

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*

October 2015

Mission Statement:

St. John the Baptist 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 member to grow in their faith.

Father Stavros' Message

A Life IN Christ

*It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me;
and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the
Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*
-Galatians 2:20

Can you imagine if you were married and only spoke to your spouse once a week for an hour? And when that hour was over, you didn't speak to your spouse again for a week? What kind of relationship do you think you would have?

What if you cut down that hour to only 15 minutes a week? Or decided that you'd only talk to your spouse on Christmas and Easter? It wouldn't be much of a relationship at all.

Because to have a good marriage, or be a good parent, or be a good friend, or be good at anything, you have to be "engaged" in the relationship on a consistent and committed basis.

Having a relationship with Christ is a lot like a marriage. How is that? Well, the day that you got baptized, you "married" the church. In scripture, we see Christ portrayed as the bridegroom (Matthew 25:1-13). We, the members of the church, are the "bride." So, if we want this relationship to work, we have to invest in the relationship and we have to do it on a daily basis.

Even if we come to church every Sunday, that's still just once a week for an hour or an hour and a half. Living in Christ is

something that needs to be done every day, multiple times a day. The same way we check in with our spouses or our children, we need to be "checking in" with our Savior. The same way we share both the extraordinary and mundane with our families, we need to do the same thing with our Lord.

We may have "date nights" with our spouse, where we spend many hours of quality time, but even with these, we still communicate with our spouses on a daily basis. Same thing with the church, and with Christ—we may have a "date morning," the special time we spend in worship at the Divine Liturgy, but even this is not enough. In marriage and in parenthood, we LIVE in a state of these things—they aren't just some compartment we pull out occasionally. We are living IN these things, they are a central focus of every day of our lives. We are supposed to live IN Christ, in the same way—He isn't a compartment to be pulled out on Sunday mornings, but rather He should be a central focus of every day of our lives.

Every day, there should be some time spent with Christ. We should spend time TALKING to the Lord—that is called prayer. Prayer is where we communicate with the Lord—where we thank Him, where we offer up the names of people whom we wish to pray for, where we offer up to God our needs and ask Him for help in carrying our crosses. And we should spend time LISTENING to God—This is done primarily through reading the scriptures, God's sacred words to us. In opening

up the Bible (or even easier, having the daily scripture readings sent to your phone), we create an opportunity to listen to the Lord, to receive guidance on how to live our lives, to receive encouragement and direction, and to hear the message of salvation.

Bible study is important because we need to lean on others to learn and most important, we need to lean on others for support. We NEED that. Why? Because no person is an island, no person is a Christian unto themselves, all by themselves. We can only make it with the support of other people, with the help of other people. It's hard to be a Christian—it is hard to understand, hard to not get discouraged when life gets tough. That's why we need other people. That's why I encourage you to attend one of our seven small group Bible studies. But even if you can't attend a Bible study, make sure you are checking in with God on a daily basis, through prayer and reading Scripture.

Lord and Master

The Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim calls God the “Lord and Master of my life.” If Christ is Lord and Master, then we are servants. And if we are servants, then we must be obedient to the words of our Lord and Master. When He says we are to love our neighbor, He means just that, to show love toward our neighbor, whoever our neighbor is. We are to help the one who is in need, whatever that need is. When He says we are to love the Lord our God with all of our strength and all of our mind, that means that the Lord our God takes the director's seat for our lives. We don't put Him in a compartment, He is not a “co-pilot” as we read on some Christian bumper stickers. He is the LEAD in our lives. We live IN Him, and we live FOR Him, and we make every day ABOUT Him.

Come Be Part of a Team that is Winning!

Ministries

What a banner day it was on September 13! We had a church that overflowed with people. Every seat, including the extra ones we brought in, was filled. There were a record 16 boys serving in the altar—we ran out of robes and had to pin up large robes to fit on smaller children. A total of 43 boys will serve in the altar this year! There were over 30 people in the choir, a new record for one service. We have a record 9 Sunday School classes, and again over 150 students. This fall will attempt a record 7 Bible studies per week. Most important, the church is filled to capacity and more often than not, past capacity, for services. This is good news indeed. At a time when churches of all denominations are on the decline, ours is continuing to grow and grow. Attendance in Orthodox churches is down 38% in the past five years according to a recent study. Statistics from the Archdiocese indicate that in 2014, there were a record low number of baptisms and a record high number of funerals in the United States. Well, in Tampa, we are still way better when it comes to the ratio of baptisms to funerals, almost 4 to 1. So, if you are reading this and not coming to church regularly, come worship with us. Come be part of God's Church in Tampa!

The Prayer Team Continues

There are nearly 300 people on the prayer team now—what I hoped would be a team of 40 people for Lent is now nearly 300

and we're well into our 8th month. The Prayer Team Messages are not appearing daily on the Orthodox Christian Network (OCN), a website that posts writings, podcasts and video presentations about our faith. So, there is a worldwide reading audience that is also part of our prayer team. If you would like to get the daily messages I am still joyfully writing, sometimes in the middle of the night, just send a one-line email to either Charlie or me and we'll add you to the list.

Extra Prayer Services

At any given time, there are always parishioners who are in need of extra prayers. With this in mind, we are going to do an extra “prayer” service each month. It may be a Paraklesis or Holy Unction, but every month we will have an extra service just to pray for whoever is in need of prayer. In October, we will have a Paraklesis service on Wednesday, October 7 at 6:00 p.m. So, bring your names and your needs and let's pray together.

Calling all Philoptochos Ladies to a special gathering on Saturday, October 24

I'm planning for a morning with our Philoptochos Ladies to talk specifically on the topic of prayer, and how to pray. We will be talking specifically about how to pray with other people, especially with those who are sick. Prayer is one of the greatest joys but also provides a great challenge for Christians. So, if you want to learn how to pray with others and feel more comfortable in something that has always been a central part of the Christian faith, come to church on Saturday, October 24, from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. for our Philoptochos Retreat.

Extending this offer to ALL our ministries

Our Church includes over 1,000 people. But those people are sub-divided into many ministries. I am happy to come and visit any ministry for spiritual discussion and prayer. All you need to do is ask and set aside an hour or so (or whatever you wish) and I'm happy to come and spend some time with you.

Conclusion - If you are Living in Christ, there should always be joy, never panic

If we are living a life IN Christ, there is no need to worry or panic that the sand is draining out of our hourglass of life. Many people as they get older and confront their mortality panic at the prospect of no longer being “alive.” If we are alive in Christ, if He is part of our everyday focus, the end of life should be embraced with joy. As if to say, “the Lord, who I focus on every day, can now be THE focus, there will be no other distractions. I can do the thing I love the most, be with Him, without any other worries.” But if the Lord fits only into a compartment once a week, if that, then the end of life will be filled with sadness, as if to say “All the things I fill my life with will be gone and I will be left feeling empty.” If THE thing that fills you is the Lord, then you will be able to relax and focus on being totally filled with Christ, and preparing to do so for eternity.

We're doing great things here in our parish! Let's keep it going! Have a great month!

With love in Christ,

+Fr. Stavros

Ask Father Stavros

I haven't done one of these columns in a while. All throughout the year, I get asked many questions. The following questions were asked by teenagers at summer camp. If you have a question you would like me to answer, just ask me and I'm happy to answer any questions you have about our faith. If you'd like me to preach on a certain subject or write on a certain subject, again, just ask. If you have a question, undoubtedly many others have the same question.

How do we know that the Orthodox Faith is the right faith for sure?

The best way to answer this question is to ask "How do you know that you married the right person?" And the answer to that is "you don't." You BELIEVE you did. Believing and knowing are two different things. To know means to have exhaustive knowledge. To believe is to have some knowledge and some faith. In the context of marriage, no one can know every person in the world, so how can you know that you have chosen the correct person to be your spouse. Well, you look, you learn, and then you choose, forsaking all others and put your faith in one person. I have never tried other faiths (Jewish, Buddhist, etc). I was raised a Christian, and based on both MY experiences and the experiences of others (fellow parishioners, things I have read, etc), I believe and continue to strengthen my belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and through Him, we can inherit everlasting life, that God created this world, and us in it, with the intention for us to share Paradise with Him.

If there are so many people in this world that believe in God, yet in different ways, then why are we so obsessed with having the correct faith, that is better than other people's faith?

First, let me define the word "faith" as opposed to "religion." "Faith" is what we believe. Our faith is stated most succinctly in the Creed: "I believe in One God, Father Almighty. . .and in one Lord Jesus Christ. . .and in the Holy Spirit." Faith is our belief system—We believe that the purpose of life is salvation in Jesus Christ, that the ultimate destination for the Christian is heaven. There are other "faiths" out there that have a different belief system, that there is a different god, or deity, or supreme being, and that the end goal is different—nirvana, re-incarnation, etc.

