



# Voice of St. George

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



## SPIRITUAL RENEWAL...AGAIN

It is the beginning of a new creation. As such, the theme of renewal is ever present in our minds—from “New Year’s resolutions,” to plans for a new way of life, which may include marriage, children, graduation, and a host of many new opportunities.

Every so often the idea of spiritual renewal comes to mind—if not with the New Year, then maybe during Great Lent. When the idea of spiritual renewal dawns upon us, there are always lingering questions: What does it mean to be “spiritual?” How do we go about renewing ourselves spiritually?

I would propose that to be spiritual means to *be* a person united with God. In other words, it is a state of *being*—being *in* the world, but not *of* the world.

Being a person who is

united with God means that one’s thoughts, ideas, and motives are centered upon the love of God, keeping one’s mind centered on God’s love in everything every day.

There are three tools that we have at our disposal in order to live a spiritual way of life:

- 1) Education in the Faith
- 2) Participation in Church worship.
- 3) Personal prayer.

Education in the Faith includes study of the Bible and reading of the writings of the Church’s Saints, while learning more about the meaning of our Divine Church Services.

As we learn more about the meanings of our Church Services through study and participation, we come to learn more about the nature and meaning of prayer. A vivid example of this is found in the Vesper and Orthros

readings celebrating both our Lord’s Circumcision on January 1st and His Baptism on January 6th.

In celebrating the Circumcision of Christ, the hymns tell us that the same God Who created the universe is the same God Who gave the Law for our benefit and Who now in the flesh shows us the example of obedience to God’s Will. By obeying His own Law, He sheds blood for the first time for our salvation and claims authority to give us a new Law—the Law of Baptism.

While circumcision is the sacrifice of a part of oneself for God; Baptism now is the sacrifice of one’s whole self for God so that God can, in turn, be with us. God took on our flesh so that we can take on His divinity. Taking upon ourselves the divine qualities of God is a matter of our willingness to do so

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and our own baptism is the first step in uniting ourselves with Christ. Holy Confession is our "second baptism" by which we repent of our sins, shedding tears of sorrow for those sins, and tears of gratitude for God's mercy. Likewise, our participation in Holy Communion and all of the Sacraments is all a matter of exercising our will to take on divine energies of Christ our God.

St. Maximos the Confessor defines a spiritual way of life as that which leads to our awareness of the divine abilities that lie within us to bring blessings and salvation to others. *"When we pray, let our aim be this mystery of deification, which shows us what we were once like and what the self-emptying of the Only-Begotten Son through the flesh has now made us; which shows us, that is, the depths to which we were dragged down by the weight of sin and the heights to which we have been raised by His compassionate hand."* ("Treatise On the Lord's Prayer, *Philokalia*, Vol. 2, pg. 304). "Being raised" means that, while Adam was unable to fight temptation and avoid evil, we are now, with Christ the New Adam, given the power to fight temptations and overcome evil by acquiring the divine virtues of Christ.

It all begins with our will. St. Thalassios, a co-worker with St. Maximos, says, *"An all-embracing and intense longing for God binds those who experience such longing both to God and to others."* (*Philokalia*, Vol. 2, pg. 307). To those who ask, "Are you saved?" the answer to them and to ourselves is found in better questions, *"Is it your will? Do you want to be saved? Do you join Christ? Have you joined Christ?"* Should the answer to those questions be "yes," we can find ourselves renewing our baptismal pledge, becoming pilgrims in prayer, like the anonymous figure behind the true story recorded in the book, *The Way of the Pilgrim*. In this way, everything we do and say every day is a living prayer to God for the salvation of others. It is spiritual life.

Let us renew our baptismal pledge again for 2018 - yes, it will be a spiritual renewal...again!

+FR. THEODORE

ENCYCLICAL FROM  
HIS EMINENCE,  
METROPOLITAN GERASIMOS



*"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (which means, God with us).*

**Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 7:14**

Amid the flurry of shopping, decorating, and parties, each of us can lose focus on the significance of the Nativity of Jesus Christ season for our life of faith. We can become overly sentimental about Christmas. We can forget the meaning of what happened in Bethlehem over two millennia ago.

The passage above from the Book of Isaiah repeated in the Gospel of Matthew, should jolt us to a new understanding: God is with us. God Himself has broken into the world and into our lives. We have seen the glorious light of God because *"God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all."* (1 John 1:5). Jesus Christ is this light. Jesus Christ is one with the Father. And today, we celebrate His Nativity in the Flesh as we call the Feast in the Church calendar.

The Nativity of Christ - the Incarnation - was necessary to rescue us from ourselves. As Saint Athanasios the Great taught, humanity had turned away from the true God and became less than what God created us to be. We had forgotten that each man and each woman is created in the image and likeness of the true God. This condition still exists in our world today, when we see the dehumanizing actions of our world towards one another, from trafficking and slavery, violence and abuse, to war and persecution, and the list could go on.

