



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
14485 SW WALKER ROAD
BEAVERTON OR 97006

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**Starting Saturday, December 5th
Vespers will begin at 5:00 PM**

St. John the Baptist 2015 Nativity and 2016 Theophany Service Schedule



Thursday, December 24th - Eve of The Nativity
7:30 a.m. Royal Hours of Nativity &
9:00 a.m. Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

11:00 p.m. Nativity Orthros &
Candlelight Divine Liturgy with Artoklasia

Friday, December 25th
Christ is Born ~ Glorify Him!



Sunday, December 27th

Annual Parish Christmas Party with dinner by reservation, caroling, kids' pajama movie

Friday, January 1st - St. Basil the Great & the Circumcision of Christ

9:00 a.m. Orthros & Divine Liturgy followed by the cutting of the Vasilopita

Tuesday, January 5th - Forefeast of Theophany

8:00 a.m. Royal Hours

5:00 p.m. Orthros & Divine Liturgy for Holy Theophany followed by the Great Blessing of the Waters

Wednesday, January 6th - Synaxis of St. John the Baptist

5:30 p.m. Orthros & Divine Liturgy with Artoklasia followed by Parish Feast Day Celebration



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

14485 SW Walker Road * Beaverton, OR 97006

Office: 503.644.7444 Fax: 503.296.2507

E-mail: churchoffice@stjohngoc.org * Parish Website: stjohngoc.org

Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

December 2015
VOL. XVIII NO. 7

Witnessing the Truth of Apostolic Christianity

The Impact of Saying the Jesus Prayer by Fr. Timothy Pavlatos

Most of us know about the Jesus Prayer, at least how to say it in its various forms: "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me." "Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me." Whichever way one says it is less important than saying it on a consistent basis, for a period of time each and every day, uninterrupted, and with attention.

The question has been posed to me in the past, "how effective is this prayer to our healing and to drawing us closer to God?" This may seem like a rhetorical question, and we could easily cite many monks, Saints, and theologians concerning the tremendous impact that the Prayer has on a person. Some of you may even give testimony to your own experience of saying the Prayer. Nevertheless, the question is valid.

Outside of personal testimonies, there has been research on the Jesus Prayer. I recently came across a doctoral dissertation of a friend and colleague of mine who studied the effects of the Jesus Prayer. The title of his dissertation: The Impact of Contemplative Prayer on Psychological, Relational, and Spiritual Well-Being: A Study of the Jesus Prayer (George Stavros, Ph.D.), brought to light some interesting data that I'd like to share with you.

The significance of the study, according to Dr. George Stavros, is manifold and I cannot possibly cover it all in this article, so I'll just highlight a couple of things. In his words, the study was for the purpose of "bringing together theoretical, experiential, and empirical literature and research from religious, theological, psychological and medical studies in an attempt to understand the effects of practicing the Jesus Prayer on contemporary persons." More specifically, and for

our own interests as Orthodox Christians, this study has importance on how the recitation of the Jesus Prayer brings about "relational and healing aspects" to our lives, both spiritually and psychologically. Forgive me if this is too "scientific" for some of you. Coming from a family of academicians, it was appealing to me and I believe it can be used with those who may place less emphasis on personal "subjective" testimonies, and lean a bit more toward scientific data. Of course we know that this can only take us so far in God's cosmos.



Population: The treatment group consisted of 88 parishioners from Greek Orthodox congregations throughout the United States. "There were 45 participants in the experimental group and 43 in the control group. The sample was evenly divided between males and females. The participants ranged in age from 25 to 74, with over half (53%) of the sample under 40 years of age. Virtually all (99%) of the participants were white, and a large number were married (78%) and were parents (75%). Most of the participants were of Greek ethnic background (68%), and 92% identified themselves as being Eastern Orthodox Christians. 83% of the participants had at least college degrees . . . The treatment group was instructed to practice the Jesus Prayer ten minutes daily for a total of thirty days. The Jesus Prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me," was prayed continuously while sitting quietly and in solitude.

