



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

THE MESSENGER

NOVEMBER 2024



Synaxis of the Archangel Michael & the other Bodiless Powers: Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Salaphiel, Jegudiel, & Barachiel – November 8

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



VISION:

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

MISSION:

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

CORE VALUES:

Love, Worship, Community, Learning, Service

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) fstav@gmail.com	Bible Study-Tuesday Night Fr. John Stefero 678-637-4425	Junior Olympics Dwight Forde 561-310-5034
Retired Priest in Residence Rev. Fr. Stratton Dorozenski 813-876-8830 (Office)	Buildings & Grounds Euripides Panos 813-352-3972	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	Choir Tara Swartzbaugh, Director 813-313-0439 Ruth Losovitz, Organist 727-688-2782 Maria Xenick, Chanter 813-765-3587	Parish Nursing Ministry Marcelle Triantafilou 612-396-5026
Ministry Coordinator/Chanter Maria Xenick Mariapxenick@stjohntpa.org 813-765-3587(Cell)	College Student Program Rev. Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038	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 Tony Magos 813-957-3206 Suzanne Pileggi 813-244-5855 Marcelle Triantafilou 612-396-5026	Community Outreach Greg Melton 813-967-2074	Photography Ministry Karina Findlay 813-476-9632
Office Staff Debbie Bowe, Bookkeeper debbie@stjohntpa.org 813-443-4899(fax)	Connect Through Christ - Special Needs Ministry for Children Dante and Lindsey Skourellos 813-765-9534	Philotochos Katherine Sakkis 813-309-1073
Elli Kehagias, Administrative Assistant, office@stjohntpa.org 813-876-8830	Dance Groups H XAPA MAS, Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668 Maraquet Edquid 813-422-8963 IIAPEA, Marina Choundas 813-877-6136 IIANHFYPI, Alexandra De Maio 813-340-9668	Stewardship Chris Kyrus 757-672-1920 George Mitseas 813-748-1220
Adopt a College Student Kathy Kaburis 813-240-6513	Daughters of Penelope Ourania Stephanides 813-546-4711	Sunday School Vickie Peckham 813-758-3102
Adult Greek School Magda Myer 813-523-5771	Festival Mike Xenick 813-340-8737	Usher Pete Trakas 813-505-2193
AHEPA James Sakaris, President 301-529-8857	Finance Committee Gary Ward 813-846-3898	Veterans/1st Responders Fr. John Stefero 813-876-8830
Altar Angels Kalliope Chagaris 813-789-4134	Food Pantry Sandra Pappas 813-785-3747	Website / Social Media / APP VOLUNTEER NEEDED!
Altar Boys Fr Stavros Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038	Gasparilla Parking Volunteer Needed	Welcoming Ministry Maria Xenick 813-765-3587
Bookstore Presbyteria Denise Stefero 678-464-4833	GOYA Michael & Bessie Palios 813-523-0346	Women's Bible Study Rev. Fr. Stavros N. Akrotirianakis 813-394-1038
	Hope/Joy George & Zackie Ameres 813-245-3813	Young Adult Aris Rogers 813-309-5525
	Joy Tweens Maraquet Edquid 813-422-8963	Young at Heart Dora Morgan 813-613-3738
		Youth Protection Suzanne Pileggi 813-244-5855
		12 Disciples VOLUNTEER NEEDED!

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRIEST

LOOKING INTO THE EYE OF THE STORM THROUGH THE LENS OF CHRISTIANITY

Two major hurricanes hit Tampa Bay in the span of two weeks. Many of our parishioners suffered major damages. We know people lost homes, contents of homes, cars, financial loss, and loss of peace of mind. Our church office building flooded and had to be quickly emptied of all contents, many of which needed to be thrown away. There was major damage to the church office building. The Greek Festival will not be happening as scheduled. Many people went days without power. I'm writing this message from the Kourmolis Center, as I currently do not have an office or any office furniture. There has been a major disruption to many of your lives and a major disruption to the life of our parish.



There is a collective sense of gratitude, that this could have been much worse. Many families suffered major damage, which cannot be minimized or understated, but many of us got away almost unscathed, except for loss of power and some anxiety. This could have been much worse. On a personal note, I watched with sadness the damages in my former town of Asheville, NC, where the destruction was almost apocalyptic in scope.

Now that we have stated the bad news, let's discuss lessons learned and some positive things, even in the face of disaster. . .

WE LIKE OUR FREEDOM, WE LIKE TO BE IN CONTROL

One of the biggest challenges of these recent hurricanes centers around freedom and control. Just about any setback in life is combined with a loss of freedom. When someone is battling serious illness as an example, there is the anxiety about the outcome and the pain and discomfort of the treatment, but on top of this, there is the loss of freedom. All of a sudden, we *HAVE* to do things. Instead of having control over our lives, we are compelled by doctors to do things we'd rather not do.

The hurricane has disrupted our sense of freedom. We now have to deal with challenges and setbacks that we hadn't even thought of a month ago. Whether that is something major like having had to relocate, something expensive like needing to replace things, something inconvenient like needing to be home to let contractors come in, something requiring patience like waiting to get a new car, something sad like not being able to replace sentimental items, something unexpected like school off days being taken away, or something uncomfortable like fear about whether this will happen again.

We like freedom. Anytime freedom is threatened, it makes us unsettled. *For those who suffered damage, the church is here for you. There are funds set up by the Archdiocese and in our own parish. If anyone needs to stop by and talk, to process and talk out what happened to you, I encourage you to make an appointment to do so.* Part of this loss is financial. Part of it is inconvenient. And part of it is mental—we've all suffered a loss of freedom.

WE CAN PIVOT QUICKLY

Hurricane Milton hit Tampa on the night of October 9 and into the early morning hours of October 10. By mid-morning on October 10, we knew there was significant damage to the church office complex. Early morning on October 11, we were told by the remediation company that we needed to get everything out of the office building by the end of the day. A small army of people came down to the church with empty boxes and bins and got everything out of the building over the course of a few hours.

On Saturday, October 12, another army of people came down to the church and helped clean our property from the significant amount of debris that covered our entire campus.

Sunday, October 13, still without power in the church, but with power on in the hall, we quickly set up the Kourmolis Center and celebrated the Divine Liturgy there, rather than in the church. After church, another army of people helped divide up the MANY boxes and bins that had been relocated from the office building and set up the hall into usable office space. The bookstore, money room, food pantry and Sunday school closet also had to be emptied of contents.

By Monday, October 14, our temporary offices were open for business. October 20 had us back in the church for Divine Liturgy, with a full sanctuary. Sunday school resumed October 27, and as November begins, we will have most of our ministries back as before. The only unknown is how long we will have our offices in the hall. While we do, we will not be able to have coffee hour in the hall or use the hall for other large ministry gatherings. It is hoped that by the beginning of December we have full use of the hall again, but at this point, that is just a guess.

OUR COMMUNITY CAME TOGETHER QUICKLY

Our people came together very quickly to help with the office relocation needs. Others stepped forward to go out and help parishioners who had damage to their homes. A group of people went into Parkland Estates on October 13 after church and helped to clean up the neighborhood. Many people have sent in financial contributions to help those who have been affected. This has been a great exercise in the power of community, something we do very well here at St. John on a regular basis, but something that rose to a different level in a time of crisis.



STUFF IS STUFF, ALTHOUGH. . .

Many people have said "stuff is stuff" in the wake of these hurricanes. We can replace stuff, so the saying goes, but we can't replace people. And that is true. Thankfully, we suffered no loss of life or serious injury in our parish. The same can't be said in other places in the Southeast. Stuff, however, makes us comfortable. I do a lot of stressful things in my office, but there is a sense of comfort and familiarity at my desk. I've sat at the same desk for almost 20 years, it was familiar. Others have said the same thing about couches, cars and dressers.



There is a short book entitled “Good Grief” by Granger Westberg that talks about how we actually grieve often in life. For instance, if you go to a restaurant looking forward to eating your favorite dish and they are out of it that day, there is a small bit of grief. Or if you

plan to go to the beach and it rains and you can’t go, there is grief there. Of course, there are big things we grieve about, like the loss of a close relative or friend. But there are lesser things we miss out on and it is important to take time to grieve losses. For those who have lost things, and even for those who have lost peace of mind, it is important to take time to grieve these losses.

A SPIRITUAL EXERCISE OF TRUSTING IN GOD

Whether we suffered material loss or not, those who stayed in Tampa during Hurricane Milton suffered through a long afternoon and night of uncertainty. The winds blew, the rains came and they didn’t stop, for a long time. A record amount of rain fell on Tampa. The hurricane came ashore as a strong category three with high winds. Once night fell, we couldn’t see the destruction outside, and once the power went out, as it did for most of us, we couldn’t see much of anything. This night of destruction, for many of us, became a spiritual exercise of trusting in God. More prayers were offered. I actually felt relaxed most of the time, ironically, even though I was not in control of much of anything. I felt like God’s guiding hand was somewhere in the storm. I don’t think it is fair to say God guided the storm away from Tampa, because then one might accuse God of guiding the storm to Sarasota. I feel like God’s hand was with us in the storm. His hand has certainly been in the recovery from the storm.

