



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

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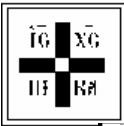
**With love and best wishes**

**To our son John and his beautiful bride Melissa**

**On their wedding day**

**March 21, 2009**

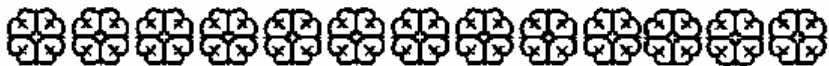
**Mom and Dad Vittas**



# THE FORERUNNER

VOL. XXIV NO. 3

March 2009





# THE FORERUNNER

Monthly Bulletin of  
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church  
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Volume XXV ▪ Number 3

*March 2009*

## *Schedule of Services at St. John's*

✓ Sunday, March 1:	Holy Liturgy,	10 A.M.
✓ Sunday, March 8:	Holy Liturgy,	10 A.M.
✓ Sunday, March 15:	Holy Liturgy,	10 A.M.
✓ Sunday, March 22:	Holy Liturgy,	10 A.M.
✓ Sunday, March 29:	Holy Liturgy,	10 A.M.

## *Orthodox Calendar*

*See enclosed calendar for dates, times, and places for special services and events this month.*

## Council Capsule

On February 15 the General Assembly was held with high attendance. Thanks to all who participated.

A huge thanks to George & Olympia Genovezos and Chris Geil who stepped up to the plate and volunteered to chair the annual food festival.

At the meeting an affirmative vote was taken to support the recommendation to fund and move forward with the design contact for a new church.

The Building Committee is composed of Joe Sullivan (Chairman), Mitch Chokas, Buck Kinman, Stacia Leeders, George Moutafis, Ted Stoycos, and Mirela Tudora.

The Capital Campaign Committee is composed of George Vittas (Chairman), Dr. Lou Antahades, Margaret Chokas, Nancy Medvic, Louis Papaliadis, Paun Peters, and Dr. Chris Yiantsou.

Please take time to thank your fellow parishioners who work hard and tirelessly on your behalf.

### **Special note:**

I wanted to give a special thank you to Trevor Matheson for his generous donation of a projector to our Church. It is most welcome and will get plenty of use!

A reminder to all of our people that they are always welcome to come and talk to the Parish Council anytime they feel the need. The schedule of our meetings is posted on the Church web site.

The criteria to speak at the Council meeting is as follows:

- Must be scheduled in advance.
- Visitors speak prior to our regularly scheduled meeting.
- Speaker is limited to 5 minutes.

-Roberts Rules Of Order apply.-  
Harry Karegeannes  
Council President

## Father Vasile's Message

### ***Loosing our self-centered mindset***

*The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one. (Joh 17:22)*

The experience of communion is the ultimate experience for Man and the perfect model of this communion is found in the Holy Trinity. The three Persons of the Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit share the same divine nature, although they are distinguished from each other. They are distinct and yet eternally together, partaking in the most sublime act of love that could exist. We have been created in this divine image of communion: we are distinguished from each other and yet we share the same human nature, being called to a universal brotherhood of love.

The In order to be able to experience in our lives the true communion of the Trinity we need the presence of Christ. The incarnation is the Mystery that makes possible the communion between the Holy Trinity and humanity, through Jesus Christ. "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." (Mat 18:20). This union is however is accomplished on the Cross where Christ, situated at the intersection of the two axes, reunites God with mankind and re-establishes the basis for human inter-communion. He is the gate that gives us access into the intimacy of the Holy Trinity: as brothers of Christ we also become sons of the Father and we partake of his fatherly Love through the Holy Spirit.

The place where this communion is fully expressed is the Church. Christ is present in the midst of His community through the Holy Eucharist. Through this Sacrament and the whole liturgical life of the Church the Holy Trinity enters in the lives of the faithful, penetrating every aspect of their existence because as Christians all our life

should be a Liturgy, a permanent strive to stay in communion with God and with our brothers in faith. Through this understanding the Christian life is a life of sharing, understanding and love and not one of selfishness, antagonism and hate.

We live however in a fallen world where the Christian principles of life are more than often forgotten. Instead of striving to aggregate around the Church in communion, man tends to separate, to find individualistic ways of self fulfillment. This is one of the main problems of our society today: the common goal is forgotten for the sake of the personal gain.