Among several things the study showed, there were two that were very significant. First, "The treatment group's adjusted post-test means on two scales measuring reported relationship with God were significantly higher than those of the control group. Second, The treatment group's

Father's Message continued on Page 3

MANY YEARS! XPONIA POLLA! MANY YEARS!

.....to those celebrating their Feastday in December:

Dec. 6 – St. Nicholas

Nicholas Hafez
Nicholas Kontaxis
Kendall Muzik
Niko W
Nicholas Soot
Nicholas Daniels
Mandi Buckley

Lois (Ruth) Russo
Naomi Ruth Knight
Noah Frey
Rachel Armstrong
Ruth Hailey
Sarah Ntatos
Sarah Powell
Talia (Ruth) Chiprout
Tobias Armstrong

Dec. 7 – St. Ambrose of Milan

Amber Hyde

Dec. 13 - St. Lucia

Colleen (Lucia) Perlmutter
Lucia Buckley

Dec. 16 – St. Theophania

Theophania VanSickle
Theophania Channah Marine

Dec. 20 - St. Ignatius

Ignatius Wood

Dec. 22 – St. Anastasia, Martyr

Ann (Anastasia) Vanikiotis
Anastasia Hillier

Dec. 25 – Nativity of Christ

Christiana Hillier
Christina Blankenstein
Christine Whitton
Christos Makarounis
Christos Maletis III
Kristina Stoeva
Emanuella Muzik

Dec. 17 – St. Judith, Prophet Daniel & 3 Holy Youths

Kh. Judy Hillhouse
Daniel Sumerfield
Azrael Pavlatos

Second Sunday before Nativity

Aaron Armstrong
Abigail Roth
Amanda (Sarah) Black
Bonnie (Ruth) Lien
Eva Hudanish
Hanna Makarounis
Hannah Frey
Joshua Knight
Levi Knight

Dec. 27 – St. Stephen the Protomartyr.

St. David the Prophet
Billy (Stephen) Benson
Stephanie Makarounis
Steven Roth

Dec. 30 – GM Anyisia

Anyisia Pavlatos

...to those celebrating Wedding Anniversaries:

Billy & Carri Benson - 36 years
Brent & Katherine Braden - 14 years
Bryan & Meika Wood - 6 years
Fr. Theodore & Pres. Stacey Dorrance - 30 years
John & Patricia Poulos - 31 years
Joseph & Kendall Muzik - 7 years
Mark & Sara Lindgren - 41 years
Titus & Kay Munden - 45 years

Memory Eternal:

Met. Anthony - 12 years
Helen Theophani Miles - 7 years
Alemash Ambaye Woldu - 5 years
Con Michas - 5 years
Evelyn McCourt - 5 years



**Please notify the church office if your feast or anniversary was not listed.*

**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
GREEK ORTHODOX
CHURCH**

Rev. Fr. Theodore L. Dorrance, Priest
Rev. Fr. Timothy Pavlatos, Priest
Fr. Innocent Duchow-Pressley, Deacon
Argero Hall, Parish Administrator

Parish Council

Robert Crosby
President, John Davis
Arthur "Ted" Deming
Treasurer, Paul Jungwirth
Mark Lindgren
Demetri Mirras
John Poulos
Niko Poulos
Kent Taylor

Vice President, Colleen Van Sickle
Secretary, Gregory Walsh
Kristine Wiseman-Patzke

Sunday School

Jessie Crosby

Logos Bookstore

Agape Ketrenos - Director
Paraskevi Whitton - Co-Director

Hospitality

Stephanie Makarounis
Patricia Poulos

Myrrh Bearers

Diane Cherry
Colleen Van Sickle

Moms & Tots

Athena Gonzales
Kendall Muzik

Church Music

Presvytera Stacey Dorrance

Altar Boys

Tobias Armstrong
Demetrius Van Sickle
Barry Ketrenos
Dn. Innocent Duchow-Pressley

Bookkeeping

Kathleen Ketrenos

**NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE**

Articles & Announcements
Thursday, December 10th
For the January Newsletter

Philoptochos *continued from Previous Page*

we have much to offer one another to the immediate community around us, and to the greater community. If we are all moving in the same direction toward Christ, what a difference we can make!



