



VOICE OF ST. GEORGE

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



THREE MIRACLES

Inside this Issue

Almost on a daily basis I am inspired by our parishioners here at St. George, as I hear words of God’s Wisdom that they impart to me, or see in them examples of God’s love. One of our recent converts to the Orthodox Christian Faith shared a valuable insight regarding the Divine Liturgy, saying that, when it is celebrated, we experience three miracles.

The first miracle is the transformation of our world. No longer are we in a world of pain, fear or worry. We are in the Kingdom of Heaven with angels and the saints and, through the prayers of the Theotokos and the saints, we can be co-workers with Christ in making our world a better world.

The second miracle is the transformation of bread and wine into the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our God with the descent of the Holy Spirit. Partaking of Christ’s Body and Blood causes one to *experience* peace and wellness in body and soul.

The third miracle is the transformation of one’s inner self. We find spiritual and physical strength from our Savior in order to navigate life’s challenges and take on the divine energies of God’s love, through which our lives are fulfilled, giving us the blessings of gratitude and true joy.

Too often, when we talk about miracles, we think about something extraordinary, huge and spectacular. However, most miracles are the small, yet life-changing miracles that make a positive difference in our lives.

Some of those miracles include radical changes in attitudes about others and about life, in general. There are people suffering from calamities, who amazingly find themselves surviving and helping others. There are people facing tremendous challenges, yet with a sense of profound wisdom and inner peace. Finally, let us not discount the many medical miracles, which seem “little,” but which are in themselves life-saving.

The three miracles of the Divine Liturgy remind us that God truly loves us. We too often lose track of this reality due to worldly distractions and self-centered thinking. Yet, these three miracles are the **foundational miracles** that lead to so many other miracles – seen and unseen – for which we can all be grateful to God. Indeed, we will not escape emotional or physical pain in this imperfect world. But these miracles remind us that our lives are very meaningful to God, which gives us as our purpose to offer words and deeds of thanksgiving.

+FR. THEODORE

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Mailing Address
 St. George Church
 74-109 Larrea Street
 Palm Desert, CA 92260
 Tel: (760) 568-9901
 FAX: (760) 568-9492
 Email:
pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com Web-
 site: www.go-stgeorge.org
 Fr. Theodore Pantels, M.Div.
 Pastor
 Dcn. Euthym Kontaxis, M.D.,
 M.Div. Deacon

**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF
AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 17/2024

**Archepiscopal Encyclical on the Feast of the
Three Hierarchs and the Day of Greek Letters**

January 30, 2024

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and entirety of the Christ-loving Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

*The Great Basil, and the Theologian Gregory, together
with the renowned John, Chrysostom of golden
speech... (Dismissal Hymn of the Three Hierarchs)*

Beloved brethren in Christ,

These three Saints and Fathers of the Fourth Century Church: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom, are celebrated today throughout the Orthodox Christian oikoumene as a symphony of faith and reason, of grace and the working of our own salvation. We pronounce their names with great reverence and in order to accentuate the values that each of these Shepherds and Teachers of the Universal Church brought to the expression of our Orthodox Faith in Christ.

They all shared in the manifold gifts of divine grace – the “charismata” of which Saint Paul speaks of in First Corinthians (12:8-10). From Basil the Great, we have learned most especially of compassion for others. His philanthropic transformation of Asia Minor during his episcopal tenure is truly awe-inspiring, particularly because what was lacking in the technologies of the day was more than equaled by the willingness of the Church as the Body of Christ to work together for the benefit of all. From Gregory the Theologian, in his Orthodox minority position among

the controversies of his day as Archbishop of Constantinople, we have learned that theology is more than a way of thinking about God. It is the very life of God as experienced by the Faithful in the life of the Church. And from the Holy Chrysostom, we have learned that it is possible to articulate and teach the things of God in a way that is not only convincing to others, but in a way that engages them to find their own path of treading the truth of the Gospel.

Each of these Great Fathers was a person of extraordinary intellectual achievement in what we now call “Greek Letters.” They put into the service of the Gospel the secular learning of their time in ways that are still studied and admired today. For they saw the ultimate value of knowledge in the ministry of love, and the esteem of reason in the service of faith. They have never been equaled in their unique combination of mind and heart, and so it is “meet and right” that we celebrate them most fervently on their shared Feast.

Therefore, beloved Christians, let us take this day and every day to honor not only these three Great Hierarchs of the Church, but let us also honor the path they trod that leads heavenward – from the things of earthly science and its ways of knowing, to the mysteries of things divine, and the way of love; for it is love that will abide unto eternity.

