

The Desert



Messenger

"Behold, I send My messenger before Your Face, who shall prepare Your way..." (Matthew 11:10)

Volume 23, Issue 3 St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, NV

March 2025

From
Father
John

"To everything there is a season, and a time for every matter in Heaven." (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Beloved in Christ:

To everything there is a season . . . and for us Orthodox Christians, Great and Holy Lent, which begins *on Monday, March 3*, is the season of the fast, the season of prayer and introspection, the season of contrition and repentance, the season of simplifying our life and giving alms, and the season of forgiveness and love.

A season of fasting is nothing new: God commanded the ancient Israelites to change their luxury into a sackcloth and, *"Sanctify a fast. Call a solemn assembly. Gather all the elders of all the people of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry out fervently to the Lord."* (Joel 1:14) The Orthodox Church continues this ancient tradition of sanctifying a season for us "prodigals" to return to our "Father's House" – both in our personal homes and as a community in our Church – and commit to the six-week pilgrimage with deep humility, prayerful hearts and prostrations, crying fervently to the Lord for His mercy. Without the voluntary Passion, Crucifixion, Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, our return to God and His loving embrace and forgiveness would never be possible. Thus, each of us must eagerly embark on the blessed season of Lent, which is nothing less than our spiritual journey toward Great and Holy Pascha – the Feast of all Feasts, the Resurrection of our Savior.

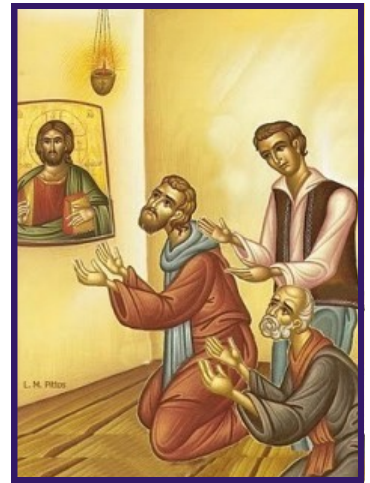
The Lenten fast and worship encourage the ascetic disciplines of abstinence, prayer, forgiveness, repentance, mercy and selfless love (best exemplified in the giving of alms to those in need) – and through these intentional exercises of responding to Christ's love for us, we engage in the most perfect acts of stewardship: Offering ourselves back to Him for a season, so that we might become more fully aware of all He has given us through His Self-sacrifice. Our goal throughout this holy season must be to become spiritually renewed and committed to living a genuinely Christ-centered life for the rest of the calendar year – and indeed, for all the years He grants us.

All of us are encouraged to return again and again to Church for the many Lenten services, which during the weekdays are conducive to the stillness that is necessary for the self-reflection and correction of our hearts, minds and behaviors. Holy Confession and frequent Communion, which are customary during Lent, are useful weapons in healing and restoring us to union with God. Moreover, the abundant Scriptural readings, hymns and prayers of this season are great aids in elevating our "nous" (the eye of the heart) and therefore strengthening us to avert the poisonous darts that the evil one throws at us continuously.

While the Church prescribes the fast for all, we must do so freely, without compulsion or judgment toward others, and according to our abilities. St. Porphyrios wisely said, *"Pressure causes a person not only to react negatively against the Church, but not to want the Church at all."* Therefore, let us approach the Lenten season freely and with joy, so our hearts and minds may burn fervently with love for the Triune God and desire more to live a life in union with Him.

With Love in Christ,

Father John



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

*Sundays: 8:45 am Orthros ~ 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
Church School follows Holy Communion*

*All our Sunday Divine Services are Available on Live-Stream!
Access the Live-Stream on <http://youtube.com/vegasgreekorthodox>*

Saturday, March 1/ *Second Saturday of Souls
(Cheesefare Saturday)/Holy Righteous Martyr
Evdokia the Samaritan/Holy Andonina the New
Martyr/St. David the Archbishop*

8:00 am Orthros

9:00 am Divine Liturgy and Memorial

Epistle: Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2

Gospel: Matthew 6:1-13

Sunday, March 2/ *Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare
Sunday)/Exile of Adam and Eve from Paradise/
Holy Hesychios the Martyr/Holy Father Nicholas
Planas/St. Joachim of Vatopedi/
Holy Martyrs Andronikos and Athanasia/Holy
Martyr Theodotos, Bishop of Cyrenia/
Holy Efthalia the Virgin-Martyr of Sicily/
St. Chad, Bishop of Lichfield*

Orthros: Third Tone

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Mark 16:9-20

Epistle: Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4

Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21

Memorials: Patricia Robison (40 days); and
Peter Limberis (40 days)

Forgiveness Vespers follows Divine Liturgy

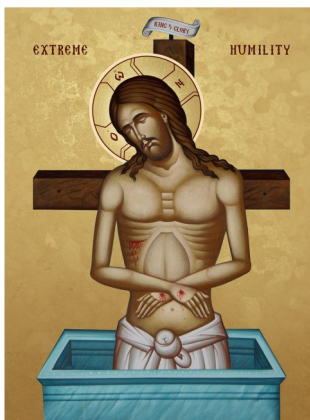
Fellowship: Philoptochos - Kids 'n' Cancer

Abstain from meat and dairy for 40 days

Monday, March 3/ *Clean Monday:*

First Day of Lent

5:30 pm Great Compline



Wednesday, March 5

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 7

6:30 pm First Salutations to the Theotokos

Saturday, March 8/ *Third Saturday of Souls/
Miracle of St. Theodore with the Kollyva/
St. Theophylact the Confessor, Bishop of
Nicomedia/St. Hermas the Apostle of the Seventy/
St. Dometios the Righteous/St. Paul the Confessor/
St. Felix of Burgundy, Enlightener of East Anglia*

8:00 am Orthros

9:00 am Divine Liturgy and Memorial

Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:1-10

Gospel: Mark 2:23-38; 3:1-2



Sunday, March 9/ *First Sunday of Lent/Triumph of
Orthodoxy/Holy Caesarios the Righteous*

Orthros: Fourth Tone

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:1-12

Epistle: Hebrews 12:1-10

Gospel: John 1:43-51

Procession of Icons follows Liturgy

Memorials: John G. Karas (40 Days); LeeAnn Eliakis
and Glenda Eliakis (3 years)

Fellowship: Diane Robison

*5:00 pm Lenten Pan-Orthodox Vespers at
St. John the Baptist*

Homily by Father Paul Hamner

WORSHIP SCHEDULE (Continued from Page 2)

Monday, March 10

5:30 pm Great Compline

Wednesday, March 12

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 14

6:30 pm Second Salutations to the Theotokos

Sunday, March 16/*Second Sunday in Lent/
Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas/Holy Martyr Sabine
of Egypt/St. Christodoulos the Wonderworker of
Patmos/St. Aristovoulos, Apostle of the Seventy/
Holy Martyr Julian/Hieromartyr Romanos of
Parium*

Orthros: First Plagal Tone

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:13-35

Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-14; 2:1-3

Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

Memorials: Constandinos Makridis (40 days);

Hristos Demolas; and Michael Mavros

Fellowship: Stewardship Committee

*5:00 pm Lenten Pan-Orthodox Vespers at
St. Simeon Church*

Homily by Father John Hondros

Monday, March 17

5:30 pm Great Compline

Wednesday, March 19

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 21

6:30 pm Third Salutations to the Theotokos

Saturday, March 22/*Third Saturday of Lent/
Holy Basil the Martyr of Ancyra/Holy Martyrs
Kalliniki and Vassilisa/Holy Eftymios the New
Martyr*

