St. John the Baptist
Greek Orthodox Church
14485 SW Walker Rd.
Beaverton, OR 97006

Change Service Requested

St. John the Baptist

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Historical Christian Church

Rev. Father Matthew Swehla, Presiding Priest
Deacon Innocent Duchow-Pressley

February 2021 Newsletter

Vol. XXIV No. 2

COURAGE TO WAGE WAR AGAINST DESPAIR

Father Matthew

As we make our way through the darkness of the winter months, compounded by the isolation brought on by COVID restrictions, it is especially difficult to keep from falling into depression and despair. Our internal monologues become increasingly harsh and self-critical when we are without human conversations as a counterbalance.

For consolation and a weapon against despair, I offer some God-inspired words from Elder Joseph, the former abbot of Vatopedi Monastery on Mt. Athos, and spiritual child of St. Joseph the Hesychast. Elder Joseph revitalized Vatopedi into the largest monastery on the Holy Mountain. He fell asleep in the Lord on July 1, 2009, and his holiness was affirmed by this miraculous event: 45 minutes after his repose, he smiled brightly as he travelled into eternity! (Photographs bare witness to this miracle.)

Below is the English translation of a talk he gave to a group of visitors and monks at Vatopedi. He is a lively and engaging speaker—full of joy!—and you will enjoy seeing him say these words (in Greek, with English subtitles) on a video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0YbazCsT9c.

> Run away from dispiritedness! If dispiritedness is not defeated, disappointment will appear. If a person neglects this too and stays dispirited and disappointed, hopelessness will come: Despair. If this prevails too then this leads to mental disorders. ... Because despair disturbs ones spiritual world, it disrupts the logical understanding of

MANY YEARS! CHRONIA POLLA! … for Namedays in February

February 1 - St. Brigid of Kildare
Kathleen Brigid Mahurin

February 3 - St. Simeon the God-Bearer, St. Anna the Prophetess & St. Eia of Cornwall
Anna Corazza
Eia Hailey
Simeon Muzik
Kaylee Anna Sorenson
Spencer Simeon Sorenson
Carrie (Anna) Thienes

February 6 - St. Amand of Maastricht
Amanda Sims

February 8 - St. Theodore the General & Prophet Zacharias
Wade (Theodore) Chosvig
Zacharias Ketrenos

February 9 - St Teilo
Dylan (Teilo) Russell

February 11 - St. Abigail
Gail Jordan

February 13 - St. Zoe
Zoya Galeev

February 17 - St. Theodore the Recruit & St. Finan
Finan Hailey
Miles Theodore Harmon

February 26 - St. Photini the Samaritan Woman
Beth (Photini) Perlmutter
Crystal (Photini) Sorenson

...and Wedding Anniversaries this Month

February 1 Norm & Eleni Goldman (18 years)
February 5 Meles Hagos & Genet Gebreeyesus (26 years)
Dino & Maria Ramzi (16 years)
February 6 John & Jennifer Davis (22 years)
February 15 Shawn & Diana Stebner (1 year)

AONIA I MNIMI! … for Memorials this Month

February 2 Anastasia Inez Simotas (1 year)
February 9 Christos Maletis, Jr. (13 years)
February 12 Constantine Davis (33 years)
February 26 Parissis Roussis (29 years)

one's personality. ... Why are we discouraged? ***Why are we allowing the devil be our lawyer?*** We already know very well that there is not a day in our lives, not a single one, when we don't sin. Because after the Fall we have experienced the downfall. We don't have the ability to stand still because the environment influences us. And thanks to that, so to speak, we make mistakes.

Then the devil comes to act as our lawyer—the sinless one! [here Elder Joseph smiles in humor]—to tell us that we are sinful. How many times did I tell you to stand up with courage, saying, "Go back where you came from! You are bringing me dispiritedness! I will go to my spiritual father and I will confess to him! The Son of the Living God wanted ***me*** as a son, and to get rid of you, and ***you*** want to act as my lawyer?!"

That's how you have to oppose dispiritedness. Because courage is the driving force. It's an energy, like electricity, like fuel. So why lose our courage? Truly we have sinned, but is there a life without sin? Then many times I turn to Christ and argue with Him in my despair:

"I say to you, O All Good One, did millions of penitents—to whom You not only forgave sins but dressed them also in the prize of sanctification, and who are gathered around Your throne—become saints with their courage? Or with the help of Your grace, my Lord? I am one of them too. I am persistent and I will not stop knocking on the door! You will open the door to me! You are the truth, You are the life, You are the resurrection!"

That's how I want you to fight, to wage war. Don't we have the examples of the lost people who have fallen to the bottom of nothingness and managed to return back? And not only did they defeat the sin, but they became saints as well and joined with other saints and shined forth.

