

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

2418 Swann Avenue – Tampa, FL 33609 – 813-876-8830 (office) - office@stjohntpa.org



~Sunday before Epiphany~

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2025

*Sunday before Epiphany —
Eve of the Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ;
The Holy Martyrs Theopemptus and Theonas*

Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis (Proistamenos)
Fr. Stratton Dorozenski (Retired Priest In Residence)
Fr. John Stefero (Retired Priest In Residence)

VISION:

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

MISSION:

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

CORE VALUES:

Love, Worship, Community, Learning, Service

SYNAXARION:

*Sunday before Epiphany—
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Apolytikion of the Resurrection:

Let all things above in heaven rejoice, and let all things below on earth be glad. With all the might and strength of His arm, an eternal deed the Lord did perform. Beneath His feet He has trampled down death by death, and first born of the dead has He become. From the womb of Hades has He delivered us, and to all the world has granted His great mercy.

Apolytikion for the Forefeast:

Jordan River once turned back when Elisha struck its stream with his mantle in the wake of Elias's ascent; and the water was parted to the one side and to the other. And thus the fluid stream became a dry way for him, a symbol and truly a type of Baptism, by which we now pass over the streaming passage of the present life. And Christ appeared at the Jordan River to sanctify the waters.

Apolytikion of St. John the Baptist:

The memory of the just is observed with hymns of praise; for you O Forerunner the witness of the Lord is sufficient. You have proved to be truly more venerable than the prophets. Since you were granted to baptize in the river, the One Whom they proclaimed. Therefore, you strove for truth, proclaiming with joy the Good News, even to those in Hades: that God was manifested in the flesh, and takes away the sins of the world, and grants to us His great mercy.

Kontakion:

To the flowing streams today of River Jordan comes the Lord and cries aloud to John the Baptist, and He says, "Be not afraid to baptize me now; for I have come to save Adam, the first-formed man."

Welcome to all of our Visitors "Welcome one another just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." Romans 15:7 We pray that your worship experience with us today will be inspirational and uplifting. Please introduce yourself to an usher or a member of the Welcoming Ministry and pick-up a "welcome packet" as you exit the church. We are happy that you are with us today!

Holy Communion is offered only to Orthodox Christians who are in good canonical standing with the church and who have prepared through prayer and fasting. Everyone is invited to receive the Antidoron (Blessed Bread) at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

Order for Holy Communion—With Sunday School in session the order for Holy Communion will be as follows:

1. Choir
2. Altar boys
3. Sunday school teachers (who will line up in middle aisle (right) before Communion).
4. Sunday school students (who will line up in the middle aisle (left) before Communion)
5. Then the rest of the congregation (side areas then the main section).
6. Parents with recently Baptized children can line up before the Sunday School Teachers.

READINGS FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 5

EPISTLE LESSON:

O LORD, SAVE YOUR PEOPLE AND BLESS YOUR INHERITANCE.

VERSE: TO YOU, O LORD, I HAVE CRIED, O MY GOD.

THE READING IS FROM ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO TIMOTHY 4:5-8

TIMOTHY, my son, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry. For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

GOSPEL LESSON: MARK 1:1-8

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophets, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' John was baptizing in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

"You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God"
2 Corinthians 9-11

Your Stewardship/Gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure create the foundation of our beautiful church! We enter a New Year filled with hope and optimism. Please take time to complete your 2025 Stewardship Pledge Forms! A gentle reminder to list your ministry interests as you complete your commitments. These are of growing importance as we continue to expand our community. Pledge Forms are also available in the Narthex and Online at Stjohntpa.org and in our App. For any questions, please call or text **George Mitseas at 813-748-1220**

ST. JOHN'S BOOKSTORE

What are your resolutions for the New Year? Do they center on prayer, Scripture reading, and learning more about your Orthodox faith? If so, our bookstore is a great place to begin. From Orthodox study Bibles, Scripture commentaries, books on prayer and spirituality etc., we have what you need to fulfill that resolution. Stop in any Sunday following Divine Liturgy and make this New Year a Christ-centered one!



