

DECEMBER 2016

Voice of St. George

**SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF THE DESERT**

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



Inside this issue

THE EYES OF GOD

A look at any icon of Christ our God shows the eyes of Christ looking into a very deep reality. Looking into His eyes, we see the eyes of God. For, God became Man. While not looking at me, God sees me. It's as though Christ sees us, while, at the same time, looking into eternity. Each of us is part of that eternity.

There is a difference between *looking at* any one of us and actually *seeing* each of us. Any classic Orthodox Christian icon of Christ is written with focus on His eyes. The gaze in His eyes is one that indicates that, while He is looking "at" me, He actually really *knows* me.

It was to Moses that God said that no human can look upon the Face of God and live. (Exodus 33:20). Yet, in Christ, we see the Face of God and we still live. In fact, we live all the more.

Perhaps one of the most genuine icons in the Orthodox Church is that known as the *Holy Mandilion*. According to Alfredo Tradigo, author of the book, *Icons and Saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church*, "Western tradition identifies the 'true' portrait of Christ as the one miraculously left by Jesus on the veil that Veronica used to wipe His face on Calvary. The Golden Legend recounts that the emperor Tiberius was cured by looking at this image...The relic, itself called 'Veronica' (from *vera icon*, 'true image'), was copied countless times before all trace of it was finally lost...For Eastern Christendom, the true Holy Face is that of the *Mandilion*, the portrait that Christ sent to Edessa to cure King Abgar. It was found inside a wall in 545 and transferred to Constantinople in 944. Exhibited in the Church of Hagia Sophia until 1204 (it disappeared at the time of the 4th Crusade), it may, in fact,

correspond to the folded Shroud of Turin itself." (pg. 235). Renderings of the *Mandilion* portray the eyes of Christ our God as *all seeing, yet loving*. It accounts for the tradition of more correctly depicting Christ, not as Judge, but as the caring Physician and Savior, Who Himself said that He came into the world not to judge the world, but to save it. To save it, His eyes are those that *watch over us*. They are eyes that draw our own eyes into "eye contact" with God—eye contact being the vital in communication with loved ones — to know them and care for them.

This brings us to the heart of the Sacrament of Holy Confession—a Sacrament in which many participate during the pre-Christmas season, as well as during Great Lent. This Sacrament ideally takes place in front of the icon of Christ. The reason for this

The Eyes of God...pg. 1
Physician-Assisted Suicide.....pg. 2
 Encyclical from Met. Gerasimos..pg.3
 Audit Report, Parish Election, General Assembly.....pg. 4
 Philoptochos News.....pg. 5
 AHEPA News...pg. 6
 2017 Festival, Philoptochos Bake Sale, Christmas With Karountzoses.....pg.7
 Saints of the Month, Coloring Group..pg.8
 Altar Bouquets, Endowment Fund.....pg.9
The Great and Holy Synod.....pg.10
Dec. Calender...pg.11
 Inserts- Xmas Lunch, Xmas Card, Bake Sale

Mailing Address

St. George Church
P.O. Box 4755
Palm Desert, CA 92261
Tel: (760) 568-9901
FAX: (760) 568-9492
Email: stgeorgepd@aol.com
 Website: www.go-stgeorge.org
-Fr. Theodore Pantels, Pastor
-Dcn. Euthym Kontaxis, M.D.

is that we confess our sins to Christ our God. I like the way Fr. George Mastrantonis explains Holy Confession in his book, *New-Style Catechism on the Eastern Orthodox Faith for Adults*. "As in all Sacraments, the confessor-priest officiates in the passive voice or third person, thereby invoking the Grace of God to forgive and absolve the sins of the confessee. The confessor-priest releases the confessee from sins with the authority received from the Apostles (given by Christ our God)...The one who receives absolution should accept this merciful gift from God without doubt or reservation, for if he doubts, he challenges God's Will, power and energy." (pg. 132). I would add that doubting God's love and forgiveness virtually nullifies our celebration of the Nativity of Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God. For, God's Will is that all should be saved. The eyes of the Savior convey this to anyone looking into His eyes with sincere prayer.

In a world in which the human conscience is constantly being worn away by relativistic thinking and immoral norms, Christ our God can still see into our hearts. It is consistent with the Divine Plan. The "Plan" is clear: God will always be *looking* for us, if only we want to be found. It is the essence of the Incarnation of God, which we will celebrate on **Sunday, December 25th**. He Whose Name is Jesus Christ—Emmanuel (which means "God is with us"), will now enter our lives, *looking* at us; *seeing* inside us; *watching out* for us.