With paternal blessings in the Lord,
† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America

ST. JOHN OF KRONSTADT – He is a pious “modern” Saint of the Orthodox Christian Church of the 19th Century, having fallen asleep in the Lord in 1909. From the book, *Spiritual Counsels of Father John of Kronstadt*, we read the following: “When God is present in thoughts, desires, intentions, words and works, then it means that the Kingdom of God is at hand. God can be seen in all things; the omnipresence of God is clearly revealed, and the true fear of God dwells in the heart, seeking every moment to please God, and fears every moment lest one sins against God, Who is present at the right hand.”

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School lessons resumed on January 14th. On January 28th, our students participated with our parish Philoptochos in a **service project** through which support can be given to the **San Francisco Philoptochos Metropolis' Kids-n-Cancer ministry**.

This service project will continue on Sunday, February 4th and Sunday, February 11th. Lessons will be combined with the service project. To help us prepare for the success of this month's Philoptochos/Sunday School service project, please contact, **Fr. Ted** (760) 880-5869), **Mrs. Athena Snarskis** (219) 313-6940, or **Pres. Petula Pantels** (909)539-7542)

PHILOPTOCHOS

On January 25, 2024, representatives from our St. George Philoptochos Chapter attended a presentation by the staff at **Safe House of the Desert**, informing us about measures to be used in addressing the tragedy of human trafficking – "See it, Say it, Stop it." Our Philoptochos had donated "**no-sew**" blankets for the residents.



On January 25th, our St. George Philoptochos was represented at a workshop sponsored by Safe House of the Desert regarding human trafficking. Pictured above, from left to right, are: Noelle Salmas, Fr. Ted, Briggitt Phillips (Safe House of the Desert co-Director), Francine Vasilomanolakis, and Philoptochos President, Rhonda Latkovic.

Philoptochos members have been hard at work preparing pastries for our 2024 Greek Festival. The baking schedule going into February and on to the dates of the Festival itself is as follows:
 January 29,30 and February 1, 2: pastries
 February 5,6 and February 8,9: baklava
 (Wednesdays are non-working days)
 February 12 – February 16: packaging & set-up

February 17 – February 18: 2024 Greek Festival

Save the date: Saturday, March 9, 2024! This is the date for our annual **Philoptochos Membership Tea and Luncheon**. See the enclosed flier! **R.S.V.P. by March 1st** by contacting our Philoptochos President, **Rhonda Latkovic** at (714) 875-4661.

AHEPA

President Wynn Storton, along with AHEPA 528 member, **Ramsay Seikaly**, represented our local AHEPA 528 Chapter at the **AHEPA District 20 Mid-Winter Conference in Long Beach, California** on the weekend of **January 27-28, 2024**.

Members of our local AHEPA Chapter are asked to help with our **2024 Greek Festival set-up and take-down of Festival stations and equipment**. Over the next few weeks of **January 28th, February 5th, and February 11th**, help for **Festival set-up** will be appreciated. Following the Greek Festival from **Monday, February 19th to February 23rd**, help will be needed for the **take-down** of Festival stations and equipment. Finally, our AHEPA members are asked to find **a few hours** on Saturday, February 17th and/or Sunday, February 18th to **help at the AHEPA booth** during the Festival.

PHILOPTOCHOS/SUNDAY SCHOOL SERVICE PROJECT

Sunday, February 5 and Sunday, February 11 are "Service Project Sundays" involving members of our St. George Philoptochos and our Sunday School students & families. The service project is a fundraiser which is to support the Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos **Kids 'n' Cancer/Camp Agape ministry**. The project entails creating "**Taylor Swift style**" word bead bracelets, using inspirational words of encouragement with a variety of colorful beads and decorative items!

While this project is sponsored by our Philoptochos and Sunday School leadership, everyone is invited to join in making these "Taylor Swift style" word bead bracelets. Find our display at the Greek Festival on February 17th and 18th in our **Religious Bookstore Booth**. Each bracelet will be selling for a **\$10 donation**. See the enclosed "Kids-n-Cancer" Fundraiser flier!

