

THE ORATOR

ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

MESSAGE FROM FR. NICHOLAS

New Year's Resolution, by Fr. Luke Veronis

Why do so many people make New Year's resolutions? Is it because we see something in our lives we want to improve? We all look at ourselves from time to time, and see things we want to improve. A New Year gives us a reason to reflect and strive for a new beginning. Well, as Christians, the type of self-reflection that many do for their New Year's resolutions is something we are called to do on an ongoing basis. We are to constantly do self-evaluations, striving to re-orient our lives back to God. We fall down and then we get back up. We are regularly taking stock of ourselves, confessing to God, repenting (which ultimately means changing our direction from a self-centered one and redirecting our lives toward God). God gives us a second, third, fifth, tenth and hundredth chance to start anew!

So with this in mind, what would be some good resolutions for us to make as Christians? Here are ten suggestions:

1. Pray every day. Accept a Prayer Rule in your life, and then try to follow that rule each day. Prayer connects us with God. We commune with the Source of life. Say set prayers every morning and evening, but also talk with God throughout the day. Don't let an hour go by where you don't "check in" with God and turn your attention to Him.

2. Do not only pray, but meditate. This means sitting in silence for 10 or 15 minutes each day, clearing your mind of all clutter, and dwelling in the presence of God. You can do this in front of an icon, or you can sit anywhere and close your eyes, reciting the Jesus Prayer – "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have Mercy On Me, a Sinner."

3. Strive to fill your mind each day with something that is "true, noble, just, pure, lovely, holy" (Phil 4:8). In other words, take time every day to read Holy Scripture, and other edifying spiritual writings – for five or ten minutes. Fill your mind with words and thoughts that will sanctify you. Meditate on what you read, and try to apply what you read in your life.

4. Take time each day to express gratitude, first towards God and then towards others. Even when you are having a tough day, pause and think of five things for which you can thank God. And make it a point that whenever you are frustrated, you thank God even more!

5. Each day hand over any anger or resentment to God. Don't allow the day to end while holding on to any bitterness. This means that we have to practice forgiveness daily. Take time each day to reflect on your own mistakes, asking God for forgiveness. Then, offer your forgiveness to anyone who may have hurt or offended you.

6. Refuse to let jealousy, covetousness, greed, and envy preoccupy your mind. Thank God for what you

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Artemis Moon, Co-Treasurer

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Georgia Sparto, Secretary

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Parish Office Hours:

Tuesday - Friday

9:00 am - 1:00 pm

have, and “rejoice with those who rejoice.

7. Every day remember how Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, and then think about how you can humbly serve others. And strive to serve others with joy, remembering that it’s a blessing to serve and to give to others.

8. Do random acts of kindness each day. Better yet, be deliberate in conscious acts of kindness. Think about how you can do something special for the people who cross your paths.

9. Smile, and try to brighten up each person who crosses your path. Say words that will “edify and bring grace to the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29)

10. Keep an eternal perspective on life. Each day remember that some people have tragically died. Reflect on death daily. If we remember that we are but brief sojourners on this earth, and our ultimate citizenship is in heaven, it changes our perspective on how to live. If we do these ten resolutions every day, we will be greatly blessed, while also blessing others. We will become instruments in God’s hands, shining forth His light of love to the world around us!

With love and joy in Christ Jesus.

SERVICE TO OUR CHURCH

Date	Parish Council Ushers	Orthros	Readers
January 3	John Sempes Georgia Sparto	Phil Hieger-Chanter Open - Reader	Greek-Stathis Michaelides English-
January 10	Terry Kouris George Vardakis	Phil Hieger-Chanter Open - Reader	Greek-Tony Xenios English-
January 17	Magda Fleming Artemis Moon	Ken George-Chanter Open - Reader	Greek- Cathy Xydas English-
January 24	Lisa Kelly Elaine Reidl	Phil Hieger-Chanter Open - Reader	Greek-MorfoulaMouzakis English-
January 31	Georgia Sparto John Sempes	Phil Hieger-Chanter Open - Reader	Greek-Stathis Michaelides English-

If you would like to be a St. Demetrios Usher, please speak to a Parish Council Member. If you would like to be a Reader (Youth and Adult), please see Stathis Michaelides or Ali Winters.

