



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
303 Cullum Drive
Euless, TX 76040-4625

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Sponsorship for This Month's Forerunner

Have a Blessed New Year 2010!

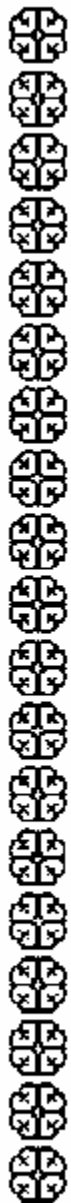




THE FORERUNNER

VOL. XXVI NO. 1

January 2010





THE FORERUNNER

Monthly Bulletin of
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
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Volume XXVI ▪ Number 1

January 2010

Schedule of Regular Services at St. John's
Summer Schedule

Sunday, January 3:	Holy Liturgy,	9:30 A.M.
Sunday, January 10:	Holy Liturgy,	9:30 A.M.
Sunday, January 17:	Holy Liturgy,	9:30 A.M.
Sunday, January 24:	Holy Liturgy,	9:30 A.M.
Sunday, January 31:	Holy Liturgy,	9:30 A.M.

Orthodox Calendar

*See enclosed calendar for dates, times, and places for the
Special services and other events this month*

Council Capsule

On January 10, the Parish Council will be hosting a free will donation luncheon after liturgy.

Please plan on celebrating our Parish Name's Day with us.

The following have been re-elected to the Church Council:

1. Nancy Medvic.
2. Barbara Vittas.
3. Allison Medvic.
4. Raj Shah.

The following have been elected as new members of the Church Council:

1. George Genovezos.
2. Terry Poriotis.

Please welcome these outstanding church members to the 2010 Church Council.

Harry Karegeannes
Council President

Father Vasile's Message

The Bond of Love

Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. (*Mat 22:37-40*)

St. John the Little, a disciple of St. Pachomios the Great, said once "*Nobody builds his house from the roof down but from the foundation up*". Asked what he meant by this he said "*our foundation is our neighbor; to him I should tend first, because on him hang all the commandments of Christ.*" The essence of Christianity is love, but love has to be directed to someone other than us, otherwise it becomes selfishness. Our relationship with God depends on our relationship with our brothers and sisters. If I don't love my brother and do not want to be with him than how could I be with God that loves my brother?

The ancient Greeks had a real fondness for the concept of love and were very particular in describing it, employing several words to describe its different meanings. For this they had *eros*, which is the passionate love, more linked with the flesh in the modern understanding, but not necessarily the only meaning of it; they also used *philia* for the love toward our friends and the things we enjoy in life; *storge* represented the family love, like parents for their children; and finally they had *agape*.

Agape signifies a love that is unconditional, selfless, genuine, and cheerful. It is the type of love that never asks but always gives, is a love that does not bother to suspect anything but trusts, it is the love that does not talk bad about others, or ever gets upset, or yells or has swinging moods. It is how God love us and how we should love our neighbor.

On Easter day, the holiest day for Orthodox people, we hold a service that we also call "*Agape*" vespers. Maybe you have wondered

where this name comes from. Its true meaning is linked with the Gospel of the day that according to Tradition is read in many different languages. The languages are a symbol of the love God has for all the people of this world, not just for the Israelites, but for all the gentiles that were all called to be a new holy nation under Christ, united into His holy body, the Church. This represents the real agape: the universal love of God, a perfect unity of persons that has all the love He needs and yet He creates the world and in it He puts Man so He can have other subjects that can partake in the perfect love of the Holy Trinity.

God did not need this for Himself, He did not just want a partner to play with, but He, unselfishly, wanted someone to share with what He already had in abundance: love. He offered man the possibility to enter into a relationship of love with Him, a relationship wanted from both sides, a relationship of unbiased free choice. Any other solution beside the total freedom to join in or not, which also includes the risk of rejection, would have fallen into the category of arranged marriages.

God wanted however a true love, a love based on mutual understanding and informed consent: a simple choice and man would have had everything. Man however, we know the history by now, rejected this union initially and sold it for an immaterial dream of existence in creation without its Creator.

The day of the great fall was a sad day in the existence of Man but in the same time one that made possible the revelation of God's supreme commitment to Man, a revelation of His profound love for mankind, a love that goes all

the way to sacrifice. Not a sacrifice of animals: doves or lambs or goats, but a meaningful sacrifice, the sacrifice of the only Son of God, Who came down to give us another chance to be redeemed and to rejoin God in His plans for union with Mankind.

