

JUNE-JULY 2016



Voice of St. George

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

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



PENTECOST: TIME FOR A HOLY COUNCIL!

Inside this issue

Two events come before us this summer: 1) Pentecost Sunday, and, 2) The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Christian Church. Pentecost Sunday this year falls on Sunday, June 19, 2016 and the "first-in-1,200-years" Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Christian Church convenes from June 16-June 27, 2016 on the island of Crete—coinciding with Pentecost Sunday.

Pentecost Sunday is the celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of fiery tongues upon the Holy Apostles, giving them the power to preach the Gospel of our Risen Christ our God and Savior in various languages so they can give the message of Eternal Life in Christ to every corner of the world. It is the Day on which the Church's mission to all nations begins and the "New Jerusalem" takes

form.

The account of this Holy Day is recorded in the Book of Acts (2:1-13). Pentecost is the "Chrismation" of all followers of Christ, Who are Baptized in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, making them, collectively, the Body of Christ—that is, His Holy Church. It is the "world-wide" version of each person's own participation in the Sacrament of Holy Chrismation following the Sacrament of Baptism.

In essence, as we have died and resurrected with Christ, the Holy Spirit ushers us into the Kingdom of God here on earth, as well as in heaven.

The rudiments of applying the ministry of the Church have always been formed through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Again, we read in the Book of Acts 5:5, how, when the

Apostles needed to determine how the Gentiles were to be received into the life of the Church, they gave themselves over to prayer, looking for guidance from the Holy Spirit. Through prayer and with Christ's Divine Love, they found the way by which Gentiles could be received into the life of the Church. This is the prototype of all of the Ecumenical Councils of the Orthodox Church, including the Holy and Great Council that is scheduled to take place in Crete in June.

As to whether this Council will be known in the future as an *Ecumenical Council*, Fr. John Chryssavgis, Archdeacon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate says, "In the final analysis, there is only one test, and that is retrospective: namely a council's acceptance and adoption by the people of God (the *pleroma*, the *sen-*

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Special Insert containing the following:
– *The Holy and Great Council*
– *June/July 2016 St. George parish Calendar*

The 2016 JUNE/JULY Voice of St. George is dedicated to the St. George Philoptochos in honor of their deeds of charity on local, Metropolis and Archdiocese levels.

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sus fidelium or *consensus ecclesiae*) [i.e.: the faithful people of the Church from generation to generation]. (*Toward the Holy and Great Council*, pg. 11).

The long-anticipated agenda for the Holy and Great Council includes the following concerns:

1. The structure and leadership of the Orthodox Church in America, Australia, Europe and beyond the borders of the traditional Orthodox Patriarchal countries and territories. (These countries and areas are known as the *Diaspora*).
2. The granting and recognizing of “autonomy” and “autocephaly” in terms of self-governance of the faithful in a particular country or region.
3. Dealing with the questions as to how the Church is administered as a geographical body outside the borders of the traditional ancient Orthodox Patriarchates and how such administrative “independence” is proclaimed.
4. The *diptychs* (defining the official list of canonically ordained Orthodox Christian Bishops in the world).
5. Dealing with and accepting a common Orthodox Christian Calendar. (Around the world today, two calendars are in use among Orthodox Christians: The Julian Calendar and the Gregorian Calendar. Unity suggests the use of only one calendar).
6. Dealing with the impediments of Holy Marriage.
7. The regulations for fasting.
8. Bilateral and multilateral dialogues with the various Christian denominations and religions throughout the world.
9. Orthodoxy and its ministry in the Christian world at large.
10. The Orthodox Church’s stand on moral and ethical issues in the world—issues of: peace, freedom, justice in the contemporary world.

Enclosed herein is a brochure from our Holy Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople outlining some of the aspects leading up to and including the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Christian Church. Also, an extensive write-up appears in the recent edition of *The Orthodox Observer*.

+FR. THEODORE

SUNDAY SCHOOL END-OF-THE-YEAR



CEREMONIES — Sunday School

“End - of - the - Year” ceremonies on Sunday, June 5th are always informative and inspiring.

