



'TIS HOUSE BLESSING SEASON! Schedule Yours Today



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Blessing our homes is an ancient tradition in which we bring the grace of the Lord's Baptism in the Jordan into our own homes. Patterned after the profound service of the Great Blessing of Waters on the feast of Theophany (Christ's baptism) on Jan 6, we take the holy water from the Church and we use it to bless our lives in every way possible. The priest blesses us, our homes, our cars, our yards, and by extension all of creation. Not only do we receive a special blessing from God, but through that blessing, God enables us to see His creation in a re-deemed way, as a means toward union and communion with Him.



Continued on page 11

Return to Church Policies

See news on page 5

St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

1523 S Yakima Ave

Tacoma, WA 98405

Phone: 253-272-0466

Parish Website: stnicholastacoma.org

E-Mail: mail@stnicholastacoma.org

Office Hours: Tuesday—Friday 10:00 am - 3:00 pm



Sunday Services

8:45 am Orthros

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

Please join us for Social/Coffee Hour in our downstairs hall, following the Divine Liturgy



Fr. Seraphim Majmudar, Our Presiding Priest

For appointments, questions or urgent needs, Fr. Seraphim is available 24/7 on his cell phone.

Fr. Seraphim's Cell phone: 253-365-5817

Office Hours at St Nicholas
Thursdays 9:00am - 12:00 noon
Email: frseraphimm@gmail.com

Saint Nicholas Messenger is the official monthly newsletter of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church of Tacoma Washington

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Submit content, comments, or corrections, addressed to the Editor at mail@stnicholastacoma.org

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St. Nicholas Ministries

AHEPA
Paul Apostle

Akathist Group Prayer
Kathy Rowley

Altar Servers
Dr Nick Themelis

Bible Study
Genevieve Eagle

Book Store
Dr. Nick Themelis

Building Committee
Bill Acker

Building, Grounds & Maintenance
Richard Heidal, John Pangis

Choir
Rebecca Primis

Hands of Love
Merrilee Pangis

Military Service
LTC Gus Chamales

Premarital Education
George Pirotis, Diane Pirotis

Stewardship
Maria Koumantaros
Gus Chamales

2021 Parish Council
Ronnie-Sue Johnson—President
David Frisk—Vice-President
Mark Robinson—Treasurer
Christina Leinneweber—Secretary
Maria Koumantaros, Alan (John) Means, David Orriss Jr., Despina Kipelidis, Kathy Johnson, Klaudia Cedeno, Sheila (Monica) Auter, Zach Karanasos

Greek Folk Dance
Evy Kontos — Chair & Intermediate dancers
Dr. Anastasia Fyntrilakis—Treasurer & Teen dancers

Krisann Firth — Costume Director
Julie Kotsali — Board Member
Presbytera Sophie Majmudar — Board Member

Kelly Rosati — Beginner dancers

George Pirotis — Adult Group Instructor

Coffee Hour
Zach Karanasos

IT, etc.
Bill Samaras

Philia
Diane Pirotis

Pro Life
Genevieve Eagle

Vitos Scholarship
Ronnie Sue Johnson

Flowers & Church Decorating
Kathy Rowley

Daughters of Penelope
Fenia Mavromichali — President
Olga Manos— Vice President
Evy Kontos - Treasurer
D. Lord/H. McClure - Secretary

Maids of Athena
Zoe Matteson-President
Alexandra Lord -Vice President
Katie McClure -Treasurer
N. Serhan/A. Matteson - Secretary
Ingrid Chamalas - Advisor
Virginia McClure - Advisor

Philoptochos Society
Jane Evancho - President
Hoddi Motz - Vice-President
Merrilee Pangis - Secretary
Ingrid Chamales - Treasurer