One of the most inspiring aspects of the hurricane was hearing that people were praying for us. At least a dozen priests let me know they were not only praying for us, but were gathering their flocks together and offering Paraklesis services in their parishes across the country for us. There is no greater gift one can offer someone than to pray for them. We have gathered many times, including after Hurricane Helene, to offer Paraklesis for victims of disasters in other places. How comforting that people prayed for us in our hour of need.

THE HURRICANE GOT SOME OF US FOCUSED ON WHAT’S REALLY IMPORTANT

The day before Hurricane Milton, we powered down the church and made some preparations. No one thought water might actually intrude into the office building, but we did move things up to higher ground. As I looked around my office, there are only a few “irreplaceable” things that actually could fit into one box—my dad’s prayer book, a journal that my mom kept, two icons that have been in my dad’s family for 200 years. Lots of people have shared similar stories, of evacuating with only a couple of boxes of important documents or treasured family heirlooms. The most important thing we have is our relationships. We didn’t have power in our house for six days. We actually spent a lot of time playing board games, reading and talking. I found that I didn’t actually miss the TV or keeping up with sports and world events. Peanut butter on crackers was sufficient for a meal—it was food. I did miss the hot shower, I won’t lie about that. But most of the other inconveniences weren’t all that inconvenient. Now that I’m working out of a temporary

office with most of my stuff packed in boxes in another room, I’m wondering when I actually unpack those boxes, how many things I will get rid of, because I don’t actually use them.

GENEROSITY COMES FROM ADVERSITY

In times of misfortune, people become more generous. Our church has received checks from many people outside of our church. Just as our parishioners were generous toward those affected in the first hurricane. Your generosity over the years has allowed our parish to build up money in reserves that will be used to pay for the damages our church complex suffered. When I first got to Tampa twenty years ago, we had \$50K in assets and over \$2M in liabilities. A storm like the one that just damaged our church would truly have been catastrophic from a financial standpoint. It is important that we continue to stay the course as it pertains to stewardship. Your generosity has helped us be ready for a “rainy day” and has also allowed us to be generous to those who are in need.

IT IS OKAY TO RECEIVE A KINDNESS

Keeping score is part of athletics but shouldn’t be part of other parts of life. As an example, when it comes to exchanging gifts, we shouldn’t keep score, either in number or monetary value, of what we give versus what we receive. There is no one who should always be on the receiving end or on the giving end when it comes to gifts and other gestures of kindness. There are many people who have been inconvenienced by the recent hurricanes, just as there are always people in our community who are inconvenienced by sickness and other life circumstances. If (and when) you are one of these people, now is a time to lean on others and to accept kindnesses. And if (and when) you are not one of these people, which is hopefully most of us most of the time, it is a time to let others lean on you and show grace and kindness. It is incumbent on us to have our eyes and ears open to those who need some extra help, or extra grace. And it is important and perfectly fine to let others know when you need help, or when others ask you if everything is okay, it is perfectly fine to let them know when it isn’t.

IT MAKES US TAKE A LONG LOOK AT WHERE OUR COMMUNITY IS GOING

The damage to our church complex has caused us to take a long look at where our community is going. The administration building, which was the primary building that was damaged is a building we don’t plan to have in just over a year. The plan is to remodel the school building into a ministry building that will house our church offices, classrooms, and promote ministry on an everyday basis, something we’ve never been able to do because of the presence of our tenant. The lease with the tenant ends in June 2025, and the plan is that next summer, we will begin the remodel of the future ministry building. Now we have at least one more reason to not have the administration building—it floods. We had minimal flooding in the Kourmolis Center and the nursery, but the entire administration building flooded. The roof is old and we are only putting band aids on it, the roofing company will not warranty that roof. We will have to make some repairs in order to use that building for another year and to allow the tenant to use the building for the remainder of their lease. But the



repairs will be minimal, with an eye towards the future when that building will be torn down and replaced with green space and an outdoor pavilion.

Several people have asked me about naming certain spaces in the ministry building. If you are interested in naming a space, or even the building, please see me or Rip Panos.

Lost in the distraction of the hurricanes was the fact that 42 people completed the Orthodoxy 101 class. On November 10, six people will be chrismated.

The theme of our building campaign is “Arise and Build,” based on Nehemiah 2:18, which reads “*And they said ‘Let us arise and build.’ So they strengthened their hands for the good work.*” The book of Nehemiah is about the return of the Jews after their exile to Babylon and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem that had been destroyed by the Babylonians. In the wake of the hurricane, some of us feel like the Jewish exiles, forced out of our homes. Our complex has suffered damage. And just like God’s chosen people of thousands of years ago, it is time for us to arise and build—a better complex for a brighter future. Much more to come on this.



AND NOW A PIVOT TOWARDS NORMALCY AS WE HEAD INTO NOVEMBER

November, December and January mark the largest number of Divine Liturgies celebrated outside of Great Lent. There is a calendar which mandates which dates are to be honored with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and the largest number of these dates are in these three months. There will be 13 Divine Liturgies celebrated in the month of November. Why does that matter? First, there is a greater number of opportunities than usual to receive Holy Communion and gather to worship. Second, whether you attend the Divine Liturgy or not, in the Divine Liturgy, we take a tour of the world in prayer, and we call the Holy Spirit down upon us (those present, our town, all of humanity) as well as upon the Gifts we are offering. The Holy Spirit fills in blanks, provides us with grace, connects us with God the Father and God the Son, provides inspiration and so much more. We don’t talk enough about the Holy Spirit as being the gateway by which we experience the Holy Trinity. The strongest church communities are the ones who gather in worship most often, because there is nothing more powerful that happens in the church than worship, and for the Orthodox, there is nothing more powerful than celebrating the Eucharist. After a month where so many normal things got upended, we are following the normal schedule of liturgical services for the month of November.

The Nativity Fast begins on November 15. This is the period of 40 days that precedes the feast of Nativity. Sometime in November, probably November 1, we will begin to hear non-stop Christmas carols (actually, more holiday songs, as they intentionally leave Christ out of them). In late November we’ll put up our Christmas trees and decorations. And soon after we’ll start stressing about holiday plans and gifts. We won’t be embracing this with joy, at least not many of us. Christmas has become a season of stress. The reason for the season, the Incarnation of the Son of God in the flesh, has been lost

on many. The Church, in its wisdom, provides this period of time for us to focus on the Nativity of Christ. If there was no incarnation, there could be no Resurrection. Thus, many Orthodox refer to the **Nativity as the winter Pascha**, a feast of such salvific weight that it ranks a close second to Pascha. Hence, the season of fasting and reflective preparation. Just as we set goals for ourselves during Great Lent each spring, we should set goals for ourselves for the Nativity Fast. These could include attending additional services, additional charitable giving, reading Scripture or more in depth prayer. Speaking personally, the hurricanes disrupted my peace and took away some of my possessions. What I need most this Christmas season is not more gifts and things, but a sense of peace that can only be found through God. There is no greater gift we can offer ourselves than to spend more time with God. There is no greater gift we can offer others than to offer their names in prayer and worship to God. Think of what a powerful gift an exchange of prayers could be—between spouses, parents and children, or with friends. This could be praying together, out loud in the same place. Or, it could just be a commitment to quietly and privately offer someone’s name in prayer daily. What a gift it would be to say to someone on November 15, that for forty days you’ll pray for them without fail—how that would change you, them, and the two of you.

THANKSGIVING

We celebrate Thanksgiving at the end of November each year. This holiday is becoming known for food, family and football. However at the center of the feast should not be a turkey, but a posture of gratitude. Most of us extend Thanksgiving for a few days as we eat leftovers. However, the feast of Thanksgiving, in its essence—a grateful people offering their gratitude to the Lord—should be something we offer year-round. **Every day should be a day of Thanksgiving!**

WE WILL COME OUT BETTER FROM ALL OF THIS.

I’m sure there will be some sadness on November 1-2 as we won’t be holding the Greek Festival as previously planned. I’m sure there will be some sadness as we drive past homes that won’t have Christmas trees and decorations up this year. Two thoughts bring me comfort—first, nothing can separate us from the love of God, certainly not a hurricane, even one that inflicted losses on people. Second, at the end of our lives, the destruction of this hurricane won’t really matter. What will matter is how we reacted to that. Were we more faithful? More trusting? More generous? Were we even more grateful for what we have, rather than what we’ve lost? There might not be a path (or a smooth path) to restoration from what was lost. But there is always a path to spiritual restoration, even growth, in all circumstances. We can come out better from all of this, but that starts with what is in our own hearts.