May our Lord grant His many and rich blessings to **Dr. Jim Christopoulos** and his wife, **Gloria**, for their tireless efforts in coordinating our Sunday School program for this year. We also offer prayers of gratitude to God for **Deacon Euthym Kontaxis, M.D.** and his wife, **Krisann**, for their assistance in teaching our Sunday School children. In addition, we are grateful to our Lord for the parents who bring their children to Sunday School and who participate in their religious education. Above all, we are grateful to God for giving us His children so that their souls can be molded according to the teachings and spiritual discipline of our Holy Orthodox Christian Faith.

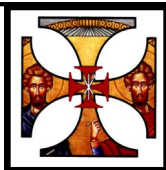
STEWARDSHIP — As we approach the summer months, we need to remind one and all that any extra Stewardship offering will be a great blessing for our St. George parish.

Anyone who has not yet submitted a 2016 Stewardship Pledge Card *and* contributed to the financial needs of our parish by virtue of fulfilling his or her pledge is fervently and prayerfully asked to do so at this time.

If there are any questions or concerns regarding Stewardship, in general, or regarding your own participation in our Stewardship efforts, please address them to the parish priest so that he can have a chance to make clarifications and/or corrections, since we all serve our Church for God’s glory.

Let us think of Stewardship as our personal *voice* in proclaiming our Faith to the general community around us. This *voice* is a voice that is to be heard *worshipping* Christ our God, as well as to be heard *proclaiming* that Christ is truly God—a proclamation with words and with deeds. Why not be a part of it? Glorifying God gives purpose to our everyday chores.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS



Our last General Meeting was on May 16th at the Old Spaghetti Factory. It was a nice way to end the season. We had 24 members and guests attend. **Alice Pulos** made all the arrangements and we thank her very much. See Photo. We will resume our meetings in September. Have a great summer!

Have spare change in your pocket or wallet? Would you like to lighten the load? Put your spare change into the specially marked cups "Mochas for Missions" on the tables in the Hall. Mochas for Missions support our Mission churches. We will be collecting through Pentecost.

Have you renewed your Membership yet? Are you thinking of joining the Philoptochos? Please do so. Of the \$45 membership fee, \$15 goes to National, \$15 goes to Metropolis and \$15 stays here with us. If you have any questions or need a membership envelope, see **Linda Kallis** or **Annette Lewis**.

In May, we sent donations to support the Salvation Army and Coachella Valley Rescue Mission and in June we support a student for a year through the Ophelia Project.

We need Coffee Hour Hostesses or Hosts for the months of June and July. See **Linda Petalas** or **Linda Kallis**.

– LINDA KALLIS,
Philoptochos President



Pictured above are some of the ladies who gathered for the May 16th Philoptochos General Members' Meeting at the Old Spaghetti Factory. The next general meeting will be in September.

AHEPA NEWS



The summer schedule for AHEPA members holds many opportunities for participation in many worthwhile AHEPA Family events and projects:

June 23 - July 23, 2016—An opportunity for study at a fully accredited U.S. University. Information is available on the AHEPA 528 website: www.ahepa528.org.

Summer 2016: We are planning to have representation at the **2016 AHEPA Western Regional District Convention** hosted by District 20 on **June 23-26, 2016**. The following month the **Supreme Convention** will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, taking place between July 24-29.

November 6, 2016. We look forward to supporting the **Veterans Day Celebration**, as led by **Louise Dobbs Barringer, St. George Outreach Chairperson**. (Veterans Day 2016 is Friday, November 11th.)

November 12, 2016 -This year, the Thanksgiving Dinner will be hosted by AHEPA Chapter 528 and Philoptochos at St. George Church. Save the date from now!

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE CLERGY-LAITY CONGRESS



The 43rd Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress of our Holy Archdiocese will take place in Nashville, Tennessee on July 3-8, 2016, with the theme, *You are the Voice of Christ in a Changing World*.

The Congress will take place immediately after the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church on June 18-27th in Crete. To follow the developments related to this important Clergy-Laity Congress access the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese website: www.goarch.org.

The National Philoptochos Congress, as always, will be held in conjunction (same time and place) with the Archdiocese Clergy-Laity Congress. Philoptochos is the "heart and soul" of our Church's philanthropic work in the world.

