

# THE MESSENGER

## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

*"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*

# April 2019

### VISION:

Love God, Love your neighbor and spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ as an Orthodox Christian community.

### MISSION:

The mission of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is to welcome and serve people with love, truth, joy and peace, and to create an environment that encourages all to seek salvation through Orthodox Christianity.

### CORE VALUES:

Love, Worship, Community, Learning, Service

### Father Stavros' Message

#### "You Only Get Out of Something What You Put into It"

We all know the saying "You only get out of something what you put into it." Any person with business experience knows that you must invest in order to receive return. Anyone who is a parent of a successful child remembers that in order for that child to be successful, there was a LOT of "grunt" work involved, most of which was repetitive and not entirely pleasant. Behind every successful adult, there was once a baby who struggled to learn to use the potty, who had to learn the alphabet, who struggled with learning the multiplication tables, who mispronounced words when reading, who made someone cry on the playground, who made missteps as a teenager, who didn't study enough at times, and many other things. For those who have grown children who are successful in what they are doing, a great thanksgiving is due to you, the parents, for not only showing consistency in an often-times maddening repetitive cycle, but for showing enthusiasm in making learning and the other challenges of growing up somehow attractive, even fun, for your children.

In speaking with my Spiritual Father recently, I asked him (because many people ask me this), "What is the point of belonging to church anyway? What is the point of worshipping anyway? Can't we just be good people without this stuff?" To which he answered "What good is it to know your multiplication tables? I mean, by themselves, what does it matter if  $3 \times 3$  is 9? The point of learning your multiplication tables is so that when a real life word problem comes up, you have the means to solve it. Let's say you have 20 people coming to an event, and each person is going to eat 3 pieces of pizza. How many pizzas do you order? Well if a pizza has 8 pieces, then 20 people times 3 pieces is 60 pieces, and 8 pieces times 8 pizzas will give you 64 pieces. So for the 20 people coming to the event,

you need 8 pizzas. Now  $8 \times 8 = 64$  and  $20 \times 3 = 60$  are really not very useful pieces of information until you put them into a real life situation. And when you get into a real life situation, if you don't know your multiplication tables, then you are going to be in some trouble.

It's the same thing with the church—the liturgy by itself doesn't mean a whole lot. The meaning of the Divine Liturgy, or prayer, or confession, or reading the Bible, or following the commandments, or charitable giving, become real and powerful and relevant only when they are integrated into the context of your whole life. Trying to live a Christ-centered life without the church, without worship, without guidance, without education, without prayer, is like trying to solve a real-life word problem without knowing your multiplication tables—it's nearly impossible to do."

### Repetition

Now we all remember from our school days that learning anything is about repetition. Rarely is it that you learn something thoroughly the first time you do it—in fact, I can't think of a single thing you can learn well in one shot. (Well, I guess you can learn from a serious mistake NOT to do something again.) Everything we learn well requires repetition. And thus it is for us in learning to be children of God, so that one day, as a child graduates from childhood to adulthood, that one day we graduate from earthly life to Everlasting Life. The child who does not do well in school is ill-equipped for the adult world and the workforce. And the child of God who does not do well in the earthly life, in the sense of not learning to live a Godly life, is going to be ill-equipped for everlasting life and is going to find himself or herself not partaking in the everlasting Kingdom of God.

## Lifelong Learning

The smart person knows that learning does not end with graduation from high school or college, but is a continual and life-long process—finding a new challenge, repetitively learning it, until there is some degree of mastery, and then moving on to the next challenge. Over time, this is how successful people become even more successful, because they are always fine-tuning themselves and what they do. They are always finding new challenges, mastering them, and finding still more challenges.

The smart Christian knows that learning does not end with Sunday school (unfortunately some think it ends with baptism and they go through life never learning anything about our Faith) but it is a continual and life-long process. Finding a new spiritual challenge, repetitively learning it, until there is some degree of mastery, and then moving on to the next spiritual challenge. Over time, this is how people radiate Christ in their lives, because they are always seeking to deepen their relationship with Christ and their commitment to Him.

As we navigate our way through Lent and enter Holy Week, in preparation of our celebration of Pascha, there are predominantly two kinds of people who will enter our church—there are people who don't have much of a relationship with Christ, and there are people who already have a relationship with Christ. (There are also other categories—those who won't come at all during the Lent/Holy Week season, and there are those who I suppose don't WANT a relationship with Christ, but I'm not going to worry about people in these two categories. There is also the category of people, the Chreasters, those who only will come once or twice a year, like Good Friday or Palm Sunday, who are there because, well, actually I'm not sure why they come! It's like why review the multiplication tables only once—you can't learn them in one shot, so if you aren't planning on studying them repetitively, you've really wasted time studying them only once.) But let's talk about the two categories I began with, the ones who already have a relationship with Christ and those who desire to have one.

We know that life is about relationships—there is no one in life that has no relationship with anyone unless he or she is the only person on a deserted island. Everyone lives in relationships with others. In some of our relationships, we don't know the names—i.e. we don't know the names of the drivers on the road, yet each of us has a relationship with thousands of people we encounter on the streets of Tampa each day—for some the relationship is good, they are courteous law-abiding drivers. And for some the relationships are strained—they are rude, road-rage filled maniacal drivers. But there is a relationship nonetheless.

## Vulnerability

We know from our successful, meaningful relationships in life that they take TIME to build. We have to spend time communicating with others, we have to listen to others, we have to make an effort to deepen relationships and we have to show some vulnerability in order for a relationship to go to a deeper level. Think about your relationship with your spouse or with your close friends—those relationships are not possible with only cursory participation or without showing some kind of vulnerability. Christ certainly made Himself vulnerable—He allowed Himself to be tortured and killed for us. It takes some kind of vulnerability to open up your heart to accept a God who is unseen, yet is all around us. It takes vulnerability to maintain a steadfast faith in the goodness of God when life gets hard. It

takes vulnerability to stand fast and cling to a faith that the entire world is trying to tear down.

Imagine the courage of the martyrs. Imagine the courage of a martyr like St. Demetrios, who stood in an arena like Raymond James Stadium, filled with 100,000 people screaming for him to die. Imagine him facing the emperor who said to him, "You are a hero to these people (St. Demetrios was a well-known and popular soldier), I don't have to kill you. The people will still love you. You made a mistake. Renounce Christ and you can live and still be a hero to them." And for St. Demetrios to say "I love the Lord, and I will not renounce Him for you or them. Kill me if that's what you must do." Imagine that courage! Imagine to love God so much that you are willing to lay down your life for Him. Most of us can't imagine that! We have a hard time setting aside our worldly cares in order to pray, to worship, or to help. We have a hard time setting aside earthly treasures to make a sacrificial contribution for the work of the Church.

***Whether your relationship with Christ is good at this moment, or whether you seek a relationship that hasn't really caught fire; whether you are solving complex "word problems" or haven't yet mastered your multiplication tables; whether you've put a lot of effort into your Christian walk, or whether you haven't put in any at all; this year's Holy Week journey has something to offer you.***

## Benefits to Be Taken from Holy Week

These are the lessons that everyone can learn this Holy Week:

1. The benefit of setting aside some time to pray, turning off the cell phone and other distractions. We all live lives that are too busy, too crazy and too noisy. Some quiet time without our electronic devices can do all of us some good.
2. The benefit is sitting with God by worshipping in church for an extended amount of time. Most of us don't spend enough time with God. We have a hard time fitting Him into our schedule. Left to our own devices, we just simply don't make the time. The Holy Week Schedule has provided the time for us. All we have to do is make the time to come.
3. The benefit of seeing and hearing the story of Christ's Passion told in scripture, in hymn and in action. We learn through repetition. Yes, it's the same story every year, it's the same ritual every year. But every year, we are a year older, a year wiser, a year closer to the end of life and a year more mature to hear and see the message with older eyes, and with eye that hopefully get more motivated as the years go by.
4. The slow journey through the Holy Week Book that may seem tedious and repetitive at times but which takes us through an adventure to spiritual renewal, from the "slow days" and "short services" of early in Holy Week to the long and painful journey of Holy Thursday night and Good Friday morning to the transition of Good Friday night to the joy of Holy Saturday and Pascha.
5. You will discover a peace and a power that comes from opening your heart by offering time to pray during Holy Week. When we truly open our hearts to God and allow them to be filled with His grace and love, it is a beautiful, power and comforting feeling. Surrendering to God doesn't make us weak or defeated. Rather it strengthens

us. Surrender the bulk of Holy Week to the Lord, and when in church surrender your thoughts to Him. Give Him the keys. Let Him drive the car of your life. And see how much smoother the ride can be.

6. If you've never come to a Pre-Sanctified Liturgy on Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday or Holy Wednesday; or if you've never been to a Bridegroom Service on Palm Sunday, Holy Monday or Holy Tuesday; or if you've never been to the Royal Hours on Good Friday morning, you'll discover that the most powerful services of Holy Week are the ones that are the least attended. You will get the sense of that well known scripture verse from Matthew 18: "Where two or three are gathered in My name, there I am also in the midst of them." *(One of my FAVORITE Holy Week services is the Royal Hours of Good Friday morning—because it looks like the scene on Golgotha—Christ hangs on the Cross, alone, and very few people keep vigil with Him, very few are there until the end. Another one of my favorite Holy Week services is Good Friday afternoon, when we take the Body of the Lord down from the Cross—it is very moving and powerful for me as a priest, to inter the Body of the Lord on top of the altar table, to see our beautiful altar stripped of its adornment and waiting for the Body of the Lord. Every year I cry during this service)*
7. A release of emotions is very cathartic and is something we don't do often enough. Getting on your knees, or raising your hands, or shedding a tear, or smiling for joy, these things are things we don't do often enough, but when we do them, it's amazing how good it feels. If you've ever been to confession, you know how much of a release it is to unburden yourself of sins and failings and to take away the peace, love and acceptance that can only come from God, and can only come when we fully let God into our hearts. There are lots of opportunities in Holy Week to express emotions—kneeling in front of the Cross and tomb of Christ, chanting the powerful hymns, listening to the moving prayers, hearing many inspiring pieces of Scripture. If you set aside some time during Holy Week, pair down your activities to a bare minimum (no TV, no music, setting aside extra time for worship), you can truly take a sense of

peace and renewal away from the Holy Week experience. It can be more than just rituals we march through every year without taking the time to fully appreciate the meaning of what it is that we are doing.

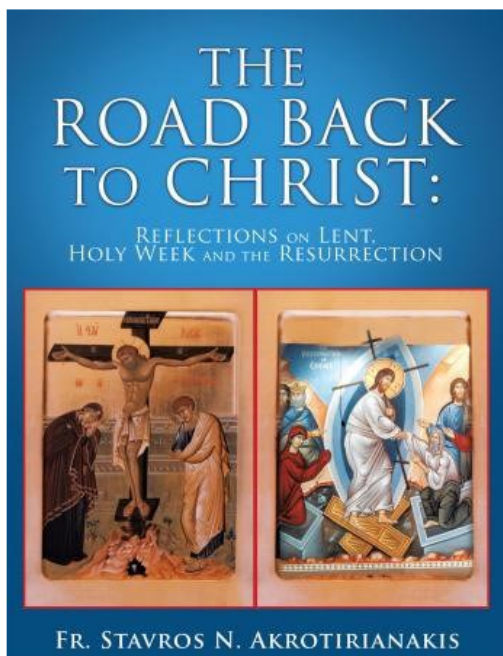
So, as we approach Holy Week in 2019, I am giving a challenge to our entire parish family. The challenge is three-fold:

1. To attend as many Holy Week services as possible (see schedule of services in this issue of *The Messenger*. And for those who are able to, come to all of them.
2. To attend at least one Holy Week Service that you have never attended in your entire life. Come to one of the six early services of the week (the service of the Bridegroom on one of the evenings, or the Presanctified Liturgy on one of the mornings). Come and sit quietly and listen once again to the teachings of Christ, before the "action" of Christ's Passion.
3. To do everything possible to make this special week HOLY. "Holy" means "set apart". Make this Holy Week special, make it a time of review, recommitment, recharge, revitalization and renewal of your Christian faith.

The Holy Week journey is something we repeat every year. But is so much more than a yearly march through the same paces. All the Holy Services speak directly to us and assist us with every aspect of life, wherever we are in life in 2019. Let us set this Holy Week aside and put away all distractions and receive our Resurrected Lord. Come to the services prepared and on time. Whether you are working complex word problems or just learning your multiplication tables, whether you are a spiritual master or know little about the faith, COME, LEARN, GROW, CELEBRATE and allow the power of Christ to take root and blossom in your life. I wish you a blessed Holy Week and a Kali Anastasi!

With love in the Lord,

+Fr. Stavros



## The Road Back to Christ: Reflections on Lent, Holy Week and the Resurrection is now on sale!

It is a series of daily reflections to be read from the beginning of Triodion (this year that is February 17) through All Saints Day (this year that is June 23). Pick up your copy today so you can begin reading it on February 17. This book costs \$18.99 and all monies taken in at the bookstore go to the church.

## Interested in Joining the Prayer Team?

Over 1650 people have! The Prayer Team is a daily message that Father Stavros has been writing for more than 4 years! Over half of our parish receives it daily, as well as many people outside of our parish. Each day, a scripture verse, a reflection written by Father, and a prayer are emailed to the Prayer Team via Constant Contact. If you would like to join the Prayer Team, please email Charlie at [charlie.hambos@gmail.com](mailto:charlie.hambos@gmail.com) and ask to add you.

# Fifty-Two Verses in Fifty-Two Weeks: The Bible Project

By Fr. Stavros

In January, we began the “Fifty-Two Verses in Fifty-Two Weeks” Bible Challenge, to memorize one Bible verse per week for fifty two weeks. I will provide a verse per week (four or five per month in *The Messenger* and then repeated weekly in the bulletin). I will choose verses that are meaningful to me. You are welcome to submit verses via email to me as well, as many of you have.