God emptied Himself of all His heavenly glory and from His greatness He made Himself small, one of us, so we can be made great; as St. Athanasius said: *God became man so man can become, at his turn, god.* This is the great mystery of love: one becoming small so the other could grow; one renouncing his will for the other's will, one giving the other receiving, always cheerful, always joyful, always holding the other one in first regard.

We re-enact this great mystery every Sunday when during Liturgy we partake of the Eucharist. Christ makes Himself again small so we can take Him in our bodies and in turn we become big, we become one with God, as He always wanted. But through Him we also become one with all that partake with Him; through communion with Christ we actually become a Church. One becomes many and many become one. When one joins the church one ceased being alone, from one, living in isolation one becomes part of a community that shares everything in agape.

What unites the bricks of His Church, us, His people, is not mortar, but is Him, love incarnate, the genuine and original *agape*. His love however is one that compels us to imitation. If we want our church to be solid and last forever we should make sure we have enough of this special cement. Hear the words of the Holy Apostle Paul: *"I want you to know what a great*

conflict I have for you [...] that [your] hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love.” (Col 2:1-2).

This is the only way: to love each other as Christ loves us. The bonds that form between people through unconditioned love, respect and consideration are the only ones that could last a life time and dare I say an eternity. A community of faith has to be first of all a community of love. We cannot be in communion with the love incarnate if we don't share this sentiment among ourselves. We join the Church because we love God, but the expression of this love is made through our brothers and sisters. They are the true gate to paradise, our long waited ticket to heaven.

Only united in one holy body the building blocks we need for our Church will be brought together in an unbreakable bond. In love and unity our sacrifice and commitment will serve the holy purpose of living a true life in Christ.

Now therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom every building having been fitly framed together, grows into a holy sanctuary in the Lord; in whom you also are built together for a dwelling place of God through the Spirit. (Eph 2:19-22)



Financial Report

Financial Report Thru 11/30/2009

Stewardship Pledge	\$144,090.00	
Stewardship Received	\$123,086.00	
Total Net Income including		
Doanations & Fundraisers		
Year	2008	2009
	\$156,506.00	\$152,788.00
Total Net Expenses		
Year	2008	2009
	\$175,810.00	\$154,849.00
Total Net Income		
Year	2008	2009
	(\$19,304.00)	(\$2,061.00)

2010 Stewardship News

Well, here we are at the beginning of a new year and a new stewardship campaign. Once again, we will try to meet our church expenses through stewardship. In order to do this we need to raise **\$185,000**. This is a challenging goal, but with everyone's help we can do it.

We are excited to announce that we are half way there! As of **12/15/09** we have **49 pledges** for a **total of \$93,504**.

If you have not already pledged, we ask that you seriously and prayerfully consider doing so. We must start showing our love for God by fully supporting His church. Please help us reach our goal by completing and submitting your card today.

A big thank you to those of you who have already become stewards and to the many who increased their pledge

2010 Stewards

Alexander, Leo & Teresa
Arlington, Linda
Ballas, Andy & Pat
Berca, Sorin & Carmen
Blake, John & Harriett
Bogdos, George & Sotera
Bogordos, George & Kasandra
Brandon, Roberta
Cline, Tim & Angela
Fondulis, Paul
Forcum, Annie
Fox, Mike & Kathy
Geil, Chris & Sandra
Genovezos, George & Olympia
George, Ken & Maggie
Hooe, Jane
Jones, Daniel
Karegeannes, Harry & Ginny
Kerbow, Joe & Maria
Koumbarides, Nicos
Leeders, Larry
MacPherson, Doug & Andi
Manos, George & Vicki
Mavias, Michael & Mary
Medvic, Allison
Medvic, Nancy

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Molhoek, Mike & Tina
Morcovescu, Serban & Anca
Naval, Marc
Nicholas, Toni
Noulas, Athanasios
Pachares, Tony & Athena
Papadopoulou, Olga & Theoni
Papaliodis, Louie
Paulos, Sophie
Petercsak, Steve & Esther
Peters, Paun & Lynn
Plock, Eleni
Poletes, Bill & Rena
Poriotis, Terry & Gail
Rafailedes, Connie
Ruppel, John & Joanie
Russo, Joseph & Athena
Shah, Raj & Kirsten
Steffaro, Bob & Karen
Talleos, Peter
Tudora, Fr. Vasile &
Presvytera Mirela
Vittas, George & Barbara
Wright, Bill & Christine

Philoptochos News

Ladies,

I pray each and every one of you had a happy holiday season with all of Christ's blessings.

