

JANUARY 1, 2023

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

74-109 Larrea Street

Palm Desert, California 92260

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—Fr. Theodore Pantels,
Proistamenos (Pastor)

—Deacon Euthym Kon-
taxis, M.D.

**Holy Communion Or-
der**

1. Please remain standing while following the directions of our ushers.
2. Ladies, kindly remove lipstick before receiving.
3. When receiving Holy Communion, make the Sign of the Cross, state your name (baptismal name), and naturally receive as if being fed.
4. Non-Orthodox Christians may not receive Holy Communion, but they may receive the Holy Bread at the end of the service.
5. All Orthodox Christians must be spiritually prepared to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Please see the priest if you have any questions.

THE LADDER



PRAYER FOR READING HOLY SCRIPTURES

"Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us, also, reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all these things that are pleasing to You. For You are the Light of our souls and bodies and to You we give glory together with Your Father Who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen."

EPISTLE—Colossians 2: 8-12

Brethren, see to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

GOSPEL—St. Luke 2: 20-21;40-52

At that time, the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the

feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.

CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD - Today we commemorate the Circumcision of our Lord. Since the Mosaic Law commands that if a woman gives birth to a male child, he should be circumcised in the foreskin of his flesh on the eighth day (Lev. 12:2-3), on this, the eighth day from His Nativity, our Savior accepted the circumcision commanded by the Law. According to the command of the Angel, He received the Name which is above every name: *JESUS*, which means "Savior."

-Taken from Archdiocese website: www.goarch.org

Liturgical Notes for Today

Entrance with the Gospel:

- 1) **Entrance Hymn:** "The women disciples of the Lord heard from the angel the joyful news of the Resurrection and the repeal of the sentence imposed upon our forefathers. With pride, they said to the Apostles, 'Death is vanquished! Christ our God is risen, bestowing upon the world His great mercy.'" / Το φαιδρόν...;
- 2) "O Most compassionate Lord, God in Essence, You unalterably clothed Yourself with human form. Fulfilling the Law, You willingly accepted circumcision of the flesh that You might dispel the obscure and uncover the mask of our passions. Glory to you goodness; glory to You compassion; glory, O Logos, to Your condescension which is beyond expression." / Μορφήν αναλλοιώτως...
- 3) "Your voice resounded throughout the world that received your word by which, in godly manner, you taught dogma; clarified the nature of beings, and set in order the character of people. Venerable father, Royal Priesthood, intercede to Christ God to grant us great mercy."
- 4) **Hymn of St. George:** "Since You are a deliverer of captives..." / Ως των αιχμαλώτων ελευθερωτής...
- 5) **Kontakion Hymn:** "The Lord of all submits to circumcision and as the Good One excises the sins of mortals granting the world today salvation. And, the Hierarch and light-bearer of the Creator, the divine initiate of Christ, Basil, rejoices from on high." / Ο των όλων Κύριος, περιτομήν υπομένει...

A NOVEL NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

Through his Epistle to the Colossians, St. Paul pleads with us today to not be duped into the false thinking of politics, philosophy and "the elemental spirits of the universe." As baptized Greek Orthodox Christians, we pledged ourselves to join ourselves to Christ. Joining ourselves to Christ means that we seek the guidance from the Holy Spirit, which is a guidance that supersedes political views, philosophical trends, as well as even much of today's technology — the most recent "spirit of the universe."

Care for the spiritual lives of our children is an urgent matter. Children are being subjected to teachings that are in conflict with those of our Church. For one, where humility drew people to accept responsibilities toward God and others, pride draws people to insist on a never-ending list of "rights." The war between "rights" and "responsibilities" is dividing people who were once united in the Faith. Worship, for example, which was once understood as a *responsibility*, is now more a matter of a casual "right to choose." Educating our children about the Bible seems to be secondary to their involvement in secular extra-curricular activities. They are then at a disadvantage when tested by the "elemental spirits of the universe." Their ignorance in efforts to live according to our Apostolic Faith, however, can be countered by our serious participation in the Divine Liturgy every Sunday throughout the year.

