

DECEMBER 2017



Voice of St. George

**SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF THE DESERT
74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA**



Inside this issue

HIS NAME: "GOD WITH US!"

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, 'God with us.'" (St. Matthew 1:23). The Incarnation of Christ is the fulfillment of the prophesy of Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14).

God is with us in the flesh as Perfect Man - the New Adam. The "New Eve" is the Ever-Virgin Mary. While the old Eve was created from Adam's rib, the New Eve's pure flesh gives birth to the New Adam through the work of the Holy Spirit. According to St. Athanasios the Great, *"He takes a body of our kind, and not merely so, but from a spotless and stainless virgin, knowing not a man, a body clean and in very truth pure from [contact] from any man."* (On the Incarnation of the Word, by St. Athanasios, Nicene-Post Nicene Fathers, Ser. 2, Vol.4, pg. 46).

St. Athanasios also notes

that God made us in His Image and Likeness, and that we thus know God by virtue of our created nature. But, *"People had so rejected God and so darkened their soul, as not merely to forget their idea of God, but also to fashion for themselves one invention after another, [giving themselves over to idols.]* (pg. 42). So, God took on human flesh in order to destroy death to which the human race was subjected as a result of rejecting God, and *"to attract [our] 'sense-oriented' attention to Himself visibly as man, and so to lead [us] to know Him as God."* (pg. 44).

We know Him to be the Actual Creator of everything, including life itself, because He resurrected from the dead - a genuine act of re-creation. He died on the Cross in order to release us from the pain of death.

Hence, God is not simply an impartial supreme being of the universe. God is

now before us as one of us and we also call Him *our Father* – a point that St. Paul emphasizes in his Epistle to the Galatians (read at the Christmas Liturgy): *"God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons...God has sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father.'" (4: 4-6).*

Yes, God is with us even in our pains and sufferings, as well. Paul also notes in his Epistle to the Hebrews, *"Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God...For, because He Himself has suffered and been tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted."* (2: 17-18).

Temptations lead to sin and sin leads to suffering. This said, we keep in mind that there are two causes of suffering: suffer-

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The December Voice is sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. William Barringer: "We give honor, glory and praise to God for a Blessed Year!"

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.

ing: suffering caused by sin, and suffering brought on by the world. Given this, there are also two forms of joy: joy that is based on luxury, which turns to sorrow when those material things are lost and joy based on God's strength and wisdom, which overcomes evil. It is this latter joy that is referred to when we sing, "*Joy to the World.*"

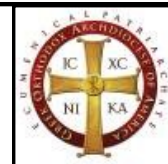
In many ways, what we feel as suffering is related to that which we consider to be joyful. People of our secular society define suffering from the point of view of the superficial joy that comes from fantasies based on riches and power. Joy is when all goes well and there is success! Suffering is defined from the point of view of the loss of such success and/or power.

Au contraire, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (4: 9-16), St. Paul describes the various hardships of the Apostles in their mission to impart the Gospel to the world. But, despite those hardships, the Apostles experienced joy for God's glory. Much like settlers in the Old West endured hardships with joy over their quest for gold, the Apostles experienced true joy for the Gospel, despite the suffering that the world offered them.

With the Incarnation of Christ, we are transformed into people with greater gifts than those originally possessed by Adam and Eve. We have the power to forgive and to repent. We have the wisdom to discern temptation from demons and inspiration from God and to overcome the forces of the world, changing it as co-creators with God. As a result, the suffering that comes from sin is remedied by repentance; the suffering that comes from the world is remedied by finding God-centered solutions. So much depends on our point of view.

At stake is our soul and our peace in the world. Our issues of anger or peace; hatred or love; anxiety or faith are defined by where we seek our joys. As we seek joy in forgiveness, repentance and co-creating solutions with God, we then sing, "*Christ is born! Glorify Him!*"
+FR. THEODORE

PRAYING FOR THE END OF VIOLENCE: "THE SHOOTING IN TEHAMA COUNTY"



Beloved in the Lord,
"*Deliver me, O Lord, from evil men; preserve me from violent men...*" Psalm 140:1

The headline was all too familiar - another shooting that has claimed innocent lives and shaken a small town to its core. This is not something we should ever become accustomed to or indifferent with our emotions. The lives of four people were tragically taken by a gunman who was later killed during this most recent attack which happened on Thursday, November 14 in the small town of Rancho Tehama, California, located approximately 120 miles north of Sacramento.

There were seven locations where the gunman launched rapid fire, and there are still at least ten people wounded, some critically, from his rage of violence. One of the locations was a local elementary school where parents were just dropping off their children to attend classes.

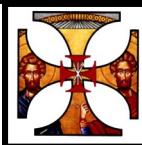
We must continue to pray for all those who lost their lives in this tragedy as well as for the recovery of those still bearing physical and emotional wounds. Through God's greatness, mercy and love, He will provide healing and comfort and "*will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.*" (Psalm 9:9). We also give thanks to the first responders, the police and fire departments and medical teams, for their diligent efforts and ask that God give them strength in their most important work.

Sadly, these incidents are becoming more and more prevalent. Let us all be vigilant during these times, keeping aware of our surroundings, reporting any suspicious activity to authorities, and always wearing the Cross of Christ to protect us.

With Love in Christ,
++METROPOLITAN GERASIMOS
Metropolitan of San Francisco _____

Note: Consistent with the advice of His Eminence, a section is included herein, entitled: "Safety in Active Shooter Event."

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS



November

Our General Meeting was well attended with 30 members and guests. We met at the Old Spaghetti Factory and had a lovely lunch. Our guest speaker was Jeannie Ranglas, Metropolis Philoptochos President. Before lunch, she met and spoke to everyone personally. As Metropolis President, she has 59 local Philoptochos chapters to keep in contact. Several members know her and I as president just met her for the first time. We were very pleased she was able to visit us.

She spoke of growing up in Chicago and early on becoming involved with Philoptochos. She has been married for 40 years and has two children. She stated that it was a privilege to be here with our chapter. Philoptochos has been a beacon of faith, hope and love. It preserves the tradition by doing good works in our church. She added that together we fulfill the Philoptochos mission of "helping those in need". She was enlightening, inspiring and with her visit our members understand more how our donations and projects are effective as outlined by the Metropolis.