Many times people say: we cannot follow Church rules; they are too strict, the world is changing and our Church does not, we cannot follow anymore. And unfortunately many leave the One Apostolic Church and follow the easy-ways-out offered to them by other churches.

The true reason why many think this way is a lack of understanding of the need for liturgical and canonical unity in the Church. We need the unity of liturgical practice because it is an important form of expressing the communion of the Church. When one fasts according to the guidelines of the Church, one is in full communion with the whole body of Christians that do the same. One is in communion with the other living Christians that fast, with the departed faithful that have observed the fast during the Church History, with the Apostolic Fathers that have perfected the fasting rules, and above all with Jesus Christ that has taught us directly the importance of fasting in our spiritual life. By abiding to the standards of our Church we are fully partaking into the living body of the Church, sharing the divine Spirit that flows through her veins.

Fasting, and all the other ascetical exercises we are called to accomplish are devoid in this way of any individual merit. One does not fast to be better than another, to compare, but simply to be like everybody else. There is no boasting in following the standard, is a minimum that is required from us. *“So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say,*

*“We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!” (Luk 17:10)*

In this common act of abiding together to the wise rules laid out by the Church we come together as brothers, supporting each other, forgiving each other’s weaknesses, and moving forward as a block, united toward the final destination of mankind.

The guidelines themselves are the fruit of communion as they spring from the universal repository of revelations of the One Church. The practical rules of the spiritual life did not come out of nowhere, they are not the work of some sick churchmen that had nothing better to do, but they represent the distillate of God’s revelation to His chosen ones, the Fathers of the Church, proven through the experience of generations and generations of faithful that attained salvation by abiding to them.

Using the experience accumulated over the history in her shared conscience, the Church has been able to distinguish for us what is beneficial and what is detrimental for our spiritual life. The Church has seen what foods are best to make us more prone to meditation and prayer and which are making us heavy, sleepy and forgetful toward the needs of the soul. The Church knows what requests are beneficial for our souls and incorporated them into her hymnology and prayers. The Church has discerned for us the virtues we need to strive for that will bring us closer to our spiritual goals. And the examples can continue.

Understanding this background how can one still say: it has to be another way to God, without following the Church, without fasting, without the Sacraments, without all that is required from us? Thinking this way leads only to a gradual separation from the body of the faithful into an individualistic and selfish attempt to reach the goal in a solitary and irrational attempt. As Tertullian said in the 4<sup>th</sup> century: *unus Christianus, nulus Christianus* – one Christian is no Christian. We cannot be Christians and act in opposition with the Church as we are on our own, as everything is between us and God, forgetting that He is the divine Head of the Church. If we want to get to

Christ and Christ is in the Church, how can we want in the same time to be outside of the Church?

Our whole life should become therefore liturgical, a service offered to God and our brothers, a continuous struggle to be one with the body of Christ, by abiding to the holy framework laid out before us by generations of saints. The only way to step up on the ladder of divine ascent is to loose our selfish predispositions that characterize our fallen nature, and give up our egoistical and self-centered mindset.

Following Christ is not a private affair, as many erroneously believe, but is a cooperative attempt, is the fruit of the participation of the whole Church in an effort that will redeem not only Man but the whole cosmos with him.

In Christ,  
Fr. Vasile

## Financial Report

<i>Year</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>2009</i>
<i>Steward</i>	<i>\$11,651</i>	<i>\$14,583</i>	<i>\$6,920</i>
<i>Income</i>	<i>\$14,555</i>	<i>\$17,474</i>	<i>\$8,710</i>
<i>Expense</i>	<i>\$15,818</i>	<i>\$15,132</i>	<i>\$15,630</i>
<i>+/-</i>	<i>\$(1,263)</i>	<i>\$2,342</i>	<i>\$(6,920)</i>

Larry Leeders,  
Treasurer

## Building Committee

Based upon the successful outcome at the February General Assembly Meeting, the Building Committee is making plans to kick off the detailed design of the new Church Building and Site Development with the Ashton Wynne-

managed design team. We have briefed the Parish Council on the Church design, detailed design process and contract arrangements with Ashton Wynne and are prepared to move forward.