Most of us don’t spend enough time in the Bible. Sadly, some of us don’t spend any time. If you want a challenge, do the following:

- Memorize the verse of the week.
- For a greater challenge, read the entire chapter of the book that the verse comes from.
- For a greater challenge, read the entire book where the verse comes from.

Another challenge to consider is to keep a journal and sit with the verse each week. Read it, memorize it, and then contemplate it. Allow the Holy Spirit to move your mind and your thoughts and then write down those thoughts and keep them in a journal. If you do one reflection on Scripture each week, you will have the best book that could be. A book written by you, for you, guided by the Holy Spirit, who will guide your thoughts as you read the Scriptures.

Below are verses for the month of April. There is one verse for each week. I have written a few comments below each verse to get your mind going. Don’t let my thoughts be your interpretation. Contemplate the Scripture each week and let it speak to you. Let the Holy Spirit speak to you through your reflection on Scripture.

## March 31 - April 6

*If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. Mark 8:34*

On the 3rd Sunday of Lent, we celebrate the Veneration of the Holy Cross, by reading this Gospel. Each of us has a cross to carry in life, probably many of them. We each have challenges and burdens that we would not have chosen for ourselves. Do we embrace and carry with dignity whatever crosses life lays upon us? Or do we set them down and quit? Or do we carry them with anger or with a chip on our shoulders? If we would follow after Christ, we have to deny some of the things we want, carry our challenges (crosses) with dignity, with love and with faith, and follow after Him, even when the cross is heavy and the way is hard.

## April 7-13

*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; I Corinthians 6:19*

We don’t necessarily think of our bodies as temples of God, but indeed they are. They were created by God, who placed in our bodies, all of our senses, and our mind, giving us the tools we need to get through this life, to serve Him and serve others. Our bodies are not ours to do with as we wish. They are a gift from Him. Thus, we should honor them, both with what we put into them (healthy

consumption of food, no excessive eating or drinking), how we take care of them (to get a sufficient amount of exercise, go to the doctor regularly for check-ups, take care of medical issues), and what comes out of them (watch our words, our thoughts and our actions). How are you taking care of your body? How can you take better care of it?

## April 14-20

*Jesus wept. John 11:35*

This is the shortest verse in the Bible. Thus, it should be the easiest to memorize. At the end of this week, we will hear it in the Gospel reading on the Saturday of Lazarus. This verse, though very short, is rich in meaning. Jesus wept over the death of His friend. He shares our grief. It showed His humanity. Jesus also weeps over the ungodly things going on in our world. What things do you grieve that Jesus can carry with you? What things in your life does He grieve over? What can you do better?

## April 21-27

*“Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth! Psalm 46:10*

If we’ve planned it our right, we’ll be spending a lot of time in church this week. We’ll relive the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. We’ll spend a lot of time being still and contemplating Christ, salvation, and our relationship with both. It is hard to be still. It is hard to block out worldly distractions. But it is also extremely reward to, as we sing in the Cherubic Hymn, “to lay aside all worldly cares so that we may receive the King of all.” Once Holy Week is over, spend some time each day being still with God.

## April 28-May 4

*Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” John 11:25-26*

We celebrate Pascha, the Feast of feasts, this week. This week is also called “Renewal Week” or “Bright Week.” It is “Bright” because it contrasts to the difficult journey of Lent and Holy Week that we have just completed. It is called “Renewal Week” because everything is renewed in the Light of the Resurrected Christ. Not only did Christ rise from the dead, we now also can rise from the dead to eternal life with Him. Do we believe this? And if so, how does this affect our lives?

*How did we do last month? If there are any scriptures that mean the world to you, send them to Fr. Stavros at [frstav@gmail.com](mailto:frstav@gmail.com).*

# Liturgical Schedule for April 2019

**Monday, April 1** Great Compline 5:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, April 3** Reading of the 9th Hour 5:30 p.m.  
Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00 - 7:15 p.m.  
Lenten Dinner hosted by the Young Adults followed by Beatitudes Presentation

**Friday, April 5** Salutations to the Virgin Mary - 4th Stanza 6:30-7:30 p.m.

**Sunday, April 7** 4th Sunday of Lent - St. John of the Ladder  
Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.

Altar Boys: GOYAns may serve **Ushers:** Nick Kavouklis, George Trimikliniotis, Peter Theophanous  
**Welcoming Ministry:** Greeters: Skip Higdon, Debbie Kavouklis; Ambassador: Maria Karounos; Caller: Christene Worley  
**Coffee Hour:** In Memory of Dionisios & Barbara Labatos **Bookstore:** Zhana Temelkova and Elaine Daniels

**Monday, April 8** Great Compline 5:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, April 10** Reading of the 9th Hour 5:30 p.m.  
Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00 - 7:15 p.m.  
Lenten Dinner hosted by the AHEPA/DOP, followed by Beatitudes Presentation

**Friday, April 12** Vigil of the Akathist Hymn  
Akathist Hymn 6:30-8:15 p.m.  
Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom 8:15-9:30 p.m.

**Sunday, April 14** 5th Sunday of Lent - St. Mary of Egypt  
Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. Matthew **Ushers:** Ron Myer, Jim Armstrong, Nick Patides  
**Welcoming Ministry:** Greeters: Bessie Palios, Michael Palios; Ambassador: Marenca Patrascoiu; Caller: Julie Palios  
**Coffee Hour:** Family Last Names C&D **Bookstore:** Rita Bedran and MaryAnn Rose

**Monday, April 15** Great Compline 5:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, April 17** Reading of the 9th Hour 5:30 p.m.  
Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00 - 7:15 p.m.  
Lenten Dinner hosted by the Bible Studies, followed by Beatitudes Presentation

## Saturday, April 20 - Sunday, April 28 Holy Week 2019 See Special Schedule

**Monday, April 29** St. George  
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**Friday, May 3** Life-Giving Fountain of the Virgin Mary—Zoödochos Peghe - Ζωοδόχος Πηγή  
Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**Sunday, May 5** Sunday of Thomas  
Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Altar Boys: Captains and St. Mark **Ushers:** David Voykin, Ed Gerecke, Pete Trakas  
**Welcoming Ministry:** TBA  
**Coffee Hour:** Pascha Picnic **Bookstore:** Happy Picnic!

# Blessed are You...

## Becoming the *Light* of the World

A SIX-WEEK LENTEN STUDY TO HELP US  
Apply the Beatitudes to our lives

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*Join us to better understand the call to becoming the Light of the World  
as Christians with more engagement.*

### Weekly Topics:

<b>Wednesday, March 13</b>	Blessed are You: It starts with humility
<b>Wednesday, March 20</b>	Seeking comfort in God's strength
<b>Wednesday, March 27</b>	A hunger for righteousness and mercy
<b>Wednesday, April 3</b>	Purity and peace bring us closer to God
<b>Wednesday, April 10</b>	Blessed even on the worst day
<b>Wednesday, April 17</b>	YOU are the Light of the World

### Each Wednesday evening schedule:

6:00 p.m.	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
7:15 p.m.	Lenten Dinner (provided by one of our ministries)
7:45 p.m.	Presentation by Fr. Stavros
8:15 p.m.	Small group discussion
8:45 p.m.	Concluding Remarks and Closing Prayer

*\*Childcare will be provided at no cost. Please contact the church office with the name and age of each child by March 1 so we can properly plan.*



## HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA SCHEDULE FOR 2019

### April 20 **Saturday of Lazarus**

*Commemoration of the raising of Lazarus from the dead*

**Orthros 8:30 a.m. Proskomide 9:30 a.m.**

**Divine Liturgy 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.**

*GOYA and Sunday School students are requested to attend to help in preparing the crosses for Palm Sunday, after Liturgy.*

### April 21 **Palm Sunday-The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem**

**Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.-noon**

**Service of the Bridegroom 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.**

Procession of the Icon of the Nymphios

*Theme: Christ as the Bridegroom of the Church; watchfulness*

### April 22 **Holy Monday**

**9<sup>th</sup> Hour 9:00 a.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 9:30-11:00 a.m.**

**Service of the Bridegroom 6:30-8:00 p.m.**

*Theme: The Parable of the Talents*

### April 23 **Holy Tuesday**

**9<sup>th</sup> Hour 9:00 a.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 9:30-11:00 a.m.**

**Service of the Bridegroom 6:30-8:30 p.m.**

His Grace Bishop Sevastianos will preside. The Choir will sing the Hymn of Kassiane.

*Theme: Repentance of the harlot vs. the Betrayal by Judas*

### April 24 **Holy Wednesday**

**9<sup>th</sup> Hour 9:00 a.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 9:30-11:00 a.m.**

**Holy Unction for Children 3:00-4:00 p.m.**

**Matins of Holy Thursday**

**Reading of the Gospel of Last Supper 5:45 p.m.**

**Holy Unction for Adults 6:30-8:00 p.m.**

*Theme: washing away of sin; healing of soul and body*

### April 25 **Holy Thursday**

**Vespers and Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 9:15-11:00 a.m.**

**Service of the Holy Passion 6:30-10:00 p.m.**

Reading of the 12 Gospels, Procession of the Crucified Christ

*Themes: The Betrayal, Trial and Death of Christ, the Passion*

*All-Night Vigil will follow the service*

### April 26 **Good Friday**

**Reading of the Royal Hours 9:00-11:00 a.m.**

*Standing vigil at the Cross of Christ*

Decorating the Epitaphios 11:00 a.m. (all are invited to help)

**Apokathelosis 3:00-4:15 p.m. The Unnailing/Burial of Christ**

**Lamentations 7:00-10:30 p.m.**

*Singing of the Funeral Lamentations and*

*Procession with the Epitaphios*

### April 27 **Holy Saturday**

**Vespers and Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 8:30-11:00 a.m.**

*Reading of Prophecies foretelling the Resurrection of Christ*

**Great Canon 11:00 p.m.**

### April 28 **PASCHA**

**The Service of the Resurrection of Christ-Midnight**

**Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom 12:30-2:00 a.m.**

Following Liturgy, all are invited to a reception in the Kourmolis Center

### **AGAPE Vespers 11:00 a.m.-Noon**

The Gospel is read in numerous languages to indicate the universal character of the Christian message

Easter Egg Hunt for Children at Noon

### April 29 **Bright Monday-Feast of St. George**

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

## ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΙΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΗΣ ΕΒΔΟΜΑΔΟΣ 2019

Σάββατο, 20 Απριλίου

**Σάββατο του Λάζαρου**

Όρθρος 8:30 - 9:30 π.μ.

Ακολουθία τη Θεία Προσκομιδή 9:30 π.μ. - 10:00 π.μ.

Θεία Λειτουργία 10:00 - 11:30 π.μ.

Κυριακή, 21 Απριλίου

**Κυριακή των Βαΐων**

Όρθρος 8:30 π.μ.

Θεία Λειτουργία 9:45 π.μ. - 12:00 μ.μ.

Ακολουθία του Νυμφίου 6:30 - 8:00 μ.μ.

Δευτέρα, 22 Απριλίου

**Μεγάλη Δευτέρα**

Ενάτη Ώρα 9:00 - 9:30 π.μ.

Θεία Λειτουργία των Προηγιασμένων Δώρων 9:30 - 11:00 π.μ.

Ακολουθία του Νυμφίου 6:30 - 8:00 μ.μ.

Τρίτη, 23 Απριλίου

**Μεγάλη Τρίτη**

Ενάτη Ώρα 9:00 - 9:30 π.μ.

Θεία Λειτουργία των Προηγιασμένων Δώρων 9:30 - 11:00 π.μ.

Ακολουθία του Νυμφίου 6:30 - 8:30 μ.μ.

Τέταρτη, 24 Απριλίου

**Μεγάλη Τέταρτη**

Ενάτη Ώρα 9:00 - 9:30 π.μ.

Θεία Λειτουργία των Προηγιασμένων Δώρων 9:30 - 11:00 π.μ.

Ακολουθία του Ευχέλαιου τα παιδιά 3:00 - 4:00 μ.μ.

Ακολουθία του Νυμφίου 5:45 - 6:30 μ.μ.

Ακολουθία του Ευχέλαιου 6:30 - 8:00 μ.μ.

Πέμπτη, 25 Απριλίου

**Μεγάλη Πέμπτη**

Θεία Λειτουργία του Αγίου Βασίλειου 9:15 - 11:00 π.μ.

Ακολουθία Σταυρώσεως 6:30 - 8:00 μ.μ.

Παρασκευή, 26 Απριλίου

**Μεγάλη Παρασκευή**

Βασιλικές Ώρες 9:00 - 11:00 π.μ.

Αποκαθήλωσης 3:00 - 4:15 μ.μ.

Επιτάφιος Θρήνος 7:00 - 10:30 μ.μ.

Σάββατο, 27 Απριλίου.

**Μεγάλο Σάββατο**

Θεία Λειτουργία του Αγίου Βασίλειου 8:30 - 11:00 π.μ.

Μέγας Κανών

Ακολουθία της Αναστάσεως, Μεσάνυχτα

Θεία Λειτουργία της Αναστάσεως 12:30 - 2:00 π.μ.

Κυριακή, 28 Απριλίου

**Άγιον Πάσχα**

Μέγας Εσπερινός της Αγάπης. 11:00 π.μ. - 12:00 μ.μ.

Δευτέρα, 29 Απριλίου

**Αγίου Γεώργιου του Τροπαιοφόρου**

Όρθρος 9:00 π.μ. Θεία Λειτουργία 10:00 π.μ.



# Liturgical Notes for Great Lent

**Divine Liturgy to begin at 9:45 on the Sundays of Great Lent** - Because the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is offered on each Sunday of Lent, and this Divine Liturgy is slightly longer than the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:45 a.m. from March 17 - April 21. The Choir will begin the Doxology at 9:40 a.m.