"Religion" is the way one expresses their faith. So if one adheres to the Christian faith, he or she can do it as an Orthodox Christian, or a Catholic Christian or a Protestant Christian. And there are plenty of devout Christians of other denominations. So, we should never put down another Christian because they express their Christianity differently. And we should never put down another person because they express another faith, just like we shouldn't put down someone who is married to not our spouse, or who has different children than our children. What we should do is "witness" for our faith, not knocking on doors and cajoling people to join, but modeling Christian behavior. A Protestant song says "They will know we are Christians by our love." In a world that needs love like never before, being a loving person will draw people to you, and ultimately to your (our) Savior.

I personally am not obsessed with the idea that our "faith" or our "religion" is better than anyone else's. I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I believe that what we believe is the correct belief. I believe that the way we practice our faith has some beautiful tools that other religions do not have—I love that we have confession, the opportunity to be cleansed of sins and absolved of wrongdoing, to set the scales of our life back to how they were at baptism. I love the fact that we have the Liturgy, which in my opin-

ion, is the most perfect and complete service there could be when celebrated properly. I love our cycle of services, even Lent and fasting. I couldn't imagine doing it differently. But I can't imagine putting down someone who expresses their Christian faith with sincerity who isn't Orthodox.

Why do you think Orthodox Christians do not know scripture as well as others (Protestants)?

The easy answer is that we were not raised reading the Bible. One of the beautiful parts of Orthodoxy is our rich sense of Tradition, whether that involves worship, or fasting, or the other "Traditions" we have. I believe that there is so much emphasis placed on doing the Traditions correctly, and rightfully so, they should be done correctly (people should know why we fast, or why icons are important, or how to make the sign of the cross), but we have almost made our religion about ritual and tradition, rather than about Christ. It's as if we worship the ritual, not the Lord. Far more time was spent at the seminary going over the how's of doing things rather than the why's. That bears out in Sunday School as well. If we want to reverse this trend, then it is up to us as individuals, to make a conscious effort to be reading our Bibles. Historically, this has not been a priority. I hope this generation will make it more of a priority. Where there is knowledge, there is power. Where there is no knowledge, there is no power. So start reading the scriptures, and you will feel more empowered in your faith.

How would you suggest methods to help me give control to God?

Giving up control means giving up something that you like. For instance, at summer camp, when we do a "Trust fall," it means that the person doing it cedes control of themselves, of their present (and their future) and for a moment, gives it to other people. They fall backwards from a platform and trust that they will be caught. Because it is so hard to give up control to anything, we practice doing that at summer camp, in the hopes that campers will make that connection once they get home.

There are several ways to practice this

1. Give up TIME and pray—make a concerted effort to set aside 5-10 minutes a day. We are obsessed with time. We like to control time. By giving up time, and giving it up to God, we are learning to cede control.
2. Work on breaking a bad habit—learn to control your desire to gossip, or use foul language, or put other people down.
3. Learn how to forgive and not hold grudges.
4. Give up money—another prized possession. Giving to the church through stewardship is another way we cede control to God.
5. When someone compliments you, learn to say "Thank God," and that will keep God at the forefront of your thoughts and will help you remember that our life is about giving Him the glory.

Liturgical Schedule for October 2015

Sunday, October 4 2nd Sunday of Luke

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

Altar Boys: Captains and St. John (Dean Mitseas, Chrstios Nenos, Antonio Bavaro, Nicholas Yotis, Peter Chandler, Zach Chandler, Niko Bavaro, Anthony Catrone)

Ushers: Gregory Tisdale, Ron Myer, George Trimikliniotis

Welcome Committee: Greeters: Tom Pessemier, Christy Pessemier; Ambassador: Sandra Pappas; Caller: Vickie Peckham;

Get Acquainted: Bessie Palios, Michael Palios

Coffee Hour: Festival Committee

Wednesday, October 7 Paraklesis Service 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, October 11 7th Ecumenical Council

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

Altar Boys: Captains and St. Matthew (George Hambos, Nicholas Katzaras, James Katzaras, John Palios, Andrew Patrasciou, Genaro Scargofliero, Makis Crassas, Jonathan Brannan, John Nicholas Krinos)

Ushers: Brett Mourer, Wayne Blankenship, Amin Hanhan

Welcome Committee: Greeters: Megan Rindone, Skip Higdon; Ambassador: Genie Carter; Caller: Jenny Paloumpis

Coffee Hour: AHEPA and Daughters of Penelope Founders Luncheon

Sunday, October 18 St. Luke the Evangelist

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

Altar Boys: Captains and St Mark (John Karamitsanis, Lukas Karamitsanis, Brigham Sibley, Dominic Garcia, Benny Hidermichel, James Kavouklis, William Sotiropoulos, Alexander Sotiropoulos, Garrison Borgeas-Beach)

Ushers: David Voykin, Ed Gerecke, Peter Trakas

Welcome Committee: Greeters: Lisa Alsina, Carole Fotopoulos; Ambassador: Donna Hambos; Caller: Jeanie Nenos

Coffee Hour: Choir & Parish Council

Wednesday, October 22 St. James – Evening Liturgy

Orthros 5:00 p.m. Liturgy of St. James 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, October 25 6th Sunday of Luke

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

Altar Boys: Captains and St Luke (Nicholas Alsina, Andrew Mellon-Lynn, Demetri Karounos, Jonah Blankenbaker, Yanni Trimikliniotis, Andrew Thatcher, Alexander Findlay, Demetri Passalaris, Chris Cojita)

Ushers: Mike Trimis, George Mitseas, Chris Kavouklis

Welcome Committee: Greeters: Marenca Patrasciou, Elanie Halkias; Ambassador: Julie Palios; Caller: Martha Kapetan

Coffee Hour: Young at Heart

Monday, October 26 St. Demetrios

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

Sunday, November 1 5th Sunday of Luke

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

Altar Boys: Captains and St. John (Dean Mitseas, Chrstos Nenos, Antonio Bavaro, Nicholas Yotis, Peter Chandler, Zach Chandler, Niko Bavaro, Anthony Catrone)

Ushers: Florin Patrasciou, Mike Kavouklis, Tammy Christou

Welcome Committee: Greeters: Debbie Kavouklis, Helen Cauthorn; Ambassador: Kalliope Chagaris; Caller: Edie Kavouklis

Getting Acquainted: Ewana Forde, Dwight Forde

Coffee Hour: Small Group Bible Study

Liturgical Notes for October

Wednesday, October 7 - Paraklesis Service

In an effort to offer one more prayer service a month, in addition to scheduled weekday services, we will be having a Paraklesis on Wednesday, October 7 at 6:00 p.m. Anyone in need of prayer, or wanting to come and pray for others, is welcome to join us. Please bring a list of any names you wish to have commemorated to church that night.

Sunday, October 18 - Special Prayer for Medical Personnel

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

Thursday, October 22 - Liturgy of St. James - Evening Liturgy

The Orthodox Church celebrates four different Divine Liturgies throughout the liturgical year. The most prominent is the Divine Liturgy written by St. John Chrysostom, which is celebrated almost every Sunday and on most feast days. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is celebrated 10 times a year—on the eve of Christmas, the eve of Epiphany, on the five Sundays of Lent, Holy Thursday morning, Holy Saturday morning, and on the feast of St. Basil, which is January 1. The Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is celebrated on Wednesday and Fridays of Great Lent and the mornings of Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday and Holy Wednesday. The Divine Liturgy of St. James is celebrated only once a year, on his feastday, which is October 23. The Liturgy of St. James will be celebrated on Thursday evening, October 22, the evening before his feastday.

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

The Liturgy of St. James will be held on Thursday, October 22 at 6:00 p.m.

Monday, October 26 - Feast of St. Demetrios

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

Donations Needed for Altar Boy Robes

We have an ever-increasing amount of altar boys. When we ordered the altar boy robes nine years ago, we ordered 18 of various sizes, based on the boys we had at the time. We also ordered three more two years ago. But with more boys, who are now the same size, we are probably going to order 1-2 sets per year to keep up with this new class (10 altar boys) 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.

Navigating the Stormy Seas of Life: The Church as a Boat

By Charlie Hambos

Author's Note: For the next three issues of The Messenger, we will explore some different metaphors of the church. In this issue, we will embark on a journey across the stormy seas of life and see how the church is the boat, which we need to climb aboard for safety. In the November issue of The Messenger, we will attempt to heal the pain of the world, as the church is described as a Hospital. Finally, in December we will stretch out our arms and legs and imagine the church as the Body, not any body but the Body of Christ.