Jeannie Ranglas brings gifts for all the women

Areille Jungwirth shared a story about her friend who has received help from the Philoptochos Ministry. Her friend's

husband, who was a priest, was killed in a car accident, along with one of their children, leaving her a widow with



Beth Capper watches Jessie Crosby show off her new gift

five children. The Philoptochos is housing them at St. Basil's Academy in New York and taking care of many of their immediate needs. Aiding the orphaned and widowed... doing the hands-on work of Christ...and loving and supporting each other, this is what we will be partnering in when we become a Philoptochos Sisterhood. ✝

Youth Corner

Pan-Orthodox Young Adults
Mark Your Calendars for

Orthodoxy on Tap

Tuesday, January 12th
Speaker: TBD

Tuesday, February 9th
Speaker: Fr. Paul Paris

Tuesday, March 8th
Speaker: Abbot Tryphon

6:30-7:00 PM - Socialize
7:00 PM - Discussion w/ Guest Speaker
at the Lucky Lab Brewpub
915 SE Hawthorne Blvd

Upcoming Trips

To St. John the Forerunner Monastery



~ Jr. GOYA ~
December 12th & 13th 2015

~ JOY ~
February 5th & 6th 2016

~ Sr. GOYA ~
February 12th & 13th 2016

Philoptochos Informational Meeting with Jeannie Ranglas

by Sandy Duchow-Pressley



On November 2nd, Jeannie Ranglas, the Ladies' Philoptochos Metropolis President came and spoke to women from St. John about starting our own Chapter. We had over forty women come and hear Jeannie's wonderful

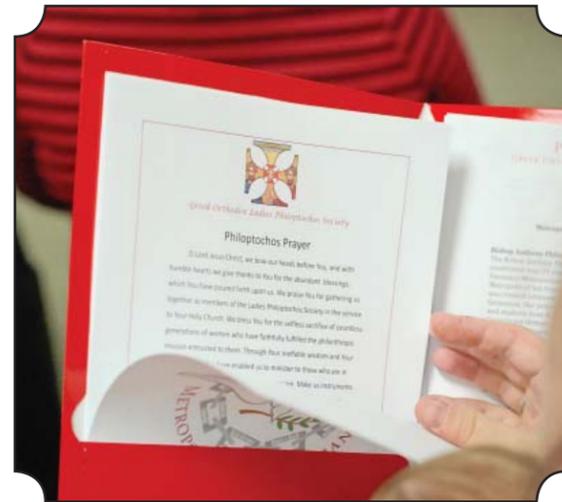
the ministries of the Chapter as individual links. These ministries include, Kids 'n' Cancer Camp Agape, the Bishop Anthony Student Endowment Fund,, Adopt a Hellenic College/Holy Cross Student, Women's Health and Wellness, and the Emergency Relief Fund. We do not need to be involved in all of these ministries. We can start small, taking baby steps, and grow as we become more comfortable with the ministries and begin to grow our own identity as a St. John the Baptist Chapter. The most important ministry in this is the fellowship and support we offer to one another as we work side by side to minister and bring the love of Jesus Christ to others.



Presvytera Stacey introduces Jeannie Ranglas

presentation and ask our questions. She explained that Philoptochos is a women's group supporting women and things we are already passionate about. It is mainly focused on philanthropy within and beyond our parish. As she was speaking, I was envisioning an umbrella organization over many of our already existing ministries like the Comforters, Almsgiving, and Adopt a Seminarian, to name a few. It will also give us opportunities to join with other Philoptochos Sisterhoods in the Metropolis and even across the United States in helping the greater community.

The Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos has a beautiful drawing of a chain linked together with all of



Reading the Philoptochos Prayer

We talked about the Mission Statement of Philoptochos; much of it being about aiding the poor, the hungry, the sick, imprisoned and how we would do all of this with discretion, courtesy and kindness. As women of faith

Philoptochos continued on Next Page

Father's Message continued from Front Page

adjusted post-test means on measures of depression, anxiety, hostility, and interpersonal sensitivity were significantly lower than those of the control group." The data showed that the practice of saying the Jesus Prayer ten minutes a day for 30 days sitting quietly, increased one's perception of feeling closer to God and decreased one's level of depression, anxiety, hostility, and interpersonal sensitivity.

