



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

THE MESSENGER

OCTOBER 2024



*St. Demetrios the Myrrh-streamer & Great Martyr of Thessaloniki—
October 26*

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

*Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople *Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America* Metropolis of Atlanta*



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

ST. JOHN'S DIRECTORY

Timetable of Services

Sundays: Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Weekdays: Orthos 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis 813-876-8830 (Office) 813-394-1038 (Cell) frstav@gmail.com	Bible Study-Tuesday Night Fr. John Stefero 678-637-4425 Buildings & Grounds Euripides Panos 813-352-3972	Junior Olympics Dwight Forde 561-310-5034
Retired Priest in Residence Rev. Fr. Stratton Dorozenski 813-876-8830 (Office)	Choir Tara Swartzbaugh, Director 813-313-0439 Ruth Losovitz, Organist 727-688-2782 Maria Xenick, Chanter 813-765-3587	Men's Fellowship Rev. Fr. Stavros N. Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038
Retired Priest in Residence Rev. Fr. John Stefero 813-876-8830 (Office) 678-637-4425 (Cell) jwstefero50@hotmail.com	College Student Program Rev. Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038	Parish Nursing Ministry Marcelle Triantafilou 612-396-5026
Ministry Coordinator/Chanter Maria Xenick Mariapxenick@stjohntpa.org 813-765-3587(Cell)	Community Outreach Greg Melton 813-967-2074	Oratorical Festival Peggy Bradshaw 727-244-1374
Parish Council Euripides (Rip) Panos, President 813-352-3972 Zohn 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 863-581-2430 Suzanne Pileggi 813-244-5855 Marcelle Triantafilou 612-396-5026	Connect Through Christ - Special Needs Ministry for Children Dante and Lindsey Skourellos 813-765-9534	Photography Ministry Karina Findlay 813-476-9632
Office Staff Debbie Bowe, Bookkeeper debbie@stjohntpa.org 813-443-4899(fax)	Dance Groups H XAPA MAΣ, Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668 Maraquet Edquid 813-422-8963 ΠΑΡΕΑ, Marina Choundas 813-877-6136 ΠΑΝΗΓΥΡΙ, Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668	Philoptochos Katherine Sakkis 813-309-1073
Elli Kehagias, Administrative Assistant, office@stjohntpa.org 813-876-8830	Daughters of Penelope Ourania Stephanides 813-546-4711	Stewardship Chris Kyrus 757-672-1920 George Mitseas 813-748-1220
Adopt a College Student Kathy Kaburis 813-240-6513	Festival Mike Xenick 813-340-8737	Sunday School Vickie Peckham 813-758-3102
Adult Greek School Magda Myer 813-523-5771	Finance Committee Gary Ward 813-846-3898	Usher Pete Trakas 813-505-2193
AHEPA Bill Zaferos, President 414-737-9103	Food Pantry Sandra Pappas 813-785-3747	Veterans/1st Responders Fr. John Stefero 813-876-8830
Altar Angels Kalliope Chagaris 813-789-4134	Gasparilla Parking Volunteer Needed	Website / Social Media / APP VOLUNTEER NEEDED!
Altar Boys Fr Stavros Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038	GOYA Michael & Bessie Palios 813-523-0346	Welcoming Ministry Maria Xenick 813-765-3587
Bookstore Presbyteria Denise Stefero 678-464-4833	Hope/Joy George & Zackie Ameres 813-245-3813	Women's Bible Study Rev. Fr. Stavros N. Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038
	Joy Tweens Maraquet Edquid 813-422-8963	Young Adult Aris Rogers 813-309-5525
		Young at Heart Dora Morgan 813-613-3738
		Youth Protection Suzanne Pileggi 813-244-5855
		12 Disciples VOLUNTEER NEEDED!

A PERSONAL THANK YOU FROM FR. STAVROS

I want to say thank you to all those who participated in the special event marking my 20-year anniversary in Tampa that happened on September 14. While there will be a community celebration in January 2025, this was something very personal for just me. If you are familiar with the book "The Five Love Languages," one of those languages is "Words of Affirmation." And of the five love languages, that is mine. The most meaningful sentiments in my life are words of affirmation. I don't need gifts, I don't really celebrate birthdays, what I like receiving most in my life are words of affirmation.

This is more than a simple thank you, or even a word of encouragement. It is a statement that something I'm doing matters. No one who isn't a priest will ever understand what my life is like. No one will fully understand the weight of the cross that a priest who cares about what he is doing carries. Over the years, I have collected a lot of images in my mind—beautiful moments, sad moments, words of affirmation and words of consternation. One hundred beautiful moments can be eclipsed by a horrific moment (like burying a child, which I have done way too many times) and one hundred beautiful words can be eclipsed by a small number of ugly ones (and yes, in my twenty years, I've had some very ugly words hurled at me, especially in the early years and even this year).

I've written extensively on the topic of encouragement, I've even written a book on it. And in that writing, I have mentioned that something positive going into someone results in something positive coming out of them. Something negative going into someone results in something negative coming out of them. And when nothing goes in to someone, then negative will come out of them. In other words, when someone offers a positive word, the recipient feels positive. When someone offers a negative word, the recipient feels negative. And when someone receives no words, the result will actually be negative. This ministry is stressful. It is also a lifestyle, not something I turn on and off when the workday is over. I've chosen to focus on relationships in ministry, which leads to carrying emotions with people, feeling their joys and actually feeling their sorrows. I still cry when I think of the children I have buried and their parents. My choice to focus on relationships also leads occasionally to failed relationships, and those emotions and failures add up at times. The devil lurks around everyone who is trying to be Godly, especially the priests. Not only does he

tempt us, he speaks words of doubt into our minds. So, this experience of September 14—the many people who came to offer words of encouragement and affirmation, offered in the quiet of our church, in the special place where I hear your confessions, meant more to me than you will ever know.

I treasure the heartfelt letters that I received from so many people. Heartfelt letters are my favorite kind of gift, because I can reread them on the tough days, when my head is filled with doubts. Thank you for creating a memorable experience for me.

I will treasure it always. Thank you.

+Fr. Stavros



On Sunday, August 25, Fr. Stavros offered a Memorial Service for all the people who have passed away in his 20 years of ministry at St. John.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRIEST

Five C's of Being an Orthodox Christian Catechism-Consistency-Comfort- Connection-Commitment

Several months ago, I wrote one column in the Messenger geared toward the ever-growing number of people who are considering becoming Orthodox. Often, I have been asked the question, what do I need to do to join the church and become Orthodox? And I came up with five "C's" as my answer—i.e. when you have these five things, you are ready to become Orthodox. This, of course, presumes you have the one big "F", which is faith. *Our faith is Christianity. Our religion, the way we practice our faith, is Orthodoxy.*



Most of the people reading this message are not in the category of newcomer to the faith. Most of us, still, have been Orthodox our whole lives. And in thinking about these **Five C's**, I thought it would be a good idea to expand on these five things because they are not just pre-requisites for joining the Orthodox Church, they are five pillars for everyone who is Orthodox, whether you have been here only a short time, or your entire life.

Let's start off, however, with Faith. Faith, as I said, is system of beliefs. There are limited number of faiths—*Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, etc.* The basic tenets of our Christian faith are these—In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. God existed forever, and created everything from nothing. Mankind is created in the image and likeness of God, as an icon of God, endowed with free will. Mankind fell away from God because of its choice to sin, causing the fall of mankind and of the world, leaving the world imperfect, mankind addicted to making the imperfect choices that are sin and temptation, and resulting in death at the end of life. Jesus Christ is the co-eternal, co-Creator with God and the Holy Spirit. Two thousand years ago, He was incarnated as a human being and lived among us. His life and death on the cross gives us the model life, one of service, sacrifice and union with the will of God. His Resurrection shows that God has the power over life and death, and using that power, God will give eternal life to those whom He has deemed worthy—we will be resurrected from the dead and sit in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

The Nicene Creed is our basic statement of faith. It was written in 325 A.D. and edited into its current form in 381 A.D. The Creed contains a summary of what we believe about God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It adds one more thing in which we believe—In one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. This means that we believe that the church is the vehicle, or vessel by which we

learn, express and grow in our faith, as we journey through life and prepare ourselves for standing at the judgment seat of Christ, where Christ will decide who enters the Kingdom of heaven and who does not.

Now that we have briefly defined faith, let us go to the five C's:

CATECHISM

Catechism is learning about the faith. This is supposed to be a lifelong journey. Orthodoxy in some sense is like an onion, there are so many layers to be peeled back. There are some people in Orthodoxy who literally know next to nothing about the faith. They never went to Sunday school, maybe came to the church for Pascha because that's what everyone does on "Greek Easter." There are some who went to Sunday school and have enough knowledge to win a trivia contest, but have never really internalized what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. There are people who know a lot about the faith, maybe even have a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, who still struggle with questions about what we believe and how we practice. And there are those who know a lot and still yearn to know more. In the secular world, we have to keep learning in order to keep up. If you don't know how to work a remote control, you can't watch TV anymore. If you can't figure out how to use a computer, you'll have a hard time finding a job. And many people have started to dread new things because every new phone and new gadget has a new learning curve—it can't be enjoyed efficiently until there is some proficiency and that takes time. One of the pillars of Orthodox Christian, for the lifelong Orthodox or the prospective convert is catechism, understanding what we believe, so that one can apply it with conviction.

CONSISTENCY

The next pillar is consistency. Consistency means doing something on a regular basis. If a person is trying to diet to lose weight, he or she can't just do it once a week or once a month. It is a consistent, daily effort. If we are trying to read a book, we can't just pick it up once a month because we will have forgotten what happened up until that point. Even if one doesn't read a lot on a daily basis, if one is trying to make it through a book, there can't be long stretches of not reading, it has to be consistent. It's the same with the practice of the Christian faith. This also needs to be done daily through prayer and weekly through worship. If a person says "I go to church consistently once a year for Pascha," that is a conflict in terms. One might say they go to church "habitually" once a year. There is no way something can be consistent but limit their participation to once or twice per year. One of the reasons that most priests, including me, ask prospective members to attend worship services for at least six months prior to Chrismation is to make sure there is consistency/constancy in attendance. It doesn't really do anything to have a person run in and get baptized and never come

back. Just like it doesn't really do anything to baptize a baby and then never bring it to church, or come to church just once a year on a holiday and then not come back for the next 12 months. Prayer is good, any time it is offered. Even the person who has not prayed in a long time can benefit from a prayer. The benefit is exponentially greater when it is offered on a daily basis.

COMFORT

No one likes to feel uncomfortable. We tend to steer away from things that make us anxious. In order to live a committed Christian life, there has to be a level of comfort to it. There needs to be comfort in prayer, in reading Scripture, in worship. Oftentimes, comfort comes from familiarity. People, as an example, who approach for Holy Communion once a year when they come for Pascha often look uncomfortable doing it. Maybe they feel guilty, or like they don't belong because they never come. People who approach more often tend to feel more comfortable. Of course, there is the temptation to become too comfortable or cavalier about Holy Communion when we come often. We should always be approaching with fear of God, faith and with love, and never with complacency. However, when one is filled with fear (awe), faith and love, then approaching for Holy Communion does bring a level of comfort. Familiarity is tied to knowledge and so we circle back to "catechism." Someone won't feel comfortable with venerating an icon, or fasting, or going to confession if they don't know why we do it. The more we know, the more comfortable we are. The more we pray, the more comfortable we become with it. Same with worship. Ideally these spiritual disciplines become less "things we do" and become more "who we are." Instead of saying "I pray" as if to check off a box, we become "a person of prayer," someone whose life revolves around a deep relationship with God, rather than fitting God into our busy lives. Worship and Communion becomes the cornerstone of the week, and everything we do follows from there. That is ideal. The more we do these things, the more comfortable we become in this mindset.

CONNECTION

Oftentimes, people who are new to the faith embrace worship, go to catechism, are very consistent and comfortable, and then it comes time to join the church formally through Chrismation. There becomes the need to have a Godparent. And sometimes there becomes a problem, there is no connection to anyone who can fill this role. Whether you are new to the faith or have been part of the church all of your life, there needs to be connection, a sense of belonging to a greater community. Even though we might be alone with our thoughts in worship, when we are in church we are in the midst of a community of people. The idea of community implies that this group of people does things together. They worship together, they learn together, they serve together. But they also know each other. As St. Paul encourages us in **Galatians 6:2**, they "bear one



another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." Part of being in a community is bearing the burdens of others in the community, supporting and encouraging others in their needs, and being supported by others in your needs.

One of the best ways to connect in a community is through a ministry. A ministry takes a group of people who have a common interest and puts them together to serve the needs of the church. For example, a person who likes to sing can join the choir. This helps them in two ways. They use their talent to help lead worship, and they bond with a sub-group of people who has the same interest. Young Adults and Young at Heart get people of a certain age demographic together for fellowship, and because people of same ages have same interests and challenges, these groups end up becoming support groups for members, places where members can find encouragement and even help. Some ministries are a place to serve the greater world, like Philoptochos. Philoptochos serves both inside and outside of our church community, it is a ministry based on philanthropy, but as a side effect, it bonds a community of women together who like philanthropic service. The Parish Council and other administrative ministries of the church help to maintain and grow our parish. These also have a fellowship component. To come and worship, and immediately leave each time, not knowing anyone in the community or participating in any other aspect of community life is a lost opportunity. Worship is THE MOST IMPORTANT ministry of the church, but it is not the only ministry. Part of what it means to be a member of the community is to engage with the community through fellowship and ministry.

