadn't asked his name at all so when I said good bye I did. His name is Gary, and I told him mine and shook his hand and told him I enjoyed talking with him. I got in the car and I started crying - all the things we take for granted - especially at a place like Universal where you go from one thing to the other, wait so impatiently in long lines - this poor guy can't see a thing around him. This has to be one of the coolest conversations I have ever had. Thought I would share with you.

*Editor's Note: This story is one that COULD take place any day and in any place. There are lots of "blind" people around—some are literally blind, some are lost or need help in other ways. This story, however, only takes place when we look up from the phone long enough to notice, and hang up the phone and the other things long enough to care. As I first heard this story, my mind went to Hebrew 13:2, where we read, "Do not forget to show love to strangers, for in so doing, some have entertained angels unawares."*

## Book Review

### The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman

Reviewed by Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis

If you are married, or in a serious relationship, you have to read this book! I have never been good or fast reader. While I enjoy writing (as you can tell from The Messenger) and write quickly, I am a slow reader. So, when I get excited about a book, it's a big deal. I also take recommendations from parishioners on books to read. When someone is "jumping up and down excited" about a book, I do take notice. And if you've read The Messenger over the years, you know that it is very rare for a book review to be part of the content. SO, TAKE NOTICE AS TO WHAT FOLLOWS—THIS IS THE BEST BOOK I HAVE EVER READ ON IMPROVING YOUR MARRIAGE:

In his book The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman (a New York Times Bestseller), he identifies FIVE specific love languages—Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Receiving Gifts, Acts of Service and Physical Touch. His hypothesis is that everyone has a primary love language and usually a secondary love language. While we may have elements of all five languages in our vocabulary, there is one, and sometimes two that are dominant.

What is a love language? A language in which we feel comfortable receiving or expressing love. If one's primary love languages is "Words of Affirmation," as opposed to let's say "Giving Gifts" it means that when that person gives a loving gesture, he or she is more likely to write a letter expressing love than to buy a gift. It also means that when receiving love, he or she would rather receive a heart-felt letter than a material gift.

The second hypothesis is that, in a marriage, the primary and secondary love languages of the respective spouses are not necessarily the same. In fact often times, they are very different. And this can potentially cause conflict in the marriage. A simple example—let's say that the husband's primary love language is "Words of Affirmation" and the wife's primary love language is "Acts of Service." Here's an example of a potential conflict—the husband is constantly telling his wife that he loves her. But she says "If you love me, pick up your socks off the floor." And when the wife wants to express her love

for her husband, she takes his car out and gets it detailed, but what he really wants is for her to tell him how proud she is of him.

Which leads to the third hypothesis—obviously, we are most comfortable speaking in our own language. But if we could learn to understand and speak to our spouse in his or her primary love language, imagine what that could do for a marriage. Everyone has an emotional "love tank" which is filled by receiving love in your primary language. When that tank is full, everything in the world looks better, including one's marriage. When that tank is empty, everything in the world looks worse, including one's marriage. So, if you can learn to speak your spouse's language and keep their tank full, it will vastly improve your marriage.

This book is not a hard read, nor is it very long, about 200 pages. It is funny and is filled with real-life stories which every marriage can relate to. It is positive and uplifting and not threatening in any way. It is a book which spouses can read together if they wish. At the end of the book there is a 30 question profile for husbands and a separate one for wives, so that each party can identify their primary and secondary love languages. Armed with knowledge of your primary language, and the primary language of your spouse, along with tools for learning how to speak a "foreign language", i.e. not your primary love language, you are ready to take your marriage to another level.

There are other books in Gary Chapman's anthology, including "Five Love Languages for Children," and "Five Love Languages for Teenagers," as well as several other titles.

You can buy "The Five Love Languages" for \$14.99. **I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THIS BOOK TO ANYONE WHO IS MARRIED OR IN A SERIOUS RELATIONSHIP!!!**



# George Carlin's Views on Aging

Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions.

"How old are you?" "I'm four **and a half!**" You're never thirty-six and a half. You're four and a half, going on five! That's the key.

You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead.

"How old are you?" "I'm **gonna be 16!**" You could be 13, but hey, you're gonna be 16! And then the greatest day of your life you become 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony. **YOU BECOME 21. YESSSS!!!**

But then you turn 30. Oooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk! He **TURNED**; we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're Just a sour-dumpling. What's wrong? What's changed?

You **BECOME** 21, you **TURN** 30, then you're **PUSHING 40**. Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you **REACH** 50 and your dreams are gone.

But wait!!! You **MAKE** it to 60. You didn't think you would!

So you **BECOME** 21, **TURN** 30, **PUSH** 40, **REACH** 50 and **MAKE** it to 60.

You've built up so much speed that you **HIT** 70! After that it's a day-by-day thing; you **HIT** Wednesday!

You **get into** your 80's and every day is a complete cycle; you **HIT** lunch; you **TURN** 4:30; you **REACH** bedtime. And it doesn't end there. Into the 90s, you start going backwards; "I **Was JUST** 92."

Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. "I'm 100 and a half!"

May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!!

## HOW TO STAY YOUNG

1. **Throw out nonessential numbers.** This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them. That is why you pay "them."
2. **Keep only cheerful friends.** The grouches pull you down.
3. **Keep learning.** Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." And the **devil's** name is **Alzheimer's**.
4. **Enjoy the simple things.**
5. **Laugh** often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath
6. **The tears happen.** Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person, who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. Be **ALIVE** while you are alive.
7. **Surround yourself with what you love**, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. **Your home is your refuge.**
8. **Cherish your health:** If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. **Don't take guilt trips.** Take a trip to the mall, even to the next county; to a foreign country but **NOT** to where the guilt is.
10. **Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.**

## AND ALWAYS REMEMBER :

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, **but** by the moments that take our breath away.