What a blessing it is when our own eyes look into God's eyes, incarnated in the flesh—when we make eye contact with God in prayer before His icon. For, eye contact validates our presence before the ones we love and with those with whom we work. We no longer need to look for God, as though trying to find God through a telescope or a microscope. Nor are we simply observers of His role in human history. Now we see the Incarnate God face-to-face. We see God and know both God and ourselves at the same time.

Approaching the Sacrament of Holy Confession with these thoughts in mind should make it much easier for us all.

+FR. THEODORE

PASTORAL POSITION REGARDING PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE

The California legislature recently passed a bill making it legal for citizens to practice physician-assisted suicide. This deserves some analysis from an Orthodox Christian point of view.

Definition of terms is needed. *Suicide* is the taking of one's own life—the murder of self. It is considered to be a sin, because our own life (as does that of our fellow human being) belongs to God. It is not ours to take. It is ours for God's glory. *Euthanasia* for Orthodox Christians means that one "dies well" in the sense that his or her *soul* is prepared for the Kingdom of God. On the contrary, "euthanasia" in popular terms tends to mean that one "dies well" in being comfortable and "with dignity." This "with dignity" leads us to think of dying *on our terms*, in the "dignity" that we define for ourselves. Thus, as applied in our present culture, euthanasia comes very close to being suicide or murder, because too much *self-will* mixed into our thinking. In specific terms, in dealing with physician-assisted suicide, we note that it is morally wrong to draw someone else into one's own sin.

There is, in fact, a prayer that the priest is to read at the point of death, asking for God's mercy in allowing for the soul to depart from the body. Implied is a plea for God's Wisdom so that we do not end life with a selfish motive, prematurely. At the same time, there is no thought of seeking to cling to the present life, frustrating the dying process due to selfish desires of trying to avoid our permanent home, which is to be appointed to us by God for all eternity. It is a prayer asking our Lord to allow one's death through the natural course of events, devoid of "heroics," which, to the extreme, involve cryogenics (the "freezing" of bodies to be "unfrozen" in the future). The prayer does not *bless anyone* means that would be used *by anyone* to end one's life. At this point, we ask for *God's* mercy, not *Man's* mercy.

Without a sincere relationship with God, one's view of "self" in the world can allow for distortions leading to "self-harm." Depression,
Continued on the next page - - - - ->

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE, continued

despair, regret and resentment are *not* feelings that come from God. Prayer and the Sacraments serve as anecdotes against such poisonous feelings. Mostly, it is pride that is at the root of many unhealthy feelings and attitudes. One of the main purposes of prayer is to seek God's Will, having nothing to do with any attitude in which one feels "unworthy" to live; or "too worthy" to suffer; or wanting to "be in control" of his or her own life and death in the name of some undefined sense of personal "dignity." In the Church's mind, the word "dignity" too often is a synonym for "vanity."

As the "standard-bearer" of Orthodox Christian doctrine, as well as the "doctor of the soul," an Orthodox priest, in particular, is charged with saving individual lives and souls, but, in this, he is, at the same time, responsible for projecting the correct message of the Church to the world at large.

People argue that "even animals are euthanized." This is so for at least two reasons: 1) they cannot survive at all without their abilities and, 2) they have no concept of *meaning* in their suffering. For humans, however, we know that Christ suffers with us in His eternal love for us.

Given this over-all analysis, a priest *cannot* read prayers and/or show a presence which would give the impression that such an event as *physician-assisted suicide* (or, as some say, "physician-assisted euthanasia") is condoned by the Church. In addition, I caution one and all that receiving Episcopal Permission to conduct an Orthodox Funeral Service for one who wants to end his or her life through physician-assisted suicide (euthanasia) will likely be impossible.

+FR. THEODORE

**WE ARE THANKFUL – Excerpts
from the recent Encyclical from
Metropolitan Gerasimos**



"...At every Divine Liturgy we thank God saying "every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from You, the Father of lights." As the Psalm states, we approach God in praise so we may thank Him, not just petition Him for more. This posture of thankfulness should permeate our lives on a daily basis, especially when we consider all that we have been given.

Cultivating an attitude of thankfulness, however, takes more than a beautiful verse from Scripture, a holiday, or even a prayer in the Liturgy. Cultivating thankfulness is a daily activity. It begins when we notice and express appreciation for all that others do for us. We can pause for a few moments, turn our gaze to the horizon and see the glories of nature. This requires developing a sense of humility, recognizing our place in the world, showing respect for others, and reciprocating with kindness and joy.