**Sacrament of Confession** Many people have already made appointments for their confessions to be heard, many for the first time in their lives. It is confidential. It helps you reconnect with God and unburden yourself of guilt. It helps you to make a new start in your spiritual journey and is an integral part of any successful Lenten journey. If you have questions about confession, please ask. There is no better way to prepare for Pascha than to receive this sacrament. Confessions will be heard up to April 18, and then again after Pascha. Please make your appointment as soon as possible, because Fr. Stavros likes to give people whatever time they need. As it gets closer to Holy Week and more and more people are coming, He is forced to go quicker, and it is very important not to be rushed in this Sacrament.

**Mondays of Lent - Great Compline** The service of Great Compline will be read on the following Mondays of Lent - April 1, April 8 and April 15. This service lasts about an hour and consists of Psalms and hymns of repentance. Service Books for this service will be available in the Narthex.

**Wednesdays of Lent - 9<sup>th</sup> Hour and Pre-Sanctified Liturgy** The Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts (also called Pre-Sanctified Liturgy) will be held on the Wednesdays during Great Lent. This service consists of Vespers with Holy Communion that was "Pre-Sanctified" the previous Sunday. It is an opportunity to receive Holy Communion frequently during the season of fasting. The Pre-Sanctified Liturgy is preceded by the reading of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hour, a short service with penitential prayers as well as the recitation of the Creed, a pre-requisite for the reception of Holy Communion. Service books for this service will be available in the Narthex. Following the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, one of our ministries will host a Lenten Dinner: Wednesday, April 3 - Young Adults; Wednesday, April 10 - AHEPA/DOP; Wednesday, April 17 - Bible Studies So, spend the hour you would spend cooking dinner worshipping in church and then stay for a complementary dinner. This is being offered in the hopes that more people will attend this service, and that each member of each ministry will attend at least one of these moving services.

**Fridays of Lent - The Salutations to the Virgin Mary (Heretismoi)** This service also lasts about an hour and is a series of prayers and devotions that invoke the intercessions of the Virgin Mary for our salvation. It will be held on April 5 and April 12. Service Books for this service will be available in the Narthex.

**Why does Liturgy seem longer on Sundays during Lent?** Because it is. It is the Tradition of the Church to celebrate the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great on the 5 Sundays of Great Lent, Holy Thursday morning, and Holy Saturday morning. St. Basil wrote his liturgy in the middle part of the 4th century. St. John Chrysostom would later edit some of the priestly prayers of St. Basil's liturgy, significantly shortening them. The Anaphora of St. Basil (from the Creed until right before the Lord's Prayer) has the priestly prayers significantly longer. They contain all the theology of the Orthodox Church. A copy of the "Anaphora" of St. Basil's Liturgy has been placed in the pews for you to **use on Sundays**.

**Sunday, April 7 - Fourth Sunday of Lent - St. John Climacus** St. John of the Ladder was only 16 years old when he left Palestine and went to St. Catherine's monastery (at Mt. Sinai, Egypt). He lived there for 50 years, where he wrote his famous book, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. This is a spiritual ladder. Christians follow certain rules so that they can get closer to God, and symbolically climb to heaven. He had struggles, like any person does, but he won over those struggles that the Devil put for him. That's why we celebrate his memory on this Sunday of Lent. St. John is a perfect example of how a person could be faithful all of their life, and be together with God in the Kingdom of Heaven.

**Friday, April 12 - Vigil of the Akathist** It is the tradition of the Orthodox Church (practiced in monasteries and in a few parishes) that the Akathist Hymn is celebrated as part of an all-night vigil, culminating in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. A Vigil is when more than one service is held in sequence. Father Stavros has always made it a practice to celebrate the Akathist Hymn (the fifth Friday of Lent) and to immediately follow it with a celebration of the Divine Liturgy. So, as we do each year, we will begin the Akathist Hymn at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, April 12, followed by the Divine Liturgy at 8:15 p.m., with both services concluding by 9:30 p.m. This will afford us the opportunity to pray the Divine Liturgy together in a more subdued atmosphere (and how often do we get to celebrate Liturgy at night in our church?) and to receive Holy Communion on this very special feast day. For those who wish to receive Holy Communion, please abstain from food after 2:00 p.m. on that Friday.

**Sunday, April 14 - 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent - St. Mary of Egypt** St. Mary of Egypt was anything but a Saint throughout the first part of her life. From a very young age, she was a prostitute. Being from Egypt, she decided that she wanted to see the Holy Land and the Tomb of Christ (also known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre). As she went to enter the Church, a force kept her from entering. She was unable to enter, while so many others did. She realized that God had done this to have her stop her sinning. She promised to God that day she would stop. She repented with a pure heart, and she was allowed to enter. She went for Confession, received Holy Communion, and then went to the desert to live for years in repentance. Years later, she was visited by a Priest-monk, Zosimos (later a Saint in our Church). He gave her Holy Communion, and they discussed her trials and tribulations. Although she suffered much, she was so happy to be with Christ. Later that same day, she fell asleep in the Lord. Her example of repentance is SO great, we commemorate her life many centuries later.

**Saturday, April 20 - Saturday of Lazarus, Service of the Proskomide**

Father Stavros has received the blessings of Metropolitan Alexios to celebrate the service of the Proskomide on the solea once a year, on the Saturday of Lazarus. The Proskomide is the service where the bread and wine are prepared to be offered at the Divine Liturgy. On Saturday, April 20, Father Stavros will celebrate this service at 9:30 a.m., on the solea at St. John the Baptist and will explain the service to those who are in attendance. He will also pray for everyone in attendance and offer a piece of bread on each person's behalf in the preparation of the Holy Communion. Please plan to come to this service to see this important aspect of the Liturgy.



# Holy Week 2019 Guidelines

## **Why are the services at night during Holy Week called Matins Services, even though they are taking place during the evening hours?**

Traditionally, the Matins or Orthros is done in the early morning hours, ending with the sunrise, when the Great Doxology is sung or read. The Orthros or Matins Services of Holy Week are VERY long, lasting almost three and a half hours. During the Middle Ages, the services were transposed ahead several hours, from the early morning hours to the evening of the preceding night. Thus, the Orthros of Good Friday was moved to Holy Thursday evening, the 12 Gospels and the Procession of the Crucified Christ. The Lamentations, which is the Orthros of Holy Saturday was moved from Saturday morning to Friday night. The Vespers services, was moved from Holy Thursday evening to Holy Thursday morning. Our services commemorate events about 12 hours before they happened in real time, with the Last Supper Holy Thursday morning, the Crucifixion Holy Thursday evening, etc. The Descent from the Cross on Friday afternoon remains at its proper time, as a Vespers service, but the interval between the Vespers of Friday afternoon and the Orthros of Holy Saturday does not. The Resurrection Service takes place at the proper time. The schedule of transposing services begins Palm Sunday when we celebrate Orthros and Liturgy in the morning and celebrate the Orthros of Holy Monday on Palm Sunday evening. There is a vespers on Palm Sunday, which has been suppressed in modern usage.

**His Grace Bishop Sevastianos to visit our Parish for Holy Tuesday Evening Bridegroom Service** - His Grace Bishop Sevastianos will preside at the Service of the Bridegroom on Holy Tuesday evening, beginning at 6:30 p.m. His Grace has visited our church many times, and now as the Auxiliary Bishop of the Metropolis of Atlanta, we will enjoy His Grace's company on a regular basis. Please come and welcome Bishop Sevastianos.

**Holy Unction** - The Mystery of Holy Unction is established upon the words and actions of our Lord Jesus Christ and is a sacrament of the church. This is a sacrament of healing and transformation from a bruised and hurt world to the deliverance from sin and corruption. All sacraments of the church are administered by the priests of the church. In fact, the primary role and identity of the priests of the church is to be the celebrant of the sacraments. Because of this, **Holy Unction may not be taken home.** If you wish to have this sacrament offered, Father Stavros is happy to offer it at the church, on a day and time of your choosing. For those unable to come to church, Father will be happy to bring it to shut-ins who are unable to come to church.

**Bridegroom Service for the Last Supper** - There is actually a Bridegroom Service which is traditionally celebrated on Holy Wednesday evening. However, this service has been suppressed in most parishes because of the Sacrament of Holy Unction. This service is important because it contains the Gospel lesson of the Last Supper. So, if you are not going to attend church on Holy Thursday morning, and would like to have a complete narrative of Holy Week, please plan to attend.

## **Holy Thursday Evening - The Service of the Passion**

The service of the 12 Gospels and procession of the crucified Lord is the longest service of the Church year. On Holy Thursday, light and darkness, joy and sorrow are mixed. At the "upper room" and in Gethsemane the light of the kingdom and the darkness of hell come together. The way of life and the way of death converge. **However, one cannot truly celebrate the Resurrection if he/she has not stood at the foot of the cross of Christ.** As one prayer of the Sunday Orthros states, "Through the Cross, joy has come to all the world." Without the Crucifixion, there could be no Resurrection. Thus, after the Resurrection Service on Holy Saturday Night, one could argue that Holy Thursday evening is the next most-important

service of Holy Week. *If you are unable to attend the entire service, then please come from 7:30-8:30 p.m., witness the Procession of the Crucified Lord, venerate His precious Body on the Cross and leave early. But please do not abandon the Lord as He hangs on the Cross.* Holy Thursday evening is the most powerful service of Holy Week and the entire church year.

## **An All-Night/All Day Vigil at the Cross of Christ**

For the past six years, we have done an All-Night Vigil at the Cross of Christ. Those who participated found it VERY inspiring. The vigil will begin following the service of the 12 Gospels and will continue until the service of the Lamentations on Good Friday Evening. Thus, beginning at 6:30 p.m. on Holy Thursday, there will be 28 continuous hours of prayer in our church. ***This way, even those who can't come out in the middle of the night can participate by taking a shift during the day*** The schedule will be as follows:

### **Holy Thursday Evening**

6:30-10:00 p.m. Service of the 12 Gospels  
10:00 p.m. - 9:00 a.m. (Fri.) Vigil of Psalm Reading at the Cross

### **Good Friday**

9:00-11:00 a.m. Service of the Royal Hours  
11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Vigil of Psalm Reading at the Cross  
3:00-4:30 p.m. The Service of the Un-nailing  
4:30-7:00 p.m. Vigil of Psalm Reading at the foot of the Cross  
7:00-10:30 p.m. Service of the Lamentations

We will have a sign-up sheet for people to sign up for an hour or two to stand at the Cross and read from the book of Psalms as well as other prayer books. Charlie Hambos will again be coordinating this for us. If you are interested in participating at the All-Night/Add-Day Vigil on Holy Thursday, please contact Charlie Hambos.

We know that at the Crucifixion, all but one of the Disciples fled. Only John stayed at the foot of the cross. In our world today, many people are abandoning Christ, Christianity, and any sense of Godliness. If Christ gave His life on the cross and did not abandon us, this is one chance, on this special day, to say thank you to Christ and remember what He did by not abandoning Him.

## **Good Friday**

**Decoration of the Epitaphios** will be done in church following the Royal Hours on Good Friday. All are invited to come and help decorate the tomb of Christ. Please, however, work quietly—this job is meant to be solemn not social.

**Apokathelosis** - The Service of Apokathelosis (the Un-Nailing) re-enacts the narrative of Christ descending from the Cross. The figure of Christ is removed from the cross and wrapped in a new linen cloth, carried into the sanctuary and placed on the altar table. In the same service, a procession with the Epitaphios (embroidery of the dead Christ) is made around the interior of the church, and the Epitaphios is placed in the Kouvouklion (tomb of Christ).

**The Lamentations and the Epitaphios Procession** - The Lamentations are short, poetic verses lamenting the Passion, Death and Burial of Christ. Interspersed with the Lamentations are Psalm verses from Psalm 119, the same verses we sing at a funeral service, which is appropriate, as the Lamentations are the funeral service for the Lord. The service starts with the Canon, and after the Canon is complete, the priest opens the Royal Doors, the lights are turned up, and the Lamentations begin. Everyone is invited to sing together. Books will be provided for your use. The outdoor procession of the tomb of our Lord will take place, weather permitting, at the Service of the Lamentations. We invite all the faithful to participate in this procession by proceeding in an order, quiet and dignified manner befitting the solemnity of this occasion. Please, refrain from talking with others or acting in a way which will bring attention to you instead of the dead Lord. Please sing along with the choir. This is a time to

pray, not to text message! Everyone will pass under the Epitaphios, symbolizing the passing from death to life, re-enter the church quietly and await the resumption of the service. Finally, everyone will be given a flower from the Epitaphios as a blessing at the end of the service.

## Holy Saturday

**Anastasis Service** The service of the Anastasis will begin at 11:00 p.m. on Holy Saturday evening, with the chanting of the Canon. Shortly before midnight, the light of the Resurrected Christ will be given to all the faithful. We will then go outside, weather permitting, to read the Resurrection Gospel and sing the Christos Anesti for the first time. Please proceed outside in an orderly manner so that we can complete this service in a timely manner. We will then proceed back into the church for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. **Please plan to stay for the entirety of the Divine Liturgy on Pascha, the most joyous Liturgy of the year, and to receive Holy Communion. After all, we don't break our fast with meatballs and cheese, but with Holy Communion.** There will be a reception following the Divine Liturgy for all in attendance, in the Kourmolis Center. After making the journey through Holy Week together, what better way to continue our celebration than to sit down as a family and break bread together on the greatest feast day of the church year.

**Blessing of Baskets of Food** - It is the Orthodox Tradition on Pascha that we not only bless eggs but other types of food that will go on the table for the Paschal Banquet. Therefore, if anyone wishes to bring a basket of food to be blessed on Pascha night, they may come and place it beneath or around the table on the Solea where the basket of Easter eggs will be.