In closing, Jeannie left us her thoughts of a Garden of Faith. "A tree is known by its fruit; a woman by her deeds. A good deed is never lost; she who sows courtesy reaps friendship and she who plants kindness gathers love." A quote by St. Basil. We had a short meeting and had a motion regarding the Church Floor Project. The motion was passed with Jeannie also voting as she is a member of our chapter. She was very happy to be involved. See photos.

Donations

The Ecumenical Patriarchate - \$450 from parishioners and Philoptochos.

Street Life - provided 500 turkey dinners to the homeless at two sites in Indio on November 21. Heading the project was Rhonda Latkovic. She made arrangements with George Argyros to roast the turkeys. Rhonda, Father Ted and

Presvytera with volunteers from Philoptochos and our parishioners delivered and served the food. We donated \$800 for the meals.

Church Floor Project - starting the donation drive to replenish our Church funds giving \$1000.

December

Our Annual Christmas Luncheon at Desert Horizons Country Club will be on Saturday, December 9 at 11:30 a.m. Make your reservation with Rhonda Latkovic or Tina Veroulis. The deadline for reservations is Monday, December 4th.

Our Board Meeting will be on Monday, December 4 at 11:30 a.m.

We are planning to feed the homeless in December. Rhonda Latkovic will make the announcement in the Ladder for the date and time.

We will also once again prepare Christmas Baskets for those ill or homebound. The date is Wednesday, December 13. We will need volunteers to deliver the baskets. See Rhonda.

Baking for our Christmas Bake Sale started December 1 with baking the koulourakia. We need volunteers. See Lula and check the Philoptochos calendar on the bulletin board. You will pick up your orders on Sunday, December 10 and 17.

Our Knitting Project is in its third year. If you are interested in helping, see Rhonda or Tina. We are making prayer blankets for the ill and homebound. Father will deliver them as he visits our parishioners. We will need many blankets and we will start distribution around February 1st.

Festival Baking will begin in January. See the calendar. Grab your apron, roll up your sleeves and volunteer. In closing, as we approach the end of 2017, Philoptochos has been blessed many times over this year. We want to thank our many donators giving monies for our various

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PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS, continued

projects especially feeding the homeless. The donations have been made by our members, parishioners and anonymous donors. And of course, all of you are appreciated for the many hours volunteered.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Many blessings to you all.

--LINDA KALLIS,
St. George Philoptochos President



On Sunday, November 26th, Philoptochos presented a check of \$1,000 toward the expenses of the new floor installed in our parish hall. Pictured are Philoptochos Board members who were in attendance—from left to right: Emily Tcharos, Linda Petalas, Fr. Ted, Linda Kallis (President), Tina Veroulis, and Lula Valissarakos.



Metropolis Philoptochos President, Jeanie Ranglas was the featured speaker at the November Gen. Members Philoptochos Meeting & Luncheon. Pictured to the left are the board members of our Philoptochos:



(top) Jeanie Ranglas, Linda Kallis, Pat Dalkas, (bottom) Emily Tcharos, Tina Veroulis, Lula Valissarakos. (Missing: Rhonda Latkovic [the photographer] Linda Petalas and Matushka Gloria Lehman)

Note: The desserts for the General Members' Luncheon was lovingly donated by Alice Pulos.



Above is a group picture, featuring Metropolis Philoptochos President, Jeanie Ranglas with the members of the St. George Ladies Philoptochos Society. Jeanie Ranglas gave an inspiring speech, outlining the National & Metropolis Philoptochos ministries.

Key points from Jeanie Ranglas' inspiring speech:

1. Metropolis Social Welfare Committee assists local chapters to help in special philanthropic needs.
2. Kids 'n' Cancer--a camp-ministry throughout the western states region of our Holy Metropolis, serving both the children who are cancer patients, and their entire families.
3. Metropolis Philoptochos chapters are assisting Holy Cross Seminary students with their necessary expenses.

AHEPA NEWS



- ◆ Thanksgiving Luncheon: We want to express our gratitude to the St. George Ladies of Philoptochos for offering support for the luncheon by helping with reservations. It was a great time for fellowship and giving thanks with friends.
- ◆ On Veterans Day, November 13th, Wynn Storton recognized and thanked Dr. Stephen Steele with a Congressional approved AHEPA Veterans Military Service Medal. Thank you all for your service. <https://ahepaveterans.org>.
- ◆ Support our AHEPA Fr. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Program. We are very proud of the accomplishment of the program and the number of students to whom we have awarded well-earned scholarships. Thus far, Chapter 528 has awarded nearly \$30,000 in the last 10 years. **Scholarship awards benefit members of Saint George Church and the AHEPA 528 Family.**
- ◆ AHEPA Chapter 528 plans to distribute college scholarship awards on AHEPA Sunday, May 20, 2018. Please consider offering a donation to AHEPA Chapter 528, P.O. Box 1735, Palm Desert, California 92261.
- ◆ Contact our website: AHEPA528.org, or <http://ahepa528.org/scholarship.htm>. Please read scholarships for changes and deadlines. The **Annual AHEPA 528 Christmas Party** is scheduled for **December 16th at 6:00 p.m. at Towne Center Café at \$35 each**. Please save the evening for another night of fellowship.
- ◆ Mid-Winter Conference will be held at the **Castaway Restaurant in San Bernardino, California on Saturday, January 27, 2018**. Make reservations from now. See the AHEPA District 20 website: www.ahepadistrict20.org.
- ◆ **AHEPA 528 December Meeting** will take place on **Wednesday, December 13th at 6:30 p.m.** at St. George.

Please consider joining AHEPA today as there is a membership incentive through December.

Contact Wynn Storton, Chapter 528 President at (760) 832-2825 or by email: wynn@ahepa528.org.

AHEPA MISSION STATEMENT: To promote the ancient Hellenic ideals of education, philanthropy, civic responsibility, integrity and family and individual excellence through community service and volunteerism.

In Christ,
 – WYNN STORTON,
 AHEPA Chapter 528 President



Pictured to the left, Dr. Steve Steele (recipient of the AHEPA Veterans Award) and (to the left) AHEPA Chapter 528 President, Wynn Storton.