*I am thankful to God that the hurricanes were not worse.
I am thankful to God for every gesture of love and support received by our church and by me personally this past month.
I am thankful to God for another day to live, breathe and grow in Him.
I am thankful for the opportunity to use this time as an exercise in faith and trusting in God.
I am thankful to be part of a Orthodox Christian community that has offered prayer, encouragement and help to so many, including me.*

Happy Thanksgiving!

With love in the Lord,
+Fr. Stavros



A MESSAGE FROM OUR MINISTRY COORDINATOR

~Use it to serve one another~

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 examine the middle first part of verse 10 of St. Peter's writing "...use it to serve one another ..."

SERVE

A cornerstone of our Orthodox Christian faith is the concept of "service." The word serve is used 331 times in the RSV version of the Bible alone. That is a lot of reminders and encouragement to serve!

It seems that it always makes sense to return the original Greek for the deeper meaning before the English translations. The word Peter uses here is "diakonoundes" which means to serve or to minister. In fact, many English translations use the word minister here. We often think of minister as an occupation; however think of it as a verb that is active for lay people as well as clergy, young as well as old, male as well as female. No matter what, we are called to minister to others.

Indeed, Christians are called to serve or minister to one another, using their spiritual gifts "as good stewards of God's grace" (more on this part of the verse next month!) The emphasis should be on selfless and humble service, recognizing that the gifts we have received are ultimately from God and should be used in His service.

Selfless and humble service. What a difficult truth we humans must accept. We shouldn't seek recognition or accolades when we serve. Many of the early church writers, who could have easily boasted about their fame or positions, referred to themselves as "bondservants of the Lord." In fact, those who seek to serve or minister to others must think more about others than they think of themselves. True humility is not thinking less of ourselves, but thinking of ourselves less. (Read that line again!) And humility is a daily struggle. The opportunity to be a servant confronts us dozens of times a day. However, servants think of ministry as an

opportunity, not an obligation. They consistently look for ways to "serve the Lord in gladness."

Many times in the Gospels, Jesus demonstrated profound examples of service, often in ways that didn't make sense to others around Him. Healing countless outcasts, feeding thousands, teaching lessons on service, and probably the greatest example, washing the feet of His disciples. This most humble act, on the night before his Passion and Crucifixion, demonstrated the importance Jesus placed on selfless acts of service and love. Let's not forget, Jesus washed the feet of ALL of His friends and disciples, the ones who deserted him, denied Him, and even betrayed Him.

What makes serving or ministering to others so contagious is the benefit that both the person serving and the one who is served will receive. It truly is a win-win! This beautiful quote from St. John of the Cross says it all - "The soul of the one who serves God always swims in joy, always keeps holiday, and is always in the mood for singing."

Ministering to people is about showing love and care to others. Here are some practical ways you can minister to people:

- ♦ Be present: Be available to listen and provide a safe space for people to be vulnerable.
- ♦ Offer physical help: You can help with tasks like mowing the lawn, grocery shopping, or delivering meals.
- ♦ Give a gift: You can order a gift online, deliver homemade food, or write a handwritten note.
- ♦ Pray together: You can pray with someone who is sick or grieving.
- ♦ Maintain the relationship: Regularly touch base with the people you are ministering to.

May the Lord our God always help us to look for ways to minister to one another! Go out there and serve!

Maria Xenick
Ministry Coordinator



In the days preceding Hurricane Milton, stress and anxiety were understandable at an all-time high. This was the second hurricane our area was facing in less than two weeks. With 24-hour news and weather reports at our fingertips, it was easy to get caught up in the cycle of "bad news." A quick google search of "encouragement in a storm" led me to this article that I found to be most helpful. I shared it with several people. It was incredibly encouraging to have something positive and rooted in faith. The article that follows was written by K-LOVE Pastors and posted on their site on January 18, 2023. In order to receive permission to republish this, I called the station and spoke with a gentleman named Landon. Landon not only gave us permission to repost this article, he listened, prayed, and offered encouragement to me, our parish, and our entire city. It was a bright spot in a stressful time that brought peace to my weary soul. I hope you will find the same encouragement. ~Maria



So take courage! For I believe God. It will be just as He said. But we will be shipwrecked on an island. – Acts 27:25-26 NLT

Have you ever been caught in a storm that you weren't prepared for?

When I was in 8th grade, an El Nino (a large storm created when unusually hot air pressures collide off the coast) hit my home.

The first day of the storm began while I was walking home from school. What was normally a twenty-minute walk took an hour. I found myself forced to walk in places where the water was halfway to my knee.

Right now, we're in a very different kind of storm. Instead of an El Nino, political tensions, social unrest, and economic downturn are leaving people fearful and insecure.

In Acts 27-28, the Apostle Paul was caught in a storm and shipwrecked. As we look at his story, there were five actions Paul took that helped him and his shipmates not only survive but thrive. Here's what Paul did in his S.T.O.R.M. that can help us with ours:

1. Steady yourself in God's promises.

God promised Paul that he was going to testify in Rome (Acts 27:23-24). Paul knew he could trust God because of God's faithfulness in the past. As you go through hard times, you need to cling to God's

promises in scripture. Remember what He did for you on the cross. Remember how He's been there for you in the past. Spend time in His Word and prayer daily. Create a list of verses that remind you of the hope you have in Christ and meditate on them during the week.

2. Take it one day at a time.

Paul knew he and the crew would be shipwrecked for a while. He didn't fixate on worst-case scenarios. Instead, he focused on doing the next right thing. When a storm hits your life, don't dwell on what might happen next. Focus on what you need to do today and trust God to help you with what happens tomorrow (Matthew 6:25-34).

3. Orient yourself through self-care.

Paul made sure the crew ate and took care of their basic needs (Acts 27:33-35). As you weather this storm, prioritize self-care through healthy eating, exercise, rest, limiting screen time, and engaging in healthy activities that fill you up.

4. Refuse to give in to discouragement.

When Paul first crashed on Malta, a snake bit him and everyone thought he was going to die. Paul shook the snake off and went about his work (Acts 28:1-6). He chose not what he couldn't control (the snake biting him) to distract him focusing on what he could control (his thoughts and actions). When you get discouraged, take time to process it. Ask the Lord to help you release bitterness and forgive others the way He has forgiven you (Ephesians 4:32).

5. Make space to serve and connect.

Paul used his time on Malta to serve the people there. He also made sure to connect with other believers when he was rescued (Acts 28:7-9; 15-16).

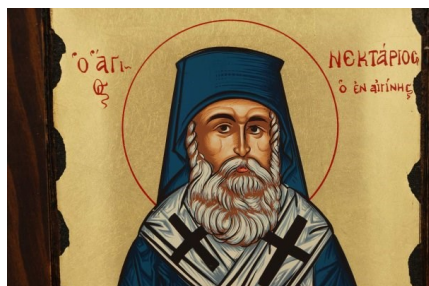
As you weather your storms, make sure you're reaching out to other believers for support and finding ways to help others.

Lord, thank You that no matter what storms come at me You are always with me. Help me not to get overwhelmed or discouraged by the storms of life. Teach me how to trust and follow You no matter what. Fill me with Your wisdom, strength, and peace today.

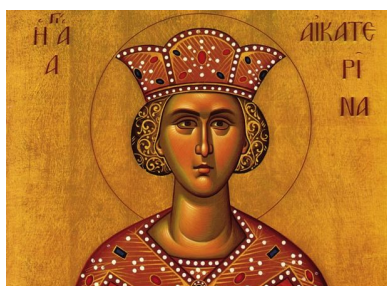


LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER

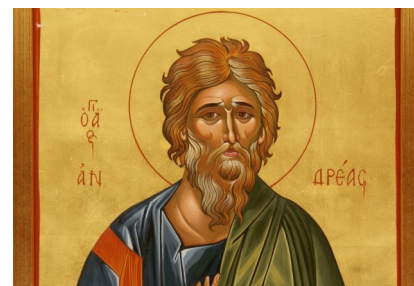
Friday, November 1	<u>STS. COSMAS AND DAMIAN THE UNMERCENARY HEALERS</u>			
	Orthros	9:00a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Sunday, November 3	Orthros	8:45a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
			<i>(Daylight Savings— Move clocks 1 hour behind)</i>	
Tuesday, November 5	Paraklesis	6:00p.m.		
Friday, November 8	<u>SYNAXIS OF THE ARCHANGELS</u>			
	Orthros	8:00a.m.	Divine Liturgy	9:00a.m.
	(NOTE— Early Start Time)			
Saturday, November 9	<u>ST. NEKTARIOS</u>			
	Orthros	9:00a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Sunday, November 10	Orthros	8:45a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Wednesday, November 13	<u>ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM</u>			
	Orthros	9:00a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Saturday, November 16	<u>ST. MATTHEW</u>			
	Orthros	9:00a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Sunday, November 17	Orthros	8:45a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Monday, November 18	Holy Unction	6:00p.m.		
Thursday, November 21	<u>THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE</u>			
	Orthros	9:00a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Sunday, November 24	Orthros	8:45a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Monday, November 25	<u>ST. KATHERINE</u>			
	Orthros	9:00a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Wednesday, November 27	<u>THANKSGIVING LITURGY (EVENING LITURGY)</u>			
	Orthros	5:00p.m.	Divine Liturgy	6:00p.m.
Saturday, November 30	<u>ST. ANDREW</u>			
	Orthros	9:00a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Sunday, December 1	Orthros	8:45a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.
Monday, December 2	<u>ST. PORPHYRIOS</u>			
	Orthros	9:00a.m.	Divine Liturgy	10:00a.m.