**Reading of the Resurrection Gospel at the Agape Vespers** - Those interested in participating in the beautiful Vespers of Agape on Pascha on Sunday morning at 11:00 a.m. by reading the Gospel of the Resurrection in a foreign language are encouraged to see Fr. Stavros or call the church office, prior to Holy Week. **DON'T JUST SHOW UP EXPECTING TO READ. WE NEED TO CAREFULLY PLAN THE SERVICES SO THEY ARE DONE PROPERLY.** Please come to the Agape service by 10:45 a.m. to find out where you will stand for the reading of the Gospel. The reading is from the Gospel of John 20:19-25. You may read it in any language you wish, the more the better.

**Holy Communion to be given only during Divine Liturgy** - There are eight opportunities to receive Holy Communion during Holy Week - Saturday of Lazarus, Palm Sunday, Holy Monday morning, Holy Tuesday morning, Holy Wednesday morning, Holy Thursday morning, Holy Saturday morning, and of course, at the Paschal Divine Liturgy. Please plan to receive Holy Communion through prayer and fasting at as many of these services as possible. Incidentally, a person may receive Holy Communion each time it is offered. For instance, you can receive Holy Communion on both Holy Saturday morning and at the Anastasis. For those who have kept the entire Lenten fast, you can receive Holy Communion conceivably, all eight times during Holy Week. Since there are so many opportunities to receive Holy Communion during the Divine Liturgies of Holy Week, **Holy Communion will only be given in the context of the Divine Liturgy, not before or after.** (no drive through Communion) Also, even if we receive Holy Communion on Holy Thursday or Holy Saturday, we should not break the fast until the conclusion of the Paschal Liturgy. When receiving Holy Communion, it is important and necessary to have celebrated the entire Liturgy. Please no phone calls about what time is Communion, so you can duck in and out quickly. Come for the entire service. Be there for the invitation to enter the Kingdom, be there for the reading of the Gospel, the reciting of the Creed. And after Communion, don't just take your Communion and run, as many people will do on Holy Saturday morning, stay the remaining minutes of the services and pray the prayers of Thanksgiving in the back of the Liturgy book.

**A Note on Kneeling and Sitting** - It is the tradition of the church that we kneel or stand for the majority of the services. However, by

dispensation, we now have pews in the church and the faithful are allowed to sit at certain points in the services. Because of the long lines for Communion and because the length of the services, **PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO SIT** as you need to during Holy Week, especially during Holy Communion. Also, for those with bad knees, just sit with your head bowed during times we are kneeling, do not attempt to kneel. Our church never seeks our physical hurt in worship, nor do we want people passing out or becoming sick, which will only make us nervous and anxious.

**Holy Week Books are available for sale in the church bookstore.** The Holy Week Book contains the words and hymns of all the Holy Week services and will serve not only as an aid to worship but as a complete theology book, for the services of Holy Week contain all the theology of the Orthodox Church.

**Pascha versus Easter** - In every language except English and German, the feast of the Resurrection is identified with a word whose root is "Pasch." For instance, in Spanish, the word is "Pasqual." "Pascha" comes from the Hebrew for "Passover." The first Passover occurred in the Old Testament book of Exodus. The last of the 10 plagues on the Egyptians was the death of the first born son. The Hebrews were told to slaughter an unblemished lamb outside the city wall on a Friday, to not break any of its bones, and to spread its blood over their doorways. Those who had the blood of the lamb on their homes would be spared. The angel of death then came to the Egyptians and killed the first-born son in each home. Passover was a holiday celebrating the deliverance of the Hebrews from the bondage of Pharaoh and his taskmasters. The Crucifixion occurred at the Passover—the Lamb of God was killed outside the city wall on a Friday, none of His bones were broken, and by His blood we are set free from the bondage of sin and death. "Easter" comes from the word "Oestre" and was actually a Pagan holiday each spring. That's why in the Orthodox Church, and in our personal lives, we try to use the word "Pascha" to describe the feast of the Resurrection, rather than Easter.

**No Kneeling until Pentecost** It is actually the Tradition in the Orthodox Church that we not kneel on Sundays in honor of the Resurrection of Christ. Because we do not worship on a daily basis in our church communities, priests have encouraged people to kneel on Sundays, the thought being that if we do not kneel on Sundays, that we'll never kneel in church. It is a Tradition, that for 50 days after Pascha, we do not kneel in honor of the Resurrection. The next time we will kneel after April 28 is on the Feast of Pentecost (June 16) at the Vespers of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, when the priest says "Again and again on bended knees let us pray to the Lord."

**Fast Free the week after Pascha** - Having kept a fast for almost 8 weeks, including the week before Lent, Lent and Holy Week, the church gives us a "week off" from fasting the week after Pascha. During Bright Week, or Renewal Week, as that week is called each day is like a Sunday. Hence, there is no fasting during this celebratory week. Who, then, may receive Communion? Whoever wishes to, providing that they abstain from food the morning they are receiving. So, the Sunday after Pascha, everyone in the congregation may receive. There is no fasting on Wednesday or Friday of renewal week, or any other day of that week either.

**Doing it all** - The experience of attending all of the Holy Week services is rare indeed. But if you are able to do it this is a beautiful experience everyone should try at least once in their life. How often do you have the opportunity to receive Holy Communion 8 times in 9 days, to be within 12 hours of having received or receiving again for a week! How often do you have the opportunity to attend two services a day for a week! For a very uplifting and unique experience, please consider coming to all the services - priests go to all the services - they know the effort, the fatigue, the pain, but also the joy that only comes when you "do them all."

## Two Services during Bright Week

**Feast of St. George to be celebrated Monday, April 29-**St. George the "Trophy Bearer" is one of the most famous saints of our church. He lived in the third century. He was a soldier, famously memorialized in icons as slaying a dragon. Symbolically, he "slayed" the "dragons" that opposed Christianity and was martyred for his faith. His relics were placed in the altar of our church when it was consecrated in 1986. St. George's feast day is celebrated on the Monday after Pascha when Pascha falls on April 23 or later (when Pascha falls earlier than April 23, we celebrate his feastday on April 23). Thus, this year, we will celebrate his feastday on the day after Pascha, Monday, April 29.

**Friday, May 3 - Feast of the Life-Giving Fountain - Friday after Pascha** Commemorates the consecration of a Chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, which was built over a spring in Constantinople, that emits water with healing powers. Hundreds of miracles and healings have occurred at this spring. This feast day of "Zoödochos Peghe - Ζωοδόχος Πηγή" the Feast of the Life-Giving Fountain, is always celebrated on the Friday of Bright (Renewal) week, the week after Pascha, May 3, this year

**Photo Ministry Looking for more Photographers** Karina Findlay is the new head of the ministry, which documents the activities of our parish. We are looking for new photographers, especially to help in documenting the upcoming Holy Week Services. If you are interested in participating, please contact Karina at 813-476-9632.

## Small Group Study of Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis

Will meet in the Administration Building Meeting Room

**On Sunday, March 31, April 7 and  
April 14 from 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

*Please purchase the book soon.*

*Contact Mary Maas at 813-215-7688*

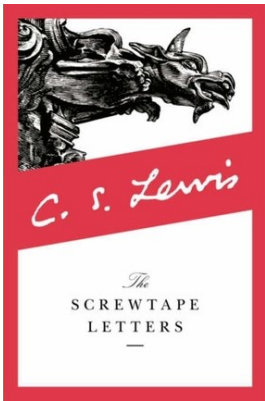
Here are the required readings for each session:

March 31 - First third of the book pages 1-61

April 7 - Second third of the book pages 63-127

April 14 - Last third of the book pages 129-209.

In this humorous exchange, C. S. Lewis delves into moral questions about good v. evil, temptation, repentance, and grace. Through this wonderful tale, the reader emerges with a better knowledge of what it means to live a good, honest life.



## Pan-Orthodox Lenten Vespers Services

4th Sunday of Lent, April 7

St. George Serbian, Clearwater

5:00 p.m.

5th Sunday of Lent, April 14

St. Philip in Tampa (OCA)

5:00 p.m.

## Special Altar Boy Schedule for Lent

Wednesday, April 3

Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 5:30 p.m.

Frankie Giallourakis and St. John

Friday, April 5

Salutations 6:30 p.m.

Anyone in GOYA may serve

Wednesday, April 10

Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 5:30 p.m.

Harry Koutroumanis and St. Matthew

Friday, April 12

Akathist Hymn 6:30 p.m.

Nicholas Katzaras and St. Mark

Wednesday, April 17

Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 5:30 p.m.

John Palios and St. Luke

**PLEASE COMMEMORATE THE NAMES OF MY DEPARTED FAMILY MEMBERS IN FRONT OF  
THE EPITAPHIOS (TOMB OF CHRIST) ON GOOD FRIDAY EVENING**

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**\*\*You only need to list the first name of the person you wish to be commemorated. You may list names of people who are Orthodox or non-Orthodox. Please mail to the office or bring to church by April 22.**

# St. John the Baptist Community News

## Parish Registry

**Chrismation**-James "Demetrios" Strahan was Chrismated on Sunday, February 24. Peter Weaver was the Sponsor. Congratulations!

**Chrismation**-Christian Perry was Chrismated on Sunday, March 10. Charlie Hambos was the Sponsor. Congratulations!

**Wedding**-Mihnea Anghelescu and Gabriela Damian were married on Sunday, February 24. Magur and Julieta Roz were the Sponsors. Congratulations!

**Funeral**-Virginia Theodorou passed away on March 2. Funeral services were held at St. John on March 7, with Fr. Stavros and Fr. Andrew Pavlakos officiating. May her memory be eternal!

**Trisagion**-Hector Colado passed away on March 4. A Trisagion was held on March 8. May his memory be eternal!

**Condolences** to Amin Hanhan, on the passing of his mother, Nahil Hanhan. May her memory be eternal!

**Condolences** to Vickie Peckham, on the passing of her mother, Nancy Styliades. May her memory be eternal!

**New Policy—no passing of trays**—As of January 1, there will no longer be a tray passed at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. It is our hope that everyone will increase their stewardship in order to bridge this gap. Increased stewardship and less nickel-and-dime (trays) are the mark of a strong parish. This new policy is in line with our desire to be a strong parish. There will be a tray in the narthex. You can deposit your stewardship checks in that tray, give additional donations in that tray or ignore the tray. There is no charge for the small candles. The large candles (the red 7-day ones) will still cost \$5. ***The exception to this will be Holy Week. We will pass trays on Palm Sunday (2), Holy Wednesday evening, Good Friday evening (2) and Pascha (2) because there are many visitors who will come to our church who are not stewards. This will afford them the opportunity to financially support our parish. Stewards may contribute as they wish.***

**NEW PROCEDURE FOR UNCLAIMED COFFEE HOURS** - We are excited to present a NEW procedure for hosting our weekly parish coffee hour for the weeks where no ministry has signed up for coffee hour. Certain letters of the alphabet according to last name, have been assigned to each open date. We will be emailing a link to a Sign-Up Genius. Please sign up for those Sundays which correspond to your last name. You may sign up for one or more items which include, set-up, serving, bringing items or clean up on any particular date. Please see the dates and suggested items below. We would like to see as many different people as possible sign up, so that the burden will not fall on anyone repeatedly. It is also important that our worship experience not be compromised by putting on the coffee hour. Finally, if a family would like to pool together to go a coffee hour, to honor a loved one who has passed, or mark another occasion, please let us know and we'll reserve that date for your family. If there are any questions, don't hesitate to call the church office at 813-876-8830. Thank you for helping us to create an environment that encourages fellowship and community. Families C & D on April 14.

**Get Acquainted Sunday, April 7** 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.

**Ushers Meeting – April 7** A meeting for all ushers will be held on Sunday, April 7, following Divine Liturgy, in the Zaharias Room. All ushers are re-requested to attend. Tom Georgas is the Head Usher for our parish and we will be re-organizing the groups as well as going over the procedures for Holy Week. Are you interested in serving as an usher? We are looking for some more people to serve in this capacity. If so, please come to the meeting on April 7. If you are on the list as an usher and do not wish to serve in this capacity, please notify Tom Georgas at [Georgas@verizon.net](mailto:Georgas@verizon.net).

## GOYA Lenten Retreat – April 5-7

Our 15th Annual GOYA Lenten Retreat will be held April 5-7. We will welcome GOYAnS and advisors from around the Tampa Bay area who will be with us for the Salutations service on Friday, April 5 and the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, April 7.

## GOYA Meeting – April 14 - Special Retreat for "Siblings" so bring your Bros and Sistas

The GOYA Meeting for April will be held on Sunday, April 14, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the Kourmoulis Center. All GOYAnS are invited to participate. For this particular meeting, Fr. Stavros is going to do a special seminar for all GOYAnS who have siblings in GOYA, a "sibling" retreat, similar to what we did last year. All other GOYAnS who do not have a sibling will meet with Charlie that night.

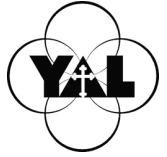
## Luminaries for Good Friday and Easter

These are little bags with votive candles inside that line the way of the procession of Christ's tomb around the church on Good Friday and are lit around the empty tomb on Easter Sunday. On each bag names can be written of loved ones, either for their health and well-being if they are living (Easter), or in memory of someone who has passed away (Good Friday evening). The GOYAnS will be selling the luminaries after church on Sundays, April 7, April 14 and April 21. This is a wonderful way to honor those who are living, those who passed away, to make our services even more beautiful and to help out our GOYAnS.

**There will be no Community Outreach in April - next one will be Saturday, May 18** It has become customary at St. John to not have any meetings or activities during Great and Holy Week, which lasts from April 20-28 this year, so that we can all spend as much time as possible worshipping and praying. Even a noble cause like Community Outreach is postponed when it conflicts with Holy Week. All organizations of our church are asked to refrain from meetings and activities during this one week of the year. Those who organize Community Outreach at First Presbyterian Church will cover for our absence. We will resume Community Outreach in May.