AHEPA Thanksgiving Luncheon at Towne Center Café-at left, top,(clockwise) Wynn Storton, President; Ana Storton, Kathy Amos, Steve Steele, Steve Banki, Jr.; Nelly Banki. At left, middle (clockwise): Lula Valis-sarakos, Carol Lyons, Doug Lyons, John Petalas, Linda Petalas, Kalitsa Xitco, Maria Zachariadou.



At left, bottom, (clockwise) Tasia Richards, Dr. Lucy Rojo, Tina Veroulis, Angelo Veroulis, Emily Tcharos.

STREET LIFE PROJECT

Pictured to the right—a group picture of volunteers who served a Thanksgiving dinner to the homeless in Indio on Nov. 21st. From left to right: Alice Pulos, Fr. Ted, Rhonda Latkovic, Reno Barela (Veterans Association, Real Estate Professionals), Nadia Hector, Julie Makrianis, Tina Veroulis, Jeffery (Demetrios) Curreri. Volunteers not pictured: Pam & Larry Zaverdas, Angelo Veroulis, Tasia Richards, Louise Dobbs Barringer, Lula Valissarakos, Presvytera Petula Pantels, Mary Zachariadou



Thanksgiving for the Homeless

On Tuesday, November 21st, fifteen volunteers from our St. George parish & Philoptochos travelled to Miles Avenue Park in Indio, CA to join the non-profit group "The Street Life Project" to provide the homeless with a Thanksgiving meal including turkey and all the trimmings.

Thanks to donations from our "secret angels," St. George Ladies Philoptochos provided 250 pounds of hot turkey and five gallons of gravy for the outreach event. The turkey and gravy were prepared by George and Stacey Argyros and was cooked and seasoned perfectly! We are very grateful for their participation!

"The Street Life Project Project" organizers asked our group to serve the food to the homeless, which was just what we do best, considering all the experience we have from working our own Greek festivals! Over three and a half hours and two locations, our group served around 250 homeless with many coming back for seconds. Other donors at the event provided mashed potatoes, yams, green bean casseroles, rolls, pies, juice, hot coffee—and hot chocolate and our St. George volunteers assisted with serving these items also.

All of our St. George volunteers remarked how wonderful it was to participate in this outreach to help the homeless. Remarks include, "We need to do more of this type of aid to the homeless" said Lula Valissarakos.

Tina Veroulis states, "I felt a warmth and appreciation from the homeless. They were so polite. It was amazing."

Alice Pulos remarked, "The Street Life Project Group is really good at putting together this type of event. It was the best gathering of this type I've ever attended."

Jeffrey Curreri offered, "It was a blessing to see people praying for one another."

Angelo Veroulis said he didn't feel tired until the very end of evening.

"It was wonderful to spend time with everyone and very rewarding to feed the homeless", said Volunteer Julie Makrianis.

Mary Zacharidou described it as "a heart warming and enlightening experience."

"Let's do this again.", Pam Zaverdas enthusiastically added.

For Rhonda Latkovic, "Being involved in helping and feeding the homeless provides an inner feeling of peace and joy that is indescribable."

Tasia Richards said, "Honestly, I was overwhelmed. Especially watching the little homeless children singing 'Jesus Loves Me'. It really got to me. It was so emotional and touching."

"The event was well organized by the Street Life
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STREET LIFE PROJECT, Continued
Project, "Nadia Hector remarked.

Louise Dobbs Barringer shared her thoughts of inspiration, saying, "What a joy it is to be a servant of God to the less fortunate! My experience with the Street Life Project puts me in line with what God says I should do as a Christian: "What you do for the least of My brethren, you do for Me."

Presvytera Petula said, "My husband often reminds himself and others of St. John Chrysostom's sentiment: 'Charity covers a multitude of sins!'"

Fr. Ted quips, "Let's not think that Holy Confession is therefore obsolete," adding, "Our Savior wants us to combine deeds of charity with the message of the Holy Gospel, giving food for the body and nourishment for the soul."



STREET LIFE PROJECT VOLUNTEERS (left to right): Alice Pulos, Nadia Hector, Julie Makrianis, Reno Barela (Veterans Association), Jeffery (Demetrius) Curreri, Tina Veroulis.



STREET LIFE PROJECT VOLUNTEERS (left to right): Lula Valissarakos, Tasia Richards, Mary Zachariadou



STREET LIFE PROJECT VOLUNTEERS (left to right): Rhonda Latkovic, Alice Pulos and Pam Zaverdas.



STREET LIFE PROJECT—The crowd of homeless lined up into the distance for a Thanksgiving meal on Nov. 21. (Presvytera Petula [red cap] seen as part of the serving line)



STREET LIFE VOLUNTEERS (left) Louise Dobbs Barringer, (right) Tina Veroulis



Rhonda Latkovic, Parish Chairperson for Street Life

PARISH COUNCIL NOTES



The Parish Council approved the proposed 2018 Parish Budget to be presented to the Fall General Assembly.

In addition, plans were finalized for repairs on the storage room ceiling and replacement of the exhaust motor for the annex, as well as the installation of a rain shield for the roof exhaust fan and the repair of one of the church pews.

Reports were also given regarding the presentations to the General Assembly of financial statements and the Proposed Parish By-law Amendments.

All were reminded of the deadline to participate in the parish Christmas Card program, as well as to help for the Festival in February.

Linda Kallis announced that Metropolis Philoptochos President, Jeanie Ranglas would be the speaker for the November Philoptochos General Members Meeting.

It was also noted that Festival preparations for menu items and set-up will begin on January 8, 2018.

Finally, the agenda items were approved, as was the date for the Fall General Assembly Meeting: Sunday, December 10, 2017, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Fr. Ted announced that, for those who want to be candidates for election to serve as Parish Council members for 2018, applications are currently available - the deadline for submitting candidacy is Monday, December 11, 2017. Elections will be held on Sunday, December 17th. All candidates must meet with Fr. Ted for a seminar *prior* to the day of the election.

November saw two projects being completed: 1) the installment of a concrete surface in the parish courtyard in order to accommodate needs for our Festival and out-door receptions; 2) the installment of tile flooring (to replace the old linoleum flooring) in the parish hall.



The cement patio area installed in the parish courtyard to accommodate Festival needs.



Workers completing the installment of the new tile flooring in our parish hall.



"Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." – Phil. 2:4
Each year the Assembly of Bishops of the United States has called the Sunday before Thanksgiving "A Day of Sharing," so that the mission the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) can continue to be a visible reality of love. It is a ministry of sharing God's good gifts to us, reiterating Christ's call to serve Him by loving and serving one another. IOCC is the official humanitarian agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America.

In 2017, IOCC's 25th anniversary year, IOCC has extended hope to many around the world. IOCC has helped Syrian refugees throughout Greece, Jordan, Lebanon, Romania, and Serbia, as well as those Syrians displaced in their own country, by

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IOCC, continued

providing food, water, shelter, and medicine. IOCC has offered economic opportunity to farmers in northern Greece grappling with the ongoing financial crisis, and trained healthcare workers in Ethiopia so that they can customize wheelchairs for people with disabilities. IOCC has also helped to reconstruct storm-damaged schools in Haiti; rebuilt homes destroyed by natural disasters here in the United States; and offered emotional and spiritual care after Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God Who activates all of them” (1 Corinthians 12: 4-6). Each one of us brings unique gifts to our service of Christ; so too the ministry of IOCC is varied in its manifestations, yet unified in purpose. That unity characterizes our ability as one Church to serve those in need, near and far.

Think about offering a Christmas gift of love for those in need. For more information regarding IOCC and to donate, see the website: <https://www.iocc.org>

SAFETY IN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENT--

A pamphlet entitled “Active Shooter Event” is available at the entrance of our St. George Church (in the Narthex) and in our parish hall. Upgrading parish surveillance is considered.

In short, there are three *safe* responses when a random active shooter attacks: 1) Run; 2) Hide or 3) Fight. (See detailed information enclosed.)

Run- An escape plan is provided in the “Active Shooter Event” pamphlet. Evacuate, helping others; try to prevent others from entering the area; keep hands visible and call 911 when able.

Hide- Keep out of shooter’s view; lock doors or entries to the hiding place; silence cell phones (including vibrating mode); keep silent.

Fight- As a last resort, use as much aggression as possible; Use anything as a weapon against the shooter and be decisive in your actions.

SACRAMENTS IN NOVEMBER--The following individuals were Christmated according to the Rites of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and have become members of our parish:

Bill Barringer (husband of Louise Dobbs Barringer) was chrismated on November 5th. **Michael Long** served as his Sponsor.

Jeffery Curreri (Demetrios) (grandson of Theresa Ayanopolis) on November 18th. **Michael Vawter** and **Becky Allen** served as his Sponsors.

Don Dymond (husband of Alexandra Dymond) on November 18th. **Jim Christopoulos** served as his Sponsor.

FR. TED TRAVELS TO SAN FRANCISCO

Fr. Ted and Presvytera will be traveling to **San Francisco** for a meeting with **His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos**, scheduled for **Thursday, December 28, 2018**. He will be returning by **Saturday evening, December 30th**. Reports will be shared with our Parish Council. This will be his first visit to the Metropolis office since even before his appointment to serve as pastor of St. George.

NEW DIVINE LITURGY BOOKS FOR OUR CHURCH

We are in need of new Divine Liturgy Books for our church pews. We look forward to reprinting the Liturgy Book that we have come to use and love so much. As is the case presently, our new books will include both the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, as well as the “Blessing of the Five Loaves” Service and the Memorial Service.

We are planning to order 150 copies at approximately \$1,050 total—plus postage. Donations from our parishioners are needed to cover costs. Note, that donating for the reprinting of the Divine Liturgy Books will be in general for the benefit of everyone to use them in participating in the Divine Liturgy. For personal copies, a separate donation will be needed.

COLORING BOOK PROJECT AND LUNCHEON

Our **November Adult Coloring session and luncheon** was held outdoors on the patio Friday, November 17th. We had eleven attendees who enjoyed a lunch consisting of two appetizers, a hummus dip and a crab dip, a Caesar salad, turkey croissant sandwiches, pumpkin spice muffins, and a pecan pie served by **Rhonda Latkovic and Pam Zaverdas**.

The ladies took time to color and to welcome one of our snowbirds, Pam Zaverdas, back to the desert. The usual monthly raffle was held with attendees winning prizes including a scarf, a tote bag, fashion jewelry, kitchen towels, and a phone wallet.

This **next Adult Coloring group session** will be held on **Friday, December 15th** and will have a Christmas theme. Attendees will be decorating sugar cookies for our holiday baskets and for the homeless. Our group sessions always begin at noon with lunch. The coloring & raffle follow, wrapping up around 2:00 PM.

For the **December session**, please **RSVP to Rhonda Latkovic** by **December 10th** at: r.s.fleminglatkovic@gmail.com, or you may call at [714-875-4661](tel:714-875-4661).



The November Coloring Book Session featured a delicious menu of hummus and crab dips, with appetizers, turkey croissant sandwiches, Caesar salad, pumpkin spice muffins and pecan pie. From left to right: Nick Kaperonis, Tina Veroulis, Alice Pulos and Pam Zaverdas



November Coloring Book Session—Pictured above, to the left: Rhonda Latkovic (left) and Pam Zaverdas, serving the luncheon. To the right, a “coloring book picture-icon” of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

2018 GREEK FESTIVAL



Beloved Fellow Parishioners of St. George:

There are five ways through which you can help make the 21st Annual St. George Greek Festival be a success:

1. Volunteer to help in the day-to-day preparations throughout January and February. Preparations begin on **January 8, 2018**.
2. Volunteer to work at least a **4 hour shift** on the days of the Festival: **Feb. 17 & 18, 2018**, or **contribute \$60** to hire a worker to work the Festival in your behalf.
3. Contribute **\$300** for a “**logo-size**” ad, or **\$150** for a **one-line** greeting for the 2018 Festival program tri-fold.
4. Contribute toward the costs of items needed for the Festival (ex.: costs for food, services, supplies), serving to underwrite or partially underwrite these costs. (See “Needs List.”)
5. Distribute fliers and posters throughout your neighborhood community.

Your help and participation will be a great blessing for everyone in our parish. We look forward to hearing from you and receiving your contribution of time, treasure and/or talents in support of the 2018 St. George Greek Festival.