So, what was Our Creator to do? How could He renew the image of God in us? He became human Himself, in His Son, Jesus Christ. Saint Athanasios writes, *"The Word of God came in His own person, because it was He alone, the image of the Father, who could recreate man after the image."* In other words, God took on human flesh, because

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*ENCYCLICAL OF HIS EMINENCE, continued*

we needed God to do for us what we could not or would not do for ourselves. We did not turn to God, so God comes to us as the child born of Mary in Bethlehem this day.

In the Nativity, God "*Became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father*" (John 1:14). By taking human flesh and living in the world, Christ has shown us how we are to treat ourselves, our neighbor, the world around us, and how to be in communion with our Heavenly Father. That fellowship does not occur by downloading a podcast or reading a few nice books, as instructional as they might be for us. Christ has taught us that communion with God requires that we immerse ourselves in our Church community, amid other disciples of Christ. God is with us in our parishes. God is with us in the Liturgy, in Sacred Scripture, in our prayer and worship, and in Holy Communion. There we experience the glory of the light of Christ.

Once we have seen the true Light of Christ, we can carry that light into the world. We actually are commanded to do so. Just as the angels - the messengers of God - shared the Good News that God is with us to the shepherds, we can share that same Good News with others. God is with us when we are with our families and friends. God is with us in our workplaces and in every action of our day, no matter how small it may seem. God is with us in our acts of charity and service that restore the dignity of those who suffer from the ills and injustices of the world, as Christ's presence renewed the image of God in us all.

May the light of the Nativity shine in your hearts, in your homes, and in all your days in this Holy Season of Light and in the coming New Year.

With Love in Our Newborn King,  
++GERASIMOS,  
Metropolitan of San Francisco

**SPIRITUAL RENEWAL WITH THE  
TEN COMMANDMENTS**

In order to properly review the status of our souls on a daily basis and to prepare for the Sacrament of Holy Confession as needed, it is vital to look at God-given guidelines, which are provided by the Beatitudes (St. Matthew 5: 3-16) and the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20: 2-17). This year, we will use the Ten Commandments to examine our consciences and to consider the changes that we need to make in our personalities in order to reflect the image of Christ our God and find peace in our lives and salvation of our souls. It will be important to review the corollaries to each of the Commandments in order to understand their full meaning for us. The Ten Commandments are:

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol or a likeness of anything in heaven above or in the earth beneath. You shall not bow down to them or serve them.
3. You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not commit murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness.
10. You shall not covet whatever belongs to your neighbor.

Beginning in February, we will study the full meaning, as well as the corollaries of the First Commandment. In March, we will study the Second Commandment in the same way- and so on every month throughout this year. As a reference, check out the *Pocket Prayer Book for Orthodox Christians*, published by the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese. Have no copy? Let Fr. Ted know and one will be given to you.

## PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS



### December

Our annual Christmas Lunch was held on December 9 at Desert Horizons Country Club. We had 51 members and guests attend. We each received a table favor of a hand carved olive wood ornament from Jerusalem. The food was delicious and the musical performance was by Eric Frankson and Bonnie Gilgallon. Eric played the violin and piano and Bonnie sang providing us with wonderful Christmas music. Rhonda Latkovic was Chairperson with Linda Kallis, Linda Petalas and Tina Veroulis assisting. Pam Zaverdas was our photographer. See photos.

### Christmas Bake Sale

Lula Valissarakos was in charge of making the bread and cookies. We had 22 volunteers. They were Kathy Amos, Stacy Argyros, Nancy Breighner, Susan Clark, Jeffrey Currari, Pat Dalkas, Bess Heinrich, Linda Kallis, Evelyn Karas, Christina Kundanis, Anna Kyriacou, Rhonda Latkovic, Carol Lyons, Tommy Maverick, Linda Petalas, Alice Pulos, Emily Tcharos, Tina Veroulis, Nadia Hector, Debbie Vawter, Mary Zachariadou and Pam Zaverdas. If anyone was left out, my apologies. The volunteers made, baked and wrapped our baked goods. We also took orders, kept track of the monies and sold our baked goods. One person cannot do a project like this alone. It takes many loving hands. Thank you.

Christmas Baskets -- for home bound parishioners were made on December 14. Rhonda Latkovic was the Chairperson of this project and the volunteers made and delivered 24 baskets. The volunteers included Chris Deleganis, Bess Heinrich, Linda Kallis, Evelyn Karas, Christina Kundanis, Tommy Maverick, Linda Petalas, Alice Pulos, Emily Tcharos and Tina Veroulis. Our parishioners were very pleased to receive them. The baskets contained bread, cookies, candy canes, hygiene products (lip balm, hand cream, etc.), an adult coloring book, colored pencils and a pencil sharpener and our Christmas Card and an ornament.