Sunday School
Sheila Auter, Director

Greek School
George Pirotis

Lazarus Group
Dean Hamos

Pilgrimage
Zach Karanasos

Prosphora Baking
Deborah Talbot

Welcome
Ronnie Sue Johnson

Parish Council

Parish Council meeting is the 2nd Tuesday of the month.
January 11, 2022

January 2022						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>2</p> <p>FAST FREE PERIOD</p> <p>Seraphim of Sarov</p> <p>8:45am-10:00am Orthros</p> <p>10:00am-11:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>2:00pm-3:00pm General Assembly: Budget (Zoom)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>FAST FREE PERIOD</p> <p>Genevieve of Paris</p> <p>6:30am-7:30am Orthros</p> <p>6:00pm-7:00pm Vespers: St Nikephoros the Leper</p> <p>6:45pm-7:45pm Evening Liturgy: St Nikephoros</p>	<p>4</p> <p>FAST FREE PERIOD</p> <p>Nikephoros the Leper</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers</p> <p>7:00pm-8:00pm Building Committee</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Eve of Theophany</p> <p>STRICT FAST</p> <p>6:30am-7:30am 1st & 3rd Royal Hours</p> <p>12:00pm-1:00pm 6th Royal Hour</p> <p>3:00pm-4:00pm Ninth Royal Hour</p> <p>6:00pm-7:00pm Vespersal Divine Liturgy w/ Blessing of Waters</p>	<p>6</p> <p>THEOPHANY</p> <p>8:45am-9:45am Orthros</p> <p>10:00am-11:00am Divine Liturgy w/ Blessing of Waters</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers & Orthros</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Synaxis of St. John the Baptist</p> <p>6:30am-7:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>7:30am-8:30am Avraam & Maria Demetriades Memorial</p> <p>10:00am-12:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Basil the Great</p> <p>Circumcision of Christ</p> <p>FAST FREE PERIOD</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Supplication to St. Xenia for Homeless</p> <p>6:00pm-7:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>9</p> <p>Evstratios</p> <p>8:45am-10:00am Orthros</p> <p>10:00am-11:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>11:30am-12:30pm Cutting of Vaslopeta (St Basil's Bread)</p> <p>1:00pm-2:00pm Orthodoxy 101</p> <p>3:30pm-4:30pm Wilson Baptism</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Gregory of Nyssa & Theophan the Recluse</p> <p>6:30am-7:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>7:30am-8:30am Reading of Selections from St Theophan</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Theodosios the Cenobiarh</p> <p>6:30am-7:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>9:30am-10:30am Fr S at WOCA</p> <p>Unction Service: Three Hierarchs, Mountlake</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers</p> <p>7:00pm-8:00pm Parish Council</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Martyr Tatiana</p> <p>Strict Fast</p> <p>6:00pm-7:00pm No Services</p> <p>Tonight</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Modern Greek</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Fast: Wine & Oil ok</p> <p>Leavetaking of Theophany</p> <p>Nina, Enlightener of Georgia</p> <p>6:30am-7:30am Orthros</p> <p>10:00am-12:00pm Bible Study</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Join the Hut Dweller</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Supplication to St Xenia for Homeless</p> <p>6:00pm-7:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>16</p> <p>Chains of Ap Peter</p> <p>8:45am-10:00am Orthros</p> <p>10:00am-11:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>1:00pm-2:00pm Orthodoxy 101</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Anthony the Great</p> <p>6:30am-7:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers & Orthros</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Athanasios the Great</p> <p>6:30am-7:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>10:30am-1:00pm Fr S at Vicariate Clergy Group</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Fast: Wine & oil ok</p> <p>Makarios the Great</p> <p>Mark of Ephesus</p> <p>6:30am-7:30am Orthros</p> <p>6:00pm-7:00pm Vespers: St Euthymios</p> <p>6:45pm-7:45pm Evening Liturgy: St Euthymios</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Euthymios the Great</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Modern Greek</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Fast: Wine & Oil ok</p> <p>Maximos the Confessor</p> <p>6:30am-7:30am Orthros</p> <p>10:00am-12:00pm Bible Study</p> <p>6:00pm-7:00pm Vespers: Ap Timothy</p> <p>6:45pm-7:45pm Evening Liturgy: Ap Timothy</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Apostle Timothy</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Supplication to St Xenia for Homeless</p> <p>6:00pm-7:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>23</p> <p>Clement</p> <p>8:45am-10:00am Orthros</p> <p>10:00am-11:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>11:30am-12:00pm Bob Leonard 10 yr Memorial</p> <p>1:00pm-2:00pm NO Orthodoxy 101 TODAY</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Xenia of St Petersburg</p> <p>6:30am-7:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers & Orthros</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Gregory the Theologian</p> <p>6:30am-7:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers</p>	<p>26</p> <p>STRICT FAST</p> <p>Xenophon</p> <p>6:00pm-7:00pm Paraklesis</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Return of Relics of St John Chrys.</p> <p>6:30am-7:30am Orthros</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Modern Greek</p> <p>6:00pm-7:00pm Vespers: Ss Isaac & Ephraim the Syrians</p> <p>6:45pm-7:45pm Evening Liturgy: Ss Isaac & Ephraim</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Ephraim & Isaac of Syria</p> <p>Fast: Wine & Oil ok</p> <p>10:00am-12:00pm Bible Study</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Lawrence of the Kiev Caves</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Supplication to St. Xenia for Homeless</p> <p>6:00pm-7:00pm Vespers</p>
<p>30</p> <p>Three Holy Hierarchs</p> <p>8:45am-10:00am Orthros</p> <p>10:00am-11:00am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>1:00pm-2:00pm Orthodoxy 101</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Cyrus & John</p> <p>6:30am-7:30am Orthros</p> <p>5:30pm-6:30pm Vespers</p> <p>7:00pm-8:00pm Building Committee</p>	<p>Notes:</p>				

The most up to date calendar is always found at the St. Nicholas web page: www.stnicholastacoma.org

News and Announcements

**May the Joy of the Christmas Season and Spirit be
with you all through the year!!!**

Returning to Church

St. Nicholas is fully open and we look forward to seeing you all! Here is the current status:

1. No sign up is necessary. We are able to fill to full capacity.
2. Sit wherever you like. All pews are available.
3. Coffee hour has resumed!
4. We will continue live streaming.
5. The Metropolis is asking parishioners to please consider wearing a mask while attending services until the COVID disease rates decline to low levels of transmission as defined by the CDC. Although this directive is voluntary, we are strongly encouraging our parishioners to wear masks while at Church. Also, please note, this is only an indoor directive and does not apply to outdoor places. We will not be re-establishing social distancing and the sign-up reservation system for attending services.