PLEASE VOLUNTEER TO BE AN ORTHROS READER OR CHANTER - see Elyn Ponton or Phil Hieger

Altar Boy Schedule

St. Spyridon	St. Nektarios	Schedule:	
Issa Shiber	Joseph Keklan	3-Jan	St. Nektarios
Andrew Fleming	Zachary Kime	10-Jan	St. Spyridon
Doran Greene	Steve Stearns	17-Jan	St. Nektarios
Yianni Hadjikirakos	Yianni Xenios	24-Jan	St. Spyridon
Joseph Shiber	Zachary Xenios	31-Jan	St. Nektarios
Please arrive by 8:50am on your day of service			

FELLOWSHIP HOUR



<i>Date</i>	<i>Hosts</i>
January 3	Caglage Family
January 10	AVAILABLE
January 17	Ken & Maggie George
January 24	AVAILABLE
January 31	AVAILABLE

Many thanks go out to all of you that have taken your turn to make the Fellowship hour a success. You can say, “Fellowship Hour is your second communion, as we come together after the Divine Liturgy as the body of Christ to care for one another and spend time with each other.” **Consider hosting with 2 or 3 others.**

Some great occasions to Host a Fellowship Hour are:

Anniversary
Baby Blessing
Birthday

Memorial
Name Day

ORTHODOX TRADITION

CYCLE OF SERVICES IN THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Compiled By Archimandrite Nektarios Serfes

Introduction by Father Nektarios Serfes:

Nothing is so spiritually uplifting, and so rewarding then prayer before God in the Church. The Orthodox Church has a cycle of services, and all of us should make every means to attend these services. It’s not really how long are these services, but what we put into them that is spiritually rewarding.

When the Church calls us to prayer, we should rush with great Christian love to go to these services, and give our Lord God due honor and worship, at the same time we should think about our spiritual relationship with our God, and our path to our salvation. During these cycle of services we begin to realize how much our Lord God loves us, and wants us to be a part of His Kingdom. We can participate in His Kingdom in prayer, and we can behold His great spiritual beauty as we gaze around the Church and behold Him, as well as the opening arms of the Mother of God, the saints, the prophets, the apostles, and the martyrs all surrounding us with their prayers and intercession on our behalf, what a blessing!

Then again preparations before the Divine Liturgy are spiritually necessary, and that is if when we will go to Holy Communion, we should consider speaking to our priest about going to Holy Confession. We also should fast from certain foods anticipation of receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, i.e. at the least, fast from meats on Wednesday and Friday, and all foods and liquids the morning of the liturgy unless these are deemed necessary for medical reasons.

We also have prayers to be read before taking Holy Communion, they are called Prayers in Preparation for Holy Communion, or prayers before Holy Communion, should speak to our parish priest about these prayers. Some of the faithful begin reading these prayers on Thursday, so that we do not have to wait to the last minute. Then

again we have prayers of Thanksgiving after Holy Communion, eventually throughout the day we should read these prayers of thanksgiving, some parishes read these prayers of Thanksgiving at the end of the Divine Liturgy, as well as the faithful who took Holy Communion remain in the church until these prayers are finished. Attend these services with your children, and rush with great love to the Church and pray. Let us make every effort to go to the Church in prayer, and let us realize when we come to late, we miss many blessings, after we leave we shall be spiritually rewarded.

Love to pray in the Temple of our Lord God His Church, and when we pray, let us pray with all our heart, mind, and soul! Well aware of the work at hand, we should attend services prepared to labor as unique members of the body of Christ. Ultimately, each of us, that is every man, woman, and child, should be ready to “put aside all the cares of life, and receive the King of all...”

I am humbly presenting to you the Cycle of Services that are celebrated in the parishes of the Greek Orthodox Church, which by understanding these services we begin to realize how important these services are in our Church, and how rewarding spiritually they can be for us all!

Small & Great Vespers (*Gr. Espermos*)

Morning and evening were always considered to be proper times for prayer. Worship services were held every morning and evening in the Temple of Jerusalem and were continued by the early Christians even after they separated themselves from the worship of the Temple. The old Jewish forms are still used. The theme of Vespers takes us through creation, sin and salvation in Christ. It includes thanksgiving for the day now coming to an end and God’s protection for the evening.