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# Liturgical Schedule for September

Sunday, September 1 **Beginning of the Ecclesiastical (Church) Year—The Indiction**

Orthros 8:45 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Anyone attending may serve

Ushers: Brett Mourer, Christopher Kavouklis, Amin Hanhan

Coffee Hour: Young at Heart

Sunday, September 8 **Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary**

Orthros 8:45 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. Matthew (Karter Lenardos, Gregory Koutroumanis, Harry Koutroumanis, Brigham Sibley, Benny Hidermichel, James Kavouklis)

Ushers: David Voykin, Ed Gerecke, Pete Trakas

Coffee Hour: Sunday School Luncheon

Wednesday, September 11 **12 Year Anniversary of 9/11**

Paraklesis Service of Supplication/Memorial Service/Prayer for Peace 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Saturday, September 14 **Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross**

Orthros 8:45 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Procession of the Holy Cross at the end of the Liturgy

Sunday, September 15 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. Mark (John Karamitsanis, Lukas Karamitsanis, Andrew Mellon-Lynn, Dominic Garcia, Demetri Karounos,, Grayson Borgeas)

Ushers: Mike Trimis, George Mitseas, Chris Kavouklis

Coffee Hour: Alexander Family to benefit the food pantry

Sunday, September 22 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. Luke (Christos Nenos, Dean Mitseas, Nicholas Katzaras, James Katzaras, Nicholas Yotis)

Ushers: Florin Patrasciou, Kevin Fentress, John Alexander

Coffee Hour: Glendi Dancers Coffee Hour and Bake Sale

Sunday, September 29 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. John (George Hambos, Alexios Diniaco, Nicholas Alsina, Matthew Demetriou, Thomas Shearer)

Ushers: Nick Kavouklis, Perry Katsamakis, Peter Theophanous

Coffee Hour: Young Adults

Sunday, October 6 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Altar Boys: Captains and St. Matthew (Karter Lenardos, Gregory Koutroumanis, Harry Koutroumanis, Brigham Sibley, Benny Hidermichel, James Kavouklis)

Ushers: Greg Tisdale, Demetrios Halkias, George Trimikliniotis

Coffee Hour: Choir

**We need Vasiliko (Basil) for the services of the Holy Cross—Please bring Vasiliko for Friday, September 14 and Sunday, September 15. Please bring it to the side door of the altar by 10:00 a.m. on both days, so we have time to make up the tray. The Procession for the Holy Cross will be held on Friday, September 14 and repeated on Sunday, September 15.**

# Liturgical Notes for September

## **Nativity of the Virgin Mary-September**

**8-Major Feast Day**-Placed right after the beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year (September 1), 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.

**September 11-Day of Remembrance**-This year marks the 12th year anniversary of the terrorist attack on America on 9/11/01. Despite the years that have passed since that awful day, feelings and emotions are still riding high. It is appropriate to stop and reflect not only on a tragic day in the life of our country, but to pray for peace in a world that is beset with hostility, not only overseas but on the streets of our own city. On September 11, we will hold a Paraklesis Service of Supplication to the Virgin Mary at 10:00 a.m., with a Trisagion service at the conclusion of the service. If you have time, please stop by our church to worship and pray for peace in the world and for recovery and healing of those who suffered and still suffer because of that terrible day.

## **Exaltation of the Holy Cross-September**

**14-Major Feast Day**-Commemorates the finding of the Precious Cross of Christ by St. Helen in the year 325. This day is equal in solemnity to Good Friday, as it draws our attention to the supreme sacrifice made by the Lord for us. Connected with September 14 is the Tradition of the Vasiliko. St. Helen went in search of the Precious Cross. In Jerusalem, she found the hill of Golgotha. But she did not know where to search for the cross. Vasiliko (Basil), a sweet scented plant, was found growing on the hillside. She looked beneath the Basil and that's where the cross was found. It is the Tradition of the Church that a Procession is held on September 14, where Basil is placed on a tray along with a cross and it is carried above the heads of the faithful. We will hold this procession on September 14, and also repeat it on Sunday, September 15.

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

**Get Acquainted Sunday-September 1**-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. Our “Get Acquainted Sunday” for September will be Sunday, September 1.

**Ministry Fair-September 8**-As we do each year on the first Sunday of Sunday school, we are going to have a Ministry Fair on Sunday, September 8. Each of our ministries will set up a table and display information about their ministries. This will be a great opportunity to see what is going on at St. John and sign up to be a part of it.

**Just Say YES Sunday—September 8**—In conjunction with the ministry fair on September 8, we are also going to pass out the Just Say YES materials described in Fathers’ Message. Families can pick up a magnet for their refrigerator and car magnet in the hall after church. Please display this in your home, for a daily reminder to Just Say YES when it comes to your spiritual life and your involvement in our community. Please display the magnet on your car as a way to witness for our faith, promote our church, and to spread the Just Say YES spirit! These materials will be available on a few other Sundays until we run out of them.

**Coffee hour September 15 to benefit the food pantry**-Anetta Alexander will be sponsoring a coffee hour on September 15—the proceeds of this coffee hour will go to stocking the food pantry and buying gift cards to local stores for those who are hungry. On September 15, we hope to have everyone bring one can of food/non-perishable item to stock the food pantry again.

**Congregational Singing—September 29, October 20**—On June 30, for those who were in church, our choir sang from among the congregation, encouraging us all to sing together in the true spirit of Orthodox worship. We have some new Liturgy books (see separate article on that) which are very “user-friendly” and will allow us to sing along with the choir on Sundays. To encourage this, we are going to have two additional congregational singing Sundays—September 29 and October 20. The choir will sing amidst the congregation, like a flash mob at the mall, and everyone will be encouraged to use the new books to sing along with them.

**Recent High School Graduates now in College**—Please email Fr. Stavros with the address of your college students. We send the Messenger electronically to our college students and want to make sure all are on the mailing list.

**The YAL wants your JUNK!!** The Young Adults of St. John’s are organizing a parish wide yard sale to take place on **Saturday, October 12th** in our church parking lot. All of the proceeds from this event will go towards restoring one of our beautiful stained glass windows. If you have items to donate for the sale, please contact Mary Ann Konstas at mapkonstas@gmail.com

**A special thanks to Kalliope Chagaris** for cleaning the church over the summer!

**Condolences** to Alexis Scarfogliero, on the passing away of her father, John Irving, on July 30. May his memory be eternal!