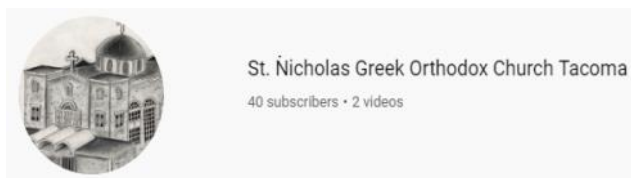
Per His Eminence's guidance, we will not ask anyone about their vaccination status.

Watch Services From Home, Live

Although you might not be able to be at St. Nicholas in person, you can watch services at home from any device capable of connecting to YouTube. This is free and is available for most services. Here's how to do it:

1. First, find the schedule when a service is being broadcast. This is called Live Streaming. Look at the calendar on the previous page, or better, look at the calendar on the St. Nicholas Web page. www.StNicholasTacoma.org. There is a Live Streaming link at the church calendar.
2. You can simply click [here](#). If there is a service underway, press the button. You will see and hear the service.
3. Watch on any device. Open **YouTube** (you may have to start a browser like Chrome). In the *YouTube search bar*, type; *St Nicholas Tacoma*

Click on this selection;



If a service is being broadcast, click the **LIVE NOW** button.

4. Some TV's allow direct connection to YouTube. You can connect as above.

Bill Samaras—

News and Announcements

Rice Family Update

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Glory to God for all things! As this first semester on campus comes to a close, we give thanks for our many blessings. The experience on campus has been much more fulfilling and complete compared to the online learning experience. This semester, Aaron took a particular interest in his Liturgical Greek course, developing his knowledge and interest in language and translation. Aaron has also been asked to chant at various churches in the New England area.

One of these churches was Panagia Greek Orthodox Church in Cohasset, MA, which we were able to attend as a family. We enjoyed the coastal town and the lovely people there, spending some time to play at the beach and park afterward. Recently, Aaron was asked to be the main chanter at the Holy Cross Chapel here on campus. So, we are now on campus every weekend. It is nice to have a consistent position and we are thankful for the compensation they have offered in our housing costs.



At Nantasket Beach after Liturgy

On Oct 19-20 we had the blessing of a visit from H.E. Archbishop Elpidophoros. The campus hosted a conference on Bishop Gerasimos of blessed memory during the feast of St. Gerasimos. The seminarians received their crosses from His Eminence following the liturgy.



Receiving the Cross and Tonsure from the Archbishop

The weekend after his visit, we were able to travel to St. Tikhon's (Fr. Seraphim's alma mater!) and meet up with Ranae's dad and some friends who are now seminarians there. The country landscape and familiar faces from back home provided some encouragement and refreshment.



In the St. Nikolai Chapel at St. Tikhon's Seminary

On Thanksgiving, we had the double blessing of celebrating St. Katherine's feast day (Ranae's patron) and sharing a generously prepared meal at the Maliotis Cultural Center here on campus. We enjoyed the fellowship with our classmates and neighbors, while of course missing our families back home.

News and Announcements

Rice Family Update Continued...

We are thankful for all of your prayers and look forward to seeing your faces again at church and spending some time back in the Northwest very soon!

With Love,

The Rice Family

If you would like to support us by helping with some of our many expenses, we have established a GoFundMe account.