THE SCRIP PROGRAM

The **Scrip Program** chaired by **Presvytera Petula Pantels** is an exciting fundraising project for the Church. Scrip turns everyday shopping into cash for our Church when families use retail gift cards to pay for everyday purchases (like gas and groceries). As soon as a parishioner orders a gift card, a rebate will go directly to our Church. Presvytera Petula will be working with her committee over the summer to set up the program. The Scrip Program will begin in the fall.

– LINDA KALLIS,
Parish Council Member

CHOIR NEWS

The choir is now “off” for the summer. Congregational singing is very much encouraged. Plan to participate in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy by bringing with you the voices that God has given you to glorify His Holy Name.

The choir will officially be “off” for the summer after **Pentecost Sunday (June 19th)**. The Choir is preparing for the Divine Liturgy for Pentecost, which will be celebrated with many special hymns related to this great feast day.

BIRTH CHOICE OF THE DESERT

Birth Choice of the Desert is an abortion alternative organization staffed with trained and compassionate volunteers who lovingly help any pregnant woman or girl, no matter what her situation may be. All of their services are free and confidential. It is a place where friendship is offered along with emotional support and material resources that a woman or girl may need. No matter how impossible a situation may seem, help is always available.

Fr. Ted has joined with **Fr. Howard Lincoln** of Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in Palm Desert to stand up to preserve the lives of the pre-born children and to encourage all who love Christ our God, Who is the Life and Resurrection of all people, to support the work of Birth Choice

of the Desert. It is a ministry to both men and women of our community, bringing spiritual healing and strength to pregnant women and the fathers of the pre-born children.

With the celebration of Pentecost, as we call upon the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, to guide and protect our own lives, let us work with the same Spirit in guiding and protecting the lives of others.

To volunteer to help with needed tasks in support of the Birth Choice of the Desert ministry, or to make a much needed monetary contribution, contact Birth Choice of the Desert at (760) 775-5683 (that’s 760-775-LOVE) and visit the website: www.desertbirthchoice.org.

2016 FESTIVAL FINANCIALS

The 2016 Festival financial report will be sent out separately in an upcoming June edition of *The Ladder*. It will include profit and loss, and net profit. The report will be accompanied with an analysis and related information.

Any of our parish members in good standing who want to view financial information regarding the 2016 Festival may do by contacting our parish office at (760) 568-9901.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GREEK FESTIVALS

St. George: June 3-5, 2016 @ 10846 Downey Ave. Downey, CA 90241; \$2, Seniors and kids under 12 Free: Info: www.stgeorgedowney.org, (562) 862-6461

St. Spyridon: June 10-12, 2016 @ 3655 Park Blvd., San Diego, CA 92103; \$3, Free on Friday. Info: www.sdgreekfestival.com, (619) 297-4165

Prophet Elias: June 11-12, 2016 @ 1035 Inland Center Dr., San Bernardino, CA 92402 Info: www.propheteliaschurch.org, (909) 885-6213

St. Paul: June 24-26, 2016 @ 4949 Alton Parkway, Irvine, CA; \$3, Info: irvinegreekfest.com (949) 733-2366



The Holy and Great Council

PENTECOST 2016

"He CALLED ALL TO UNITY"

History of the Holy and Great Council

By Rev. Dr. John Chrysavgis, Archdeacon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

The Orthodox Church is the church of the apostles, the church of the martyrs, the church of the fathers, the church of the councils. Through the centuries, the Orthodox Church convened local and regional, great and greater, as well as universal or ecumenical councils. Just as every celebration of the holy Eucharist is a confirmation of the communion between each person with his or her community, and that local community with the universal Church,



His All-Holiness Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch. Photo: Nikolaos Manginas

so too, every council is a reaffirmation of the unity between each local and self-governing Orthodox church with the universal Church. In fact, St. John Chrysostom – the renowned fourth-century archbishop of Constantinople – boldly states that “council” is another name for “church.”

In this spirit and from its responsibility and privilege to ensure inter-Orthodox unity and facilitate inter-Orthodox cooperation, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has tirelessly labored to convene a Pan-Orthodox Council since the early 1900s.