8:00 am Orthros

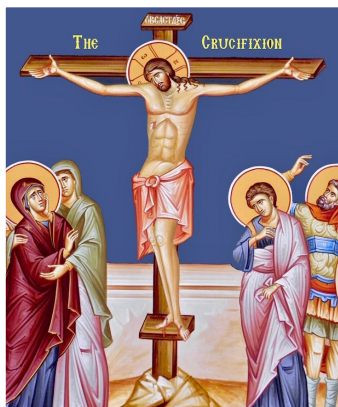
8:30 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Hebrews 10:32-38

Gospel: Mark 2:14-17

Lenten Retreat follows

*We venerate
Your Cross, O Lord,
and we glorify Your
Holy Resurrection!*



Sunday, March 23/*Third Sunday of Lent/*

*Veneration of the Holy Cross/The Holy
Righteous Martyr Nikon and His 199 Disciples/
Holy Martyrs Anatolios and Protoleon/Holy
Luke the New Martyr of Mytilene
Procession of Holy Cross at Doxology*

Orthros: Second Plagal Tone

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): Luke 24:36-53

Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-18; 5:1-6

Gospel: Mark 8:34-38; 9:1

Memorials: Dina Dounis (3 years); Mary Bochanis
(5 years) and Kathryn Katris

Fellowship: Philoptochos - Holy Cross

*5:00 pm Lenten Pan-Orthodox Vespers at
Ss. George and Dimitrie Church*

Homily by Father Florin Ristache

Monday, March 24

5:30 pm Great Vespers of the Annunciation

Tuesday, March 25/*Annunciation of Our Most
Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary
8:00 am Orthros*

9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Hebrews 2:11-18

Gospel: Luke 1:24-38

Wednesday, March 26

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 28

6:30 pm Fourth Salutations to the Theotokos

Sunday, March 30/*Fourth Sunday of Lent/
Sunday of St. John Climacos/Ss. Sosthenes,
Apollon, Cephas, Caesar and Epaphroditos, the
Apostles of the Seventy/Holy Zacharias the New
Martyr*

Orthros: Grave Tone

Resurrection Gospel (Orthros): John 20:1-10

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20

Gospel: Mark 9:17-31

Fellowship: Homeless Outreach Ministry

*5:00 pm Lenten Pan-Orthodox Vespers at
St. Paul Orthodox Church*

Homily by Father Michael Balan

Monday, March 31

5:30 pm Great Compline

Parish Council Report

When we attend an event at our Church, whether it is after Divine Liturgy, for a dinner on a weekend, a Parishioner's Baptism or after a Funeral service, there are always volunteers present who are cooking, serving, cleaning or otherwise assisting and helping at these events. These volunteers are not doing this work for their own personal glory or recognition but because of their deep-rooted commitment to service to our Parish. A great recent example of this was at our well attended Dance Group Glendi which had volunteers cooking, serving food, manning raffle tables, bussing tables and cleaning up the hall well after the event had concluded.

It is these members of our Church who give their time and talents that allow our Parish to continue moving forward. Without them making these personal time commitments we would not be able to host the beautiful Church events that take place for our Parish community. We all need to acknowledge and thank these individuals when we see them working at our events inside and outside of our Church halls. In fact, we can all go one better and start volunteering our own time and talents to many important upcoming events that will be taking place at our Church.

For the rest of this calendar year, we will be having our Agape Picnic, Greek Food Festival and we are planning many other events that are coming up. For those of you who already volunteer your time and talents at these events, and there are so many of you, I do not have the space to list each and every one of you, we all extend a loud and warm THANK YOU! For those of you who are thinking about such volunteer work for our Church, the time to act is NOW! We need and appreciate everyone who volunteers doing what you know or just helping in so many other different ways.

While I am talking about our community coming together to assist our Parish, we also want to thank everyone who has already committed their 2025 Stewardship Pledge to our Church. The outpouring of support we have seen to our Church through Stewardship Pledges has been overwhelming. As you all know, we have set our Stewardship goal this year for \$700,000.00. We can meet this goal if every Steward from 2024 increases their Stewardship Pledge by 15 to 20%. This is a goal we can meet. To those of you who have not yet had a chance to return your Stewardship Pledge, please reflect on your pledge, and how you are able to help your Church meet its financial obligations so that we can all participate in all that our Church offers us and our families.

Once again, our warmest thanks to all of you who volunteer your time and talents to our Church Community – your efforts are truly appreciated!

Sincerely, George T. Bochanis, Parish Council President



***GREAT LENT BEGINS ON
MONDAY, MARCH 3***

HOLY WEEK IS APRIL 13 - 19

GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA IS APRIL 20

HOLY CONFESSION DURING LENT:

Father John is available for Confession by appointment only during the weekdays of Lent. Do not delay, as Confessions will not be heard Holy Week.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

HAVE A BLESSED LENTEN JOURNEY!

STEWARDSHIP 2025

Make your Pledge online at the QR code below
or return your Stewardship Form and offering to the Church Office.

“BELIEVE, BELONG, BE LOVED!”



Please detach and return to St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

+++++

Please Print Name(s), Address, Phone and Email

“BELIEVE, BELONG, BE LOVED!”

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
5300 El Camino Road
Las Vegas, Nevada 89118
(702) 221-8245

As a blessed member of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, I/we commit to \$ _____
per week/month, with the total amount for the year 2025 of \$ _____.

Signed: _____

Orthodox Christian: Yes No

Signed: _____

Orthodox Christian: Yes No

Others sharing in the gift (children): _____

*The Clark County Orthodox Clergy Association
Invites All Adults to Join Us for the
Annual Lenten Retreat*



Saturday, March 22, 2025

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

**Father Tom and
Presvytera Pat Tsagalakis
*Retreat Speakers***



**\$25 per Person or \$50 per Couple
Lenten Lunch Included
RSVP by March 15, 2024
Please register at the link below or scan QR code.**



Join Father Tom and Presvytera Pat Tsagalakis of the Family Wellness Ministry for a dynamic and interactive retreat focusing on cultivating life-giving relationships as we grow in faith, healing and love.

Register at the link below for the “Created for Connection” Retreat for couples who are dating, engaged, married or individuals seeking to be in a relationship.

**CLICK HERE:
[RETREAT - March 22, 2025](#)**

Program

8:00 am	Orthros
8:30 am	Divine Liturgy
9:30 am	Coffee and Refreshments
10:00 am	<i>Session 1</i>
12:00 pm	Lenten Lunch
1:00 pm	<i>Session 2</i>
3:00 pm	Wrap Up

Philoptochos News



The time has come – the start of our spiritual contests, the victory over demons, the full armor of self-control, the Angels’ dignity, the confidence before God. Thereby did Moses become conversant with the Creator, and heard the invisible voice. Lord, through fasting make us worthy to worship Your Passion and Holy Resurrection, as You love humanity. (Doxastikon of Orthros, Cheesefare Sunday, translated by Father Seraphim Dedes)

The Great Lent is upon us! As we use this time to add services to attend, to increase our daily prayers, contribute to the poor in spirit, health and need, and of course make our fasting menus for our families. Following the traditions for the Faith, our Ladies Philoptochos Society goes into overdrive preparing and hosting those fellowships, dinners, and fundraisers for the Great Lent, Epitaphion, Holy Cross, Palm Sunday and of course, the Agape Picnic.

Sunday, March 2: Kids ‘N’ Cancer Fellowship and Fundraiser. We just witnessed the kids of our Dance Groups having a blast being kids. Jumping, dancing, giggling and having fun, it is pure joy. We are asking you to help provide this same happiness by contributing to the Camp Agape – Kids ‘N’ Cancer project. The Metropolis of San Francisco sponsors four camps for one week each summer for kids who have cancer. During this one week a year – they get to be kids, jumping, dancing, giggling and having fun. The parents also get one short week of respite knowing that their child is being well taken care of, medically and physically. Please see the form attached or make your donation **on March 2**. Please note that these camps are open to all children referred by an oncologist.