<https://www.gofundme.com/manage/help-the-rices-pay-for-seminary-expenses>



News and Announcements

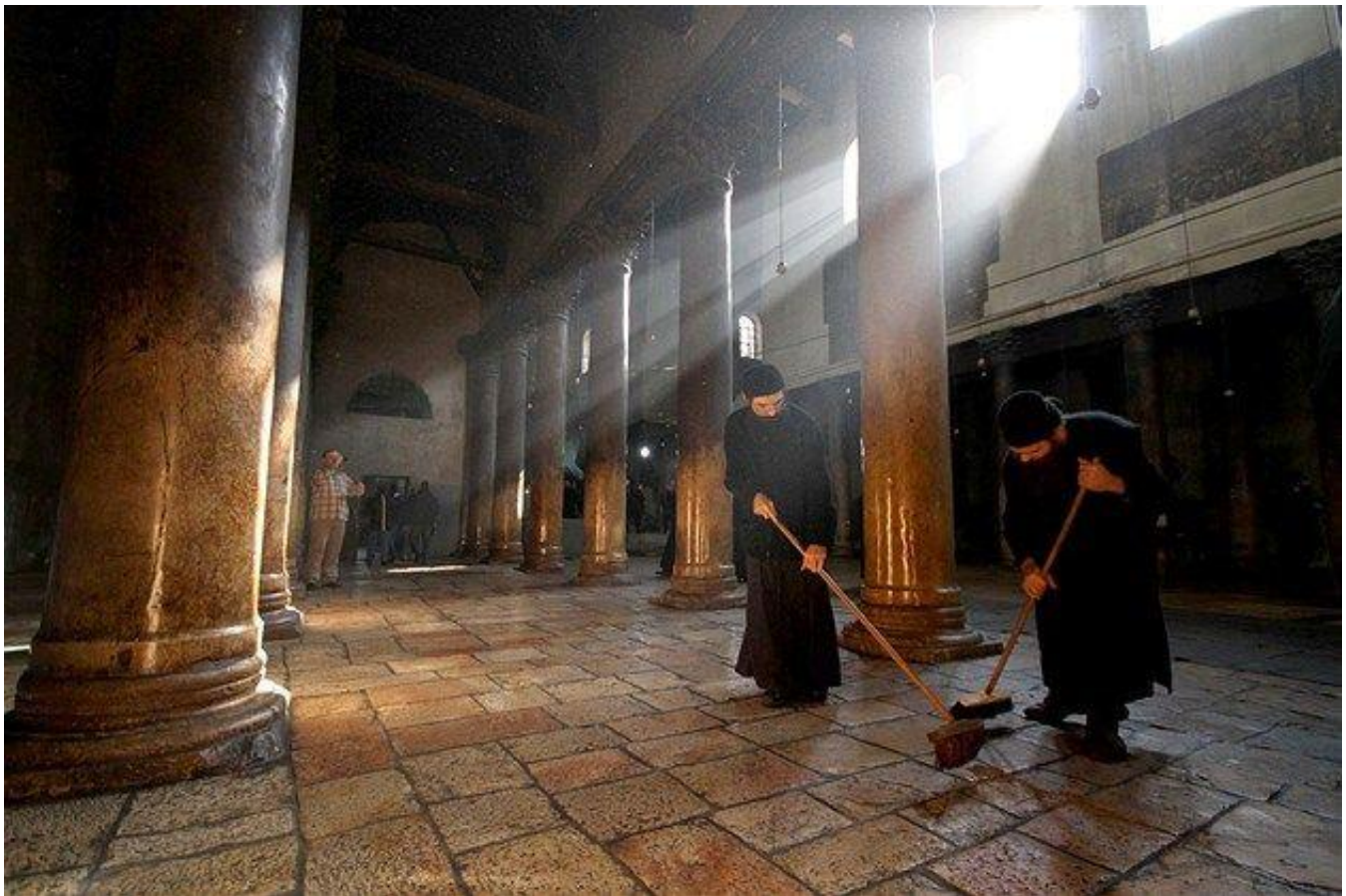
NEW JANITORIAL SERVICE

St. Nicholas now has a new janitorial service effective December 13, 2021.

The new service is New Vision Enterprises (NVE), Fircrest, Washington. Here is the link to their website: <https://newvisioncleaning.com/> Five (5) vendors were interviewed for the job, down-selected to 2, with NVE chosen by the Parish Executive Council on December 6, 2021. The selection was based on competitive pricing and NVE's in-depth experience with our complex.

This past week and in the upcoming week they are working with us to prepare for Nativity by a "mini-clean" of the temple and our meeting halls and rooms: lower hall, kitchen, temple chandeliers, all bathrooms and much more.

The president is Isaac Jacobs. He is a managerial and "hand's on" person that values holy spaces. Please welcome Isaac and his team when you see them!



News and Announcements



Instant Church Directory™

Our Church Directory is now available to stewards in digital form which can be accessed on your computer or through an app on your mobile device. It's safe, easy to use and quite economical, saving us time and money in keeping our directory up-to-date in an instant!

A few details you'll want to know:

- Access to the online directory is only available to parishioners who have filled out a stewardship card for the current year. This contributes to keeping our directory safe and secure.
- Need to update your stewardship? Pledge cards are available in the Lower Hall. There's also a copy included in every monthly Messenger and on our church's website.
- All information in the online directory is secure. It can only be accessed by stewards who have been granted permission by one of our own parish administrators.
- There are plans in place to distribute a printed version of our church directory once we have built up the online one. We'll see you posted!

Need Help?

Members of the Directory Committee will be available during Coffee Hour to answer your questions, help you get registered or even upload a picture. You may also call the church office to request being added.

