

# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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



*~Sunday after the Nativity of Christ – December 29~*

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2024

*Sunday after Nativity –*

*14,000 infants (Holy Innocents) slain by Herod in Bethlehem;  
Our Righteous Father Marcellus, Abbot of the Monastery of the Unsleeping Ones*

**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 after Nativity —*

*14,000 infants (Holy Innocents) slain by Herod in Bethlehem;*

*Our Righteous Father Marcellus, Abbot of the Monastery of the Unsleeping Ones*

**Apolytikion of the Resurrection:**

*When You descended to the realm of death, You as Life immortal, rendered to Hades a mortal blow, through Your Divine Radiance. And when You, from the depths of Hades and the darkness below, did raise the dead all the powers of heaven did proclaim and cry out: O life-giving Christ and our God we give glory.*

**Apolytikion for Nativity:**

*Your Nativity, O Christ our God, has caused the light of knowledge to rise upon the world. For therein the worshippers of the stars were, by a star, instructed to worship You, the very Sun of Righteousness, and to know You as Orient from on high. Glory to You, O Lord.*

**Apolytikion for the Ancestors of God:**

*Annunciate the miracles to David the ancestor of God, O Joseph. You saw the Virgin pregnant. You glorified with the shepherds. You worshipped with the Magi. And you were warned by an Angel. Entreat Christ God to save our souls.*

**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:**

*The Virgin gives birth today to Him Who is above all-being and the earth offers a cave to Him Whom no man can approach. Angels, with the shepherds, Glorify Him. Magi, with a star make their journey. For unto us is born today as a newborn Child, the Pre-Eternal God.*

**Trisagion Hymn:**

*All those who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia. (Three times)*

**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, DECEMBER 29

### EPISTLE LESSON:

GOD IS WONDERFUL AMONG HIS SAINTS.

VERSE: BLESS GOD IN THE CONGREGATIONS.

### THE READING IS FROM ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS 1:11-19

*Brethren, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.*

### GOSPEL LESSON: MATTHEW 2:13-23

*When the wise men departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaos reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."*

### Megalinarion:

*Me-ga-li-non psi-chi mou tin ti-mi-o-te-ran, ke en-do-xo-ter-an ton a-no stra-tev-ma-ton. Mi-sti-ri-on xe-non, o-ro ke pa-ra-do-xon, ou-ra-non to spi-le-on thro-non, He-ru-vi-kon tin Par-the-non, tin fat-nin ho-ri-on, en o a-nek-li-this o a-ho-ri-tos, Chri-stos o The-os, on a-nim-noun-tes me-ga-li-no-men.*

*My soul, magnify her who is greater in honor and glory than the armies of heaven.*

*Behold I see here a strange mystery, for behold,*

*the cave is heaven; a Cherubic throne the Virgin; the manger, a grand space in which Christ our God, the Uncontainable, reclined as a Babe, Whom in extolling, do we magnify.*

### Communion Hymn: (Psalm 111:9)

*Li-tro-sin a-pes-ti-le Ky-ri-os to la-o af-tou. Allilulia.*

*The Lord has sent redemption to His people. Alleluia.*

## 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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.



### STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

Your Stewardship/Gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure create the foundation of our beautiful church! We have kicked off Stewardship Month and invite you to complete your 2025 Stewardship Pledge Forms! We THANK the over 100 parishioners who have responded so far. 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](http://StJohnTPA.org) and in our App. For any questions, please call or text George Mitseas at 813-748-1220

### 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.**

### 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](mailto:vickiepeckham@gmail.com)



## 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. We will **NOT** have Bible Study on Tuesday December 31. 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. We will **NOT** have Bible Study on Tuesday December 31. For January, the dates are Tuesday January 7, Tuesday January 14, Tuesday January 21 & Tuesday January 28.

**MY WORD 2025** -For the past four years, we’ve encouraged parishioners to identify one word that will shape their year. With 2025 now a month away, it’s time to start thinking of the word that will define you in 2025. Towards the end of December, Father will send out a request for individual words to define you for 2025.

### **Food Pantry Update**

We were able to prepare over 50 ‘Snack Bags’ for the residents of Tampa Hope last Sunday. We are deeply grateful for our support. We welcome donations anytime and have a dedicated drop-off, to the left, inside the church hall entrance. 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

### **SAVE THE DATE – St. John needs all hands on deck for Gasparilla on January 25!**

Every year we've opened our parking lot to attendees of the Tampa Bay Gasparilla Festivities. This has been a successful undertaking for years and we are thankful for all who have helped in years past! To run this event, we are asking for your help once more! We are looking for a new person to chair this event, as our past chairperson is unable to fill that role this year. He is, however, willing to help a new chairperson understand what is involved in this. If you are willing to chair this event, please contact Fr. Stavros. As for everyone else, even a few hours of volunteering is a great help to make this a safe, fun and profitable event. A sign-up genius along with details will be forthcoming through email and the bulletin.