In the Orthodox Church the liturgical day begins in the evening with the setting of the sun. One the great themes of Vespers is the coming of Christ, the Light to dispel the darkness. The coming of evening darkness reminds us of the darkness of sin and death. In that darkness Jesus is praised as “the gladsome light of the holy glory of the Immortal Father” and “a light for revelation to the Gentiles.” Vesper services are offered daily in monasteries and usually only on Saturday evenings in some parishes. Orthodox Christians daily may offer evening prayers in private by praying the Psalter and the other Vesper prayers at home. It should be noted in the Greek Orthodox tradition on a parish level Vespers are held in the evenings, Matins-Orthros service held in the mornings, followed by the Doxology and the Divine Liturgy.

Small & Great Compline (*Gr. Apodeipnon*)

A worship service performed after dusk. It is often combined with Vespers, to form an all-night vigil. There is a Great Compline and its abridgement, known as Small Compline. Great Compline is celebrated during Great Lent, whereas Little or also known as Small Compline can be celebrated daily when it’s not Great Lent.

Matins (*Gr. Orthros*)

This is a morning service that can be heard by it self or be followed by the Liturgy on Sundays and other feast days. It begins with the reading of the well known Six-Psalms (Exaspсалmos), includes the reading of a Matins Gospel and hymns pertaining to the day, and ends with the small Doxology (if not to be followed by the Liturgy), or by great Doxology if the Liturgy is to follow. When Matins is celebrated on Sunday morning hymns are sung for the Resurrection of our Lord.

Prayers of entrance (*Kairos*) and Liturgical vesting of the priest

Before the priest serves the Divine Liturgy he arrives to first say the prescribed prayers in the middle of the church before entering the holy Altar. After the priest has finished with the entrance prayers, he then puts on his Liturgical vestments, and putting on each liturgical vestment he says certain prayers. At the conclusion of vesting the priest washes his hands and prepares the Proskomedion.

Proskomedie

Proskomedie is the service of preparation of the bread and wine for the Eucharist taking place during the Matins-Orthros at the table (within the Holy Altar) known as the Prothesis. The priest extracts from the seal of the Prospora the lamb, the portion of Theotokos, the portions of the nine orders of angels and saints, and portions of living and dead and arranges them on the diskarion as prescribed. Then, wine and water are ceremoniously poured into the Chalice, diskarion and chalice is both covered (with prayers), and both veiled with a larger vestment called the Aer. After the end of the ceremony, the prepared Gifts are conserved and prayer is said for these to be accepted to God's heavenly altar. The Proskomedie is sometimes signified by the term Prothesis that, actually, is the table, or conch, to the left of the altar on which Proskomedie takes place.

Liturgy also known as the Divine Liturgy

The institution of the Eucharist, that is, of the Mystic Supper by the Lord, is recorded by St. Matthew 26:26-28; St. Mark 14:22-24; St. Luke 22:19-20, and the Apostle Paul, I Corinthians. 11:23-25. What was created at the Eucharist the gathering of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles was for our Lord, "to create the Holy Eucharist and leave His own Being to the Church."

The term (Liturgy) originally signified a public duty of any kind, including religious assignments. In the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, the term is used for the first time to denote services in the Temple. In its Orthodox usage the term denotes the Eucharist as the chief act of public Christian worship. In a derived sense, the term also denotes the text containing the words and order of the Eucharist. There are three main Orthodox Liturgies; St. Chrysostom's, St. Basil's, and Presanctified. Another Liturgy, that of St. James, the Brother of the Lord.

May our Lord God bless you!
Humbly In Christ Our Lord,
+Very Rev. Archimandrite Nektarios Serfes
Who prays for you and with you!

ALPHA OMEGA

Please join us on Tuesday, January 12th at NOON (not 11:30 a.m.) at Shaw's



1051 West Magnolia Avenue (817) 926-2116

See you there!!!.....Mary Galanis

BOOKSTORE

Don't forget to stop by the St. Demetrios Bookstore after the Divine Liturgy
or find us in the hall with our display cabinet.

Daily Bread

We are now accepting donations to this ministry. If you wish to donate by check, please indicate "Outreach Ministry--Daily Bread" in the memo section of your check. This month we are only having one event for Daily Bread, for One Harvest.

SCHEDULE

Saturday, January 24th 9AM - 10AM St. Demetrios One Harvest*

Click here To view the Menu:

*For One Harvest, we will need to be at the St. Demetrios Hall by 8:30am to prepare, and one volunteer will need to go to the distribution center (300 Belmont Street, Saginaw, TX) by 7:30am to pick up the kits. Please contact John Sempes (682-215-3151, dfwgrimlock@yahoo.com) if you want to volunteer for the One Harvest events.