MINISTRY NEWS & UPDATES

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN EASILY MAKE DONATIONS ONLINE???

Simply scan the following QR Code with your phone's camera and select your fund of choice, Stewardship, General, Memorial etc. You can include notes to provide more detail.

Thank you for your Generosity and Support!



WELCOME TO OUR PARISH

If you are new to the Tampa Bay area or just visiting, we would love to get to know you better.

PLEASE TEXT THE WORD

"WELCOME" TO 813-790-5950

FOLLOW THE PROMPTS TO GIVE US
YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION AND FROM THERE
YOU WILL BE DIRECTED TO OUR ONLINE CONNECTION CARD

DO NOT NEGLECT TO SHOW *hospitality* TO STRANGERS.
FOR THEREBY SOME HAVE ENTERTAINED *angels in unwares*.

YOUNG AT HEART JANUARY GATHERING

Join us on **Saturday, January 11th** for our next Young at Heart Gathering ushering in the New Year!

3pm to 5pm – Appetizers, Desserts, and Beverages

Program – St. Basil the Great Video Presentation

Cutting of the Vasilopeta

A "Price is Right" Game for All to Enjoy

Please respond to Presvytera Denise no later than January 5th with your number attending. We have been growing by leaps and bounds so please feel free to invite a friend and give them the experience of fellowship, food, and fun.



VISITATION MINISTRY

The *Philoptochos* encourages parishioners to visit our homebound seniors from St. John's. If you are interested in visiting and/or know of one of our seniors who would like some company, please e-mail Vickie Peckham at vickiepeckham@gmail.com

PARISH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



PAP provides free and confidential counseling services when life's challenges become overwhelming. The PAP utilizes a network of faith-based providers that are sensitive to the values and beliefs of those they serve and provides compassionate care to children, adults, parents, and seniors. Parishioners can confidentially contact BayCare directly to request up to three free counseling sessions by a licensed mental health professional. BayCare helpline, 800-878-5470, is answered **24/7 by mental health professionals.**

MORE MINISTRY NEWS & UPDATES

Bible Study – Women’s Bible Study with Fr. Stavros will take place on most Tuesdays from 10:00-11:30a.m. either in person (in Father’s office) or zoom. For January the dates are Tuesday January 14, Tuesday January 21 & Monday January 27.

Tuesday night Bible study with Fr. John will continue meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the Zaharias Room. Join us in person or via zoom for some very informative, lively and interactive discussions on how we apply Biblical principles in our everyday lives. For January, the dates are Tuesday January 7, Tuesday January 14, Tuesday January 21 & Tuesday January 28.

Food Pantry Update

We are grateful for your support the past year and turn the page to a New Year of helping others! We have targeted January as a month to rebuild our inventory and invite you to bring in donations every Sunday. We ended the year preparing over 50 ‘Snack Bags’ for the residents of Tampa Hope. We welcome donations anytime and have a dedicated drop-off, to the left, inside the church hall entrance. You can also see a full list of items we need in the Messenger and inside the Hall. If you know of someone in need or wish to take a bag of groceries to go, we can make that happen! Please call or text Sandra Pappas at 813-785-3747

Young Adults- Our young adult group meets once a month for dinner/discussion (and other times for fellowship and service). The meeting for January will be on Thursday, January 9, from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. All young adults, ages 18-40, are invited to participate. We will be having a monthly discussion based on some set topics. The Topic for January will be a Bible study on the feast of Theophany and St. John the Baptist. Group Members use What’s App for communication.

Sunday School Teachers’ Seminar, January 11 – On Saturday, January 11, from 9:00am-12:00pm, there will be a seminar for all Sunday school teachers.

Meeting of Ministry Heads, Monday, January 13 – On Monday, January 13, there will be a meeting of ministry heads from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Each ministry head is requested to attend and other members of each ministry are invited to attend. If the ministry head cannot attend, please ask someone else in your ministry to attend, so that all ministries are represented.