Preparations for this council began in earnest in 1961 and continued through the 1960s, while pre-conciliar conferences, tasked with forming the council’s agenda and its rules of operation, met in 1976 through 1986. After a long hiatus created by immense political and ideological changes, as well as the unprecedented social and religious challenges resulting from the collapse of the Iron Curtain, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew revived the process in 2008.

So, after almost a century, the agenda was finalized, the documents were edited, and the process was completed in January 2016.



The Holy and Great Council is assembling on the feast of Pentecost.

Never before in the history of the Orthodox Church have so many Orthodox churches – fourteen from around the world – assembled in one and the same place.

Yet, despite hesitation and apprehension, despite reservation and even resistance, the Holy and Great Council is being convened at the Orthodox Academy of Crete—steps from a ninth-century Monastery of the Virgin Mary—from June 16 to June 27, 2016.

He called all to unity. May we respond with charity and generosity.

We fervently ask the plenitude of the Church – clergy and laity, men and women, old and young – to pray for this unique and historical event. We especially ask that you implore God to strengthen and inspire the leaders of the Church to manifest their unity in a world afflicted by conflict and division.

May God bless the Holy and Great Council. And May His abundant grace be with all of you.

- His All-Holiness Bartholomew,
Ecumenical Patriarch



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TOWARDS THE HOLY AND GREAT COUNCIL: A Comprehensive Timeline

For the first time in 1200 years, the fourteen autocephalous Orthodox Churches will meet, with a common desire to reinforce their relations and address contemporary spiritual and social challenges in the world.

1961 Sept. 24 - Oct. 1

First Pan-Orthodox Conference, Rhodes

1962 Sept 26-29

Second Pan-Orthodox Conference, Rhodes

1963 Nov 1-15

Third Pan-Orthodox Conference, Rhodes

1968 June 8-15

Fourth Pan-Orthodox Conference, Chambésy

1971 July 15-28

Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission, Chambésy



1976 Nov. 21-28

First Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, Chambésy

- Methodology and themes for the Holy and Great Council
- The Orthodox Church's relations with other Christian churches
- Discussion on the common celebration of Easter by all Christians

1977 June 28 - July 3

Congress on the Common Celebration of the Easter by all Christians on a Fixed Sunday

1982 Sept 3-12

Second Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, Chambésy

- Impediments to marriage
- Adaptation of the ordinances regarding fasting

1986 Feb 15-23

Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission, Chambésy

"He CALLED ALL TO UNITY"

1986 Oct 28 - Nov 6

Third Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, Chambésy

- Adaptation of ordinances for fasting
- The mission of the Orthodox Church in the world

1990 Nov 10-17

Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission, Chambésy

- Orthodox Diaspora

1992

First Synaxis of Primates, Istanbul



1993 Nov 7-13

Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission, Chambésy

- Autocephaly

1995 April 10-13

Canon Law Congress on Regulation for Episcopal Assemblies, Chambésy

1995

Second Synaxis of Primates, Patmos

2000

Third Synaxis of Primates, Jerusalem/Bethlehem and Istanbul/Nicaea

2008

Fourth Synaxis of Primates, Istanbul

2009 June 8-12

Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, Chambésy

- Episcopal Assemblies

2009 Dec. 10-17

Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission, Chambésy

- Autocephaly and Autonomy
- Diptychs

2014

Fifth Synaxis of Primates, Istanbul

2015 Oct. 10-17

Fifth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, Chambésy

2016 Jan. 21-28

Sixth Synaxis of Primates, Chambésy

2016 June 16-27

The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, Crete



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1200 YEARS...



Photos courtesy Archon Dimitrios Panagos and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.



Official channels of communications

The Holy and Great Council will be held June 16-27 in Crete. For the first time in 1200 years, the primates of all 14 Orthodox autocephalous (or self-governed) Churches, along with more than 300 bishops and others, will meet to pray and discuss issues of common concern. Keep up-to-date by visiting www.orthodoxcouncil.org for daily briefings, and by using the communication channels of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Website: www.orthodoxcouncil.org

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