### Donations to the local poor:

Street Life - feeding 250 people December 19 at a park in Indio. Arrangements were made by Rhonda Latkovic. We served burritos, rice and beans bought from Andy's Burgers (Nick Krespis). We had 15 volunteers including Father Ted and Presvytera. Funds were distributed in support toward the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission food drive, the Salvation Army, and the Ophelia Project which supports girls in high school to help them graduate.

### January

We will be sending a New Year's box of goodies to our Adopt a Student Devon. The box will include our bread and cookies.

We start making the food for the Festival on January 8th. Check the schedule and see Lula. Roll up your sleeves, put on your apron and come help us. Everyone can help. There are various jobs; not just baking.

We need sponsors or hosts for our Coffee Hour each Sunday in January. Please check your calendars and sign up with Pat Dalkas.

– LINDA KALLIS,  
Philoptochos Chapter President



(left to right) Melissa Hawkins, Alexandra Dymond, Marge Guerecki, Maria Dunkel, Nancy Breighner, Bess and John Manesis.

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PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS, Continued



(left to right) Linda Petalas, Rhonda Latkovic, Sherryl Best



(left to right) Nelly, Steve, Jr., and Steve Banki, Sr., Josie Desnoyers, Evelyn Karas, Carol Lyons, Tommie Maverick, Annette Laskaris



<-----Evonne Brown and Linda Kallis



(left to right) Terry Ayanopolis, Kathy Amos, Demetrios Currari, Louise Dobbs Barringer, Becky Allen, Matushka Gloria Lehman, Katerina, and Doris Elmo



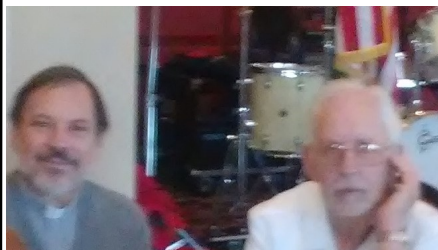
(left to right) sitting: Christina Kundanis, Tina Veroulis, Angie Wyssup, Olga and Nadia. (left to right) standing: Pam Zaverdas, Ana Doubaratzis, Lula Valissarakos, Maria Zachariadou



(standing, left to right) Emily Tcharos, J.J. Richards, Susan Clark, Ken Hoffman. (sitting left to right) Connie Loomis, Alice Pulos, Adele Gallade



<-----Connie Betton and Chris Laskaris



<-----Fr. Ted and Chris Laskaris

## DECEMBER CHRISTMAS BASKETS FOR THE HOMEBOUND

On Thursday, December 14th, volunteers met to prepare 24 Christmas Baskets for those in our community who are homebound. Thanks to donations of time, talent, & treasure, our Philoptochos Chapter was able to prepare beautiful holiday baskets whose contents included Christmas bread & koulouria, coloring books, pencils & sharpeners, nuts, crackers, chocolates, candy canes, tissue packs, & anti-bacterial hand gel all placed in festive packaging. Volunteers assembled the baskets & then delivered them the same day. Our thanks to those who helped with assembly and delivery of the baskets. These included Bess Heinrich, Evelyn Karas, Linda Kallis, Christine Kundanis, Rhonda Latkovic, Tommie Maverick, Linda Petalas, Alice Pulos, Emily Tcharos, Lula Valissarakos, Tina Veroulis, & Chris Deleganis.



CHRISTMAS BASKET WORKERS - (Top row: left to right) Evelyn Karas, Linda Kallis, Chris Deleganis, Linda Petalas, Rhonda Latkovic (Bottom row: left to right) Alice Pulos, Tommie Maverick, Bess Heinrich, Emily Tcharos, Tina Veroulis and Christine Kundanis



Christmas Baskets all in a row distributed to the home bound parishioners of St. George

## AHEPA NEWS



The next meeting of members of our parish AHEPA 528 Chapter will be on **Wednesday, January 10th at 6:30 p.m. at the church.** The agenda will include discussion regarding the District 20 Mid – Winter Conference in San Bernardino on Saturday, January 27, 2018 at the Castaway Restaurant. Details, information and registration forms can be found online at: [www.ahepadistrict20.org](http://www.ahepadistrict20.org). Attention will be given to sending delegates from our local chapter to this Conference. Also, members are asked to save the dates for the **AHEPA Western Regional District Convention in Reno, Nevada from June 21st to June 24th** at the **Atlantis Casino Resort Hotel and Spa.**

As part of the January meeting agenda, discussion will also be entertained regarding the traditional AHEPA participation in this year's St. George Greek Festival, scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, February 17 & 18. We look forward to helping in every aspect of the Festival and setting up the AHEPA 528 Festival vendor booth.