THE ST. GEORGE ENDOWMENT FUND

The Saint George of the Desert Endowment Fund grew from \$321,682.32 at the end of September 2017 to \$325,541.66 at the end of October 2017, a plus of \$33,738.20 YTD. Our current Asset Allocation follows the Fund's by-laws as shown below:

A. Domestic Equities.....	\$172,376.21.....	52%
B. Domestic Fixed Income. \$126,933.37.....		40%
C. International Equities....	\$ 24,654.59.....	7%
D. Cash & Equivalents.....	\$ 1,577.49.....	1%
TOTAL.....	\$325,541.66.....	100%

We began 2017 with a balance of \$288,807.91. The Endowment Fund has shown us that patient investing will get us to our goal of +\$500,000 so we can utilize the funds if necessary as voted upon. At current rates, not sustainable, but as an example, we can reach \$500,000 in 5 years. We are currently seeing 11.7% annual returns. Performance against benchmarks will be obtained at the year-end report.

We also have on deposit 28 United Health Group shares as a stewardship deposit with a current value of \$5,915.16, which can be used at any time as an offering to the church with proper authorization of the Parish Council. Current stock price is \$211/per with a 1.41% dividend. This is included as our account's total value and is not considered part of the Endowment Fund. I would like to recommend that we sell these shares and invest in an income fund to preserve capital and reduce risk -- or cash out if needed. This is also a recommendation of our Fund manager, Michele Moore. I will welcome feedback.

Parishioners are always welcome to donate by check to the Endowment Fund through the St. George parish office with "St. George of the Desert Endowment Fund" written on the memo line of the check. Remember the Church in your **estate planning**. To date, **\$925** has been donated to the Fund.

If you have any questions, thoughts, or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out.

--NICHOLAS M. LATKOVIC,
Chairman of the Endowment Fund

THE FALL GENERAL ASSEMBLY & PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The St. George Fall General Assembly Meeting will take place on **Sunday, December 10, 2017**, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

This General Assembly will feature presentations of the 2017 parish financial statements; the proposed 2018 parish budget; the formation of an audit committee; reports regarding the 2018 Greek Festival, as well as reports regarding the courtyard and parish hall upgrades. Also, proposed amendments to the parish by-laws will be presented, as well as updates on maintenance needs.

To participate in the Fall General Assembly, one's parish Stewardship Commitment for 2017 must be up to date. For questions related to one's personal Stewardship record, or to the over-all parish Stewardship program, please contact the parish office as soon as possible.

2018 Parish Council Candidacy Forms are now available in our parish office (or from Fr. Ted). Deadline : Monday, December 11, 2017. To be considered for candidacy to serve as a Parish Council member, one must be baptized and chrismated as an Orthodox Christian and, if married, his or her marriage must have been performed according to the Rites of our Holy Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. In addition, one must be a responsible Stewardship member of St. George parish for at least one year prior to applying for candidacy. Candidates are also required to meet with Fr. Ted prior to the Parish Council Elections. Elections will be held on **Sunday, December 17th.**

ST. NICHOLAS FEAST DAY

The Feast Day of St. Nicholas is Wednesday, December 6th. Fr. Ted will participate in the Vesper Service for this Feast Day on **Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m. at the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Temecula, California.** His Grace, Bishop Apostolos of Medeia will officiate.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NOTES



There are two events planned for our Sunday School students in December.

The **Christmas program**, which was scheduled for Sunday, December 10th, has been re-scheduled for **Sunday, December 17th**, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Before the *antidoron*, the program will take place in our church. Deacon Euthym will narrate the Christmas story and the students with their families will join in singing Christmas carols.

Christmas caroling will occur after church services on **Sunday, December 24th**. We will visit 2 to 3 parishioners and sing Christmas carols to them. The annual Sunday School Christmas Caroling luncheon will take place following the scheduled visits for the singing of Christmas carols.

Parents are asked to respond to **Jim Christopoulos** as soon as possible and let him know if their child, or children, will be available for either of these events. We understand that the holidays are a busy time of year and people often travel, but we hope that those who are in town will participate on both Sundays.

*Sunday School Message: A Real Christmas**

Should the churches be allowed to remain open on Christmas Day? That's a question with which Art Buchwald once began one of his columns. He lampooned Christmas commercialism by humorously suggesting that the church should close on Christmas because such spiritual activity detracted from the commercial value of Christmas and interfered with the gift-giving, eating, partying and television watching. Cast in the style of a dialogue, the column went this way in part:

"If you keep the churches open, you detract from the great materialistic fervor in this country."

"When?" He asked.

"Quite a few years ago. I read a book that said at one time the religious aspect of Christmas was more important than the exchanging of gifts."

"I don't believe you," he said.

"It's true. The original idea of Christmas was to celebrate the birth of Christ."

Buchwald drives home a point. The Church indeed seeks to help us celebrate a real Christmas. But, how can we experience a real Christmas? How can we teach our children that the toys, games and other gifts that they see advertised over and over have nothing to do with the true spirit of the day? Here are some things to think about:

1. The examples of the Forefathers remind us of the priority of seeking, believing in and serving God— always looking to Him for the fulfillment of our deepest hopes and desires. *"Wise men still seek Him."*
2. The purpose of fasting is to live free from the bondage of excessive food and drink.
3. The singing of Christmas gifts and carols inspires us to anticipate Christmas as a spiritual banquet.
4. The preparation to receive Holy Communion awakens us spiritually and leads us to see how truly Christ is born in us.
5. Giving of ourselves to others in need—our attention; our love; our time and resources— puts flesh and blood on the meaning of Christmas.

As we follow the rhythm of the liturgical year and respond to God's gift of His Son with faith, prayer and obedience, we are able to prepare for and to celebrate a real Christmas. God bless.

— JIM CHRISTOPOULOS,
Sunday School Superintendent

**Adopted from A Year of the Lord: Liturgical Bible Studies*

We ask parents to discuss with their children the lessons that they learn in Sunday School. Sunday School convenes only once a week and it is necessary to re-enforce throughout the week their lessons. For materials that are available for home use, please see Fr. Ted.

TWO SAINTS FROM THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: ST. NICHOLAS & ST. SPYRIDON

There are two Saints who are bound up with the Advent period that show how philanthropic giving and love for mankind was combined with dogmatic and right teaching about Christ and the Holy Trinity. Both Saints were present at the Nicaea Council and believed that the Son of God was truly equal and part of the great Godhead.