Sunday, March 9: St. John the Baptist will host the Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers Dinner. Under the leadership of the Kitchen Crew, the Philoptochos will provide the set-up, serving and clean up. Please look for more information in the *Weekly Word*.

Tuesday, March 11: General Meeting at 6:00 pm. Please join us in Kokkos Hall for a meeting to finalize plans for the rest of the calendar.

Sunday, March 23: Sunday of the Holy Cross. Philoptochos will provide the Carnations adorning the Holy Cross and Fellowship. Please look for more information in the *Weekly Word*.

In March the Social Services Committee will be collecting hygiene items for the needy. Please start saving those coupons for shampoo, conditioner, liquid and bar soap, hand lotion, toothbrushes, toothpaste, mouthwash, combs, brushes and baby wipes (the best buy are the ones from Wal-Mart). Please note – the jumbo size wipes from Costco and Sams are too big to carry. Please bring your items to Church – we will have a box by the front door across from the Church Office.

Membership for 2025 is still ongoing. Ladies, please remember that when you join the Ladies Philoptochos Society, you are joining the ARMY OF AGAPE! If you have joined, please look for the *Weekly Word* in your email. If you are not receiving it, please check your spam/junk folders and change your setting to receive. If you are still not getting it, please let me know – bernadette.anthony@gmail.com.

At this time, I would like to personally thank all the wonderful and faithful members of LPS and St. John’s Parish who always answer the call for assistance. May God bless and keep you all.

Your Sister in Christ, Bernadette Anthony, Philoptochos President

BELIEVE. BELONG. BE LOVED. STEWARDSHIP 2025!

Stewardship, a cornerstone of Orthodox Christian faith, reflects our commitment to managing God's gifts responsibly. By aligning Stewardship with Orthodox traditions, we can both deepen our spiritual practice and enhance our sense of community. Guided by a selection of Lenten services, March's reflection explores practical ways we may practice Stewardship.

Saturday of Souls (March 1 and 8) – Stewardship Through Memory: These services are dedicated to remembering and praying for the departed, increasing our awareness of the interrelation within our Church community – both living and departed. Honoring the departed through Stewardship can include participating in Memorial services and meals, contributing funds toward supported causes, and supporting the bereaved. These acts of remembrance cultivate our sense of continuity and responsibility within our community.

Forgiveness Sunday (March 2) – Stewardship Through Community Building: This service underscores the importance of reconciliation and unity, reminding us that forgiveness is a powerful act of Stewardship. Examples include reaching out to reconcile with others, participating in service projects, and offering acts of kindness and charity. These efforts not only strengthen individual relationships but also help build a caring and supportive Church community.

Feast of St. John Climacos (March 30) – Stewardship Through Spiritual Growth and Asceticism: St. John Climacos provided timeless wisdom on spiritual growth and asceticism in his book, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, written circa AD 600. It encourages self-discipline, humility, and service – all crucial elements of Christian Stewardship. By applying St. John's lessons, we can practice responsible management of our resources, we can dedicate our time and talents to Church activities, and we can live in a manner which reflects our faith. This approach to Stewardship ensures that our Church remains a vibrant and thriving community.

As we make our way through this first month of Lent, let us increase our Stewardship efforts in meaningful ways. Let us mindfully integrate Orthodox tradition into our Stewardship practice – by honoring the departed, by embracing forgiveness, and by drawing on the teachings of St. John Climacos. In doing so, we can simultaneously enrich our spiritual journeys and deepen our connections within the St. John the Baptist Church community.

“Obedience is the burial of the will and the resurrection of humility.” (St John Climacos)

Mike Beeler, Stewardship Committee

Kokkos Scholarship

The Scholarship Committee for the Kokkos Scholarship Fund is pleased to announce that applications are now available at the Church Office. If you wish to receive your application via email, please contact Karen at karen@vegasgreekorthodox.com. The applications must be returned *on or before Friday, April 11*. Late and/or incomplete applications will not be considered.

The eligibility requirements were established by Fofa Kokkos in her Last Will and Testament. The Scholarship Committee for the Kokkos Scholarship Fund administers this program under the guidance of Father John Hondros; the committee members are Diakonissa Ellyn Nixon, John Generales and Marina Adamy.

The Kokkos Will stipulates that two high school graduates, preferably of Greek descent, within the St. John Community be selected, who are enrolled for higher education to a college or university. The scholarship amounts this year are \$1,500. The students must have an outstanding scholastic record and be in financial need. Also, Parish involvement by the students at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church was important to Fofa Kokkos; therefore, this is also a factor in evaluating the applicants.

Please contact Karen at the Church Office for more information at (702) 221-8245.



Baptized into Christ: Na Mas Zisoun

Zakarias (Zakari), son of Alexander Lucas and Kirsten Yaeger, on February 15, 2025.
Godparent: Joel Nixon.

Aiden (Zayden), son of Alexander Lucas and Kirsten Yaeger, on February 15, 2025.
Godparent: Jennifer Nixon.

Sophia (Hunter), daughter of Connor and Alexandra Rickerson, on February 17, 2025.
Godparent: Richard Kilgore.

Marriages: Na Zisete

Michael Lauchlan and Antonina Sytyk on February 1, 2025.
Koumbara: Rachel Stransky.

Gabriel Chavolla-Fukushima and Katina Vasiliou on February 21, 2025.
Koumbaros: William Vasilios Bruninga.

Fallen Asleep in the Lord: Eternal Memory!

John George Karas on January 30. Funeral on February 12.

George David Fischetti on February 5. Funeral on February 18.

Orthodox Bookstore

Greetings from the Bookstore!

Great Lent is upon us this month and our featured selection, *Great Lent: Journey to Pascha*, by Father Alexander Schmemmann, is a great and edifying read for the season. Once the subject of a book study here at St. John Church, it gets a thumbs-up from our clergy as well! Published by SVS Press, the following is in their words:

In Great Lent, Father Alexander Schmemmann offers profound insights into the rich spiritual meaning of the Lenten season. Exploring treasures like the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, the Prayer of St. Ephraim, and the Canon of St. Andrew, this revised edition unveils the depth and purpose of Lenten worship, often misunderstood or overlooked.

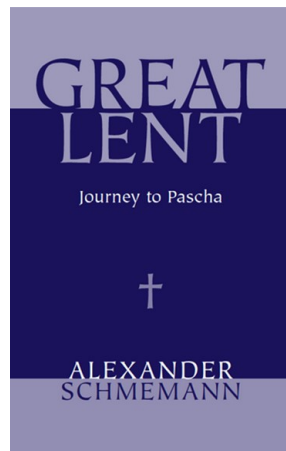
Schmemmann describes Lent as a journey of “bright sadness,” a time to awaken our hearts to the remembrance of Christ and rekindle a relationship with God that may feel distant. Through fasting, prayer, and reflection, Lent becomes a sacred space for spiritual renewal, leading us through its solemnity to the radiant joy of the Resurrection.

This book is an inspiring companion for anyone seeking to experience Lent more deeply, rediscover the beauty of Orthodox worship, and draw closer to God during this transformative season.

About the Author: Father Alexander Schmemmann was a prolific writer, brilliant lecturer, and dedicated pastor. Former dean and professor of liturgical theology at St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, his insight into contemporary culture and liturgical celebration left an indelible mark on the Christian community worldwide.