ST. NEKTARIOS— NOVEMBER 9



ST. KATHERINE— NOVEMBER 25



ST. ANDREW— NOVEMBER 30

LITURGICAL NOTES FOR NOVEMBER

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

Sts. Cosmas and Damian are the Patron Saints of the 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).

Tuesday, November 5—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. For November, the Paraklesis will be offered on Tuesday evening, November 5 from 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Friday, November 8 - The Archangels

This feast commemorates the Archangels Michael and Gabriel and all of the “bodiless powers” of heaven, all of the angels. There are nine orders of angels— Angels, Archangels, Virtues, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Authorities, Cherubim and Seraphim.

(Divine Liturgy on November 8 will begin at 9:00a.m.-Orthros at 8:00a.m.)

Saturday, November 9— St. Nektarios

St. Nektarios is a “modern day” saint, a saint of the 20th Century, (Died in 1920, Canonized as a Saint in 1960), who was a bishop in Greece. St. Nektarios is the patron saint of cancer patients and is considered one of our “healing” saints, meaning that we invoke his intercessions when we are praying for those who are sick. Cancer sufferers and survivors are urged to attend this Divine Liturgy in order to pray for continued healing through the Intercessions of St. Nektarios. Father Stavros has oil from the tomb of St. Nektarios in Aegina, Greece, with which he will anoint the faithful in attendance at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on November 9.

Wednesday, November 13— St. John Chrysostom

St. John Chrysostom lived in the 4th Century. He was a Bishop of the Church and is recognized as one of the Three Hierarchs (together with St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory the Theologian). He received the title “Chrysostomos,” meaning “the Golden Mouth,” for his great ability to speak. St. John Chrysostom authored the Divine Liturgy that we celebrate on most Sundays. Therefore, we offer the Divine Liturgy on this day in honor of St. John Chrysostom.

Saturday, November 16— St. Matthew the Apostle and Evangelist

Saint Matthew was one of the 12 Disciples and one of four Evangelists, the authors of the Gospels. St. Matthew did not spend his early life as a holy man. Rather, he was a dishonest tax collector. Once he encountered Christ, his life changed. He became a faithful follower. St. Matthew is one of many examples of prominent saints who turned their life around after an inauspicious beginning. He is a role model for any of us to do the same.

Monday, November 18—Holy Unction for the beginning of Advent at 6:00 p.m.

The forty-day period of Advent begins on November 18. It is a period of fasting and reflective preparation. In America, Advent is marked by a period of shopping, decorating and parties, none of which really help us prepare spiritually to celebrate the great feast of the Nativity. As we have done in past years, we will hold a Holy Unction Service as we begin the period of Advent—it will be on Monday, November 18, at 6:00 p.m. Please bring your Holy Week book as the service will follow the service of Holy Monday evening.

Thursday, November 21— Entrance of the Virgin Mary into the Temple

The Entrance of the Virgin Mary (Ta Eisodia) Commemorates when the Virgin Mary entered into the Temple at age two to begin a life of service to God, in preparation for the awesome role she would play in the history of humanity as the Theotokos. This is one of the 12 Major Feastdays of the Orthodox Liturgical Year.

Monday, November 25— St. Katherine the Great Martyr

St. Katherine was born in Alexandria, Egypt in the third century. She was very wise and eloquent, successfully arguing for Christianity in the face of tyrannical rulers and philosophers. She was martyred in the year 305 and her relics were taken by Angels to Mount Sinai where they were discovered many years later. St. Katherine has the title “Pansophou” the “All-Wise.”

Wednesday, November 27— Evening Liturgy for Thanksgiving

In Greek the word for Thanksgiving is “Eucharistia,” so the Holy Eucharist is the “Holy Thanksgiving.” As we celebrate Thanksgiving with turkey and the Dallas Cowboys on Thursday, set aside Wednesday to receive the Holy Thanksgiving. As is our custom at St. John, we will celebrate Divine Liturgy for Thanksgiving on Wednesday, November 27 at 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 30— St. Andrew the Apostle

St. Andrew is the first-called of the Apostles. He is also the patron saint of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Women's Bible Study with Fr. Stavros takes place on most Tuesdays from 10:00-11:30a.m. either in person or zoom. For November, the dates are: Tuesday November 5, Tuesday November 12 & Tuesday November 19. There will be NO Bible Study Tuesday, November 26.

Tuesday night Bible Study with Fr. John will continue meeting at **6:30pm** on most Tuesday 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 November, the dates are: Tuesday November 5 (**at 7:00p.m.**), Tuesday November 12, Tuesday November 19 & Tuesday November 26.

Fr. Stavros will be out of town November 8-9 – He will be leaving immediately after Divine Liturgy on November 8. Liturgy will be at 9:00 a.m. that morning. He will be returning late on November 9. Fr. John Stefero will celebrate the Divine Liturgy for the feast of St. Nektarios on November 9.

Men's Group—Our men's group will meet on Sunday, November 10, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. Any men of our community are welcome to join us for dinner, 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.

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

Parish Assembly Rescheduled for November 10 – The Parish Assembly previously scheduled for Sunday, October 20, will be held on Sunday, November 10 after the Divine Liturgy. Principal items on the agenda include the budget for 2025 and nominations for Parish Council.

Young Adult Dinner/Discussion—Thursday, November 14—Our young adult group meets once a month for dinner/ discussion (and other times for fellowship and service). The meeting for November will be on Thursday, November 14, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Kourmolis Center. All young adults, ages 18-40, are invited to participate. We will be having a monthly discussion based on some set topics. The Topic for November is "**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.

GOYA—The GOYA Meeting for November will be Sunday, November 17, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. The location is to be determined.

Tony Magos was appointed to the Parish Council, to finish Mike Xenick's term. As per the UPR, Mike left the Parish Council August 1, when Maria Xenick became our Ministry Coordinator. **Welcome Tony!**

Office Closures— Our office will remain closed Thursday, November 28 & Friday, November 29 in honor of Thanksgiving. We will reopen Monday, December 2.

Diving for the Cross at Epiphany— Attention all young men ages 16-18 (if you will be 16-18 on January 6, 2025) – you are eligible to dive for the cross at the Epiphany celebration in Tarpon Springs. Applications are due on December 10 at 5:00 p.m. No exceptions. There are several requirements that need to be fulfilled in order to participate. If you are interested in diving for the cross, please visit <https://stnicholastarpon.org/diverapp> for more information and to apply.



INSPIRATION

"I don't get anything out of Church." How many times have you heard people say, "I don't get anything out of Liturgy"? The truth is that we don't come to church to get something, but to give ourselves—our whole being—to God. We have to give ourselves as an offering to God and what we get in return is the presence of Jesus Christ within us. As we come to know Jesus this way, we are drawn into the communion of the Church.

God is everywhere. There is no place God is not. . . You cry out to Him, "Where are Thou, my God?" And He answers, "I am present, my child! I am always beside you." Both inside and outside, above and below, wherever you turn, everything shouts "God!" In Him we live and move. We breathe God, we eat God, we clothe ourselves with God. Everything praises and blesses God. All of creation shouts His praise. Everything animate and inanimate speaks wondrously and glorifies the Creator. Let every breath praise the Lord!
~Elder Joseph the Hesychast

When you are ready to stand in the presence of the Lord, let your soul wear a garment woven from the cloth of your forgiveness of others. Otherwise, your prayer will be of no value whatsoever.
~St. John Climacus

Evil begins from bad thoughts. When you are bitter and indignant, even just with your thoughts, you spoil a spiritual atmosphere. You prevent the holy Spirit from acting and allow the devil to increase the evil. You should always pray, love and forgive, driving out of yourself every evil thought.
~St. Porphyrios of Kafsokalyvia

When church becomes optional to you, it will become unnecessary to your children.

Jesus fed 5000 but only 500 followed Him after lunch. He had 12 disciples but only 3 went further in the garden and only 1 stood with Him at the Cross. The closer you get to the Cross, the smaller the crowd gets.