Through his research, Dr. Stavros was able to show the effectiveness of the Jesus Prayer in a person's life. In his dissertation he stated, "Practicing the Jesus Prayer ten minutes per day for thirty days provided the prayer group with a specific technique by which they could replace dysfunctional, primitive thinking with the words and thoughts of the prayer. Primitive thinking is characterized by harsh, global, moralistic, and irreversible ideas about the self and the self's place in the world (Beck, 1976). Some of the most prevalent and well-documented cognitive experiences of depression include hopelessness, worthlessness, and meaninglessness in life (Westgate, 1996). In this way the Jesus Prayer could serve as a means of thought stoppage by offering a simple, repetitive, cognitive focus with a positive meaning in place of more primitive and destructive cognitions. The Jesus Prayer could also contribute to psychological symptom reduction by challenging and stopping depressive cognitions, including negative views of self, world, and the future and anxiety-provoking cognitions, including fears of physical and psychological danger, catastrophic misinterpretations of bodily and mental experiences, and obsessions and doubts (Kaplan, Sadock, and Grebb, 1994, p. 861). The Jesus Prayer, as a therapeutic intervention, may have also contributed to stopping primitive thinking and impulses, which characterize a cognitive movement toward an anger response. Finally, practicing the Jesus Prayer appears to have contributed to stopping and replacing some of the negative assumptions and expectations and harsh character diagnosis associated with interpersonal sensitivity."

Beyond this research, we read in the Fathers of the Church that reciting the Jesus Prayer does have tremendous impact on the soul of the person. St. Barsanuphius the Great (6th cent.) states, "Unceasing calling upon the name of God cures one not only of passions, but also of actions; and as a medicine affects a sick man without his comprehension, similarly the invocation of the name of God destroys passions in a manner beyond our comprehension." How is this possible? One answer can be found in the teaching of St. Mark the Ascetic who said, "Christ is hid within the Scripture." In other words, we cannot read the word and the Word of God not be present. Thus, we cannot utter the name Jesus Christ and not have Him present at that moment because as St. Mark alludes, it's impossible to separate the Name from the Person.

In all, whether through scientific research of the writings of the Holy Fathers of the Church, the practice of saying the Jesus Prayer is a means of healing and deeper union with God. However, as we begin the practice of saying the Prayer, we must simultaneously strive to live by the commandments of God. If we do not strive to live according to our Lord's gracious teachings, the Jesus Prayer will have little impact on us. While it's good to see a reduction in symptoms as this research shows, and people having a sense of being closer to God, it is just the beginning. The goal of every Orthodox Christian is purity of heart "for they shall see God" (c.f. Mt. 5:8). The process of becoming more like Christ is the process of becoming less carnal and more spiritual in our being, something that is only possible through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the action of God's grace in our life. So we strive to unite our mind with our heart through the Prayer, pushing out the distractions and the impurities of this world and our passions. St. Ignatius Brianchaninov puts it this way:

"The union of the mind with the heart is the union of the spiritual thoughts of the mind with the spiritual feelings of the heart. Since man has fallen, since his thoughts and feelings have been changed from spiritual into carnal and earthly thoughts and feelings, it is necessary by means of the commandments of the Gospel to lift up the mind and spirit to spiritual thoughts and feelings . . . This means that the mind and heart cannot be united unless we completely renounce our fallen nature, unless we surrender ourselves entirely to the guidance of the Gospel, unless we attract the grace of the Holy Spirit to heal us by constant and increased obedience to the Gospel commandments, unless we are healed and restored to life by the touch of grace, by the overshadowing of the Spirit" (The Arena).

Dr. Stavros reminds us that, "healing requires an interaction between the human person and an "other," a person or Person with whom one interacts in ways which are life-giving and directed towards wholeness." Our Lord said, "Behold, I stand at the door (of your heart) and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20). It is up to us to set aside a little bit of time each day to say the Jesus Prayer and strive to follow the soul saving teachings of our Lord.