Our journey begins with the flood. God had come up with a plan to wipe the slate clean, because clearly things were not going as He intended. He decided to flood the earth. He instructed Noah, one of the only faithful men, left on the planet to build a big boat, the ark. The ark would be big enough to house 2 of every kind of animal and 8 people: Noah, Noah's wife, Noah's three sons and their wives. These 8 people and the male and female of each animal were responsible for restoring the world and give the whole of creation a second chance.

Now, we fast forward to the Son of God, Jesus Christ, walking along the shore in search of a few good men. He came upon some fisherman, Simon, Simon's brother Andrew, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. He told them, "Come after me and I will make you fishers of men." These men were transformed from fishers of fish to fishers of men. So the first disciples were fishermen, working on boats for a living. These men would be given the task of restoring the world by preaching the Good News of Christ's life, death and Resurrection.

In the scriptures, both in the Old and the New Testament, God uses a boat to save people and chose the future captains of the boat, called the Church. The part of the church, where the people sit is called the nave. The word "nave" comes from the Latin *navis*, meaning "ship." In the Orthodox Church it is quite common to hear the Church being compared to a boat. The book which includes all of the canons of the Church, is called the Rudder. As a rudder steers a ship, so do the Holy Canons of the Orthodox Church, Steering the Church towards the Kingdom of God.

Studying the metaphor of the Church as a boat, Tim Woodroof, wrote a detailed study on Christ and His use of the boat in the Gospel of Mark. Christ uses a boat very often in Mark. He uses it to travel. He uses it to distance Himself from the people. He uses it to show His great power. He uses it to teach.

The first instance in Mark is the one described above,

when Christ called the first disciples. The second is in Mark 3:7-10. Here, Christ had just cured so many people that he had a crowd following Him. He told the disciples to go ahead of Him to prepare the boat, so he would not be crushed by the people. Even Christ had to get away from the people and he used the boat as an escape. For us, the Church can be a way to escape those who bother us or the world in general which can most times influence us in a bad way and take our gaze off of Christ.

The second instance is in Mark 4:1-9. Instead of getting into the boat, to escape the people. He got into the boat, to use it as a place where he could preach. At this moment, He offered the parable of the sower and the seed. Afterward, the disciples asked Christ the meaning of the Parables. He said, "To you is granted the secret of the Kingdom of God, but to those who are outside everything comes in parables." Thus the boat also acted as something which separated the people on the outside from the disciples. So it is with the Church. As Christians, we are supposed to be different than the world, not that we are better than the world but that we should reflect the light of Christ in the world because we have the Light and much of the world remains in the darkness.

The third instance is in 4:35-41. Christ and the disciples got on the boat and were crossing over to the other side and a great storm came upon them. Waves were crashing overboard and they were at risk of sinking. They became afraid. Christ was sleeping and they woke Him up because they were afraid. He rebuked the wind and told the sea to calm down. Then he turned to the disciples and said, "Why are you so frightened? Have you still no faith." Here the boat serves as a place of safety. It also serves as a place of testing our faith. It also serves as a spiritual battleground. Finally, it is a place to witness the



saving power of Christ. So the Church is a place of safety. People who enter in should be safe and when they are with members of the community, they should feel safe. It is also a place where our faith is tested but also a place where it is strengthened. Also, Christ was on the boat, the disciples still doubted they would survive. The Church can also be a spiritual battleground because Satan, does not want a boat of believers to reach their intended destination, the Kingdom of God. So instead, storms come into our life and we feel like the waves are crashing us hard and we are going to sink. We have to call on Christ to calm the storms in our life. If he can save them from the storms, He can save us.

A fourth instance can be found in Mark 4:45-52. Christ sent the disciples away by boat. He dismissed the crowds and went up to the mountain to pray by himself. In the evening, he found himself alone on the land and the disciples were struggling in the distance because it was windy. He walked out to them and they were all afraid. He told them not be afraid but to have courage. When he walked onto the boat, the wind died down and they were amazed. Here the boat acted as a place where they were tested yet

encouraged to put their faith in Christ.

As we have seen, the boat and thus the church is a place where there is safety from the storm, a place where we can learn from Christ and be in communion with Him. Practically speaking, the boat is a place where we must take on some responsibility and we must agree to go in the same direction with the same goal in mind. Our direction is toward Christ and our goal is everlasting communion with Him in His Heavenly Kingdom.

In the boats, during the time of Christ, everyone on board had a responsibility. Someone had to steer, some had to row, some had to man the sails. Being part of the Church can be hard work. This is because the world out there is not creating for us the smoothest seas to sail on. We are fortunate to have a Captain who can calm the seas and quiet the winds. May we always have faith in our Captain to deliver us from the storms of life as we yearn for safe passage on the rough seas.

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.

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Community News

Parish Registry

Wedding - Jason Williams and Alexandra Djiovanis were married on Saturday, August 22. The koumbaro was Petros Djiovanis. Congratulations!

Funeral - Demetrios Nolas passed away on August 27. Funeral service was on August 31. May his memory be eternal!

Condolences - Nancy Vallianatos on the passing away of her husband Bob, on August 17. May his memory be eternal!

Condolences - Magda Myer on the passing away of her mother, Sultana, on September 6. May her memory be eternal!

Welcome Ruth Losoviz!

We warmly welcome Ruth Losoviz, who will serve as our organist. Ruth has played the organ in churches for a number of years and is a welcome addition to our parish. Please take a few moments and introduce yourself to Ruth!

Honoring Jim Leone, our retiring organist-Jim Leone has played the organ in our church for 25 years. On October 18, we will honor Jim both in church and at the coffee hour. Please come to church and to the fellowship hall that day so we can honor and thank Jim for his quarter century of work at our church.

Order for Holy Communion

With Sunday school classes beginning, we want to remind you of the order for Holy Communion:

1. Choir Members
2. Altar Boys (so that they can receive Communion and go to their classes)
3. Parents with babies/small children
4. Sunday School Students and Teachers
5. Anyone sitting in the side sections of the church
6. Those sitting in the main section of the church, from the front row to the back row.

The ushers will also be assisting everyone so that everyone who wishes to receive Communion may do so in the correct order. Thank you for your patience and your cooperation with these procedures.



Get Acquainted Sunday, October 4

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.



Choir

Sunday, October 18th is Church Musicians Sunday. On this day, the feast day of St. Romanos, the patron saint of music, all choir members and psaltis are honored and recognized. We sincerely thank our choir, under the direction of Artie Palios, as well as our chanters, for their tireless work in chanting the beautiful services of our church. We will also be honoring Jim Leone, our outgoing organist, for his 25 years of service to our church.

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, October 17 and November 21. For more information or to sign up to serve one Saturday, please contact, please contact Betty Katherine Katsamakis at bettypalios@gmail.com or 813-468-1596.

GOYA

Volleyball Tournament October 16-18

St. Stefanos Greek Orthodox Church in St. Petersburg is sponsoring a volleyball tournament from October 16-18. Our GOYAns will be attending. Please bring your registration forms to the GOYA meeting on October 12.

Meeting Sunday, October 11

Our regular GOYA meeting for September will be Sunday, October 11, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. Dinner, as always, will be provided.

HOPE/JOY

On October 18, our HOPE/JOY (ages 3-6th Grade) will have a Fall Harvest Festival.

Men's Basketball

On Tuesday nights at 8:00 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center is open for men's basketball pick up games. If you are interested in joining the games, please contact Perry Katsamakakis at 516-403-3118 or Jimmy Konstas at 813-220-7352 or just come to the gym and join a team! **No skills necessary.**

Ministry of Mothers Sharing (MOMS)

MOMS meet in the Nursery at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, October 5, and October 19. This is a ministry for mothers to gather together to form a network of mutual spiritual support. It is for mothers with wisdom to share and mothers who are searching for answers and meaning in the vocation of motherhood. Our mission is to provide Biblical encouragement and support to women as they begin their journey of motherhood. Please contact Lindsey Skourellos (813) 503-7845 or Mary Ann Konstas (813) 215-9862 with questions.

Young at Heart

The next Young at Heart Meeting will be Thursday, October 1 at 11:30 a.m.

The Young At Heart is taking reservations for the annual Christmas dinner show that we attend. It is at the Showboat Dinner Theater in Hudson on Saturday, December 19 at 11:00 a.m. We will meet at the church and carpool to Hudson. They serve a buffet meal and there is a show. This year is a "Christmas Revue" with a "Living Nativity." Our reservations must be in as soon as possible (they sell out quickly) but no later than November. The cost is under \$43. Please contact one of the Young at Heart members. We would love to have a big group to share in the fun. Everyone is welcome to join!