**Congratulations to Mihail Kabouris**, who was chosen to take part in a youth summit in Wesley Chapel to combat bullying, youth violence and other problems young people face. The event was called “Together We Stand—Pasco Youth and Community Summit.” This event, including quotes from Mihail, was documented in Tampa newspapers. Congratulations Mihail! Our young people are involved in some truly amazing things! He was mentioned as follows:

*Mihail Kaburis, 15, a Land O’ Lakes High sophomore in the IB program, said he thinks bullying is less of a problem than it once was, though it still needs to be addressed. After the opening session, the summit participants split into breakout groups. Kaburis said students seemed open to discussing their experiences, especially after they were allowed to ask adults to leave the room.*

*“I feel we are getting a full opinion from the whole student body,” Kaburis said.*

*Later, he said, the students would be able to share their ideas with the adults to work toward solutions “as an entire community.”*

**Constant Contact and Email Updates**—Our church is using “constant contact” for email blasts, especially notices about funerals and other time-sensitive information. We have sent out several email blasts over the summer. If you have NOT received one from the office, please call or email the office and

make sure that the email address we have on file for you is current. And when you change your address, please keep us up to date.

**Alarm System in the Church**—Effective immediately, the church is being alarmed when not in use. If you are someone who comes into the church on a regular basis, or need to enter during times when the church may be alarmed, please see Father about disarming the alarm. If you come during office hours and find the church locked, please ask the office staff and they will be happy to disarm the alarm and open it for you.

**Donation Needed for altar boy robes**—we have an ever-increasing amount of altar boys. When we ordered the altar boy robes seven years ago, we ordered 18 of various sizes, based on the boys we had at the time. For each size, we have one gold robe, one white robe, and six stoles (red, white, blue, green, gold and purple). We need to order an additional robe in the small size, one more in the medium and one more in the large. They are about \$1,000 per set—that's for the two robes and six stoles in each size. So we need a total of \$3,000 for this project. The good news is that the robes we have, thanks to the donations for dry cleaning that we have received, look as good as new. The robes are excellently made and will last at least 20-25 years because we take such good care of them. We just need a few more for the additional boys and their additional sizes.

**Donations needed for flowers for Feast of the Holy Cross**—We need donations of \$100 for flowers for the tray for the procession of the Holy Cross on September 14, and \$350 for flowers for the tray for the procession that will be repeated on September 15. Please call the office if you are interested.

**Get Daily Bible Readings Sent to your Email or Phone**—One of the best ways to start each day is by reading from the Bible. There are prescribed readings for every day of the year in the Orthodox Church. You can go on the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America website at [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org), go into the search box and type in "Receive Daily Readings," follow the prompts and have this valuable resource sent right to your phone or email. Reading the Bible is so important and for those of us who don't make the time or are lazy to reach for the Bible, have the readings sent in a way that is easy to remember. Spend some time this new ecclesiastical year in God's Word, the sacred Scriptures!



Scan to like St. John on Facebook  
[facebook.com/StJohnGOCTampa](https://facebook.com/StJohnGOCTampa)

St. John has a Facebook page. Please "like" our page and suggest it to your friends. Announcements are put on their frequently and we will also be posting photos in the near future.

**Orthodoxy 101 Class to be held in September**—Fr. Stavros offers this class two times per year, in spring and in fall. This will be the SAME CLASS so no need to take it again if you already have. This will be a three-week course of study on Monday nights to make people aware of the basics of being an Orthodox Christian. Who should attend the Orthodoxy 101 class?

- ~Interfaith couples—this will help the non-Orthodox person understand more what is going on in our church when they attend.
- ~Anyone who is considering joining our h. 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 about it.
- ~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.

The classes will be part lecture, part discussion, with lots of time for questions and answers. The three sessions will be done as follows:

Monday, September 16	A Tour of the Orthodox Church: What we see in the Church and what it means
Monday, September 23	Orthodox Spirituality—The Seven Sacraments and the Divine Liturgy
Monday, September 30	Orthodox Traditions—fasting, icons, prayer and separating Theology from "yiaiyalogy" (what our grandparents taught us wasn't always right)

Classes will be held on these three 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

## Meeting Schedule for September

Tuesday, September 3	Young at Heart	11:00 a.m.	Museum visit/Restaurant, see article
Sunday, September 8	GOYA	5:00 p.m.	Kourmolis Center
Tuesday, September 10	Parish Council	6:15 p.m.	Multi-Purpose Rom
Sunday, September 15	AHEPA	After Liturgy	Zaharias Room
Sunday, September 15	Daughters/Penelope	After Liturgy	Meeting Room-Administration Building

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE (AS OF AUGUST 15)

	August 15, 2013	August 15, 2012
Number of Pledged Families	271	283
Total Amount Pledged	\$301,017.25	\$279,291
Stewardship Goal	\$300,000	\$300,00
Money Received to date	\$196,194	\$207,956

*For those who have pledged this year, thank you for your generous support of St. John Greek Orthodox Church. For those who have not pledged, please send in your pledge form today. Extra forms are available in the church office. Remember, the church relies on your generosity to not only keep it's doors open, but to offer it's many ministries. We all benefit from the church. We all must do our part in support of our church! **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF ST. JOHN GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH IN TAMPA***

## Leave the Church in Your Will

Part of our life's legacy is the inheritance we leave our children. By leaving an inheritance, a part of us lives on through them. When preparing your will, you should consider leaving money to our church—this is the church of your children and part of their future can be positively impacted by leaving some of your inheritance to the church. The ability of the church to spread the Word of God is facilitated by everyone's stewardship. By leaving a portion of your inheritance to the church in your will, you remain a steward in perpetuity, but more importantly, you help cement a solid financial future for the church for your children and your grandchildren. If you are interested in leaving the church in your will, please contact Russell Sibley (church member) at rsibleylaw@gmail.com. Thank you for your consideration.

**Friends of St. John**—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 as a "Friend of St. John". 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 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. If you are interested in being a "Friend of St. John", please fill out and return the form below. Thank you for your consideration of our parish.