FROM THE PC CORNER

Greetings All!

I want to thank Joe Lubliner and Chris Perlmutter for their parish council service over the past several years. I also want to welcome Michael Psiropoulos and Sophia Galeev as new members to Parish Council. Thanks to those past and present members of the audit committee, election committee, site committee, AV team, altar team, chanters, those who keep us running (Mark and Ted), bookstore, Philoptochos etc. All those who make St John special and family. I miss you all and still dream of the day when we all gather together.

In Christ, Jon (T.U.T - The Ultimate Turkey)

SITE COMMITTEE:
Foundational Steps are Taken in the Search for our New Parish Home
Matt Van Sickle

A new year brings a new broker, new financial information, and further progress for securing the path to the St. John's new, permanent home.

Learning of the departure of the real estate broker with whom the parish had a decade-long relationship—a casualty to the pandemic's havoc on the real estate industry—the Site Committee, chaired by Diane Cherry and Nate Lubliner, quickly pivoted. The Search Subcommittee led interviews with several local commercial real estate brokers to find a quality replacement.

With Parish Council's approval, Capacity Commercial was selected as the new broker, with Nick Diamond as our commercial real estate broker. Nick may be familiar to some, as he is a Holy Trinity parishioner, and brings to our search the Orthodox perspective and an understanding the dynamics of parish decision making. His contacts with contractors and land-use specialists will be essential as we consider options which could include building a church/multipurpose building, if no suitable existing buildings can be found.

Additionally, our new broker values our current property at about $5 million. The Finance Subcommittee worked with lenders to ascertain that banks are willing to consider extending to our parish a loan between approximately $1.5-2.5 million. Important to note is that the value of our current property reflects our purchasing power, and that we will likely need to sell our current property in order complete a purchase. (Currently the St. John building fund has nearly $800,000.)

Work began towards finding our new parish home with direction provided through the consensus-building Fireside Meetings with parishioners in 2019. And while it may be hard to see the blessings that came out of this past year, through the work of the Search Subcommittee, the parish is blessed to be in a position in 2021 to begin considering some possible locations for our new home.

Anyone can be a part of the Site Committee; and with subcommittees in Finance, Consulting Search, and Communication, there is ample opportunity for every talent to be a part of the process. Interested? Contact Diane Cherry (dcwlor@gmail.com) to learn more.

Parishioners with potential properties can have them researched and vetted by our broker by emailing property details to Patrice Kuchulis (patrice@hasson.com).

BE A PART OF IT!
STS. MARY & MARTHAT PHILOPTOCHOS

In the December/January newsletter we thanked our parish community for the incredible support provided to help our Sts. Mary and Martha Philoptochos Chapter to offer:

- Comfort where we see pain,
- Sustenance where we find hunger, and
- Hope where we encounter despair.

In addition to the ministries noted in that article, our chapter also coordinates a parish visitation ministry, supports the Bishop Anthony Philoptochos Student Aid Endowment Fund, and remembers our own parish college students.

We are inviting you to be a part of Philoptochos! With the start of the new year, it is time to renew your membership, or to become a member if you are not one already.

This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with sisters and brothers in Christ and to help those in our parish and our community, while financially supporting the national and international work of Philoptochos through your annual membership. Working side-by-side to help others doesn't just benefit those in need; it also helps fill our own soul, while strengthening friendships. This past year we were focused on helping those in need during this time of COVID. While we were successful in that effort, we realize that we need to find ways for us to connect as sisters in Christ. We'll be looking for ideas about ways to do that, especially while we still have these restrictions.

Your once-a-year financial commitment of at least $50 helps support not only our local Philoptochos chapter's charitable work, but also the ministries of the Metropolis Philoptochos on the West Coast ($15) and the National Philoptochos ($15). The remaining $20 (or more) stays in our Sts. Mary and Martha chapter to go directly toward our charitable work, all of which is ultimately for our commitment and obligation to Christ.

Questions? Please contact one of the Sts. Mary and Martha Philoptochos current board members: Charity Reiter, president; Jennifer Davis, 1st VP; Lois Russo, 2nd VP; Diane Cherry, secretary; Sophia Galeev, treasurer; Carmen Rusinaru or Stephanie Makarounis.

Please watch for information in the weekly bulletins about how you can become a member. (We are working to have an on-line registration option.)