**Hosting Lenten Meal after the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy on, Wednesday, April 3**

**Young Adult Ministry - Holy Monday, April 20** - The YAL will walk over to Starbucks and have some tea or coffee after the Bridgroom Service. The service starts at 6:30 p.m. and is over by 8:00 p.m. We'll walk over when it's over. Please RSVP to Charlie if you are going to attend. Dates may change. Charlie will send an email.



**St. John's is proud to offer a new ministry for families with special needs:**

### *Connect Through Christ*

According to the US Census, 18.5% of American Children under age 18 are Special Needs Children. That doesn't mean that they aren't smart, talented or capable. Just that they have specific challenges that a "typical" student would not face.

There are four major types of special needs children:

- Physical – muscular dystrophy, chronic asthma, epilepsy, etc.
- Developmental – down syndrome, autism, dyslexia, speech delays, processing disorders
- Behavioral/Emotional – ADD, bi-polar, oppositional defiance disorder, etc.
- Sensory Impaired – Blind, visually impaired, deaf, limited hearing

Our mission is to break down barriers that keep children with disabilities and their families from being able to participate in the Church community. By discretely identifying families that Connect Through Christ can serve we hope to assist in providing a life long relationship with Christ. For more information please contact Lindsey Skourellos at 813-503-7845 and [lskourellos@yahoo.com](mailto:lskourellos@yahoo.com) or Dante Skourellos 813-765-9534 and [andd\\_skourellos@yahoo.com](mailto:andd_skourellos@yahoo.com)

## Youth Protection Update

Dear Parishioners,

As many of you are aware, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America passed a resolution last summer mandating Youth Worker screening, training, and background checks for all Greek Orthodox churches in North America. Luckily, we've already implemented a youth protection program and many of us are familiar with the processes.

Please be aware that the youth protection enrollment for ecclesiastical year 2019–2020 will occur between June 1 and August 31. Prior to this starting date, you will receive email communication regarding what steps to take if you are volunteer who works with children or leads our Church. We ask that you keep an eye out for these emails and read the Messenger for updates as our methodology may change due to the new requirements. Thank you for serving so faithfully at St. John's.

Yours in Christ,

Catherine S. Mitseas, ministry head  
Nick Katzaras, Parish Council Liaison





# Your Cleaning Products Could be Making You Sick

**D**o you have bleach in your home? Did you know that bleach is the most toxic product you could have and that it does NOT kill mold? Did you know that most tooth pastes have formaldehyde (embalming fluid) in them? Did you know that Tide, Windex, Scrubbing Bubbles and many other cleaning products that you buy have toxic chemicals that can cause serious health issues including cancer? 50% of the population is predicted to get cancer in their life time. Only 20% is hereditary. The other 80% is environmental.

There was a study done (You can find it on line at WebMD) with over 6000 subjects over a period of 20 years that said using the cleaning products you buy at the grocery stores or any other store just once a week can cause the same lung damage that smoking a pack of cigarettes every day for 20 years will do. Ask any person that cleans homes for a living and most of them have some pretty serious respiratory issues. Some of those same toxic chemicals can be in your hair and skin care products along with creams and other personal care products you may be using. It takes 26 seconds for those toxins to get absorbed into your body through your skin and then into your blood, vital organs and brain. If you get frequent colds and/or flu like symptoms, headaches, joint pain, a cough that just doesn't seem to go away, it could be the products you are using. Asthma patients could experience increased asthma attacks as well.

So what can you do? There is an app called Think Dirty. Once downloaded to your cell phone, you can use it to check the products you have in your home. Scan the bar code and if your product is one of thousands that have known toxic chemicals, it will tell you. Then get rid of that product. Replace it with toxic



free products that are plant based and have no warning labels on them. Any product that warns you against ingesting or getting it on your skin has a toxic chemical in it and should not be used. If you need some recommendations to some toxic free products, feel free to ask me as I have converted my home to toxic free zone. Prevention of illness is always easier and so much less expensive than treating an illness.

Always consult with your physician for any reoccurring health issues or symptoms that don't seem to resolve in a few days.

Stavrula Crafa, RNC, Parish Nursing Ministry



## Join the IOCC Emergency Action Team

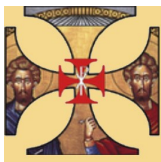
Are you interested in helping your neighbors get back on their feet after a disaster? When a disaster strikes, families often need help removing debris, tearing down water soaked walls, or ripping out buckled floors. In the event of a disaster in your greater community, IOCC will reach out to you to join one of our Emergency Action Teams. If you are willing to travel to a disaster affected area that is not in your greater community, please let us know that as well. Go to <https://www.iocc.org/take-action/join-action-team/emergency-action-team>.

## Metropolis of Atlanta's St. Stephen's Summer Camp



- Week #1** June 23 - June 29
- Week #2** June 30 - July 6
- Week #3** July 7 - July 13
- Week #4** July 14 - July 20
- Week #5** July 21 - July 27

Registration was on March 20. A few spots may still be open. In the meantime, visit <http://atlmetropolis.org/st-stephens-summer-camp> to help with the Camp Wish List!



# METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA PHILOPTOCHOS Christ the Good Shepherd SUMMER CAMP

## Created for Families with Children on the Autism Spectrum

- A faith based camp offered by the Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos to help children with Autism grow in their relationship with God.
- There is a 1:1 ratio of trained counselors for each special needs child.
- Limited to 10 families.
- Families will stay in cabins and experience all that our beautiful retreat center has to offer: recreational activities, art programs, special parent seminars, bonding with other families, spiritual nourishment.

**When:** May 24-26, 2019

**Where:** Diakonia Retreat Center, 455 Quail Ridge Rd., Salem, SC 29676

**Who:** Families with children on the Autism Spectrum (ages 9-15) parents and siblings included.

**Cost:** \$100/family. Remaining cost is donated by Philoptochos.

**Contact Despina Koulianos:** dkoulianos@gmail.com, 251-454-5657.

## HOLY UNMERCENARIES MEDICAL SOCIETY



**3RD ANNUAL RETREAT  
May 17 - 19, 2019**

**"HEALING THE HEALER:  
REFLECTIONS ON THE HEALING  
PARTNERSHIP and the  
SPIRITUAL LIFE  
OF THE PHYSICIAN "**

**Panagia Chapel Conference Center**  
Diakonia Retreat Center  
**Retreat Leader:** Dn. Dr. Stephen  
Muse

For more information or to register, contact  
Dn. Paul Tsahakis at ptsahakis@gmail.com  
Registration: \$200/single or \$225/couple in-  
cludes meals and accommodations. Due by  
April 16, 2019.

# Donations Needed for Great Lent and Holy Week

Great Lent begins March 11. We have many special celebrations during these weeks. We know that many of you would like to contribute to the decorating of our church and icons during this period. For your convenience, below is a list of items needed for the celebration of the Sacred Services of Lent and Holy Week. Please contact the church office to reserve your desired offering for the health of your loved ones or in memory of a deceased loved one.

Payment may be sent to the church office. Checks should be made payable to “St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church” with “Lenten Flower Donation” on the memo line. Online donations are also accepted, be sure to specify.

<b>Lent</b>	Wireless Microphones in the Church	Duracell or Energizer AA Batteries	Many
<b>April 5</b>	Salutations to the Virgin Mary - 4 <sup>th</sup> Stanza	Flowers for Icon of Panagia	\$100
<b>April 12</b>	Akathist Hymn	Flowers for Icon of Panagia	\$100
<b>April 21</b>	<b>Palm Sunday</b>	Flowers for Icon of Palm Sunday	\$100
		Palms Strips & Branches	\$250 total
<b>Holy Week</b>		Pillar Candles for Windows (20)	\$15 each
<b>April 22</b>	<b>Holy Monday</b>	Flowers for Icon of Bridegroom in Narthex	\$100
	Bridegroom Service	Flowers for Icon of Bridegroom on Solea (2)	\$100 each
<b>April 24</b>	<b>Holy Wednesday</b>	Flowers for Icon of Last Supper	\$100
	Holy Unction	Olive Oil, Flour, Prosphora (2)	See Fr. Stavros
<b>April 25</b>	<b>Holy Thursday</b>	Flowers for Icon of Crucifixion	\$100
		Wreath for Top of Cross	\$250
		Wreaths for Bottom of Cross (2)	\$150 each
		Scattered flowers at base of cross	\$50
		Candles for Top of Cross (3)	\$15 each
<b>April 26</b>	<b>Good Friday</b>	8 Bags of Rose Petals for Myrrh-bearers	\$50
		Flowers for Epitaphios	\$1,000 for all
		Candles for Top of Cross (3)-Apokathelosis	\$15 each
		Candles for Top of Cross (3)-Lamentations	\$15 each
		Icon of Extreme Humility	\$100
<b>April 28</b>	<b>Pascha</b>	Flowers for Icon of Resurrection	\$100
		Flowers for Icon of Empty Tomb	\$100
		Silk Flower for Royal Doors	\$100
		Easter Lilies	\$25 per Lily

## AFGLC Accepting Scholarship Applications

The following AFGLC Scholarships now available to College and High School Seniors. AFGLC Dr. Demetrios G. Halkias, AFGLC Peter & Sophia Kourmolis and AFGLC Dr. Byron P. Palls Scholarships. **Deadline is April 6, 2019.** For more information contact Kalliope at 813-789-4134 or [khalkias@afglc.org](mailto:khalkias@afglc.org). Application available online and near the baptistery.



## Featured Book of the St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church Bookstore:

### “The Lenten Spring” by Father Thomas Hopko

“The Church welcomes the Lenten spring with a spirit of exultation...with the enthusiasm of a child...The tone of the church services is one of brightness and light.” Thus, the author begins the first of forty meditations on Great Lent, casting out the gloom and darkness with which many Christians approach this holy season and revealing, in a simple, clear and beautiful manner, its true meaning.

In his meditations, Fr. Hopko draws on his long experience as a priest and teacher, working with young and old throughout the country, to present to the modern reader the relevance of the Orthodox Church’s two-thousand-year-old tradition of preparing to greet our Lord’s Resurrection. But in so doing, he also makes extensive use of all facets of church tradition from all times---inspiring scriptural and liturgical passages from the Lenten services, the spiritual wisdom of the ancient saints and fathers, as well as the teaching of modern guides to the Orthodox Christian life.

All who undertake the yearly journey to the blessed Pascha of our Lord will find inspiration and guidance in these meditations. All can enjoy reading and re-reading them and share in the profound thoughts of the author as they make their own spiritual way through this holy season.

This book is available in the bookstore. We would love to hear from you, particularly what you think of the book after reading it. If there is any Orthodox Christian religious item that you would like the bookstore to order, please contact us. We are often able to get a discount as a bookstore.

Brett and Ana Mourer



## Small Group Bible Study

### Monday Night Bible Study (for everyone)

**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 6:45–8:15 p.m.

**Meeting Dates:** April 1, 8 and 15

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

**Group Leader:** Debbie Kavouklis

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

**Meeting time and Dates:** For Great Lent, this Bible study group will be meeting after Pre-Sanctified Liturgy on

Wednesday evenings as part of the “Blessed Are You. .

.Becoming the Light of the World” series. They will resume on Tuesdays after Pascha.

### 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

**Group Leader:** Bessie Palios

bmp1126@yahoo.com 813-523-0347

**Meeting time and Dates:** For Great Lent, this Bible study group will be meeting after Pre-Sanctified Liturgy on Wednesday evenings as part of the “Blessed Are You. . .Becoming the Light of the World” series. They will resume on Tuesdays after Pascha.

# Philoptochos 2019 Membership Drive

**We are on the MOVE for a Great New Year!**

We invite all women ages 18 to 118 to join the St. John the Baptist Philoptochos Annunciation Chapter!

Membership Drive: January thru April, Suggested Stewardship is \$35.00.

However, we accept whatever you have in your heart to give.

Your donation makes you a member of the National, The Metropolis and our Local Chapters of Philoptochos.

**Members 80 years of age or older are honorary members- NO DUES NECESSARY.**

**THANK YOU SO MUCH AND HAVE A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR 2019**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle which number is the preferred contact: **HOME/ CELL**

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

*The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc., is the duly accredited women's philanthropic society of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The mission of the Society shall be:*

*To aid the poor, the destitute, the hungry, the aged, the sick, the unemployed, the orphaned, the imprisoned, the widowed, the handicapped, the victims of disasters, to undertake the burial of impoverished persons and to offer assistance to anyone who may need the help of the Church through fund raising efforts; and*

*To promote the charitable, benevolent, and philanthropic purposes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, through instructional programs, presentations, lectures, seminars and other educational resources;*

*To preserve and perpetuate Orthodox Christian concepts and the Orthodox Christian Family, and through them, to promote the Greek Orthodox Faith and traditions, in accordance with its doctrines, canons, discipline, divine worship, usages and customs;*

*To promote participation in the activities of the Greek Orthodox community, with the cooperation of the Parish Priest and the Parish Council.*

Please return form to: Jeanie Nenos, 14506 Nettle Creek Rd, Tampa, FL 33624

Or the Philoptochos mailbox in the church office.



# PHILOPTOCHOS SPRING LUNCHEON AND ELECTIONS

*Maggiano's Little Italy*

*May 19, 2019 1:00 p.m.*

*203 Westshore Plaza*

*Tampa, FL*

*Please RSVP to Lisa Alsina by May 15*

*813 728-1094 [lisaalsina@gmail.com](mailto:lisaalsina@gmail.com)*

*Cost of the luncheon is \$30. Please mail your check payable Philoptochos to 812 S. Poinsettia Dr. Tampa 33609 or to the church office –  
“attention Philoptochos”*

## **Thank You to all of Our Friends!**

Barbara Akrotirianakis - Whittier, CA	Bessie Bliziotes - Palm Cost, FL
William J Camarinos - Alexandria, VA	Suzanne Alvarez - Tampa, FL
Richard & Mickie Bass - Asheville, NC	Lazarus & Maria Kavouklis - Tarpon Springs, FL
Jason & Kelly Bangos - Clearwater, FL	William & Kane Chapman - Palmetto, FL
Nicholas & Anna Karnavas - New Port Richey, FL	Lillian Thomas - Highland, IN
Michael Kapetan - Ann Arbor, MI	Kathleen Mendez - Ponte Vedra, FL
Perry & Fay Stamatiades - Asheville, NC	Theodora Poletis - Baltimore, MD
Melvin & Violet Tamashiro - Kaneohe, HI	Basil & Dorothy Nosal - Fredericksburg, VA
Wesley & Melissa Thompson - Clearwater, FL	Nicholas & Vaso Anton - Dunedin, FL
Demitrius & Katherine Klimis - Boardman, OH	Gerald & Deborah Galovic - Tampa, FL
Mary Spanos - St. Augustine, FL	

**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 by being 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 the Baptist 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.