Below is a list of --

"Philoptochos Dates to Remember"

- **January 9, 2010 - Vasilopita Bake Day**

- **January 10, 2010 - Vasilopita Auction following Liturgy (Benefiting St. Basil's Academy)**
- **January 17, 2010 - Philoptochos Meeting & Membership Tea**

Our annual Philoptochos Christmas Dinner was held Sunday, December 13, 2009 at Café Italia in Grapevine. All that attended had a great time, the food was delicious and the gathering of our families during the holidays was enjoyed by all.

Thanks to Joanie Ruppel who once again coordinated the “Adopt a Family” gift program. We had an overwhelming response this year and are so very blessed to see so many supporting hands in our parish.

Thank you to those that participated in our Christmas Bake Sale. As always, Baklava, Bread and all our other items make wonderful gifts for family and friends during the holidays. Thank you to the gracious ladies who gave up their Saturday to prepare all these delicious items.

Our 3rd annual ornament exchange was wonderful. Many chose to participate and as a result took home a part of their church family. We hope the participation level grows each and every year as our community grows.

We have adopted a new program this year – “Shoes for the Orphaned Soul”. This program provides less fortunate children with a new pair of shoes. We humbly ask each of you to bring a

pair of new shoes to church during the months of January and February. We will collect them and send them off so that these “orphaned souls” have shoes to wear. Please see Roberta Brandon or Kathy Fox for additional details.

We will be hosting our annual Membership Tea on the 17th of January following Divine Liturgy in the Paulos Center. Martha Stefanadakis from our National Board has graciously accepted our invitation to speak to us about Stewardship and Membership. Let us each show our support by bringing a non-member to this meeting and introducing them to our “Sisters in Christ.”

Once again, please reference our website www.stjohndfw.info to receive additional information on our mission and philanthropic events.

With Christ's Love,

Bertha

Youth Ministries on the Move

December brought us many joyful moments as we observed our Youth during the Christmas Pageant. The costumes were beautiful, thanks to Sandra Geil and Margo Yiantsou; the scenery which the teachers put together was perfect and all spoke their parts clearly and meaningfully. Yes, we have talent! We all look forward to a presentation in our new buildings where there will be adequate room to preform.

Orthodox Observer

Thanks to the GOYANS and their advisors who added to our Christmas cheer with their happy singing voices,

Let's plan to support them in Dallas during the Diocesan Basketball Tournament January 22, and 23! Details are printed up in the Forerunner.

JOY will have a get-together on Jan. 3 so all you 3rd through 5th graders please plan to attend for lots of fun activities. For details, please call or e-mail Olympia Genovezos. biagenovezos@gmail.com.

Youth Ministries will meet in the Paulos Center on Jan. 31 following Liturgy. We welcome new members!

Athena Pachares, Youth Ministries Coordinator

pachares@sbcglobal.net

GOYA

If you are between the ages of 12 and 18 and would like to be a member of GOYA, please contact one of the officers.

Maggie Mohloek, President
Philip Sullivan, Vice President
Mallory Chokas, Treasurer
Nina Papadamitriou, Secretary

Philip Sullivan
Vice-President

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We have recently learned that there are several parishioners that have not been receiving the Orthodox Observer. If you wish to receive this publication, you can contact them at 212- 570-3555 or go to

www.observer.goarch.org

Gladsome Light Dialogues

Gladsome Light Dialogues will take a break in January dues to the busy House Blessings schedule. We will be back in February with fresh new dialogues!

Don't forget to visit our redesigned blog for additional info, materials and reflection at: <http://dialogues.stjohndfw.info>

Practical Faith

A Prayer For the Enemies

By St. Nikolai (Velimirovic)

**Bless my enemies, O Lord.
Even I bless them and do not curse them.**

Enemies have driven me into Your embrace more than friends have.

Friends have bound me to earth, enemies have loosed me from earth and have demolished all my aspirations in the world.

Enemies have made me a stranger in worldly realms and an extraneous inhabitant of the world.

Just as a hunted animal finds safer shelter than an unhunted animal does,

so have I, persecuted by enemies, found the
safest sanctuary,
having ensconced myself beneath Your
tabernacle, where neither friends nor enemies
can slay my soul.