### **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, Toulia 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 and all victims of war, terrorism, crime, natural disaster, and all of whom we are unaware.*

## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS & TOPICS

**December 29th**  
No Sunday School Class



**January 5th**  
Epiphany - St. John the Baptist  
9th-12th Boys stay in Church

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

## UPCOMING SERVICES & EVENTS

<b>SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29</b>	ORTHROS 8:45A.M. (ANYONE ATTENDING MAY SERVE) NO SUNDAY SCHOOL	DIVINE LITURGY 10:00A.M.
<b>MONDAY, DECEMBER 30</b>	<b><u>ST. ANYSIA</u></b> ORTHROS 9:00A.M.	DIVINE LITURGY 10:00A.M
<b>WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1</b>	<b><u>NEW YEAR'S DAY, ST. BASIL</u></b> ORTHROS 8:45A.M. (OFFICE CLOSED)	DIVINE LITURGY 10:00A.M
<b>FRIDAY, JANUARY 3</b>	ROYAL HOURS OF THEOPHANY	9:30A.M.
<b>SATURDAY, JANUARY 4</b>	ADULT GREEK SCHOOL CHILDREN'S GREEK SCHOOL	
<b>SUNDAY, JANUARY 5</b>	ORTHROS 8:45A.M. (ALTAR BOYS- CAPTAINS ONLY)	DIVINE LITURGY 10:00A.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>

<b>Parish Priest:</b>	Rev. Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis (frstav@gmail.com)	813-394-1038
<b>Retired Priest in Residence:</b>	Rev. Fr. Stratton Dorozenski	813-876-8830
<b>Retired Priest in Residence:</b>	Rev. Fr. John Stefero (jwstefero50@hotmail.com)	678-637-4425
<b>Ministry Coordinator/Chanter:</b>	Maria Xenick (Mariapxenick@stjohntpa.org)	813-765-3587
<b>Bookkeeper:</b>	Debbie Bowe (debbie!@stjohntpa.org)	813-876-8830
<b>Administrative Assistant :</b>	Elli Kehagias (office@stjohntpa.org)	813-876-8830
<b>Parish Council:</b>	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
<b>AHEPA:</b>	James Sakaris	301-529-8857
<b>Altar Angels:</b>	Kalliope Chagaris	813-789-4134
<b>Bible Study:</b>	Fr. John Stefero	678-637-4425
<b>Bookstore:</b>	Pres. Denise Stefero	678-464-4833
<b>Choir:</b>	Tara Swartzbaugh, Director	813-313-0439
	Ruth Losoviz, Organist	727-688-2782
<b>Community Outreach:</b>	Greg Melton	813-967-2074
<b>Dance Groups:</b>	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
<b>Daughters of Penelope:</b>	Ourania Stephanides	813-546-4711
<b>Festival:</b>	Mike Xenick	813-340-8737
<b>Finance Committee:</b>	Gary Ward	813-846-3898
<b>Food Pantry:</b>	Sandra Pappas	813-785-3747
<b>GOYA:</b>	Michael & Bessie Palios	813-523-0346
<b>Hope/Joy:</b>	George & Zackie Ameres	813-245-3813
<b>Joy Tweens</b>	Maraquet Edquid	813-422-8963
<b>Men's Fellowship:</b>	Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis	813-394-1038
<b>Nursing Ministry:</b>	Marcelle Triantafilou	612-396-5026
<b>Photography Ministry:</b>	Karina Findlay	813-476-9632
<b>Philoptochos:</b>	Katherine Sakkis	813-309-1073
<b>Stewardship:</b>	Chris Kyros	757-672-1920
	George Mitseas	813-748-1220
<b>Sunday School:</b>	Vickie Peckham	813-758-3102
<b>Ushers</b>	Pete Trakas	813-505-2193
<b>Veterans/1st Responders</b>	Fr. John Stefero	678-637-4425
<b>Welcoming Ministry:</b>	Maria Xenick	813-765-3587
<b>Women's Bible Study:</b>	Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis	813-876-8830
<b>Young Adults</b>	Aris Rogers	813-309-5525
<b>Young at Heart:</b>	Dora Morgan	813-613-3738
<b>Youth Protection:</b>	Suzanne Pileggi	813-244-5855