Submitted by Sheila Auter, Kathy Johnson, Klaudia Cedenno and Despina Kipelidis

Council Corner

News from the Parish Council

Curious about what your Parish Council is doing? Look no further than Council Corner! Highlights from December's Parish Council meeting include:

- ✦ **New Parish Council Members** Congratulations to David Frisk, Zachary Karanasos, Christina Leinneweber, and Mark Robinson on their election to the Parish Council on December 5th. Two vacancies on the 2022 Council remain. If you know someone who could serve our community on the Parish Council, please talk to an existing Parish Council member.
- ✦ **A New Budget for a New Year!** Mark your calendars: the **General Assembly** for the Budget will be on **January 2nd at 2 p.m. over Zoom**. Please plan to attend and learn about our plan for the 2022.
- ✦ **Reopening Volunteers** The **Coffee Hour Ministry** and the **Welcome Ministry** are both restarting, and they need YOU! Our community life is not the same without the warm *philoxenia* we share together with our guests after the Divine Liturgy on Sundays. Do you want to help make that happen? Talk to Zach Karanasos about the Coffee Hour Ministry, or Ronnie-Sue Johnson about the Welcome ministry.
- ✦ **Parish Directory** As our community begins gathering together more and more, we realize it can be hard to refresh lost connections. In order to foster the spirit of *koinonia* after COVID, the Parish Council has invested in **digital Directory software**. All Stewards are invited to submit their names, photos, and as much contact information as they wish into our system.
- ✦ **Janitorial Services** The Parish Council has selected a new company, New Vision, as the janitorial service for our church after a competitive bidding process. If you have any questions, contact Alan Means.
- ✦ **Daughters of Penelope** Our own *Icaria* branch of the Daughters of Penelope are already planning for 2022. Their annual fundraiser will be held on **February 5th**. Contact Helen McClure or Fenia Mavromichali if you would like more information.



Cover Story Continued

What should you expect in terms of the House Blessing?

Fr Seraphim will offer a short prayer service in front of your home altar and then proceed through the home sprinkling it with holy water, while chanting the Apolytikion of Theophany (provided below).

What should you have ready?

Have your home altar/icon corner ready and accessible.

Try to make your house as clean and orderly as possible (but don't worry...it doesn't have to be perfect!)

If possible, get a bowl of water, a bunch of fresh basil, rosemary or branch from an evergreen tree tied at the stem for Father to use in sprinkling holy water, a candle, charcoal and incense (if you have an incense burner). However, don't worry if you can't gather all of these items. Just let Fr Seraphim know and he will bring everything.

If you have already picked up a new holy water bottle at church, please have that handy too. Father will pick up holy water bottles from years past.

Blessings will begin during the second week of January, and will continue until they are completed—ideally before the beginning of Great Lent.

- ✦ No gratuity for Fr Seraphim is necessary. The reward is simply being together in the Lord's name!
 - ✦ If possible, plan to spend a little time over coffee or a simple meal in fellowship and joy.
- Invite your neighbors and friends! This is a community event.

How Do You Schedule One?

Simply contact Fr Seraphim or the Church Office.

Apolytikion of Theophany (Mode 1)

*When You were baptized in the Jordan, O Lord
The worship of the Trinity was made manifest
For the voice of the Father bore witness to You,
Calling You His beloved Son
And the Spirit in the likeness of a dove
Confirmed the truth of His word
O Christ our God, Who has appeared and enlightened the world,
Glory to You!*



Philoptochos News

PHILOPTOCHOS

President's Message

Greetings everyone and Happy New Year!

Significant activities in December included:

Holiday Food Certificate Drive-Every year Philoptochos has spearheaded a project to donate food certificates to families in the community for Thanksgiving and Christmas. This year we helped eight families at four schools, Boze, Blix, Downing and McCarver elementary schools. Gift cards have already been distributed to the families for both holidays.

Our goal was to raise \$2,000 for this project. As of December 13, 2021, we had raised \$3,000, surpassing this goal. Thank you to all members of our community who donated towards this project. Letters from these families are attached separately in this bulletin. Additional funds raised will be applied towards parishioner and/or local community needs.

January planned activities to further our mission of helping those less fortunate and to promote participation in the Philoptochos Society:

Vasilopeta -On January 9, special loaves of bread (made by our Philoptochos members in the church kitchen) will be cut and served to representatives of the St. Nicholas ministries. Funds from this event will go to the St. Basil's Academy, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese home for children in need in New York.

Soup Coffee Hour-On January 30, a homemade soup and rolls will be served at the coffee hour. Funds for this event benefit the Archdiocese Social Services fund.

Membership-Our year starts in January and runs through December. The membership fee is \$30 for the year. Please ask any member about Philoptochos-it is the Orthodox Church's Women's Ministry. Please contact Jane Evancho for membership payment. We encourage our Greek Orthodox friends to join us. They can be involved as much or as little as they wish. We welcome you all to our group. There is a lot of satisfaction in doing things for the common good and helping our church and the less fortunate among us...

Thank you so much for your support!

Jane-

Continued next page....

Philoptochos News

Thank you letters

Dear Church Members,

Thank you for helping my family for the Thanksgiving holidays.

Dear St. Nicholas,
I want you to know how much we appreciate you! The families we work with have expressed gratitude through tears and disbelief that people can be so generous. I'm thankful that we had you to count on for our McCarver families in need. I hope you have a very Merry Christmas!