Mirela Tudora is finalizing several modifications on the concept design to create a more efficient Church design, reduce construction costs and address all comments recommended by His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah. We hope to display the slightly revised Church rendering depicting the Byzantine-style architecture in the Church Hall very soon.

Once the design process is underway, we will provide two opportunities for the congregation to review the plans and make comments on the design details. The Building Committee will filter these comments and make recommendations to the Parish Council for proceeding with any changes based upon building functionality, cost and/or theological relevance to the Church.

Joe Sullivan  
Building Committee Chairman

## Stewardship News

As of **2/18/09** we have **71 pledges** for a **total of \$112,900 or 65%** of our goal. We still have a very long way to go.

Many of last year's stewards still have not pledged. The church needs your help. Please take a moment to complete your pledge card and become a member today.

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

## 2009 Stewards

Alexander, Leo & Teresa  
Antahades, Dr. Lou & Judyth  
Arapis, Minoli & Marsha

Ballas, Andy & Pat  
 Berca, Sorin & Carmen  
 Bitner, Carol  
 Blake, John & Harriett  
 Bogdos, George & Sotera  
 Bogordos, George & Kasandra  
 Brandon, Roberta  
 Chokas, Margaret  
 Clay, Aria & Wayne  
 Cline, Tim & Angela  
 Demetriades, Gus & Andi  
 Dempsey, Margaret  
 Dempsey, Walt & Dorothy  
 Feichtinger, Pavlina  
 Fondulis, Paul  
 Fox, Mike & Kathy  
 Geil, Christopher & Sandra  
 Genovezos, George & Olympia  
 Gigliotta, Leonard  
 Hooe, Jane  
 Johnson, Marshall & Velva  
 Karegeannes, Harry & Ginny  
 Kerbow, Joe & Maria  
 Leeders, Larry  
 Leeders, Stacia  
 Maayeh, Bishara & Mary  
 MacPherson, Doug & Andi  
 Manos, George & Vicki  
 Manos, Michael & Debbie  
 Matheson, Trevor & Sherri  
 Mavias, Michael & Mary  
 Medvic, Allison  
 Medvic, Nancy  
 Molhoek, Mike & Tina  
 Morcovescu, Serban & Anca  
 Moutafis, George & Khanh  
 Nahatis, Arthur  
 Nicholas, Toni  
 Pachares, Tony & Athena  
 Papadimitriou, Alex & Linda  
 Papadopoulou, Olga & Theoni  
 Papaliadis, Georgia  
 Petercsak, Steve & Esther  
 Peters, Elise  
 Peters, Paun & Lynn  
 Plock, Eleni  
 Poletes, Bill & Rena

Poletes, John  
 Poriotis, Terry & Gail  
 Pursley, Peter & Cynthia  
 Rafailedes, Connie  
 Ruppel, John & Joanie  
 Russo, Joseph & Athena  
 Ryan, Joanne & Chad  
 Samaras, Johnny  
 Sardos, George & Janet  
 Shah, Raj & Kirsten  
 Stoycos, Ted & Mary Helen  
 Sullivan, Joe & Nina  
 Talleos, Peter  
 Tudora, Fr. Vasile & Presvytera Mirela  
 Vittas, George & Barbara  
 Vittas, Johnny & Mel  
 Vloitos, Nick & Rayanna  
 Walker, Jim & Harriett  
 Wright, Bill & Christine  
 Yiantsou, Dr. Chris & Margo  
 Zingas, Ari & Olga

## Philoptochos News

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Below is a list of --

### “Philoptochos Dates to Remember”

- **March 6, 2009 – 1<sup>st</sup> Lenten Soup Supper  
(See Kathy Fox for Details)**
- **March 15, 2009 – Membership Tea-Paulos  
Center (Following Divine Liturgy) &  
Meeting**
- **March 20, 2009 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Lenten Soup Supper  
(See Kathy Fox for Details)**
- **March 29, 2009 – Deadline for Submitting  
Scholarship Application**

On February 14, 2009, St. Irene’s hosted a Valentines Dinner Dance. What a wonderful time we shared with one another due to the commitment and hard work of three lovely ladies, Angela Cline, Lynn Peters and Stacia Leeders. We raised approximately \$1,000 from this event, which will assist us in our mission to minister to those in need. Thank you for your faithfulness ladies and to those who attended.