COMMITMENT

A commitment is an agreement or a pledge to do something for a period of time. As an example, a professional athlete (and other professionals as well) will sign a contract committing their services to a team for a specific amount of time for a specific amount of money. Orthodox Christians are called upon to have a commitment to Christ as well as a commitment to their community. Christ committed Himself to us to the point of dying on the cross for our sins. No one is asking for that kind of commitment from us (*though one day, a Christian under persecution might have to commit his life, as many martyrs have done in centuries past*). The commitments of the Christians are two: First, to commit ourselves to living the Christian life. We commit our actions, our morals, our behavior, to living according to how Christ taught us to live.

There is a petition that is offered frequently in our services that says "Let us commit ourselves and one

another and our whole life to Christ our God." This commitment highlights both the obligations of the Christian, to commit ourselves AND to bring others to the same commitment, which is the second commitment of the Christian. We have to be involved in a community so that the others will encourage our commitment to Christ and we can encourage theirs.

Stewardship fulfills this commitment. Stewardship is the objective, tangible sign of our commitment. Stewardship is offered in three ways. There is a stewardship of time—this is time we pledge to pray, worship, read Scripture and learn about the faith. This is a private commitment between you and God. There is not a form on file that say "Eleni pledged to pray 10 minutes a day and read one theology book a year." The stewardship of your time reflects YOUR personal commitment to Christ. The stewardship of your talent enables the ministries of our church to function. There can be no Sunday school without Sunday school teachers. There is no choir without choir members. So much of what happens in parishes is driven by the commitment of volunteers, of people who make an offering of their talent to help a ministry of the church.

Then there is the stewardship of our finances. It costs money to operate a church. Before we do anything here, there are costs like insurance, maintenance and utilities just to have the buildings standing. These costs are fixed, we have no choice about them. Churches require personnel to administer them. This includes the priest and support staff—ministry coordinator, administrative assistant, bookkeeper, custodian, choir director, organist. These are the personnel engaged by our church. Whether we need all of them and what we pay them is subjective—different people will have different opinions. A parish of our size in another denomination would probably have three pastors and a staff of ten. To effectively minister to a parish of this size congregation, that is what is needed. Ministries are getting done, people are being ministered to, but are we getting everyone what they need? Probably not. There is a saying that "you get what you pay for." People always scrutinize church workers in regards to how much they make. If we want top notch staff, they must be paid a competitive wage. There are other costs associated with having a church community—it costs money

to produce a monthly periodical, to make copies, to buy supplies. If we are going to support ministries like Sunday school and GOYA, these cost some money as well. As I wrote, ministries are how we become connected to the community, so it is important that the members invest financially in



ministries through the budget.

This brings us to the most discretionary section of the budget—what we give to charitable causes. Here is the way the budget is done in every parish, including ours. We make sure we get all the required expenses in and even a few discretionary ones and whatever is left over, if anything, can be given to charitable causes. One of the charitable causes we will contribute to this year is to the Metropolis of Cameroon in Africa, where we will send \$1,000 so that new wells can be dug so that people in that area will have clean water to drink. We're not talking about a donation to church building, or even for a specific ministry—we are talking a donation that will enable people simply to keep living. And shame on me that in a meeting where we were discussing how tight the budget is, I said "well, we need to give some money to Africa, you know," as if it was an afterthought or a bother. We are a church, we should be leading with this stuff.

This brings us now to the **Parish Assembly Meeting of October 20** (which will be spoken more of in the article which follows). At that meeting, we will pass a budget that will reflect two things about our community: First, it will reflect our commitment to be a church community. You will see in the budget that we will no longer have a tenant after June 30 of 2025. (See separate article on our vision plan). This reflects the desire of our parish to have a fully functioning ministry building seven days a week, where we can grow our existing ministries and even establish new ones as our population grows. Second, it will reflect our commitment to supporting charitable causes outside of our community. We are proposing about \$40,000 in charitable donations, which reflects about 5% of our budget. That number ideally is a tithe of the budget, or 10%, so we have a way to go on this.

The challenge to you is, will you be at this meeting, and will you vote in favor of being a church and supporting charity?

A steward is a temporary caretaker. We are all stewards because we are all temporary. In 100 years, none of us will be here. Will there be a St. John Greek Orthodox Church in 100 years? That's up to the stewards of today, who will pass on this church to the stewards of tomorrow. In reflecting on our own stewardship, I invite you to reflect on four questions in the article below "The Church and Your Role In It."

ALL OF US affect the answer to this question by our 5 C's—Catechism, Consistency, Comfort, Community and Commitment.

+Fr. Stavros

THE CHURCH AND YOUR ROLE IN IT

"The Church and Your Role in It" was the topic of discussion at our September Young Adult gathering. There were four questions offered for discussion. Many of us don't have time to come to a Bible study, and so we never have the opportunity or challenge to sit down and reflect on Bible verses, or our faith. I encourage you to reflect on these questions with your family, with your peers, with other people in your ministry and even by yourself. Hopefully this exercise will help you discover more about what role you can play in our church community."

1. What are you good at? What do you really love doing? How can you use these talents to serve the church?
2. In **Matthew 28:19-20**, Jesus gives the Great Commission to the Apostles (and by extension to us, as this is read at every baptism), which tells Christians: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."* What verbs does Jesus use in these verses? How well do you think Orthodox Christians fulfill this mission? How well do you think our parish of St. John fulfills this mission? How well do you think you personally fulfill this mission?
3. In **2 Corinthians 9:7**, St. Paul writes, *"Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God love a cheerful giver."* Can you share a time when you gave a gift you were really excited to give to someone? Have you cheerfully given to a cause?
4. Reflect on the parable of the widow's penny. **41** *And He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the multitude putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. 42* *And a poor widow came, and put in two copper coins, which make a penny. 43* *And He called His disciples to him, and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. 44* *For they all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had her whole living."* **Mark 12:41-44** How would you retell this parable in today's world? Does this challenge your thinking when it comes to giving financially to the church? What motivates you to give to a charitable cause? How can the church better motivate people to give more generously? How can praying influence how we give?

FUTURE PLANS FOR ST. JOHN GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

There is a well-known line from a well-known movie "Field of Dreams," which says "If you build it, they will come." In looking towards the future of our parish, we have a need to build, not because they will come, but because they are already here, and more will come.

FACTS:

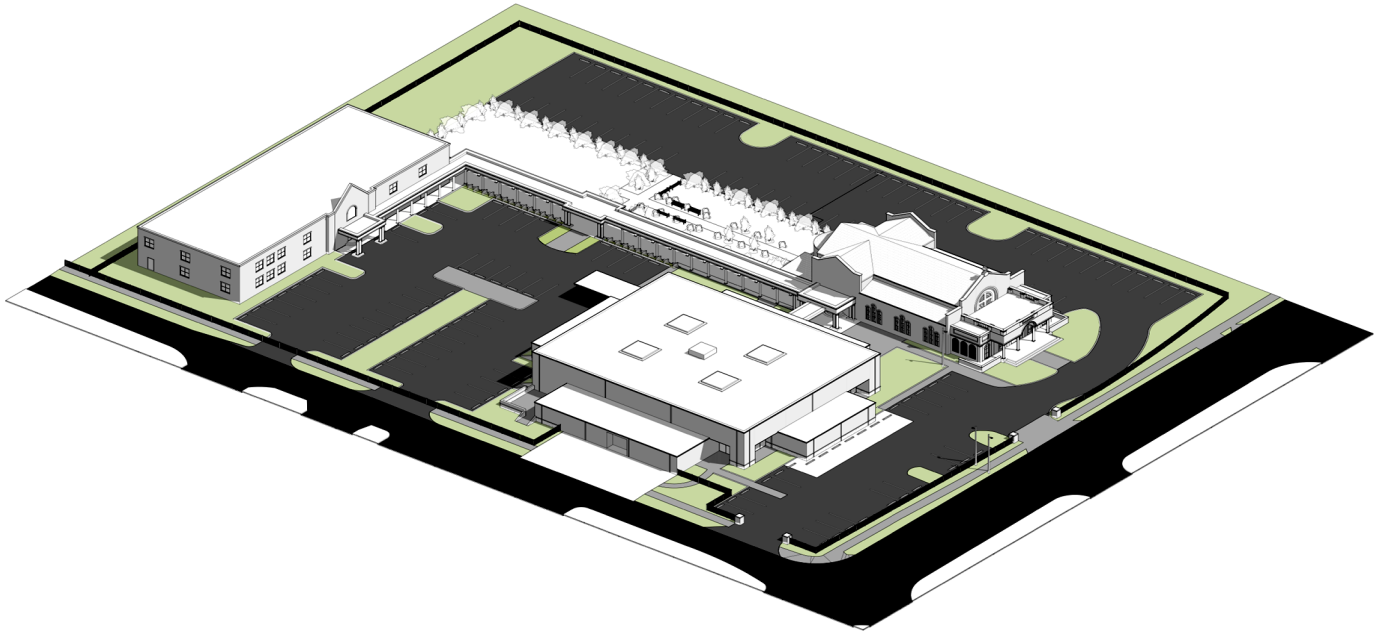
1. There is no room in the church to seat everyone who comes. Every Sunday, just about all year, there are people who are worshipping in the hall, sometimes 100 of them.
2. We don't have room for our ministries. On a recent Sunday, there were three ministries requesting to use the same space.
3. We don't have room for our current ministries. We don't have room to develop new ministries.
4. Our Sunday school classrooms are not allowed to have icons in them because we are renting out our facility to a public charter school.
5. Our Greek School program has been very successful the past few years. The Greek school can only be held on Saturdays, because we do not currently have use of our facilities until after 6:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. However, because there are conflict on certain Saturdays, there are some days where we cannot have Greek school.
6. The lease with the current tenant will expire on June 30, 2025, at which point we will be able to use our campus for its intended use, a full-time Orthodox Church.

THE PLAN:

1. Reconfigure the current school building into a ministry building, solving all of the issues 2-6 described above.
2. Expand the church so that there will be two hundred additional seats.
3. An update to the Kourmolis Center.
4. Sprucing up our grounds.
5. Demolition of the current office building (which is being held together by band-aids) and creation of additional parking.

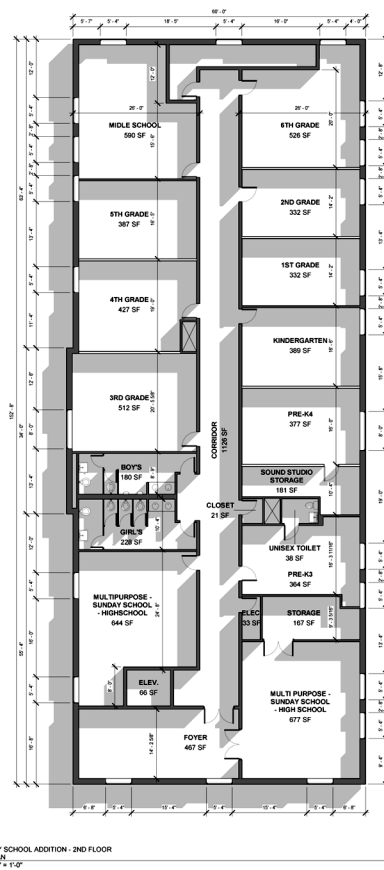
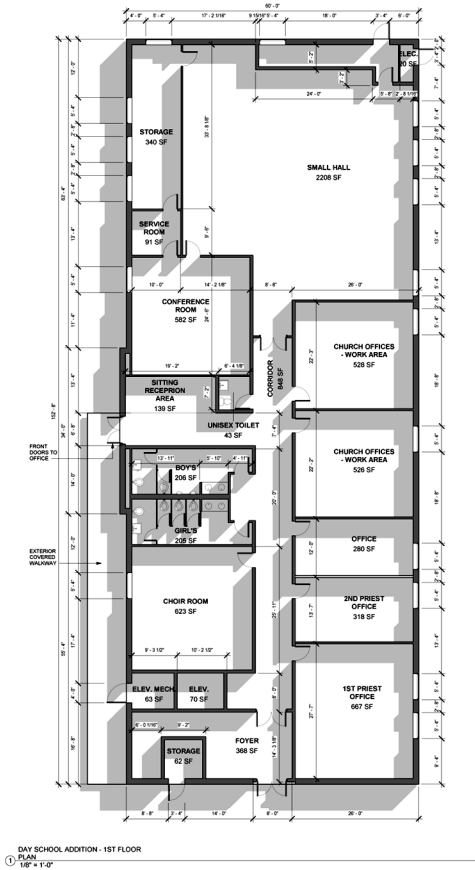
We need to ramp up this conversation. We have a responsibility as stewards, as inheritors of the Great Commission, to make new disciples. And how blessed we are, we don't have to go out and find them, they are coming to us. Look at the influx of people who have joined our church in the past year. We don't have to build it and hope "they" come. They are already here. This is not only about serving new people either. This is about serving ourselves—we deserve a larger worship space. And this is also about our salvation—this opportunity will help us fulfill our Great Commission. And the 5 C's again are critical—**catechism, consistency, comfort, connection and COMMITMENT.**





St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
 2418 W Swann Ave, Tampa FL 33609

Rendering of our campus reflecting ministry building, walkway, pavilion and expanded church.