Come by the Bookstore for your copy or other Lenten devotional needs. Anna and I always look forward to seeing you.

Serving You with Love in Christ, Paraskevi Santamaria, Bookstore Director



Ministry News

Church School

Hi Everyone! Can you believe Lent starts *on Monday, March 3?* During this very special time of Lent, please try to bring your children to some extra services, which are included in the Lenten schedule.



On March 9 we celebrate the Sunday of Orthodoxy. There will be no Church School classes, but we do ask that you bring an Icon for your children so they can participate in the Procession of Icons during Liturgy. We ask our children to receive Holy Communion with their family and then we will line up to participate in the Procession.

On Saturday, March 29 we will have our Lenten Retreat. Please see the article and flyer for more details.

A special Congratulations to all of our FDF Dancers for a successful event – we are happy that they all had such a great time. I loved seeing all the photos of the dancers.

Please reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

In Christ, Eileen Koutsulis, Church School Director (702) 521-6516 or vivaleenie@cox.net

Greek Folk Dance

Our dance groups just returned from Anaheim, California where they attended FDF on February 13-17. There were over 110 dance and choral groups that attended this year, and it was truly magical for all our groups.

Asteria, directed by Gabi Payan and assisted by Nick Barbarino, Niko Pouridis, and Demetri Pouridis, competed in the primary category and won 1st Place! They were fantastic! Aetopoula, directed by Nicholas Varonos and Maya Sorkhabi, competed in a very difficult advanced junior category and wowed us with their beautiful singing of the songs of Naxos! Xrisi Ippotes, our advanced senior group directed by Paul and Alex Mantas, showed off their gorgeous Konitsa suite! And Liondaria, our exhibition group directed by Panayiota Dalacas, Nicholas Katopodis, and Mariah Thompson, danced first with His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, and then showed off their newly learned dance skills in front of a lively crowd.

Thank you to Father Florin for joining us at FDF and supporting our kids. It was a beautiful weekend and we owe so many thanks to all that have supported our groups along the way.

Leading up to FDF, we hosted a Glendi dinner dance that was hugely successful! We want to thank the entire community for turning out and all the special people to helped out, including our chefs, Steve Thompson, Demetri Philippou, and Steve Tzelalis, the entire kitchen support crew, everyone who donated the raffle prizes, Sandy Valley Farms, the Ladies Philoptochos for their donation to our program, the Parish Council for their continued and unwavering support of our program, and each and every parent and grandparent who helped out. It was beautiful to see us all working together to put on a great event.

Our Greek Dance Ministry is taking a break until August, when we will begin our new dance season in preparation for the Greek Food Festival. Please look for registration information in the summer edition of *The Desert Messenger*.

Much Gratitude, Sia Dalacas and the Folk Dance Board

Youth Greek Language Classes

The students have been busy learning the Greek Independence Day poem. *On Sunday, March 23*, following the Divine Liturgy, they will perform the poem in Church.

We are currently looking for another Greek School teacher to teach Kindergarten age children. This will allow the current students to continue on in their studies and open a new opportunity for new students to register in the Fall. If you are interested, please reach out to me or our Director, Paula Kelesis.

Katerina Katelouzou, Greek School Instructor

All Youth Event

Dear Kids, Teenagers, and Parents,

It was a joy to be able to meet with a lot of you this year at FDF! Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your dance practices and to be able to see everyone's emotions, happiness and hard work! Of course, on top of all that, we are all grateful for your dance teachers, and especially for your parents.

This month, as we will be already in Lent, please join us *on Saturday, March 29* for our traditional *Lenten Retreats*, which we will organize with the help of our Church School Director and Teachers. We will have two retreats for the two different age groups, so please check the flyer posted in this issue of *The Desert Messenger* to see the times for each of them.

Please, confirm your participation at frflorin@vegasgreekorthodox.com.

In Christ, Father Florin – and Maha Habiba, GOYA Advisor, and April Rivera, OFF Advisor

Altar Servers

As we enter the spiritually inspiring Lenten season, we encourage new Acolytes, **8 years through adult**, to join us in serving in the Altar! There are many Holy Services and your willingness to assist would be greatly appreciated and pleasing to God. Please contact me in person or at frjohn@vegasgreekorthodox.com if you are interested, and I will give you the blessing to serve.

Yours in Christ's Service, Father John

Young Adults ~ 18 Years through Early 30s

This month, please join us *on Saturday, March 22*, from 8:00 am until 3:00 pm, at St. John the Baptist for an amazing retreat with Father Tom and Presvytera Pat Tsagalakis. The theme is *"Created for Connection."* Let us enjoy some time together, while benefiting from this dynamic and interactive retreat. The fee is \$25 per person, and coffee, refreshments and a Lenten Lunch will be provided by our Parish.

Please contact our Church Office to register *by March 15*. I look forward to seeing you all there!

With Love in Christ, Father Florin

Mr. & Mrs.

Dear Couples of St. John the Baptist,

This month, we will meet *on Saturday, March 1, starting at 5:00 pm* at the home of Deacon John and Diakonissa Elyn, whom we thank for hosting. We will have a great time and a spiritual discussion as we will enjoy delicious food right before we start Lent. For their address and to let us know what dish you will bring (meatless, but dairy allowed), please contact our Church Office.

Then, *on Saturday, March 22*, all couples are encouraged to attend a Pan Orthodox Retreat, from 8:00 am until 3:00 pm, at St. John the Baptist. Our speakers will be Father Tom and Presvytera Pat Tsagalakis, and the theme is "Created for Connection." We will all benefit from this dynamic and interactive retreat. The fee is \$25 per person, and coffee, refreshments and a Lenten Lunch will be provided by our Parish.

Please contact our Church Office to register *by March 15*. Please see the flyer for more details.

We look forward to seeing you at both events.

Yours in Christ, Father John, Presvytera Maria, Father Florin and Presvytera Alexandra

Kali Parea ~ For the 40+ Crowd

Please join us *on Saturday, March 22*, from 8:00 am until 3:00 pm, at St. John the Baptist for an amazing retreat with Father Tom and Presvytera Pat Tsagalakis. The theme of this dynamic and interactive retreat is *"Created for Connection."* The fee is \$25, which includes coffee, refreshments and a Lenten Lunch. Please see the flyer for more information. Please contact our Church Office to register *by March 15*.

In Christ, Demetri Asim



2025 ORTHODOX LENTEN RETREATS

Come join us during the Lenten Season,
as we discuss what it means that

GOD IS WITH US!

Saturday, March 29

For children K through 5th grade
from 10:00 am until 12:00 pm.

For youth 6th through 12th grade
from 11:00 am until 3:00 pm.

We will have the opportunity to pray
together, have Holy Confession with
Father John, enjoy Lenten food and
other activities and games!

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church



Congratulations to the
Folk Dance Groups of
St. John the Baptist!!!



From Father Florin

St. Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem

Heavy-hearted, Sophronios, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, set out to meet the Caliph, the successor to the Muslim prophet Muhammad, at the gates of the Holy City. The surrender had already been negotiated, after a siege that had lasted four months. Sophronios, Patriarch since 634, had decided that the city must be surrendered. For several years, Palestine had been cut off from the rest of Christian-Byzantine territory. Sophronios could have known nothing of Emperor Heraclius' intentions to relieve or leave the city to its fate. He did know that invaders had ransacked villages of Palestine for the second time in a generation. That terror certainly encouraged him to accept surrender in exchange for the lives of the Jerusalemites and the safety of their Churches. In the meantime, he sent many of the city's precious relics, including the True Cross, to Constantinople, where they could be kept safe. Shortly after the capitulation of the city, Sophronios fled into a voluntary exile. He reposed shortly thereafter, sometime in 638, many said of a broken heart.