HOUSE BLESSING

January 6th we celebrate Epiphany, the Baptism of Jesus Christ

We will begin House/business blessing January 7th

Make your appointment today!

Contact Fr. Nicholas frnicholas@stdemetrios.net to have your house or business blessed this year.

What is a House Blessing? **Blessing homes** of Orthodox Christians is done each year on or after the feast of Theophany. This act is the central sign of God's sanctification of all things through Christ's baptism in the river Jordan and his epiphany to the world. The sanctification of the home takes place with [prayer](#) and the sprinkling of [holy water](#). The [priest](#), at this annual visit, asks God to have mercy on the house, to rid it of every evil and to fill it with every blessing. They all sing the hymn of salvation and process from room to room while the priest blesses the house.

Traditions of the ceremony differ according to local custom, but these general guidelines should be observed:

- A candle with an icon, fresh basil leaves, and some holy water should be placed in a suitable place, such as kitchen or dining room table, or a [home altar](#).
- Also, a list of living Orthodox or Non-Orthodox first names for whom prayers are to be offered.

PHILOPTOCHOS

Save the date

for our next Philoptochos Meeting, Next Saturday, January 9, 2016 at 2 pm at the home of Marrlen Kime.
(Start scouring your home for any gold or silver pieces you may want to sell or have appraised)

Vasilopita

Join us for the Vasilopita Cutting on Sunday, January 10th following the Divine Liturgy. Proceeds will go to St. Basil's Academy.

Saint Basil Academy is a national not-for-profit philanthropic center of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America which provides love, shelter, food, education, protection and a home for her orphans, children of chronically ill or destitute parents or children from broken homes.

The Saint Basil Academy ministers to the whole child: mind, body, and spirit. Our mission is to facilitate

shelter, protection, love, and education in youth so they grow up to be healthy, wholesome, well-rounded Orthodox Christians, as well as productive members of society with vision and hope.

To learn more visit: <http://www.stbasil.goarch.org/assets/files/Fact%20Sheet%202014%20SBA-1.pdf>

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

January's Prayer of the Month:

Trisagion Prayer

Holy God. Holy Mighty. Holy Immortal. Have mercy on us. (3)

Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
both now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

All Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, forgive our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities,

for the glory of Your Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

Glory to the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, both now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

The Trisagion Prayer is an integral part of the Orthodox Christian prayer life. It is among the first of prayers we use to start our Morning and at the Conclusion of our day. This prayer is sung in the Divine Liturgy and almost every service. This prayer coincides with the prayer to the Holy Spirit and The Lord's Prayer. To learn more about the origins of the Trisagion, please visit: <http://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2010/09/miracle-of-trisagion-thrice-holy-hymn.html>

YOUTH MINISTRIES

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

GOYA:

Sunday, January 10th following the Vasilopita Cutting. See you in the Youth Room!

Ionian Village

I.V. on-the-GO is run by staff from Ionian Village, and this January, the staff will be running the activities at **Holy Trinity in Dallas, WHEN: January 23, 2016**
TIME: 10:30am-4:30pm
PLACE: HOLY TRINITY/DALLAS
WHO: Youth of grades 9 to 12

Come receive the IV experience here in Texas: **Holy Trinity, January 23, 1030am-430pm.**

IV On-the-Go is the traveling retreat program of the Office of Ionian Village that promises to give the young people of your home parish a taste of our unique and interactive approach to youth ministry. Ionian Village has always been a



travel program. While we can't possibly transport the entire country of Greece, we realized that we *can* travel with our enthusiasm, our energy, and our crazy ideas to bring the Ionian Village experience to as many young people as possible and provide the opportunity for even more young people to interact with the amazing Ionian Village Ministry here in America throughout the school year. Just like at camp, participants will encounter our Orthodox faith in an up close and personal and unforgettable way. **IV On-the-Go** is a new, fun, and engaging ministry for the youth of our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, and is open to every parish and youth group.

Ionian Village is an experience.

Teens and young adults that participate in Ionian Village travel across Greece, venerate the relics of saints, walk in the footsteps of the Apostles, and visit significant sites of Greek history and culture. Ionian Village is a unique summer camping program located in Greece and operated by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Ionian Village offers its participants a unique experience that is unavailable elsewhere. At the end of the program, staff and campers return to their homes with strengthened faith and with a greater appreciation for the Church and for Greek culture and heritage.