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Project Status:
 SCHEMATIC DESIGN

Project:
 St. John the Baptist Greek
 Orthodox Church
 2418 W Swann Ave, Tampa FL 33609

Drawing Title:
 SCHOOL BUILDING -
 NEW FLOOR
 PLANS

Revisions	No.	Description	Date

Drawn By: Mia Ivanenko
 Project No: 2022_001
 Date: 01/24/22

Sheet:
A102

Rendering of remodeling of the current school to be a ministry building.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MINISTRY COORDINATOR

~As each has received a gift~

1 Peter 4:9-11 ESV

⁹ Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

This monthly article will break down these beautiful verses from **St. Peter's Epistle** one phrase at a time. This month, let's consider the first part of **verse 10 of St. Peter's writing** "As each has received a gift..."

Note that Peter wrote, "As each has received..." There is no question to Peter that each and every one of us HAS received a gift. There is no "if" or "maybe" in this letter. So if we accept this truth, that each one of us has received a gift from God, we can do no less than to accept it with gratitude. For who receives a truly amazing gift and doesn't thank the giver?

And how is it that God, in His infinite wisdom and generosity, has somehow given each of us unique and abundant gifts? We didn't do anything to earn them or deserve them. They are a free gift of God. Everyone receives different gifts. God knew that this way, we have to depend on each other. We can't compare our gifts nor can we expect everyone to have the same gifts we have. God loves variety!

Our gifts are not just for us to keep to ourselves. According to Matthew's gospel, Jesus tells us to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." **Matthew 5:16** As such, our God-given gifts are for the benefit of others and to share and show the glory of God our Father.

According to one of my favorite books, **The Purpose Driven Life** by Rick Warren, our spiritual gifts are just a part of understanding how we are made to serve others and serve God. He created an acronym to easily remember several facets to discover our purpose: Our SHAPE - that is, our Spiritual

gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences- helps to define our purpose in life. In his explanation of how to discern your gifts, he suggests several things: Assess your gifts by taking a critical look at what you are good at. Make a list of what you love doing. Ask others. And most of all, experiment with different areas of service.

St. Paul also spends several chapters of his letters talking about spiritual gifts. In his first letter to the **Corinthians, Chapter 12:1** he says, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed." In other words, figure it out! You have these gifts, now use them, share them, for the benefit of others and God. You may not fully understand and accept your gifts until you jump in and try some things out. And who knows, this could be a life-long pursuit! You are encouraged to keep trying new things. You may just realize gifts you never knew you had!

As a sneak peek into next month's reflection on the second part of verse 10, we are called to share our gifts with others. After all, an unopened gift is basically worthless. Remember the light that Jesus mentions in the book of Matthew? He also reminded the large crowd not to hide their light under a bushel. I imagine the listeners on the mountainside reacting to this sermon with perhaps some giggles at such a preposterous idea. Like, really, who would do THAT? Lighting a torch and hiding it defeats the whole purpose. Exactly!! So let your light shine!

Thank God for the spiritual gifts we have received! May He always guide us in discerning them so we can hone them and share them!

Maria Xenick
Ministry
Coordinator



save
the date

SATURDAY JANUARY 11, 2025

join us for an evening of
fellowship

HONORING

FATHER STAVROS
AKROTIRIANAKIS

FOR HIS TWENTY YEARS OF
SERVICE AT ST. JOHN

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Congratulations
Father Stavros for twenty years
of ministry in Tampa.
We are so grateful for all you
have done for our
St. John community!
Thank you for your service,
faithfulness and leadership.
Our parish is blessed to have
you, Presbytera Lisa, and
Nicholas as part of our
St. John family.

Thank you, Father Stavros, for being such a wonderful priest. I love attending church and have learned so much about our faith because of you. Thank you for being such a good example of what it means to be an Orthodox Christian in today's world!

Dear Father Stavros,
I just wanted to tell you how blessed I am that you came into my life. You have influenced me to become a better person, grow closer to God, and understand our faith so much more than you can imagine. You are truly a special person that God put in my life to help me.



Father Stavros offered an Artoklasia on September 1, 2024 in thanksgiving for twenty years of ministry in Tampa. Axios!

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

Wednesday, October 2	Paraklesis	6:00p.m.		
Sunday, October 6	Orthros	8:45a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Sunday, October 13	Orthros	8:45a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Friday, October 18	<u>ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST</u>			
	Orthros	9:00a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Sunday, October 20	Orthros	8:45a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Monday, October 21	<u>ST. JAMES - EVENING LITURGY</u>			
	Orthros	5:00p.m.	Liturgy of St. James	6:00p.m.
Saturday, October 26	<u>ST. DEMETRIOS THE MARTYR</u>			
	Orthros	9:00a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Sunday, October 27	Orthros	8:45a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Monday, October 28	<u>HOLY PROTECTION OF VIRGIN MARY/OXI DAY</u>			
	Orthros	9:00a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Friday, November 1	<u>STS. COSMAS AND DAMIAN THE UNMERCENARY HEALERS</u>			
	Orthros	9:00a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Saturday, November 2	Orthros	8:00a.m.	Divine Liturgy	9:00a.m.
Sunday, November 3	Orthros	8:45a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.



St. Luke



Holy Protection Of Virgin Mary



Sts. Cosmas and Damian

LITURGICAL NOTES FOR OCTOBER

Wednesday, October 2— Paraklesis Service of Supplication to the Virgin Mary

We will continue to offer Paraklesis once a month, so that we can pray for all the members of our community by name, out loud. The Paraklesis for October will be Wednesday, October 2 at 6:00pm.

Friday, October 18 - Feast of St. Luke

St. Luke was one of the Four Evangelists, along with Sts. Matthew, Mark and John. He was an artist, writer, and doctor, and is probably one of the most intelligent of all the saints in the history of our church.

Monday, October 21— Liturgy of St. James— Evening Liturgy

The Orthodox Church celebrates four different Divine Liturgies throughout the liturgical year. The most prominent is the Divine Liturgy written by St. John Chrysostom, which is celebrated almost every Sunday and on most feast days. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is celebrated 10 times a year—on the eve of Christmas, the eve of Epiphany, on the five Sundays of Lent, Holy Thursday morning, Holy Saturday morning, and on the feast of St. Basil, which is January 1. The Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is celebrated on Wednesday and Fridays of Great Lent and the mornings of Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday, and Holy Wednesday. The Divine Liturgy of St. James is celebrated only once a year, on his feast day, which is October 23. (We will celebrate it on Monday, October 21, because Fr. Stavros will be out of town October 23). The Divine Liturgy of St. James is the oldest of the Divine Liturgies and is also the longest. It was written around 70 A.D. making it the oldest Eucharistic service in the entire Christian world. Among the interesting things about this service is that by the end of the first century, the structure of the Liturgy we celebrate today was already loosely in place. The Divine Liturgy begins not in the altar, but in the Narthex of the church, as was the custom of the early church. The priest and faithful enter the church together from the narthex, and the next part of the service is conducted on the solea, with the priest facing the people. The priestly prayers, while very long in the liturgy, reveal a beauty and completeness which would later be shortened by St. Basil and even more by St. John Chrysostom. The most unique part of this service comes at the reception of Holy Communion. This the only Divine Liturgy that has become the custom for the faithful to receive Holy Communion in separate elements, in similar fashion with how the clergy commune. The communicants first receive the Holy Body of Christ in their hands and consume it, and then drink from the Holy Chalice. This is a special beautiful tradition which will be continued at St. John the Baptist, and it is encouraged that all who attend this service fast before-hand and prepare to receive Holy Communion at this Divine Liturgy.

Saturday, October 26— Feast of St. Demetrios

St. Demetrios was born into a wealthy and distinguished Christian family in the Greek City of Thessaloniki in the late 3rd century. Demetrios was noted for his wisdom, and was a good speaker and polished orator. St. Demetrios was also a distinguished soldier. Thessaloniki was known for popular gladiatorial games which attracted the local pagans. Travelling with the Emperor Galerius after a military victory, Demetrios stopped in Thessaloniki, where many pagans, who were jealous of his successful life, denounced him as a Christian before the emperor, who ordered Demetrios be put in prison. A man named Nestor befriended Demetrios in prison. The Emperor went to the arena to see his favorite gladiator, Lyaios and offered a reward to whomever could defeat him. Nestor accepted the challenge, and through the prayers of St. Demetrios, defeated the giant. When Nestor refused to kill Lyaios, because he had been helped by the "God of Demetrios," the Emperor ordered that both be killed. This occurred in the year 306. We commemorate St. Demetrios on October 26 and St. Nestor on October 27.

Monday, October 28 - Holy Protection of Virgin Mary/ Oxi Day— (Mostly) GREEK Liturgy

October 1 has been celebrated for many centuries as the feast day of the Holy Protection of the Virgin Mary. October 28, 1940, is observed in Greece as Oxi Day, the day the Greeks said "no" to the Axis powers who were trying to invade Greece. Since 1940, the church of Greece moved the feast of the Holy Protection of the Virgin Mary (Agia Skepi) to October 28, to coincide with Oxi Day. In other jurisdictions, it is still celebrated on October 1. Because many of us have our roots in Greece, celebrating the Holy Protection of the Virgin Mary on October is something that has great meaning. In trying to serve the many and diverse needs of our parish, we get requests periodically to do more Greek in the services. Our use of Greek in worship reflects a congregation that by and large does not speak Greek. Making an effort to accommodate these requests, occasionally a weekday Divine Liturgy will be scheduled that will be celebrated mostly in Greek. October 28 will be one of these.

Friday, November 1— Feast of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, the Unmercenary Healers

Sts. Cosmas and Damian are the Patron Saints of the National Philoptochos, as they went from place to place healing people and not taking any money for their services. Sts. Cosmas and Damian (called the Agii Anargyri) are also saints we pray to for intercession when we are sick, and are also patron saints of doctors (in addition to St. Luke).



COMMUNITY NEWS

Women's Bible Study with Fr. Stavros began in September. We meet on most Tuesdays from 10:00-11:30a.m. either in person or zoom. For October, the dates are: Tuesday October 1, Tuesday October 8, Tuesday October 15 & Tuesday October 29. We are studying **I Corinthians**.

Tuesday night Bible Study with Fr. John will continue meeting at **6:30pm** on most Tuesday evenings, except some Monday evenings. Join us in person or via zoom for some informative, lively and interactive discussions on how we apply Biblical Principles in our everyday lives. For October, the dates are: Tuesday October 1, Tuesday October 8, Tuesday October 15, Tuesday October 22 & Tuesday October 29.

Choir

Choir practices will be held on most Wednesdays in the Zaharias Room from 7:15-8:30 p.m. New singers are always welcome. If you are interested in joining our choir, please contact Tara at tswatzbaugh@ut.edu or 813-313-0439. There will be **NO Choir practice** on October 2.

Y Hara Mas Greek dance practices for the younger group (K-2nd grade) will begin Sunday 9/15/24 through Sunday 10/27/24 (7 Sunday total practices for the festival November 1,2.) Same will be held after Divine Liturgy and during coffee hour in the church hall by the stage. There will be a sign-up sheet. Contact **Alexandra DeMaio 813 340 9668** or Alexandra.DeMaio@libertymutual.com accordingly for any questions. **OPA!**

Dance Practices will be starting again in preparation for our Greek Festival

Greek dance practices for **Y Hara Mas (3rd-6th grades)** started on **September 15 at 12:15pm** in the Kourmoulis Center (during coffee hour). Practices will continue every Sunday from 12:15 to 12:45pm for the whole October until our Greek Festival on November 1-2, 2024. Please contact **Maraquet Edquid (813-422-8963)** with any questions. **OPA!**

GOYA Meeting- Our regular GOYA meeting will be on Sunday, October 6, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the Kourmoulis Center. Dinner, as always, will be provided.

Nursing Ministry

Flu shots are confirmed for October 27 starting at 11:30. Please ask your Nursing Ministry nurse if you have any questions.

Young Adult Dinner Discussion—Monday, October 14 (PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DAY). Our young adult group meets once a month for dinner/discussion (and other times for fellowship and service.) The meeting for October will be on **Monday, October 14, from 6:30-8:30** p.m. in the Kourmoulis 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 October will be: How to read the Bible. Group members use What's App for communication. Please contact Aris Rogers to be added to our what's app for young adults at 813-309-5525. The November meeting will be on Thursday, November 14.

Men's Group

Our men's group will meet on Sunday, **October 20 from 5:00-7:30** p.m. in the Kourmoulis Center. Any men of our community are welcome to join us for dinner and discussion. We meet at 5:00 p.m., walk to a local restaurant and get some food, then bring it back to the hall where we eat and have a discussion. Our topic for October will be "Constructing a Spiritual Life—Prayer and Scripture Reading." Please mark down our dates for men's group for this calendar year—Sunday, October 20; Sunday, November 10; and Sunday, December 15.

Save the Date—Men's Retreat—**Saturday, February 8**—Men's Retreat for Orthodox Men of the Tampa Bay area.

Fr. Stavros will be out of town October 9-12. He will be attending the "Be Attentive" program at Holy Cross School of Theology, where he will be speaking to prospective students as well as teaching students who are currently enrolled. He has participated in the program for the past few years at the invitation of the Holy Cross School of Theology.

Fr. Stavros will be out of town October 22-24. He will be attending clergy meetings at the Diakonia Retreat Center in Salem, SC.

PARISH ASSEMBLY MEETING- OCTOBER 2024

WHAT IS A PARISH ASSEMBLY MEETING? AND WHY SHOULD YOU ATTEND?

What is a Parish Assembly Meeting?