### FRIENDS OF ST. JOHN

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to be a "Friend of St. John". I am enclosing a contribution in the amount of:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ \$200 \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Please mail this form and check to: St. John Greek Orthodox Church 2418 Swann Avenue, Tampa, FL 33609



# MINISTRIES

## JOY PRE-TEEN RETREAT—SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

Our St. John JOY is hosting a workshop for all pre-teens grades 3-7 on Sunday September 29, beginning after church from 12:30-3:00 p.m.. All children and their parents are invited to attend. We will have activities and games, guest speakers on a variety of topics including self-esteem, bullying, prayer and making Godly choices. Please contact Maria Xenick (813) 839-9897, [mpxenick@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:mpxenick@tampabay.rr.com) if you and your children will be attending. See enclosed flyer for more details.

## ADULT GREEK SCHOOL

The Adult Greek School program will start at 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 10, 2013. The teacher Mrs. Magda Myer will use the same text book for beginners. Those interested in learning Greek, please contact Mrs. Myer at (813)

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

## YOUNG AT HEART

The Young At Heart monthly meeting was held on August 6, 2013 at Mary Nenos home. There were about 16 persons present. Mary prepared food for everyone, that included meals for those that were fasting and for those that were not. Dessert was also served. Everything was homemade and just wonderful!

The future events were discussed as follows:

1- September 3 - the next meeting will combine a visit to the University of Tampa for the Language of Jewelry exhibit and lunch will follow at a nearby restaurant.

2- October will include an evening of "Hello Dolly" at the The Show Palace dinner theatre in Hudson - specific date will be announced in the near future.

3- We are planning a Mystery Train overnight trip in Manatee county and waiting to confirm the date.

If you are interested in the joining the St John's Y.A.H. ministry, please feel free to contact Mary Nenos 813 935 2096 or Nick Antonakakis 813 477 6639.

## YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (YAL)

The Young Adults resumed Bible study/small group on Wednesday August 21st. Bible study will be held every Wednesday at 6:30pm and dinner will be provided. The meeting place will vary each week. Even if you have not been able to make prior meetings, join us if you can! To be added to the email list for this and other YAL events, please contact Mary Ann Konstas at [mapkonstas@gmail.com](mailto:mapkonstas@gmail.com) or 813-215-9862. Most announcements regarding this group go out through email, so please contact Mary Ann to be added to the email list.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Thank you to everyone who continues to support our Community Outreach ministry to serve the homeless and those in need. For those who don't know, we serve breakfast at First Presbyterian Church on the third Saturday of each month from 8:00-10:30 a.m. Upcoming dates are Saturday, September 21 and Saturday, October 19. For more information or to sign up to serve one Saturday, please contact, please contact Betty Katherine Palios at [bettypalios@gmail.com](mailto:bettypalios@gmail.com) or 813-468-1596.

## GOYA

**GOYA Meeting for September—September 8**—Our regular GOYA meeting for September will be Sunday, September 8, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. Dinner, as always, will be provided.

**Lock-In on September 14**—we will be having a lock-in for our GOYAns as well as GOYAns from neighboring parishes on Saturday, September 14, beginning at 6:00 p.m. We will have games, sessions, discussions and food. We will be spending the night in the Kourmolis Center and then attending church on Sunday, September 15. Please RSVP to Elaine Halkias by September 8 if you are interested in attending.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

**September Service Project**—Our Sunday School is holding a single item drive for the entire month of September! Please help us collect any travel sized personal care product – soap, deodorant, toothpaste, lotions, shaving items, mouthwash, etc. These can be for men or women. We will have a collection box in the foyer of the Kourmolis Center. We will donate these items to First Presbyterian Church. As part of our Outreach Ministry, we partner with this downtown church and help serve breakfast on a monthly basis to the homeless community. They can use these personal care items to distribute to those in need. Thank you for your generosity and support of this worthwhile cause!

**Sunday School Classes will begin on September 8**—Sunday School Registration will take place on August 25 and September 1 following the Divine Liturgy each Sunday.

**First Youth Sunday—September 22**—Every month, from September through May (see enclosed calendar), we are going to have one Sunday designated as Youth Sunday. On Youth Sunday each month, all Sunday school students are requested to be in church no later than 9:50 a.m., and to sit near the choir in the small section on the right side of the church (or in the front pews on the right side if there are too many to fit in the small section). We will sing along with the choir and there will be several hymns where the children will sing on their own. This is a great way for them to learn the hymns of our church and to inspire our congregation with their angelic voices. The first youth Sunday will be September 22.

### News and Notes:

The Sunday School Staff is looking forward to serving the children of St. John's for the 2013-2014 school year. Our first day of Sunday School is September 8th. Please make sure to register your children on Sept. 1st or on the first day of school, if you haven't already done so. We need this information for our records and for communication.

We would like thank everyone for a successful Sunday School Graduation Ceremony and Peggy & Harold Bradshaw for hosting our end of the year party. Everyone had such a great time. Congratulations to our High School Graduates. We wish Thanasi Halkas, Matthew Peckham, Andy Paloumpis, Sam Alem, Maggie Kavouklis, Christina Gerecke, and Alexandra Gerecke the best of luck in college.

At this Graduation we kicked off our Sunday School Stained Glass Window Project. We raised \$604 from a tray that was passed and now we have a total of \$1204 towards our goal of \$4500. We are hosting a Luncheon on Sept. 8th catered by EVO's and 50% of the proceeds will go towards this project. We will also have other fundraisers with the hopes of achieving this goal by Christmas. Thank you again for your support of this project.

Before we introduce our new staff, we would like to thank the following people for their service and dedication to the Sunday School. They are: Kara Kataras, Victoria Garos, and Jenna Mingledorff.