Ionian Village builds friendships.

Teens and young adults have the time of their lives while at Ionian Village. Staff and campers from across the United States form bonds and friendships that last a lifetime. Since 1970, more than 17,000 teens and young adults have experienced a 45 year old tradition committed to building, "Faith and friendships that last a lifetime."

Ionian Village is beautiful.

Ionian Village operates from a beautiful seafront campsite on western Peloponnesus in Greece on the coast of the Ionian Sea. The camp facility accommodates 200 campers and 50 staff members in white-washed cabins and bungalows. The campground was developed and built with the intention of fostering an Orthodox Christian community and providing a Greek village experience for all participants. The facilities are centered around a traditional white-washed Chapel and include a private beach, an Olympic-size swimming pool, shady pine forests, an amphitheater, a large hall for gatherings and activities, an open-air cafeteria, a soccer field, two volleyball courts, a tennis courts, and a basketball court.

<http://www.ionianvillage.org/iv-on-the-go> for more information

Orthodox Christian Mission Center: News from the Mission Field

OCMC NEWS - MIRACLES AND MILESTONES: MISSIONS IN 2015

BY ALEX GOODWIN

2015 was another great year for orthodox missions that saw missionaries, mission teams, and mission priests share the orthodox faith with people around the world. none of it would have been possible without your prayers and support. 2016 is shaping up to be an even better year! we are looking forward to continuing to answer the call to make disciples of all nations with you in the coming year. 2015 has been an amazing year for



orthodox missions and the orthodox christian mission center (ocmc). none of it would have been possible without your prayers, support, and service. what follows are some highlights from the mission center programs that have shared christ with a wanting world.

following a wonderful term in mongolia, the moore family returned to the united states so that chris could pursue a seminary education. they plan to return to mongolia, but while they are away ocmc missionary kurt bringerud will continue their growing "studies in the faith" group. the ritzi family gave birth to their son moises while in albania. both dcn. stephanos and dkn. alexandria were able to continue serving the youth of albania while hosting mission teams that worked to share the faith with young

people. dkn. alexandria taught at the protagonist school directed by ocmc missionary presbytera georgia bendo. the hoppe family advocated for strong albanian families. nathan hoppe, the macdonald family, and anastasia barksdale continued training future church leaders at the seminary. kenya welcomed dr. william black who began teaching at the makarios iii seminary in nairobi where meagan engelbach is also working on translating church texts. in romania, floyd frantz expanded the reach of the church's substance abuse initiatives while his wife ancuta continued to direct the protection of the theotokos day center for unwed mothers. the chakos family, along with jesse brandow, saw the opening of a new clinic and further catechism of the mayan people in guatemala. and, the ruckers returned to alaska where fr. david teaches at st. herman seminary while blake dilullo continued construction and restoration projects throughout diocese.

sixteen, orthodox mission teams served around the world in 2015 including the first ocmc mission team to indonesia and the first ocmc healthcare team to guatemala. teams also helped build a school in the turkana village of loupwala in northern kenya. a second ocmc team spent time with the people of san esteban and pisaflores, mexico, where they taught the faith to the aztec people that call these villages home.

two long-time priests who have been supported through the support a mission priest program (samp) were elevated to the episcopacy in kenya in the past year. at the end of 2014, fr. neophytos kongai was enthroned bishop of nyeri and later in 2015 fr. athanasius akunda was ordained bishop of kisumu. in all, the samp program helped enable the pastoral ministries of 376 clergy in sixteen countries.

the ocmc was also able to direct thousands of dollars to help fund various church projects as initiatives around the world aimed at building up the church and encouraging self-sustainability around the world.

2016 is shaping up to be an even more impactful year. registration for mission teams is currently open and more long-term missionaries are slated to deploy to the field. your continued prayers and support are needed now more than ever! thank you for your steadfast dedication to this incredible work. the staff, board, and missionaries of the orthodox christian mission center pray that you have a blessed new year!