The churches of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America are governed ecclesiastically by Hierarchs. There is an Archbishop of America, there are eight Metropolises, each governed by a Metropolitan. We are part of the Metropolis of Atlanta. His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios is our Hierarch. The Uniform Parish Regulations (UPR) is a set of regulations, compiled by both the clergy and laity, which lay out how the church is governed from a legal perspective. As part of the UPR, each parish is required to have periodic Parish Assembly meetings, meetings of all the parishioners, outside of worship, to talk about the administrative (not theological) governance of the parish. Parish Councils are elected by parishioners and nominated at Parish Assembly meetings to represent the parish in day-to-day administrative affairs. The Parish Council reports to the parish at large at a Parish Assembly meeting. It reports on things like finances and budget, buildings and grounds, and other things unique to each specific parish. It sets goals for the parish. And then the parish assembly votes to approve, or not approve, or approve with amendments, the proposals of the Parish Council. Certain Parish Council decisions do not require the approval of the Parish Assembly. For instance, a Parish Assembly approves a budget for the parish, or for a specific project, and then the Parish Council can spend the amount of the approved budget without further consent of the Parish Assembly. These meetings are held at least once a year, usually twice, and sometimes more often if there is a specific project, or financial outlay that the Parish Council needs approval for before executing.

What Happens at a Parish Assembly Meeting?

This is a business meeting. In order to have a meeting, there needs to be a quorum. In our parish, the quorum is 15% of stewards in good standing, in other words, people who have made a financial pledge for the year and are current with their payments. It is important that everyone be a steward, not only because this is how we participate in the life of the church, but this is how we become eligible to participate in Parish Assemblies, vote for Parish Council and other things. If there is no quorum, there can be no meeting. Once the quorum has been met, then the meeting begins with prayer, followed by reports from the priest, the Parish Council President, Treasurer, and others. New business is discussed. At the October Parish Assembly, we pass a budget, and we nominate Parish Council Members. The meetings usually last about an hour.

Why Is It Important to Attend?

There are a couple of reasons. First, we need people in order to even have the meeting. No quorum means no meeting. Our quorum is generally around 50-60 people. Second, we need your input. These public meetings are an opportunity for people to input ideas and to discuss

the ideas that have been put forth by the Parish Council and others. And finally, your involvement in these meetings is a reflection of your commitment to our parish in all aspects. You may love worshipping, and that's a great thing. Or partaking in a ministry like Bible Study, or Young Adults, etc. And that's a good thing too. But if there is no Parish Assembly, then there is no budget, which means no priest, no ministry, no buildings, and grounds, it all stops. That's why we need to participate in Parish Assembly meetings because they are vital to the continued growth and operation of our parish.

Why Do More People Not Attend?

I suppose that there are some people who are reading this message who didn't know before now what a Parish Assembly meeting is, so hopefully this message answers that question. There are probably some people who are apathetic about this aspect of the church. And sadly, in some parishes, there have been instances where people act in a less than Christian way at some of these Parish Assembly meetings. Our parish is not an exception, unfortunately, when it comes to this kind of behavior. There is a respectful way to say things, and sadly, there are instances when people teeter on the line of concern and respect, and occasionally there have been times when concerns are brought in a disrespectful manner.

A NOTE ABOUT RESPECT AT ALL PARISH ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

At the beginning of the meeting, there will be a reminder of a code of conduct and the need and expectation for respect and decorum at our Parish Assembly meeting. These ground rules will be enforced for everyone in attendance. If someone chooses to address the meeting in a manner that is disrespectful, the chair of the meeting will offer a warning. If the warning is not heeded, they will be asked to leave and banned from future Parish Assembly meetings.

With all this in mind, we hope you will attend the Parish Assembly meeting on Sunday, October 20, following the Divine Liturgy, in the Kourmolis Center and be a part of helping to shape the future of our parish. . If you haven't made a pledge this year, please do so, so that you can participate in the meeting. On the agenda, under new business, will be the budget for 2025

and nominations for the Parish Council. How WE craft the budget not only will guide how we administer our parish in 2025, but will also say a lot about the kind of parish we are. If you have any further questions about membership or a Parish Assembly, please feel free to approach Fr. Stavros or any member of the Parish Council.



PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2024



There was no Parish Council Election in the fall of 2020. This was because of the pandemic. The Metropolis of Atlanta said that everyone serving on the Parish Council would have one year added to their term. This means that everyone on the Parish Council at present is either in the added year to their original term, or will have one year added. Everyone on the Parish Council is able to serve three consecutive terms, which for those who are currently serving may amount to 7 years, since one of those terms is a three-year term.

Even though it is October, it will be time to start thinking about Parish Council Elections. On October 20, we will hold our fall Parish Assembly and open up nominations for the Parish Council. This year, there are **five (5)** positions coming up for election for a **two-year term**. According to the Parish By-laws, nominations for the Parish Council will be closed following the Parish Assembly Meeting on **Sunday, October 20**. If you wish to be nominated for the Parish Council, please plan to attend the meeting on **Sunday, October 20** and have someone nominate you, or send a letter to Fr. Stavros prior to the commencement of the meeting, stating your wish to be nominated for the Parish Council and he will read it at the meeting and have someone nominate you. Parish Council Elections will be held on **Sunday, December 15**, following the Divine Liturgy. A mailing to all eligible voters will occur following the close of the nominations period which will have the names of the candidates, a picture of each candidate and a statement by each candidate.

In preparation for nominations and elections, please keep in mind the following: **Regarding eligibility to be a candidate for the Parish Council: Uniform Parish Regulations (UPR) Article 18, Section 1:**

PARISHIONERS

Section 1: Every person who is baptized and chrismated according to the rites of the Orthodox Church is a parishioner. The religious, moral and social duties of a parishioner are to apply the tenets of the Orthodox Faith to his/her life and to: adhere to and live according to the tenets of the Orthodox faith; faithfully attend the Divine Liturgy and other worship services; participate regularly in the holy sacraments; respect all ecclesiastical authority and all governing bodies of the Church; be obedient in matters of the Faith, practice and ecclesiastical order; contribute towards the progress of the Church's sacred mission; and be an effective witness and example of the Orthodox Faith and Traditions to all people.

A parishioner in good standing practices all the religious and moral duties as described in this Section 1. At a minimum, a parishioner in good standing must: be eighteen years of age or over; be current in his or her stewardship and other financial obligations to the Parish, abide by all the regulations herein stated and the Parish Bylaws; and cooperate in every way towards the welfare and well being of the Parish. (Stewardship is recommended to be ten percent (10%) of one's annual income as stated in Holy Scripture to help meet the financial obligations of the Parish, the Metropolis and the Archdiocese.)

2. Regarding Election of Parish Council: UPR Article 25, Section Two

Section 2: A candidate for the Parish Council must be a parishioner in good standing of the Parish for at least one (1) year immediately preceding the date of the election and must live his or her life in accordance with the Faith and canons of the Church. The Priest determines whether the Parishioners are in canonical and financial good standing as specified in Article 18, Sections 1 through 3.

Section 3: Candidates for election to the Parish Council shall be nominated in accordance with the provisions of the Parish Bylaws.

All candidates shall attend a seminar conducted by the Priest

prior to the election at which the Priest shall discuss and explain to the candidates the Uniform Parish Regulations, and the significance of the affirmation of office. **This seminar is scheduled for Saturday, November 23 at 1:00pm. at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Tarpon Springs.**

At the discretion of the respective Hierarchy, such seminar may be held locally or regionally, provided that candidates are given appropriate advance notice and more than one reasonable opportunity to attend the seminar in a location within close proximity to the applicable Parish.

In the event that an otherwise eligible candidate(s) cannot attend the scheduled seminar(s) for justifiable cause, the Priest shall meet privately with such individual(s) to provide the seminar.

At the conclusion of the seminar all candidates must sign a statement acknowledging that they understand the Regulations and will abide by them and the affirmation of office. If a candidate for the Parish Council does not attend a seminar and sign the statement, his/her name shall be deleted from the list of candidates.

~ Each candidate is expected to be active in the sacramental life of the church. This is covered in Article 18, section one, above. This includes the sacrament of confession. If a candidate has not been to confession in the past year, they are not eligible to run for the Parish Council. In the event your spiritual father is serving another parish, he can send a one-line email to Fr. Stavros indicating your participation in this sacrament in the past year.

~All candidates for the Parish Council will be subject to a background check. Any background check that reveals a felony conviction will make a candidate ineligible to serve for ten years. Any background check revealing a conviction for financial misconduct—embezzlement, fraud, etc., will make a candidate permanently ineligible to serve on the Parish Council.

~Each candidate is asked to write a half a page on why they want to run for the Parish Council and to supply a recent photograph that is able to be photocopied well. The statement and photo need to be to the church office no later than November 15.

Thank you for your interest in being a Parish Council candidate. If you have any questions on any of the above, please feel free to contact me at any time.

+Fr. Stavros

PARISH COUNCIL NOMINATIONS

At the conclusion of the Parish Assembly Meeting in October, we will again nominate people for the Parish Council for **2025**. This is a critical decision each year, as it affects how our church will function in **2025** and beyond. Year after year, people decide to run for the Parish Council. Some are qualified and some are not. Some come in to speak with me about running, even asking a blessing to run. And many do not come into speak with me, they certainly don't seek any kind of blessing to run. As I have mentioned in previous writings and sermons, getting a blessing from the bishop in a Liturgy when multiple priests are serving creates a good sense of order, which in turn, leads to a good sense of Christ. Running without any input or blessing from the priest can create disorder and disharmony in the Parish Council and in the parish. I'm asking then, if you are thinking about running for the Parish Council, please make an appointment and come see me before **October 20**, and let's talk about it.

INSPIRATION

Yes, I am a Christian. Yes, I make hypocritical decisions. Yes, I fail. I stumble. I struggle. I am a mess. But I'm God's mess. And He can turn a mess into a masterpiece.

Eve found the serpent more trustworthy than God, not because of its credentials, but because the serpent said what Eve wanted to hear.

God is sitting in heaven when a scientist says to Him, "Lord, we don't need you anymore. Science has finally figured out a way to create life out of nothing. In other words, we can now do what you did 'in the beginning.'"

"Oh, is that so? Tell me. . ." replies God.

"Well," says the scientist, "we can take dirt and form it into the likeness of you and breathe life into it, thus creating man."

"Well, that's interesting. Show me," answers God.

So the scientist bends down to the earth and starts to mold the soil.

"Oh, no, no, no. . ." interrupts God. "Get your own dirt."

Our culture has accepted two huge lies. . .The first is that if you disagree with someone, you must hate them. The second is that to love someone means you agree with everything they believe or do. Both are nonsense. You don't have to compromise convictions to be compassionate.

Science says that we need at least four basic elements to survive—water, air, food, light.

And look what the Bible tells us about Jesus—

I am the living water.

I am the breath of life.

I am the bread of life.

I am the light of the world.

Science was right, we needed Jesus to live.

**Finally the fourth ape!
He is the sum of the first three: He sees nobody, hears nobody and speaks to nobody.**



~CROSSROAD EXPERIENCE~

CrossRoads

Crossroads is a program offered by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in conjunction with Hellenic College-Holy Cross School of Theology, that offers students who are either rising senior in high school, or about to enter into college, a ten-day program where they will be immersed in theology, studying with professors from the Seminary, but also touring a city, other churches, doing teambuilding and bonding with others in the program, and having lots of fun. The program is held three times each summer, in Boston, Chicago and San Francisco. We've had two young people from our parish participate in this program in the past few years. This year, **Emily Nicklow** went. Below please find her reflection on the experience. For more information, please ask Emily, or Fr. Stavros.



My name is Emily Nicklow and this summer I attended **CrossRoad Summer Institute at the Hellenic College of Holy Cross in Boston**. CrossRoad is a ten day academic institute for rising or graduating highschool seniors. CrossRoad is a "welcoming and supportive environment where you can deepen your understanding of your faith and connect with other young Orthodox Christians from across the country" (**CrossRoad Summer Institute, 2024**). During this ten day period, you ask yourself hard questions, make life-long friendships, and discover your purpose.

When I first arrived at CrossRoad I was extremely intimidated. I did not know what to expect from these ten days and was nervous about who would be attending. I had heard that this program was serious and that we had to stay in small dorms which added to the intimidation. However, as soon as I got there, I knew that this would be a great experience. In order to learn more about our faith and to help us make decisions about our future, there was a series of classes and lessons that participants partook in throughout the ten days. The lessons consisted of scripture, theology and how to apply Christ into your life. In scripture class our group studied the significance of mountains in the Bible. We learned that God places mountains, or obstacles, in our lives in order for us to get closer to Him. We also studied the Book of Job in the Old Testament. In theology we learned how the first church was created and how orthodoxy has evolved to what it is today. The scripture and theology classes were taught by the seminary professors. There were also other camp-like sessions led by CrossRoad staff. These sessions focused on vocation and how to apply Orthodoxy in our everyday life. These sessions were amazing,

having a huge positive impact on me. We had time to sit outside on the beautiful grounds of the Hellenic College campus and reflect.



In between our lessons and sessions we attended Orthos and Vespers daily and three Divine Liturgies. Having the opportunity to go to church everyday was spiritually rewarding.

CrossRoad may seem like it's all about classes and church, but it is the perfect mix of faith, fun, charity and fellowship. Our group went to the Museum of Fine Arts where we visited the Byzantine section, we went to different Orthodox churches around the Boston area, we had an incredible time participating at the unique ropes course, we went to Quincy Market and we went to the beach. During the program we also participated in philanthropic activities. We visited a nursing home to spend time with the elderly which was very rewarding. Another activity we did, that was very eye opening, was going out at 6 am in groups to the Harvard campus to feed the homeless. It was both scary and shocking to see how many people were out there homeless and hungry. Over the course of the ten days of CrossRoad Summer Institute, I was able to meet like minded students from all over the country and make new friends. I was able to strengthen my relationship with two friends from the Tampa Bay area and made new best friends. I have made new lifelong friendships by attending CrossRoad.