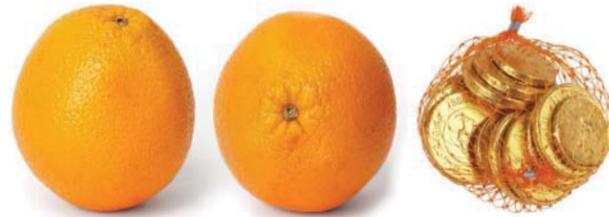
One last thing, it's a good idea to study the Scripture with commentaries of the Holy Fathers by your side. It's also a good idea to be under the guidance of a spiritual father or mother who has been steeped in the Jesus Prayer for some time. You have heard that "the path to hell is paved with good intentions." It's not difficult to fall into spiritual pride, so for this reason, it is always good to have a guide.

With Love,

Fr. Timothy ✚

5th Annual St. Nicholas Celebration

Saturday, December 5th
Great Vespers Begins at 5:00 PM
followed by the special celebration!



- * A special visit & gift from St. Nicholas!
- * Learn about the life & miracles of St. Nicholas
- * Participate in stories & songs
- * Lenten desserts & hot cider

We are looking for helpers to set up, clean up, help with events, provide Lenten desserts, make/serve cider, & donate chocolate coins or oranges. Sign-ups coming soon!

Contact: Arielle J. with any questions or to see how you can help



You are invited

Annual Christmas Tea
& Caroling Party

Sponsored by the Senior Misistry

December 13th 4-6pm
in the Parish Hall

Lenten snacks and deserts will be served

Carols will be led by our own St John the Baptist choir

Please contact Helen Stinman if you need a ride

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS



Applications and more information are located on the Community Bulletin Board outside the Church Office

Nominations are open until November 30th
Please prayerfully consider serving a 2-year term on Parish Council and Minister to the St. John Community

PC Elections will be Sunday, December 6th

Contact a Committee Member for more information:
Linda Weick, Christina Blankenstein,
Chris Perlmutter and Eva Walters

Our Hellenic College Holy Cross Students

at Holy Cross Chapel in Brookline, MA



Pictured from Left to right:

Back Row: Steve Tussing, Maria Tussing, Nathaniel Corazza, Fr. Theodore Dorrance, Constantine Trumpower

Middle Row: Adrienne Trumpower, Fotini Dorrance, Diane Cherry, Peter Trumpower, Elaine VanSickle, Isaac Trumpower, Katie Tussing

Front Row: Joseph Tussing, Theodore Trumpower, Susanna Tussing, Vasilia Tussing



Pictured from Left to right:

Back Row: Father Timothy Pavlatos, Presvytera Victoria Pavlatos, Steve Tussing

Next Row: Peter Trumpower, Constantine Trumpower, Elaine VanSickle, Isaac Trumpower, Adrienne Trumpower, Vasilia Tussing, Susanna Tussing, Katie Tussing, Joseph Tussing, Theodore Trumpower, Maria Tussing

Benevolence Fund ~ Christmas Card Fundraiser

December 6th - December 20th

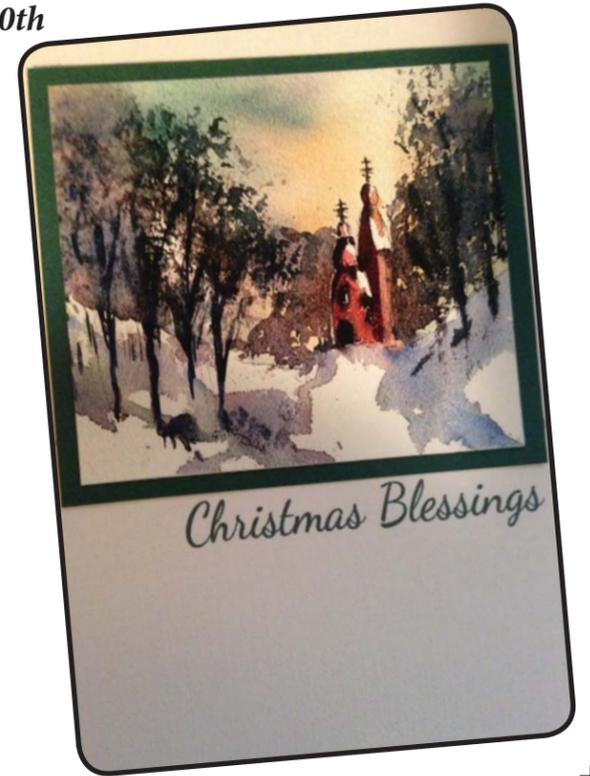
"Tis the Season" for gift-giving decisions.
Here's a simple solution that will bring true joy!