Youth Protection Policies

Over the past year, we have instituted several policies regarding Youth Protection. People who work with children in our parish have undergone background checks and other procedures. All of this is designed to make our parish safe for people of all ages, especially children, by keeping away from them, anyone who seeks to do harm. Catherine Mitseas and Chris Mantzanas, together with Fr. Stavros, form our committee on youth protection. If you have any concerns about suspicious behavior involving how people are interacting with children, please see Father Stavros, Catherine or Chris. By being vigilant and communicating, we can continue to keep our kids safe.

Please stay subscribed to Constant Contact

Our church is now using Constant Contact for mailings for GOYA, Sunday School, and other ministries, as well as for announcements. The whole community receives community announcements. We have separate group lists for Sunday School, GOYA, etc., so members of those groups will receive those messages. If you unsubscribe from the community list, you will NOT get Constant Contact reminders from the other lists you may be on. Unsubscribing from the community list unsubscribes you from a GOYA list, or Sunday school list, etc. If you are not on constant contact right now, or have unsubscribed and wish to be added, please email Charlie at charlie.hambos@gmail.com and we'll add you to the list.



~Save the Date~

The Tampa Greek Festival is November 6, 7, & 8, 2015!

The first full weekend in November we will unite as a Parish to support our Festival. We need everyone and the following poem gives a little perspective. Look for communication soon from the individual Festival Chairs as they look to staff their areas. As well as the Chair of Manpower to coordinate the efforts of our hundreds of volunteers!

Humor about the funny things in life

Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, And Nobody

This is a little story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done

We Still Need YOU for our Annual St. John the Baptist Greek Festival! We have many open time slots and also need help on Wednesday, November 4 and Thursday, November 5 to help Set-up and November 10 to tear down/clean-up!

Follow the Volunteer Link on Tampagreekfestival.com or stop in the Church Hall after services to pick up a Signup Form. A final sign-up day will be Sunday, November 1st at the Church, but you may still go on-line to make additions/changes.

THANK-YOU in advance for your time and effort on festival day, if you've signed up already! If you've only signed up for one shift please consider adding a second or third. Once you get there you may not want to leave!

If for some reason you did not sign up (but find yourself able to volunteer Festival Weekend), just stop at Volunteer Check-in – WE will find a place for YOU!

If any questions please email tpagreekfestival@gmail.com or call Sandra Pappas – 813-785-3747

St. John the Baptist Dance Groups

H XAPA MAΣ

This is the group for our youngest children. It is subdivided into two groups. Alex DeMaio teaches the kids in kindergarten through second grade. Bessie Palios and Maraquet Edquid will teach the kids in 3rd-5th grades. Practices are after church on Sundays.

Kefi

This is the dance group for young people in grades 6-12. They will also practice on Sundays. The teachers are Marina Choundas and Anna Maria Bavaro.

Panigyri

This group is for adults. The practice on Wednesday evenings, under the direction of Vanessa Aviles. Because Vanessa is out of town, please contact Marina Choundas for more information on this group.

If you are interested in joining any of our dance groups, please contact the instructors, whose numbers are listed on the back of the Messenger.

Festival Baking Days

Wednesday, October 7 - Koulourakia beginning at 9:00 a.m. and **Thursday, October 8** at 9:00 a.m. (if needed)

Wednesday, October 14 - Finikia and Kourambietes beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Wednesday, October 21 - Tsoureki-beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Please consult the weekly bulletin for additional baking information, dates, etc.

2015
Tampa

GREEK

FESTIVAL

Festival Committee

Alkis Crassas, Overall
acrassas@gmail.com, 813-690-3867

Dan Bavaro, Food & Beverage
dan@bavarofoods.com, 732-239-7273

Theo Camene, Admissions
tcamene@gmail.com, 727-482-1302

Catherine Mitseas, Advertising/PR
cmitseas@icloud.com, 813-571-0658

Theo Panopoulos, Marketing/IT
tp2@me.com, 248-868-3697

Sandra Pappas, Volunteers
spappas11@gmail.com, 813-785-3747

Florin Patrascioiu, Vendor Sales
florinp@gmail.com, 813-817-4070

Mike Xenick, Buildings & Grounds
mxenick@gmail.com, 813-340-8737

Area/Booth Chairs

Album Sales, Maria Gorter
Mariag44@live.com, 813- 841-1883

Bar-Outside, Ryan Rindone
ryan.rindone@gmail.com, 704-564-2046

Beverage Carts, Greg Melton
gmelt12@gmail.com, 813-355-6360

Bookstore, Bill Manikas
manrou2000@yahoo.com, 813-960-3679

Choir, Artie Palios
jpalios1@tampabat.rr.com, 813-831-1294

Church tours, Charlie Hambos
charlie.hambos@gmail.com, 813-876-8830

Dance group, H XAPA MAΣ, Alex De Miao
alexandra.demaio@libetrymutual.com 813-340-9668
Bessie Palios, bmp1126@yahoo.com, 813-523-0347
Maraquet Edquid, maraquet@gmail.com, 813-422-8963

Dance group, Kefi, Anna-Maria Bavaro
annamariabavaro@gmail.com, 732- 239-9085
Marina Choundas, mchoundas@foley.com, 813-877-6136

Dance group, Panigyri, Vanessa Aviles
vanessaavilies@outlook.com, 813-221-2194

Food/Buffer, Donna Hambos
dhambos@msn.com, 813-843-8412

Food/Inside Gyros, Ari Georgiou
ageo_1967@yahoo.com, 813-841-7236

Food/Kitchen/Production, George Hambos
dhambos@msn.com, 813-368-9226

Food/Paper Products, Theo Camene
tcamene@gmail.com, 727-482-1302

Food/Salad Production, Debbie Kavouklis
dkavouklis1@verizon.net, 813-690-0155

Greek Market/ Bar, Theresa Smyrnakis-Rodriguez
tsmyrnakis@southernwine.com, 813-843-8412

Gyro Grill-Outside, Byron Nenos Jr
byron@nenoslaw.com, 813-789-0729

Kafenio, Chris Ferekides
ferekide@gmail.com, 813-948-9994

Kids Area, Alexis Scarfogliero
ascarfogliero@hotmail.com, 813-920-9085

Loukoumades, Engie Halkis
engiehalkias@aol.com, 813-932-5859

MC/Announcements, George Fellios
gfellios@gmail.com, 813-495-7562

Music, John Demas
johndemas@verizon.net, 813-240-5199

Parking, Brett Mourer
bamourer@gmail.com, 813-831-9027

Pastries, Lisa Alsina
aalsina@tampabay.rr.com, 813-728-1094

Printing/Graphics, Maria Fentress
mariafentress@hotmail.com, 732-921-1575

Public Relations, Maria Alithinos
iacmaria@msn.com, 813-784-2006
Christy Pessemier, christy.p9700@gmail.com, 253-318-3886

Silent Auction, Eleni Camene
nurseeleni@aol.com, 727-415-1622
Emanouel Kouloumbre, emanouel@live.com, 813-390-7232

Social Media, Deano Kastis
deano@nakedfitfoods.com, 407-719-6500
Vanessa Aviles, vanessaaviles@outlook.com, 813-417-4364

Take-Out, Amin Hanhan
hanhanamin@aol.com, 813-846-2957

St John the Baptist Philoptochos Announces



New Board Members

President : Lisa Alsina

Vice President: Jeanie Nenos

Recording Secretary: Elaine Halkias

Corresponding Secretary: Martha Kapetan

Treasurer: Melissa Krinos

Advisor: JoAnn Hartung

Board Members: Vanessa Aviles, Arty Giallourakis, Ellen Karaku, Kathy MacLaury & Cindy Xenick

PHILOPTOCHOS CALENDAR 2015-2016

COFFEE HOURS/LUNCHEONS

December 6 - Shoe Drive - Chester W. Taylor Elementary

January 10 - Vasilopita Sunday

February 7 - O.C.M.C. Luncheon

April 24 - Palm Sunday Luncheon & Bake Sale

May 22 - Coffee Hour

July 31 - Coffee Hour

General Meetings

September 27 - Zaharias Room

October 24 - Seminar on Prayer -Fr. Stavros - 9:30-12pm

December 13 - Christmas Party – Palma Ceia

March 6 - Membership Tea – (*tentative date*)

April 17 - Zaharias Room

T.B.A. - End of the Year Luncheon

Other Important Dates

October 7 & 8 - Koulourakia Baking

October 14- Finikia & Kourambiedes Baking

October 21 - Tsoureki Baking

January 6 - St. John Vespers

March 6 - Membership Tea (*tentative date*)

T.B.A. - Topgolf Outing

**A great big thank you to all who helped make our first Fanouropita Sunday a big success.
We raised \$405 to aid in Metropolis of Atlanta Youth Ministries.**

St. John the Baptist is on Social Media!