Expressing thankfulness is a habit formed in our family, when parents and grandparents remind children to say "thank you", but also when children see the adults in their lives expressing thanks to one another. An attitude of thankfulness also develops in our homes when we regularly "count our blessings" and acknowledge the ultimate divine source of those good things in our prayers at home.

With these seemingly small acts of gratitude, everyday becomes Thanksgiving Day, not just one Thursday in November. We will certainly set aside this day for a celebration with family and friends, and at that celebration we should offer a word of thanks to God for all that He has bestowed on us. And, more importantly, after the celebration, we should continue to offer thanks to all and for all.

Wishing you and your families a most Blessed and Happy Thanksgiving!"

+ G E R A S I M O S

Metropolitan of San Francisco

ST. GEORGE AUDITING COMMITTEE REPORT

It was not easy completing this report. The **Income Spreadsheets** were well done. However, the **Expense Spreadsheets** were a challenge. We had to go back and forth through folders looking for matching entries.

After speaking with the bookkeeper of our parish, all of our questions were answered.

She provided the following Audit Results: As a result of the 2016 Greek Festival Audit, Festival supplies in the amount of \$124.04 which were inadvertently coded to building expenses have been updated and included in Festival supplies. Account #7726 – Cash Register Programing was excluded from the Festival Expenses, which resulted in additional expenses of \$1,170.00. With these new changes, the 2016 **Festival Income is \$64,450.99 (Changed from \$65,745.03).**

We offer the following recommendations:

1. Use purchase orders and staple a copy of the receipt to it.
2. Make separate file folders for each company used. (Example: Albertsons, Costco, Staples, Ace Hardware)

Respectfully Submitted by the Auditing Committee:

– ANNETTE LASKARIS (Chair),
DOUG LYONS, JOHN PETALAS

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION

The Election for candidates to serve as members of the 2017 St. George Parish Council will be held on **Sunday, December 11, 2016** following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Serving as members of the **Election Committee** are: **Michael Long, Matushka Gloria Lehman and Presvytera Petula Pantels.** Only Stewardship members of the parish may receive a ballot to vote. A Stewardship member is one who has completed his or her 2016 Stewardship Pledge of a responsible contribution of time, talent and treasure. For questions and/or concerns regarding Stewardship, please contact our parish office.

The **candidates** for election to serve as members of the 2017 Parish Council are (listed in alphabetical order):

Becky Allen
Spiro Astmos
Susan Clark
Tony Dalkas
Lula Valissarakos

GENERAL ASSEMBLY RECAP – As a recap of the Fall General Assembly Meeting held on Sunday, November 13, 2016, the following agenda items were discussed. Included here is the general outcome from the discussed agenda items:

1. The financial reports, as well as the Proposed 2017 Parish Budget were approved. Completed parish upgrades included: LED lighting in the church; landscaping; flag stone maintenance.
2. It was agreed that the Auditing Committee Report would be printed in the December 2016 publication of the *Voice of St. George*.
3. The members of the 2017 Auditing Committee were elected: Doug Lyons, Michael Long, Michael Vawter and Pres. Petula Pantels.
4. The status of installation for our parish solar panels was reported. In essence, efforts to have solar panels installed will begin fresh in the New Year – 2017. Michael Vawter was commended for setting the stage for future planning of this project.
5. It was announced that proposed revisions to the St. George Parish By-laws will be presented to parishioners for review after the New Year, seeking approval in the Spring.
6. The need to support the Endowment Fund was discussed. A summary of the Endowment Fund purpose is herein included.
7. Nominations for candidates to serve on the 2017 Parish Council were made. It was noted that candidates can be accepted for nomination no later than Sunday, November 20th.

Continued on the next page – – – – -->

8. It was announced that the Festival Committee is reviewing proposals to comply with the recent regulation from the Riverside Health Department, stating that grills/stoves where food is cooked must be placed on a washable surface.

9. Fr. Ted announced the visit of His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos on our Feast Day in 2017. Future parish plans will be presented.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS



Our Christmas Luncheon is on Saturday, December 10 at Desert Horizons Country Club. Make your reservations today! The deadline for reservations is **Sunday, December 4**; no reservations will be taken at the door. Bring your family and friends!

The Christmas Bake Sale is here! Have you ordered your Christmas bread and cookies yet? If not, fill out our order form located on the coffee bar in the Church hall.