**Bless my enemies, O Lord.
Even I bless them and do not curse them.**

They, rather than I, have confessed my sins
before the world.
They have punished me, whenever I have
hesitated to punish myself
They have tormented me, whenever I have tried
to flee torments.
They have scolded me, whenever I have
flattered myself
They have spat upon me, whenever I have filled
myself with arrogance.

**Bless my enemies, O Lord.
Even I bless them and do not curse them.**

Whenever I have made myself wise, they have
called me foolish.
Whenever I have made myself mighty, they
have mocked me as though I were a dwarf.
Whenever I have wanted to lead people, they
have shoved me into the background.
Whenever I have rushed to enrich myself, they
have prevented me with an iron hand.
Whenever I thought that I would sleep
peacefully, they have wakened me from sleep.
Whenever I have tried to build a home for a
long and tranquil life, they have demolished it
and driven me out.
Truly, enemies have cut me loose from the
world and have stretched out my hands to the
hem of Your garment.

**Bless my enemies, O Lord.
Even I bless them and do not curse them.**

Bless them and multiply them; multiply them
and make them even more bitterly against me:
so that my fleeing to You may have no return;
so that all hope in men may be scattered like
cobwebs;
so that absolute serenity may begin to reign in
my soul;
so that my heart may become the grave of my
two evil twins: arrogance and anger;
so that I might amass all my treasure in heaven;
ah, so that I may for once be freed from self-
deception, which has entangled me in the
dreadful web of illusory life.
Enemies have taught me to know what hardly
anyone knows,
that a person has no enemies in the world except
himself.
One hates his enemies only when he fails to
realize that they are not enemies, but cruel
friends.
It is truly difficult for me to say who has done
me more good and who has done me more evil
in the world: friends or enemies.
Therefore bless, O Lord, both my friends and
my enemies.
A slave curses enemies, for he does not
understand.
But a son blesses them, for he understands.
For a son knows that his enemies cannot touch
his life.
Therefore he freely steps among them and prays
to God for them.

**Bless my enemies, O Lord.
Even I bless them and do not curse them.**

(This prayer is included in the book, "The Illumined Heart" by Frederica Mathewes-Green)

Choir Notes

Our choir welcomes a new member, Annie Forcum. Annie has sung in other Orthodox Church choirs and is a welcomed addition to Alto and Soprano sections.

Let us give thanks to the Lord for getting us through another year as we look forward to what He has for us up ahead.

Wishing you all a Blessed New Year.

Bill Poletes & Choir Members of St. John the Baptist

Church School News

I'm sure you've enjoyed this year's Christmas pageant. Every child had an opportunity to shine. It was fun to see our youths' perform. Mrs. Kirsten Shah was the creative conductor and producer for this pageant. Mrs. Sandra Geil is our costume designer and creator. Thank you, Mrs. Shah and Mrs. Geil.

I send heartfelt thanks to our Church School teachers for their dedication to our children.

- Pre-K and Kindergarten: Mrs. Maria Kerbow, Ms. Allison Medvic, Mrs. Tina Molhoek
- First and Second grades: Mrs. Theresa Alexander

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- Third and Fourth grades: Mrs. Esther Petercsak
- Fifth and Sixth grades: Mrs. Pavlina Feichtinger
- Middle School: Mrs. Harriet Blake
- Teen-age: Ms. Stephanie Kallis

Church school will resume on January 3rd. When we resume classes, the Fifth and Sixth grade class will join the Middle School class in the Paulos Center.

Thank you, Mrs. Pavlina Feichtinger. We will miss you in church school.

Happy New Year.
Khanh Moutafis

Ageless Wonders

The Ageless Wonders will be meeting on Tuesday, January 12th, 2010 at 9:30 A.M. We will carpool from the church and go to Fort Worth to the new museum of Science and History in the Will Rogers complex, then on to lunch. More details to follow! On January, 24th in conjunction with our monthly coffee hour Fr. Vasile is going to have a memorial service for our former members who have passed on; George Coston, Pete Nicholas, Argie Ott, Nick and Ronnie Anagnostis, Nick Papaliothis and Allan McKinnon.

I hope y'all have a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Margaret 817-354-7731

Building Committee

The Building Committee is continuing to look for options to replace the functionality of the Paulos Center via a cost effective first phase of the Church Hall expansion and renovation.

Thanks to all who stopped by and offered comments and suggestions at the December 6th Open House review session. We will be presenting these options soon for review and approval to enable us to provide classrooms and offices for the parish prior to the Paulos Center demolition in order to make way for the new Church.