Sermons on Youtube Channel Each Sunday

Father's sermons each Sunday are available on our YouTube channel. Just go to YouTube and type in "St John GOC Tampa" and you'll find them. If you miss a sermon or wish to hear a sermon again, you'll find it there!



Do you Like our Facebook page? Like our page and suggest it to your friends. Announcements are posted frequently so you are up to date with everything going on at St. John the Baptist. You can find our page at StJohnGOC-Tampa.

Live Streaming - All of our services are being video recorded and are available on our Livestream page.

To access this page

1. Go to our Church's website: greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com,
2. Scroll the mouse over the "Multimedia" tab on the menu bar,
3. Click "View Liturgy,"
4. Then click on the link where it says, "Check out our live stream of the Divine Liturgy here <http://new.livestream.com/accounts/2454446>.

All of the services are available to watch at anytime.





AHEPA FAMILY NEWS October 2015



Join us in playing golf and supporting the AHEPA Family Scholarship fund.
Have a wonderful day of golf and enjoy a scrumptious dinner afterwards.

LYCURGUS CHAPTER 12 TAMPA GOLF TOURNAMENT SATURDAY OCTOBER 17, 2015



4-Player Scramble Format

12:30 p.m.....Registration

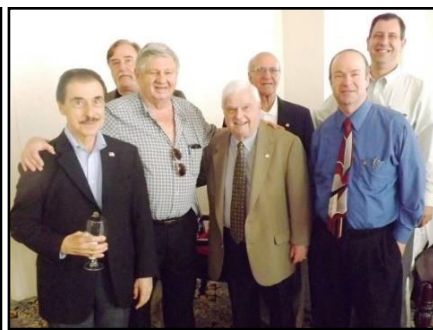
1:30 p.m.....Shotgun Start

Register at: <http://www.westchasegc.com/-ahepa-golf-tournament>

BENEFITS THE AHEPA FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP FUND \$100 COST FOR SINGLE PLAYER

We hope that you'll join us for a fun-filled day at The Westchase Golf Club 11602 Westchase Golf Drive Tampa Invite your friends and co-workers and hit the links with AHEPA LYCURGUS TAMPA. The tournament benefits the AHEPA FAMILY scholarship fund. The cost IS \$100 for single players and \$400 for a Foursome which includes: 18 holes of golf, 1 bucket of driving range balls, A buffet dinner

AHEPA LYCURGUS CHAPTER 12 HOSTS MIXER



A mixer for members and guests was held at the Floridan Hotel on August 28. It was attended by AHEPAns, Daughters and guests from several Bay Area chapters. Several prospective new members were present and indicated an interest in attending Lycurgus Chapter 12 meetings in the future.

New Smyrna Odyssey Memorial



AHEPA members and Daughters from throughout Florida including Gus Paras, AHEPA District Secretary and Marina Paras, Daughters of Penelope District Lt. Governor, from Tampa attended the New Smyrna Odyssey Memorial celebration which honors the first Greek settlers in North America. The project became an AHEPA National Project and was dedicated in 2004. A memorial service was held for the Greek settlers who established the New Smyrna colony in the summer of 1768 as indentured servants of Andrew Turnbull. These settlers fled New Smyrna, because of harsh treatment and difficult conditions, to Saint Augustine where they settled in 1777. The descendants of those settlers made an impact on the growth and culture of Saint Augustine and the Saint Photias Shrine owned by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese commemorates their past.



AHEPA FAMILY FOUNDERS DAY OCTOBER 11

AHEPA and Daughters of Penelope members will be honoring their founders and early members on October 11. They will honor the founding members of both organizations by having a Mnemosino in Church and providing a free lunch to all Church members afterward. You are all invited to join us for Lunch and share with us the history of our organizations. AHEPA was founded in Tampa in 1924 and chartered in 1926 the Daughters of Penelope was founded in 1948 and have been active until today.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

What a great start to the 2015-2016 Sunday School year. We've had record attendance in September thanks to all the teachers, parents, and children who are committed to our program.

Thank you to the many families who have registered their children in Sunday School and for the generous donations they have made to our program. Your donations go towards the Sunday School materials and supplies. It also enables us to have three retreats for our children (Christmas, Pre-Lent, and God Friday). We would also like to thank the Patrascoiu Family for recently donating their container of pennies from our previous Pennies for Our Prayers Program.

We are very excited about our Weekly Topics that each classroom will include into their program this year. The topics for the month of September were PRAYER and the SIGN OF THE CROSS. We would like to thank Fr. Stavros and Charlie for creating this curriculum for us.

Our YOUTH SUNDAY SERVICE took place on September 27th. Our students in 1st -5th grade sang the Liturgical Hymns with the choir beautifully. As a result of the many years of our Music Program we now have eight of our older students singing with the choir on a regular basis. We need to thank Maria Xenick for making this possible and inspiring our children's love for the hymns of our church. We would also like to thank our high school student who read the Epistle.

On Youth Sundays Charlie conducts a sermon for our 1st - 5th graders and afterwards he teaches one of our classes. This month he brought the Church Vessels into our 2nd Grade Class. Thank you Charlie for all you do in our Sunday School. Our students LOVE having you in their classroom. One of our classes also makes Prospora on Youth Sunday. Our Fifth Graders made it this month for our Church. We would to thank Melissa Krinos for directing this program for our children. The congregation of St. John's is truly blessed to have such wonderful children.

For the 2015-2016 school year, we will acknowledge students with perfect attendance. We will keep track of Perfect Attendance for the year and award those students at our Graduation Ceremony. If you are out of town and attend church, we will count it, so please let us know. Last year we had eleven students accomplish this...Could we have more this year?

We understand that it is very difficult to attend church every week, but PARENTS, please make an effort. Your children's understanding of our faith is essential. It is also important to make it a "habit" of going to church on Sunday morning. When students come to church on a regular basis they feel CONNECTED to our church, to their teachers, and especially to their classmates. What better peers to have, than their Orthodox friends! These friendships could also last a lifetime. Students who do not come regularly may feel uncomfortable and miss so much of our valuable instruction.

This year we are introducing our HALL of FAITH program. This program is to encourage our children to memorize and understand the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. Our Pre-K through 2nd Grade will be focusing on the Lord's Prayer and our 3rd graders on up will do the Creed. Look for our HALL of FAITH poster on our Sunday School bulletin board. Will your child's name be on it?

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, suggestions, or comments regarding St. John's Sunday School Program. Parents: If you do not receive our weekly e-mails about our Sunday School Program, please contact Vickie Peckham at 406-5626 or e-mail her at vickiepeckham@gmail.com.

DID YOU KNOW...?

That the newly-crowned Miss America is an Orthodox Christian! Betty (Vasiliki) Cantrell grew up in Warner Robbins, Georgia, where she is a faithful member of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Macon, GA. She attended St. Stephen's Summer Camp in summer of 2011. She won the Miss Georgia Title before competing and winning Miss America 2016!

~Stewardship...little of this and that... ...and a St. John the Baptist Milestone!

With VERY Grateful Hearts we greeted a St. John the Baptist Milestone last month with over \$400,000 in Stewardship Pledges from 312 Families!

And although short \$68,000 of our budgeted goal for the year, we mark this as progress and a positive sign for our church and community! Please always keep in mind the church doesn't exist to collect money. But without our Stewardship our place of Worship, Love and Community will not be here. God instituted tithing for a purpose!

We also experienced more consistent donations this year with our Stewards choosing to pay in the beginning of the year or on a weekly/monthly basis. This is a tremendous help to the church operations and easy to set up with your Internet Banking or Electronic Funds Transfer, if you wish to automate. We can help if you have any questions.

**If you haven't pledged to St. John the Baptist this year it is not too late.
We are making progress toward our projected goal!**

YES - Stewardship Pledge Forms really are critical. They help keep us current on how much income the Church can expect to support our ministries and expenses. They also provide details on your family information and areas of interest so we can tap into your Talents and Interests! And lastly, pledge forms and current contributions meet the Uniform Parish Regulations (UPR) of our Archdiocese as well as our local by-laws to enable participation at Parish General Assembly Meetings in October, Nominations and Voting for Parish Council in December.