Thank you to Presvytera Milera for sharing her time and talent in demonstrating and teaching us the egg painting technique. We created such beautiful eggs; it is remarkable how the simplest of things can be transformed into such beauty. For those that were unable to attend, I hope you have the opportunity to learn this craft, it is amazing!!

Our Annual Membership Tea is scheduled for March 15<sup>th</sup> following Divine Liturgy in the Paulos Center. We will have a guest speaker from the Women's Shelter with us for a meet and greet. We encourage all women who are at least 18 years of age to become a member by simply completing our membership form and making a stewardship pledge for the year. Letters will be sent out shortly with details, or you may see a Philoptochos board member for additional information.

We are fast approaching Great Lent and our Lenten Soup Suppers are scheduled above. Please support this wonderful cause. It is wonderful to know that we can "break bread" with our church family during this spiritual time of the year. Kathy Fox will be contacting those interested in assisting with the meals.

With Christ's Love,  
Bertha

## **Youth Ministries Is On the Move**

Busy, busy times just now and ahead! The Oratorical Festival is our main focus with the Teen Class writing and practicing their speeches for our local Festival on March 8<sup>th</sup> following Liturgy. Who will represent our parish at the Diocesan Oratorical Festival which our parish is hosting on March 27, 28, 29. Come and find out!

Some of the Teen students have chosen to write a paper but not present orally and this is good! Presenting speeches will be Junior Division - Bennett Kerbow and Senior Division -

Andrianna Chrestopoulos, Patrick Sullivan and Philip Sullivan. In addition Mrs. Peterczak's class is writing papers and will present them in church as a great beginning to get them ready for the Oratorical Festival when they become of age!

Youth Ministries will provide the registration fees for our representatives to the Diocesan level. Please plan to come to hear the speeches of the students from many states in our Diocese on Saturday morning, March 28 at 9 a.m. You will be amazed!

Also...we will need volunteers for a variety of activities so please talk to me or Barbara Vittas if you can help that week-end.

A report of our next Youth Ministries meeting on March 1 will be in the next Forerunner.

Yours in Christ,  
Athena Pachares, Y.M. Coordinator  
([pachares@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pachares@sbcglobal.net))

## **Church School News**

Dear Students and Parents,

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, we will have a procession of the icons on the Sunday of Orthodoxy. The children should bring their Saint's icon for the procession which will be after Liturgy.

Due to Spring Break, we'll not have church school on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

We will focus on the season of Lent and Easter. Our children will learn what is the meaning and why we observe this Holy event.

Additionally, we will distribute the Orthodox Christian Mission Center's Mission Coin Boxes. We're using this tool to assist the children in learning about missions in other countries and how



they can support these efforts. At the end of Lent, we will collect the Mission Coin Boxes and will celebrate the amounts collected by our children. Please help reinforce the importance of missions to other countries.

The Lenten Retreat will be on April 11 10AM – 1PM. We will start in church with a short service on Lazarus. Also, we'll learn to create the palm crosses for Palm Sunday. We'll have activities and lunch together.

Praising Him,  
Khanh Moutafis

## GOYA

The GOYA held officer elections on Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup>. Congratulations to the following:

Maggie Molhoek – President

Philip Sullivan – Vice President

Nina Papadimitriou – Secretary

Mallory Chokas – Treasurer

Also, we are happy to welcome our two newest members, Ovi Berca and John Molhoek!

We welcome students who are 12-18 years old to join! If you are interested, please contact one of the officers.

## Ageless Wonders

The Ageless Wonders will meet Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009 for lunch and a film T.B.A! "The Queen" has been on holiday, so that's it for now.....Details.....Call Margaret.....817-354-7731

## Gladsome Light Dialogues

Gladsome Light Dialogues discussion topics for March. New Cycle: *The Christian Virtues* (illustrated though the life of the Saints)  
3/4/2009 Knowing God: Faith and rationality  
3/11/2009 The unseen warfare: the watch for the heart mind and body  
3/18/2009 Sin and redemption  
3/25/2009 No Evening Film Dialogues

Don't forget to visit our blog at  
<http://dialogues.stjohndfw.info>

## 2009 Foodfest

Our new Festival Chairs are George and Olympia Genovezos, along with Chris Geil! Congratulations to them, and let's help them out by signing up for your area on the board in the Hall. We would like to have all Chairs filled in by March 15<sup>th</sup>. The Greekfest this year is October 9,10, and 11.