February

St. John the Baptist
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 7:30 am **Orthros** 8:30 am **Divine Liturgy** 10:00 am Bible Study in SFH 7:00 pm Jr. GOYA Meeting (via Zoom)	3	4	5 5:30 pm **EVENING Orthros** 6:30 am **EVENING Divine Liturgy** 8:00 pm Young Professionals Dinner and Discussion	6 5:00 pm **Great Vespers**
7 8:45 am **Orthros** 10:00 am **Divine Liturgy**	8	9 10:00 am Bible Study in SFH 7:00 pm Jr. GOYA Meeting (via Zoom)	10 7:30 am **Orthros** 8:30 am **Divine Liturgy**	11	12	13 5:00 pm **Memorial for Catherine Carlson (40 days)** 5:00 pm **Great Vespers** 7:00 pm In-Person GOYA Meeting at church
14 8:45 am **Orthros** 10:00 am **Divine Liturgy**	15 President's Day Church Office Closed	16 10:00 am Bible Study in SFH 7:00 pm Parish Council Meeting (via Zoom) 7:00 pm Jr. GOYA Meeting (via Zoom)	17	18 7:00 pm Young Professionals Escape Room (via Zoom)	19 10:30 am Philoptochos Board Meeting via Zoom	20 5:00 pm **Great Vespers**
21 **Triodion Begins** **Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee** 8:45 am **Orthros** 9:45 am **Churching of Halli (Elizabeth) & Osceola (Parthenia) Peil** 10:00 am **Divine Liturgy**	22	23 7:00 pm Jr. GOYA Meeting (via Zoom)	24 7:30 am **Orthros** 8:30 am **Divine Liturgy**	25	26 6:30 pm **Paraklesis Service to the Theotokos**	27 5:00 pm **Great Vespers** 7:00 pm GOYA Meeting (via Zoom)
28 **Sunday of the Prodigal Son** 8:45 am **Orthros** 9:45 am **Churching of Hannah & Felicity Jordan** 10:00 am **Divine Liturgy**						

Feast Days Celebrated in February:

- Feb 3 Meeting of our Lord in the Temple
- Feb 5 St, Photios the Great
- Feb 10 St. Haralambos the Hieromartyr
- Feb 24 First and Second Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist

Please check the website calendar (www.stjohngoc.org/calendar) for the latest schedule, as events and services sometimes change.

FEBRUARY VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

FLOWER MINISTRY

February 7 Jill Hudanish/Kendall Muzik

February 14 Katherine Braden/Crystal Sorenson

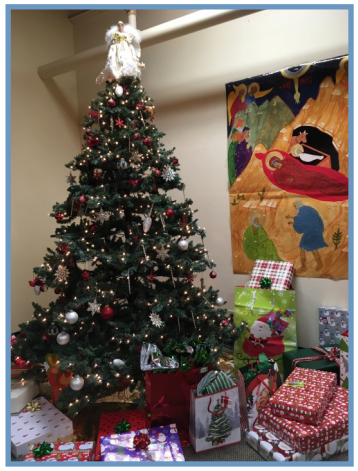
February 21 Cindy Trumpower/Stephanie Makarounis

February 28 Erica Wilson/Thomaida Hudanish

DATE	PARISH COUNCIL	A/V	CHOIR	PROSPHORA
Feb.2	Jon	--	Elizabeth	Carmen (2)
Feb.5	Michael	Shannon	Thomaida	
Feb.6	Sophia	Paul	Patrick	
Feb.7	Sophia/Ted	Bryan	Elizabeth	Kathleen (2)
Feb.10	Matt	Danica	Thomaida	
Feb.13	Shawn	Paul	Patrick	
Feb.14	Shawn/Kathleen	Kathleen	Maria	Carmen (2)
Feb.20	Jon	Shannon	Thomaida	
Feb.21	Patrice/Jon	Paul	Patrick	Meropi (2)
Feb.24	Matt	Danica	Thomaida	Jodi (1)
Feb.26	Sophia	Kathleen	Maria	
Feb.27	Nate	Paul	Patrick	
Feb.28	Robert/Nate	Shannon	Maria	Jennifer D (2)

FAMILY PROMISE

Thank you for your OVERWHELMING support of Family Promise for Christmas. When the Christmas gifts were dropped to the family we adopted, the grandmother, Elizabeth, was there to greet us. She said, "God bless you!" over and over as bundles of gifts were brought into their tiny apartment. She asked that we tell everyone who bought them gifts how grateful they were. She was so full of faith, joy and gratitude—real blessing to witness!



During Great Lent, St. John will again have the privilege to "host" families experiencing homelessness through the Family Promise program, starting Forgiveness Sunday, ***March 14, through March 20.*** Details to come.

JOURNEY TO ORTHODOXY

Shannon R.

"What cult is my new husband getting himself into?!" That is what I ask myself during my first visit to an Orthodox church, around 2003. Hanging back, I'm in shock and wide-eyed. People are bowing and kissing paintings of people! The incense burns my nose. Despite my discomfort, we stay for a fellowship meal because Brian was there for research. (He was a Theology minor.) "How have I never heard of Orthodoxy? I took church history classes in university!"