SERVICE PROJECT, Continued



Pictured above are the adult leaders of the Philoptochos/Sunday School "Kids-n-Cancer Fundraiser Project" in support of our San Francisco Metropolis Philoptochos Kids-n-Cancer/Camp Agape Ministries. From left to right: Alexandra Pappas, Nicole Nassar, Rhonda Latkovic (Philoptochos President), Athena Snarskis (Sunday School Director), and Louka (Arts & Crafts Professional)



Pictured to the left are the "Taylor Swift Style" bracelets prepared by participants of our Philoptochos/Sunday School service project in support of our Metropolis of San Francisco Kids-n-Cancer/Camp Agape ministries.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

Sunday, February 11, 2024 is our parish Stewardship Sunday. For those who have not yet completed their **2024 Stewardship Pledge Cards**, Stewardship Sunday serves as a reminder to complete and return Pledge Cards to our parish office, as well as to give Stewardship Pledge Cards to those who have not already received them. A special "**Stewardship Prayer**" will be read for all of our parishioners, asking our Lord to inspire them with love in support of our parish ministries.

Matthew Holm is our **Stewardship chairman**. Throughout January, we have received 21 Stewardship pledges for 2024.

FESTIVAL – YIAYIA’S ATTIC

Our 2024 Greek Festival is around the corner – February 17th & 18th. **Yiayia’s Attic** is a big part of our Festival operations. Those who have items to give for Yiayia’s Attic are asked to bring their items **Monday to Friday to our church hall from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. from now until Thursday, February 15th**. Donations of items for the success of our Festival’s Yiayia’s Attic are appreciated.

ST. GEORGE PARISH LENTEN RETREAT

Everyone is invited to participate in our annual **St. George Parish Lenten Retreat** on Saturday, **April 6th from 10:00 a.m to 2:30 p.m.** Our speaker will be **Fr. Steven Tsihlis**, pastor of St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church in Irvine, California and the author of the instructional pamphlet, ***A Worshiper’s Guide to the Divine Liturgy***.

The retreat will focus on details related to the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and its meaning for us. The first presentation will be "The Liturgy of the Word," and the second will be "The Liturgy of the Eucharist."

A Lenten luncheon will be provided for all participants. Everyone is invited to join the retreat for the full day, for either morning or afternoon presentations, or for the luncheon only – it will be a bless for us to see everyone. A completely free-will donation is asked from those who wish to make an offering.

We look forward to seeing all of our parishioners, friends and families on Saturday, April 6th for our annual St. George Parish Lenten Retreat. See the enclosed flier for more information.

WELCOME OUR CONVERTS TO ORTHODOXY

Kelsey (St. Katherine) Nelson – January 21, 2024

Noelle (St. Christina) Salmas – January 26, 2024

Daniel (Prophet Danial) Cabantangan- January 27, 2024

Many blessings to all!

PAINT & SIP

Our January 21st Philoptochos **“Paint & Sip”** event was extremely successful. Miniature pottery items were decorated by the participants and will be available for purchase at our Greek Festival. We are most grateful to God for the leadership of **Louka** who guides the participants in their decorative painting efforts. As well, we are grateful to God for **Rhonda Latkovic** and **Athena Snarskis** for organizing this successful event.



Pictured above are the participants in our January 21st “Paint & Sip” event.

CLERGY-LAITY

Our San Francisco Metropolis Clergy-Laity Assembly will take place at St. Nicholas Ranch outside of Fresno, California on **March 4-6, 2024**. Indeed, this year’s **Metropolis Clergy-Laity** will focus on preparations for the national Greek Or-

thodox **Archdiocese Clergy-Laity Assembly and the Philoptochos Society National Convention**, which will take place in **San Diego, California from June 30 – July 4, 2024**.

In that our San Francisco Metropolis is the host Metropolis for the Archdiocese Clergy-Laity Assembly and National Philoptochos Convention and, our parish is one of the Southern California parishes within the **San Diego vicarate**, we look forward to assisting our sister Orthodox parishes in welcoming the many guests and visitors who will attend this major event. Fr. Ted is planning to participate in both the Metropolis Clergy-Laity Assembly and the national Archdiocese Clergy-Laity Assembly.

ONLINE ORTHODOX CATECHISM

Everyone is invited to join in **Wednesday evenings Online Orthodox Catechism classes at 6:30 p.m.** Send an email our church in order to receive the Zoom link to join the class. Our parish email is: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com.

SATURDAY VESPERS

Beginning March 2, 2024, Great Vespers will take place on Saturdays beginning at 5:00 p.m. An interest in participating in the Great Vesper services has been expressed by some of our recent converts to Orthodoxy. March is a good month to re-ignite our pre-Covid practice of participating in Great Vespers in preparation for Sundays’ Liturgies.