International Orthodox Christian Charities: News and Information

IOCC Responds As Severe Weather Cripples Communities From Texas To The Midwest

Baltimore, MD (IOCC) — International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) is preparing emergency relief for survivors of severe weather that is crippling hundreds of communities across the country. Nearly 70 tornados have swept across the country in the past week, causing 11 deaths and massive destruction near Garland, Texas. In Missouri, the governor has declared a state of emergency after severe weather claimed 13 lives and residents brace for more flooding in rivers in Missouri and Illinois in the coming days. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reports that 18 million people have been living under flood warnings across 13 states.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the thousands of people currently being impacted by the current spate of severe weather impacting so much of our country," said IOCC US Country Representative Daniel Christopoulos. "We are in the process of formulating, with our Church, governmental, ecumenical and VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters) partners, the most effective way to respond, and we encourage our IOCC supporters to join us in prayer and active



A homeowner tries to retrieve personal belongings from his neighborhood turned rubble heap after a string of tornados ripped through Garland, Texas, three days ago. A large weather system packing snow and heavy rain hit the mid-section of the US hard on the heels of extreme weather that claimed 43 lives in seven states. *Photo: EPS*

love for those suffering during these Holy days when we celebrate God's Incarnate Love."

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Pray for those who have suffered loss in this disaster that has impacted so many communities across the US.

Assemble emergency kits. IOCC also anticipates the need for Emergency Clean-Up Buckets which are in low supply. For directions on how to assemble Emergency Clean-Up Buckets, please visit iocc.org/kits.

Make a donation. You can help the victims of disasters in the United States, like the tornados in Texas and the flooding in Missouri and Illinois by making a financial gift to the **United States Emergency Response Fund**, The fund will provide immediate relief as well as long-term support through emergency aid, recovery assistance and other support to help those in need. To make a gift, please visit iocc.org, call toll free at 1-877-803-IOCC (4622), or mail a check or money order payable to IOCC, P.O. Box 17398, Baltimore, MD 21297-0429.

ICONOGRAPHY

DO ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS WORSHIP ICONS?

by Tony Holden

People sometimes ask if we worship Icons. The answer is simple, it is an emphatic **No!**

No Christian worships an image. Christians worship God. We do not worship Icons, but we do **venerate** them. That means we show special respect for the Icons. We do this because the Icons are a way of joining us to the goodness and holiness of God and His Saints.

When an Orthodox Christian goes into Church he lights a candle, makes the sign of the cross then kisses the Icons of Christ, His Mother the Theotokos, and the Saints.

A screen separates the Altar from the rest of the Church. This screen is known as the "Icon Screen" or "Iconostasis" because it supports a series of Icons. The North and South aspects of the Iconostasis is divided by central double doors known as the "Royal Doors" or "Holy Doors". Characteristically in Orthodox Churches, the first Icon to the right of the Holy Doors is the Icon of Christ, the Creator of All Things. To the left of the Holy Doors is an Icon of the Mother of God with Christ cradled in Her arms. The Icon depicted on the Holy Doors is that of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, where the Archangel Gabriel brings to Her the news of the impending Miraculous Conception. Icons of the four Evangelists are also often found on the Holy Doors.

The Holy Doors show us the way heaven and earth are reunited by Christ. The Icon of the Annunciation reminds us that God came down to us as a person. Mary was a doorway for Christ to enter this world, and for us to enter heaven. The Icons of the Four Evangelists remind us that we come to God through the teachings of the Gospel.

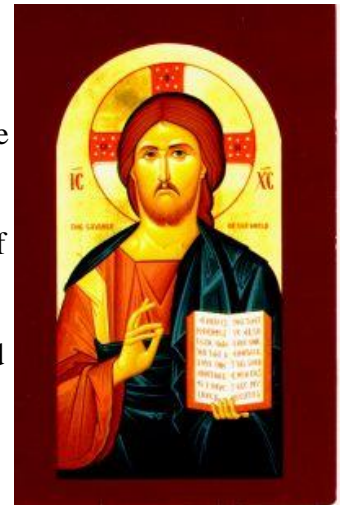
To the right of the Icon of Christ on the Iconostasis is the Icon of the Forerunner St John the Baptist. To the left of the Icon of the Virgin and Christ Child is the Patron Saint of that particular Church Parish

Every orthodox home has its Icon shelf, and family Prayers are said there.

The meaning of Icons

Images have always played a part in teaching Christians about their faith. Icons are much more than religious pictures. They are a way of telling people about some complicated Christian teaching in a simple form that anyone can see and start to understand -- even a tiny child. Icons in the earliest days of the Church were a means of depicting Gospel events to Christians who may not have been able to read the Gospel themselves.