Prayer List: Lord Jesus Christ, Physician of our Souls and Bodies, visit and heal your servants:

Athena Felley, Melissa Romero, Sandra Reyes, Miltiadis, Larry Maas; Konstantinos Triantafyllopoulos; Kostadinos Booras; Michael I, Anna Maria & Thomas Reilly, Calliope Herman; Delaney & Alexis Johnson; Ron & Linda Ledet; Helen & Mike Mitchell, Elena, Ricky & Michael Gordenina, Tina Chakonas, Felix R., Ivco; Anna, Stavroula, George, Pam, and Liz; Christopher Labatos; Eva Coppalla; Christopher; Christopher; Peter Nenos; Patrick Carroll; Irina, Marina, Yuri, and Christophoros; Ashley Snyder; Evangelos & Caroline Critkas; Christine Alex, June, Lillian Thomas; Scotty; Desi Serriera; Ashley Kladakis; Kathy & Andrew Bouzinekis; Anastasia; Virginia Georgiou, Toula Tsaros, Nellie Pringle, Yolanda Webb, Angela Bougas, Ron, Jason Vickers, Rex Garrison, Ann Demas, Christina Noel Kouzes Houck, Evangeline Xeroteris, Ashley Henderson, Natalie Henderson, Chris, Debbie, James, Avery, Lily, Jacob, Jesse, Ann, Rosario, Alissa, John, Angela, Joey, Christine Scourtes, Steven, Phyllis, John Zelatis, Reagan, Peter Zaharis, Alexandra Ferrarolis, Leon & Despina Botham, Cindy Xenick, Mary Ellen Evdemon, Marie Sofia Panagopoulos, Maria Hursey, Chris Vamvakias, Mike Trimis, Michael Romero, George Hambos, Dean Kondilis and Family, Bill and Nancy Manikas, Patricia Costello, Ekaterina & Anna S. Dora K., Debbie P., Mary V., David V., Don Payne, Valery, Jimmy, Timoleon, Elias, Anna, Damynos, Anna C., Anthony Welker, John Bella, Michele Blankebaker, Jonah, George Voulgaris, Carol Cretekos, Tina, Bob, Bonnie and all victims of war, terrorism, crime, natural disaster, and all of whom we are unaware.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS & TOPICS

January 5th

Epiphany - St. John the Baptist
9th-12th Boys stay in Church



January 12th

Vasilopita—St. Basil

If you do not receive our weekly Sunday School Constant Contact every Friday afternoon, please email Vickie Peckham at vickiepeckham@gmail.com to let her know.

UPCOMING SERVICES & EVENTS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5	ORTHROS 8:45A.M. (ALTAR BOYS— CAPTAINS ONLY)	DIVINE LITURGY 10:00A.M.
MONDAY, JANUARY 6	VESPERS-ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PHILOTOCHOS RECEPTION	6:30P.M.
TUESDAY, JANUARY 7	<u>ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST</u> ORTHROS 9:00A.M. LUNCHEON-SPONSORED BY PARISH COUNCIL BIBLE STUDY	DIVINE LITURGY 10:00A.M 6:30P.M.
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8	CHOIR	7:15P.M.
THURSDAY, JANUARY 9	YOUNG ADULT DISCUSSION	7:00P.M.
SATURDAY, JANUARY 11	SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS SEMINAR ADULT GREEK SCHOOL CHILDREN'S GREEK SCHOOL YOUNG AT HEART	9:00A.M.-12:00P.M 3:00P.M.-5:00P.M.
SUNDAY, JANUARY 12	ORTHROS 8:45A.M. (ALTAR BOYS— ST. JOHN) GOYA	DIVINE LITURGY 10:00A.M. 5:00P.M.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT ST. JOHN

Women's Bible Study

Leader: Fr. Stavros
January 7: **NO Bible Study**

Tuesday Night Bible Study

Leader: Fr. John
January 7: **Bible Study**

DID YOU KNOW???

We have a new Instagram Page!
Feel free to click on the link
below and follow us..

@stjohntpa



In our effort to support efforts for improved mental health, our parish is proud to support the 988 suicide hotline. Spread the word and you might help save a life!



Philoptochos 2025 Membership Drive

We are on the MOVE for a Great New Year!