*Celebrate friends and family
by giving a gift in their name.
For your contribution to the Benevolence Fund,
you receive a beautifully hand-crafted card
to give to your honored recipient. It's a "win win",
to give, and receive, and bless all at the same time!*

*Cards will be available, and donations accepted
during Coffee Fellowship on Sundays*

Questions: contact Adrienne Gillespie for details

*The Benevolence Fund at St. John is used to help
meet the needs of people in the parish and the community at large*



SUPPER FOR SIX

**Sign-ups will be available after most
Sunday services during the month of December**

*Open and targeted to any couple, Supper for Six is a great way to break bread with other
couples in the church. Supper for Six consists of randomly selected, rotating groups of three
couples that meet once a month for three months for potluck and fellowship.*

SIGN-UP DEADLINE IS SUNDAY, January 3rd
Contact Brandon Ephraim Wilson at cravetruth@yahoo.com
with questions or to sign-up anytime before the deadline



The Students of Agia Sophia Academy invite you to
our Nativity Performance

"Christ is Born!"

Friday, December 11th, 2015

at 6:30pm

with Light Refreshments and Bake Sale to follow

Agia Sophia Academy * 14485 SW Walker Road, Beaverton * www.asapdx.org

DATE	SNACK	PROSFORA LOAVES (delivered day before)	PARISH COUNCIL	GREETERS	CHURCH FLOWERS	CLEAN- UP	ALTAR BOYS
Friday, December 4, 2015 GM Barbara W/ASA		Goldman (4)					
Saturday, December 5, 2015		Davis (4)					
Sunday, December 6, 2015	M. Powell	Becker(4)/ (2) from Sat.	Jungwirth/Walsh	Chosvrig		Wilson	Team 7 Team E
December 7 - December 11		Euphrosyne					
Saturday, December 12		Makarounis (2)					
Sunday, December 13	M. VanSickle	Barnes (4)/ Downs (2)	N.Poulos/Wiseman	Becker		Walters	Team 8 Team A
December 14 - December 18		Euphrosyne					
Saturday, December 19		Hailey (2)					
Sunday December 20	B&A Ketrenos	Sandy D.P. (4)/ Wehlitz (2)	Crosby/Lindgren	Goldman		Hailey	Team 9 Team B
December 21 - December 23		Euphrosyne					
Thursday, December 24 - Nativity Eve		Poulos (4)					
Friday, December 25 - Nativity		Mirras (4)	All Parish Council				
Sunday, December 27	E. Solomon	Goldman (4)/ Davis (2)	Lindgren/VanSickle	Reiter			Flower Committee Team 10 Team C
Friday, January 1 - St. Basil the Great		Makarounis (2)					
Sunday, January 3	A. Armstrong	Becker (4) / Downs (2)	Jungwirth/Wiseman	Benson			Flower Committee Team 1 Team D
Tuesday, January 5th - Holy Theophany		Barnes (4)					
Wednesday, January 6th - St. John		Sandy Duchow-Pressley (4)					
Sunday, January 10th	B. Wood	Wehlitz (4)/ Hailey (2)	Crosby/Wiseman	Blankenstein			Flower Committee Team 2 Team E

Clean-up Team 1: Becker, Armstrong, Benson, Lowe, Whitton, Marina, Leslie, Mirras, Malotis
 Clean up Team 2: Wood, Barnes, Morgan, Powell, Simman, Gillespie, Muzik, Poulos N & A
 Clean up Team 3: Cherry, Makarounis, Chiprout, Knight, Chosvrig, Poulos J & P, Cones, Dorrance
 Clean up Team 4: Corazza, Trunpover, Buckley, Williams/Teaney, Scott, Ketrenos B & A, Dunfield, Gonzales, Ramzi
 Clean up Team 5: Walsh, Damiels, Hudanish T, Keese, Chan, Olson, Matsos, Kolpakov, Clary