Joe Sullivan
Building Committee Chairman

Capital Campaign Committee

The Capital Campaign is nearing the end of a brief but exciting and successful two-and-one-half months of activity since its beginning in mid-October, after the Food Festival. We are happy to report the parishioners of St. John the Baptist have, as of Sunday, December 20th, stepped forward to offer commitments in the total of amount of \$1,552,010. We are humbled at the generosity displayed by these commitments and we are strengthened by our fellow parishioners' demonstrated resolve to build the new church.

As of December 20th, this level of total commitment has been achieved by about one-half the number of stewards of the Parish. We are confident many of our as yet uncommitted stewards and regular parishioners will also decide to step forward during the remaining weeks of December before we conclude the Capital Campaign's first year of activities... The Campaign will continue anew in the New Year as we strive to reach the ultimate goal of \$2,400,000, of which the first \$2.0 million will be for construction of the new church building.

During the first half of the year 2010, the Capital Campaign Committee's focus will be on working with the Parish Council and the Building Committee to finalize plans for the Paulos Center Replacement addition to the hall/church building. We must build the Paulos Center Replacement and demolish the old building before we can start construction of the new church. This will take-up approximately the first half of the New Year during which time we hope our uncommitted parishioners will be able to make their commitments to the Capital Campaign Fund according to their abilities... At the same time, the CCC will be launching the Campaign BRIDGE program to Build communications, Report financial information; Involve new members; Discover new ministries; Grow our stewardship culture; and, Express our appreciation continually to those who are making it possible to "Build Our Future" with their commitments and contributions no matter what size. With the support of Fr. Vasile and

the Parish Council, we hope to use the Capital Campaign and the development of the new church to prepare the Parish for the additional growth we expect with the opening of the new church and other renovated and expanded facilities over the next several years' time.

As we have reported to the Parish at the various Campaign events, a financially secure Capital Campaign Fund Account has been opened at a local bank and arrangements have also been made for acceptance of non-cash contributions in payment of commitments for those who desire to transfer securities to the CCFA. Please contact the Council Treasurer or any member of the CCC for further information and directions as to the steps to take when transferring securities.

The members of your Capital Campaign Committee wish you and yours a Blessed Christmas and to all of us a very Happy, Healthy and Successful New Year...

George Vittas, Chairman, Dr. Chris Yiantsou, Paun Peters, Nancy Medvic, Louis Papaliodis and Margaret Chokas

Websites

Don't forget pay us an often visit at our parish websites <http://stjohndfw.info> and <http://dialogues.stjohndfw.info>. The sites are continuously updated with news and information about our faith. Also visit us on our

new Capital Campaign website at <http://buildingourfuture.stjohndfw.info/>

Yours in Christ,
Sorin Berca, Website Administrator

Usher Schedule

- 1st Sunday: George Moutafis, Cynthia Pursley
- 2nd Sunday: Peter Talleos,, Raj Shah
- 3rd Sunday: Bill Wright, Tim Cline
- 4th Sunday: Barbara Vittas, Larry Leeders
- 5th Sunday: Nancy Medvic, Allyson Medvic

Acolyte Schedule

- 1st Sunday : Phillip Sullivan, Alex Genevesos, John Molhoek, Bennet Kerbow
- 2nd Sunday : Chris Eftemie, Ovidiu Berca, Phillip Sullivan, Chris File
- 3rd Sunday : Jackson Wright, Joey Basiliadis, Alex Genevezos, James Seals
- 4th Sunday : Luca Tudora, Ovi Berca, James Seals, Alex Shah
- 5th Sunday: Phillip Sullivan, Jackson Wright, Ovi Berca, James Seals

Coffee Hour Schedule

- 1st Sun.: Mr. & Mrs. Sorin Berca
- 2nd Sun: Philoptochos
- 3rd Sun: Parish Council
- 4th Sun: Ageless Wonders
- 5th Sun: Parish Council (If Applicable)

Duties for hosts of Coffee Hour

SETUP

- Arrange pastries/food in a desirable manner on the appropriate tables in the parish hall.
- You are responsible for making the coffee. Make two pots: one regular, one decaf. Plug in before going into church. The instructions are in the kitchen.
- Prepare a tray with sugar, creamer, sugar substitute, mixing straws, a few spoons. Set with trash bucket.
- Put donation basket out with appropriate sign.

CLEAN UP

- Wash all dishes soiled, including coffee pots.
- Return sugar tray to kitchen and replenish it.
- Wash off hall tables and kitchen counters.
- Donation money will be collected by the Parish Council