I've talked to a lot of people who have attended CrossRoad and to put it in simple words, everyone has said it has been life changing. I can attest to that view. After I got back from CrossRoad I felt so complete and strong in my faith. The difference between St. Stephen's Camp and CrossRoad is that you only have one opportunity to attend CrossRoad. I love St. Stephens with all my heart but I also love CrossRoad Summer Institute. You are surrounded by like minded friends that want to grow, earn and experience the same things.

My understanding of our orthodox faith grew, my faith strengthened and I left CrossRoad feeling like a new person. My relationship with God is stronger than ever. My experience at CrossRoad was so positive that I would encourage everyone to go.



THE STORY OF CHRISTINE'S LIFE

~Christine Scourtes at 100 Years and Still Running~

October 17, 2024 is Christine's birthday. She still has a sharp mind and a good memory. She comes from one of the few Greek families that had moved to Tampa by 1930. She and her husband, Frank, were members of the American Hellenic Center founded in the 1930's and helped found St. John Greek Orthodox Church in 1957.



Christine was born in Vidalia, Georgia. Her father, Canellos and mother, Maria Kavakos were immigrants from Sparta, Greece. Soon after their marriage they moved to Coney Island, New York, but did not stay long. Brother Bill had moved to Vidalia, Georgia, a small town noted for its onions and tobacco. Shortly after, Canellos and Maria moved to Vidalia and opened a restaurant, the Plaza Cafe, and it was there the three girls, Christine, Estelle and Dimitra (Jean) were born to.

Brought up in a Greek home in the American setting, Christine spoke Greek and English. Even though Canellos was happy in Vidalia and had made friends with the other ethnic families, he was concerned with the Greek cultural upbringing of his children. Canellos had a sister living in Tarpon Springs, Florida and once visited her. In 1929 the family moved south but settled in Tampa because Tarpon Springs was too small in which to operate a restaurant. Canellos and his family settled down in Hyde Park and Canellos opened his restaurant across the street from the post office and called it the Post Office Cafe.

The Greeks kept the Greek culture and Greek language alive. They acquired Greek school teachers, especially single men from Greece. A Greek school was formed 1922. According to Christine the teachers were very strict. She related one incident that occurred. Though a good student in Greek school, Christine did step out of line one day and got punished. On that day on the playground she was throwing the basketball into the hoop and forgot the time. She entered class late and the teacher punished her by having Christine kneel facing the wall for the duration of the class (one hour long) for a week. As Christine said, the teachers back then were the law; they were placed on a pedestal, and they accepted no excuse for breaking the rules.

During her high school years, Christine attended Plant High. At the age of seventeen Christine graduated from Plant High in 1941. While at Plant High she took extra classes before and after her regular classes. Those classes included short hand and typing. After graduation she attended Tampa Business College which offered a five-month curriculum. After attending classes there she went to Greek school. Christine loved to learn so she didn't mind there was no time to play.

Upon finishing Business College Christine went to work. For a year she worked as a secretary for the Boy Scouts of America. Then she worked for the McCloskey Shipyards which was started in 1942 by Matthew McCloskey of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Christine and her family often went to church in Tarpon Springs before the Tampa church was built, and visited her Uncle George Stamas, who was Canellos' brother-in-law. He had a large family, which included four daughters and two sons.

Following the advice of her mother, Christine met a young Greek man who was stationed at MacDill Airforce Base. In 1944, at the age of nineteen, she got married, she and her husband moved to Texas where he was from, and there, her son, Jimmy, was born on August 11, 1945. Her husband was very domineering which made for an unhappy marriage and the relationship ended in 1948. Christine, with her son, moved back to Tampa, and they lived with her mother.

At the age of twenty-four she started working, full time, at the University of Tampa as a social secretary to the president. She was responsible for sending out holiday greeting cards, arranging for meetings, etc.

While the Greek community gradually grew, there was no Greek church in Tampa before 1956-57. St. Nicholas in Tarpon Springs was their church. Christine and her cousins in Tarpon Springs often visited each other. Her Uncle George Stamas had a restaurant and a hotel located near the bayou. He frequently visited Christine and her family. One day in 1950, while visiting her Stamas cousins at Uncle George's restaurant, Christine met Frank Scourtes, her future husband. Frank was a restaurateur, who was from Long Island, New York, and annually went to Clearwater with a close friend for the winter months. During his stay in Clearwater he frequently visited Christine in Tampa and waited at her house until she came home from school. Their close relationship developed quickly and Frank and Christine were married on March 10, 1950 and on December 14th. of that year, their daughter, Mary Denise was born.

Before leaving for Long Island to take care of some business matters Frank asked Christine to look for a house. Desiring to live near her family and friends in Tampa, in the spring of 1950 Christine found the house on Fountain Blvd. where she has lived in for over seventy-three years. The home once belonged to the Zaccihini Family who had their own circus. They practiced in her neighborhood. Their main act was shooting a person out of a canon, and Christine and friends often went to watch.

When Mary Denise was born Christine took time off from work to care for her children. In 1963 at the age of thirty-nine she started taking classes, one at a time at the University of Tampa while working full-time.

Christine majored in counseling-psychology at the University of Tampa and needed a particular psychology class. She asked the psychology professor to teach it at night even though he did not teach night classes. He told her if she could get ten students to sign up, he would teach it. Word was spread and thirty students signed up for it. The professor told Christine he taught the class for her but he missed his favorite T.V. program "Laugh Inn."

While a student at the University of Tampa and working full time she became a member of the Honors Society. She got her bachelor's degree in psychology in 1971. To continue her education and work on a master degree, Christine took the GRE examine and entered USF. While working, still at the University of Tampa, she took one class at a time in the evening.

Christine moved from the President's Office at the University of Tampa, to work for the Dean of Men as a student assistant. Christine worked with students which she enjoyed very much. She thought she would make a good counselor. They were constantly in and out of the office. She handled their complaints



and her office was in charge of the dormitories, assignment of rooms, and even the fraternities.

Christine graduated from USF in 1973 with a Master's degree in counseling and psychology. She taught several psychology classes. During the summer the night classes met four times a week. The classes lasted from 6-10 p.m. and some of her students walked her to her car. They talked to Christine about problems that bothered them. She became friends with her students. It was easy for Christine to make friends. She was a part time teacher for five years at the University of Tampa teaching during the regular year and in the summers. Her classes were at night.

At USF she worked for the College of Education as a full time counselor. In 1983 at the age of eighty-five Frank passed away, and Christine continued to work. She told her sisters, Dimitra and Estelle that after Frank passed away she had to do something. If she stayed home she would have been sitting and staring at the walls. Finally, she retired in 1997 at the age of 70 to help in taking care of her mother.

Both Christine and her husband were active at St. John's Church. She was involved with the Daughters of Penelope and Philoptochos. Christine related the important role her husband played in starting St. John Greek Orthodox Church. Frank, who was involved in starting two churches in New Jersey and Long Island, supported the idea of establishing a church in Tampa. He went into the Greek community to raise money. Frank was an important fund raiser, who himself was a silent donor, and served on the Board of Directors (Parish Council) for many years. Initially, there were no railings on the front steps of the church. He persuaded important members of the church to pay for the railings in front of the church.

Once the church was built, there was no baptismal font to perform the sacrament of baptism. The babies were baptized in a galvanized tub, owned by Frank and Christine, which was carried to the church. Frank carried water from their house, nearby, to the church because there were no plumbing connections at the church.

At first Christine missed her counseling job but then she got involved in other activities. Christine started going to the gym upon the advice of her doctor. Her daughter gave her a gift card that allowed Christine to go for three months. But Christine had other things on her mind, such as going to the grocery store and other matters. She stopped going to the gym for a while then returned. She went to Shapes' Gym and made friends there. When Shapes closed down she went to LA Fitness where she made more friends. They enjoyed doing water aerobics. Once a month she met her gym friends for lunch and every Friday they met for brunch. Christine stated that she and her lady friends were widows or divorcees who didn't have anybody else to go out with, and they enjoyed each other's company. In 2017 Christine started going to her blind classes which has interrupted meeting her friends for lunch and brunch. Her blind classes are two days a week.

Since 2017 Christine had several falls which required her to be admitted to rehabilitation facilities. After a fall recently Christine had to spent about eight weeks at Tampa General and Pruitt Rehab center. By the sixth week she was walking. She wants to be alone in her home, but probably with a caretaker. Yet, she still insists that she is an independent woman.

Before her recent fall she was still going to the gym three-to five times a week, if she had a ride, with friends. She used the pool and with her friends she went out for an occasional lunch.

Every year Christine has helped with the preparation for the Greek Festival at St. John's Greek Orthodox Church. She has helped in making the dolmathes, pastichio and

koulourakia. During the weekend of Junior Olympics, Christine was at the church helping out. During Holy Week she helps in the preparation of the flowers to be placed on the Kouvouklion (Canopy) for the Good Friday evening service. Once a month, along with other members of the community she helped in feeding the homeless at the First Presbyterian Church. In addition, since 2005 until recently Christine was a faithful attendee of the weekly Bible Study class. When well Christine faithfully attends church. Since her house is only one and a half block away, she walked to church until 2017. Since then, her friends, have taken her to church.

" Christine preparing flowers for the Kouvouklion "



Christine was a member of Ron Myers' "Young at Heart" group which went on trips locally and overseas. He organized the different trips that included the Alaskan Cruise, Greece, Mexico, Key West and the Bahamas. She even received an award for perfect attendance at the monthly meetings. For some unexplainable reason the group split in two. Christine was encouraged by Mary Nenos to join with those who wanted to be involved in money-making projects for the church. This was a logical choice since her husband Frank helped in founding the church.

Asked how she likes to be remembered, Christine responded by saying "friendly and helpful but being firm." All her life it was easy to be friends and helpful to others. She said that she use to tell her kids that "counseling is friendship for pay." When she was working she got paid for helping people. In retirement she has been helping people, both at her church and Shapes' gym. At Shapes she became known as the "pool psychologist." Her friends went to her for advice for various situations, and their children wanted advice about which college to attend and what tests they had to take.

Christine is the only one left from that generation. She is the oldest person among the church community and in her neighborhood. As the Greeks, who owned mansions and got older, they sold them and moved into retirement homes like the Canterbury Tower on Bayshore Blvd. in Tampa. Christine, however, has remained in her Fountain Blvd. house. She said she will leave "when I am taken out in a wooden box." Her mother Maria lived in her home until she was one hundred years old. When Christine started to fall quite frequently, she has spent time at rehabilitation facilities until she was well enough to go home.

Whether at Bible Study class or at the Sunday morning coffee hour, Christine has kept the attention of those present with anecdotes about the Greek community. Even at the age of 100 Christine speaks her mind. She has her views about not renewing the contract with the charter school and about enlarging the church.

For the last many years, Fr. Stavros has honored Christine with the first piece of the Vasilopita (in honor of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ)



Hope & Joy

**FALL
FESTIVAL**

LUNCH-GAMES-CRAFTS-FUN

PRE-K - 6TH GRADE WELCOME



SUNDAY OCTOBER 27, 2024

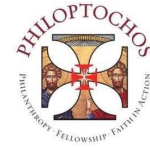
1:00PM *

***AFTER SUNDAY SCHOOL AND FESTIVAL DANCE PRACTICE**

OUTDOOR PATIO SPACE ON CAMPUS

PLEASE RSVP TO ZACKIE 813.245.3813 OR ZACKIEC@YAHOO.COM

Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc.
 126 East 37th Street, New York, NY 10016
 T: 212.977.7770
 E: supportgroup@philoptochos.org
 W: www.philoptochos.org



**TWO UPCOMING CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS FOR
 ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CAREGIVERS NATIONWIDE:**

Group 1: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 to THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24
7:00 pm EST – 8:00 pm EST

Group 2: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12 to TUESDAY DECEMBER 17
7:00 pm EST – 8:00 pm EST

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED: <https://bit.ly/3AJ1SYY>.

- Are you caring for a loved one of any age who may be elderly, or has a chronic or life-threatening illness or health condition, or who is disabled? **Please select the group that best fits your schedule.**
 - Do you wish you knew others who are facing the same challenges as you? ***Each session is 6 consecutive weeks.***
 - Do you wish there were someone with whom you can share your thoughts, concerns, experiences, and questions? ***Groups meet between 7pm – 8pm EST***
 - Do you wish you were part of a community of caregivers who understands our faith, culture, family traditions, and background? ***Groups are conducted over ZOOM***
 - Are you so overwhelmed you're not even sure what questions to ask or who could help? ***Space is limited – don't delay.***
- Pre-registration is required.***

A program of the National Philoptochos Department of Social Services and facilitated by professionals knowledgeable in caregiving and aging services, each group will “meet” over six consecutive weeks from 7pm – 8pm EST over ZOOM. Please select the group that best fits your schedule:

Group 1 will meet on 6 consecutive Thursdays from September 19th to October 24th.
Group 2 will meet on 6 consecutive Tuesdays from November 12th to December 17th.

In a confidential and safe environment, we will discuss best practices to help you manage the physical and emotional needs of your loved one; cognitive issues resulting from Alzheimer’s or other dementias; caregiver stress; work/life balance; family dynamics / decision-making; sandwich generation challenges; long-distance and holiday caregiving; financial concerns; accessing local and broader services and resources and preparing for the future.