Brian continues to use school assignments to learn about Orthodoxy as we struggle to find a church as newlyweds. Our dissatisfaction with the Protestant church is growing and, despite the echoes of loved ones' scoffs about empty tradition and rote liturgy, we feel that the Episcopal church is closer to home than the Evangelical mega-churches. Still, something is missing.

Our second summer (2004), we drive tour buses in Alaska. While in

Juneau, we attend the local Orthodox parish. It is beautiful and I love how they alternate each, "Lord, have mercy," in different languages, including Inuit. I offer Brian a gift for our anniversary: I'll attend an Orthodox church with him for a year. That year, I fall in love with the Church.

We don't commit right away though. Joining the church, like marriage, is a decision for life. We pour ourselves into reading and learning about the life of the Church. Icons begin to adorn our home, but questions about Mary, Church authority, and praying to saints still linger. Believing we'd get there eventually, we become catechumens in 2006, with no hard timeline for joining.

Life seems to delay the research we felt we needed to do to commit. Brian enters grad school in 2007. Magnolia and then Kaleia, a short 16 months later, are born. How can we make a huge decision like this while juggling young children, school, and work? Yet I long for my children to be baptized, and I can't imagine going to church anywhere else.

Then in 2011, we move to China. We trek across Beijing, through security at the Russian embassy, to attend the one legal Orthodox church in China—once. With attendance too difficult, we try to continue our Orthodox inquiry on our own. The Prayer of the Optima Fathers seemed to be written for me that year.

In 2012, my job brings us to Portland and, after a year without, we immediately seek out an Orthodox church. Life still seems to get in the way of fully committing, though. Job challenges keep Brian traveling a lot and leave us little time to talk. Besides, we don't know anyone at St. John—"Who would be our sponsors?" we wonder. Then, my father, 57, dies unexpectedly in 2013, so helping my mom and siblings consumes our limited time and emotions for the next few years. Again, the prayers of the Church support me, providing me words to pray when I have no words.

Then, Maggie and Kaleia, who only really know Orthodoxy, start asking, "Why can't we go up front with everyone else?"

I'm ready, but Brian isn't. After waiting and praying, I lay aside my ideal of our family joining together and begin preparing for the girls and me to become Orthodox. Shortly after, Brian announces he is joining us! On Holy Saturday 2016, just over ten years after becoming catechumens, we enter the Church.

I don't necessarily recommend waiting ten years! Part of me regrets the years I missed out on receiving the Eucharist and wonders who we might be, had we taken the plunge earlier. And yet, I see God's hand in our journey. Maybe that's what it needed to be.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST MINISTRIES

PARISH COUNCIL
Jon Corazza, President
Robert Downs, Vice President
Kathleen Ketrenos, Treasurer
Matt VanSickle Secretary
Mike Psiropoulos, Stewardship
Michael Agrawal
Sophia Galeev
Barry Ketrenos
Patrice Kuchulis
Nathaniel Lubliner
Ted Moffitt
Shawn Stebner

SITE COMMITTEE
Diane Cherry & Nathaniel Lubliner

PHILOPTOCHOS
Charity Reiter, President
Jennifer Davis, 1st Vice President
Lois Russo, 2nd Vice President
Bethany Downs, Treasurer
Diane Cherry, Secretary
Stephanie Makarounis
Carmen Rusinaru

CHURCH MUSIC
Patrick Barnes & Elizabeth Hatch

ALTAR SERVERS
Deacon Innocent & Barry Ketrenos

PROSFORA BAKERS
Deacon Innocent & Church Office

MISSIONS & EVANGELISM
Jennifer Rich

LOGOS BOOKSTORE
Agape Ketrenos & Paraskevi Whitton

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:
SECOND FRIDAY
OF THE MONTH

WELCOME MINISTRY
Moses (Clayton) Dale

CROSSROADS MINISTRY
Demetri Mirras

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
Fr. Matthew & Beth Perlmutter

MEN'S MINISTRIES
Brandon Wilson, Robert Crosby & Robert Downs

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP
Beth Smith

MOTHERHOOD MINISTRY
Elizabeth McAtee & Meika Wood

MOMS' NIGHT OUT
Sam Marine

ST. KOSMAS HOMESCHOOL CLUB
Amanda Black & Meika Wood

YOUTH MINISTRIES
Beth Perlmutter, *Youth Director*

SUNDAY SCHOOL
Kendall Muzik

GOYA (9th-12th Grades)
Deacon Innocent & Beth Carper

JR. GOYA (6th-8th Grades)
Shannon Rush & Chris Perlmutter

JOY (3rd-5th Grades)
Bethany Downs & Kendal Muzik

HOPE (K-2nd Grades)
Jessie Crosby & Arielle Jungwirth

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