### **Thank you for your consideration of our parish.**

**Friend of St. John the Baptist:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

*I wish to become a Friend of St. John the Baptist. I am enclosing a contribution in the amount of:*

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

**Please mail this form and check to: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church 2418 W. Swann Ave Tampa, FL 33609.**



**Pre-Orders Suggested**

**ST JOHN PHILOPTOCHOS\* BAKE SALE SUNDAY, APRIL 21**

**Pre orders available on April 20**

- **TSOUREKI –EASTER BREAD, A GLAZED BREAD TOPPED WITH SLIVERED ALMONDS** **\$7**
- **KOULOURAKIA – GREEK BUTTER TWIST COOKIES.** **\$5 BAG**
- **SPINACH PIE TRIANGLES, FROZEN.(48 PIECES)** **\$30**
- **CHEESE PIE TRIANGLES - FROZEN; 48 PIECES** **\$30**
- **SPINACH PIE –FROZEN; 2 lb PAN** **\$20**
- **EASTER SUGAR COOKIE, EACH** **\$ 4**
- **PAXIMATHIA – BISCOTTI TYPE COOKIE WITH GROUND NUTS**  
     ▪ **CINNAMON & POWDER SUGAR** **\$5 pkg.**

PRE –ORDER FORM.....  
 \*\*\*\*\*

Name	Phone Number	
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Qty	Description	Unit Price	Line Total
	TSOUREKI - BREAD	\$7 EA.	
	KOULOURAKIA	\$5 BAG	
	SPINACH TRIANGLES / PAN	\$30	
	CHEESE TRIANGLES / PAN	\$30	
	SPINACH 2 LB PAN	\$20	
	EASTER SUGAR COOKIE	\$4	
	PAXIMATHIA	\$5 PACKAGE	

**TOTAL**

**E MAIL ORDER TO: [greeksbake@yahoo.com](mailto:greeksbake@yahoo.com)**

Or call JoAnn Hartung: 727-432-0228

*\*To promote charitable, benevolent and philanthropic outreach to preserve the sanctity of life and family and to perpetuate and promote our Orthodox faith and traditions*

# For Those Who Don't Come to Church Often Or Who Haven't Been in A While

**As there are in all churches, whether they are Orthodox or not, there is a segment of the congregation that doesn't come often.**

- Some people come sporadically.
- Some come for the occasional wedding, baptism, funeral or memorial service.
- Some come in time of crisis.
- Some come for Christmas and Easter (in Tampa, we call them "Chreasters").

**There are different reasons why people don't come to church.**

- Some are angry at other parishioners.
- Some are angry at something that happened in the community in the past.
- Some are angry at God because their lives haven't gone well and they blame Him.
- Some work on Sundays.
- Some don't understand why it is important.
- Some have fallen out of the habit.
- Some choose to do other things.
- And some are just lazy.

**Church is important. Why?**

- It's not because God needs our praise—He is God, He doesn't need anything.
- It's not so we can brag about how many people come to church—church is about faith, not about counting bodies in the pews.
- It's not a matter of giving God His due, once in a while, or especially at Easter.
- It's not a matter of tradition or pride or culture.

**Church is important because**

- It helps us slow down the hectic pace of our life so we can reflect on what is really important—our salvation.
- It gives us the opportunity to pray for ourselves and our loved ones.
- It gives us the opportunity to receive the prayers of others

- It gives us the opportunity to enjoy fellowship with people like us.
- It gives us the opportunity to pray in a way that is structured so well, that the Divine Liturgy is a complete prayer that touches on every aspect of our life and our World.
- It gives us an opportunity to touch God and for God to touch us, in the sacrament of Holy Communion.
- It unites us with the saints, the holy ones of God; and also with those in our family who have passed away, since we pray for the departed in our services.

**It gives us a foretaste of the kingdom of heaven. Why?**

- Because heaven won't be anything like life on earth.
- Heaven will not be a secular experience but a holy, awesome and moving one.
- The central activity in heaven is Communion with God and fellowship with those in God's kingdom.
- If we don't learn how to worship, we won't be ready to enter God's Kingdom, just like those who do not practice their sport don't play well on the field, just like those who don't do well in school do not graduate.

**How can you get back in the habit of coming to church?**

**JUST START COMING!!!**

**When is a good time to come back?**

**ANY TIME, BUT ESPECIALLY DURING LENT**

**But what if I'm mad at someone?**

It's a great time to forgive them. After all, if we want God to forgive us, we must forgive one another.

**What if I'm totally lost in my faith and don't know how to start over again?**

Make an appointment to meet with Fr. Stavros.

**SEE YOU IN CHURCH!!! PLEASE COME BACK!**



## Great and Holy Friday Youth Retreat

**Friday, April 26, 2019 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

*\*Service of Royal Hours - 9:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.\**

Our retreat will begin in church at 10:00 a.m. for the last part of the Service of Royal Hours.

**Please join us for a day filled with crafts, activities, reflection, and worship with your Sunday School friends.**

The retreat will end with The Apokathelosis Service -- Descent from the Cross Service at 3:00 p.m.

All Parents are encouraged to attend!

**\*Lunch and snacks included\* Please r.s.v.p. for your child by Friday, April 19, 2019**

**\*Parent volunteers are needed\***

Call or email Debbie Nicklow at [Debbienicklow@hotmail.com](mailto:Debbienicklow@hotmail.com) or 813-920-0892.

Students should dress appropriately for Church and for comfort during the retreat.

**Come spend a wonderful day at Church preparing for the Triumphant Resurrection!**

# St. John's PASCHA PICNIC

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Parish Picnic

**When:** Sunday, May 5, 2019

Following the Divine Liturgy

**Where:** Ballast Point Park\*

5300 Interbay Boulevard

Tampa, Florida 33611

## Admission is FREE!

We will have sports, games, and activities on the field for all ages.

Plus hamburgers, cheeseburgers, and hot dogs for all!

\*Please carpool since parking is limited. Bus transportation may be available. Stay tuned for more information.





# A Timely Reminder from the Welcome Ministry

*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,  
for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Hebrews 13:2*

The Welcome Ministry has been busy at work, updating our welcome packets, greeting visitors and guests as they come to our church. Our mission is to practice hospitality to all who enter our doors. We are not just about welcoming people, but about developing relationships – with each other and with Christ. The most important person for a visitor to talk to in order to feel at home in a new church is you. It is not the priest, or the greeter, but a regular attender. One of the most impressive gestures we can extend to first time visitors is for people with no official position to take the initiative and welcome them.

## **How can you do this?**

- Treat first time visitors as guests of God, not strangers.
- Offer a smile or a handshake with a simple “Good Morning!”
- Rather than saying, “Are you new here?” ask “Have we met before?” and offer your name.
- Take the initiative; don’t wait for visitors to initiate conversation.
- Learn people’s names and remember them.
- Invite visitors to join you at something, anything!
- Never let new people sit alone and introduce them to others.
- Invite people to fill out our church’s connection card.
- Tell people you’re glad they are here.
- As visitors are leaving, make sure to smile and thank them for coming.
- Pray for them throughout your week.

You don’t have to travel to a foreign country, to another state, or even get in your car to do the work of a missionary. The Great Commission of Christ can be fulfilled simply by picking up the phone, speaking to a new person you don’t recognize, sitting with someone who is alone. Can you call a parish member you haven’t seen in a while? A personal invitation to attend church is a great way to reintroduce them to the wonderful things we have going on at St. John.

If you are interested in joining the exciting and rewarding work of the Welcome Ministry, please contact Maria Xenick at [mpxenick@gmail.com](mailto:mpxenick@gmail.com).

We will see many new faces during the busy weeks ahead. Please make all feel welcome as they join us for worship services!

## St. John the Baptist is on Social Media!

### **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 [StJohnGOCTampa](https://www.facebook.com/StJohnGOCTampa).



Like

### **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](http://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.**



### **Pictures**

Go to Flickr.com and search “St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church” or go to [www.flickr.com/photos/stjohngoctampa](http://www.flickr.com/photos/stjohngoctampa)





# My One Word for 2019—Mirror

By John Zelatis

*As we make our way through 2019, anyone who has chosen a word for this year is welcome to submit a testimonial for the Messenger each month. If you'd like to share your word and how it's shaping your year, please email Fr. Stavros at [frstav@gmail.com](mailto:frstav@gmail.com). This month's testimonial is from John Zelatis.*

Mirror: noun

1 : a polished or smooth surface (as of glass) that forms images by reflection

//She looked at herself in the mirror.

2 a : something that gives a true representation

//the press as a mirror of public opinion

b : an exemplary model

//She is the mirror of feminine beauty

Mirror: verb

: to reflect in or as if in a mirror

: resemble

When Father Stavros' email came out asking for the one word that would define me for 2019, I was both excited and apprehensive. I sat at my desk at home deep in thought, contemplating on a single word to help motivate me in being a better person and a better Christian. Time passed as the clock just kept ticking away. I started thinking to myself that this is harder than I thought. I should have come up with a word by now. I figured I didn't have any success while sitting down so I got up and walked around a bit hoping to get around this mental and spiritual block.

I stopped by my wife's desk (we work together from home) to talk to her for a bit and let her know that I was having a hard time. Right above her desk is a large mirror she had put up for decorative purposes. I looked up at my reflection and the first thing that came to mind was the 1937 Disney classic "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" and the famous, always misquoted line, "Magic Mirror on the Wall, who is the fairest one of all?" (Just an FYI, the Brothers Grimm Story "Little Snow White" translated into English is indeed "Mirror, Mirror on the wall, who in this land is the fairest of all?"). But my second thought was more in line with the task at hand. What did I see when I looked in the mirror? Was it someone I was completely happy with? Were people seeing the same thing I was seeing?

That's when it hit me. To be a better person and a better Christian I need to MIRROR Christ! The more I reflect Christ, the closer I will get to being Christ-like. I will become a mirror image of Him. I was

so excited! I found my word! How do I start? I headed back into my office and sat down in front of the computer and searched for verses with the word "Mirror". I found the following Scripture:

*I Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*

*II Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

*James 1:23-25 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

I was truly inspired after reading the passages above. So I started asking the question, "who am I and what do I want to reflect?" My answer, "I am an Orthodox Christian, husband, father, son, brother, uncle, friend, neighbor, business owner, advisor, and scout leader. When I look in the mirror, I want to reflect Love, Forgiveness, Compassion, Understanding, Patience, Health, Strength ..... in essence all the Christ-like qualities."

But to mirror Him I first have to get to know Him. So I started reading the bible in the mornings to begin my day. I go online to go-arch.org/chapel and read the selected passage. The great thing about this is I can discuss what I've read with my son who is also reading the daily bible selection. He is currently working towards his religious award in scouting. It's very refreshing to hear an 11 year olds take on what we just read. I have also started eating healthy and exercising daily so I may mirror a healthy lifestyle. We are very big into hiking and backpacking in scouts and the last thing I want my son to see is his father sucking wind on the next big hiking trip.

I've only just started and I have a long road ahead. So I ask for your prayers, and look forward to waking up in the mornings and looking in the mirror to catch a glimpse of what is to come.

What do you see when you look in the mirror?

*John Zelatis attends St. John with his wife, Denise, and their children, Kaitlin and Panos (PJ).*

## Our Food Pantry is very active helping people near and far in the Tampa Community.

### Here are some special requests we have:

- Pasta
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Tomato sauce/chopped tomatoes etc.
- All kinds of white flour
- Canned Tuna
- Canned Chicken
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Gluten Free Foods and Flours
- Cereal
- Whole wheat rice and pasta
- Men's and Women's razors and shaving cream (travel size)
- Toothbrushes
- Gift cards in any amount for Publix, Walmart or Save-a-lot

All food items offered are accepted. Thank you for supporting those who need it the most. For more info and questions about our Food Pantry please contact Anetta Alexander at 813-758-2689 or [exchange2861@yahoo.com](mailto:exchange2861@yahoo.com).

# Church Etiquette by Fr. Stavros

*As we are in the Lenten and Paschal seasons, many people will be attending church services. It's always helpful to be reminded of a few basic points of etiquette for our church services. I have expanded on the article I have printed in years past so please reread this one.*

## Some General Thoughts

At a recent baptism, where the sponsor was chewing gum with his hands in his pockets, made me think that we need some continued commentary on church etiquette. The Orthodox Church is a sacred space. Our society is losing its understanding of sacredness in general, but the Orthodox Church is a sacred place. When you enter the church, you are entering a piece of heaven on earth. There are large icons of the Lord, the Virgin Mary and the Saints, that dominate the church edifice. The smell of incense reminds us of our prayers going to heaven. The Body and Blood of Christ are present at all times in the tabernacle on the Altar Table. So, whether there is a service going on or not, the church is sacred at all times.

When we enter the church for a service, before a service has begun, we should be quiet and reverent. If speaking, it should be in hushed tones. It is frustrating that before a baptism, the volume level in church would be the same as in a restaurant or bar, and that we often have to ask people for their attention to begin the service, or ask them to quiet down. Leaving the church is the same thing—when waiting for Antithoron, please do so quietly, and whisper if you are going to speak.