Sophronios lived in a religiously and politically tumultuous era. Violence between Monophysite and Chalcedonian Christians often erupted in the great cities of Antioch and Alexandria. These two rival groups had been at odds since the fifth century, when non-Chalcedonian Christians began to insist on the one nature in the incarnate Christ, in opposition to the teaching of the Council of Chalcedon in 451, which taught two Natures in Christ, one fully Divine and the other fully Human. In addition to this religious strife, Byzantine politics destabilized, and made the empire vulnerable to invasion from Persia, the Roman Empire's age-old enemy. In 602, a bloody coup in the palace in Constantinople ushered in a decade of terror and instability, which the Persians used to conquer Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, all of which remained in Sassanid hands for a generation.

Sophronios was born sometime around 560 in Damascus but was formed by the Christianity of Palestine. Great monastic and liturgical creativity flourished in Christ's homeland during the sixth century. Still to be seen today are the remnants of numerous *lavra*, the cliff monasteries in the Judean countryside, some of which are still living communities. *Lavra* monasticism sought to combine the eremitic and cenobitic observations of monasticism. Sophronios joined the *lavra* of St. Chariton, where he became the disciple and friend of the Byzantine monk and ascetical writer of Georgian origin, John Moschos. In 604, the two monks left St. Chariton to travel throughout Egypt, where they studied monasticism in its homeland. They became advisors to the patriarch of Alexandria, who in 607 encouraged them to gather the lore of the desert fathers. John Moschos collected these in his *The Spiritual Meadow*, a catalogue of the lives and deeds of mostly Middle Eastern holy men. Some of Sophronios' own works survive; they clearly influenced the thought of the most creative of the later Fathers, Maximos the Confessor. All three of these great figures emphasized deification – the divinization and glorification of humanity by the grace and glory of God.

Turmoil in the imperial capital must have contributed to their decision to leave Egypt for Rome. In 602, a general named Phokas deposed and executed Emperor Maurice. Phokas was a cruel, bloodthirsty tyrant whose rule amounted to a reign of terror. In 610, a general from Africa named Heraclius gathered an army and deposed and executed Phokas. The political instability proved a catastrophe, for the Sassanid Persians took advantage and seized the regions of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt from Byzantine control. Persecution of Christianity accompanied the military campaign, for the Persians slaughtered lay and clerical Christians, and destroyed numerous Churches. They took Jerusalem's most precious relic, the True Cross, off to Mesopotamia. Many Byzantine-Christians fled to the west. Like many other refugees of the religious and political tumult of the east, Sophronios and Moschos found sanctuary in Rome. Christian worship in the east was badly damaged, and the length of the Persian occupation (about 15 years) meant that many of the young grew up knowing little of Christian faith or liturgy.

(Continued on Page 15)

Byzantine Chanters and Choir

Blessed Lent!

Our practices will shift a bit for the Lenten season. We will be practicing for thirty minutes before each Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays and Salutations to the Theotokos on Fridays. We will have short practice sessions on Sundays if needed. The schedule is subject to change depending on how we progress.

Thanks to all who participate! May we all have a spiritual and fruitful Lenten season, as we chant the myriad of hymns to lift our souls!

With Love in Christ, Presvytera Maria

Forerunners ~ Our Seniors Fellowship

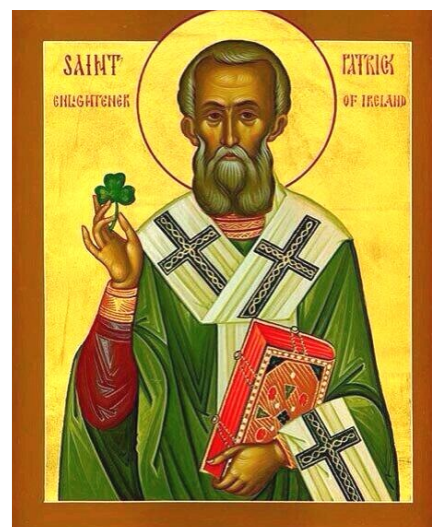


The Forerunners Valentine's Day Luncheon was a great time! We enjoyed a delicious lunch, sharing everyone's favorite candy and playing bingo.

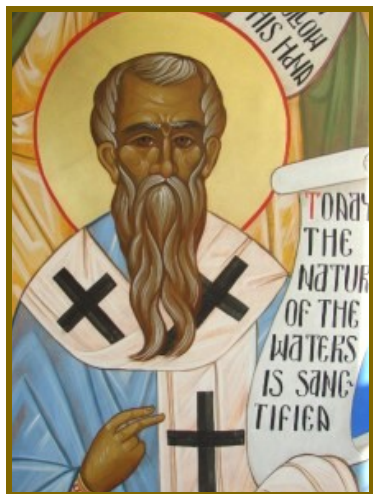
Join us for our St. Patrick's Day Lenten Luncheon on Monday, March 17 at 11:30

am in Kokkos Hall. Please wear green!

Love in Christ, Paula Kelesis for the Forerunners



From Father Florin (Continued from Page 14)



Heraclius, however, rallied Byzantine forces and had decisively defeated the Persians by 628. Sophronios returned to Palestine and was named Patriarch and the True Cross returned to Jerusalem amid triumphal rejoicing. Still, Byzantine political and religious authorities faced a colossal task. Both the government and Church desperately needed time to be reconstructed. Unfortunately, that time was not forthcoming. Muhammad himself had planned on a campaign against Christian Syria and Palestine, but when he saw Heraclius' armies, he decided to bide his time. In the meantime, he died, but his successor Umar waged a campaign of conquest in fulfillment of Muhammad's ambitions. The great battle of the Yarmuk River in 636 spelled the doom of Christian government in the Levantine regions and the destruction of the Byzantine army as the empire's military resources were depleted. Heraclius, who lived until 641, spent the rest of his days broken-hearted, having seen his great reconquests lost.

St. Sophronios, whom the Church commemorates *on March 11*, has left the Church many writings, including the life of St. Mary of Egypt and the poetic prayer for the Great Blessing of the Water on Holy Theophany.

Fr. F. J. Ristache.

From the Building Committee

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Our community hall has long been a gathering place for celebrations, events, and fellowship. Over the years, time and weather have taken their toll on the exterior, and it is now in urgent need of painting and restuccoing. To preserve and enhance this cherished space, we need your help. We have raised a third of the necessary funds.

We aim to begin this much-needed project in the spring, but we cannot do it without your generosity. Your contribution – no matter the amount – will directly impact the completion of these essential improvements, ensuring that our hall remains a welcoming and beautiful space for all who walk through its doors.

Please consider making a donation toward this restoration effort. Every dollar brings us closer to our goal and helps maintain the legacy of our community for generations to come.

If you have any questions or wish to learn more, feel free to reach out.

Thank you always for your support and generosity. Together, we can make this important project a reality!