Let our "New Year's Resolution" this year be one in which we commit ourselves to enthusiastic participation in the prayers of our Divine Liturgy, through which our minds are set aright and our youth can see such virtues as prayer, love, repentance and forgiveness lived out in real time. +FR. THEODORE

Διά μέσου της Επιστολής του προς τους Κολοσσαείς, ο Άγιος Παύλος μας παρακαλεί σήμερα να μην ξεγελασθούμε από τις ψευδείς ιδεολογίες που προέρχονται από τις πολιτικές θεωρίες, την κοσμική φιλοσοφία και τα «στοιχειώδη πνεύματα του σύμπαντος». Ως βαπτισμένοι Έλληνο-Ορθόδοξοι, υποσχεθήκαμε να ενωθούμε με τον Χριστό. Το να ενωθούμε με τον Χριστό σημαίνει ότι αναζητούμε συνεχώς την καθοδήγηση του Άγιου Πνεύματος, που αντικαθιστά τις πολιτικές απόψεις, τις φιλοσοφικές τάσεις, καθώς ακόμη και πολλά «θέματα» της σημερινής τεχνολογίας - το πιο πρόσφατο «πνεύμα του σύμπαντος».

Η φροντίδα για την πνευματική ζωή των παιδιών μας είναι επείγον ζήτημα. Τα παιδιά υποβάλλονται σε διδασκαλίες που έρχονται σε σύγκρουση με αυτές της Εκκλησίας μας. Πρώτον, όπου η ταπεινοφροσύνη ώθησε τους ανθρώπους να αποδεχθούν ευθύνες απέναντι στον Θεό και συνανθρώπους, η υπερηφάνεια ώθησε τους ανθρώπους να επιμείνουν σε έναν ατελείωτο κατάλογο «δικαιωμάτων». Ο πόλεμος μεταξύ «δικαιωμάτων» και «ευθύνων» διχάζει τους ανθρώπους. Η λατρεία, για παράδειγμα,

Συνέχεια στην επόμενη σελίδα — — —>

που κάποτε θεωρούνταν ευθύνη, τώρα είναι περισσότερο θέμα περιστασιακού «δικαιώματος επιλογής». Η εκπαίδευση των παιδιών μας σχετικά με την Αγία Γραφή φαίνεται να είναι δευτερεύουσα σε σχέση με τη συμμετοχή τους σε κοσμικές εξωσχολικές δραστηριότητες. Στη συνέχεια, ευρίσκονται σε μειονεκτική θέση όταν δοκιμάζονται από τα «στοιχειώδη πνεύματα του σύμπαντος». Η άγνοιά τους όμως προς την προσπάθεια να ζήσουν σύμφωνα με την Ορθόδοξο Πίστην μπορεί να αντιμετωπισθεί με τη σοβαρή συμμετοχή μας στη Θεία Λειτουργία κάθε Κυριακή καθ' όλη τη διάρκεια του έτους, μέσω της οποίας διορθώνονται οι διάνοιές μας και η νεολαία μπορεί να βιώσει τις αρετές όπως η προσευχή, η αγάπη, η μετάνοια και η συγχώρεση. +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, January 2nd.....Festival Preparations begin! - 9:00 a.m.
Festival Meeting – 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 3rd.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, January 5th.....EVE OF THEOPHANY
Vespertal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great -9:00 a.m. & the
Great Blessing of the Waters (Agiasmo) [Strict Fasting Day]

Friday, January 6th.....HOLY THEOPHANY (The Baptism of our Lord)
Orthros-8:00 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:00 a.m. followed by the Great
Blessing of the Waters (Agiasmo)

Saturday, January 7th.....ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
Orthros-8:00 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:00 a.m.

Next Sunday, January 8th.....*Philoptochos Vasilopita Celebration following the Divine Liturgy*

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

THEOPHANY, HOLY WATER, AND HOUSE BLESSINGS - Holy Theophany (Baptism of our Lord in the River Jordan) will be observed on **Friday, January 6, 2023**, with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, followed by the **Service of the Great Blessing of the Waters**. On the **eve of Theophany, January 5, 2023**, we celebrate the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, also followed by the **Service of the Great Blessing of the Waters**. Therefore, on both days, **Holy Water** will be offered to all of our faithful in attendance. In addition, our **St. George parishioners** are encouraged have their **homes blessed with Holy Water** throughout the **month of January 2023**. **Please feel free to call Fr. Ted at (760) 880-5869 to make an appointment.**

GREEK FESTIVAL – Preparations for the 2023 Festival begin **tomorrow, January 2nd at 9:00 a.m.** Everyone is needed in the effort of preparing the dolmades. **FESTIVAL MEETING** – tomorrow, **January 2nd at 4:00 p.m.** Everyone is asked to attend. See enclosed **Festival Clover Register** information!