We will be making Christmas Baskets and delivering them in December for those parishioners who are shut-ins. The December date is to be determined. If you are interested in volunteering to make and deliver baskets, see **Rhonda Latkovic**.

The AHEPA/Philoptochos Thanksgiving Luncheon was a success! The luncheon was on Saturday, November 12. Prepared by the men of AHEPA, everyone said their lunch was delicious. They ate turkey, green beans, potatoes and completed their lunch with pumpkin pie. We had 46 parishioners attend.

Our **Book Talk** on November 14 at our General Meeting was very successful with 45 people attending with members, husbands, parishioners and friends. Our Book Talk was given by **Constance M. Constant**, a member of St. Katherine's in Redondo Beach. This is her second book and is titled **American Kid - Nazi-Occupied Greece Through a Child's Eyes**. This book is about war and its effect on a family trying to survive the Nazi occupation of their village and home during WWII. This is a story of her family. The author generously donated \$3.00 for

every book sold to our Philoptochos chapter.

Donations in November

National

1. Ecumenical Patriarcate (with donations from our parishioner – \$313)
2. Benevolent Fund- \$200
3. Emergency Fund – \$100

Local

1. St. George Church Lighting Project – \$3,000
2. St. George Church Veterans' Day Program - \$250

Donations in December

National

1. St. Nicholas Shrine – \$1000
2. General Medical Fund- \$200
3. Unicef – \$25

Metropolis

1. Light the Path – \$100
2. St. Nicholas Fund – \$300
3. Bishop Anthony's Scholarship Fund-\$500

Local - Eisenhower Toy Fund- \$350

Future dates to save:

1. Board Meeting on **Monday, December 5** at 11:00 a.m.
2. **Christmas Luncheon on Saturday, December 10 at 11:30 a.m.**
3. Christmas Baskets will be made in December (date to be determined).
4. Taverna Night Saturday, January 7, 2017

Lastly as we are at the end of the year, I want to thank my board and members of Philoptochos and all the parishioners who have contributed their **time and donations** to make this another successful year for our Philoptochos chapter.

Have a wonderful holiday!
– LINDA KALLIS,
Philoptochos President

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS, *continued*

Mrs. Constance M. Constant, author of *American Kid: Nazi-Occupied Greece*, spoke at the Philoptochos Members' Meeting on November 14th.



Linda Kallis, Philoptochos President, called the November 14th Philoptochos General Members Meeting to order, introducing the speaker, Constance M. Constant, author of the book, *American Kid: Nazi-Occupied Greece Through a Child's Eyes*.

AHEPA NEWS



Thomas Evangelous joined AHEPA in January 1958 in Clinton, MA. He believes it was Chapter 362. He celebrated his 100th birthday with his Chapter 528 Brothers in Palm Desert, CA on November 9th 2016, where he has been an active member. He still lives alone, cooks his own meals, drives himself around and gets himself to our meetings, events, festival and to church services every Sunday. Tom is an example of the Greek *Dynamis* (Strength). As we all have been unofficially adopted by him as sons, he has lost his own son, **Robert Evans** 78, just days before his birthday.

We were grateful to have District Governor **Alex Soles** and District Warden **Nondas Dratsiotis** traveled to be in attendance to award him and his family with a recognition of this achievement. Tom's immediate family was in attendance as well as his Church family to celebrate this wonderful day.

Saturday, November 12th—Our AHEPA Chapter 528 Thanksgiving Dinner was a great success thanks to the help from Philoptochos. It was a great day for fellowship and thanks. All proceeds go to **Fr. Theophilos Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund**. Scholarship awards benefit stewards of St. George Church and the AHEPA 528 Family. The AHEPA 528 Fr. T.P. Theophilos Scholarship is available for all high school graduates of 2017. For more information regarding the AHEPA Scholarship, visit the website: www.ahepa528.org, or contact us by email at: contact@ahepa528.org. Scholarships will be awarded on AHEPA **Sunday, May 21st 2017**.

Please consider joining AHEPA Chapter 528 and keep Hellenism strong in the desert through philanthropy and brotherhood. Men of faith need to bond together for our traditions and, as leaders of the faith, need to set positive role models for the community.

December 14th will be the annual AHEPA
Continued on the next page — — — — >

AHEPA NEWS, continued

Christmas dinner 6pm at Spaghetti Factory in Rancho Mirage. **No-Host dinner, order off menu. Dinner in lieu of December meeting.**

– WYNN STORTON, PDG,
AHEPA Chapter 528 President



Tom Evangelous, (center) with AHEPA 528 brothers, family and friends in celebration of his 100th year old birthday.