With Gratitude, Eleni Filios, Building Committee Chair



Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

*Lord and Master of my life,
cast away from me the spirit of laziness,
idle curiosity,
love of power and vain talk.*

*But grant me, Your servant,
the spirit of moderation,
humility, patience and love.*

*Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see
my own faults and
not to judge my brothers and sisters.*

*For You are blessed forever.
Amen.*

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

5300 El Camino Road
Las Vegas, NV 89118

Rev. Father John Hondros
frjohn@vegasgreekorthodox.com

Rev. Father Florin Ristache
frflorin@vegasgreekorthodox.com

Rev. Deacon John Nixon
deaconjohn@vegasgreekorthodox.com

Karen Rawlinson
Administrative Assistant

Michelle Eugenio
Bookkeeper

Claudia Kasiotis
Housekeeping

Office Hours

Monday - Friday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Telephone: (702) 221-8245
www.vegasgreekorthodox.com

Parish Council: George Bochanis

Philoptochos: Bernadette Anthony

Stewardship Committee:
George Bochanis

Homeless Outreach:
Dimitrios Kladouchos

Maintenance: Steve Tzelalis

Building Committee: Eleni Filios

Byzantine Chanters and Choir:
Presvytera Maria Hondros

Church School: Eileen Koutsulis

Altar Servers: Father John & Mark Stransky

GOYA: Father Florin & Maha Habiba

Orthodox Family Fellowship:
Father Florin & April Rivera

Young Adults: Father Florin

Greek Folk Dance: Sia Dalacas

Greek Language: Paula Kelesis

Mr. & Mrs.:
Father John & Presvytera Maria,
Father Florin & Presvytera Alexandra

Kali Parea: Demetrious Asim

Forerunners: Paula Kelesis

Orthodox Bookstore: Paraskevi Santamaria

Hellenic Historical Society:
Nitsa Filios, Cheryl Pandelis & Susan Stamis

Greek Food Festival: Steve Tzelalis

Photography and Live-Streaming:
Bill & Erin Bruninga



Month of March Blast from the Past!
Greek School Independence Day (March 25th) Celebrations



Front Row L. to R. Unknown, Albert Flargas, Julie Gialketsis, Stephen Gialketsis, Diane Robison
Second Row L. to R. Michelle Campbell, Unknown, Adams Children in Costume, John Eliakis, Billy Gialketsis
Third Row L. to R. Unknown, Unknown, Teddy Campbell, Unknown, Unknown, Billy (Gus) Flargas
Back Row L. to R. Unknown, Unknown, Adrian Fuson, Unknown, Stacy Campbell

GREEK SCHOOL

Fofo Kokkos, Instructor

1966



50

ΖΗΤΩ ΤΟ ΕΘΝΟΣ



Jimmy Stavropoulos Maria Kakavulias John Kakavulias Bessie Stavropoulos



Katerina Eliades John Panagiotidis Nicky Pandelis Georgeite Saloni

GREEK SCHOOL

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

Niki Stavropoulos, Director

1983



Pete Tzortzis

119 D



L to R. John Kakavulias, Jimmy Stavropoulos
Pete Tzortzis, Bessie Stavropoulos,
Veneta George



L to R. Niki Stavropoulos, Alike Panagopoulos,
Billy George, Dimitris Afentoulis



Ernest Searles

GREEK SCHOOL

Carson Avenue

Niki Stavropoulos, Director

1986



L to R. Barbara Stamis, Unknown, Kelly Wilson, Teddy
Tzortzis, Billy George, Unknown, Dimitris Afentoulis



L to R. Unknown, John Kakavulias,
Niki Stavropoulos, Unknown, John Rouvas, Billy
George, Dimitris Afentoulis, Teddy Tzortzis

138 A



Please Join Us for Our
AGAPE PICNIC
Holy Pascha Sunday, April 20, 2025
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

12:00 noon to 4:00 pm
(Agape Vespers at noon, followed by the Picnic)

*Tickets are \$30
for either Traditional Lamb or Chicken Meal,
with Rice Pilaf, Greek Fries,
Fasolakia and Fresh Bread . . .
or four (4) Specialty items
(Pastitsio, Lokaniko, Tyropita, Spanakopita) . . .
or Lamb Sandwich and two (2) Specialties*

- ♦ *Delicious Greek Pastries*
- ♦ *Cash Bar*
- ♦ *Greek Music*
- ♦ *Children's Egg Hunt at 2:00 pm*
- ♦ *Table Reservations are Available and Encouraged*



Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!

*For tickets and table reservations, please call
Karen at the Church Office (702) 221-8245*





PANCRETAN ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Preserving the rich cultural heritage of the island of Crete



The Pancretan Association of America (PAA) and Pancretan Youth Association (PYA) are non-profit organizations committed to **preserving and celebrating the vibrant cultural heritage of Crete**. Through diverse programs in cultural education, philanthropy, and scholarships, we engage Cretans of all ages across the United States and Canada. **Since 1929 we've empowered our members, supported local chapters, and shared the rich history and culture of Crete with the wider community.**

At the Pancretan Association of America, we are more than just an organization. Our mission is simple yet profound: to perpetuate and celebrate the rich tapestry of Cretan culture. Through educational, cultural, and philanthropic initiatives, we honor the timeless principles of 'philoxenia' (friend to all strangers) and 'philotimo' (kindness and compassion).



Contact Us:

National President, Diane Kounalakis

✉ dkounalakis@pancretan.org

🌐 www.pancretan.org or www.pancretanarchives.org

📍 **Pancretan Association of America Hellenic Center**
6505 Bells Mill Road | Bethesda, MD 20817

Why Join PAA?

Member and Chapter Benefits:

- KPTH Magazine (bi-monthly)
- PAA e-Newsletter (monthly)
- PAA Membership Database
- PYA Conferences
- National Board and Chapters
- PAA Cultural Programs
- PAA Philanthropic Programs
- Youth Scholarships
- Pancretan Endowment Fund
- PAATalks!
- Excursions to Crete
- Biennial Conventions
- Member of the World Council of Cretans
- Historical Chapter Archives

Membership Dues Include:

- KPTH Magazine to each household
- Adults \$30
- Youth \$19 (ages 15-29)
- Additional Chapter Dues may be applied

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

49TH PAA NATIONAL CONVENTION
WEST PALM BEACH, FL | JUNE 18-22, 2025



pancretan



pancretanamerica



pancretan association of america

BELIEVE. BELONG. BE LOVED. STEWARDSHIP 2025!