Christians of the Orthodox Church say that it is both wrong and impossible to make a picture showing what God looks like. We have never seen Him, we hardly know Him, We cannot draw Him. However, God came into this world as a person. He became flesh and blood as Jesus Christ. This is what Christians call the "Incarnation". This belief that God became a man is one of the most fundamental of Christian teachings. We



can paint a picture of Christ because He lived here as a person. The word "Icon" means a picture or image. In simple terms an Icon of Christ is a picture of Christ which tells everyone that God became a man.

The meaning of Icons goes even further than this. In Icons of the Saints, the pictures do not look like pictures of ordinary flesh and blood. They look strange. The Church teaches that Christ had a human body in order to save our bodies as well as our souls. At the end of time, when Christ comes again, everyone will rise from the dead. We will not look the same as we do now. We will be utterly changed, and we will shine with the glory of God. Icons show people with that sort of body -- a Resurrection body. The Church also teaches that all people are made in the image and likeness of God. In a way then, the Saints are living 'Icons' of Christ. Because Christ was God and Man at the same time. He was able to show us just what that image and likeness of God can actually look like. The Gospels tell us that once, at a place called Mount Tabor, the Apostles saw that Christ was shining with light. (Matt. 17. 1-13; Mark 9. 2-13; Luke 9. 28-36) The same thing sometimes happens to people who live a very holy life. When they are deep in prayer they shine with a mysterious light. Their bodies have been changed so that they show the image and likeness of God. They are holy flesh. Not all of the Saints show this sort of holiness on the outside in their lives. More often they grow into the likeness of God in a hidden way, but all Icons of the Saints show that they have already changed from ordinary flesh and blood. Saints are depicted with a halo of light around their head.



There are many examples of [miraculous Icons](#) throughout time. Some even [today](#). Orthodox Christians believe firmly that God can use things of this world [such as wood and paint] to help us to share in the heavenly world. We use water in Baptism or bread and wine in Holy Communion. We ask God to bless these ordinary things so that they can bring us to Him. Similarly, we ask God to bless Icons as well, so that the paint and wood and the artist's skill can be used in His service. Icons are blessed to bring us to God. This is the reason why we call them "Holy Icons".

Windows into heaven

In an ordinary picture things seem to get narrower as they go into the distance. This gives the picture its feeling of depth. It is called "perspective". Icons are different. On many of them the picture seems to get wider as it goes into the distance -- the perspective is back to front.

In an ordinary painting you can often see the sun, or else you can see light and shadow. You can tell the time of day, or you can see that it is night. You can not see these things in an Icon. There are no shadows, or ways of showing day and night. An Icon shows a view of heaven, so it is lighted by the unchanging light of God.

Icons are painted this way on purpose. An Icon is a window into Heaven. The veneration granted to the Icon is said to pass on to Heaven and the person depicted therein.

2016 STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Goal \$213,200.00

PLEDGES		% of Goal	% Paid
Total Pledged for the Fund:	\$110,984.00	52.06 %	0.00 %
Additional Pledges Needed to make Goal:	\$102,216.00	47.94 %	
Number of Families Pledging:	41		
Avg. Pledge per Family Pledging:	\$2,706.93		

of Addl. Pledges Needed (at Avg. Pledge) to reach Goal: **38**

Have you made your 2016 Stewardship Pledge?

Visit us online to make your 2016 pledge: www.stdemetrios.net and click on "Stewardship"

CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

1. Infant Jesus was brought to the temple to be presented to God and to offer sacrifices how many days after his birth?

- a. 8
- b. 10
- c. 40
- d. 50

2. According to the Gospel of St. Luke, how many wise men or magi visited the Christ Child after His birth?

- a. Two
- b. Three
- c. Ten
- d. None of the above

3. True or False:

On Epiphany, Jesus was baptized and adopted by God as His Son.

4. As was the custom of the Jews, Jesus was circumcised how many days after his birth?

- a. Three
- b. Eight
- c. Forty
- d. Fifty

5. The feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple occurs how many days after the feast of the Nativity of the Lord?

- a. 7
- b. 8
- c. 40
- d. 50

6. True or False:

A church that is autocephalous is self-governing administratively, but remains in spiritual communion with the body of the Orthodox Church.