WE ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE OUR OUTSTANDING STAFF FOR THE 2013-2014 SCHOOL YEAR.THEY ARE:

**Director of Sunday School: Vickie Peckham**

**Assistant Director of Administration: Tammy Christou**

**Assistant Director of Music/Special Programs: Maria Xenick**

**Pam Irwin - Music Assistant**

**Nursery Coordinator: Donna Trakas**

**Pre-K (3 and 4 year olds): Alexis Scarfogliero – Teacher and Debbie Nicklow - Assistant**

**Kindergarten: Irene Kostaris - Teacher and Bessie Palios - Assistant**

**Grade 1: Heidi Borgeas and Amy Kafantaris - Co-Teachers**

**Grade 2: Marina Choundas - Teacher and Lora Williams - Assistant**

**Grade 3: Stamie Garcia - Teacher and Melissa Krinos- Assistant**

**Grade 4 and 5: Debbie Ferekides**

**Grade 6: Vickie Peckham**

**Grade 7 and 8: Betty Palios**

**High School: Peggy Bradshaw and Isidoros Passalaris – Co-Teachers**

The teachers met with Father Stavros for a Sunday School Teachers Retreat on Aug. 24th. The focus of our retreat was to bond as a team and work on our group identity: religious educators. Of course a good portion of this retreat was discussing our faith. Father Stavros is an inspirational teacher and this was a wonderful way to start the new Sunday School year.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The Sunday School Program at St. John Greek Orthodox Church is dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

### Sunday School Vision:

The Sunday School Program shall seek to fulfill its mission by:

1. Embracing the Spiritual Life and Joy of our Orthodox faith through regular prayer, worship, and frequent participation in the sacraments.
2. Support the Church through stewardship of time, talent, and sacrificial giving.
3. Providing our students with a welcoming, caring, and loving educational environment.
4. Having the Sunday School Staff and Students exemplify Orthodox Christian character and morals.
5. Providing strategies for our children to rely on their faith and values, when confronted with challenging circumstances and temptations, as they travel through their teens and into adulthood.
6. Teaching our students why this vision is important—why it is important to embrace the Spiritual Life by defining and teaching what is the Spiritual and Sacramental Life of the Orthodox Church; what is stewardship and why it is important; and teaching Orthodox Christian character and morals.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, suggestions, or comments regarding St. John's Sunday School Program. Vickie Peckham - 406-5626



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Please call me and mention this ad, 10% of the  
commission will be given to the church.



## HIGHLIGHTS ON THE CALENDAR 2013-2014

Thursday, September 5	Festival Organizational Meeting
Sunday, September 8	First day of Sunday School
Week of September 9	Small Group Bible Studies begin Women's Group—Tuesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. Mixed Group Adults—South Tampa-Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. Mixed Group Adults—East Tampa-Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. Men's Group—Wednesday mornings at 7:00 a.m. Young Adults (began August 21)—Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. Mixed Group Adults—North Tampa-Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.
Monday, September 16	Orthodoxy 101 series begins
Sunday, September 29	JOY Pre-Teen Retreat
Tuesday, October 22	Evening Liturgy of St. Jams
Sunday, October 27	JOY/HOPE Fall Festival
Friday, November 8-Sunday, November 10	Greek Festival
Saturday, November 23	Adult Advent Retreat at St. John
Sunday, November 24	Fall Parish Assembly Meeting
Wednesday, November 27	Evening Divine Liturgy for Thanksgiving
Sunday, December 8	Stewardship Sunday
Sunday, December 8	Parish Council Elections
Saturday, December 14	Sunday School Christmas Program Rehearsal/Christmas Party
Sunday, December 15	Sunday School Christmas Program
Monday, December 16	Christmas College Event
Tuesday, December 24	Christmas Eve Services
Monday, January 6-Tuesday, January 7	—St. John's Feastday Vespers and Liturgy
Sunday, January 12	Vasilopita Sunday
Saturday, January 19	Gasparilla Children's Parade Fundraiser
Saturday, January 26	Gasparilla Adult Parade Fundraiser
Saturday, February 1	GOYA Lock-in
Sunday, February 2	Philoptochos Missions' Luncheon
Saturday, February 22	Young at Heart Apokreatiko Dance
Saturday, March 1	Saturday of Souls—Liturgy at Garden of Memories Memorial Park
Sunday, March 2	Sunday School Pre-Lenten Retreat
Monday, March 3	Beginning of Great Lent
Sunday, March 9	Sunday of Orthodoxy
Sunday, March 16	Greek Independence Day Luncheon
Saturday, March 22	Adult Lenten Retreat
Friday, March 28-Sunday, March 30	GOYA Lenten Retreat
Monday, March 18	Beginning of Great Lent
Sunday, March 24	Sunday of Orthodoxy
Sunday, April 13	Palm Sunday
Friday, April 18	Sunday School Good Friday Retreat
Sunday, April 20	PASCHA
Sunday, April 27	Parish Picnic
Sunday, May 19	Last Day of Sunday School Classes
Sunday, June 8	Pentecost
Friday, June 13-Sunday, June 15	Junior Olympics

# YOUTH CALENDAR 2013-2014

Sunday, September 8  
 Sunday, September 8  
 Saturday, September 14  
**Sunday, September 22**  
 Sunday, September 29

First day of Sunday school classes  
 GOYA 5:00 p.m.  
 GOYA Lock-in 6:00 p.m.  
**Youth Sunday**  
 JOY Pre-Teen Retreat

Sunday, October 6  
**Sunday, October 13**  
 October 18-20  
 Sunday, October 27

GOYA 5:00 p.m.  
**Youth Sunday**  
 GOYA Volleyball Tournament-St. Petersburg  
 JOY/HOPE Fall Festival

**Sunday, November 3**  
 Sunday, November 10  
 Sunday, November 17

**Youth Sunday**  
 Festival-No Sunday School  
 GOYA 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 1  
 Sunday, December 1  
**Sunday, December 8**  
 Saturday, December 14  
 Sunday, December 15  
 Sunday, December 22  
 Sunday, December 29

Thanksgiving Holiday—No Sunday School  
 GOYA 5:00 p.m.  
**Youth Sunday**  
 Christmas Program Rehearsal-Christmas Party  
 Christmas Program  
 No Sunday School  
 No Sunday School

January 2014  
 Sunday, January 5  
**Sunday, January 12**  
 Sunday, January 12

Sunday School classes Resume  
**Youth Sunday**  
 GOYA 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 9  
**Sunday, February 16**