Acovino, Richard and Angela	Costas, Charles and Louise	Hondros, Christopher and Darlene	McPherson, Robert and Marie
Adamy, Marina	Costas, Philip	Hondros, Fr. John and	McSweeney, Farolyn
Agouridis, Lambros and Erika	Costuros, George and Marsha	Presv. Maria	Mehas, Andrew and Samantha
Alford, Cynthia "Mary"	Crist, Adam and Kanistra	Howe, David and Ana	Melnichuk, Andrew
Alhayek, Areen and Majd	Dalacas, Dimitri and Athanasia	Hristopoulou, Spiridoula	Menegatos, James
Allen, John and Nana	Dalacas, Georgia	Hurey, Heather	Merritt, Devin and Sonia
Allen, Darin and Vasiliki	Daskalos, Voula	Iteen, Robert and Sophia	Mikelis, Nikolas and Angela
Alsup, Trevor and Kelly	Davis, Matthew and Christine	Jandete, Johanna	Monk, Theodore and Marissa
Anastasakis, Elaine	Demas, Spiro and Rita	Jaynes, Christine	Monolakis, Anthony
Andrews, George	Demetriou, Andrew	Jensen, Matthew and Michelle	Monoyudis, Jim and Julie
Anghel, Vincentiu and Julia	Demoleas, Spero and Grace	Kachikis, Ernestine	Mulopulos, George and Jenny
Anthony, Stavros and Bernadette	Demoleas, Stephanie	Kakavulias, George and Helen	Murray, Christopher and
Antoniadis, Panagiotis and	Diktakis, Gregory	Kalianiotis, Labros and Rena	George, Veneta
Katherine	Dominguez, Eric and Amalia	Kanis, Constantinos and Katie	Nicholas, Christina
Antoniou, Dimitri	Doran, Neil and Eugenia	Kaptain, Nicolas	Nicholas, John and Estella
Antoniou, George and Candace	Doskas, Athanasios and Anastasia	Karas, James	Nicolas, Samer and Christine
Aristides, George and Diana	Dramitinos, Mary	Karas, John + and Marcie	Niforos, Helen and
Asim, Demetrious	Earl, Christine Michaelides	Karris, Mark and Suzanne	Pray, Daniel
Avdoulos, Pagona and Chryssa	Eliades, Eleni and	Kasiotis, Nicholas and Claudia	Nikou, Volha
Ayalewu, Membe	Garza, Everardo	Katopodis, Efstratios	Nixon, Deacon John and
Balason, Voula	Eliades, Gregory and Maria	Katre, Sotir Mark	Diakonissa Ellyn
Barbarino, Demetra and Nick	Eliades, Harry and Agapi	Katsaros, Thomas and Sharon	Olmsted, Travis and Marilyn
Bartel, Ioanna and Robert	Eliades, Katerina	Kelesis, Paula	Paikos, Tom and Elizabeth
Beeler, Mike and Carolyn	Eliades-Prusha, Virginia	Kirchner, Barlaam	Palivos, Peter and Vicky
Belojevic, Marija	Eliakis, Peter	Kirollos, Michael and	Pallis, Paul
Berendji, Jim	Eliakis, Varthie	Molina, Adriana	Pandelis, Cheryl
Bieker, Adam and Cassie	Eyler, John and Elizabeth	Kokkinis, Peter and Jennifer	Panos, Jeanne
Bjorklund, Danielle and	Eyler, Reagan	Kokkinopoulou, Anastasia	Papas, Christian and Nicole
Geronisin, Justin	Failla, Jennifer	Kokkinos, Christina	Papas, Peter and Rita
Bland, James and Sherry	Fenlason, Nathan and	Konstantarakis, Voula	Pappas, Panagiotis and Andrea
Blume, Michael	Zmina-Fenlason, Jennifer	Kontos, Diana	Paschalis, Evangelos and Maria
Bochanis, George	Feola, Richard	Kostopoulos, Georgia	Payan, Luis and Eleni
Boehm, Alexy and	Filios, Spiridon and Eleni	Koupais, Mario and Cheri	Pendleton, Kali
Cone, Jayme	Filios, George Jr.	Kouris, Demitris and Terry	Pendleton, Tricia
Booth, Paul and Alina	Filios, Nicoletta	Koutsulis, John and Eileen	Penev, Kamen and Miglena
Bowman, Jennifer	Fischer, Cheryl	Koutsulis, Sam and Effie	Petersen, Todd and Diane
Britten, Ronald and Carol	Fitzgerald, Norman and	Krikie, Jonathan and Iryna	Petriuc, Constantin
Brown, Faye	McCullen, Sandra	Kypreos, Lesley	Petrou, Jim and Penelopi
Bruninga, William and Erin	Flangas, Marilyn	Kyriannis, Justin and Linda	Pierro, Joe and Rhonda
Bryant, Timothy and Janet	Fleischer, Bob and Penny	Kyriazopoulos, Constantine Jr.	Pilatos, Emmanuel and Erica
Bucy, Brent and Elaine	Foskaris, Nicholas	Lagomarsino, Victor and Sophia	Polimerou, Angeline
Carabas, Sotiroulla	Foster, Kyle and Mia	Lakkis, Christina	Politis, Pantelis and Dimitra
Carahalios, John and Constance	Fotopoulos, John and Barbara	Lakkis, Sahar	Poulis, Chris and Francine
Caredis, Jon and Marjorie	Fountas, Constantinos	Landahl, Richard and Johana	Pouridis, Kouli and Para
Carrico, William and Alexandra	Fountoulakis, Vasileios	Larchlan, Michael and Antonina	Powell, Scott and Angela
Carstensen, Kathleen	Franco, Emilia	Lavine, Frederick	Powers, Russell and Rebecca
Carter, Maria	Frangakis, Christos and Anastasia	Lee, David and Alexandra	Prestage, Adam and Courtney
Castoro, Mariane	Fukushima, Gabriel and Katina	Lekar, Caroline	Randis, Anastasia
Chachas, Bessie	Gebrehiwot, Kiros	Lekar, Michael and Effie	Rey, Robert and Patricia
Chamie, Elie, Emil and Claudine	Gekakis, George	Leong, Marissa	Rigas, Anthony and Mary
Chandrinis, Alexia	Generales, John and Arlene	Leonis, Tishe	Rihani, Gary and Linda
Chanos, Jennifer	Goodman, Linda	Leventis, Nicholas and Christina	Ristache, Fr. Florin and
Chomakos, Dean and Tammy	Gordon, Victor and Demetria	Liaos, James and Tina	Presv. Alexandra
Chomakos, George	Gorgan, Patrick	Likourinou, Angie	Rivera, Elias and April
Chomakos, Kosta	Grabovoi, Daphne	Loughton, Dustin and Rena	Robison, Diane
Chondrakis, Dimosthenis and	Granillo, Abraham	Lucas, Nicholas and Linda	Rodis, Dimitri and Angeline
Kragerud, Kaaren	Gutierrez, Connie	Magee, Thomas and Catalina	Roselli, Augustine
Christou, Toni	Gutierrez, Daniel	Manolakis, Catherine	Rotas, Beatrice
Cocores-Ely, Caron	Hagos, Yohannes and Mebrat	Manos, Constantine and Michele	Sakkas, Georgios and
Coll, Patrick and Anita	Hailemichael, Harenet	Markantonis, Demos and Catherine	Stavropoulos, Bessie
Collins, David	Hamilton, Mary	Markantonis, George and Sarah	Santamaria, Jennifer and Robert
Conger, William and Alexia	Haralambakis, Demetre and	Mavros, Alex and Jen	Setian, Gary
Conger, William	Dimitra	Mavros, Debbie	Shipman, Chad and Anastasia
Corey, Amanda	Hollar, Michelle and	McKinney, Michael and Mersene	Simos, Tony and Lorie
Costacos, John	DiGioia, Antonio	McManus, Jeanette	Simpson, Bryan and Julie

BELIEVE. BELONG. BE LOVED. STEWARDSHIP 2025!

Sinclair, Bill
Sirhan, Michael and Imtisal
Soteropoulos, Gust and Rita
Sotiropoulos, Chris and Jessica
Soursos, Helene
Spanos, Paraskevas
Sparkuhl, Alex and Antoinette
Stamis, Angelo and Susan
Staubs, Douglas and Anastasia
Stavropoulos, Terry and Niki
Stransky, Mark
Stransky, John and Rachel
Swartz, Noah
Szukiewicz, Joseph and Justina
Tadich, Andrea

Tadich, Katarina
Tafoya, Steven and Irene
Thanos, Nicholas and Victoria
Theros, James and Kathryn
Thompson, Maggy
Tijiboy, Ana
Tijiboy, Christine
Tim, Anna
Tsarouhas, Maria
Tsiralidis, Kosmas and Katerina
Tsolis, Christos and Panagioula
Tzelalis, Antonia
Tzelalis, Steve
Tzelalis, Vaso
Varellas, Billy

Varonos, Nicholas and Alexis
Vervilos, James and Anna
Vigil, Michael
Wadlow, Nicholas and Pamela
Wagner, Sophye
Weishar, Dale
Williamson, Daniel and
Stavroula Halatsis-
Wilson, Cleo
Wilson, Clyde
Wilson, Kelly and
Egi, Junichiro
Womack, Kimberly
Xerogianes, Nikki
Xikis, Victoria

