

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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



*The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross –
Sunday, September 14*

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2025

*The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross;
Commemoration of the 6th Ecumenical Council*

Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis (Proistamenos)

Fr. John Stefero (Associate Priest)

Fr. Stratton Dorozenski (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:

*The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross;
Commemoration of the 6th Ecumenical Council*

Second Antiphon: *Save us o Son of God, who was crucified in the flesh, to Thee we sing: Alleluia.*

Apolytikion for the Cross: *Save O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance. Give victory to those who battle evil and protect us all by Your Holy Cross.*

Kontakion: *You were lifted on the Cross voluntarily, on Your new community that bears Your Name, do You bestow Your mercies O Christ our God; gladden in Your mighty strength, our faithful leaders, granting to them victories, against all their enemies, and may Your help in battle be for them: a weapon of peace, and banner invincible.*

Trisagion Hymn: *Your Cross we Venerate O Master and Your Holy Resurrection we glorify.*

Communion Hymn: (Psalm 4:6): *Let the Light of Your face shine on us, O Lord. Alleluia.*

**After the Sermon, there will be a procession of the Holy Cross. You can find it on pg.85 of the Divine Liturgy Book.*

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, SEPTEMBER 14

Exalt the Lord our God. Verse: The Lord reigns; let the people tremble.

THE READING IS FROM ST. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS 1:18-24

Brethren, the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart." Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

GOSPEL LESSON: JOHN 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30

At that time, when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no crime in Him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die, because He has made Himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard these words, he was the more afraid; he entered the praetorium again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer. Pilate therefore said to Him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the Pavement, and in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" They cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed Him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha. There they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing near, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. Then when Jesus had received the vinegar, He said, "It is finished"; and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

YOUNG AT HEART SEPTEMBER GATHERING

Join us on **Saturday, September 20th**

12:45pm Gathering time

1:00 pm Catered Luncheon

(Roast Chicken, Rice, Salad, Vegetable, Dessert, and Beverage)—\$12 per person

Followed by Discussion on ***"The Weekly Commemorations of the Church"***

Reservations are a must. Please reply to Presvytera Denise at denises54@hotmail.com no later than September 14th and reserve your place with your payment.

MINISTRY NEWS & UPDATES

UPCOMING COFFEE HOUR SCHEDULE

Philoptochos

September 21

Sunday School/Hope Joy

September 28

College Outreach Ministry/Altar Angels

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!



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.**



Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta
Tampa Bay District Council

"The Roaring Twenties" Golden Gala

Sat. October 11th, 2025

6:00PM Cash Bar

DRESS IN YOUR BEST 1920's ATTIRE!

St. Nicholas Community Center
348 N Pinellas Avenue
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689

To benefit the building of the "Philoxenia House" for housing accommodations for the Diakonia Retreat Center

Ticket Cost \$125
Seating is limited. RSVP by September 20th

For more information email OrthodoxGoldenGala@gmail.com
or Call/Text Katerina Damianakis at 727-459-2123

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



STEWARDSHIP REPORT

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

*Thank You to the 336 families and individuals who have participated so far in our 2025 Stewardship drive. Total Giving has reached **\$633,000** thru August 31st. Letters were recently mailed summarizing donations to date. We are available to answer any questions.*

There are still many parishioners who have not yet submitted a pledge form for 2025. A final request to participate will be mailed to each of you soon. Please take the time to respond. We need your support!

If you are new to the community and would like to know more about the Stewardship Program, please email George at gmitseas@mail.com.

DO NOT NEGLECT TO SHOW *hospitality* TO STRANGERS.
FOR THEREBY SOME HAVE ENTERED *angels unawares*.
HEBREWS 13:2

MORE MINISTRY NEWS & UPDATES

Women's Bible Study on Tuesday mornings with Fr. Stavros will continue meeting at 10:00am. Women's Bible study meets in the Parish Council Room, or via zoom for those who can't make it in person. We will be studying the books of I and II Timothy and Titus.

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 September, the dates are: Tuesday September 16, Tuesday September 23 & Tuesday September 30.**

Dance Groups—Greek folk dance practices for Y Hara Mas (3rd-6th grades) will start **TODAY** September 14 at 12:15pm in the Kourmoulis Center (during coffee hour)! Practices will continue every Sunday (except September 28) from 12:15 to 12:45pm for the remainder of September and October until our Greek Festival on November 7-8, 2025. Please contact Maraquet Edquid (813-422-8963) with any questions. OPA!

GOYA— The GOYA Meeting for September will be Sunday, September 21, from 5:00pm-7:30pm. Dinner, as always, will be provided.

Men's Group—The Men's Group will meet on Sunday, September 28, at 5:00pm. We will walk to a nearby restaurant and have dinner and then come back to church for a discussion, concluding by 7:30pm. All men of the community are welcome to participate.