"Happy Wife, Happy Life" is destroying many marriages. . . it should be "Happy Spouse, Happy House" because this is the truth: a good marriage consists of two happy people.

When it comes to the emotional needs of my spouse, such as. . .

- ~Affection
- ~Communication
- ~Praise
- ~Sexual fulfillment
- ~Openness and honesty
- ~Attractiveness
- ~Financial support
- ~Family commitment
- ~Recreational companionship

. . . the ones that are important to my spouse, should also be important to me and vice-versa.

After a particularly difficult confession of mine, a priest said, "Never be ashamed of what you bring to confession. When I see someone in the confessional, I see a saint in the making."

Think of the Father as a spring of life begetting the Son like a river and the Holy Spirit like a sea, for the spring and the river and sea are all one nature. Think of the Father as a root, and of the Son as a branch, and the Spirit as a fruit, for the substance in these three is one. The Father is a sun with the Son as rays and the Holy Spirit as heat.
~St. John of Damascus

When God wanted to create fish, He spoke to the sea. When God wanted to create trees, He spoke to the earth. But when God wanted to create man, He turned to Himself. Then, God said, "Let us make man in our image and in our likeness."

If you take a fish out of water, it will die; and when you remove a tree from soil, it will also die. Likewise when man is disconnected from God, he dies.

God is our natural environment. We were created to live in His presence. We have to be connected to Him because it is only Him that life exists. Let us stay connected to God.

We recall that water without fish is still water, but fish without water is nothing. The soil without a tree is still soil, but the tree without soil is nothing. God without man is still God, but man without God is nothing.

MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR: CHOOSE YOUR BEHAVIOR WISELY
BY TIMOTHY D. EVANS AND GERI CARTER

During the holidays it is tempting to observe others and be duped into believing everyone else is happy. The holidays are a time when we all put on our "best face." If you find yourself struggling with a relationship, during "the most wonderful time of the year," take heart, you are not alone!

Successful relationships are not defined by being conflict free. When you choose a long-term partner, you inevitably choose a particular set of problems. Your ability to negotiate these differences in a way that feelings of hurt, frustration, and rejection do not become overwhelming is critical in maintaining a satisfying relationship.

During conflict, couples need to convey acceptance and avoid criticism, nagging, and judging. These behaviors only intensify the conflict. The overall goal in a marital conflict is to maintain respect and stay connected. This is more important than resolving differences. Respecting and accepting differences could be the solution to many of our conflicts. Keep in mind, some conflicts never get resolved.

Conflict that contains criticism and contempt locks a couple into miserable and hurtful relationships. Both individuals believe they are "right". There is no absolute truth in marital conflict, only two subjective viewpoints. The ability to negotiate differences, without displaying contemptuous facial expressions like eye rolling, is crucial to resolving differences.

In the past, conflict in the family was settled by tradition and power. Men were accepted to lead (boss) so women and children were in a poor position to fight, and conflict was easily managed. However, in the past 40 years women and children have learned they are of equal worth and value. Thus, they often fight back resenting being put down.

When inequality is a source of conflict find a good counselor. A qualified counselor knows something about creating social equality and will help resolve your immediate concerns. Otherwise, the key to resolving conflict is what we do with our own behavior. The most useful and courageous choice is the decision not to fight and not to give-in. Knowing how to withdraw from conflict but not the individual is an art that takes practice. Consequently, we open the door for improvement.

There are several things you can do instead of fighting. First, you can ensure that you maintain fondness and admiration for your partner. This means focusing on the good, and the courage to

forgive the past.

The second choice is to do something different with your own behavior that is satisfying and has nothing to do with the conflict. If the conflict is too intense then back away. Make sure you do this in a friendly manner and provide a useful exit line, such as 'let's talk later, and for now agree to disagree'. Then find something you have control over that depends on yourself, not your partner. Focus on something that is possible but is not part of the conflict. Meeting your own needs will give you some time and courage so later you can make a successful repair attempt. Remember, resentment and contempt hurt relationships.

Friendship, acceptance, and cooperation are the keys to creating relationships that free each other into becoming fully functioning human beings. You always have a choice to cooperate or fight. It's up to you!

Tim Evans and Geri Carter are licensed mental health therapists who practice in Tampa. Several of our parishioners have seen them for counseling.

The entire Bible explained in one Facebook post.

This guy nails it.

Genesis

God: All right, you two, don't do the one thing. Other than that, have fun.
Adam and Eve: OK.
Satan: You should do the thing.
Adam and Eve: OK.
God: What happened?
Adam and Eve: We did the thing.
God: Guys ...

The rest of the Old Testament

God: You are my people, and you should not do the things.
People: We won't do the things.
God: Good.
People: We did the things.
God: Guys ...

The Gospels

Jesus: I am the Son of God, and even though you have done the things, the Father and I still love you and want you to live. Don't do the things anymore.
Healed people: OK! Thank you!
Other people: We've never seen him do the things, but he probably does the things when no one is looking.
Jesus: I have never done the things.
Other people: We're going to put you on trial for doing the things.
Pilate: Did you do the things?

Jesus: No.
Pilate: He didn't do the things.
Other people: Kill him anyway!
Pilate: OK.
Jesus: Guys...

Paul's letters

People: We did the things.
Paul: Jesus still loves you, and because you love Him, you have to stop doing the things.
People: OK.

Paul's letters, Part II

People: We did the things again.
Paul: Guys ...

The Revelation

John: When Jesus comes back, there will be more people who do the things. In the meantime, stop doing the things.

The end



In the end it won't matter...



Parish Registry.

Baptism-Isabella Anna Panagopoulos, daughter of George and Nirmalasari Panagopoulos, was baptized on Sunday, October 6. Chris Karapasha was the Godfather.

Na Sas Zisi!

Wedding-Kyra Frey and Corey Graf were married on Saturday, October 19. Angelique Xenick was the Koumbara. **Congratulations!**



ICON DONATIONS NEEDED

We are looking for donations for the following icons (\$50 for each one), so we can display the correct icon in both the Narthex and on the solea at each Sunday and feastday Divine Liturgy:

1. St. Paisios (July 12)
2. St. Porphyrios (December 2)
3. The Sunday of the Last Judgment (Third Sunday of Triodion)
4. The Fall of Adam and Eve (Forgiveness Sunday)
5. St. Phanourios (August 27)
6. Commemoration of the Righteous Ascetics (Second Saturday of Souls)
7. Synaxis of the Archangels (November 8)
8. Holy Protection of the Virgin Mary (October 28)
9. Feeding of the 5,000
10. Healing of Jairus' Daughter
11. Raising of the son of the widow of Nain
12. Parable of the Sower

If interested, please send a check to the church office to let us know which icon(s) you are interested in donating.



HOPE & JOY FALL FOOD DRIVE

Sun, Nov 3rd- Sun, Dec 15th

"HOPE starts with a MEAL. HOPE starts with YOU!"

Metropolitan Ministries helps 50,000+ families in need for Thanksgiving and Christmas and this year they need our help more than ever after hurricanes.

Please join St. John's Hope & Joy children's ministry in providing a meal to families in need through Metropolitan Ministries. Make this your family project and help us put together Boxes of Hope filled with the items needed for a Christmas holiday dinner. There are many ways you can help provide a Box of Hope:

- Shop for any of the items below and bring to church **Sun, Nov 3rd- Sun, Dec 15th.**
- Donate \$25 or more (cash/ check/ gift card) for a Box of Hope-
Checks payable to Metropolitan Ministries

A BOX OF HOPE contains:

• Gift certificate for a turkey or ham	• 2 cans of black beans
• 1 box of cereal (hot or cold)	• 2 cans of cranberry sauce
• 2 cans of fruit	• 1 bag of dried beans
• 1 jar of peanut butter	• 1 box or bag of rice
• 2 cans of vegetables	• 1 can or packet of gravy
• 2 cans of yams	• 1 box dessert mix
• 1 bag or box of stuffing	• 1 bag cookie mix
• 1 box of potatoes	• 1 family box of Jell-O/Pudding

BOLD items are Most Needed Items

Only non-perishable food donations please. **Call Zackie Ameres at 813-245-3813 or email at zackiec@yahoo.com with any questions.** Thank you!

*"He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will reward him for what he has done."
Proverbs 19:17*



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..

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

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

Due to the unfortunate circumstances surrounding the recent hurricanes, our 2024 Annual Greek Festival has been canceled.

Thank you for the support and understanding.

We will be back in 2025!



www.tampagreekfestival.com

St. John Greek Orthodox Church - 2418 W. Swann Avenue - Tampa, FL 33609
(813) 876-8830 - www.stjohntpa.org



Our **Veterans/1st Responders Ministry** will support the US Marines **‘Toys for Tots’**

Program

again this year!