**Cell phones** should be turned off during the service. This is a time to disengage from the world and enter into God's world. The only cell phones that should be on are for doctors who are on call who come to church and these should be on vibrate mode. Also, please don't give phones to your kids to play on, or text people while in church. I have heard from several people who have been distracted by others who are texting or children who are playing video games. If you want to take a picture or a video of something in church, that's fine, but other than this, please don't use the phones in church.

**Gum** belongs at a ballgame, not at church. Our mouth should be praying and singing in church, not chomping on gum.

**Lipstick** stains have been left on the icons in the narthex or on the special icons that are on the solea. Please be careful that you do not leave lipstick marks on the icons. You should not wear lipstick on Holy Thursday or Good Friday. These are days of extreme humility and sadness. Do not leave lipstick marks on the body of Christ as it hangs on the Cross. Please refrain from wearing lipstick if you plan to receive Holy Communion.

**Hands in pockets** are too casual. Our hands should be in our laps or at our sides or folded in front of us, a position of reverence and attention.

**Don't Cross your legs in church** because it is too casual. When standing in church, either have your hands on the pews in front of you, cross them in front of you, or hold a liturgy book in front of you. When sitting, place hands in your lap, not around the person next to you. Have your feet flat on the floor, not crossed legs.

**Cocktail dresses** are too short for church. Low-cut tops are inappropriate for church and really for anywhere. Dress in a manner that befits an encounter with the living God.

**Strapless dresses**—in monasteries, women must have their heads covered in church. In our church, we only ask for the shoulders. A three inch wide strap is appropriate. Less than that is not.

We should put on our Sunday best for church. If the best at your disposal is blue jeans, then come in blue jeans. But don't opt for blue jeans if you have other attire. If the best you have is a T-shirt, then do not stay away. But if you own a polo shirt or a button down shirt, or a coat and tie, then come at your best.

We would never want anyone to stay away from church because of lack of an expensive wardrobe. Merely, put on the "best" that you have in your wardrobe for church, and come to church respectfully, and ready for worship, not like you are ready for a night on the town. As a society, we have become altogether immodest. I do not wish to return to the overly dressed gentlemen and ladies of the middle-ages, but it seems that we have taken it to the other extreme. And outside of church, we should consider what kind of statement our clothing makes about us and the Christian values of modesty that we claim to hold.

## Arriving at church

**Come on time** - The time to arrive at church is before the service starts. If you arrive after the Divine Liturgy begins, try to enter the church quietly and observe what is happening. **If it is the Small Entrance, the Gospel, the Great Entrance, the Creed or the Consecration (kneeling), then do not enter the church.** Wait until these are finished and then quickly find a seat. Do not enter the nave while Father is giving the sermon. Try to not interrupt the Liturgy by your entrance. The best way to avoid this situation is to arrive on time.

**How late can I come and still receive Holy Communion?** This is a sad question. If we really believe that Holy Communion is the Body and Blood of Christ, what kind of respect and order does it show for THE BODY and THE BLOOD of Christ if we are arriving only a few minutes before Holy Communion? If we are not there for the Consecration of the Gifts. We really should be at the Divine Liturgy from the beginning if we are to receive. So, what if we are running late? Can we get there by the reading of the Scriptures? If we can't come on time to hear God's Word, should really be receiving Holy Communion? Some might argue, I can read the Bible outside of Church, why do I need to be there for that? The most basic requirement for Holy Communion is a confession of faith, the Creed. Thus, if you are arriving after the Creed, it is not appropriate to receive Holy Communion. **Please refrain from receiving Holy Communion if you enter the church after the Creed.**

**Venerating icons** - It is customary to venerate icons in the Narthex when you enter into the church. When venerating (kissing) an icon, you are venerating an image of holiness. A Holy Person, or the LORD Himself is depicted in each icon. Pay attention where you kiss. It is not appropriate to kiss one of the saints on the lips. Rather, kiss the hands or feet of the saint, or if the person depicted in the icon is holding a cross, Gospel or scroll, you can venerate that, along with the hand or feet of the person depicted in the icon.

**Lighting candles** - Lighting candles is an important part of Orthodox worship. We light them along with offering personal prayers. Thus, it is not appropriate to be lighting candles during the Small Entrance, Gospel, Great Entrance, Creed or Consecration.

## While in Church

**Talk only to the Lord during the services** - worship is not an appropriate time to greet your friends and neighbors. Please leave that for the coffee hour.

**Leaving the church early** - our Sunday School students go to class after Holy Communion, so that they may receive proper instructions. For those who are not in Sunday School, or when there is no Sunday School, it is expected that everyone will remain in church until the end of the service. To receive Holy Communion and immediately leave is to treat the church like a restaurant where we come and go as we please.

## When do I make the sign of the cross?

You can make the sign of the cross any time you wish, but please do it in a reverent way. It is not necessary to cross oneself three times in a row. Once, and reverently, is sufficient. Making the cross sloppily many times makes it look like we are strumming a guitar. There are some times when we should cross ourselves.

### These include:

- Anytime you hear the name of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- When you hear the name of the Theotokos/Virgin Mary
- Before and after venerating an icon, the cross or the Gospel book
- When you enter and exit the church building
- When you cross in front of the altar, from one side of the church to the other.
- As the Holy Gifts pass you during the Great Entrance
- Before and after the Holy Gospel, when saying "Glory to You O Lord, Glory to You."
- At the phrase "In one, holy, catholic and apostolic church" in the Creed.
- At the words of Institution - "Take, Eat, this is My Body"; and "Drink of this all of you, this is My Blood."
- Before and after receiving Communion - Make the sign of the cross before it is your turn and after you've stepped away so one does not hit the chalice.
- When the priest comes out with Holy Communion and says "With the fear of God, with faith and with love draw near."
- On any petition or prayer that speaks to your heart.
- When the priest censes you, or blesses you, you can make the

sign of the cross, or simply bow your head.

### Listen to the words of the service, they tell you what to do!

At the Small Entrance: "Come let us worship and bow down" make a slight bow.

"Let us lift up our hearts:" Look upwards to Christ in the dome and lift up your hands.

"Let us bow our heads to the Lord:" Pretty self-explanatory, bow your head to the Lord.

**Sing with the choir** and offer the responses of the Divine Liturgy, this is a work of the people, ALL the people. Recite the Creed and Lord's Prayer as well.

### Kneeling

Put the kneelers up and down quietly.

### Kissing the hand of the priest

When greeting a priest, you should kiss his hand as a sign of respect that this is the hand that holds the Holy Communion. This goes for in church, and also outside of the church, for instance when greeting a priest in his office or in the hall. Also, when you kiss the priest's hand (or the bishop's) you receive a blessing in return, they offer you a blessing in return.

### For Holy Communion:

- Pray the Holy Communion Prayers silently as Father prays aloud.
- As you are waiting in line, pray the Jesus Prayer, "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner," or the prayer of the repentant thief "Lord, remember me in Your Kingdom" repeatedly.
- Don't have your hands in your pockets
- Girls, wipe off lipstick before receiving
- When the person before you is receiving, make the sign of the cross.
- When it is your turn to receive, say your Orthodox name to the priest, even if he knows your name.
- Either take the cloth and hold it under your chin or allow the altar boy to do that for you. Come close to the chalice so that Father doesn't have to reach.
- Open your mouth wide
- Close your mouth on the spoon. Holy Communion is the Body and Blood of Christ—it cannot communicate disease.
- Wipe your lips.
- As you walk away, make the sign of the cross
- Take a piece of the blessed bread.
- Pray the post-Communion prayers in the Liturgy book if you are staying in church.

Holy Communion is the Body and Blood of Christ. There has never been a documented case of disease being transmitted through Holy Communion. Every priest in the Orthodox Church, after distributing Holy Communion to all the faithful (and undoubtedly someone is sick in our church each Sunday when over 250 people are receiving) consumes what remains of the Holy Communion. No priest gets sick from doing this. Father chooses

to put a lot of Communion on the spoon, so that you can “*taste and see how good the Lord is*” (Psalm 34:8). **So please don’t pull away quickly, because it makes him nervous because we do not want the Body and Blood of Christ to end up on the floor.** Please approach with not only fear of God, with faith and with love, but also with care. This IS THE Body and THE Blood of Christ, “*shed for the life and salvation of the world*” (*Liturgy of St. Basil*) and imparted to us for “*the remission of sins and life everlasting.*”

**Bread at the end of church** is called Antithoron which means “instead of the Gifts.” Antithoron is not Holy Communion but needs to be treated with respect and reverence. When you approach to receive Antithoron, cup your hands one inside the other, kiss the hand of the priest as he places the bread in your hand, and then eat the bread carefully so that crumbs don’t fall all over the place. This is holy and blessed bread! When waiting for Antithoron at the end of the service, please do so quietly, and whisper if you are going to speak.

**Small Children** – We love that there are so many children at St. John the Baptist. Please use discretion and common sense when it comes to taking them out when they become fussy. As the Holy Week services are long and run late, for those who bring small children to the services, please sit near either the side door or in the back and if your child becomes fussy, please take them outside for a few minutes. Our nursery is also open and livestreaming of the services is available both there and in the Kourmolis Center

Thank you for your cooperation in honoring the sanctity of our Holy Church. Your cooperation will assure that our services will continue to be celebrated with the proper honor and dignity with which they should be afforded and will make our celebration of Holy Week and Pascha truly memorable. These etiquette practices should be observed all year round.

## Continue Supporting Our Beloved St. John After Your Lifetime Join the St. John Legacy Society Today! Bequest Benefits

A bequest is generally a revocable gift, which means it can be changed or modified at any time. You can choose to designate that a bequest be used for a general or specific purpose so you have the peace of mind knowing that your gift will be used as intended. Bequests are exempt from federal estate taxes. If you have a taxable estate, the estate tax charitable deduction may offset or eliminate estate taxes, resulting in a larger inheritance for your heirs.

Please consider becoming a member of the St. John Legacy Society by leaving a portion of your estate to St. John Greek Orthodox Church. For more information, contact Fr. Stavros at 813-876-8830 ext. 103, (email [frstav@gmail.com](mailto:frstav@gmail.com)) so that we may include you as a member of the Legacy Society.

## We Support Love INC of Metro Tampa, Inc. - Go to Breakfast Fundraiser



Love INC of Metro Tampa, Inc.  
Breakfast Fundraiser  
**SAVE THE DATE!**  
Tuesday, April 9th, 2019

The Portico Church  
1001 N Florida Ave.  
Tampa, FL 33602  
8:00 AM – 9AM Doors open  
7:30 AM

**Continental breakfast – coffee, juice, Danish. Ample, free off-street parking**  
**No charge – bring your hearts!**

*Help beyond the food and clothing commands of Matthew 25:31.*  
[www.loveinctampa.org](http://www.loveinctampa.org) (813) 222-Love (5683)

**Mission:** Mobilize the Church to transform lives and communities in the name of Christ. Love INC provides the means for Christian churches to work together to express their love for God, each other, and their neighbors in practical, coordinated ways, bringing hope to young and old.

**Ann M. and Michael Doyle / vision carriers**  
**Love INC of Metro Tampa Inc. / 813 466-9166 Mike’s cell**



# Those who Pray Together, Stay Together

**Ecumenical Service**—We held our annual Ecumenical Prayer Service at Christ the King Roman Catholic Church on Tuesday, February 19. Once a year for the past several years, we've held a service with our Roman Catholic brethren, led by Fr. Len and Fr. Stavros, and hosted by Christ the King in the odd numbered years and by St. John in the even ones. This year's service was dedicated to praying for families and children, for health and safety around the world. A combined choir of the two churches offered hymns and responses. Fr. Stavros and Fr. Len both offered homilies. We will host the service in spring of 2020.



## Beautiful Saturday of Souls at the Garden of Memories

Thank you to Garden of Memories for again allowing us to use their facilities for our annual service.





# APRIL 2019 SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS:

February and March were very busy month for the Sunday School. Our topics were The Presentation of Christ, Salvation (Story of Zaccaeus), The Publican & The Pharisee, The Prodigal Son, The Last Judgement, Icons/Sunday of Orthodoxy, Being a Good Friend. (Second Sunday of Lent—The Paralytic), and the Holy Cross Charlie Hambos was also very busy with our students these past two months. He was able to do a lesson in each of the Toddler 2's through 5th Grade Classrooms. We would like to thank our 2nd Graders for making Prospora on Feb. 10 and our 1st Graders made Prospora under the direction of Melissa Krinos on March 3rd.

Our February YOUTH SUNDAY took place on Feb. 10 and our March one took place on March 3. We need to thank our children who are singing more beautifully than ever and learning more church hymns under the direction of Maria Xenick.

Our PRE-LENTEN RETREAT took place on March 10. Our Topics were:

- Holy Unction and Confession taught by Vickie Peckham.
- The Sunday's of Lent taught by Charlie Hambos.
- Lenten calendar, Lenten covenant, and Prayer of St. Ephraim taught by Maria Xenick.

Afterwards all the children and their parents met with Fr. Stavros in the church. He spoke to them about Lent and closed our retreat with a prayer. We would like to thank Father Stavros, Vickie Peckham, Charlie Hambos, and Maria Xenick for doing such a great job with our students.

Father Stavros has heard the CONFESSIONS of our 6th, 5th, and 4th Graders. On April 14th our 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Graders will participate in this important Sacrament. Our 7th - High School students will participant in Confession during the GOYA Lenten Retreat on April 5th - 7th.

One of the best ways to prepare for Pascha is to participate in the Sacrament of Confession. We would like to thank Father Stavros for hearing the confessions of all of our Sunday School children. It is a wonderful thing to see our children going to Confession year after year.

We would like to thank all the families that brought a lenten dish to the PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY DINNER Sponsored by the Sunday School on March 27th. It was a pleasure to offer this delicious meal to our parishioners after such a spiritually motivating service and before the retreat on the Beatitudes.