JOY Tweens Group —Our first JOY Tweens meeting will be on Sunday, September 28, from 12:45-2:15 p.m. We will have lunch, icebreakers, and a discussion with Fr. Stavros. This group is open to all 4-6th graders. Please check your email for the SignUpGenius to RSVP. Contact Maraquet Edquid at 813-422-8963 for more information.

Children and worship/sermon—We are delighted to have so many young children in church each Sunday. We encourage people to bring children so that they are familiar with worship from the youngest age. However, on the occasion when a young child's crying or fussiness cannot be calmed quickly, especially during the sermon, we kindly ask that you step out for a few minutes, and either go to the nursery, or participate via livestream in the Kourmoulis Center, so as to not disrupt the opportunity for others to hear the sermon.

Food Pantry Update

Jesus said, *"They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."* – **Matthew 14:16**
Every donation to our Food Pantry makes a difference and we remain grateful! We delivered many donations this week to Metropolitan Ministries, with your generosity. We have a designated area to the left inside the church hall entrance for your donations. We have a current need for - Peanut Butter & Jelly, Mac & Cheese, easy 'Grab & Go' items, Bars, Cans with pull tops, single serving items etc. A complete list of needed items can be found in the Messenger and inside the Hall. If you or someone you know needs groceries, we are happy to provide a bag of food. We also welcome your ideas and involvement! To get in touch or to contribute, please contact **Sandra Pappas at 813-785-3747** via call or text.

Prayer List: Lord Jesus Christ, Physician of our Souls and Bodies, visit and heal your servants: Athena Felley, Melissa Romero, Sandra Reyes, Miltiadis, Kostadinou Booras; Michael I, 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, Toulia Tsaros, Nellie Pringle, Yolanda Webb, Angela Bougas, Ron, Jason Vickers, Rex Garrison, Ann Demas, Christina Noel Kouzes Houck, 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, Pelagia & family, Michael Spithoyanis, Maggie Trakas, Marcellé Triantafyllou, Mary Speegle, June, Katherine, Raissa J., Robert and Inger Calbi and all victims of war, terrorism, crime, natural disaster, and all of whom we are unaware.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS & TOPICS

We are blessed with 125 devoted Sunday school students; all seeking to grow spiritually and build a closer relationship with God.

This Month's Topics:



9/14 Sign of/ The Holy Cross
9/21 The Lord's Prayer/ Sunday School and H&J are hosting Coffee Hour

9/28 The Creed /Sunday School Class Pictures Day.

Please register your Toddler 2s through HS students using this QR Code:



If you do not receive our **weekly Sunday School Constant Contact** every Friday afternoon, please email Zackie Ameres at zackiee@yahoo.com to let her know.

UPCOMING SERVICES & EVENTS

Sunday, September 14	<u>The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross</u> Orthros 8:45a.m. Divine Liturgy Greek Dance Y Hara Mas	10:00a.m. 12:15p.m.
Monday, September 15	Orthodoxy 101 6:30p.m.	
Tuesday, September 16	Women's Bible Study with Fr. Stavros Bible Study with Fr. John	10:00a.m. 6:30p.m.
Wednesday, September 17	Adult Greek Dance Choir	7:00p.m. 7:30p.m.
Saturday, September 20	Community Outreach Adult Greek School Starts Young At Heart	12:30-3:00 p.m. 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Sunday, September 21	Orthros 8:45a.m. Divine Liturgy GOYA	10:00a.m. 5:00p.m.

Assist the Ladies Philoptochos Society and the Daughters of Penelope as they support
Hillsborough County Public Schools – "Erase the Need" School Supply Collection Drive
throughout the month of September.

Donate School Supplies and Change a Student's Future

Many students in Hillsborough County Public Schools lack basic supplies needed to succeed in the classroom. Nearly 62% of students or approximately 137,000 children are considered economically disadvantaged.

Your support can make a real difference!

Some of the most needed items include: Backpacks, pencils and colored pencils, 24 count crayons, rulers, scissors, pocket folders, erasers, markers, glue bottles and sticks, notebook paper, construction paper, spiral notebooks and much more.

Bring your supplies to the school bus collection boxes located in the Kourmolis Center. For more information see Ourania Stephanides, Diane Trimis, or Presvytera Denise. Thank you for your generosity!





Thank you!

A very special thank you
to those who have already donated to
the Arise & Build Capital Campaign.

We are grateful for our existing donors whose
commitment brings this vision to life.