Donations of unwrapped new toys may be dropped off at the Church Hall in the

‘Toys for Tots’ containers. The drive will run from **November 10th through**

December 8th.

Monetary donations will also be accepted. Checks can be made out to ‘St. John’s Greek Orthodox Church’ - ‘Toys for Tots’ on the Memo Line.

Please share your love to help make this a special Christmas for kids!





SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS:



The Sunday School staff is very grateful that life is starting to get back to normal after a devastated month of October with two hurricanes effecting so many. We pray that you and your family are safe and have recovered. Thank you to all our families for you patience and grace during this difficult time.

The Sunday School Topics for the month of October were: **READING THE BIBLE on October 6th and THE LIGHT OF CHRIST-MAKING FAITH PERSONAL** was our topic on **October 27th**. Unfortunately we missed 2 weeks of Sunday School due to Milton and the damage it caused to our church property.

Please stop by our SUNDAY SCHOOL BULLETIN BOARD. Our new class photos are up along with our updated list of students in the Hall of Faith. **CONGRATULATIONS** to the following students have been inducted into our HALL of FAITH Program for memorizing The Lord's Prayer. They are: **Stella Malatin, John McLean, Samuel Rodrigues, Demetri Panopoulos, Demetri Ameres, Sam Lenardos, Alexandra Laliotis, Nikolas Massey, Luca Portier, Michael Svintsitskiy, Casey Callahan, Caroline Anton, and Carmella Walker.** **Congratulations** to **Louis and Michael Mantzanas** for memorizing the The Creed. If your child is not in the Hall of Faith and has memorized The Lord's Prayer or The Creed, please have them ask their teacher or Vickie Peckham to test them.

This month we will start the Christmas Pageant preparations. Usually 4th through 6th graders have the speaking parts. If your child is interested in a specific part, please let Vickie Peckham know.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER:

November 3rd: TOPIC: The Ten Commandments

November 10th: TOPIC: Communion-Liturgy-Worship

November 17th: TOPIC: Charity/Thanksgiving

November 24th: No Class-Thanksgiving Break



SUNDAY SCHOOL PHOTOS



OUR PRECIOUS TODDLER TWO'S CLASS PICTURE.



OUR SPECIAL PRE-K3 CLASS PICTURE.



OUR KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS ARE SO PROUD OF THEIR PROJECTS.



OUR PRECIOUS PRE-K4 STUDENTS ARE SO PROUD OF THEIR PROJECT.



OUR FIFTH GRADERS WITH THEIR CROSSES.



OUR 5TH GRADERS ARE DEMONSTRATING THE HOLY TRINITY USING 3 LIT CANDLES. THE PHOTO ABOVE SHOWS THREE FLAMES (THE FATHER, THE SON, THE HOLY SPIRIT.) THE PHOTO BELOW SHOWS ONE FLAME REPRESENTING THE HOLY TRINITY.



MORE PHOTOS OF CROSSES MADE BY THE 5TH GRADERS.



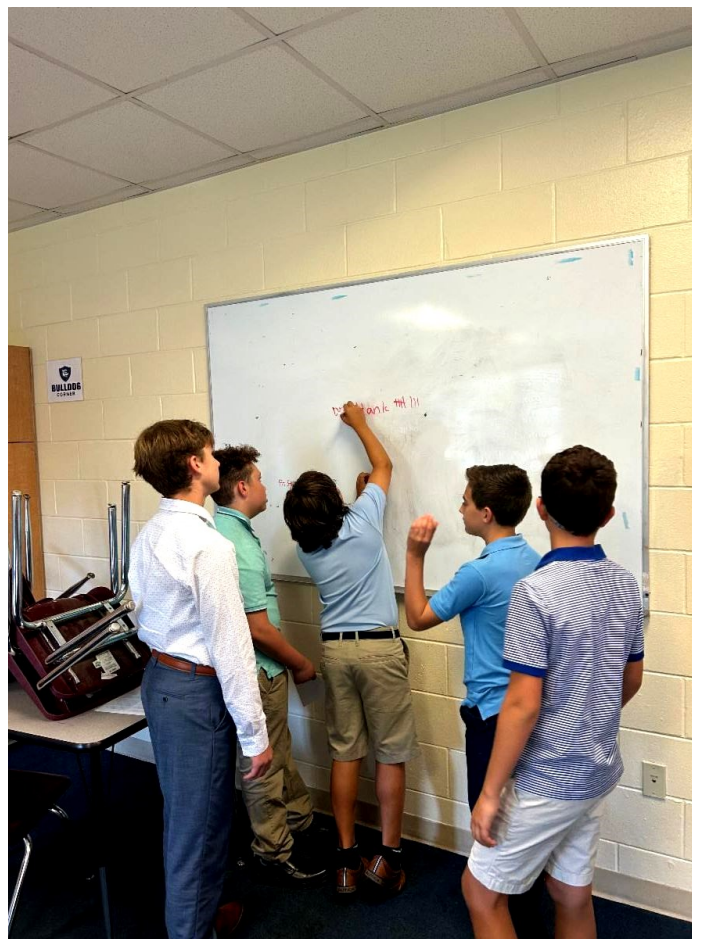
OUR SIXTH GRADE GIRLS WORKING TOGETHER!



OUR SIXTH GRADE STUDENTS ARE SO PROUD OF THEIR PROJECT.



OUR SIXTH GRADERS MADE THIS ART DISPLAY OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.



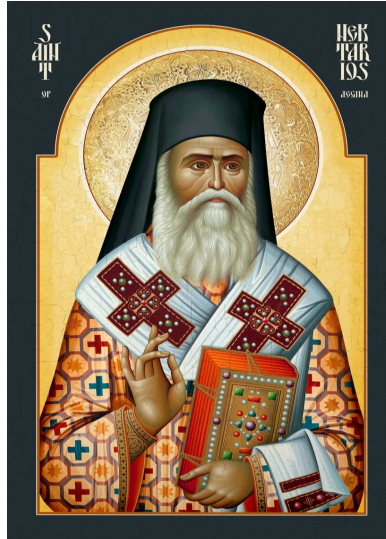
OUR SIXTH GRADE BOYS WORKING TOGETHER!

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.

November Gathering Saturday, November 9th



Feast Day of St. Nektarios of Pentapolis

Orthros 9 am
Divine Liturgy - 10 am

Breakfast Buffet to Follow - \$10 per person
Presentation on St. Nektarios

*Please contact Presvytera Denise for reservations and payment no later than November 3rd.
Look forward to seeing you there.*

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!



ALTAR ANGELS

EXALTATION OF HOLY CROSS SERVICES

SEPTEMBER 14-15 2024

Thank you to all the parishioners who kindly donated Basil plants for the Tray. Special thanks to the following ladies who assisted in decorating the tray: **Presbytera Lisa Akrotirianakis, Kathy Kaburis, Jeanie Nenos and Debbie Nicklow.**

The tray for both services was very beautiful.

May God Bless you all!

*With appreciation,
Kalliope Chagaris, Altar Angel Ministry*



PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS!

*I hope you and your families fared well during these last two weeks. I know that many have had issues and are exhausted and overwhelmed by the recent back-to-back hurricanes. Philoptochos is more than a fund raising organization. It is a true Christian sisterhood and as such, I ask each of you to pray for our members, our parish and our community at large. Please reach out to those you know and make sure they are OK or if they have needs. Sometimes we just need to talk. Please let me know if you or someone you know from our community needs help, be it food, shelter, clothing etc. and I will coordinate with Father to assist. Also see attached Philoptochos Metropolis Disaster Relief Application. Feel free to apply if needed and share this with other community members.
On the immediate, these are the changes coming up:*



November Calendar!

11/3 - 8:30 AM—Alzheimer’s Walk— with Daughters of Penelope and AHEPA —Offsite

Meetings are on hold—Due to the hall/office situation, we are on hold for general meetings. I have asked Father to identify donation preferences and will call a board zoom to discuss, once I hear back.

Festival is Canceled—Due to the circumstances surrounding the recent hurricanes, the festival is canceled.

Bags of Love—This was scheduled for Nov 17 and will be postponed until we have hall use again.

Philoptochos Metropolis Hurricane Relief- Early in the month our Metropolis Philoptochos initiated a relief fund. They have since joined forces with National to provide even more support.

Please follow this link for more information:
<https://www.goarch.org/donate/hurricane>

DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE

Daughters of Penelope Alcmaeon #167 Tampa

Greetings to all in our community. As we prepare this write up to be included in the St. John's Messenger, a lot of our community has been impacted by two hurricanes. We have also witnessed significant progress towards recovery and saw our community pulling together to help each other.

As you are reading this, it is our hope that all impacted are recovered or getting close to being recovered. Please reach out if we can help.