Both are also connected with loving gift-giving. St. Nicholas was from a wealthy family and he used his wealth to benefit the needy. St. Nicholas became bishop of Myra. He is known for showing his loving concern for a poor father who had to provide a dowry for three daughters to enter into marriage. Without having a dowry, the daughters could have become slaves. Nicholas gave a sack of gold coins which landed in a shoe or stocking. When the man realized that the third dowry was from St. Nicholas, the Saint begged him not to share what had happened with anyone else. In this way, St. Nicholas became a model-type of giver like Santa Claus, especially in the West. In the East, St. Basil became connected with gifts near the beginning of the year (known now as New Year).

But, St. Nicholas was also connected with worship for Jesus Christ. When Arius defended his ideas that the Son was inferior to the Father, Bishop Nicholas struck him and was deprived of his clerical robes. However, while in detention, he was awarded new robes from the Virgin Mary. At any rate, the Council, together with the new Emperor Constantine agreed with the fact that Christ is indeed equal to God and part of the Holy Trinity. It should be noted that Nicholas had been imprisoned by the pagan Emperor Diocletian, but was freed and restored by Constantine. Otherwise, Nicholas would have been a martyr for the Faith.

St. Spyridon was also very active in the fight for the divinity of Christ. He argued for the role of Christ as part of the Godhead. He also was persecuted under the later pagan emperors and became Bishop of Trimythous. At the First Ecumenical Council, he actively took part in the debate about

the role of Jesus Christ and he argued against a "philosopher" who argued for the Arian position. It is important to note that the Arian position was more in line with Greek philosophy; but, the Christian bishops worked out a formula that agreed in one Godhead of equal Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They used Greek language and terminology to state the Christian truth.

Later, the Second Ecumenical Council clarified that the Holy Spirit was also derived from the Father, but equal in Godliness. This was in the year 381 A.D. The "philosopher" who argued against St. Spyridon later converted to the Christian Faith and became a supporter of St. Spyridon. St. Spyridon was also a man who helped the poor. He is called a "wonder-worker" because of the many miracles that were associated with his prayers. In one case, a lifeless daughter and mother, were restored to life. In another major event, a friend who was condemned by a judge got a better sentence and the judge set his friend free.

Everywhere St. Spyridon became a voice for the Holy Trinity and always helped those who were in need. **St. Spyridon** is celebrated every year on **December 12th**, while **St. Nicholas** is honored every year on **December 6th**.

In noting that the Feast Day of St. Spyridon is December 12th, we also note that this is just one day prior to the day when the Christmas Fast traditionally becomes more intense. Weddings, for example are not performed from December 12 and throughout the rest of this Fasting season in preparation for celebrating the Lord's Nativity (Christmas Day).

– MATTHEW DAVIS

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

December 3, 2017, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Plan to join us in making our pledge to grow the membership and the ministries of our beloved St. George Greek Orthodox Church of the Desert.

THE VIRTUE OF DISCERNMENT

"For all things that are good and beneficial for our souls and peace in the world, let us ask the Lord." This short prayer-request is heard during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. This request offered to our Lord carries with it the implication that we seek His wisdom through the *gift of discernment*. Indeed, not all things are good and beneficial for our souls. What is clear is that whatever is good for our souls, helps to establish peace in our world. Peace and spiritual well-being go hand-in-hand. In fact, the things that are beneficial to our souls and the most important things in our lives. This point is driven home by the Church through Her very body of Church Law, in which the principle of *economia* is allowed. *Economia* means the allowance of all things that are beneficial for the salvation of one's soul, precisely because the salvation of the soul supersedes the parameters issued by laws. This does not mean that the Church's Laws are to be ignored or abolished. They serve to preserve our moral and spiritual way of life as prescribed in the Bible.

There is no doubt that we need to pray for God's Wisdom, of which the gift of discernment is a big part. It is needed in all that we do - even in our household chores. Therefore, let us review a few major areas in which discernment is needed: 1) our personal fasting and prayer disciplines; 2) our proper self-image and our relationships with others; 3) our efforts toward repentance and penance.

The Church's fasting laws are very strict. During fasting seasons (examples, before Christmas and before Easter) fasting involves increased efforts in the avoidance of certain foods and participation in more Church Services, as well as more study of Scripture. However, incorporated into our Church's Law is the rule that one who is unable to fast strictly or pray for longer hours is to eat whatever is necessary for their health and to worship according to their ability. In fact, this is the basis for the hospital visit by the priest to administer Holy Communion to the sick, in which case, fasting and church attendance are not required.

Discernment plays a major role in our own self-

image, as well as in our view of other people. We and others are not all bad, nor all perfect. We are loved by God Who loves us more than we love ourselves. Therefore, the laws of the Church require us to encourage each other to both repent of our sins and maintain our virtues. The Church never gives up on anyone. Discernment teaches that we do not hate the person; we hate the sin. Despite the sin, the person has been given the power by God to repent, which means that there is innate goodness within each of us. Discernment teaches us to see our faults while also knowing our virtues (and everyone has God-given virtues). We *use* our virtues to *overcome* our sins. We must allow ourselves the opportunities to do this - and we must allow others to do so, as well. Ideally, in a sinless world, based on everyone's virtuous living, we would have both personal and world peace.

Our efforts toward repentance need to be measured by discernment. One of the grave consequences of sin is that it erodes the conscience. In addition - or, as a result - sin creates "bad habits" and even addictions, which undermine peaceful households and productive work. Repentance is in one sense instantaneous, as in the case of the Prodigal Son who "came to his senses." In another sense, it is a road to recovery requiring patience. Thus, we accept paying the consequences of sin as a duty for God. Above all, we remember that we can overcome our faults only with God's help.

Finally, we always need to discern our thoughts and motives in everything - discerning what is based on pride and what is based on humility. St. Moses the Ascetic advises, *"Discernment is no small virtue, but one of the most important gifts of the Holy Spirit...to acquire the ability to discern between the spirits that enter the soul and to assess them accurately..."* (*Philokalia, Vol. 1 "On the Fathers of Sketis and Discrimination,"* by St. John Cassian, pgs. 98-108)

+FR. THEODORE



ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENT

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

An "active shooter" is an individual who is engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms(s) and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.