Dear St. Nicholas
Greek Orthodox church
and community,

Thank you for bringing joy, support, hope, and the gift of giving this Thanksgiving

Thanks for giving

Love
Vic
Fa

Coffee Hour



COFFEE HOUR MINISTRY

URGENT CALL FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS TO JOIN

The **coffee** hour teams will be in rotation again starting in January. Thank you to those who have signed up. You will be contacted by your team leader soon. We are still in need of more volunteers. You can help by volunteering to join the ministry. There is a sign-up sheet in the lower hall to sign-up. For the no-host coffee hours, you may bring something. Individuals or families may host a coffee hour for a special occasion. For more information please contact Zach Karanasos.

MISSION

- To extend the Holy Eucharist to social/coffee hour
- To express and manifest our faith by extending the hospitality we proclaim and by acknowledging the grace we have received during the Divine Liturgy
- To promote fellowship
- To connect with fellow parishioners, to welcome guests and to invite new faith seekers to our Church

Keeping the Coffee Hour Ministry alive is pivotal because it represents a great opportunity to:

- Put into practice principles of our faith (hospitality, discipline, respect, servitude, generosity, engagement) that enhance our spiritual growth and challenge us to become servant leaders
- Foster a sense of community
- Unify us by building within our parish a center of shared values and purposes

Coffee hour should become part of our collective identity as Orthodox Christians at St. Nicholas Church. Furthermore, it is one of the few and regular times parishioners can connect with each other.

TEAM SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER:

- 01/02/2022 Pot Luck
- 01/09/2022 Vasilopita Cutting
- 01/16/2022 Men's Team
- 01/23/2022 Team Johnson
- 01/30/2022 Philoptochos Soup for Cancer, Autism & Social Services

Building Committee



NOW FULLY ENCLOSED

Both sets of interior and exterior double doors in the Narthex and a scissor gate outside its exterior main entry have finally arrived and been installed. While there still is some trim work, loose ends and refinement to work to do, the Narthex and its main entry area is now fully enclosed. Temporary construction fencing that was set around the outside work areas since the project began last May has been removed, as shown in the above photo.

Another improvement feature that has just been implemented is the field painting of new accent bricks, which really brings to life some of the finer details of the new masonry work. A special thanks to Martinson Painting, Rush Construction's painting subcontractor who did such an excellent job. All that remains with the exterior work is a having few days of dry weather that will allow the application of water repellents over the new masonry.

A final inspection and sign-off of the project building permit should be forthcoming soon, and eventual full project completion afterwards.

In other news, a new door to replace the existing Lower Hall exterior door that faces South 16th Street has finally been procured, and is in the process of being painted offsite. It's installation should be occurring shortly.



Submitted by: Bill Acker

Stewardship Ministry News

On behalf of the Stewardship Ministry, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your willingness to give back to God a portion of the gifts that He has bestowed upon US during 2021.

For those who were present at the Stewardship Sunday event held on 12 December, we saw as of January 1, through November 30, 2021 our financial objective for 2021 was approximately \$15,000.00 shy of our objective for the entire calendar year. With your kindness and willingness to give back to God a portion of the gifts that He has provided Us, we will be able to reach the stewardship goal for 2021.

THANK YOU so much and ***Doxa to Theoi!***

Looking back on 2021 we have much for which to be thankful.

Many of our elderly and high risk parishioners were vaccinated.

Our beloved St. Nicholas Church has been able to open up a little more after the initial attendance restrictions which were imposed.

Many of our parishioners have returned to worship services. Sunday Liturgy attendance regularly exceeds seventy-five people.

Many of our elderly parishioners have not yet returned to Sunday services, and that is totally understandable. For those who do not yet feel comfortable venturing out, we are thankful for your participation through YouTube livestreaming.

We recognize, remember, and appreciate all of the time, talent, and treasure that you have provided in the past, and we are very thankful for what you have done for our church. We look forward to the day when we shall be graced with your presence during liturgy at St. Nicholas, and able to visit with you during our coffee hour/luncheons afterward.

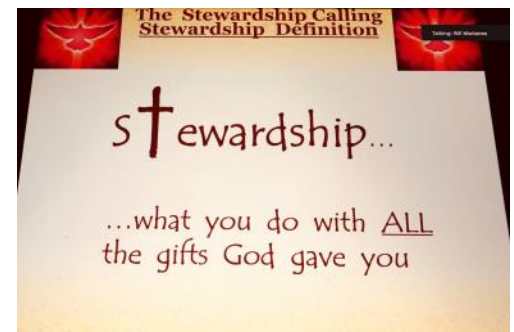
Although we may not be in contact, you should know that you are not forgotten. We think about many of you on a regular basis and are very appreciative for all you do for our church.