Please feel free to share your thoughts to the office email - officestjohnngoctampa@gmail.com or speak directly with Fr. Stavros, Sandra Pappas or Pete Trakas -Stewardship Co-Chairs. We are here for YOU!

2015 Stewardship Goal	\$470,000.00
Pledged	\$404,796.00
Received*	\$306,036.43
Average Pledge	\$1,285.18
Median Pledge**	\$745
# of Parishioners (Families) Pledged with a completed form	316
# of Parishioners (Families) that have given a Stewardship Check without a form+	30

*Dollars received - Based on YTD as of 9/15/2015

** Pledge amount in the Middle – ½ of Stewards pledge higher & ½ lower

+Per our Bylaws, to be considered a Voting Member of St. John the Baptist you must have a completed Pledge Form.

Thank You To All of Our Pledged Stewards!

This is a list of all Pledged Stewards at St. John the Baptist that have filled out a 2015 Stewardship Form. Names on this list do not indicate a Parishioner is 'Current' in pledge payments. Please call our church office with any questions on the status of your pledge commitments.

Abramis, John & Nicky, Mr. & Mrs.
Akrotirianakis, Fr. Stavros & Pres. Lisa
Alikakos, Maria, Ms.
Alithinos, Katarina, Mrs.
Alsina, Alexa, Ms.
Alsina, Angel & Lisa, Dr. & Mrs.
Ambrozy, Edward, Mr.
Ameres, George & Zackie, Mr. & Mrs.
Andreadakis, Nicholas & Doris, Dr. & Mrs.
Andros, George & Maria, Dr. & Mrs.
Anthousis, John & Kay, Dr. & Mrs.
Anton, Alex & Kristen, Dr. & Mrs.
Apockotos, James & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.
Apostoleres, Nicholas & Rosalie, Mr. & Mrs.
Argyros, Harry & Linda, Mr. & Mrs.
Armstrong, Jim & Myra, Mr. & Mrs.
Artzibushev, Dimitri & Sonya, Mr. & Mrs.
Aviles, Pablo & Vanessa, Mr. & Mrs.

Avros, Chris & Jennifer, Mr. & Mrs.
Axelrod, Scott & Christine, Mr. & Mrs.
Badrane, Denise, Ms.
Bakirdgi, Joan, Ms.
Balasis, Matthew & Suzy, Mr. & Mrs.
Barrett, Sara, Ms.
Bavaro, Daniel & Anna Maria, Mr. & Mrs.
Beach, Kevin, Mr. & Borgeas, Heidi, Mrs.
Bedran, Rita, Ms.
Blackburn, Robert & Kathryn, Mr. & Dr.
Blankenship, Wayne & Athanasia, Mr. & Mrs.
Bougas, Constantine & Angela, Mr. & Mrs.
Bradshaw, Harold & Peggy, Mr. & Mrs.
Brown, Chrysanthi, Ms.
Burchill, George, Fr.
Bush, Dorothy, Mrs.
Calpakis, Marcus, Mr.
Camene, Theo & Eleni, Mr. & Mrs.

Cantonis II, Michael & Rebecca, Mr. & Mrs.
Capitano, Frank & Christina, Mr. & Mrs.
Caramalis, Nick, Mr.
Carter, John & Genie, Mr. & Mrs.
Cauthorn, Ken & Helen, Mr. & Mrs.
Cazzola, Brian, Mr. & Stoican, Roxana, Ms.
Chagaris, George & Kalliope, Mr. & Mrs.
Chakonas, Ethel Athena, Mrs.
Chandler, Robert & Viviana, Mr. & Mrs.
Charalabakis, Terry G., Mr.
Cherpelis, Basil & Alyssa, Dr. & Dr.
Choundas, Marina, Ms. & Thatcher, Greg, Mr.
Choundas, Peter & Adis, Mr. & Mrs.
Christ, John E., Dr.
Christodoulou, Louis & Mary Ann, Mr. & Mrs.
Christopher, Louis, Mr. & Plakas, Penny, Dr.
Christou, Tammy, Ms.
Colado, David & Alexandria, Mr. & Mrs.

Conner, Michael & Artemis, Mr. & Mrs.
Copolos, Vasiliki ,Mrs.
Cortright, Donnel, Mr.& Grigoropoulos, Christina, Ms.
Costello, Patricia, Ms.
Courialis, Telly & Toulia, Dr. & Mrs
Crafa, Paul & Stavroula, Mr. & Mrs.
Crassas, Alkis & Aime, Mr. & Mrs.
Cunavelis, Frances, Ms.
Cunavelis, John, Mr.
Dalaklis, Joanne, Ms.
De Maio, Alexandra, Ms.
DeJesus, Roy & Anna, Mr. & Mrs.
Demas, Anna K., Ms.
Demas, John, Mr.
Demetriou, Nektarios & Peggy, Dr. & Mrs.
Diamantakes, Georgia, Ms.
Diamantides, Melpo, Mrs.
Dimas, Gregory Mr. & Patsavos, Evelyn Mrs.
Diniaco, Peter & Rebecca, Mr. & Mrs.
Edquid, Marc & Maraquet, Mr. & Mrs.
Eggleston, Charles & Catherine, Mr. & Mrs.
Ekonomides, Anthony C, Mr.
Elly, Jonathan & Jenivieve, Mr. & Mrs.
Evdemon, Stanley & Mary Ellen, Mr. & Mrs.
Fallieras, George, Mr.
Fallieras, Lauren, Ms.
Fallieras, Nicholas & Susan, Dr. & Mrs.
Fellios, Alexander, Mr.
Fellios, George & Zeina, Mr. & Mrs.
Fentress, Kevin & Maria, Mr. & Mrs.
Ferarolis, Alexandra, Ms.
Ferekides, Christos & Debbie, Dr. & Mrs.
Findlay, Andrew & Karina Mr. & Dr.
Forde, Dwight & Ewana, Mr. & Mrs.
Fotopoulos, Anthony & Carole, Mr. & Mrs.
Frazier, Chris, Ms.
Frey,Carlos, Mr. & Sorolis-Frey, Sophia,Ms.
Frimenko, Mary Z, Pres.
Gallos, Peter, Mrs.
Garcia, Mark & Anastasia, Mr. & Mrs.
Garcia, Rick &Stamie, Mr. & Mrs.
Georgas, Thomas & Janet, Mr. & Mrs.
George, Michael & Peggy, Mr. & Mrs.
Georgiou Djiovanis, Petros, Mr.
Georgiou, Speros & Eleanor, Mr. & Mrs.
Gerecke, Alexandra, Ms.
Gerecke, Christina, Ms.
Gerecke, Ed & Terry, Mr. & Mrs.
Giallourakis, Michael & Arty, Mr. & Mrs.
Gombos, Jack & Harriet, Mr. & Mrs.
Gorter, Maria, Ms.
Gregory, Daniel, Mr. & Stefero, Alicia, Ms.
Halikoytakias, Alex, Mr.
Halikoytakias, Michael & Margaret, Mr. & Mrs.
Halkias, Chris, Mr.
Halkias, Demetrios, Mr.
Halkias, Evangline, Mrs.
Halkias, Thanasi, Mr.
Halkias, George & Elaine, Mr. & Mrs.
Hambos, Charlie, Mr.
Hambos, George & Donna, Mr. & Mrs.
Hampers, Dean & Valerie, Mr. & Mrs.
Hanhan, Amin & Gloria, Mr. & Mrs.
Hartung, Mark & JoAnn, Mr. & Mrs.
Higdon, Skip, Mrs.

Hoppenstand, Evelyn, Ms.
Horack, Scott & Rena, Mr. & Mrs.
Ioannidis, Theodore & Sharon, Mr. & Mrs.
Iraklianos, Mike, Mr.
Irwin, Jon & Pam, Mr. & Mrs.
Jacobsen, Anne, Mrs.
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According to the St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Tampa FL By-Laws, one must have completed a form AND be ‘current’ in their pledge (for this year and last year) to vote at the General Assembly Meeting in October and Parish Council Elections in December. If you have sent in a Stewardship Check and are not on the list, please contact the office so we can forward you a 2015 Stewardship Pledge Form.

If you have NOT sent in a contribution, or a form, please contact the church office and we will forward you a pledge package. It is hope that EVERYONE on our mailing list will be a Steward or a Friend of St. John the Baptist, for those who do not live in Tampa.