AHEPA 528 members, along with family and friends gathered at the Towne Center Café on Saturday, December 16th for the annual AHEPA Christmas dinner. The whole AHEPA 528 membership joins in asking our Lord to continue blessing all of our St. George parishioners in celebration of our Lord's Nativity and His Holy Baptism, and we pray for a blessed and healthy New Year to all.

As we begin a New Year, we would like everyone to consider making a donation to the AHEPA 528 **Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund.** Every year, college-bound students from our St. George community are awarded scholarships from this AHEPA 528 scholarship fund, founded in loving memory of Fr. T. P. Theophilos. To donate, contact the AHEPA 528 website at: [www.ahepa528.org](http://www.ahepa528.org). Students applying for the scholarship this year need to contact this website to download the application forms and instructions.

## NOTES FROM THE FALL GENERAL ASSEMBLY



The Fall General Assembly of our St. George parish was held on Sunday, December 10th (late, due to the installation of our new parish hall flooring). The General Assembly Chairman was **Jim Christopoulos**.

Proposed amendments to the parish by-laws were reported by **Mike Vawter**. The amendments that were approved were those stating that in the event that a quorum for a General Assembly is not reached, a fifteen-to twenty minute recess will occur in order to try to gather a quorum, that failing, the subsequent General Assembly will be considered legal. The number of parish council members was reduced from 11 to 9. Monies paid for parish needs above the amount of \$250 without authorization from the parish council or designated chairperson of an event will not be reimbursed. The amendment to establish a minimum amount for Stewardship failed, since there was no motion to accept it.

The 2018 Parish Budget was passed and financial reports were accepted.

The 2018 Festival report was accepted and the Festival Preparation Schedule was presented.

Members gave resounding approval with an ovation applauding the Parish Council for the upgrades of both the parish courtyard and the re-flooring of the parish hall.

Tasia Richards offered to serve as auditor for the parish if she happened not to be elected to the parish council. Her offer was unanimously accepted.

The Election Committee for 2017 was formed: Nancy Breighner, John Petalas, and Emily Tcharos.

Fr. Ted announced that the **Metropolis of San Francisco Clergy-Laity Assembly** will take place at **St. Nicholas Ranch on January 29 and 30, 2018**.

## 2018 GREEK FESTIVAL



**Monday, January 8, 2018** is the date when preparations for the 2018 Festival take on their serious nature.

Checking our the enclosed, January 2018 parish calendar, Monday, January 8th will find dolmades to be the first menu item to be made, followed by the making of tyropites the following week.

**We need everyone to help throughout January and February leading up to the Festival. Every week, volunteers to work in preparation for our Festival are needed from 9:00 a.m. to at least 2:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday.** For information and details regarding the work schedule and to volunteer, please plan to check in with **Stacey Argyros** or **Lula Valissarakos** when arriving.

**2018 Festival fliers** are now available for distribution throughout our general community. Everyone is asked to distribute these fliers wherever possible. In addition, **social media** is a big part of our Festival advertising campaign. Those who use Facebook are asked to post information about our Festival on their page and share. Donations toward covering Festival costs are most welcome. Please write checks to "St. George Greek Orthodox Church" and indicate in the memo section "Festival (and the item(s) toward which the donation is to be applied). See the Needs List posted in the parish hall.

All station chairpersons and Parish Council members and general volunteers are to attend the **Festival meeting - Monday, January 8th at 7:00 p.m.**

## OUR ST. GEORGE PARISH WEBSITE

We thank God for the wonderful work provided by **Wynn Storton** in managing our **St. George parish website**. Visitors to our parish often give compliments about our website and how they are inspired to attend our church services and also join us for our parish festival. Our website can be found online at [www.go-stgeorge.org](http://www.go-stgeorge.org). Our prayers are that Wynn be granted many blessings as he continues his dedicated work in managing our top-quality parish website.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL



Our Sunday School students celebrated the season of our Lord's Nativity by presenting an inspirational Sunday School Christmas Program directed by **Deacon Euthym Kontaxis** on Sunday, December 17th, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Santa Claus (a.k.a. Wynn Storton) added to the festivities, offering a spark plug this year for the car that he gave Fr. Ted last year. (His car now runs smoothly across the carpet in his living room.) Santa brought joy to all during the special coffee hour that followed the program.

In addition, Christmas Eve, December 24th, saw our Sunday School students singing Christmas carols to some of the homebound parishioners of St. George. After visiting these parishioners, the students and their parents joined for their traditional Sunday School luncheon at the Towne Center Café.

Sunday School classes resume on Sunday, January 7, 2018.



←— Constantine Kolytiris' beloved wife, Valerie, and his three daughters, Vasiliki, Euthymia and Zoe, pose with "Santa Claus" (a.k.a. Wynn Storton).