If you have not yet returned to services, we would like you to know that God has led many new people to our church. Some of them are Orthodox already, and some are going through Father Seraphim's catechumen teachings. All are truly wonderful individuals. You will enjoy meeting them when you return to God's home at St. Nicholas. Best of all, the many new faces that you see means that our church is growing, and that is truly a gift for which all of us should be thankful.

When thinking about offering to God a portion of the gifts He has bestowed upon Us, it is important to acknowledge the gifts of time and talent. If you have not been to church for a while, or if you have refrained from coming because of COVID, we would like to share with you some of the remarkable gifts of time and talent many have provided to our church.

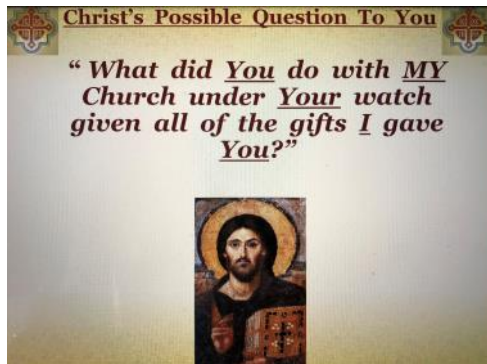
First, 2021 brought in a new Parish Council, led by President Mrs. Ronnie-Sue Johnson. This group of 12 individuals helped us get through the COVID crisis, worked with Bill Acker and the Building Committee on the Narthex construction, worked on the by-laws, developed an on-line directory, hired a new janitorial company and much more.

Continued on next page....



Stewardship Ministry News

Serving on the Parish Council is not an easy task, but it is truly rewarding. We should all be thankful for the many parish council members who have served before this one, and those who are leading us presently. If you truly want to experience St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church doing God's work, then at some point you should plan to serve at least one "tour of duty" on the Parish Council. The experience you will gain and the friendships you will cultivate with your fellow council members will be a blessing you will cherish for many years, and your gift of time and talent will become a part of our church's history.



Beginning with this article we are going to recognize at least one of the many ministries and organizations that we have at St. Nicholas. Your engagement with these ministries/organizations/groups is key to our growth, but more importantly, it is your opportunity to help St. Nicholas do God's work.

The Prospora Ministry. Presently, Ms. Deborah Talbot is the leader of our Prospora Ministry. Our Lord led Deborah Talbot to St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in February of 2015. She had been reading about orthodoxy for a few years prior to that and when she started attending services, she was blessed to meet Cathy and Andy Bouzinekis. Cathy and Andy made Deborah (and many others) feel welcome in God's home. As a result, she was baptized in 2016 with Cathy Bouzinekis as her "Nouna."



Like many of us who are not born into the St. Nicholas parish, it takes a while to get to know people, and participation in the festival is one of the best pathways to facilitate that process. Deborah started by helping with the baking group that prepared the pastries and baked goods that back in the bC era (bC: before COVID) were sold in the bakery and the coffee shop during the festival. She had many years of prior baking experience (for years she would grind her own flour and bake her own bread) so "baking prep" was the logical place "to get her feet wet."

Deborah started baking the prospora in Dec 2016 and was given instructions by Kelly Rossi who was then the leader of Prospora Ministry. Deborah also read on line about the history of prospora in the Orthodox church, and different methods of preparation.

Deborah prays when preparing Prospora and she is particularly fond of reciting Psalm 138 during the preparation process. For a very detailed article that explains much of what an Orthodox Christian should know about the preparation of the Prospora and the serving of the gifts during Divine Liturgy, please read the article on the next page that was prepared and written by Deborah Talbot, along with her excellent article that she references in the December 2018 Messenger.

Continued next page...

Stewardship Ministry News



Many St. Nicholas parishioners have given back a portion of the gifts with which they have been blessed by preparing the Prosphora in the past. Mrs. Maria Georgeopoulos, May her memory be eternal, Mrs. Lena Plunkett, and many others were long time members of this very distinguished group. Today, we express our sincere appreciation for Deborah Talbot, Mrs. Despina Ampatsis, and Mrs. Deana Fotinopoulos who share their gifts of time and talent with all of us. Recently a couple of our terrific younger parishioners (James Horton and Sophie Charitou) have also expressed an interest. We pray they too will join the ranks of this very distinguished list of St.

Nicholas Prosphora bakers, and we thank all, past, present and future, members of this ministry, for their generous gifts of time and talent.

The following contains Deborah Talbot's exceptional writing about Prosphora baking.

Introduction to Prosphora baking

Prosphora baking is a liturgical ministry. In order for there to be a Divine Liturgy, there has to be some kind of bread, some kind of grape, an altar, one man ordained to serve the Liturgy, and at least one other person. I've heard a story about a Liturgy that was whispered from memory in the Russian gulag, performed on the chest of a dead man for that man, who was the altar (containing the relics of a saint, himself), and using some kind of dried bread or cracker and a raisin they managed to bring back to their barracks.