GOYA 5:00 p.m.  
**Youth Sunday**

**Sunday, March 2**  
 Sunday, March 2  
 Sunday, March 9  
 Sunday, March 16  
 Friday, March 28-Sunday, March 30

**Youth Sunday**  
 Sunday School Pre-Lenten Retreat  
 Sunday of Orthodoxy—Icon Procession  
 GOYA 5:00 p.m.  
 GOYA Lenten Retreat

**Sunday, April 6**  
 Sunday, April 6  
 Sunday, April 13  
 Friday, April 18  
 Sunday, April 20  
 Sunday, April 27

**Youth Sunday**  
 GOYA 5:00 p.m.  
 Palm Sunday—Procession with Palms  
 Good Friday Retreat  
 Pascha-No Sunday School Classes  
 Parish Picnic

Sunday, May 4  
**Sunday, May 18**  
 Sunday, May 18

GOYA 5:00 p.m.  
**Youth Sunday**  
 Last Day of Sunday School Classes—Awards—Pool Party

Sunday, June 8  
 Friday, June 13-Sunday, June 15

GOYA 5:00 p.m.  
 Junior Olympics

\*\*Youth Sunday means youth choir sings, and we'll try to get young people to read the Epistle, etc.

## A GUIDE TO USING THE NEW LITURGY BOOK

The word "Liturgy," from the words "Leitos" and "Ergon," literally means, "the work of the people." The Liturgy is an act of worship of all of the people. It is not merely a priest and a choir or chanter performing a play in the presence of spectators, but rather a "work" of all the people. The celebrant priest, or priests, offer petitions and prayers, and the "people" offer responses and chant hymns. Throughout church history, a choir of chanters has led the people in offering the responses. In addition to leading the people in the "common" responses of the Liturgy, those elements of the service that appear each time the service is celebrated, the choir also chanted the hymns that are specific to each service - the hymn of the day (Apolytikion), the hymn of the season (Kontakion), etc.

While the content of the Liturgy is the same in every Orthodox Church, there are differences in which parts of the service are offered in Greek and English, and which translation of certain hymns are used. The purpose of this book, in particular, is to assist you, the worshipper, in participating in the service as it is done at St. John, specifically in regards to the translation of the hymns and petitions, as well as denoting which sections are done in Greek and in English in our particular church.

As you go through this book, we hope that you will find that it is easy to follow along with the service. The elements that are done only in English appear only in English. The parts of the service done in Greek appear in phonetics with the translation in parentheses. The parts that are repeated in both languages have the languages one after the other with no parentheses.

In the pages following the Liturgy in this book, there is an Appendix which shows the substitutions that are made to the Liturgy during Feast Days. Reference notes appear in the text and weekly notes on the correct hymns of the day and the scripture readings will appear in the weekly bulletin. Also, if you prefer to follow the service in Greek, as opposed to phonetics, please use the red Liturgy book that is in the pews.

It is our hope that having this more "user friendly" version of the Liturgy book in the pews will serve to increase congregational participation in the service. Contrary to how many of us were raised, to worship in silence, listening to the choir and watching the actions of the priest, we encourage you to sing along in joy, opening your mouths so that the praise of God may come forth from you with enthusiasm and joy. We hope that this book will add to your participation in the service and will heighten our collective participation in the Divine Services of the church. It is a blessing to have you join us in worship today. We invite you to join in our work, our praise, and our worship of God through the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.



### **Katherine Sakakis, CRS Fine Homes Specialist**

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*Isaiah 30:21*

*Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying,  
"This is the way; walk in it."*

---

**Choices:**  
**How to make Godly decisions.**  
**A workshop for pre-teens and their parents**

---

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

**Sunday, September 29, 2013**  
**12:30 – 3:00**

St. John Greek Orthodox Church  
2418 Swann Ave

*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@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:mpxenick@tampabay.rr.com), (813)839-9897

# List of Pledged Stewards for 2013—as of August 15, 2013

Akrotirianakis, Fr. Stavros & Lisa  
Abramis, John & Nicky  
Alexander, John & Anetta  
Alikakos, Maria  
Alithinos, Maria & Kathy  
Alsina, Angel & Lisa  
Ambrozy, Edward & Philip  
Anagnost, Deno  
Andreadakis, Nicholas & Doris  
Andros, George & Maria  
Antonakakis, Nickolas & Judith  
Argyros, Harry & Linda  
Armstrong, James & Myra  
Assimiadis, Paul  
Axelrod, Christine  
Badrane, Denise  
Bakirdgi, Joan  
Balasis, Matthew & Suzy  
Bedran, Rita  
Betinis, Giovanna  
Blackburn, Robert & Kathryn  
Blakenbaker, James & Michelle  
Blankenship, Wayne, Athanasia,  
& Alexander  
Borgeas, Heidi & Ken Beach  
Bouglas, Constantine & Angela  
Bradshaw, Pelagia & Harold  
Brown, Chrysanthi  
Bush, Dorothy  
Calamunci, Alex  
Calamunci, Catherine  
Calamunci, Chris & Crystal  
Cantonis, George & Maria  
Carter, John & Georgia  
Cauthorn, Ken & Helen  
Chagaris, George & Kalliope  
Chakonas, Ethel Athena  
Charalabakis, Terry  
Cherpelis, Basil & Alyssa Zwarych  
Choundas, Marina & Greg  
Thachter  
Choundas, Peter  
Christodoulou, Louis &  
Maryann  
Christou, Tammy  
Circello, Vincent & Tamara  
Colado, David & Alexandria  
Colado, Mary & Hector  
Conner, Michael & Artemis  
Cotterman, Sandy  
Courialis, Telly & Toulia  
Crassas, Alkis & Aime  
Cunavelis, Frances