Speaking of Lent and Holy Week, our Altar Boys, Myrhh Bearers, and Maiden for the Bridegroom Services are preparing and excited for their roles during this important time in our church. Everyone is also looking forward to our Sunday School Good Friday Retreat on April 26th.

+++ May everyone have a blessed Lent, Holy Week, and a spiritually uplifting Pascha experience.



## APRIL 2019 SUNDAY SCHOOL CALENDAR

Friday, April 5 – Sunday, April 7:  
GOYA Lenten Retreat

Sunday, April 7  
Topic: Faith – Gospel Lesson –  
Fourth Sunday of Great Lent  
No Sunday School for  
7th & 8th & High School

Sun., April 14:  
Topic: Holy Week –  
5th Sunday of Great Lent  
CONFESSION:  
1ST - 3RD Graders  
Youth Sunday - (6th - 8th Grade  
Music at 11:50 a.m.)  
Charlie: 6th Grade  
Prospora: Kindergarten  
GOYA Meeting 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 21 - Palm Sunday  
Topic: Holy Week – Palm  
Sunday

Fri., April 26:  
Good Friday Retreat

Sunday, April 28:  
PASCHA – No Sunday School

# Family Calendar for Great Lent 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>March 10</b> <b>Cheesefare</b> <b>Sunday of Forgiveness</b> Come to church and ask forgiveness <b>Sunday School Retreat</b>	<b>11</b> <b>Clean Monday</b> <b>Great Lent Begins</b> <b>Canon of St. Andrew</b> <b>Holy Unction Service</b> No electronics today	<b>12</b> Call and wish your Godparents a "Blessed Lent/Kali Sarakosti"	<b>13</b> <b>Pre-Sanctified Liturgy</b> Say a special prayer for sick children	<b>14</b> Make a prosforo (bread) with your family to bring to church	<b>15</b> <b>Salutations to the Virgin Mary</b> Make a list of 5 things you are thankful for	<b>16</b> <b>Saturday of the Souls</b> <i>*At Garden of Memories</i> Make a prayer list of those who have died and bring to church
<b>17</b> <b>Sunday of Orthodoxy</b> Bring an icon from home for procession Sing Kyrie Eleison	<b>18</b> <b>Great Compline</b> Help make your bed, clean up and dust your room	<b>19</b> Do something helpful for your mother	<b>20</b> <b>Pre-Sanctified Liturgy</b> Say a special prayer for your priest	<b>21</b> Collect some clothing or shoes to donate to a charity special to you	<b>22</b> <b>Salutations to the Virgin Mary</b> Read a favorite Bible story with your family	<b>23</b> Help your parents in the yard/garden
<b>24</b> <b>St. Gregory of Palamas</b> Say a special prayer for your grandparents	<b>25</b> <b>Annunciation</b> <b>Great Compline</b> Help set the table and clean up after dinner	<b>26</b> Do something helpful for your father	<b>27</b> <b>Pre-Sanctified Liturgy</b> Receive Holy Communion /Sunday School Family dinner	<b>28</b> Collect some coins to bring to church on Sunday	<b>29</b> <b>Salutations to the Virgin Mary</b> Pray the Lenten prayer of St. Ephraim together with your family	<b>30</b> Read about the life of a Saint with your family
<b>31</b> <b>Holy Cross</b> Take home a flower from the cross	<b>April 1</b> <b>Great Compline</b> Forgive someone who hurt you	<b>2</b> Do something helpful for your teacher	<b>3</b> <b>Pre-Sanctified Liturgy</b> Say a special prayer for your Sunday School teachers	<b>4</b> Buy and donate a food item for our St. John food pantry	<b>5</b> <b>Salutations to the Virgin Mary</b> Come Bless the icon of Panagia <b>GOYA Lenten Retreat</b>	<b>6</b> Tell someone you hurt that you are sorry
<b>7</b> <b>St. John of the Ladder</b> Take 5 minutes of silence to pray about how much God loves you	<b>8</b> <b>Great Compline</b> Play with someone who feels left out	<b>9</b> Draw a picture of your saint or feast day by looking at an icon	<b>10</b> <b>Pre-Sanctified Liturgy</b> Say a special prayer for your neighbors	<b>11</b> Choose a toy you don't play with and donate it	<b>12</b> <b>Akathist Hymn/Divine Liturgy</b> Sing Victorious Lady in your prayers one last time	<b>13</b> Ask for God to protect your house
<b>14</b> <b>St. Mary of Egypt</b> Sing Agios O Theos in Church today <b>Youth Sunday</b>	<b>15</b> <b>Great Compline</b> Be kind to someone who needs your kindness	<b>16</b> Mail a card to your Godparents wishing them a Blessed Holy Week and Kalo Pascha	<b>17</b> <b>Pre-Sanctified Liturgy</b> Say a special prayer for your friends	<b>18</b> Make and bake some Lenten cookies with your family	<b>19</b> Make a list of all living and dead loved ones and bring it to church for the Proskomide	<b>20</b> <b>Saturday of Lazarus</b> <b>Divine Liturgy</b> Receive Holy Communion Make palm crosses
<b>21</b> <b>Palm Sunday</b> <b>Service of Bridgroom</b> Replace your old palm crosses and cut up old ones and place in your garden where no one will step on them	<b>22</b> <b>Holy Monday</b> <b>Bridgroom Service</b> Read the story about the prophet Joseph	<b>23</b> <b>Holy Tuesday</b> <b>Bridgroom Service</b> Read the story of Kasiani the Hymnographer	<b>24</b> <b>Holy Wednesday</b> Come and receive Holy Unction	<b>25</b> <b>Holy Thursday</b> <b>Divine Liturgy</b> <b>12 Gospels Service</b> Color eggs red for Pascha, think about Jesus on the cross	<b>26</b> <b>Holy Friday</b> <b>Royal Hours</b> <b>Unnailing from the Cross</b> <b>Lamentations</b> Attend Sunday School retreat	<b>27</b> <b>Holy Saturday</b> <b>Liturgy of St. Basil</b> <b>Resurrection Service</b> Come to the early Liturgy to see scattering of bay leaves
<b>April 28</b> <b>PASCHA!!</b> <b>Christ is Risen!</b> You have completed Great Lent! Attend Agape vespers to light your candle						

# ~ April 2019 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1 **</b> Compline 5:30 p.m. No Bible Study	<b>2 **</b> Basketball 8:00 p.m. Monday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	<b>3 **</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> Hour 5:30 p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00 p.m. Lenten Dinner/Lecture series	<b>4 **</b> Young at Heart 11:30 a.m.  Greek School 6:00 p.m. Choir Practice 7:15 p.m.	<b>5 **</b>  Salutations 6:30 p.m. GOYA Lenten Retreat	<b>6 **</b>  GOYA Lenten Retreat
<b>7 **</b> Orthros 8:15 a.m. <b>Divine Liturgy</b> <b>9:45 a.m.</b> GOYA Luminaries Usher Meeting CS Lewis Book Study	<b>8 **</b> Compline 5:30 p.m. Bible Study 6:45 p.m.	<b>9 **</b> Basketball 8:00 p.m.	<b>10 **</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> Hour 5:30 p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00 p.m. Lenten Dinner/Lecture series	<b>11 **</b> Greek School 6:00 p.m. Choir Practice 7:15 p.m.	<b>12 **</b> Akathist Hymn 6:30 p.m. Liturgy 8:15 p.m.	<b>13 **</b> District Oratorical Festival--Sarasota
<b>14 **</b> Orthros 8:15 a.m. <b>Divine Liturgy</b> <b>9:45 a.m.</b> CS Lewis Book Study Youth Sunday GOYA Luminaries Sales GOYA 5:00 p.m.	<b>15 **</b> Compline 5:30 p.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	<b>16 **</b> Basketball 8:00 p.m.	<b>17 **</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> Hour 5:30 p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00 p.m. Lenten Dinner/Lecture series	<b>18 **</b> Philoptochos Baking Day 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  Greek School 6:00 p.m. Choir Practice 7:15 p.m.	<b>19 **</b>	<b>20 **</b> Saturday of Lazarus Orthros 8:30 a.m. Proskomide 9:30 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Preparation of Palm Crosses  Palm Sunday Bake Sale PreOrders
<b>21 **</b> Palm Sunday Orthros 8:15 a.m. <b>Divine Liturgy</b> <b>9:45 a.m.</b> Luncheon/Bake Sale GOYA Luminaries Sales <b>Bridegroom Service</b> 6:30 p.m.	<b>22 **</b> <b>Pre-Sanctified</b> <b>Liturgy</b> 9:00 a.m.  <b>Bridegroom Service</b> 6:30 p.m.	<b>23 **</b> <b>Pre-Sanctified</b> <b>Liturgy</b> 9:00 a.m.  <b>Bridegroom Service</b> 6:30 p.m.  NO BASKETBALL	<b>24 **</b> <b>Pre-Sanctified</b> <b>Liturgy</b> 9:00 a.m. <b>Uction</b> 3:00 p.m.  <b>Bridegroom Service</b> 5:45 p.m. <b>Uction</b> 6:30 p.m.	<b>25 **</b> Vespers Liturgy 9:15 a.m.  <b>Passion of Christ-12</b> <b>Gospels</b> 6:30 p.m. <b>Vigil at the Cross</b> No Greek School	<b>26 **</b> <b>Royal Hours</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School Retreat  <b>Apokathelosis</b> 3:00 p.m.  <b>Lamentations</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>27 **</b> Vespers Liturgy 8:30 a.m. <b>Canon</b> 11:00 p.m. <b>Resurrection Service</b> 11:45 p.m. Liturgy 12:30 a.m. Paschal Reception
<b>28 PASCHA</b> Agape Vespers 11:00 a.m.	<b>29 St. George</b> Orthros 9:00 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	<b>30 WBS</b> 10:00 a.m. SBS 7:00 p.m. Parish Council 6:30 p.m. Basketball 8:00 p.m.				

## St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

2418 W. Swann Avenue

Tampa, FL 33609-4712

Office: (813) 876-8830 Fax: (813) 443-4899

officestjohnngoctampa@gmail.com

www.greekorthodoxchurchtampa.com

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## St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

### Timetable of Services

**Sundays:** Orthros 8:45 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) 813-394-1038 (Cell)  
frstav@gmail.com

#### **Pastoral Assistant** Charlie Hambos

813-876-8830 (Office) 813-843-8471 (Cell)  
Charlie.hambos@gmail.com

#### **Parish Council**

Alkis Crassas, President	813-690-3867
Mike Xenick, VP	813-340-8737
Gary Ward, Treasurer	813-846-3898
Ryan Rindone, Secretary	704-564-2046
Sandra Pappas	813-785-3747
Jim Armstrong	954-295-6665
George Chagaris	727-420-1920
Amin Hanhan	813-846-2957
Nick Katzaras	863-581-2430
Edie Kavouklis	813-758-0305
Jimmy Konstas	813-220-7352

#### **Office Staff**

Debbie Bowe, Bookkeeper  
debstjohntpa@gmail.com fax:813-443-4899

#### **Adult Greek School**

Magda Myer 813-909-2327

#### **AHEPA**

Gus Paras, President 813-254-6980

#### **Altar Angels**

Engie Halkias 813-932-5859  
Sia Blankenship 813-968-8855

#### **Basketball**

Perry Katsamakias 516-403-3118  
Jimmy Konstas 813-220-7352

#### **Bible Study**

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

#### **Bookstore**

Brett Mourer 813-376-9315

#### **Chanter**

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

#### **Choir**

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

#### **Community Outreach**

Greg Melton 813-967-2074

#### **Connect Through Christ -**

**Special Needs Ministry for Children**  
Dante and Lindsey Skourellos 813-765-9534

#### **Dance Groups**

H XAPA MAΣ,	Alexandra De Maio	813-340-9668
	Bessie Palios,	813-523-0347
	Maraquet Edquid	813-422-8963
Parea,	Marina Choundas	813-877-6136
	Anna Maria Bavaro	732-239-9085
Panigyri,	Alexandra De Maio	813-340-9668

#### **Daughters of Penelope**

Nicole Leontsinis, President 703-585-7490

#### **Finance Committee**

Gary Ward 813-846-3898

#### **Food Pantry**

Anetta Alexander 813-758-2689

#### **Gasparilla Parking**

John Kokkas 727-992-4615

#### **GOYA**

Maria Koutroumanis 813-245-3854

#### **Hope/Joy**

Debbie Nicklow 813-690-0671

#### **Junior Olympics**

Dwight Forde 727-685-9028

#### **MOMS**

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

#### **Parish Nurse**

Stavrula Crafa 727-409-0686  
Edie Kavouklis 813-758-0305

#### **Orthodox Christian Fellowship**

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

#### **Oratorical Festival**

Peggy Bradshaw 727-244-1374

#### **Photography Ministry**

Karina Findlay 813-476-9632

#### **Philoptochos**

Lisa Alsina 813-728-1094

#### **Small Group Bible Study**

South, Bessie Palios 813-523-0347  
Women, Debbie Kavouklis 813-258-5571

#### **Strategic Planning**

Marc Edquid 813-422-8940  
Gary Ward 813-846-3898

#### **Stewardship**

Sandra Pappas 813-785-3747  
Pete Trakas 813-505-2193

#### **Sunday School**

Vickie Peckham 813-406-5626

#### **Usher**

Tom Georgas 813-985-0236

#### **Visitation Committee**

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

#### **Welcoming Ministry**

Maria Xenick 813-765-3587

#### **Young Adult**

Charlie Hambos 813-843-8471

#### **Young at Heart**

Carole Fotopoulos 813-982-0947  
Mary Nenos 813-935-2096

#### **Youth Protection**

Catherine Mitseas 813-571-0658

*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 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. You may send announcements to the church office through email.*

“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.