2017 GREEK FESTIVAL

Everyone is needed at the upcoming Festival Meeting, scheduled for **Monday, December 5th at 7:00 p.m.** Key set-up issues will be presented for discussion.

Among other topics, the following will be decided:

1. Publicity
2. Volunteers
3. Preparation schedule
4. Sponsorships

At the last Festival Meeting held on November 7th, it was announced that people will **underwrite** certain aspects of the Festival, such as the costs for the **pastitsio** and the **moussaka**. Other pledges to underwrite, or partially underwrite Festival needs, included **printing costs** and **office supplies**.

A sub-committee was formed to investigate options surrounding the requirement of the Riverside County Health Department to place a **washable surface** in the parish court-yard under grills and stoves where food is cooked and prepared.

Festival fliers will soon be delivered to the church. Everyone is asked to circulate them.

PHILOPTOCHOS CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE

The annual Philoptochos Christmas Bake Sale will take place on the Sundays of **December 11th and December 18th**. Orders may be placed by completing the **Philoptochos Christmas Bake Sale Order Form**, which is available daily in our parish hall. Completed Order Forms with checks written to "Ladies Philoptochos" for the amount of purchase can be placed in the basket on the coffee bar in the parish hall, or given to **Lula Valissarakos**. Baking will be done according to the orders received. Therefore, it is important to place orders now!



Lula Valissarakos poses with the many trays of pasties featured with this year's Philoptochos Christmas Bake Sale.



Tillie Lockshire and Pam Zaverdas package koulourakia which will be available at this year's Christmas Bake Sale.

CHRISTMAS WITH THE KAROUNTZOSES

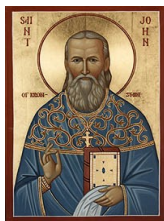
On **Saturday, December 17, 2016 at 1:00 p.m.** there will be a showing of the comedy movie, *Christmas With the Karountzoses* in our parish hall following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. It will be a fine time of fellowship for all. We would like everyone to contribute to our Church by purchasing tickets for this event: **\$15 includes snacks and refreshments**. See the enclosed flier in this issue of *The Voice*.

SAINTS OF THE MONTH: ST. SPYRIDON OF TRIMITHOUS



St. Spyridon was married and had a daughter by the name of Irene. At the time, bishops were allowed to be married, and he assumed the responsibilities of the Church in Tremithus. At the 1st Ecumenical Council, he matched wits with a philosopher who argued in favor of the Arian heresy, according to which, God was understood in a very classical Greek way, assuming that the Son was inferior in the chain of being. This would have been the position of Plato or Aristotle. But Spyridon made a direct argument of his own: *"Listen, Philosopher, to what I tell you. There is One God Who created man from dust. He has ordered all things, both visible and invisible by His Word and His Spirit. The Word is the Son of God Who came down into the world on account of our sins...We believe that He is one in essence with the Father and equal to Him in authority and honor."* As a result of this discussion, this opponent to Christianity later became the Saint's zealous defender and later was baptized. While at the 1st Ecumenical Council, St. Spyridon took a brick and showed that clay, water and fire are needed to create it as a brick. *"Just like the brick, the Holy Trinity is One God, but Three Persons."* The Feast Day of St. Spyridon of Tremithus is **December 12th** every year.

—MATTHEW DAVIS



.....
ST. JOHN OF KRONSTADT—St. John of Kronstadt was born in Russia in 1829. Following his theological training in 1855, he married his Presvytera, Elizabeth Nesvitsky, assisted him piously in his ministry of many years to the faithful of St. Andrew's parish.

As a priest, St. John ministered to all people, including the poor and the infirm. He created programs for them through which workshops and schools for them to learn how to live productive lives, benefiting both their own needs, as well as the needs of their society in general. The young,

old and infirm found work, shelter, food, clothing, and education through the charitable efforts of St. John. He also inspired them to pull their efforts together to build churches, monasteries and public schools. In his ministry, he also inspired the wealthy to give for the establishment of churches and hospitals. He also wrote extensive articles, catechizing his people in the teachings of the Orthodox Church. The Feast Day of St. John of Kronstadt is **December 20th** every year.

COLORING BOOK GROUP

The next Coloring Book Group session is scheduled for **Friday, December 16, 2016 at 12:00 noon**. Christmas cookies and the holiday spirit will be featured.