The last session of each group will be led by a member of the clergy who will address how faith, culture and spirituality can help build your understanding, strength and resilience.

[Pre-register by clicking here](https://bit.ly/3AJ1SYY)

For information, please email us at supportgroup@philoptochos.org

JOY TWEENS

Welcome to the **2024-2025 school year!** Our Holy Orthodox Primary Education (HOPE) & Junior Orthodox Youth (JOY) ministries have lots of fun activities planned for this year!

In addition to the HOPE/JOY combined events, we will have meetings and fun activities for our JOY Tweens (4th- 6th grades) at least once per month. Our first welcome meeting is **Sunday, September 29, 2024, at 12:45pm**, following the Divine Liturgy and Y Hara Mas Greek Festival dance practice.

We pray that the JOY Tweens Ministry will give our children, at this pivotal age, an opportunity to develop their faith while also strengthening their bonds with their peers, through age-appropriate activities centered around worship, fellowship, and service. Please mark your calendars and join us. We can't wait to see you!

SAVE THE DATE! JOY Tweens (Grades 4th - 6th) Calendar 2024-2025

Friday, October 25 (6:00pm)	JOY Tweens - Movie Night
Sunday, October 27	HOPE/JOY Fall Festival
Sunday, November 17- December 15	HOPE/JOY - Boxes of Hope (Food drive to provide meals to families in need)
Sunday, November 17 (12:15pm)	JOY Tweens - Meeting with Father Stavros
Saturday, December 14	All Youth - Christmas Party
Sunday, January 26 (12:15pm-2:30pm)	JOY Tweens - Parent/Tweens Retreat
Sunday, February 9	HOPE/JOY - Superbowl of Caring (Donation drive to benefit Children's Home)
Sunday, February 23 (1:00pm)	JOY Tweens - Offsite Activity
Sunday, March 23 (12:15pm)	JOY Tweens - Meeting with Father Stavros
Friday, April 18	HOPE/JOY - Good Friday Retreat
Friday, May 2 (6:00pm)	JOY Tweens - Movie Night
Sunday, May 18	All Youth - End of Year Party

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS:

We are so glad to have the **2024-2025 Sunday School year** off to a great start. Thank you to all the teachers, parents, and children who are committed to our program.

All class pictures were taken in September and the new photos should be up on our Sunday School bulletin board by the time you read this article. Thank you to **Karina Findlay and her mom, Markissia**, for taking these class photos. These photos are included in this Messenger.

We are very excited about our **Weekly Topics** that each classroom will include into their program. The topics for the month of **SEPTEMBER** were **PRAYER, THE SIGN OF THE CROSS, THE LORD'S PRAYER, and THE CREED.**

Our students made cards and wrote letters to Fr. Stavros thanking him for all he does at St. John's Greek Orthodox Church. These cards were presented to him on Sept. 14th. Everyone is so grateful that he has served our church for 20 years and we pray that he will do so for the next 20 years.

Our **HALL of FAITH** program will continue again this year! This program is to encourage our children to memorize and understand The Lord's Prayer and The Creed. Our Pre-K through 4th Graders will be focusing on The Lord's Prayer and our 5th graders through High School will focus on The Creed. Look for our HALL of FAITH poster on our Sunday School bulletin board.

Will your child be in the Hall of Faith?

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, suggestions, or comments regarding St. John's Sunday School Program. Parents: If you do not receive our weekly e-mails about our Sunday School Program, please contact **Vickie Peckham at 813-758-3102 or e-mail her at vickiepeckham@gmail.com**

OCTOBER CALENDAR:

October 6 TOPIC: Reading the Bible

October 13 TOPIC: The Ten Commandments

October 20 TOPIC: Making Moral Choices

October 27 TOPIC: The Light of Christ-Making -Faith Personal
YOUTH SUNDAY

SUNDAY SCHOOL PICTURES



Pre-K4: Teachers: Denise Panos - Rachel Zaharis



Grade 2: Teachers: Nicole Mantzanas - Jaime Brewer



Kindergarten: Teachers: Debbie Nicklow - Donna Trakas



Grade 3: Teachers: Amy Kafantaris - Stamie Garcia



Grade 1: Teachers: Maraquet Edquid - Doukissa Moshos



Grade 4: Teachers: Georgia Kane - Vivian Laliotis Samuel



Grade 5: Teacher: Vickie Peckham



High School Girls: Teacher: MaryAnn Konstas



Grade 6: Teachers: Katherine Kyrus - Mia Lenardos



High School Boys: Teacher: Jimmy Konstas



7th and 8th Grade: Teachers: Betty Katherine Katsamakis - Marina Choundas



DANCE GROUP

PANIGYRI ADULT DANCE

Please join us for our weekly Adult Greek Dance practice at the Kourmolis Hall!
Please wear dance shoes or sneakers and comfortable clothes for dancing.



Every Wednesday at 7:00pm.

We will create line-ups for those that commit to performing several times each day for the Festival.

Any questions, please contact Alex DeMaio at
813-340-9668, Alexandra.DeMaio@libertymutual.com

ADULT GREEK SCHOOL

ST. JOHN GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH ADULT GREEK SCHOOL **WANT TO LEARN MODERN GREEK?**



Teacher born, raised, and educated in Greece with 25 years of experience teaching the Greek language. Adult classes for beginners taught @ **St. John Greek Orthodox Church (2418 W. Swann Ave, Tampa, FL 33609)**. Classes are held at **12:30-3:00pm on Saturday afternoon, starting on September 14, 2024**. This will be the first of three sessions, with each session lasting three months.

- Speak Greek
- Read Greek
- Write Greek
- Basic Grammar & more.
- Some Greek History
- **BOOK INCLUDED IN PRICE**

Price per session is \$125 for church members and \$150 for non-members.

*Contact Ms. Magdalini Myer: at (813) 523-5771, aspis69@aol.com
or the church office at (813) 876-8830*

YOUNG AT HEART

Too old for GOYA?
Too old for Young Adult Group? Don't Despair - **YAH is here!!**

*Join us at **Young at Heart** where active men and women 55 yrs and up enjoy fellowship, education, and fun. We meet once a month - usually on a Saturday - share a meal, enjoy a presentation, and visit with friends. Join us this month and see what you've been missing.*



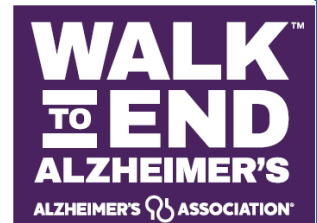
"Young at Heart Members Enjoying Their Gathering in September"

*Philoptochos is teaming up with the
Daughter of Penelope and AHEPA for the
Alzheimer Walk on Saturday, Oct 19th*

Did you know...

*6 Million Americans are living with Alzheimer's
11 Million People are serving as unpaid Caregivers*

*The Association provides Care & Support Millions of times each year
through alz.org, support groups, education programs, research and more.*



Follow link below to join the Saint John's Team:

https://act.alz.org/site/TR?team_id=884419&pg=team&fr_id=17531

DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE



DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE ALCMAEON #167 TAMPA



Our local chapter had a meeting at our President Ourania Stephanides' residence. The Daughters and spouses that were present enjoyed excellent food and fellowship. The participants also brought over items which are needed by our Hillsborough County area students. The collected items were donated to the Hillsborough Education Foundation program which distributes them to teachers to help students to "ERASE THE NEED"! The Daughters are partnering with Philoptochos and will be collecting the needed school items again in February to donate in the Spring. For more information about the current student needs, please check the following websites: <https://educationfoundation.com>
<https://educationfoundation.com/initiatives/school-supplies-resources/>



Meeting



Food enjoyed



Fellowship



School Items Collected



Delivery of School items to "ERASE THE NEED"



Delivery of the School items to Hillsborough Education Foundation

Daughters of Penelope upcoming activities include:

1. October 19, Saturday, 8 am: Partnering with AHEPA, Philoptochos and the Nursing Ministry to raise funds for Walking to End Alzheimers at Amalie Arena. To donate or to sign up to join the walk, please visit https://act.alz.org/site/TR?team_id=884419&pg=team&fr_id=17531
2. November 1&2: Working in various booths to support the Greek Festival.
3. November 17, Sunday: In partnership with Philoptochos and Sunday School we are contributing items for the Bags of Love (Men's crew socks, black and/or white, sunscreen packets).
4. November 17, Sunday: Founders Day Memorial in church. Serving Kolyva and Coffee Hour.
5. December 15 and 22: Donating and selling handmade items at Yia Yia's table in the Kourmolis Hall to benefit the Scholarship Fund for our youth.

To support the above activities or to join the Daughters please contact Maria Zabetakis, Vice President and Membership Chair at maria1106@live.com or Ourania Stephanides, President at stephanides.ourania@gmail.com. Please visit the national site for information regarding the Daughters of Penelope organization www.DaughtersofPenelope.org.

COLLEGE STUDENT OUTREACH

Kathy Kaburis is once again leading our college Student Outreach Ministry. We want to connect with our college students who are in school away from home as well as those students who attending college here at one of our local schools in Tampa from other areas around the country who are new to our St. John community.

TO OUR COLLEGE STUDENTS—Please join our mailing list to stay connected! Please send your name, current email, mailing address and phone number so you can be placed on our list!

TO OUR COLLEGE PARENTS—Please confirm with your student that we have their contact information!

You can send your information to **Kathy at kkaburis2000@yahoo.com and or (813)240-6513**

College Student Contact Information

Please scan the QR code to go directly to a google form!



FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

Thank YOU for YOUR ongoing support of the St. John Food Pantry. We had a great month compiling over 50 'gift bags' for Tampa Hope and 5 boxed of donations. They were well received and quickly distributed.

Your generous donations enable us to compile boxes of food to share with Metropolitan Ministries & Tampa Hope! We also provide bags of food to many local individuals and families.

Every little bit helps! One donation at a time YOU can help us help OTHERS to tackle hunger in our community! It's as easy as 1,2,3 ...

- 1) *Look for our dedicated drop off location just past the entrance area of the Church Hall.*
- 2) *Mark your calendars for the First Sunday of Each Month as our primary collection day (but donations are welcome anytime).*
- 3) *When you attend a Ministry Meeting bring a food item from the list below.*

Lastly, we accept **grocery store gift cards of \$20** denominations or less in the church office.

*Thank you for your support and thinking of the St. John Food Pantry one item at a time. If you know of someone in need or wish to take a bag of groceries to go, we can make that happen! Please contact **Sandra Pappas at 813-785-3747***



Requested Food Pantry Items (Please be mindful of expiration dates)-

Bolded items of greatest need at this time.

- **Canned Fruits and Vegetables**
- Canned or Dried Beans
- **Canned Meat (including Vienna sausage, spam, chicken, and tuna)**
- Cereal / Boxes of Milk
- **Granola / Bars**
- Instant Mashed Potatoes
- Jell-O/Pudding
- Macaroni & Cheese
- Oatmeal
- Pasta & Ramen Noodles
- Peanut butter & Jelly (in plastic jars)
- Rice
- Soup – Cans or Ready to Go (just add water)
- Spaghetti Sauce – (no glass)
- **Dry Goods**
- Paper Towels/Toilet Paper

NURSING MINISTRY

Stay Healthy This Season: The Importance of the Flu Shot and Flu Prevention

We are approaching flu season, it is important to remember that taking care of our health is not just a personal responsibility, but a community one as well. Our Church community thrives when we all do our part to protect each other and one way to do that is by personal prevention and getting a flu shot.



Flu Prevention Tips

In addition to getting your flu shot, here are a few other ways to protect yourself and others from the flu:

- **Wash your hands frequently.** Good hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs.
- **Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.** Use a tissue or your elbow to prevent germs from spreading through the air.
- **Stay home if you're sick.** If you feel unwell, it's best to rest and recover at home to avoid passing the flu on to others.
- **Eat well and stay active.** A healthy lifestyle strengthens your immune system and helps you fight off infections.

The Flu Shot Matters

The flu is more than just a bad cold. It can lead to serious health complications, especially for older adults, young children, pregnant women, and those with chronic health conditions. Every year, thousands of people are hospitalized due to flu-related complications. The flu shot is a safe and effective way to reduce your chances of getting sick and to lessen the severity of illness in case you catch the flu.

Where to Get Your Flu Shot

St. John's is hosting BayCare on **October 27th, after liturgy, starting at 11:30** the flu shot will be made available for all parishioners at no cost. Additionally, flu shots are widely available at pharmacies, doctor's offices, and clinics. Many places offer them for free or at a low cost, and some insurance plans cover the vaccine entirely. Make it a priority to get vaccinated this year—it's a simple step that can make a big difference.

Faith and Health: Caring for One Another

Our faith teaches us to care for one another and preventing the flu is one way to live out that principle. By preventing the spread of illness, we show love and compassion to our neighbors, especially the most vulnerable among us. As we gather in worship and fellowship this season, let us remember that taking care of our health is one way we can take care of each other.

PHILOPTOCHOS

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS!



Thank you to our Chairperson Joanne D for an outstanding fundraising event to benefit Hellenic College/Holy Cross Scholarship Fund and the Retired Clergy/Widowed Presbyteres Benevolent Fund.

Thank you to all the ladies who contributed goodies, time and clean-up. We raised almost \$600.



Thank you to our community for supporting this sale so generously.



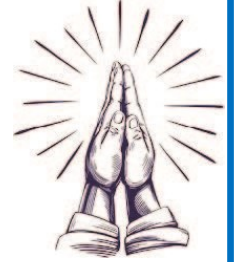
October Calendar!