FEBRUARY 2024 PARISH CALENDAR

Friday, February 2nd.....PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE

Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m./Agiasmo (Holy Water) - 11:00 a.m.

Tuesday, February 6th.....Bible Study-10:00 a.m./Parish Council- 2:00 p.m./ AHEPA -6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 7th.....Online Orthodox Catechism Class (Zoom) - 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 8th – Saturday, February 10th – Fr. Ted will be in Sacramento for granddaughters' "Grandparents Day" presentation at their school on Friday, February 9th. Fr. David Kruse, pastor of St. Raphael Antiochian Orthodox Church in Thousand Palms will be available in the event of an emergency.

Sunday, February 11thSTEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

Monday, February 12th – Friday, February 16th – Final preparations for our 2024 St. George Greek Festival.

Wednesday, February 14th.....Online Orthodox Catechism Class (Zoom) - 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 17th.....2024 ST. GEORGE GREEK FESTIVAL – 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 18th.....2024 ST. GEORGE GREEK FESTIVAL – 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

(Note: Orthros-8:00 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:00 a.m.)

Monday, February 19th.....FESTIVAL APPRECIATION DINNER – 6:00 p.m.

(Monday, February 19th – Thursday, February 22nd – Take-down of Festival equipment)

Wednesday, February 21st.....Online Orthodox Catechism Class (Zoom) - 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 27th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, February 28th.....Online Orthodox Catechism Class (Zoom) - 6:30 p.m.



Support our Festival!

Our festival is just a few months away and, God willing, everyone will have a rewarding experience. We thank our parishioners and friends for your past support and want to take a moment to remind you of all the ways you can help this upcoming year.


Volunteering – Volunteers are welcome as of the 18th of December for cooking. Such support will be needed up until the festival in February. Please reach out to George or Stacy Argyros to get more information. In addition, assistance is appreciated during the week before the festival to help set up, during the festival and following the festival to assist with cleanup. If you've volunteered before and wish to continue, feel free to contact the past chairperson to again offer your assistance. If you'd like to volunteer for the first time or don't have contact information for the past chairperson, feel free to reach out to Jim Christopoulos at 760-902-8460 or at goofy_328@yahoo.com.

Sponsorships – Any person can pay for a sponsorship, whether it be to advertise your business or send a personal message. You may also ask friends and/or owners of businesses you frequent to buy a sponsorship. These not only provide financial support for the festival, but are a wonderful way to advertise businesses. Sponsorship donations can be sent to our parish office. For more information, please call our parish office at (760) 568-9901. Make checks payable to "St. George Greek Orthodox Church" and in the memo, write, "FESTIVAL DONATION."

Donations – Unable to volunteer? Sponsorship not appropriate? Another option would be to provide a cash donation. Such a donation would help offset our many expenses.

The success of our festival depends on us all. We strive to simultaneously satisfy the needs of our guests as well as to share our hospitality and religion with them. Please help in any way you can. You may contact George Argyros or Father Ted for more information.

St George 2024 Festival Register Training

 The good news is we are expecting +7,000 visitors at our Festival on February 17th and 18th with good weather. This will amount to over 25,000 transactions at our booths.

The 2024 St George Festival will accept Credit / Debit Cards only for payment to improve transactional efficiency, eliminate manual bookkeeping and reduce the security concerns related to handling large amounts of cash.

We are using CLOVER DUO Electronic Registers to process all transactions. These registers are like today's smartphones – ICON driven and intuitive after a short training session.

I highly recommend Chairman and Cashiers attend at least 1 Hands On class to be comfortable with the new machines. **See or contact Nick Latkovic with questions.**

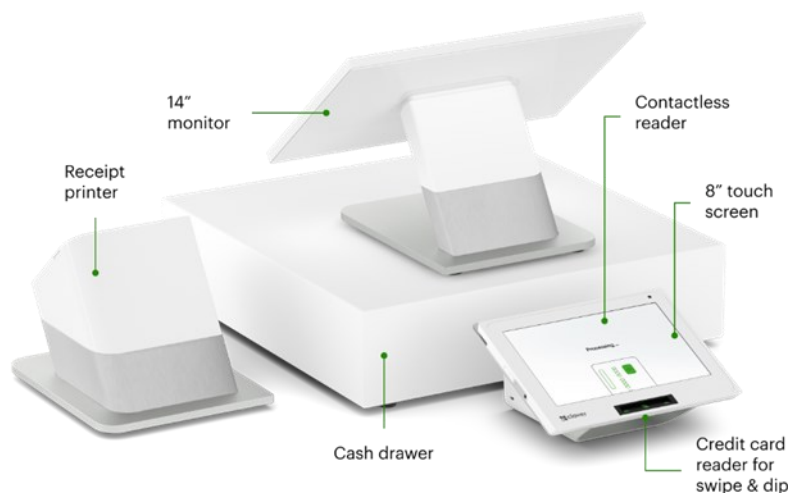
As with any new technology, there will be questions during the festival. We will have a roaming "Help Desk" team to assist cashiers with questions during the hours of operation.