We express special gratitude to **Linda Kallis** for her help in setting up December's meeting. Also, special gratitude is expressed to **Michael Carroll** who offered a donation to sponsor the Coloring Book luncheon, which consisted of grilled cheese sandwiches, onion rings and fries, purchased from John's Restaurant where the owner, **George Argyros**, provided a generous discount.

As always, everyone is invited to participate in the Coloring Book Group, which meets monthly usually on the second Friday. A donation of only **\$5.00** is requested in order to help defray costs for supplies and luncheon items.



Linda Kallis poses with a new coloring book design available to any who attend future Coloring Group sessions.

On the next page there is a picture showing all the participants for the Coloring Book Group posing at lunch, which is always part of the fellowship at the monthly Coloring Book gatherings. Join us!

Continued on the next page — — — — —>

COLORING BOOK GROUP, *continued*



Lunch is always part of the fellowship at the monthly Coloring Book Group gatherings. In December, we look forward to a Christmas theme.

SUNDAY SCHOOL



Everyone is invited to enjoy the Sunday School Christmas Program, which will take place on Sunday, December 11th, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS

Dear Parishioners: Please check the **2017 Altar Flowers sign-up sheet on the Bulletin Board** in the Parish Hall, for your requests. The season begins in January, and ends in May. Altar Flowers are displayed on the first, third, and fifth Sundays. If you have special dates that you would like to recognize a love one, family member, or just to honor your church with a special dedication, sign up now. Also, if you desire you can pre-pay 'now' for your order, and in the Memo Column write the Month and date of your display! See our **Altar Flower Coordinator, Louise Dobbs Barringer**. We would like to thank you for your support of the Altar Flower program.

ST. GEORGE COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD

Sign up to participate in our annual **St. George Christmas Card Greeting** to one and all! Please see the enclosed "**Christmas Blessing**" **Order Form** to join in with prayers and greetings to all of our fellow parishioners.

THE ENDOWMENT FUND

(In answer to my question stated at the Fall General Assembly, "Does everyone understand what the Endowment Fund is for; Are there people who care to support the Fund?" the following analysis is provided. +Fr. Ted)

"Father Ted: One of the non-stated purposes of the Endowment Fund is to invest some of the monies we had in low interest savings accounts in something that would provide a better return but still be **liquid**. Note higher return means more risk and we found that out the hard way. However, because of staying the course and maintaining the allocations the fund has recovered which speaks well for the prudent planning. **Patience** pays off with such investment as the stock market has increased 20%, adjusted to today's dollar value, even if you track back starting before and including the great depression.

The investment policy for the Endowment Fund states the purpose of the fund very well. In the **Executive Summary** it states: "**Present recommendation; 50-60% equities, 40% bonds...cash reserves as prudent...**" This is a conservative approach. Recently, the fund allocation performed well relative to the market during the downturn and has rebounded well. **Credit should be given for this performance.**

Liquidity: It is stated in the Fund's document that '*all investments must be highly liquid and able to be converted into cash within a three day settlement period.*' On page 9, there is the heading: '*Investment Guidelines, Prohibited Assets...Real Estate Properties*' and on **page 12** it says, '*No funds shall be expended except for natural disaster, capital improvements...or failure to meet operating expenses.*'

In summary: From 2000 we have seen the amount in the general parish accounts of checking and saving continue to shrink. It is suggested that we consider an income stream to replace our reliability on the festival. However, this needs to be carefully analyzed and planned in all aspects, considering the value of any assets, or separate stocks.

Continued on the next page - - - - ->

ENDOWMENT FUND, continued

As for the Endowment Fund, the Fund's chairman, Nick Latkovic would like to start an "Eternal Light" Drive. Indeed, everyone can consider programs of individual planned giving toward the Fund's principle.

THE HOLY AND GREAT COUNCIL OF THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH:

The Holy Spirit in Council with Man

On November 16, 2016, Fr. Ted attended the Pan-Orthodox Clergy Retreat, held at the St. Steven's Serbian Orthodox Church in Alhambra, California. The theme was "Orthodox Synodality," featuring the Hierarchs of the Orthodox Christian Church regionally: His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos, of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese; His Grace, Bishop Benjamin, of the Russian-based Orthodox Church in America; His Grace, Bishop Maxim, of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The Orthodox Christian Church is "the Church of Synods," consistent with the Apostolic Church, which was "synodal" (i.e., *conciliar*) in nature from the Day of Pentecost.