Clean up Team 6: Ketrenos J & K, Lubliner E, Lubliner D & J, Lubliner N, Goldman, Thianos, Testamtael, Traylor, Harch
 Clean up Team 7: Gehreiwot, Hailey, Jungwirth, Deming, Russo, Walters, Hall I, Stehner, Dale
 Clean up Team 8: Patzke, Rich, McKenzie, Reiter, Downs, Ionescu, Walker, Hafez
 Clean up Team 9: Feyler, Jones/Kuchillis, Lindgren, Rush, Wehlitz, Solomon, Manssager, Crosby, Gebreyseus
 Clean up Team 10: Wilson, Blankenstein, Hudanish P & J, Hills, Bradden, Perlmutter N & D, Stover, Breen

Team A: Samuel, Zacharias, Nathan, Elias, Gavin, Tasso
 Team B: Anthony, Christos, Stathi, Nicholas, Makarios, Nicolas
 Team C: Tobias, Kyle, Levi, Aiden, Thomas, Petros, Gabriel

Altar Boys
 Team D: Demetrius, Constantine, Athanasios, Basil, Wade, Owen, Simon
 Team E: Alexander, Gabriel, Yous, Pavlos, Noah, Peter

Stewardship

Those That Seek the Lord Shall Never be in Want of any Good Thing

From the Greek Archdiocese Department of Stewardship

Do Your Best

A traditional American proverb says, “God makes this request of his children: Do the best you can – where you are, with what you have, now.” The story of Jesus Christ feeding the 5,000 illustrates this through the boy’s offering of all that he had – five loaves and two fish. This boy did his best with what he had, and Jesus used it to perform an incredible miracle.

The Economy of Heaven

The disciples had wanted to send the people away to get something to eat, but Jesus responds, “There is no need for them to go away; give them food yourselves.” The disciples approached the issue from the point of view of earthly economics. To buy food for the people assembled would be too expensive – 200 days’ wages. Jesus’ response is simple. He asks, “What do you have?” But the disciples don’t realize that they are being called to participate in a miracle by simply giving what they have.

Bring Them to Me

Jesus Is concerned about the 5,000 men plus women and children that are with him in the wilderness. His disciples tell him that all they have are five loaves and two small fish, the offering of a young boy. Jesus’ response is the phrase, “Bring them to me.” Jesus then takes the loaves, blesses and breaks them, and feeds over 10,000 people. We also bring what we have to Jesus. We offer bread and wine. He returns it to us as His body and blood in Holy Communion. We offer ourselves and we become the Church, the Body of Christ. No matter how much we give, He cannot be outdone. Just like the boy who offered the loaves and the fish, if we offer what we have – however great or small our gift – with prayer and humility, God will receive our gifts and multiply them to feed and transform His people.

Stewardship is about Joy

We don’t give out of fear of judgment in the afterlife. We give with joy as part of our spiritual growth, putting the emphasis on experiencing heaven now. Stewardship of our gifts can help shape our world and ourselves in such a way that we can experience God’s grace, love and communion in the present. This perspective on Christian Stewardship emphasizes that which is possible for us as humans – now rather than later. It shifts our focus from fear to the reality of experiencing joy. Hard work may bring worldly power and success, but only God can bring us joy, peace and love. American writer, Frederick Buechner has written, “Greed is the mathematical truism that the more you get, the more you have. The opposite of greed – the selfless love of God and neighbor

– is based on the truth that the more you give away in love, the more you are.”

Put away the Pie Chart

Stewardship is not about calculations, portions or percentages. It cannot be reduced to a number of hours of service or dollars offered. We can’t reduce our responsibilities as members of the Body of Christ to paying the bills. Christian Stewardship is a mindset – a way of life. In true stewardship, we do not give to the Church for any specific purpose. We are giving back to God with joy in thanksgiving for what He has done for us. God is never outdone in generosity.