SUNDAY SCHOOL-- Starting January 15th, 2023 - We will be returning to having Sunday School sessions **each Sunday!** Thank you to **Alexandra Pappas** (Emily Tcharos' niece) and **Emily Kayaloglou** (Angeliki Trapatsas' Yiayia) in joining **Presbytera Petula** and **Mrs Athena** each Sunday this year! **Fr Ted** along with **Deacon Euthym** will also be making visits to each classroom!

PHILOPTOCHOS - The **Philoptochos Vasilopita** celebration will take place following the Divine Liturgy on **Sunday, January 8, 2023**. More details to follow.

AHEPA – **January 28, 2023...Join AHEPA Chapter 528 for a Greek Island Dinner at Desert Willow Golf Resort** in Palm Desert. **R.S.V.P. by January 16, 2023. \$75 per person.** See enclosed flyer.



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 01/23

Archiepiscopal Encyclical on the New Year

Unto...the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America:

I, who am a creature of God, am called to be God... (PG 36, 560A).

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On this first day of the 2023 New Year, let us invoke for inspiration in the coming year the memory of the Saint of God who reposed this day so many centuries ago: the shining Hierarch of Cappadocia and Teacher of the *oikoumene*, Basil the Great. We have many traditions around Saint Basil the Great – the giving of gifts on his Feastday, the Vasilopita, our St. Basil Academy in Garrison, New York, which is a National Institution that proudly bears his name. But beyond even these beloved traditions, we also have the legacy of this saintly hierarch, which offers us a profound understanding of what it means to be a human being.

The aforementioned quote was remembered by Saint Basil's lifelong friend, Saint Gregory the Theologian, who recalled the Saint's words in the eulogy he delivered at his funeral. Such a simple expression, and yet here, midway between the infancy of our Lord at Christmas and the fulness of His humanity at Theophany, Saint Basil reminds each of us of the nature of our high calling in Christ. Yes, we are creatures, but we are called to be God, or what the Fathers of the Church would term as *theosis*, or divinization.

Imagine the New Year of 2023 as a series of opportunities for *theosis* in your life. You do not have to be a monastic or even an ascetic to embrace this aspiration. Each moment, every encounter, all the people that you meet – they are all opportunities for you to act as God acts; to speak as God speaks; and to love as God loves.

We often hear our friends talk about their "New Year's resolutions," their intentions to either spend more time with family, to lose weight, or the thousand other commitments we try to make at the turn of the New Year. This year, though, let us follow the example of the Great Basil of Caesarea. Let us take our lives – humble and even faulted – and let us make of them a chance to become godlike in our ways. This is the realization of our human nature, created in the image and according to the likeness of the Holy Trinity, which is a communion of love.

May 2023 be filled with moments where your lives are changed and transformed by the love of God, so that you can share abundantly with the world around you the fullness of what it means to be a creature that aspires to be like our Creator.

With paternal love in Christ Jesus,
† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America

Giving Thanks

Eucharistic Stewardship

His Gifts

Christian stewardship means that I own nothing. Everything I have belongs to God. He has loaned it to me. I am committed to use it responsibly, and one day, I will have to answer to Him for my use or misuse of His gifts.

I am the manager of God's gifts: my time, my talents, my possessions, my body, my soul - everything belongs to God. Saint Paul asks us, "What have you that you have not received?" Money, for example, becomes a sacrament when it is offered to God. It becomes a visible expression of our commitment, faith, and love for Jesus. Once given to God, our gifts are consecrated by the Holy Spirit, who then translates them into works of mercy that brings glory to God.

-Father Anthony M. Coniaris

Stewardship comments from Rhonda Latkovic, Chairperson.

We are looking to expand our Stewardship team for 2023 and **we need you!** Our goal is to form a team of 7 to 9 parishioners to engage, energize, and lead our church to increased membership! We are looking for parishioners, both young & old, men & women, converts & Orthodox from birth who all want to work to ensure our church is around for our children's children and grandchildren. We will be recruiting members for our team. If you are interested in becoming a part of the 2023 please contact Rhonda Latkovic via phone or text (714) 875-4661, or email (r.s.fleminglatkovic@gmail.com) by January 8th, 2023.