We invite all women ages 18 plus 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 can give to support our mission. Your donation makes you a member of the National, Metropolis and Local Chapters of Philoptochos. **We invite all women age 80 and above to join us as honorary members with no dues required.**

“Truly I tell you, whatever you do for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you do for me.” (Matt 24:25)

Name _____	Date _____
Street Address _____	
City _____	State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone _____	Cell _____
E-mail address _____	

Main areas of interest (check all that apply): Visiting the Sick _____, Fundraising _____, Spiritual Retreats _____, Communication (Messenger-Sunday Bulletin) _____, Baking _____, Social Gatherings _____, Decorating _____, Koliva _____, Other (write in) _____

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America – Ladies Philoptochos Society. 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: Presvytera Denise Stefero, 11209 Lark Landing Ct., Riverview, FL 33569 or

Drop off on any Sunday in St. John's Bookstore. Questions: denises54@hotmail.com

Please make checks payable to: St. John Philoptochos or pay online <https://square.link/u/123vm6lr>

Parish Priest:	Rev. Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis (frstav@gmail.com)	813-394-1038
Retired Priest in Residence:	Rev. Fr. Stratton Dorozenski	813-876-8830
Retired Priest in Residence:	Rev. Fr. John Stefero (jwstefero50@hotmail.com)	678-637-4425
Ministry Coordinator/Chanter:	Maria Xenick (Mariapxenick@stjohntpa.org)	813-765-3587
Bookkeeper:	Debbie Bowe (debbie!@stjohntpa.org)	813-876-8830
Administrative Assistant :	Elli Kehagias (office@stjohntpa.org)	813-876-8830
Parish Council:	Euripides Panos, President	813-352-3972
	John Zelatis, Vice President	813-727-2271
	Marilyn Sandborn, Secretary	813-760-6289
	Alexis Scarfogliero, Treasurer	813-892-1599
	George Ameres	941-720-3494
	Peggy George	813-727-5587
	Peter George	781-910-9971
	Amin Hanhan	813-846-2957
	Tony Magos	813-957-3206
	Suzanne Pileggi	813-244-5855
	Marcelle Triantafilou	612-396-5026
AHEPA:	James Sakaris	301-529-8857
Altar Angels:	Kalliope Chagaris	813-789-4134
Bible Study:	Fr. John Stefero	678-637-4425
Bookstore:	Pres. Denise Stefero	678-464-4833
Choir:	Tara Swartzbaugh, Director	813-313-0439
	Ruth Losoviz, Organist	727-688-2782
Community Outreach:	Greg Melton	813-967-2074
Dance Groups:	Η ΧΑΡΑ ΜΑΣ, Alexandra De Maio	813-340-9668
	Maraquet Edquid	813-422-8963
	ΠΑΡΕΑ, Marina Choundas	813-877-6136
	Genie Carter	813-363-2362
	ΠΑΝΗΓΥΡΙ, Alexandra De Maio	813-340-9668
Daughters of Penelope:	Ourania Stephanides	813-546-4711
Festival:	Mike Xenick	813-340-8737
Finance Committee:	Gary Ward	813-846-3898
Food Pantry:	Sandra Pappas	813-785-3747
GOYA:	Michael & Bessie Palios	813-523-0346
Hope/Joy:	George & Zackie Ameres	813-245-3813
Joy Tweens	Maraquet Edquid	813-422-8963
Men's Fellowship:	Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis	813-394-1038
Nursing Ministry:	Marcelle Triantafilou	612-396-5026
Photography Ministry:	Karina Findlay	813-476-9632
Philoptochos:	Katherine Sakkis	813-309-1073
Stewardship:	Chris Kyrus	757-672-1920
	George Mitseas	813-748-1220
Sunday School:	Vickie Peckham	813-758-3102
Ushers	Pete Trakas	813-505-2193
Veterans/1st Responders	Fr. John Stefero	678-637-4425
Welcoming Ministry:	Maria Xenick	813-765-3587
Women's Bible Study:	Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis	813-876-8830
Young Adults	Aris Rogers	813-309-5525
Young at Heart:	Dora Morgan	813-613-3738
Youth Protection:	Suzanne Pileggi	813-244-5855