Friends of St. John the Baptist - Some of you who receive *The Messenger* do not live in the Tampa Bay area or are members of other Greek Orthodox parishes. We would like to ask for your support of our parish as a “Friend of St. John the Baptist”. Your contribution as a “Friend” will help offset the cost of mailing *The Messenger*, among other things. *Being a “friend” does not make one a steward of St. John 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 the Baptist”, please fill out and return the form below. Thank you for your consideration of our parish.

Thank You to all of Our Friends!

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I wish to be a “Friend of St. John”. I am enclosing a contribution in the amount of:
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Please mail this form and check to: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church 2418 Swann Avenue, Tampa, FL 33609

Monday Night Bible Study (for everyone)

We will be studying the book of I Corinthians.

Location: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in the Administration Building meeting room

Group Leader: Charlie Hambos

Charlie.hambos@gmail.com, 813-843-8471

Meeting time: Monday evenings from 6:30– 8:00 p.m.

October Meeting Dates: October 5, 12, 19 and 26

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

Location: Meets at the home of Debbie Kavouklis, Debbie lives in South Tampa, a mile or so from the church.

3315 Jean Circle, Tampa, FL 33629

Group Leader: Debbie Kavouklis

dkavouklis1@verizon.net, (813) 690-0155.

Meeting time: Tuesday mornings from 10:00-11:30 a.m. (9:30 a.m. for coffee and refreshments)

October Meeting Dates: October 6, 13, 20 and 27

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

Location: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in the Administration Building in the meeting room

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 7:30-8:30 a.m.

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

October Meeting Dates: October 7, 14, 21 and 28

North Tampa Mixed Group (for any adults)

Anyone can attend this group but obviously this will be most convenient for those who live on the north side of town.

Location: Home of George and Cindy Xenick

614 Downs Ave. Temple Terrace, FL 33617

Group Leader: Cindy Xenick

gatormomx@aol.com, 813-505-7657

Meeting Time: Thursday evenings from 7:00–8:15 p.m.

October Meeting Dates: October 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29

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: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in the Zaharias Room

Group Leader: Bessie Palios

bmp1126@yahoo.com, 813-523-0347.

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

October Meeting Dates: October 6, 13, 20 and 27

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

2604 Herndon Street, Valrico, FL 33596

Group Leader: Donna Hambos

dhambos@msn.com, 813-843-8412

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

October Meeting Dates: October 6, 13, 20 and 27

Young Adult Group (for adults ages 18-40)

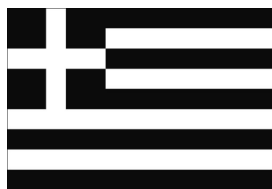
Location: TBA

Group Leader: Mary Ann Konstas

mapkonstas@gmail.com, 813-215-9862

Meeting Time: Sundays following the Divine Liturgy

October Meeting Dates: October 4 and 18



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Hope/Joy Fall Harvest Festival

Sunday, October 18th

4:00 – 6:00 PM

on the Day School Lunch Patio

(In case of rain we will be in the Kourmolis Center)



Please join us for an afternoon
of fun, food, and fellowship!

ALL children through 6th grade
are invited to attend.

Moms, dads, grandparents, friends
Please sign up to help!

Please come in costume!

(no witches or devils please)

We will have
games, crafts, prizes for all

Dinner will be served

RSVP to Debbie Nicklow at Debbienicklow@hotmail.com or 813-920-0892



Our Wedding Night Changed Our Marriage

By. Dr. K. Kimberling

*"What, then, shall we say in response to these things?
If God is for us, who can be against us?"*
-Romans 8:31 (NIV)

When I tell people that my wife Nancy and I have been married 45 years, I almost always hear "Wow!" and "That's great." I appreciate those comments, but where we are today has been a journey. We didn't have an awesome marriage for a very long time.

In fact, starting out as barely 20-year-olds, we really had no idea what marriage was all about. Our fights almost did our marriage in before it began. After six years of marriage, the future was dark, we had a new baby and we needed a miracle.

Of all the things we did wrong, there is one thing we did right. I wish I could say I brought it to the marriage, but I didn't. Nancy did.

Let me paint a picture for you.

On our wedding night after we left the reception and finally made it to our hotel room, Nancy made a request of me that God has used in our marriage since that day.

As we got ready for bed, Nancy went into the bathroom to change. I changed in about 30 seconds and waited for her sitting on the side of the bed. An eternity later, she emerged from the bathroom looking like an angel. She walked over to me, took my hand, sat beside me on the bed, looked into my eyes and said, "We need to pray."

In case you were wondering, that was the last thing I thought my new bride would say to me in that moment. But the real surprise was that I looked her back in the eyes and said, "OK."

We knelt by the bed in our hotel room, held hands and prayed a prayer we both knew and were comfortable praying together: The Lord's Prayer.

Since that first night many years ago, we have prayed together almost every day. Through all the ups and downs of life and

marriage, praying together daily is the glue God has used over and over to keep us close to Him.

During the darkest times in our marriage, as we continued to pray together, we saw God show up over and over to keep us together.

First, God used an older lady in our church to minister to Nancy. As Nancy shared our story, this wise woman lovingly encouraged Nancy to stay in the marriage and that God would make something beautiful out of it.

Second, as we continued to talk about our marriage and our struggles, it became obvious that neither one of us really wanted a divorce.

Finally, we made a vow never to bring up divorce again and to let God build our marriage His way.

As we purposely put God first each day, our marriage began to change. It was not overnight; in fact, it was a process that continues to this day. But God taught us how to fight for our marriage instead of fighting each other. It was marriage-changing.

We learned to stand side by side with God and take on anything and everything that the world threw at us. We learned firsthand that if God is for us no one can ever stand against us (Romans 8:31b). It is a truth that I pray every married couple can embrace because it is a truth that will close the gap between where your marriage is and where God wants it to be.

Lord, You truly are the Great Healer. I pray that I may see Your plan for my marriage. Make the changes You want to make in me. In us. I pray to be so connected to You and my spouse that we may stand together against all that would come against our marriage. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Dr. K. Kimberling is the author of the book,
*7 Secrets to an Awesome Marriage:
Strengthen Your Most Intimate Relationship*



Do you have the Messengers from the last year and not know what to do with them? Do you read the Messenger and just throw it away? Did you know you can be emailed the Messenger?

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In the Subject Line just type: **Please Email Me the Messenger** and you will be emailed and not mailed the November Messenger!

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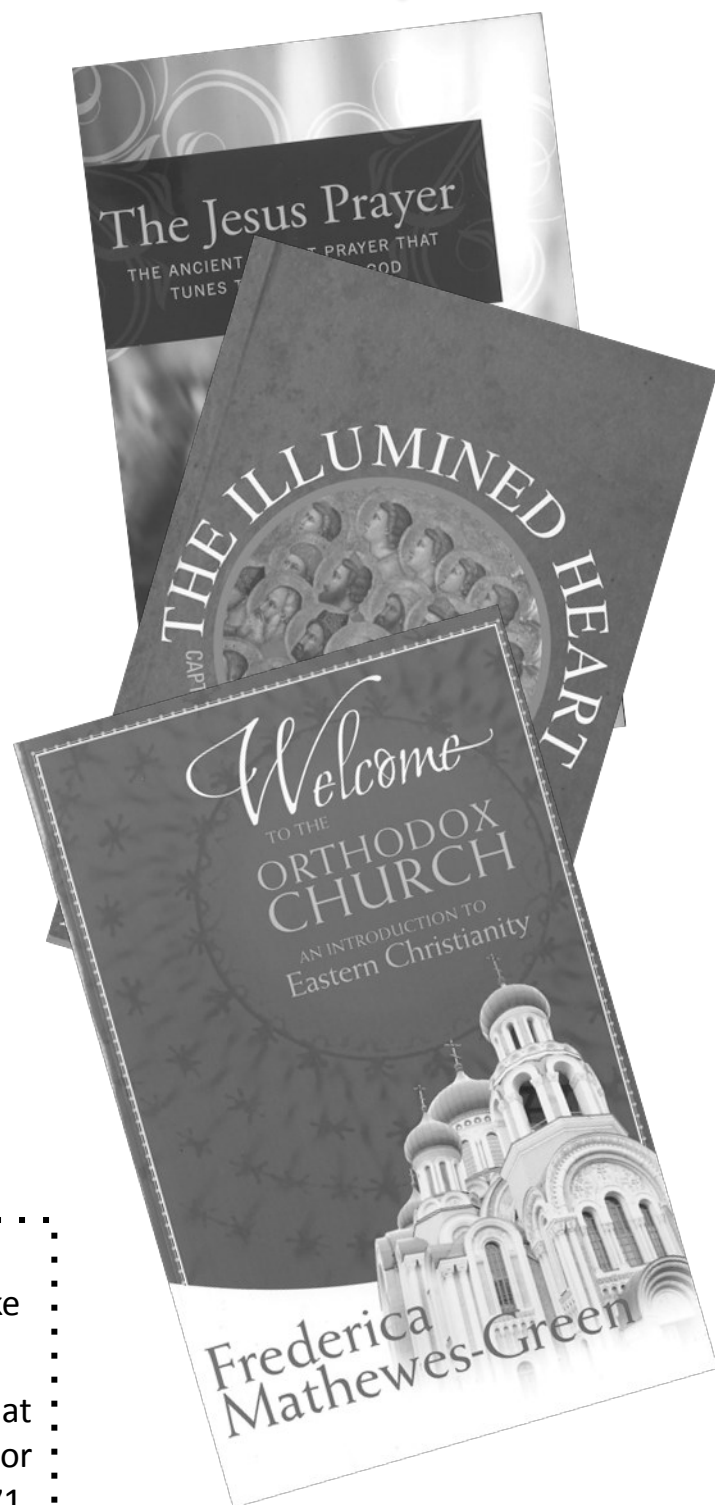
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Sundays after Liturgy – 1p.m.
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Why Would God Sow Seeds He Knows Will Bear No Fruit?-A Pondering on the Parable of the Sower