Yurkov, Andre and Kalina
Zaferatos, Ted
Zamir, Michelle and Talor
Zarkos, Nick and Dina
Zarras, Nick and Chery
Zekichev, Timothy and
Morris, Alexandra
Zervas, Dionisios and Cacilda
Zimmerman, Paul, Angela,
Christopher and Vangeli
Zimmerman, Paul and Julie
Zmina, Stephen and Cynthia



**Kids 'n' Cancer
Camp Agape**

*Once again, we are asking for your generous support for **Ladies Philoptochos Society, Kids "n" Cancer: Camp Agape.** Camp Agape affords children afflicted with Cancer and their families to spend a week together at a summer camp – participating in swimming, archery, games, dancing, singing, eating, taking pictures, planting trees etc. In addition, we are giving the parents of these kids a degree of security, there are medical staff on site to meet any necessary immediate medical needs. All this in a caring and compassionate environment with unconditional love, along with an opportunity to shape meaningful friendships and create precious memories with other children like themselves. Please join us in giving a child a summer to create memories for a lifetime.*

I/We pledge our support to the Kids 'n' Cancer Ministry in the amount of \$ _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ TELEPHONE: _____

I wish to pay by check: (payable to Ladies Philoptochos Society Memo: KIDS N CANCER MINISTRY and mailed to Philoptochos Society c/o St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church 5200 South El Camino Rd. Las Vegas, NV 89118)

I wish to pay by Credit Card: AmEx, Visa, MasterCard or Discover

Credit Card # _____ EXP Date: _____

Signature of Cardholder: _____

Zelle payment available to lvphiloptochos.stjohn.treasury@gmail.com, please note Kids N Cancer

**2025
Stewardship
Report**
(as of 2/24/25)

***“BELIEVE,
BELONG,
BE LOVED!”***

Stewardship Gifts Pledged: \$428,213 (\$466,752 in 2024)
Stewardship Gifts Received: \$155,524 (\$138,410 in 2024)
Unfulfilled Pledge Balance: \$272,689 (\$328,342 in 2024)
Stewardship Families Pledged: 295 (289 in 2024)
2025 Goal: \$700,000

<u>Average Pledge</u>	<u>No. of Families</u>	<u>Amount Pledged</u>
\$1 - \$500	129	\$ 33,070
\$501 - \$1,000	44	\$ 33,634
\$1,001 - \$2,500	82	\$122,953
\$2,501 - \$5,000	20	\$ 72,930
\$5,001 - \$9999	16	\$101,017
\$10,000 & Above	<u>3</u>	<u>\$ 64,600</u>
Total Families	295	\$428,213

Church Account Summaries ~ January 2025

Nevada State Bank Accounts	December Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January Ending Balance	Notes
General Operating Account (GOA)	\$96,655.01	\$105,937.83		5,023.19	\$68,097.65	\$129,472.00	
Community and Education (C&E)	\$22,925.49					\$22,925.49	
Greek Food Festival (GFF)	\$56,556.36	11,381.90		\$90.00	\$11,203.75	\$56,644.51	
Designated, Restricted & Other (DR&O)	\$268,956.10	\$26,595.44		\$489.82	\$1,702.53	\$293,359.19	
Building & Maintenance (B&M)	\$111,650.27	\$125.00		\$67,622.00	\$42.00	\$44,111.27	
Folk Dance Group	\$24,522.64	\$3,979.00		\$8,002.28	\$63.90	\$20,435.46	
Hellenic Historical Society	\$790.96					\$790.96	
Designated Funds	December Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January Ending Balance	Notes
Bookstore	\$41,263.30	\$2,946.00			\$1,702.53	\$42,506.77	
Restricted Funds	December Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January Ending Balance	Notes
ICON	\$16,509.80	\$18,649.44				\$35,159.24	
Faithtree	\$1,626.39					\$1,626.39	
Youth Choir	\$2,989.18					\$2,989.18	
Church School	\$125,884.29			\$489.82		\$125,394.47	
GOYA	\$530.36					\$530.36	
Eyler Memorial Fund	\$10,390.15					\$10,390.15	
Emergency Fund	\$5,000.00					\$5,000.00	
Three Priests	\$64,322.63					\$64,322.63	
Altar Servers	\$440.00					\$440.00	
Kitchen Servicing & Cleaning	\$0.00	\$5,000.00				\$5,000.00	
Designated, Restricted and Other Total	\$268,956.10	\$26,595.44	\$0.00	\$489.82	\$1,702.53	\$293,359.19	
Building and Maintenance Funds	December Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January Ending Balance	Notes
Building Fund	\$9,525.35	\$125.00		\$42.00		\$9,608.35	
Hall Project	\$92,407.05			\$67,622.00		\$24,785.05	
Giving Tree	\$9,717.87					\$9,717.87	
Building & Maintenance Funds Total	\$111,650.27	\$125.00	\$0.00	\$67,664.00	\$0.00	\$44,111.27	
Other Funds	December Ending Balance	Deposits	Transfers In	Withdraws/ Checks	Transfers Out	January Ending Balance	Notes
Kokkos Scholarship Fund	\$72,275.91		\$4,449.13			\$76,725.04	
Commonwealth Investments (Icon)	\$152,614.20		\$4,935.40			\$157,549.60	

January 2025 Candles **\$6,000.23**
January 2025 Trays **\$4,666.40**
January 2025 Candles & Trays **\$10,666.63**



MARCH 2025 ~ IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Forgiveness Vespers follows Liturgy	3 First Day of Lent/ Clean Monday 5:30 pm Great Compline		5 5:30 pm Chanter/Choir Practice 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy	6 9:00 am Homeless Outreach	7 6:00 pm Chanter/Choir Practice 6:30 pm First Salutations to the Theotokos	1 2nd Saturday of Souls 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy & Memorial 5:00 pm Mr. and Mrs. at Nixon Home
9 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Procession of Icons 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. John the Baptist	10 4:30 pm Youth and Adult Greek School Classes 5:30 pm Great Compline		12 5:30 pm Chanter/Choir Practice 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy	13 9:00 am Homeless Outreach	14 6:00 pm Chanter/Choir Practice 6:30 pm Second Salutations to the Theotokos	8 3rd Saturday of Souls 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy & Memorial
16 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Simeon	17 11:30 am Forerunners Luncheon in Kokkos 4:30 pm Youth and Adult Greek School Classes 5:30 pm Great Compline	18	19 5:30 pm Chanter/Choir Practice 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy	20 9:00 am Homeless Outreach	21 6:00 pm Chanter/Choir Practice 6:30 pm Third Salutations to the Theotokos	22 8:00 am Orthros 8:30 am Divine Liturgy Lenten Retreat Follows - "Created for Connection"
23 8:45 am Orthros Procession of Holy Cross 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at Ss. George & Dimitri	24 4:30 pm Youth and Adult Greek School 5:30 pm Great Vespers	25 Annunciation of the Theotokos 8:00 am Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	26 5:30 pm Chanter/Choir Practice 6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy	27 9:00 am Homeless Outreach	28 6:00 pm Chanter/Choir Practice 6:30 pm Fourth Salutations to the Theotokos	29 10:00 am Kindergarten -5th Grade Lenten Retreat 11:00 am 6th - 12th Grade Lenten Retreat
30 8:45 am Orthros 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 5:00 pm Lenten Vespers at St. Paul	31 4:30 pm Youth and Adult Greek School 5:30 pm Great Compline					

The Desert Messenger

*St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
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The Way of the Lord



The Lord said, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father Who is in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on Earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

(Matthew 6:14-21)