On this point, a few notes are of great help:

1. The earliest icons of Pentecost depict the Holy Spirit descending upon all the Apostles *together*. In addition, the Apostles are depicted in their hierarchical liturgical vestments, each Apostle wearing the same style vestments representing their role as a "council of bishops" preaching *in unity* the Truth of the Gospel and ministering *in unity* the people of God.
2. The Book of Acts, Chapter 15, describes the participation of the Holy Apostles as the Apostolic Council in agreement with the reception of pagans into the Body of the Christian Church.

Aside from the Apostolic Council, the conciliarity of the Church is evident throughout the New Testament: the apparent existence of a set network of Christian communities; the Epistles point to the *unity* of the Church throughout great distances, in which the Gospel is preached

in common to all.

As is in practice today, the Church ministers to the world as the Church of Councils. On the local level, this is evident in the fact that a parish is administered through a *parish council*, as opposed to a *board of directors*. This is a "micro-cosmic" image of the world-wide administration of the Church through *Ecumenical Councils*.

From Apostolic times, history has made it clear that the Holy Spirit works through all of us who preserve the teachings of the Holy Apostles, since Christ our God chose them and the Holy Spirit descended upon them.

From last month's *Voice of St. George*, clarification is now given to the featured issue of the Sacrament of Marriage. In the document, *Impediments to Marriage*, we read paragraph 5: "Marriage between Orthodox Christians and non-Orthodox Christians is forbidden according to canonical *akriveia* (strictness.) Over the years, the Holy Archdiocese has allowed *oikonomia* (leniency) on this matter, stating: "The Orthodox Church will bless marriages between Orthodox and non-Orthodox partners..." This is the practice of the Church today.



His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos addresses the participants of the Pan-Orthodox Clergy Retreat held at St. Steven's Serbian Orthodox Church in Alhambra, California on November 14th. Clergy from the Orthodox Christian Jurisdictions of the Greek Orthodox; the Russian Orthodox (O.C.A.); the Serbian Orthodox and Romanian Orthodox Churches were in attendance.

St. George Greek Orthodox Church of the Desert
 74-109 Larrea St. / P.O. Box 4755
 Palm Desert, California 92261 web: www.go-stgeorge.org/ email: pdssaintgeorge@gmail.com
 Telephone: (760)568-9901 / FAX: 9760) 568-9492

DECEMBER, 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sunday Schedule of Services: Orthros-8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m. Sunday School—10:30 a.m. No Sunday School on Christmas & New Year				Choir Practice—1:00 p.m.		Vespers—5:00 p.m.
4 - ST. BARBARA THE MARTYR Ep.-Gal. 3:23-29;4:1-5 Gos.- St. Luke 13: 10-17	5 Philoptochos Board Meeting-11:00 a.m. Festival Meeting-7:00 p.m.	6- ST. NICHOLAS OF MYRA Bible Study-11:00 a.m.		8 Parish Council Meeting-6:30 p.m.	9- ST. ANNA and the CONCEPTION OF THE THEOTOKOS	10 Philoptochos Christmas Luncheon At: Desert Horizons Country Club—11:30 am Vespers-5:00 p.m.
11- 11th Sunday of St. Luke Ep.-Col. 3: 4-11 Gos.- St. Luke 14:16-24 Philoptochos Bake Sale Christmas Program Parish Council Election	12 ST. SPYRIDON Orthros-8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.	13 Bible Study-10:00 a.m.	14 AHEPA Christmas Dinner—6:30 p.m.	15 Choir Practice—1:00 p.m.	16 Coloring Book Group- 12: 00 noon	17- ST. DIONYSIOS Orthros-8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m. Movie Showing: Christmas With the Karantzoses—1:00 p.m. Vespers-5:00 p.m.
18- SUNDAY BEFORE- THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST Ep.-Heb. 1:1:9-10:32-40 Gos.-St. Matth. 1:1-25		20 Bible Study-10:00 a.m.	21	22	23 ROYAL HOURS FOR THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST—9:30 a.m.	24 EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST Orthros-8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m. Sunday School Christmas Caroling
25- THE NATIVITY OF OUR GOD & SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST (Christmas Day) Ep. Gal. 4:4-7 Gos.-St. Matth. 2: 1-12	26	27	28	29	30	31



SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, April 23, 2017

FEAST DAY OF ST. GEORGE

HOSTING:

HIS EMINENCE,

METROPOLITAN GERASIMOS

of

SAN FRANCISCO

On the occasion of the:

**20th ANNIVERSARY OF CELEBRATING OUR PATRON SAINT IN OUR
ST. GEORGE PARISH CHURCH EDIFACE!**

THIS CELEBRATION INCLUDES:

St. George Golf Tournament at Desert Willow

Golf Resort in Palm Desert: Friday and Saturday, April 21-22.