Our Sunday School students and their parents joined Deacon Euthym (at right) singing Christmas carols during their annual Program.



Steve Banki, Jr., gave a short & wonderful performance of one of the Sunday School Christmas carols during the program.

## DECEMBER ADULT COLORING GROUP SESSION

—Our adult coloring group met on Friday, December 15th for our holiday session. Luncheon was served at noon and included turkey sandwiches, potato salad, green bean casserole, and dessert. A holiday raffle was held with several women winning prizes that included bath & body products, jewelry items & a tote bag. Everyone at the luncheon were also treated with a Tiffany "swag bag", that was donated by Rhonda's good friend Larry Jindra, sales representative from the Tiffany store on El Paseo. After lunch the group worked together & iced 10 dozen sugar cookies. These cookies were prepared for the homeless and given out at the Christmas event in Indio on December 21st. Everyone really enjoyed working on this cookie project and we may plan a similar session for the Easter season benefiting the homeless group again. Due to the festival baking schedule, there will not be any adult coloring sessions in January & February. Our meetings will resume in March 2018. —RHONDA LATKOVIC



Members of the Adult Coloring Book Program—with their Christmas gift bags, offering blessings to all for a Merry Christmas.

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DECEMBER ADULT COLORING, *continued*

Preparing Christmas treats for the homeless: (left to right): Emily Tcharos, Doris Elmo, Christina Kundanis

**OFFICE STAFF**

We wish a most blessed New Year to those who work with great dedication in managing our parish office: our bookkeeper, Cherise Everett, along with our volunteer, Tina Veroulis (who also serves as our assistant treasurer). Rhonda Latkovic helps with the administration of our Stewardship program and, of course, Nick Kaperonis works with Cherise, Tina and Rhonda as parish treasurer.

**NEW LITURGY BOOKS** - have arrived. Donations for the cost of printing these new books are still being accepted. Those who want their own copy of the new Liturgy books are asked to purchase a copy for themselves. Please leave the books already in church for others to use.

**SACRAMENTS IN DECEMBER**

Marriage: Yvonne Barsakis and Victor DuQue. Kara Bakas, Koumbara. Dec. 2nd.

Funeral: John Skordoulis- Dec. 22nd.

**ENDOWMENT FUND**

The Saint George of the Desert Endowment Fund grew from \$325,541.66 at month end October, 2017 to \$331,681.86 at the month end November, 2017. +\$ 39,878.40 YTD. Our current Asset Allocation follows the Fund's by-laws as shown below:

A. Domestic Equities.....\$178,500.90 .....52%

B. Domestic Fixed Income-\$126,733.00....	40%
C. International Equities....\$ 24,869.16...	7%
D. Cash & Equivalents.....\$ 1,578.80....	1%
<b>Total.....\$ 331,681.66.....</b>	<b>100%</b>

Equity Markets, i.e. The Stock Markets, have been at record levels lately and a pullback eventually will occur - be it 10% or 20% or some other amount - none of which can be predicted. To the doomsday sayers who say they predicted it, but not when, I say a broken clock is right twice a day. The committee insists on patient, diverse and conservative investing. 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 when voted upon. At current rates, not sustainable but as an example, we can reach \$500,000 in less than 5 years. We are currently seeing 12% annual returns. Performance against benchmarks will be obtained at the year-end report.

**I will present to the Board that we we also have on deposit 28 United Health Group shares as a stewardship deposit with a current value of \$6,388.76 which can be used at any time as an offering to the church with proper authorization of the Parish Council.** Current Stock price is \$222.35/share 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 we sell these shares and invest in an Income fund to preserve capital and reduce risk - or cash out if needed. This is also the recommendation of our fund manager, Michele Moore. I 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 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, concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out.

--NICHOLAS M. LATKOVIC,  
Endowment Fund Chairman

**THE THREE HIERARCHS:**  
**STS. BASIL THE GREAT**  
**GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN**  
**& JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**

The Orthodox Church has long honored three Saints: St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil of Caesarea and St. Gregory the Theologian. All these Saints were considered theologians and doctors of the Church. And, as a group, they were honored fairly early as the "Three Hierarchs." Yet, each of them also have their own feast days in the year. But, by early Byzantine times they were united in a common feast held every year on January 30th.

It can be noted that each of these had knowledge of Attic Greek and each of them had exposure to ancient Greek culture. They used their knowledge of Greek and Greek customs as a means to preach about Christ.