By Msgr. Charles Pope

A few weeks ago when the Gospel from today's Mass was proclaimed on Sunday, someone asked me a series of questions regarding the sower. We are told by Jesus that the sower is the Son of Man, Jesus himself. Hence, why would the Lord, who knows everything ahead of time, sow seed he knew would not bear fruit?

Let's review the text:

"A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear." (Matt 13:1-9)

Now, a human sower can have little control over the destiny of the seeds he sows. But in this parable Jesus, who is God is the sower and he has the capacity to sow seeds only in perfect soil. Why then waste any seed on rocky or thin soil, or the path? This is the question I was asked.

Perhaps a series of possible "answers" is all we can venture. I place "answers" in quotes since we are in fact touching on some mysteries here of which we can only speculate. So, here are some "answers."

1. God is extravagant – it is not just seed He scatters liberally, it is everything. There are hundreds of billions of stars in over 100 billion galaxies, most of these seemingly devoid of life as we understand it. Between these 100 billion galaxies are huge amounts of, what seems to be, empty space. On this planet where one species of bird would do, there are thousands of species, tens of thousands of different sorts of insects, a vast array of different sorts of trees, mammals, fish etc. Extravagant barely covers it. The word "extravagant" means "to go, or wander beyond." And God has gone vastly beyond anything we can imagine. But God is love, and love is extravagant. The image of him sowing seeds, almost in a careless way is thus consistent with the usual way of God.

This of course is less an answer to the question before us than a deepening of the question. The answer, if there is one, is caught up in the mystery of love. Love does not say, what is the least I can do? It says "What more can I do." If a man loves a woman, he does not look for the

cheapest gift on her birthday, rather he looks for an extravagant gift. God is Love and God is extravagant.

2. Even if the failed seed represents those who ultimately reject him, God loves that seed anyway. Remember, as Jesus goes on to explain, the seeds that fail to bear fruit, are symbols of those who allow riches, worldly preoccupation, persecution and other things to draw them away from God. But, even knowing this, does not change God's love for them. He still wills their existence. Scripture says elsewhere, *But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous* (Matt 5:44-45).

Yes, God loves even those who will reject him and will not, knowing ahead of that rejection, say to them, "You cannot exist." He thus scatters even that seed, knowing ahead of time that it will not bear fruit. Further, he continues to send the sun and rain, even on those who will reject him.

Hence this parable shows forth God's unfailing love. He sows seeds, even knowing they will not bear the fruit he wants. He wills the existence of all, even those who he knows ahead of time will reject him.

3. That God sows seeds and allows them to fall on bad soil is indicative of our freedom. The various places the seed falls is indicative of human freedom, more than illustrative of the intent of God. For one may still question, "Why would God "allow" seed to fall on the path, or among thorns, or in rocky soil?" And the only answer here is that God has made us free. Were He to go back and place the seed in good soil, this would, by way of the analogy of the parable, veto our choice, and we could *only* bear good fruit. In other words, there could be no other outcome than to bear fruit. But this is not freedom, for there is no real choice. Thus, that God sows seeds and allows them to fall on bad soil is indicative of our freedom.

So, permit these "answers." God sows seed he knows will bear no fruit because he is extravagant, because he loves and wills the existence even of those he knows will reject him, and because he respects our freedom.

As with all reckoning about the interaction of God's sovereignty with our freedom, these "answers" limp a bit. There are mysteries here caught up in time, in providence, freedom and the sovereignty of God. These answers are thus submitted with humility and should be read with humility.

	~ October 2015 ~					
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Fast Day	MBS-Men's Bible Study WBS-Women's Bible Study	NBS-North Bible Study EBS-East Bible Study	SBS-South Bible Study YABS-Young Adult Bible Study	1 Young at Heart 11:00 a.m.	2	3
4 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Get Acquainted Sunday H Χάρα Μαγ & Kefi Dance Practice YABS	5 MOMS 11:00 a.m. Orthodoxy 101 6:30 p.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	6 WBS 9:30 a.m. EBS 6:30 p.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	7** MBS 7:30 a.m. Koulourakia Baking Paraklesis 6:00 p.m. Pangryi Dance Practice 7:00 p.m.	8 Koulourakia Baking Only if needed Greek School 6:00 p.m. NBS 6:30 p.m.	9**	10
11 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. AHEPA Founders' day luncheon/I service H Χάρα Μαγ & Kefi Dance Practice GOYA 5:00 p.m.	12 Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	13 WBS 9:30 a.m. EBS 6:30 p.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Parish Council 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	14** MBS 7:30 a.m. Finikia & Kouambiethes Baking Pangryi Dance Practice 7:00 p.m.	15 Greek School 6:00 p.m. NBS 6:30 p.m.	16** GOYA Volleyball Tournament in St. Pete	17 Community Outreach AHEPA Golf Tournament GOYA Volleyball Tournament in St. Pete
18 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Youth Sunday H Χάρα Μαγ & Kefi Dance Practice AHEPA Mtg. Fall Festival YABS	19 Bible Study 6:30 p.m. MOMS 11:00 a.m.	20 Clergy Retreat WBS 9:30 a.m. EBS 6:30 p.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	21** Clergy Retreat MBS 7:30 a.m.. Tsourekia Baking Pangryi Dance Practice 7:00 p.m.	22 Clergy Retreat St. James Orthros: 5:00 p.m. Liturgy 6:00 p.m.	23**	24 Philoptochos Retreat 9:30 a.m.
25 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. H Χάρα Μαγ & Kefi Dance Practice	26 St. Demetrios Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. .	27 WBS 9:30 a.m. EBS 6:30 p.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.	28** MBS 7:30 a.m. Pangryi Dance Parctice 7:00 p.m.	29 Greek School 6:00 p.m. NBS 6:30 p.m.	30	31

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

2418 W. Swann Avenue

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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

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Gus Paras, President 813-254-6980

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Sia Blankenship 813-968-8855

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Jimmy Konstas 813-220-7352

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Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

Bookstore

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Chanter

Nick Andreadakis 813-516-6081

Choir

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

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Betty Katherine Katsamakis 813-468-1596

Dance Group

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Bessie Palios, 813-523-0347
Maraquet Edquid 813-422-8963
Kefi, Marina Choundas 813-877-6136
Anna Maria Bavaro 732-239-9085
Panigyri, Vanessa Aviles 813-221-2194

Daughters of Penelope

Edie Kavouklis, President 813-758-0305

Finance Committee

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Food Pantry

Mick Scharbach 813-458-1620

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John Kokkas 727-992-4615

GOYA

Elane Halkias 813-629-1843

Hope/Joy

Amy Kafantaris 727-743-1297
Debbie Nicklow 813-690-0671

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Bryon Nenos 813-789-0729

MOMS

Mary Ann Konstas 813-215-9862
Lindsey Skourellos 813-503-7845

Oratorical Festival

Peggy Bradshaw 727-244-1374

Philoptochos

Lisa Alsina 813-728-1094

REAL

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

Small Group Bible Study

East, Donna Hambos 813-843-8412
Men, Fr. Stavros 813-394-1038
North, Cindy Xenick 813-505-7657
South, Bessie Palios 813-523-0347
Women, Debbie Kavouklis 813-258-5571
Young Adult, Mary Ann Konstas 813-215-9862

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“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.