- Victims are selected at random*
- Event is unpredictable and evolves quickly*
- Knowing what to do can save lives*

You have three options:

1 RUN

- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Leave your belongings behind
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
- Help others escape, if possible
- Do not attempt to move the wounded

- Prevent others from entering an area where the active shooter may be
- Keep your hands visible

2 HIDE

- Hide in an area out of the shooter's view
- Lock door or block entry to your hiding place
- Silence your cell phone (including vibrate mode) and remain quiet

3 FIGHT

- Fight as a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger
- Attempt to incapacitate the shooter
- Act with as much physical aggression as possible
- Improvise weapons or throw items at the active shooter
- Commit to your actions . . . your life depends on it

The first officers to arrive on scene will not stop to help the injured. Expect rescue teams to follow initial officers. These rescue teams will treat and remove injured.

Once you have reached a safe location, you will likely be held in that area by law enforcement until the situation is under control, and all witnesses have been identified and questioned. Do not leave the area until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.

*Philoptochos Christmas Luncheon
Saturday, December 9, 2017*

11:30 a.m.

At

*Desert Horizons Country Club
44900 Desert Horizons Country Club
Indian Wells, CA 92210
760-340-4646*

*R.S.V.P. by December 3, 2017 to
Rhonda Latkovic, Linda Kallis, Tina Veroulis
Make your check out to Philoptochos*

Family and Friends are invited

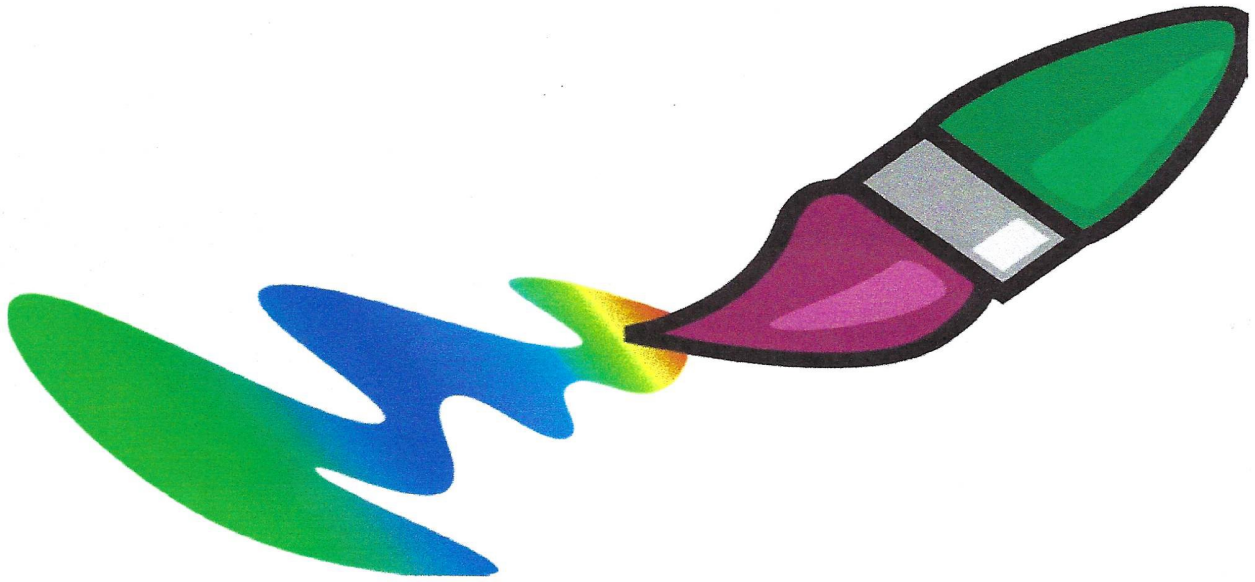
Pre-fixe Menu, no substitutions \$35.00 per person

Choice of:

- 1. Salmon with creamy polenta, sherried mushrooms and vegetables*
 - 2. Petite Filet with chutney sauce, garlic mashed potatoes and vegetables*
 - 3. Medallions of Chicken with kale risotto and vegetables*
- Salad, soft drinks and dessert are included*

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Number attending: _____ Amount Enclosed: _____



ADULT COLORING SESSION & LUNCHEON

When: Friday, December 15th @ 12 PM-2 PM

Where: St. George Church Hall

RSVP: By Dec. 10th to Rhonda Latkovic

We will have a Christmas Theme for our luncheon & coloring session! Lunch will be served at 12:00 PM with coloring to follow. We will be decorating sugar cookies for the Holidays for attendees to take home! A \$5.00 minimum donation is requested. There will also be a raffle. Coloring supplies provided. Please join us!

Please note-due to Greek Festival preparations there will be no Adult Coloring Sessions in January & February.

- GYROS - GREEK LAMB - BAKLAVA - LOUKOUMADES -
 GREEK CHICKEN - MOUSAKA - SPANAKOPITA - DOLMADE - PASTICHIO - SOULVAKI - BAKLAVA - DOLMADES - GYROS
 GREEK CHICKEN - MOUSAKA - SPANAKOPITA - DOLMADE - PASTICHIO - SOULVAKI - BAKLAVA - DOLMADES - GYROS
 GYROS - GREEK LAMB - BAKLAVA - LOUKOUMADES -



AUTHENTIC GREEK FOOD
HEAVENLY PASTRIES
GREEK FOLK DANCERS
OUZO • RETSINA • METAXA
ART & SOUVENIRS
RELIGIOUS ITEMS
CHURCH TOURS
KIDZ ZONE
FUN FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

Saint George
Greek Orthodox Church

Proudly presents the

22ND ANNUAL

GREEK
FESTIVAL

in Palm Desert, CA

Saturday & Sunday

February 17th & 18th 2018

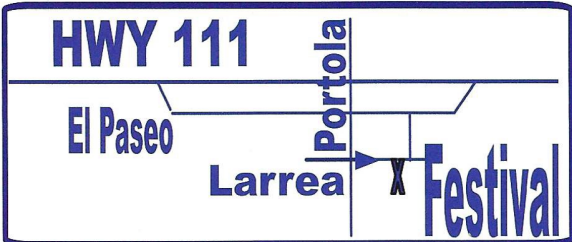
11am to 8pm

on the Church Grounds

74-109 Larrea, Palm Desert, CA

(760) 568-9901

Experience Authentic Greek Food
Devour Heavenly Pastries
Dance to live Greek music, and
Be Greek for a Day!