While studying in the University of Greece, during class time, St. Basil managed to pen a treatise entitled, "To the Youth" ("Pros tous Neous"), in which he encouraged youth to learn as much as they can, while using their lessons for the management of one's soul and for the preaching of the Holy Gospel. This was not odd—for, during this period of time, many educated people took classes with pagan people dealing with Greek philosophy and literature. Some even had contact at school with Julian the Apostate, who later became the last pagan Roman Emperor (361-363 A.D.) Since, according to the Holy Tradition of the Church, Saints are commemorated on the day on which they departed this present life, St. Basil is also remembered on January 1st. Like many Christian bishops, he came from a family of means, and, like St. Nicholas, he helped care for the poor out of his own resources. He was very active in making Christians remember the Holy Trinity: that the Father; the Son and the Holy Spirit are Three Persons of One God. The Second Ecumenical Council defined the role of the Holy Spirit as proceeding from the Father, but equal to Him as is the Son. Finally, we remember that St. Basil became very important to monasticism in the ancient East. He was drawn to communal religious life and his writings became pivotal in the

Eastern Church's monastic traditions.

Both St. Basil and St. Gregory the Theologian were very involved with fighting the false teaching known as Arianism. The Arian problem was huge, since Constantius II was tolerant of Arians who considered the Father and the Son to be *alike*, or *similar*, while the governor Valens actually preached that the Son was *inferior* to the Father. When the Goths were converted, they became Arians, bringing about many public debates regarding the Personhood of the Son. St. Basil won every debate, which earned him deep hatred from Valens. But, Valens, in trying to force St. Basil into exile, was humbled by St. Basil's boldness against him. Complaining that no one ever before dared to confront him, Valens challenged Basil, saying, "*Never before has anyone dared to speak to me so boldly!*" To which St. Basil replied, "*Perhaps you have never met a bishop before!*"

Both Sts. Gregory and Basil shared enthusiasm for the monastic life. St. Gregory confronted the Emperor Julian the Apostate, saying that he was hypocritical in claiming to be a Christian, while denying that Christ is God, which inevitably led him to speak like a pagan, charging, "*What an evil the Roman state is now nourishing!*" His words reverberated in the minds of many over generations, such that two centuries later, the Emperor Justinian shut down the University in Athens, the last pagan university of the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, Gregory used his skill to defend the Trinitarian theology and he became a very important figure at the Second Ecumenical Council, held at Constantinople. He used the term "proceeds" to express the relation of the Spirit to the Father (just as the Son is "begotten", the Spirit "proceeds" from the Father). Eventually, St. Gregory became Archbishop of Constantinople.

Finally, we come to speak about St. John Chrysostom. He was so good at preaching that he was named "Golden Mouthed" (In Greek, "golden" means "chryso" and "mouth" means "stoma," hence "chryso-stomos" --Chrysostom). He became Patriarch of Constantinople and endeavored to reform and make the clergy of the capitol

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*THE THREE HIERARCHS, continued*

morally better. He also critiqued the royal family and he was summarily exiled. St. John Chrysostom shared with the other three hierarchs a great concern for the poor. St. John Chrysostom, as well as St. Basil founded hospitals and orphanages in Constantinople to help the needy.

Another important aspect of St. John Chrysostom's life was his publication of treatises and homilies. He wrote on many topics, especially important to the life of the Church - among which is the treatise entitled, "On the Priesthood." His instructions on monasticism were also accepted as guideline in the spiritual way of life. His commentaries on the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul are most inspirational.

There are four forms of celebration of the Divine Liturgy used by the Church: The Divine Liturgy of St. James; the Presanctified Divine Liturgy; the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, and the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. The Liturgies of St. John and St. Basil are the most commonly used today. The Liturgy of St. James, if used, is celebrated usually by more than one priest on the Feast Day of St. James the Apostle (October 23rd). The Liturgy of St. Basil is celebrated on the Sundays during Great Lent, the Eve of major Feast Days of the Lord and on the Feast Day of St. Basil (January 1st). The Liturgy of St. John is the most common Liturgy used throughout the year. (By the way, St. John's Feast Day is November 13th.)

There we have it! The Three Hierarchs, celebrated together every year on January 30th. They knew the Greek Language and culture, which they used to steer the people to Christ and the Church, which, at the time was one Church, existing prior to the split between Christian West and Christian East - and way before the fragmentation of the Church in the West. As contemporaries, they joined together as a united force to end one civilization and begin the growth and health of another. **God bless us all through the Three Hierarchs!**  
--MATTHEW DAVIS