Grace

The true motivation for giving is grace. Giving is an act of worship in response to the generosity of God. “You are to give,” says Saint Paul, “as God has prospered you.” His Second Letter to the Corinthians (9 & 10) teaches us clearly, “He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” God blesses those who give with generosity.

Thanking God

The question is not, “How much do I give to stay in the club?” or “What are the dues?” The real question we need to ask ourselves is “How do I thank God for my many blessings?” As Orthodox Christians, we are called to a new way of seeing things – a new way of life. Stewardship is obedience to the greatest commandment to “love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.” We are called to commit our lives to Jesus Christ in such a way that leads to the joy of knowing him personally and profoundly. This kind of commitment and resulting personal transformation is both contagious and attractive to others.

God’s Generosity

Saint Gregory the Theologian writes, “You will never overcome God’s generosity, even if you give away all that you have.... And however much you bring to him, always more remains. Nor will you give anything that is your own; for all things flow from God.

Leave the Rest to God

You cannot do everything, but you can do something. God wants you to do your best and leave the rest to him. Saint Theophan said, “Exert all your strength, but rest your concern for success on God.” The Lord doesn’t expect any more from us than what we have to offer, but He does expect us to be faithful and that we do our very best for Him.

We do our best and leave the rest to Him. ✙

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church

December 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 NOVEMBER 8:45a Orthros/Div Liturgy NO Sunday School/T101	30 Apostle Andrew 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy	1 DECEMBER 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy 9:30a Bible Study 7:00p PC Candidate Mtg.	2 St. Porphyrios 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy 7:00p Choir Practice	3 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy	4 GM Babara 7:30a Orthros/Div. Liturgy (ASA attends) 10:30a Moms & Tots Bible Study	5 St. Savas 9:00a PCP/Div. Liturgy 10:30a Men’s Breakfast 4:45p Miles Memorials 5:00p Great Vespers 6:00p St. Nicholas Party
6 St. Nicholas 8:45a Orthros/Div Liturgy 12:15p Sunday School/T101	7 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy 7:00p Philoptochos Gathering	8 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy 9:30a Bible Study	9 Conc. Theotokos 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy 7:00p Choir Practice	10 **NEWSLETTER** **DEADLINE** 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy	11 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy 10:30a Moms & Tots Bible Study 6:30p ASA Christmas Performance	12 St. Spyridon Jr. GOYA Monastery 9:00a PCP/Div. Liturgy 4:45p A. Ambaye Memorial 5:00p Great Vespers 6:00p Memorial Reception for Alamash Ambaye 6:00p Sr. GOYA fireside chat & ugly sweater party
13 Jr. GOYA Monastery 8:45a Orthros/Div Liturgy 12:15p Sunday School/T101 4:00p Seniors Christmas Tea & Caroling	14 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy	15 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy 9:30a Bible Study 6:45p Parish Council Mtg.	16 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy 7:00p Choir Practice	17 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy	18 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy 10:30a Moms & Tots Bible Study	19 9:00a PCP/Div. Liturgy 3:45p M & E Meeting 5:00p Great Vespers 6:00p Jr. GOYA fireside Chat: Location TBD
20 8:45a Orthros/Div Liturgy 12:15p Sunday School/T101	21 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy	22 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy 9:30a Bible Study	23 5:30a PCP/Div. Liturgy No Choir Practice	24 Nativity Eve 7:30a Royal Hours & Vespers/Div Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 11:00p Nativity Orthros & Divine Liturgy	25 Nativity of Christ No Bible Study Christ is Born! Glorify Him! Church Office Closed	26 5:00p Great Vespers
27 Protomartyr Stephen 8:45a Orthros/Div Liturgy NO Sunday School/T101 5:00p Parish Christmas Party	28 No Bible Study	29 No Bible Study	30 No Choir Practice e	31 1 St. Basil the Great 9:00a Orthros/Div. Liturgy No Bible Study	2 5:00p Great Vespers	

NOTE: **CALENDAR SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Please visit Parish website at www.stjohngoc.org for most up to date schedule of services and activities.