EL PASEO COURTESY CARTS available for festival attendee pick up & drop off. Route along El Paseo from San Pablo to Portola & church festival entrance.
ADDITIONAL PARKING AVAILABLE at Washington Charter School, and Hope Luthern Church.
SHUTTLE SERVICE PROVIDED.

ADMISSION \$3

(Children 12 & under free)
 Active Duty Military, Police,
 Fire & EMT Free w/ ID

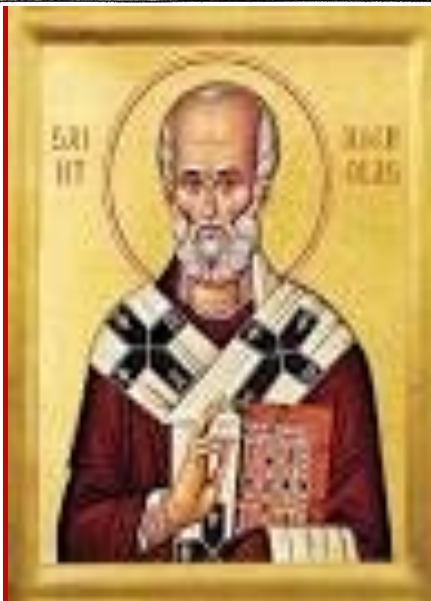
www.PDGreekFest.org
 t f PDGreekFest



We are pleased to provide assistance to anyone requesting it. If you need help, please ask.

Needs list

Item Description	Quantity	Source	Estimated price	
Paper goods and supplies		El Greco	\$6,000.00	Half of it he donates
Greek Beer	70 cases	Fantis	\$1,750.00	
Ouzo	15 cases	Fantis	\$1,500.00	
Retsina	8 cases	Fantis	\$750.00	
Greek white wine	15 cases	Fantis	\$1,250.00	
Geek red wine	15 cases	Fantis	\$1,250.00	
Domestic wine	15 cases		\$1,000.00	
Domestic beer		Heimark	\$2,500.00	
Bottled water	100 cases		\$500.00	
Produce			\$3,000.00	
Grape leaves	6 tubs	Fantis		
Filo	700 lbs.	Fantis		
Loukaniko	150 lbs.	Fotis and Son	\$1,000.00	
Optional Santorini wine	15 cases		\$1,850.00	
Greek yogurt	25 tubs	Sysco	\$750.00	
Dairy products and eggs		Ionian Produce	\$5,00.00	
Feta	15 tubs	Ionian produce	\$1,000.00	
Calamari	35 cases			
Pita	75 cases	Vitco	\$1,500.00	
Gyros slices	50 cases	Vitco	\$1,750.00	
Gyros cones	800 lbs.	Vitco	\$3,500.00	
Chickens	20 cases	Vitco	\$2,000.00	
Lamb chops	600 lbs.	Vitco	\$5,000.00	
Leg of lamb	400 lbs.	Sam's club	\$2,500.00	
Pastitsio		In house	\$2,000.00	
Mousaka		In house	\$2,000.00	
Pork souvlaki		In house	\$1,500.00	
Chicken souvlaki		In house	\$3,000.00	



Please Join us to Celebrate
Saint Nicholas Name Day
 Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church
 41132 Guava St., Murrieta, CA 92562

Tuesday, December 5
 7 pm GREAT VESPERS

Wednesday, December 6
 9 am ORTHROS - 10am DIVINE LITURGY

Celebrant Bishop Apostolos of Medeia
St. Nicholas Annual Dinner to follow Vespers
Everyone is Welcomed!

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: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com
Telephone: (760)568-9901 / FAX: 9760) 568-9492

Schedule of Sunday Services: Orthros-8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Sunday School-10:30 a.m.

DECEMBER 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Schedule of Sunday Services: Orthros-8:30am Divine Liturgy-9:30am Sunday School- 10:30 am					1	2 Vespers-5:00 p.m.
3- 14th Sunday of St. Luke Ep. Eph. 5:8-19 Gos.-St. Luke 18:35-43 Stewardship Sunday	4- ST. BARBARA THE GREAT MARTYR Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m. Philoptochos Board Mtg.- 11:00 a.m Festival Mtg- 7:00 p.m	5 Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Vespers at Saint Nicholas Church in Temecula-7:00 p.m	6-ST. NICHOLAS OF MYRA Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study - 2:00 p.m.	7 Choir Practice- 1:00 p.m. Parish Council- 2:30 p.m.	8	9 Philoptochos Christmas Luncheon-11:30am @ Desert Horizons, Indian Wells No Vespers
10- 10th Sunday of St. Luke Ep.-Eph.6:10-17 Gos.-St. Luke 13:10-17 Christmas Bake Sale General Assembly	11 Deadline for Applications for Parish Council Elections	12-ST. SPYRIDON Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m Bible Study- 11:00 a.m.	13 Men's Bible Study- 2:00 p.m. AHEPA Meeting- 6:30 p.m.	14 Christmas Baskets for the homebound Choir Practice- 1:00 p.m.	15 Coloring Book Session-12 noon	16 Vespers-5:00 p.m.
17 - 11th Sunday of St. Luke Ep.-Col. 3:4-11 Gos.-St. Luke 14:16-24 Christmas Program Christmas Bake Sale Parish Elections	18	19 Bible Study- 10:00 a.m.	20 Men's Bible Study-2:00 p.m.	21	22 ROYAL HOURS OF CHRISTMAS— 9:00 a.m.	23 FOREFEAST OF CHRISTMAS Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m. Vespers—5:00 p.m.
24- Sunday Before Christmas Gos. St.Matth. 1:1-25 Sun. School Christmas Caroling <u>Great Vespers-5 p.m.</u> 31-Sunday After Christmas	25-CHRISTMAS DAY THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy -9:30 a.m.	26	27 Fr. Ted will travel to the Metropolis Offices in San Francisco	28 Fr. Ted will travel to the Metropolis Offices in San Francisco	29	30 No Vespers