**April 21, 2017: Friday afternoon golf followed by steak dinner
at the church.**

**April 22, 2017: Saturday morning golf followed by Greek-style
dinner at the church...live music, dancing and fun!**

More details and information to follow in the months ahead.

JOIN US!

PHILOPTOCHOS

CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE

Christmas Bread-Vasilopita
Koulourakia



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

The Ladies of Philoptochos Society will be baking again this year the traditional Christmas bread, Vasilopita and koulourakia that are delicious any time of day.

Orders with your contribution should be made no later than **December 5, 2016**. Please place the completed order in an envelope marked "PHILOPTOCHOS" in the basket on the Coffee Bar in the Church Hall or give to Lula Valissarakos or Tina Veroulis. If you have any questions, please call Lula at 760 200-8501 or Tina 406 431-9516.

PICK UP DATES:

Sunday, December 11, 2016 (following the conclusion of Church Services)

Sunday, December 18, 2016 (following the conclusion of Church Services)

We thank you in advance for your continued support of Philoptochos



NAME _____

PHONE _____

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>QUANTITY</u>	<u>UNIT PRICE</u>	<u>AMOUNT (\$)</u>
Koulourakia _____		\$6.00	_____
Christmas Bread _____		\$10.00	_____
Vasilopita Bread with Coin _____		\$10.00	_____
<u>Make checks payable to Philoptochos</u>		Total Amount	\$ _____

SAVE THE DATES

2017 ST. GEORGE GREEK FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2017

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2017

FESTIVAL PLANNING MEETINGS:

Monday, December 5, 2016—7:00 p.m.

Next Meetings: January 9 and February 6, 2017

at: 7:00 p.m.

FESTIVAL PREPARATIONS BEGIN:

JANUARY 9, 2017

Christmas with the KAROUNTZOSES



The Grandmothers - Yia Yia Mafia



Michael - The Husband



Tiffany - The Wife



Telly - The Crazy Cousin



The Karountzoses



Father Tom



Ithea - The Therapist



Papou - The Patriarch





Philoptochos Christmas Luncheon

Invite Your Family and Friends!

Saturday, December 10, 2016

At 11:30 A.M.

Desert Horizons Country Club

44900 Desert Horizons Country Club

Indian Wells, CA 92210 (760-340-4646)

Cost For A 3 Course Luncheon is \$35.00

*R. S. V. P. by Dec. 4th to the Philoptochos table or
See Rhonda Latkovic, Linda Bozigian, or mail ths form with check to:*

St. George Philoptochos, P.O. Box 4755, Palm Desert, CA 92261

and note Christmas Luncheon

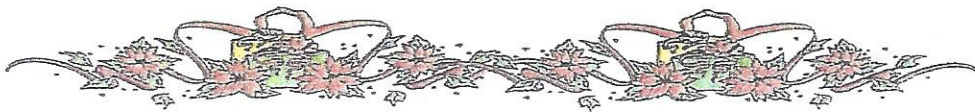
Choice of Entree (Please check one of the selections below):

- 1. Pepper Steak (Petite fillet w/pepper, brandy & chutney sauce) _____*
- 2. Salmon Caprise (grilled w/ tomato salsa, grilled vegetables) _____*

Name _____ Phone _____

Number of persons attending _____

Amount Enclosed _____



Dear Parishioners,

Once again, our community of St. George Greek Orthodox Church of The Desert will be preparing a Parish Christmas Card. We are certain that all of you will want to participate in this very popular and meaningful Christmas Blessing.

Please join the many families of our parish in expressing Christmas Greetings to fellow members and friends by completing this form. A donation of \$20.00 should be enclosed along with this form and made payable to St. George Greek Orthodox Church of the Desert. You can mail it to P.O. Box 4755, Palm Desert, CA 92261.

Please print your name, as you would like it to appear on the card on the line below. (Please Print)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Deadline: December 4, 2016



St. George Greek Orthodox Church of the Desert
Contact our parish office – 760-568-9901
74109 Larrea Street-Post Office Box 4755
Palm Desert, CA 92261
St. George Greek Orthodox Church is a 501(c) 3 Exempt
Organization



CHRISTMAS BLESSING