2023 Stewardship

On behalf of the Parish Council and Stewardship Committee, we wish to thank all of our stewards for their generous donations to St. George this past year. Your stewardship donation is vital to the daily operations and services that we provide to all in our community.

For the new year, our plan is to automatically rollover your 2022 pledged amount into 2023, or in other words, we will keep it at the same level unless you wish to change it. For both new or continuing stewards who wish to change their stewardship pledge amount, we have new pledge cards available in the office for you to fill out and return.

Stewardship Chairperson Rhonda Latkovic will be available on Sunday, January 1st and 8th in the church hall after Divine Liturgy to answer any questions or to assist you with filling out a pledger card.

Thank you again for your support of our St. George parish. Praying for you and your loved ones to have a happy and healthy New Year in 2023!

12/31/2022

GREEK FESTIVAL CLOVER REGISTERS

RE: 2023 Festival Sales using CLOVER™ Registers

The 2023 St. George Festival will use Credit and Debit Cards only for all transactions. We will not be accepting cash at our booths. All transactions will be done on a CLOVER™ device designed for credit card Festival use.

You can see the devices in the Church Hall on the table next to the Sunday School Rooms.

Sales and Transactions are immediately recorded to the correct account eliminating the need for Office Staff, Runners, and Night Cash Deposits during the Festival. Without cash on the premises, risk of robbery and theft is eliminated, and accounting accuracy is greatly improved.

Festivals using this method have seen dramatic increases in sales as the customer is not limited to the cash they have on hand. In addition, there will be a "TIP" screen at food and bar locations which has been proven to increase sales as well.

Chairman and Register workers will need to attend a brief "hands on" training session lasting less than 30 minutes during January and early February. The stations are very intuitive with ICONS and Menu Items already pre-loaded onto the screens. The station operation is very similar to your Smart Phone.

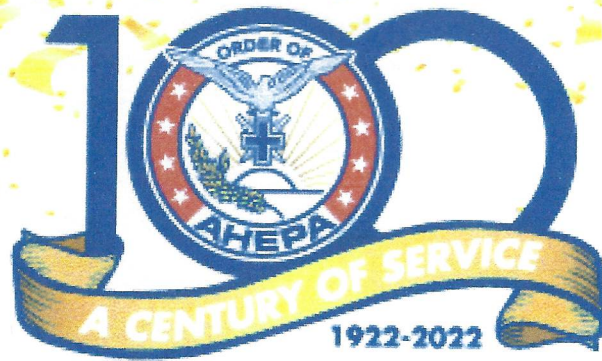
The training schedule will be posted in the 1st issue of the 2023 Ladder. A single session should be sufficient however users are welcome to attend more than 1 for additional training.

During the Festival, we will have on-site support people available for questions from open to close.

The registers can track **SALES, VOID transactions,** and provide **REFUNDS** in real time.

Our goal is to improve sales efficiency while reducing office staffing.





*Join AHEPA Chapter 528
for a Greek Island Dinner*



January 28th, 2023

Desert Willow Golf Resort

38995 Desert Willow Drive Palm Desert, CA 92260



No host Cocktails 5pm, 6pm Dinner / Cocktail Attire Preferred

RSVP Required by 01/16/2023

\$75.00 per person

Group Name _____ Qty _____

Payable to: AHEPA CHAPTER 528

42-215 Washington St A-154 Palm Desert, CA 92211-8031

contact@ahepa528.org - 760.832.2825

Website payments - ahepa528.org/event

First Course - Greek Salad / Romaine Lettuce, Olives, Feta, Cucumber,
Roasted Bell Peppers, Roasted Tomatoes, and Lemon Dressing.

Entree - Duet Plate / Lamb Chop and Chicken Satay Served with Rice and
Roasted Vegetables.

Dessert - Family-Style at Tables / Caramelized Apple Tarte, Baklava.

Beverages - Freshly Brewed Coffee & Iced Tea Service. No-Host Bar.

/ Following AHEPA District 20 Mid-Winter Conference /

Desert Willow
Golf Resort