- 10/6 - General Meeting; 12:15 PM Zoom -Zaharias Room
- 10/13 - Luncheon—with Parish Council- 12:00 PM—Church Hall
- 10/19—Alzheimer's Walk— with Daughters of Penelope and AHEPA —Offsite

TWELVE DISCIPLES PROJECT

*I had rather speak five words with my understanding...
than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. (I Cor. 14:19)*



St. John the Baptist's Twelve Disciples Project continues, as dozens of your fellow Orthodox Christians, Prayer Warriors, set aside a few minutes each day to pray for "mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, protection and pardon and remission of the sins for servants of God" all members of the St. John's congregation.

Are you interested???

You too may join us in this endeavor that, not only broadens your community awareness with others in our congregation, but also sharpens each of our personal prayer disciplines.

"Prayer is doxology, praise, thanksgiving, confession, supplication, and intercession to God. 'When I prayed I was new,' wrote a great theologian of Christian antiquity, 'but when I stopped praying I became old. Prayer is the way to renewal and spiritual life. Prayer is aliveness to God. Prayer is strength, refreshment, and joy. Through the grace of God and our disciplined efforts prayer lifts us up from our isolation to a conscious, loving communion with God in which everything is experienced in a new light. Prayer becomes a personal dialogue with God, a spiritual breathing of the soul, a foretaste of the bliss of God's kingdom." <https://www.goarch.org/-/the-fruits-of-true-prayer?inheritRedirect=true> "Pray for others by name and ask people to pray for you, too. The Church is a praying Body. When we pray for others, we lift them up and embrace them. It connects us in Christ, no matter how far away our loved ones may be from us. Prayer is even more intimate when we offer up specific people, by name, (and their specific needs) to the Lord." (Sam Williams, blogs.goarch.org, Sept. 24, 2015)

Participating requires no special talent, no physical ability, no financial investment but only a desire to offer up prayerful love or your fellow members of the St. John the Baptist congregation. There are no restrictions. You may choose a time during the day when you can spend a quiet moment with God.

Mathew Balasis led this ministry since its inception in 2020. With his recent passing, we are looking for someone to direct this ministry and hope to fill this in the next month. **Memory Eternal Mathew!**

~Participation will warm your spiritual heart.~

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Love thy Neighbor through our Monthly Community Outreach

We have the privilege to help serve the needs of our homeless community in East Tampa on the 3rd Saturday of each month. We partner with Matthew 25 (a local Charity), Metropolitan Ministries and USF to serve breakfast, provide clothing and medical needs for our guests.

Our next dates are: 10/19, 11/16 & 12/21.

What to expect: A rewarding experience and we welcome new volunteers!

To Volunteer: [Click Here](#), (link below) or scan our QR code to access our Signup Genius - <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F48A5A62DA3F49-community1/8067245#/>

Place: *Tampa Hope @ 3704 E. 3rd Ave. — Tampa East*

Time: *8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.*

Questions on Arrival: Look for Matthew 25 founders, Peggy & Mike Kanter or Greg & Victoria Melton, our dedicated parishioners that organize this ministry. They can help answer any questions or if you need direction when you arrive.

You may also call Greg directly at 813-967-2074.



'Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men' Colossians 3:23

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship Update

On behalf of the Stewardship Committee, we hope the school year is off to a great start for everyone. Sunday School is in full swing, and our church is full every Sunday. Here is a picture of how our 2024 Stewardship campaign is progressing as of September 1st:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Total Number of Families	330	320
Total Dollars Pledged & Unpledged	\$627,382	\$533,627

We have increased by ten families and our dollars are ahead of last year for the same time frame. Thank You to everyone who has participated so far.

If you have not yet made your commitment, we humbly remind you to make your Stewardship commitment for 2024 today. Stewardship provides the foundation for our Parish ministries and enables us to meet our financial obligations. Our ministry offerings can benefit every member of your family. From Sunday School, GOYA, Young Adults, Young at Heart and everything in between. We ask you to support these worthy ministries.

*Take the time today to make your Commitment in Time, Talent, and Treasure. Our entire church community is stronger with your participation. Stewardship forms are available online and at the church office. If you have any questions regarding Stewardship, please call or text **George Mitseas at 813-748-1220**. Please do not hesitate to call.*

May the Lord richly bless you and your family in all things! We look forward to your continuing commitment to our parish family. Please remember that our Pastoral Staff is available if there is anything you need. Our community needs your financial support.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PARISH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church is excited to share we will continue to offer the Parish Assistance program together with BayCare Behavioral Health.

The program will provide our parishioners access to **free and confidential** counseling services - offering additional support 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 provide compassionate care to children, adults, parents, and seniors. Parishioners can confidentially contact BayCare directly to request up to three free counseling sessions from a licensed mental health professional.

The BayCare helpline, 800-878-5470, is answered 24/7 by mental health professionals. Many BayCare therapists are also offering telephonic and virtual counseling sessions to help parishioners maintain their emotional wellbeing during these trying times. You can get more information on the BayCare Behavioral Health Community Services Program on their website at: <https://baycare.org/services/behavioral-health/our-specialties/community-health-services> Help is available for life issues including:

Help is available for life issues including:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Family discord
- Marital problems
- Substance abuse issues
- Behavioral issues



The service is completely confidential between parishioner and a Baycare Christian Therapist.

TAMPA POLICE Department

FAITH & BLUE

October 6, 2024 6:00 PM-8:00 PM

Water Works Park, 1701 N. Highland Avenue

OUR MISSION
National Faith & Blue Weekend facilitates safer and stronger communities by engaging law enforcement officers and local residents through the connections of faith-based organizations.

LIVE MUSIC, FOOD TRUCKS, KID'S ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

For more information call: 813-354-6692
@TAMPAPD

2024 Tampa Greek Festival

Save the Date!

November 1 – 2



This year's Tampa Greek Festival is almost here! Please mark your calendars for these dates as well as the week before, October 28 – 31 for set up, November 3rd for Liturgy and Community Celebration and November 4th for clean up. WE WILL NEED HELP ALL OF THOSE DAYS!!

Volunteer SignUp for Tampa Greek Festival



Last year's Festival was a tremendous success and set records for 2-day attendance and profits, so I know everyone is excited to make the 2024 Festival an even greater event this year!

We are still looking for leadership in the following areas:

- Kids' Area (90% of this area has or will be set up ahead of time)
- 50/50 Raffle Coordinator
- Roving Bar Carts inside Hall
- Logistics/Runners – Supporting Takeout, Pastry, Gyro and Taverna areas

If you would like to lead, co-lead or otherwise assist in any of these areas, please contact Mike Xenick at mxenick@gmail.com or 813.340.8737 or Sandra Pappas at spappas11@gmail.com or 813.785.3747

Please be on the lookout for emails and bulletin notices announcing dates for:

- General Festival Planning Meetings
- Pre-Festival Cooking (dolmathes, pastitsio, etc.)
- Sponsorship Opportunities for Your Business
- Yard Signs, Posters and other Ways you Can Promote the Festival!

If you have any questions or ideas, please contact Mike Xenick. Thank you for your dedication and service to our Festival, and let the countdown begin! OPA!

Festival Baking Dates

Thursday October 10 – 9:30 AM

Saturday October 19 – 9:30 AM

Please join us! Many hands make light work,

-No prior experience necessary-

Questions: call Lisa Alsina- 813 728-1094



For over nine years, Fr. Stavros has been writing a daily reflection called "The Prayer Team." It comes out every morning at 12:30 a.m. via Constant Contact. From Monday-Friday, Father will be writing on the Post-Paschal Gospels and on Saturday-Sunday, Father is writing on the Scripture passages of each Sunday. There are 4,524 people on the Prayer Team.

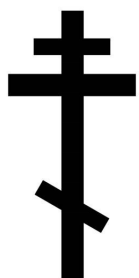


INTERESTED IN JOINING THE PRAYER TEAM?

Over 4,566 people have! The Prayer Team is a daily message that Father Stavros has been writing for more than 6 years! Each day, a scripture verse, a reflection written by Father, and a prayer are emailed to the Prayer Team via Constant Contact. If you would like to join the Prayer Team, please email our office at office@stjohntpa.org and ask to be added. If you receive the daily emails already and want to add a friend, please email the office or follow the link at the bottom of the daily emails to do so. If you want to forward to a friend, please use the "forward to a friend" option. Also, make sure prayerteam365@gmail.com has been added to your contacts so that these emails stay in your Inbox rather than going to the Junk or Spam folders.

**The Prayer Team has a new dedicated website: PrayerTeam365.com
Check it out! Search by topic and grow in your faith today!**

MEMORIAL & KOLYVA PROTOCOL



1. Memorial Services **MUST** be scheduled through the church office at least two weeks in advance of when you want the service.
2. Memorial services for 40 days and one year will be done on the Sunday closest to the appropriate date. All other memorials will be done on the designated Memorial Sunday each month.
3. Please let the office know when you call or email whether you will be providing your own kolyva or whether you wish for the Philoptochos to provide. If a family chooses to make their own Kolyva(es), the family will be responsible for scooping the Kolyva(es) in the kitchen after the Memorial Service to share with the entire community.
4. If the Philoptochos does the kolyva, there is a \$100 charge for this service-checks may be made payable to "St. John Philoptochos."
5. Also, please send the church office all of the names you wish to have commemorated at the memorial service, and how many pews, if any, you would like reserved for your family.

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!



Have questions?

**Just need to talk? Worried? Sad? Happy?
We are here for you!**

Fr. Stavros
< 813-394-1038



Fr. John
678-637-4425>



OPT-IN ON THE MESSENGER

In an effort to be more environmentally conscious, we will be mailing The Messenger **ONLY** to those who ask. If you wish to receive The Messenger by mail, you certainly may. We just ask that you indicate on your stewardship form, or let the office know, that you wish to receive The Messenger by mail. We will no longer be mailing The Messenger unless you ask us to.



*Proverbs 16:3—Commit your work to the Lord; and your plans will be established.
Psalm 37:5—Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and He will act.*



Our word for this year for our parish is the word “Commit.” To commit means to do something. In my message this month, I wrote about the word “commitment” being one of five integral “C’s” to being an Orthodox Christian. The opposite state of commit is to be unreliable, unsure, inconsistent. The idea of “commit” is like a covenant, a sacred agreement even. When one decides to get married, he or she commits to the idea that they will be with one person for the rest of their lives. We don’t offer vows in our church, but the spirit of the vows we often hear still applies—for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, etc. The commitment is part of all seasons of life, not just the good ones. As most of you know, I’m a big college football fan. In the last couple of years, the landscape of college football has changed so that players can more easily transfer if they are not happy, and colleges can use financial incentives including some that are pretty lucrative to woo athletes away from one school to another. When football season began last month, I didn’t even recognize the names of half the players on my favorite team because the roster turned over. Gone are the days of committing to play for four years for one school. There is too much financially at stake. And who can blame someone for doing better for themselves financially, I suppose. The problem is that this tears away at the idea of being committed to something outside of oneself. If it’s all about what works for me, not only will football teams not work, but marriages won’t either. Will we treat God the same way? We’ve got a better deal somewhere else, so we’ll leave God and the church for other opportunities? There is a fine line between being committed to something and constantly looking at other things. We need to pray for wisdom to know where the lines are, discernment not to cross them, and humility to “forsake all others” at times, content with where we are and who we might be there with.

+Fr. Stavros

PHOTO GALLERY



Goya lock-in at the Bethany center in August 21



Our fall orthodoxy 101 class has nearly 40 people participating.



Young adults. We had 33 young adults at our September meeting and discussed ministries and how we can be more involved in the church.



On Sunday, August 25, Fr. Stavros offered a Memorial Service for all the people who have passed away in his 20 years of ministry at St. John.



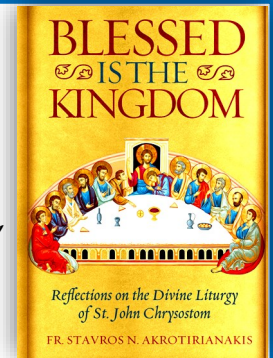
On September 14, 2024 the Panigyri adult dance group performed traditional dances at the Greek-themed annual fundraising gala for Stay in Step, a local nonprofit organization dedicated to providing rehab and support to individuals with spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries. The emcee announced the upcoming Tampa Greek Festival to the gala attendees, and the gala organizers were appreciative of Panigyri's performance!

Pictures from our Holy Cross Liturgy on September 14.