Due to the hurricanes, some of the activities that we had originally planned in late October and early November have either been postponed or cancelled. However, we are planning for upcoming events including:

1. **November 3, Sunday:** Rescheduled Date for **Walk to End Alzheimer's Tampa**. New start time: Ceremony + Walk at 8:30 AM. We are very excited about the joint participation of Philoptochos, the Daughters of Penelope and AHEPA. More information at txt.alz.org/NnxY7nFW8n4E
2. **November 17, Sunday:** **Founders Day Memorial** in church. Serving Kolyva and Coffee Hour.
3. **December 15 and 22:** Donating and selling handmade items at **YiaYia's table** in the Kourmolis Hall to benefit the Scholarship Fund for our youth.

In preparation for the YiaYia's table, we met **Oct 5th**, to brainstorm and plan. The Daughters participating shared some excellent ideas and we are all excited about the products that will be offered at the YiaYia's table on **Dec 15 and 22**. Just like we did last year, we will offer unique, tasteful, affordable handmade items and new items. Including will be many keepsake tie ornaments and other cute items made from the donated ties. We are grateful to all who have donated including **Tom Georgas, Marilyn Sandborn, and Michael Trimis** whose ties have been used for the sample of "Angel Buddies" shown in the photo below:



YiaYia's table 2023



Sneak Preview of some of the 2024 offerings



Sample of "Angel Buddies" made with donated ties

Additional donations of handmade or new items are appreciated.

To support the planned 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.

FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

Thank YOU for YOUR ongoing support of the St. John Food Pantry. Our hearts go out to those suffering from the impact of 2 Major Hurricanes in less than two weeks. It's been a test of resilience for our community, friends and family. Now more than ever your donations help us provide for our own community along with Metropolitan Ministries and Tampa Hope!

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

TIPS FOR HEALTHY HOLIDAY EATING

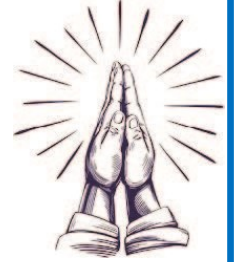
It's easy to get swept up in the holiday season. This combination of religious and national celebrations can help keep the cold winter away. But the feasts and parties that mark it can tax the arteries and strain the waistline. By eating just 200 extra calories a day – a piece of pecan pie and a tumbler of eggnog here, a couple latkes and some butter cookies there – you could pack on two to three pounds over this five- to six-week period. That doesn't sound like much, except few people shed that extra weight in the following months and years.

You don't need to deprive yourself, eat only boring foods, or take your treats with a side order of guilt. Instead, by practicing a bit of defensive eating and cooking, you can come through the holidays without making "go on a diet" one of your New Year's resolutions.

- **Budget wisely.** Don't eat everything at feasts and parties. Be choosy and spend calories judiciously on the foods you love.
- **Take 10 before taking seconds.** It takes a few minutes for your stomach's "I'm getting full" signal to get to your brain. After finishing your first helping, take a 10-minute break. Make conversation. Drink some water. Then recheck your appetite. You might realize you are full or want only a small portion of seconds.
- **Distance helps the heart stay healthy.** At a party, don't stand next to the food table. That makes it harder to mindlessly reach for food as you talk. If you know you are prone to recreational eating, pop a mint or a stick of gum so you won't keep reaching for the chips.
- **Don't go out with an empty tank.** Before setting out for a party, eat something so you don't arrive famished. Excellent pre-party snacks combine complex carbohydrates with protein and unsaturated fat, like apple slices with peanut butter or a slice of turkey and dessert.
- **Drink to your health.** A glass of eggnog can set you back 500 calories; wine, beer, and mixed drinks range from 150 to 225 calories. If you drink alcohol, have a glass of water or juice-flavored seltzer in between drinks.
- **Avoid alcohol on an empty stomach.** Alcohol increases your appetite and diminishes your ability to control what you eat.
- **Put on your dancing (or walking) shoes.** Dancing is a great way to work off some holiday calories. If you are at a family gathering, suggest a walk before the feast or even between dinner holidays without making "go on a diet" one of your New Year's resolutions.
- **Make room for veggies.** At meals and parties, don't ignore fruits and vegetables. They make great snacks and even better side or main dishes – unless they're slathered with creamy sauces or butter.
- **Be buffet savvy.** At a buffet, wander 'round the food table before putting anything on your plate. By checking out all of your options, you might be less inclined to pile on items one after another.
- **Don't shop hungry.** Eat before you go shopping so the scent of Cinnabons or caramel corn doesn't tempt you to gobble treats you don't need.
- **Cook from (and for) the heart.** To show family and friends that you really care about them, be creative with recipes that use less butter, cream, lard, vegetable shortening, and other ingredients rich in saturated fats. Prepare turkey or fish instead of red meat.
- **Pay attention to what really matters.** Although food is an integral part of the holidays, put the focus on family and friends, laughter and cheer. If balance and moderation are your usual guides, it's okay to indulge or overeat once in a while.

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: 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.



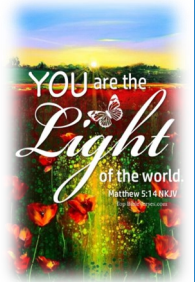
'Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men' Colossians 3:23

STEWARDSHIP

**"You are the LIGHT of the World."
Matthew 5:14**

We hope and pray that everyone is recovering from the recent storms. We are thankful for everyone who has pitched in to help our church community recover.

We are deeply grateful for our faithful Stewards of St. John. So far in 2024, 344 families and individuals have made a firm commitment to our church community. Your dedication to Time, Talent and Treasure supports our Church Mission and Ministries.



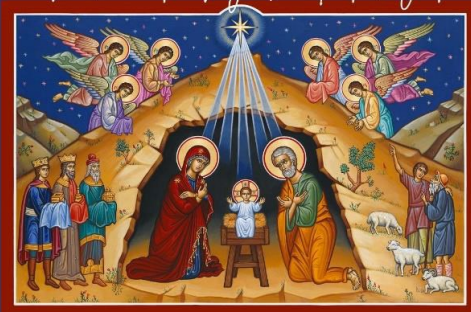
In 2023, 361 families and individuals contributed a portion of their treasure to help our community reach a record amount of giving. Here's a look at where we stand as of 10/1/2024.

	<u>10/1/2024</u>	<u>12/31/2023</u>
Collections	522,962	711,999
Average Pledge	1,907	1,972
Median Pledge	960	800
Stewards	344	361

If you haven't pledged for 2024, there is still time! You can see we have some work to do in order to reach last years level. Use a Stewardship Form and make your pledge payment today. If you love what you experience here, we want to count you as a St. John's Greek Orthodox Church Steward.

*If you have any questions regarding Stewardship, please contact **George Mitsēas** at **813-748-1220**.*

Guide us to Thy Perfect Light



NATIVITY FAST DESK CALENDAR
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
TAMPA, FL

**Tis the season to pull out your
Guide Us to Thy Perfect Light Nativity Desk Calendar!**

*The Nativity Fast begins each year on **November 15**, and this year it falls on a **Friday**.*

We are so excited to once again utilize our parish wide gift to enhance your family's Nativity Fast and help prepare you for the upcoming celebration of the Birth of Christ! Our carefully created daily desk calendar will help guide your spiritual path during this season with prayers, daily scripture readings, personal reflection points and family action items.

Special thanks to Monastery Icons for allowing us permission to use their beautiful "O Holy Night" Icon of the Nativity.

If you cannot find your calendar or never received one last year, we will have some available after the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, November 10th. You may pick one up as you leave liturgy, or if you are watching online and would like to drive thru, we can bring one straight to your car! The calendars will also be available in the office during the week.

During this season of the Nativity Fast, may we grow in Christ's love, both individually and as a community and experience firsthand and seek for someone to

Guide us to Thy Perfect Light!

BOOKSTORE

St. John's Bookstore - "Superheroes of the Church"



Do your kids love Superheroes? Teach them about the Superheroes of our Orthodox Church with the many beautifully illustrated books available in our bookstore.

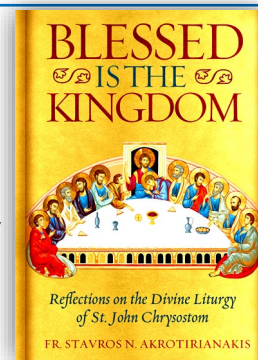
- ♦ *101 Orthodox Saints and Newly Released 102 Orthodox Saints*
- ♦ *St. John the Baptist - Forerunner, Prophet, Apostle, and Martyr*
- ♦ *St. Paul - Apostle to the Nations*
- ♦ *St. Nektarios the Wonderworker - A Boy's Journey to Sainthood*
- ♦ *St. Joseph the Hesychast - Guardian of Holy Mt. Athos*
- ♦ *St. Sergius - A Beacon in the Wilderness of Radonezh*
- ♦ *St. Luke - Physician and Holy Hierarch*
- ♦ *St. Paisios the Athonite - Journey to Sainthood*
- ♦ *St. Porphyrios Kafsokalivia - Journey to Sainthood*



Our bookstore is open every Sunday following Divine Liturgy.
Check out the many new items now available!