**DECEMBER HOMELESS EVENT WITH THE STREET LIFE PROJECT**

Thanks to our Philoptochos Ladies group, and donations from several St. George benefactors (angels), our church community again came together with many volunteers stepping forward to participate in the Christmas Homeless Event in Indio, CA on Tuesday, December 21st from 5:30-8:30 pm sponsored by the Street Life Project group. We asked Nick Krespis, owner of Andy's Burgers in Indio, to prepare burritos, rice, & beans to feed 200-250 homeless at the event. In addition, volunteers donated several cases of bottled water, tortilla chips, over 20-25 dozen cookies, and clothing & toys for this event. St. George also donated the paper plates, napkins, plastic utensils, and garbage bags that were used. Some of our volunteers met at the church to car pool together over to Miles Avenue Park in Indio while others drove directly there. Our St. George group again staffed the food line and dished out food to 200-250 homeless at the Miles Avenue Park location. All the leftovers were then transported over to a second location in Indio, where more homeless were fed. In addition, several St. George volunteers helped out with the distribution of toys to the children. A 'HUGE' thank you to all who participated in helping the homeless at this event including Stephanie & Gloria Christopoulos, Louise DobbsBarringer, Susan Clark & Stan Segaar, Nick Kaperonis, Lula Valissarakos, Emily Tcharos, Maximos Lee, Nick & Fotini Krespis and their employees of Andy's Burgers, Rhonda & Nick Latkovic, Tina & Angelo Veroulis, Dr. Michael Long, Christina Kundanis, Alice Pulos, Jeffery

*Continued on the next page ----->*



SOME NEW FACES

<---(left to right):  
Michael Long, Nick Kaperonis, Fr. Ted, Nick Krespis and Demetrios Krespis

*STREET LIFE PROJECT, continued*

Currari, Father Ted & Presvytera Petula Pantels. Everyone who participated again said how much it meant to them to help the homeless during the holiday season, both at Thanksgiving and for Christmas. It just seems to put everything into perspective. The Street Life Project group is currently trying to raise funds to help get a homeless man named "Nick" off the streets and into an apartment. They have raised \$2500 towards their goal of \$3200. If you would like to help with a donation towards the final \$700 needed, please make a check payable to "The Street Life Project" and in the memo column write "Nick" and turn it into Tina at the church office ASAP. Thank you.

—RHONDA LATKOVIC, Parish Coordinator



<----(left to right):  
Stephanie  
Christopoulos and  
her mother,  
Gloria  
Christopoulos



<----Nick Latkovic  
(Rhonda Latkovic's  
husband)

**HOUSE BLESSINGS**—Those wanting Fr. Ted to visit their homes for House Blessings are asked to contact Fr. Ted to make arrangements regarding date and time. Also, it is helpful in some cases to supply him with directions. In addition to blessing homes, Fr. Ted will continue to complete his

rounds in offering Holy Communion to the homebound as we continue to celebrate the Theophany of our Lord and the New Year.

**BIBLE STUDY CLASSES**

Bible Study classes beginning in 2018 will focus on Bible passages specifically related to the Sacraments of the Church, including House blessings, funerals, and the Blessing of the Waters in celebration of Epiphany. During the season of Great Lent, attention will be given to the Bible passages related to the performance of our Holy Week Services, Pascha and the post-Paschal season. As always, Bible Study classes will take place on Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. The designated time and day for **The Men's Bible Study Class** is still to be determined. Those interested in joining the Men's Bible Study class are asked to contact Fr. Ted informing him of ideas for a day and time that is convenient for most of our men parishioners.

**STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY-JANURARY 14th**

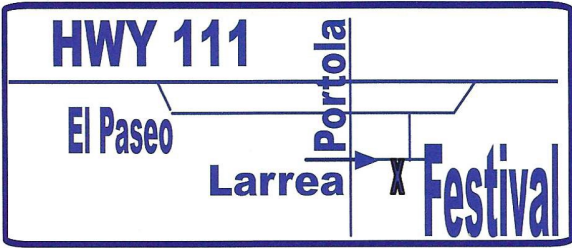
*"Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a way of life, which acknowledges accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God. A primary goal of Stewardship is to promote spiritual growth and strengthen faith. Becoming a Steward begins when we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty and trust and act on those beliefs. As Stewards, we affirm that every aspect of our lives comes as a gift from Him. Stewardship calls on the faithful to cheerfully offer back to God a portion of the gifts with which they have been blessed. An Orthodox Christian Steward is an active participant in the life of the Church. The parish encourages all who accept the Orthodox Faith to become practicing Stewards. Each year the Steward is expected to carefully review his or her personal circumstances and make a commitment of time, talent, and treasure to support the Church."* (Taken from our Archdiocese website: [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org).)