If you haven't pledged, scan the code below.
Every gift matters.
Let's reach our goal of 100% parish participation.



www.ariseandbuild.com

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
YOUNG ADULTS' MINISTRY
PRESENTS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2025
10 AM - 4 PM



\$25
registration

ages:
20-40

FINDING MY PURPOSE: USING MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO ANSWER GOD'S CALL FOR MY LIFE

A FALL SPIRITUAL RETREAT LED BY
FR. STAVROS AKROTIRIANAKIS

IDENTIFY YOUR PURPOSE, CONNECT WITH
LIKEMINDED PEERS, HEAR GOD'S WORD

RSVP BY SEPTEMBER 21:
STJOHNTPA.YOUNGADULTS@GMAIL.COM

2418 W SWANN AVE, TAMPA, FL, 33609

ORTHODOXY 101

Begins in September & offered by Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis, Parish Priest

When will the classes be held?

Monday, September 15—Introduction to the Sacraments: Baptism, Chrismation, Confession, Marriage, Unction
Monday, September 22—The Divine Liturgy—A "Teaching" Liturgy
Monday, September 29—Orthodox Traditions—fasting, icons, prayer and living an Orthodox Christian life

Why should I attend Orthodoxy 101?

- Interfaith couples. This will help the non-Orthodox person understand more about what is going on in our church.
- Anyone who is considering joining our church. Going forward, this class will be a requirement for those who wish to join our Orthodox faith.
- New converts to Orthodoxy. For those who recently joined our church and who want to know a little bit more.
- Anyone who wants to know more about the basics of our faith, or who wants a refresher

What format can I expect?

A relaxed atmosphere with presentations, interactive discussions, and lots of time for questions and answers.
Classes will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Church Sanctuary.
Please sign up with Fr. Stavros at frstav@gmail.com, so he has enough materials for everyone. There is no charge for this class.

Parish Priest:	Rev. Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis (frstav@gmail.com)	813-394-1038
Associate Priest:	Rev. Fr. John Stefero (jwstefero50@hotmail.com)	678-637-4425
Retired Priest in Residence:	Rev. Fr. Stratton Dorozenski	813-876-8830
Ministry Coordinator/Chanter:	Maria Xenick (Mariapxenick@stjohnntpa.org)	813-765-3587
Bookkeeper:	Debbie Bowe (Debbie@stjohnntpa.org)	813-876-8830
Administrative Assistant :	Ellie Kehagias (office@stjohnntpa.org)	813-876-8830
Parish Council:	Parish Council	
	Alexis Scarfogliero, President	813-892-1599
	George Ameres, Vice President	941-720-3494
	Marilyn Sandborn, Secretary	813-760-6289
	George Chagaris, Treasurer	727-420-1920
	John Carter	813-376-9196
	Peggy George	813-727-5587
	Peter George	781-910-9971
	Tony Magos	813-957-3206
	Suzanne Pileggi	813-244-5855
	Marcelle Triantafilou	612-396-5026
	John Zelatis	813-727-2271
Arise & Build Capital Campaign:	Mike Xenick, Chair	813-340-8737
	Euripides Panos, Vice Chair	813-352-3972
Adult Greek School:	Magda Myer	813-523-5771
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 Losovitz, Organist	727-688-2782
College Outreach:	Kathy Kaburis	813-240-6513
Community Outreach:	Greg Melton	813-967-2074
Dance Groups:	H XAPA 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
Finance Committee:	Gary Ward	813-846-3898
Food Pantry:	Sandra Pappas	813-785-3747
Gasparilla Parking:	Fady Hakim	678-294-7732
GOYA:	Tony & Mary Magos	813-957-3206
Greek Festival:	Volunteer Needed	
Hope/Joy:	George & Zackie Ameres	813-245-3813
Joy Tweens	Maraquet Edquid	813-422-8963
Junior Olympics:	Dwight Forde	727-685-9028
Men's Fellowship:	Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis	813-394-1038
Nursing Ministry:	Marcelle Triantafilou	612-396-5026
Oratorical Festival:	Peggy Bradshaw	727-244-1374
Photography Ministry:	Karina Findlay	813-476-9632
Philotochos:	Melissa Krinos	813-716-9975
Stewardship:	George Mitseas	813-748-1220
Sunday School:	Zackie Ameres	813-245-3813
12 Disciples:	Theo Panopoulos	248-867-3697
Ushers:	Pete Trakas	813-505-2193
Technology:	Mike Wenditz	813-550-3099
Veterans/1st Responders :	Fr. John Stefero	678-637-4425
Website/Social Media/App:	Miguel Piniero Jr	305-632-4871
Welcoming Ministry:	Skip Higdon	813-391-6915
Women's Bible Study:	Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis	813-394-1038
Young Adults:	Aris Rogers	813-309-5525
Young at Heart:	Dora Morgan	813-613-3738
Youth Protection:	Suzanne Pileggi	813-244-5855