Cunavelis, John  
Dalaklis, Joanne  
DeJesus, Roy & Anna Tataris  
De Maio, Alexandra  
Demas, Anna  
Demas, John  
Diamantakes, Georgia  
Diamantides, Melpo  
Dimas, Gregory & Evelyn  
Patsavos  
Diniaco, Peter & Rebecca  
Doucas, Deborah  
Drossos, Patricia  
Edquid Marc & Maraquet  
Eggleston, Charles & Catherine  
Evdemon, Stan & Maryellen  
Fallieras, George N.  
Fallieras, Lauren  
Fallieras, Nicholas & Susan.  
Farkas, John  
Fellios, George  
Fentress, Andrew Kevin & Maria  
K.  
Ferarolis, Alexandra  
Ferarolis, Stamatis & Cheryl  
Ferekides, Christos & Debbie  
Forde, Dwight & Ewana  
Fotopoulos, Anthony & Carole  
Frazier, Chris  
Frinmenko, Mary  
Gallos, Peter & Vasiliki  
Gallos, Spiros  
Garcia, Mark & Anastasia  
Garcia, Richard & Stamie  
Garos, Victoria  
Georgas, Thomas & Janet  
Georgiou, Aristos & JoAnna  
Georgiou, Speros & Eleanor  
Gerecke, Edward & Terri  
Gombos, Jack & Harriet  
Gorter, Maria  
Halikoytakis, Alex  
Halikoytakis, Michael  
Halkias, Evangeline  
Halkias, George & Elaine  
Hambos, George & Donna  
Hanhan, Amin & Gloria  
Hartsfield, Christine  
Hartung, Mark & JoAnn  
Harvie, Andrew & Krista  
Harvie, Evan  
Henderson, Nickollet & Kenneth  
Higdon, Skip  
Hoppenstand, Anna  
Horack, Scott  
Horrigan, Paulette  
Iraklianos, Michael  
Irwin, Jon & Pam  
Jacobsen, Anne  
James, Arthur

Jennewein, Georgia  
Johnson, Aphroditi  
Joseffy, Justin & Valerie House-  
man  
Kabougeris, Pete & Voula  
Kaburis, George & Kathy  
Kafantaris, Michael & Amy  
Kalojiannis, Nic & Alicia  
Kane, Lance & Georgia  
Kantzios, Ippkratis  
Kapetan, Martha  
Karagiannakis, Keith & Katerina  
Karaku, Ellen  
Karas, Anthony & Sophie  
Karpelenia, Loretta & Daniel  
Katsadourous, Konstantin &  
Katherine  
Katsamakias, Perry  
Katsifis, John & Margaret  
Katzaras, George & Elina  
Katzaras, Nick & Helen  
Katzaras, Stefan & Kara  
Kavakos, Estelle  
Kavouklis, Chris & Debbie  
Kavouklis, Laz & Maria  
Kavouklis, Nicholas & Edie  
Kladakis, Katherine  
Kladis, George  
Kladis Theodore  
Koch John & Cathie  
Kokkas, John  
Komninos, Tom & Gina  
Konstas, Demetrios & Maryann  
Korakis, Alexander  
Korakis, Alexandros & Louise  
Korakis, Tina  
Kostaris, Irene  
Koudouna, Dora  
Kouimanis, Despina & Frank  
Bartos  
Krinos, John  
Krinos, Dimitri & Melissa  
Kwasny, Foti & Fatin  
Kyrusm Chris & Katherine  
L'Hommedieu, Timothy & Tia  
Laliotis, Stavros & Adriana  
Laskey, Fred & Coleen  
Lavdas, Steve  
Lenardos, Steve & Melissa  
Leontsinis, Nicole  
Letobarone, Domenic & Melanie  
Liakos, James  
Liakos, Nicholas  
Lobue, David & Tracy  
Luter, Thomas  
Maas, Mary  
MacLaury, Kathryn  
Madill, Chad  
Maltezos, Stephen  
Manikas, Bill & Nancy

Manikis, Clara & Nicholas  
Martin, Tyson & Marissa  
Matassini, Nicholas & Christina  
McKinnon, Joseph & Christina  
Mellon, Andria, Keith Lynn &  
Andrew  
Melton, Gregory & Victoria  
Metcalf, Maria  
Milligan, David & Mary  
Milonas, Lula  
Milonas, Taso & Thay  
Mitchell, John & Edith  
Mitseas, George & Catherine  
Moran, Andy & Stefanie  
Morgan, Theodora & Christopher  
Mourer, Brett & Ana  
Moutsatsos, Spero  
Mueller, William Jeffrey  
Myer, Ronald & Magdalini  
Nakis, Betty Ann & Emmanuel  
Nenos, Byron & Jeanie  
Nenos, Mary  
Nenos, Peter  
Neyland, Bill & Marilyn  
Nicklow, Thomas & Demetra  
Nicolaou, Chris & Dee  
Nolen, Pamela  
Nolas, George & Cheryl  
Norcross, Diane  
Olsen, Scott & Elpida  
O'Malley, Rachel & Zaharis,  
Constantine  
Palios, Artie  
Palios, Betty Katherine  
Palios, George & Julie  
Palios, Michael & Bessie  
Paloumpis, Athanasios & Jenny  
Panos, Euripides & Denise  
Papadakis, Alec & Lauren  
Papadeas, Venetia  
Papadopoulos, John  
Papakosta, Peter & Vasiliki  
Papas, George  
Pappas, Paul & Georgia  
Passalaris, Isidoros  
Passavanti, Anthony & Brittany  
Osgood  
Passavanti, Robert & Debbra  
Patellis, Theophilos  
Patracoii, Florin & Marenca  
Pavlopoulos, George  
Payne, Georgia  
Peckham, Richard & Victoria  
Perdicis, Ernest & Nancy  
Piperaki, Eleni & Tom Sheridan  
Plakas, Theodore & Kyriakoula  
Quinn, Mary Elisabeth  
Quinn, Toulia  
Rindone, Ryan & Megan  
Rogers, Aris