Our parish Stewardship Chairperson, **Rhonda Latkovic**, will offer an informative and inspiring presentation, as we look forward to receiving completed **2018 Stewardship Cards and pledges on Sunday, January 14th.**


- 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



**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.**

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

**Saint George**  
**Greek Orthodox Church**

*Proudly presents the*

**22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL**

# GREEK FESTIVAL

in Palm Desert, CA

**Saturday & Sunday**

**February 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> 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!**

**ADMISSION \$3**

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

[www.PDGreekFest.org](http://www.PDGreekFest.org)  
  PDGreekFest





## STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY—JANUARY 14, 2018

SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY OUR STEWARDSHIP CHAIRPERSON, RHONDA LATKOVIC  
&

PRAYER SERVICE OFFERED BY FR. TED

Give your 2018 pledge of time, talent and treasure in loving support for our Holy St. George Greek Orthodox Church of the Desert

*Peace*

## 2018 METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO CLERGY-LAITY ASSEMBLY JANUARY 29-30, 2018

The 2018 Metropolis Clergy-Laity Assembly will be held on **January 29 - 30, 2018** at **Saint Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center in Dunlap, California**. The Assembly will begin promptly at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, January 29, and will conclude at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 30, 2018.

The theme for this year's Clergy-Laity Assembly is **"Peace"**, based on the quote from the Gospel of John 14:27, **"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."**

- Keynote Address by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos
- Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Stavros Kofinas who will offer a presentation on: ***Leading the Church in a Chaotic World***.
- Interactive workshops on Family Wellness and Missions & Evangelism.
- Presentation on the important Archdiocese Policies for the Protection of Youth and Children.
- Receive an exciting updates on the ministries of Philoptochos and Saint Nicholas Ranch.
- Learn about the progress of our Strategic Plan.
- Divine Services at the Monastery of the Theotokos the Life Giving Spring.
- Review and approval of the Metropolis Budget for 2018.
- Elections for Metropolis Council members.

**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/](http://www.go-stgeorge.org/) email: [pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com](mailto: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.**

# JANUARY 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>*-Check. Fr. Ted may have jury duty.</p> <p>**-Festival preparations continue from Monday to Friday</p>	<p>1-CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST</p> <p>ST. BASIL the GREAT</p> <p>Orthros-8:30 a.m.</p> <p>Divine Liturgy-9:30am</p>	2	3	4	<p>5. EVE OF THEOPHANY*</p> <p>Hours - 8:00 a.m.</p> <p>D. Liturgy 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Blessing of Water- 10:45 a.m.</p>	<p>6-THEOPHANY</p> <p>Orthros-8:30 a.m</p> <p>D.Liturgy-9:30am</p> <p>Blessing of Water 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>Vespers-5:00 p.m.</p>
<p>7- St. John the Baptist</p> <p>Ep.-Acts 18: 1-8</p> <p>Gos.-St. John 1:29-34</p> <p>Vasilopita</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Beginning of 2018</p> <p>Greek Festival</p> <p>Preparations-9:00am</p> <p>(Dolmades)**</p> <p>Festival Meeting- 7:00 p.m.</p>	9	10	11	12	13
		<p>Bible Study- 10:00 a.m.</p>	<p>AHEPA Meeting- 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Choir Practice- 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Parish Council Meeting</p>		<p>Vespers-5:00 p.m.</p>
<p>14-Sunday After Theophany</p> <p>Ep.- Eph. 4:7-13</p> <p>Gos.-St. Matth.4:12-17</p> <p>Stewardship Sunday</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Festival Preparations</p> <p>(tyropitess/spanakopita)** -9:00 a.m.</p>	16	17	18	19	20
		<p>Bible Study- 10:00 a.m.</p>	<p>ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT</p> <p>Orthros-8:30 a.m.</p> <p>D. Liturgy-9:30 am.</p>	<p>ST. ATHANASIOS</p> <p>Orthros-8:30 am</p> <p>D. Liturgy-9:30 am</p>		<p>ST.EFTHYMIOS</p> <p>Orthso-8:30 a.m.</p> <p>D. Liturgy-9:30 am</p> <p>Vespers-5:00 pm.</p>
<p>21-Sunday of Zacchaeus</p> <p>St. Maximos the Confessor</p> <p>Ep.-1 Tim.4:9-15</p> <p>Gos.-St. Luke 18:1-10</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Festival Preparations</p> <p>(pastries/mousaka)**</p>	23	24	25	26	27
		<p>Bible Study- 10:00 a.m.</p>		<p>ST. GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN</p> <p>Orthros-8:30 am</p> <p>D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m.</p>		<p>Vespers-5:00 p.m.</p>
<p>28-Sunday of the Publican &amp; Pharisee</p> <p>Triodion Season Begins</p> <p>Ep.-2 Tim. 3:10-15</p> <p>Gos-St. Luke 19:10-14</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Festival Preparations</p> <p>(pastries/pork-ka-bobs)**- 9:00 a.m.</p>	30-	31	FEBRUARY 1	FEBRUARY 2	FEBRUARY 3
		<p>Metropolis of San Francisco Clergy-Laity Assembly at St. Nicholas Ranch</p>		<p>Vespers- 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE</p> <p>Orthros-8:30 a.m.</p> <p>D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m</p>	<p>Vespers-5:00 p.m.</p>