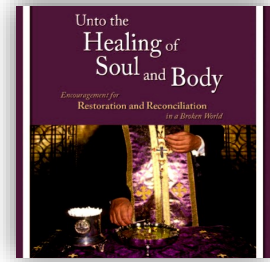
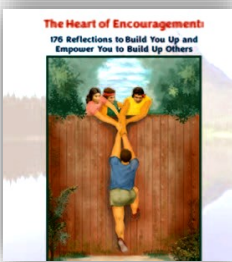
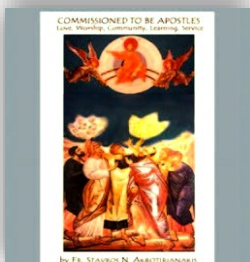
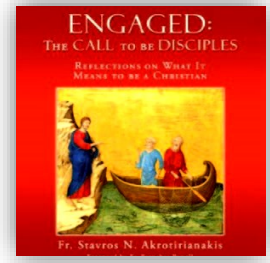
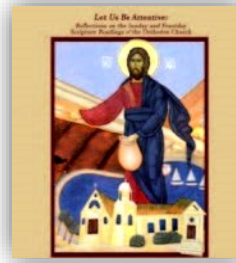
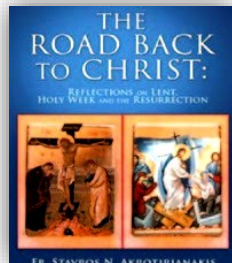
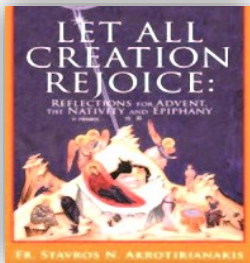
FR. STAVROS NEW BOOK

FR. STAVROS NEW BOOK “**BLESSED IS THE KINGDOM**” REPUBLISHED BY ANCIENT FAITH PUBLISHING—FR. STAVROS RECENTLY HAD HIS BOOK “**BLESSED IS THE KINGDOM: REFLECTIONS ON THE DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**” REPUBLISHED BY ANCIENT FAITH PUBLISHING. THIS BOOK HAS BEEN EDITED, UPDATED AND IMPROVED AND IS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE THROUGH OUR OWN BOOKSTORE, OR THE ANCIENT FAITH BOOKSTORE. WITH THIS BOOK NOW IN PRINT, FR. STAVROS HAS NINE PUBLISHED BOOKS THAT ARE AVAILABLE BOTH IN THE BOOKSTORE AND ONLINE.



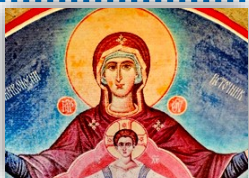
The additional 8 are entitled:

- Let All Creation Rejoice: Reflections on Advent, the Nativity and Epiphany
- The Road Back to Christ: Reflections on Lent, Holy Week and the Resurrection
- Let us Be Attentive: Reflections on the Sunday and Feastday Scripture Readings of the Orthodox Church
- Engaged: The Call To Be Disciples, Reflections on What it Means to be a Christian
- Commissioned to be Apostles: Love, Worship, Community, Learning, Service
- The Heart of Encouragement: 176 Reflections to Build You Up and Empower You to Build Up Others
- The Greatest Story Ever Sung: Reflections on the Hymns of Holy Week In the Orthodox Church
- Unto the Healing of Soul and Body: Encouragement for Restoration and Reconciliation in a Broken World



ST. JOHN'S BOOKSTORE

Our bookstore offers a series of booklets featuring various *Akathist hymns* priced under \$5. Stop in and browse through them this month. Among those offered are:



Akathist to Jesus - Light to Those in Darkness

Prayers to Jesus, the Light of the world, for help in times of depression, pain, and despair. The Akathist guides those living in darkness to the Light of Christ.

Akathist to Almighty God - For Help in Trouble

An Akathist prayed in times of difficulty. We pray that God bring solace to the soul and strengthen our faith in the merciful providence of our loving Lord.

Akathist to the Mother of God "Pantanassa" - Healer of Cancer

Written in commemoration of the Mother of God "Pantanassa" (Queen of All), an Athonite miracle working icon effective in many healings of cancer and other ills.

Akathist to the Mother of God - Nurturer of Children

A Prayer Service for one who desires to pray for a son, daughter, or godchild. The prayer is an offering to the Theotokos asking to raise these young ones to be worthy heirs of Christ's kingdom.

Follow Us on Social Media



St. John the Baptist



Let's Get Connected for Our Latest News & Updates



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stjohntpa.org

2418 W. Swann Avenue
Tampa, FL 33609

(813)876-8830

St. John the Baptist is on Social Media!

Have you downloaded our App?

Download the St. John's app in the App Store, or Google Play Store by typing in "St John GOC Tampa." You can access the Messenger, weekly bulletin, streaming services, and much more all through our app!

Do you Like our Facebook page? Like our page and suggest it to your friends. Announcements are posted frequently so you are up to date with everything going on at St. John the Baptist. You can find our page at StJohnGOCTampa.

We Are Live

We have switched from LiveStream to Vimeo as the streaming platform for our church services. You can easily access our Live and Recorded Events from the following **URL link: <https://stjohntpa.org/live/>**

This link will be included in the weekly Constant Contact Bulletin Message and is also accessible from our Church Website and SJGOC App. The sermon portion of services will continue to be shared on YouTube as recordings. Happy Streaming! Please call our Church Office with any questions.



Beware of Emails or Text Messages Asking for Gift Cards



This is a common and very scary thing that is happening. People who are impersonating as Fr. Stavros have been emailing people and asking them to buy gift cards, scratch off the back to reveal the code, take pictures of the code and email them the pictures. Fr. Stavros would never under any circumstances ask for a gift card via email. If you receive an email like this, please call Fr. Stavros immediately. Many people these days are falling victim to scams like these. Please double check and even triple check any emails or phone calls that ask for money even if it looks real.

Any questions? Please contact the office.

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta
Tampa Bay District Council

"The Roaring Twenties"
Golden Gala

Sat. October 19th, 2024

6:30PM



Cash Bar

DRESS IN YOUR BEST 1920'S ATTIRE!

St. Nicholas Spanos Pappas 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 October 1st

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

The Roaring "Twenties"

Golden Gala Sponsorship Opportunities

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> DIAMOND LEVEL | \$10,000 | 10 TICKETS TO THE BANQUET
FULL PAGE AD IN BANQUET JOURNAL
ACKNOWLEDGMENT AT THE EVENT
PREFERENTIAL SEATING |
| <input type="radio"/> PLATINUM LEVEL | \$5,000 | 10 TICKETS TO THE BANQUET
FULL PAGE AD IN BANQUET JOURNAL
ACKNOWLEDGMENT AT THE EVENT |
| <input type="radio"/> GOLD LEVEL | \$2,500 | 8 TICKETS TO THE BANQUET
FULL PAGE AD IN BANQUET JOURNAL
ACKNOWLEDGMENT AT THE EVENT |
| <input type="radio"/> SILVER LEVEL | \$1,000 | 4 TICKETS TO THE BANQUET
HALF PAGE AD IN BANQUET JOURNAL |
| <input type="radio"/> BRONZE LEVEL | \$500 | 2 TICKETS TO THE BANQUET
QUARTER PAGE AD IN BANQUET |

- All Sponsorships Include:**
- Listing on "Supporter wall" at the event
 - Recognition in the Banquet Event Program
 - Name or Business Logo on Event Website
 - Social Media Promotion

Please indicate your selection and return by October 1st
Mail CHECK payable to: "St. Raphael DRC Golden Gala" to
1100 Riviere Rd Palm Harbor FL 34683

NAME _____

COMPANY _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

CREDIT CHECK CASH EXP DATE _____

NAME ON CARD _____

CARD NUMBER _____

For additional Sponsorship opportunities email: OrthodoxGoldenGala@gmail.com

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 unawares.*
HEBREWS 13:2

Youth Protection Program



GREEK ORTHODOX
ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA



Would you like to participate in or help with child/youth programs, events, or activities at our church? If the answer is yes, then you must register, screen, and train through the new Youth Protection platform first.

If you are interested and would like to get started or if you have questions, please contact Suzanne Pileggi at smpileggi@gmail.com or (813) 244-5855. Thank you!

Thank You to all of Our Friends!

Friends of St. John the Baptist - Some of you who receive The Messenger do not live in the Tampa Bay area or are members of other Greek Orthodox parishes. We would like to ask for your support of our parish by being a "Friend of St. John the Baptist." Your contribution as a "Friend" will help offset the cost of mailing The Messenger, among other things. Being a "friend" does not make one a steward of St. John the Baptist or afford membership rights and responsibilities, but gives one who is a member elsewhere, an opportunity to make a gesture of financial support to our parish.

Thank you for your consideration of our parish.

Friend of St. John the Baptist:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

_____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$200 _____ Other

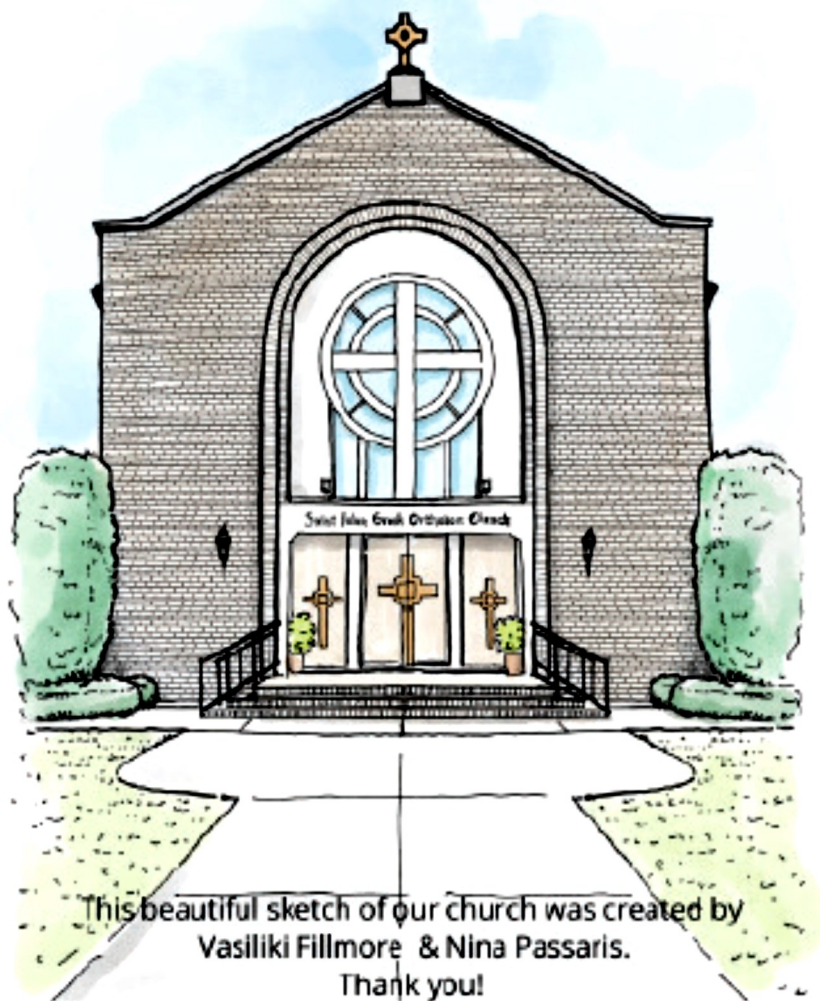
Please mail this form and check to: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
2418 W. Swann Ave Tampa, FL 33609.

October 2024

◀ Sep 2024	October 2024						Nov 2024 ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
		1 Women's Bible Study 10:00a.m. Bible Study 6:30p.m.	2** Paraklesis 6:00p.m. Greek Dance 7:00p.m.	3	4**	5 Adult Greek School 12:30-3:00p.m. Children's Greek School 1:00-3:00p.m.	
6 Orthros 8:45a.m. Liturgy 10:00a.m. Church Musicians' Sunday Philoctochos General Meeting (Zaharias Room) GOYA 5:00p.m.	7	8 Women's Bible Study 10:00a.m. Bible Study 6:30p.m.	9** Greek Dance 7:00p.m. Choir 7:15p.m. Fr. Stavros at Holy Cross Seminary 10/9-10/12	10 Festival Baking 9:30a.m.	11**	12 Young at Heart 11:30 a.m. Adult Greek School 12:30-3:00p.m. Children's Greek School 1:00-3:00p.m.	
13 Orthros 8:45a.m. Liturgy 10:00a.m. Christine Scourtes 100 years Celebration	14 Young Adult Discussion 6:30p.m.	15 Women's Bible Study 10:00a.m. Bible Study 6:30p.m.	16** Greek Dance 7:00p.m. Choir 7:15p.m.	17	18** St. Luke Orthros 9:00a.m.. Liturgy 10:00a.m.	19 Philoptochos-DOP Alzheimer's Walk Festival Baking 9:30a.m. Adult Greek School 12:30-3:00p.m. Children's Greek School 1:00-3:00p.m. Community Outreach	
20 Orthros 8:45a.m. Liturgy 10:00a.m. Parish Assembly Mtg. Men's Group 5:00p.m.	21 St. James Liturgy Orthros 5:00p.m. Liturgy 6:00p.m.	22 Fr. Stavros at Clergy Meeting at the DRC 10/22-10/24 Bible Study 6:30p.m.	23** Greek Dance 7:00p.m. Choir 7:15p.m.	24	25** Tweens Movie night 6:00-9:00p.m.	26 St. Demetrios Orthros 9:00a.m.. Liturgy 10:00a.m. Adult Greek School 12:30-3:00p.m. Children's Greek School 1:00-3:00p.m.	
27 Orthros 8:45a.m. Liturgy 10:00a.m. Youth Sunday Fall Festival HOPE/JOY	28 Holy Protection of Virgin Mary/Oxi Day Orthros 9:00a.m. Liturgy 10:00a.m.	29 Women's Bible Study 10:00a.m. Bible Study 6:30p.m.	30** Greek Dance 7:00p.m.	31			

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX
CHURCH 2418 W. SWANN AVENUE
TAMPA, FL 33609-4712
OFFICE: (813) 876-8830
FAX: (813) 443-4899
OFFICE@STJOHNTPA.ORG
WWW.STJOHNTPA.ORG

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As it is written in Isaiah, "Behold, I send my messenger before Thy face, who shall prepare thy way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight--"
"Mark 2:3