Rogers II, Aris  
Rose, Mary  
Roussos, Archie & Eleftheria  
Royack, Florian & Jeanie  
Saavedra, John  
Sakellaris, Leo & Anne  
Sakkis, John & Katherine  
Scarfogliero, Alexis & Gennaro  
Scharbach, Michael  
Scourtes, Christine  
Serbanos, Michael & Patricia  
Sermier, Eustace & Bennette  
Shanahan, Kenneth & Katrina  
Shearer, John & Fifika  
Shrader, Maria  
Sibley, Russell & Despina  
Skourellos, Dante & Lindsey  
Skourellos, Michael & Shirley  
Skourellos, Petros  
Slater, Sam & Joanna  
Sorolis, Eftihia  
Sorolis, Sophia  
Sotiropoulos, Paul  
Sotiropoulos, Peggy  
Sotiropoulos, Vasilios & Jenny  
Spanos, Peter  
Spencer, Wayne & Pauline  
Stavropoulos, Jane  
Stavrou, George & Katina  
Stephanides, Christos  
Stephanides, Marios &  
Ourania  
Theophanous, Peter  
Tingiris, Mary  
Tisdale, Gregory  
Trakas, Alysa  
Trakas, Andrew & Adrienne  
Trakas, Pete & Donna  
Trimis, Michael & Diane  
Tsibris, John  
Valaes, James & Lynn  
Vasilopoulos, Kostadinis & Toulia  
Voykin, David  
Voykin, Mary  
Wade, Deborah  
Wagner, Christine  
Ward, Gary & Sandra  
Whallen, Donald  
Worley, Chistene  
Xenick, Emanuel & Maria  
Xenick, George & Cindy  
Xeroteris, Evangeline  
Yohai, Eleni  
Yotis, Victor

**\*\*If your name doesn't appear  
on this list and you have filled  
out a pledge form for 2013,  
please contact the office.**



# September 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	2 Labor Day Office Closed	3 Young at Heart 11:00 a.m.	4 Fast Day	5 Fast Day	6 Fast Day	7
8 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. First Day of Sunday School Ministry Fair—Just Say YES GOYA 5:00 p.m.	9 Orthodoxy 101 6:30-8:30 p.m.	10 Women's Group 10:00 a.m. Parish Council 6:15 p.m. Small Group East Tampa 6:30p Small Group South Tampa 6:30 p	11 Men's Club 7:00 a.m. Paraklesis/Prayer for Peace on 9/11 10:00 a.m. YAL Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Fast Day	12 Small Group North Tampa 6:30 p.m.	13 Fast Day	14 Holy Cross Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. GOYA Lock-in 6:00 p.m. Fast Day
15 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	16 Orthodoxy 101 6:30-8:30 p.m.	17 Women's Group 10 a.m. Small Group East Tampa 6:30 p.m. Small Group South Tampa 6:30 p.m.	18 Men's Group 7:00 a.m. YAL Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Fast Day	19 Small Group North Tampa 6:30 p.m.	20 Fast Day	21 Community Outreach Youth Worker Training Seminar 9:00 am-3:00 pm
22 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Youth Sunday Glendi Dancers Bake Sale	23 Orthodoxy 101 6:30-8:30 p.m.	24 Women's Group 10 a.m. Small Group East Tampa 6:30 p.m. Small Group South Tampa 6:30 p.m.	25 Men's Group 7:00 a.m. YAL Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Fast Day	26 Small Group North Tampa 6:30 p.m.	27 Fast Day	28
29 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Congregational Singing Sunday GOYA Pre-Teen Retreat	30 Orthodoxy 101 6:30-8:30 p.m.					

# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

2418 W. Swann Avenue

Tampa, FL 33609-4712

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## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

### *Timetable of Services*

**Sundays:** Orthros 8:30 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) 394-1038 (cell)

frstav@gmail.com

**Parish Council:**

Katherine Sakkis, President 813-309-1073

Bill Manikas V. President 813-716-8185

Diane Trimis, Secretary 813-968-9038

Skip Higdon, Treasurer 813-831-9021

Nick Antonakakis 813-477-6639

Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668

Carole Fotopoulos 813-982-0947

Byron Nenos 813-789-0729

Dante Skourellos 813-765-9534

Despina Sibley 813-251-5384

David Voykin 727-415-5603

**Stewardship Chairperson:**

Bill Manikas 813-716-8185

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**Office Staff:**

Christine Bostrom, Operations Coordinator 813-876-8830

Michele DeLally, Administrative Assistant 813-876-8830

**Office Fax:** 813-443-4899

**•Choir:** Artie Palios, Director 813-831-1294

Jim Leone, Organist 813-254-7844

**•Chanter:** Nick Andreadakis 813-876-8830

**•Sunday Sch.:** Victoria Peckham 813-406-5626

Maria Xenick 813-839-9897

**•Finance Committee:** Mike Xenick 813-340-8737

**•Adult Greek School:** Magda Myer 813-909-2327

**•AHEPA:** Mike Trimis 813-968-9038

**•Community Outreach:** Chairperson

Betty Katherine Palios 813-215-9862

**•Daughters:** Diane Trimis 813-220-3389

**•Food Pantry:** Anetta Alexander 863-224-3001

**•GOYA Adv.** Elaine Halkias 813-968-9129

Byron Nenos 813-789-0729

**•JOY/HOPE:** Maria Xenick 813-839-9897

**•Young Adults (YAL)** Mary Ann Konsta 813-215-9862

**•Philoptochos:** JoAnn Hartung, Pres. 727-432-0228

**•Oratorical Festival Chairperson**

Peggy Bradshaw: 727-244-1374

**•Young at Heart:** Nick Antonakakis 813-477-6639

Mary Nenos 813-935-2096

**•Jr Olympics:** Byron Nenos 813-789-0729

**•Ushers:** Tom Georgas 813-985-0236

**•Altar Angels:**

Engie Halkias, Viorica Kirby & Sia Blankenship. 813-932-5859

**•Bookstore:** Jon & Pamela Irwin 813-679-4113

**•H XAPA MAΣ Dance Group:**

Alex De Maio & 813-340-9668

Marina Choundas 813-877-6136

**•Glendi Dancers:** Jenna Mingledorff 813-610-7365

**•Panigyri Dancers:** Vanessa Aviles 813-221-2194

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is a parish under the spiritual and ecclesiastical oversight of His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of the Metropolis of Atlanta, of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

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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 15th of each month. You may send announcements to the church office or through **email to: stjohnngoctampa@gmail.com**

Website: [www.greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com](http://www.greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com)

“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