CLOVER Cashless Register user's training will occur in the church hall on the following days:

Monday 2/12/24 @ 9 AM and 6:30 PM if requested due to work schedules.

Tuesday 2/13/24 @ 9 AM and 6:30 PM if requested due to work schedules.

Please contact Nick Latkovic at 760-455-9727 to arrange another time if you cannot attend the above sessions. I will also be at the church hall during the next 2 weeks prior to the festival to answer questions as well.



Volunteer for the 2024 Festival

What Kind of Person Are You?

In this world there are four kinds of people: Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did.

Somebody got angry about it because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Somebody would do it, but Nobody realized it wouldn't get done by Anybody. It ended up that not only was the job not done, but Everybody accused Somebody, and Nobody accepted the responsibility.

Moral: Everybody's job is Anybody's. Nobody can be Somebody unless they are willing to do Anybody's work.



If you haven't already, please sign up to volunteer for our festival. Complete and drop off this form to either Jim Christopoulos or Father Ted. You may also contact Jim Christopoulos at 760-902-8460 or email at goofy_328@yahoo.com. God bless!

.....
Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Check Availability: Saturday 2/17: ____ 9:45-3:00 ____ 2:45-8:00

Sunday 2/18: ____ 9:45-3:00 ____ 2:45-8:00

Set up (week before festival): ____

Clean up (day after festival): ____

- GYROS - GREEK LAMB - BAKLAVA - LOUKOUMADES -
 GREEK CHICKEN - MOUSAKA - SPANAKOPITA - DOLMADE - PASTIKHIO - GYROS - GREEK LAMB - BAKLAVA - DOLMADES
 GREEK CHICKEN - MOUSAKA - SPANAKOPITA - DOLMADE - PASTIKHIO - 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

26TH ANNUAL

**GREEK
 FESTIVAL**

in Palm Desert, CA

Saturday & Sunday

February 17th & 18th 2024

10am to 8pm

on the Church Grounds

74-109 Larrea, Palm Desert, CA

(760) 568-9901



NO CASH PAYMENT Credit Card and contactless payment **only** at this time



NO PETS ALLOWED Service Animals specifically trained to aid a person with a disability are welcome



SMOKING and use of tobacco products **PROHIBITED** on church grounds

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 Lutheran Church & Spiritual Center.

SHUTTLE SERVICE PROVIDED.



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

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

ADMISSION \$5

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

www.PDGreekFest.org
 PDGreekFest





St George Ladies Philoptochos invites you to a

Membership Tea & Luncheon

Saturday, March 9

11:30 -2:00 P.M.

St. George Greek Orthodox Church Hall

RSVP By March 1st

Rhonda 714-875-4661



*Wear your favorite hat!
Hat Contest ~ Music ~ Raffle*



St. George
Greek Orthodox Church's
2024 Lenten Retreat

Living the Liturgy

with

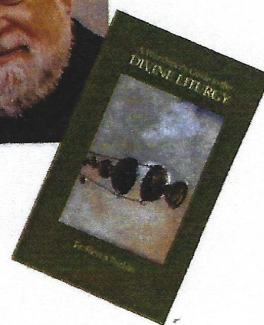
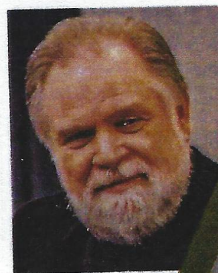
Father Steven Tschlis

Pastor of St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church, Irvine, CA
Author of *A Worshiper's Guide to the Divine Liturgy*

Saturday, April 6, 2024

10:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Lenten Lunch Included



Session 1

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Liturgy of the Word

Session 2

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Liturgy of the Eucharist



A freewill
donation of
\$10
is appreciated

To Register:

pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com | 760-568-9901

74-109 Larrea Street, Palm Desert, CA