## 2009 Golf Tournament

This year's golf tournament will be held on June 8, 2009 at Great Southwest Golf club in Grand Prairie. It is time to begin assembling your teams for this year's event. All proceeds will go toward our building fund, so please come out and support our Parish and plans for our new Church. Non monetary donations are being accepted for the raffle. If you have any ideas or contacts to support the raffle, please contact Angela Cline.

Thank You  
Golf Committee

# Practical Faith

## Great Lent Fasting Guidelines

Just as there are times for feasting, there are also times set aside for fasting. The most important fasting period of the year is the Great Lent that precedes the Great Feast of Pascha. This year the Great Lent Starts on March 1<sup>st</sup> and ends up After the Paschal Service on April 19<sup>th</sup>.

During this period we observe strict fasting in most of the days. When we observe strict fasting certain foods are prohibited as follows: any type of meat (including poultry), dairy products, fish, olive oil and wine. Fruits, vegetables, grains and shellfish are permitted throughout the Lenten Season.

The Church recognizes however that not everyone can fast to the same degree, and encourages the individual Christians to consult with their Spiritual Fathers in order to make any necessary adjustments to the above guidelines.

The following are the days in which we observe strict fasting:

- Clean Monday (March 1<sup>st</sup>) through the Friday before Lazarus Saturday (April 10), olive oil and wine are permitted on weekends;
- Great and Holy Week (April 12-18; Note that Great and Holy Saturday is a day of strict fasting, during which the faithful abstain from olive oil and wine);

The following are fasting days on which fish, wine and olive oil are permitted:

- The Feast of the Annunciation (March 25)
- Palm Sunday (April 11)

Of course, the Orthodox Church never reduces the practice of fasting to a legalistic observance of dietary rules. Fasting, that is not accompanied by intensified prayer and acts of charity, inevitably becomes a source of pride.

*Adapted from the Metropolis of Denver Guidelines*

## Usher Schedule

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: George Moutafis, Cynthia Pursley
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday: Peter Talleos,, Harry Karageannes
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Bill Wright, Tim Cline
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Barbara Vittas, Larry Leeders
- 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Nancy Medvic, Harry Karageannes

## Nursery Attendants Schedule

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Marsha Arapis
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday: Elizabeth Popescu
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Marsha Arapis
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Marsha Arapis
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Marsha Arapis
- Thanks,  
Marsha

## Acolyte Schedule

- 1st Sunday :** Patrick Sullivan, Phillip Sullivan, Peter Pursley, John Molhoek
- 2nd Sunday :** James Seals, Ovidiu Berca, Patrick Sullivan, Philip Sullivan
- 3rd Sunday :** Jackson Wright, Joey Basiliadis, Ovi Berca, Alex Shah
- 4th Sunday :** Bennett Kerbow, Ovi Berca, James Seals, Alex Shah
- 5th Sunday:** Patrick Sullivan, Phillip Sullivan, Jackson Wright, Ovi Berca

## Coffee Hour Schedule

- 1st Sun.: Mr. & Mrs. Trevor Matheson
- 2nd Sun: Philoptochos
- 3rd Sun: Parish Council

- 4th Sun: Ageless Wonders
- 5th Sun: Parish Council (If Applicable)

Thursday for the Weekly Bulletin. To defray the cost of the printing and postage of *The Forerunner* we are looking for monthly sponsors. Please contact Greg DiGiovanni (mrdigio@sbcglobal.net) if you are interested in sponsoring one month. The cost is \$150.00 and the sponsorship will be acknowledged on the back cover.

## **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.

## **Agape Dinner Information**

Our Agape Dinner will be held on Easter Sunday, April 19 immediately following Services. The ticket costs for adults is \$25.00 and for the children \$10.00. Please see a council member for additional information.

## **Deadline for The Forerunner and Weekly Bulletin**

The deadline for information for the Forerunner is the 18<sup>th</sup> of each month, and