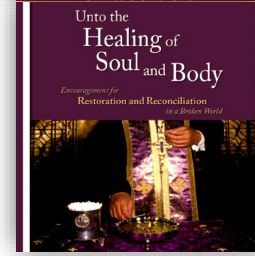
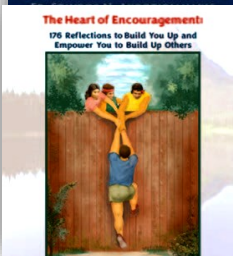
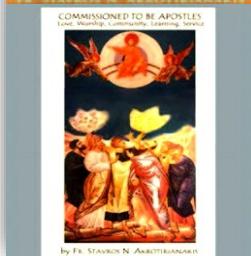
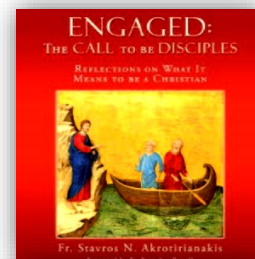
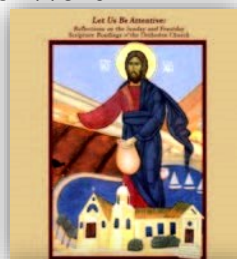
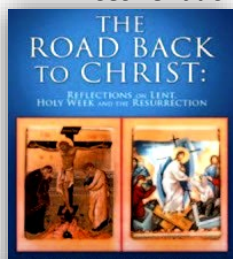
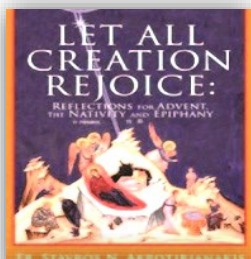
FR. STAVROS NEW BOOK

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



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:



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

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

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.

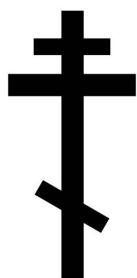


INTERESTED IN JOINING THE PRAYER TEAM?

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. There are two things that make the decision to commit difficult. First, we don’t always know the outcome of the things we commit to. Second, to commit means one has to stay faithful in both good times and bad times. The hurricanes of the last month have certainly tested us in this category, as it related to committing to God. Just because one commits his or her life to God doesn’t mean that life suddenly becomes easier. In fact, it is often the opposite. It is challenging to live a life with morals, discipline, obedience and to do these things with joy. There are many devout Christians who suffer greatly in life—as a result of hurricanes, illness, and countless other kinds of misfortune. While a commitment to God sets us on the path to eternal life, that path is not necessarily going to be an easy one. Even though we believe in the outcome—salvation—and even though we know, in essence, the path required to get there, we do not know the individual and unique path each of us will be following on the journey. To commit means to stay faithful in both good times and bad. This month has been bad for many of us, or challenging at best. This has been a time when that commitment to God has been challenged—how do we (or even more personally, how do I) stay faithful to God who allows storms, even destructive ones, to happen. The “storm” in your life might not be a hurricane. It might be something else. The mark of a committed Christian is to stand with God in all circumstances, confident that He is standing with us as well. Thus, sometimes our prayer to commit might not be one for deliverance, or even for help, but one for confidence, to keep the commitment even in times of setback and disappointment. On the day before Hurricane Milton, as we locked down the church and left, I not only said a prayer, but I said within myself, “I am committed to stand in front of this altar with God, no matter the outcome of the storm.” And even though this storm shook me up quite a bit, I am still standing with God. I pray that I will have confidence to always stand with Him, and be confident that He is standing with me, regardless of the “storms” that will happen in my life. I pray the same for you.

+Fr. Stavros

PHOTO GALLERY

“DIVINE LITURGY AFTER HURRICANE MILTON– OCTOBER 13”



“CHURCH MUSICIANS SUNDAY 2024– OCTOBER 6”



Follow Us on Social Media



St. John the Baptist



Let's Get Connected for Our Latest News & Updates



on Flickr

@<https://www.flickr.com/photos/stjohngoctampa>



on Facebook

@<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnGOCTampa/>



on Instagram @stjohntpa

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.

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:

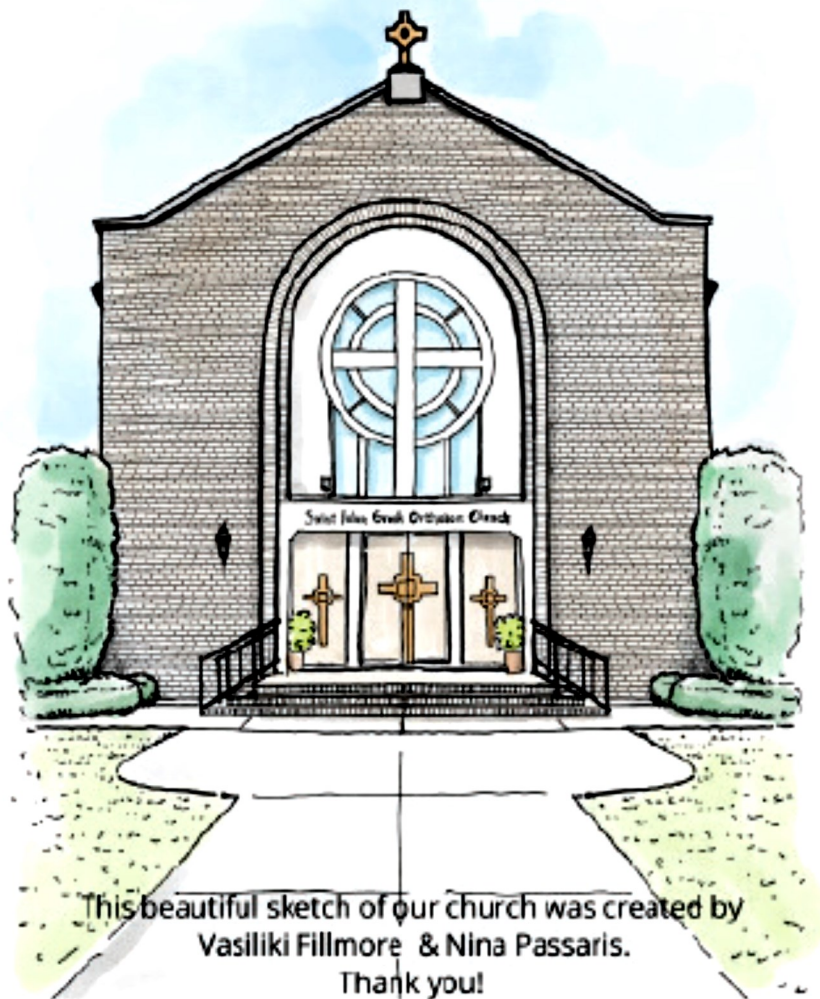
_____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$200 _____ Other

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

◀ Oct 2024	November 2024						Dec 2024 ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
Boxes of Hope 11/17-12/15					1 Sts. Cosmas and Damian Orthros 9:00 a.m.. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	2 Adult Greek School Children's Greek School	
3 Daylight Saving Time Ends Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. College student Luncheon Fall Festival HOPE/ JOY	4	5 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Paraklesis 6:00 p.m. Bible Study 7:00p.m.	6 Choir 7:15 p.m.	7	8 Archangels Orthros 8:00 a.m.. Liturgy 9:00 a.m.	9 St. Nektarios Orthros 9:00 a.m.. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Young at Heart 11:30 a.m. Adult Greek School Children's Greek School	
10 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Veteran's Sunday Parish Assembly Mtg. Men's Group 5:00 p.m.	11 Veterans Day	12 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Parish Council 6:30 p.m.	13 St. John Chrysostom Orthros 9:00 a.m.. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Choir 7:15 p.m.	14 Young Adult Discussion 6:30p.m.	15	16 St. Matthew Orthros 9:00 a.m.. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Community Outreach Adult Greek School Children's Greek School	
17 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Bags of Love- Philoptochos- DOP Founder's Day – DOP (Memorial) Tweens GOYA 5:00 p.m.	18 Holy Unction 6:00 p.m.	19 Women's Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	20	21 Entrance of Virgin Mary Orthros 9:00 a.m.. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	22	23 Parish Council Train- ing at 1:00 p.m. in Tarpon Springs Adult Greek School Children's Greek School	
24 Orthros 8:45 a.m. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. No Sunday School	25 St. Katherine Orthros 9:00 a.m.. Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	26 Bible Study 6:30 p.m.	27 Thanksgiving Liturgy Orthros 5:00 p.m. Liturgy 6:00 p.m.	28 Thanksgiving Day Office Closed	29 Office Closed	30 St. Andrew Orthros 9:00 a.m.. Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Children's Greek School	

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