7. Jesus Christ is

- a. A great man in whom God lived
- b. A Prophet
- c. God and Man
- d. A god who appeared as a man before ascending into heaven

8. True or False: Christ was born with two perfect natures, the divine and human, as God-Man.

9. True or False: The Orthodox Church believes that Christ will come again to judge the world.

10. "Amen" means

- a. Glory to God
- b. Praise the Lord
- c. So be it
- d. We are done

1.c 2.d 3. False 4.b 5.c 6. True 7.c 8.True 9. True 10.c

BURN THE MORTGAGE

Thank you! to all our Burn the Mortgage Champions!

We did it! We raised \$33,078.31!!!

\$30,000 will be matched allowing us to contribute \$63,078.31 to pay off our Mortgage!!!
What an accomplishment of St. Demetrios!!!!

The Festival proceeds will cover the remaining \$22,167.82. However, if you would still like to make a contribution we will gladly accept.

Again, **THANK YOU!!!!!! Glory to God!!!!**

COMMUNITY IN PICTURES

St. Nicholas Retreat



Sunday School Christmas Program

















Elyse Rose Pool's Baptism

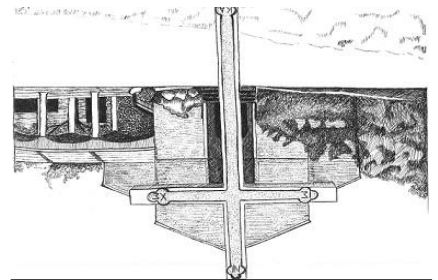
**Congratulations to Ellene M. Cudd for her graduation with her Masters in Library Science.
Ellene is the Daughter of Jim and Dimitra Cudd.**

January 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<u>1</u> St. Basil the Great Circumcision of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ 8am Orthros 9am Feast of St. Basil the Great	<u>2</u>
<u>3</u> Sunday before Epiphany 7:45am Orthros 9am Divine Liturgy 40 Day Memorial: Kiki Caglage	<u>4</u> No Greek School	<u>5</u>  Eve of the Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ 8am Orthros 9am Divine Liturgy 10:30am Lesser Blessing of the Waters 7pm Parish Council	<u>6</u> The Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ 8am Orthros 9am Divine Liturgy Feast of Theophany 10:30am Greater Blessing of the Waters	<u>7</u> Synaxis of John the Holy Glorious Prophet , Baptist, & Forerunner 9am Divine Liturgy 4pm Supper Club	<u>8</u> 	<u>9</u> 10am Philoptochos Meeting
<u>10</u> Sunday after Epiphany 7:45am Orthros 9am Divine Liturgy 10am Philoptochos Vasilopita Cutting 10:30am Church School 11:00am GOYA	<u>11</u> 4:30pm Greek School	<u>12</u> 6pm AHEPA Meeting	<u>13</u> 	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u> 	<u>16</u>
<u>17</u> 12th Sunday of Luke 7:45am Orthros 9am Divine Liturgy 10:30am Church School	<u>18</u> 4:30pm Greek School	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u> 	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u> 	<u>23</u> 10:30am-4:30pm Ionian Village on the Go Dallas
<u>24</u> 14th Sunday of Luke 7:45am Orthros 9am Divine Liturgy 10:30am Church School	<u>25</u> 4:30pm Greek School	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u> 	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u> 	30 Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, & John Chrysostom 8am Orthros 9am Feast of the Three Hierarchs
<u>31</u> 15th Sunday of Luke 7:45am Orthros 9am Divine Liturgy 10:30am One Year Memorial for Nick Vloitos 10:30am Church School					 Strict Fast  Fish allowed	 Dairy, Eggs, and Fish allowed  Wine and Oil allowed

Sunday Readings for January 2016

Jan. 3	Sunday before Theophany	Epistle: II Timothy 4:5-8 Gospel: Mark 1:1-8
Jan. 10	Sunday after Theophany	Epistle: Ephesians 4:7-13 Gospel: Matthew 4:12-17
Jan. 17	12th Sunday of Luke	Epistle: Hebrews 13:17-21 Gospel: Luke 17:12-19
Jan. 24	14th Sunday of Luke	Epistle: Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2 Gospel: Luke 18:35-43
Jan. 31	15th Sunday of Luke	Epistle: I Corinthians 12:27-31; 13:1-8 Gospel: Luke 19:1-10



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