RULES YOU MUST FOLLOW

1. The dough can contain only wheat flour, water, yeast and salt. Nothing else. Our Archdiocese requires white flour—no whole wheat, no rye or other grains. If you read the ingredients on the flour bags, you will know that almost all our white flour in the U.S. is mixed with a little barley (it makes the baked goods softer). Apparently that has been accepted.
2. Do not use any oils or sprays to prevent sticking to pans. I use parchment paper. Some people use flour, some use beeswax. Others say that even beeswax leaves an oily residue in the wine. And some people use those silicone baking pads, cut to fit their pans, bottom and sides.
3. Shape each loaf with two pieces of dough representing the two natures of Christ, fully human and fully divine.

Otherwise, each offering is unique.

GUIDELINES ON ENVIRONMENT:

1. Physical: clean your workspace, wash your hands, wear a clean apron, do something to keep your hair out of the dough, play liturgical music.

Continued on next page....

Stewardship Ministry News

2. Spiritual: examine the condition of your heart and your mood. Repent, humble yourself, try to bring forth a prayerful, holy environment while baking. Listening to prayers, canons, hymns, akathists to the Theotokos or to the Lord Jesus or the Divine Liturgy is a way to do it. The Jesus Prayer is good. Try to be in your heart, not your head.

PERFECT LOAVES: Mine never are perfectly shaped. Our priest is more concerned about the quality of the bread when he works with it. It should be spongy, moist, dense, finely textured with no big bubbles, as crumb-less as possible. This kind of bread should keep its shape in the wine, making communion go smoother, and it is easier to keep crumbs from falling all over the floor, which is especially important after it has been consecrated. Father also prefers loaves that are around 550-600 grams. These bake nicely in a 7-inch spring form pan.

THE LITURGY OF PREPARATION: During the Divine Liturgy, just before the descent of the Holy Spirit and the consecration of the gifts, the priest raises the chalice containing the wine and the discos containing the prepared bread and calls out "*Your own of your own, we offer to you, in all and for all.*" The whole Church is on that discos. This is the bread that the baker has prepared and offered. On the St.

Nicholas website, in the archived Messenger articles, see the Prosphora article from the December 2018 Messenger. It has pictures and explanations of the Proskomedion (aka Liturgy of Preparation) which is performed by the Priest back in the altar before the Divine Liturgy starts. It is something we should all know about and think about, in my opinion. You can also go to YouTube and search Proskomedion. There are many links.

SEAL: Good wooden prosphora seals from Greece are sometimes available on Amazon and/or eBay. I think you can also ask the nuns at Goldendale to order one for you.

BRINGING YOUR OFFERING: At St. Nicholas, Father wants to have the prosphora there before Orthros begins. That would be at 08:30 on a Sunday morning. This is so he can perform the Proskomedion. Alternatively, you can package your bread between coffee filters, two on the top of the bread, two on the bottom of the bread, put it in a freezer bag, mark the date, and put it in the church bread freezer. Then Father thaws it whenever he needs it, and you don't have to be there.

SUGGESTED WEBSITES:

<http://illumination-learning.com/main/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Prosphoro-Baking-Class.pdf>

<http://www.prosphora.org/page1.html>

<https://www.goarch.org/-/prosphora-teaching-transformation?inheritRedirect=true>

Contributed by: Gus

Stewardship Ministry Continued Next Page...

Stewardship Ministry News

Stewardship

Offering Our Time, Talent and Treasure To God

Thank you to everyone who donated to St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and its ministries in 2021. Your 2021 contribution statements will be issued the end of January. Please inform the church office if your physical address or email address has recently changed.

Many thanks for those who attended the Stewardship Sunday meeting on the 12th of December. Below is a list of parishioners who have submitted their 2022 commitment for stewardship as of December 21, 2021:

Kostas and Maria Aggelidakis
 Sonny and Irene Angelos
 Ricardo Aaron Bottino
 Yvonne Brandvold
 Klaudia Cedeno
 C.G. and Ingrid Chamales
 Yianni and Sophia Charitou
 Gretchen (Genevieve) Eagle
 Frederick and Anastasia Ehret
 David and Savina Frisk
 Timothy and Kathleen Harvey
 Magdaline Hatzikazakis
 Richard and Kathleen Heidal
 Joseph and Ronnie-Sue Johnson
 Kariklia (Rikki) Kapes
 Sharon Kennedy
 Anna Koopman
 John C. Kouklis
 Maria Koumantaros
 Robert and Anne Latz
 Fr. Seraphim and Sophie Majmudar
 Katherine and Gregory Mason
 Alan and Sheila Means
 John and Merrilee Pangis
 John Payne
 George and Diane Pirotis
 Katherine Ballasiotes Rowley
 Jacob Swain
 Olympia Tachopoulou
 Deborah Talbot
 Edward Winskill
 John and Kalitsa Zitco

On behalf of the Stewardship Committee, our sincere best wishes for a Merry Christmas; may the coming year bring us good health, happiness, and peace.

Maria Koumantaros

Bible Study

ST. NICHOLAS BIBLE STUDY THE REVELATION



άβυσσος – avyssos
Without bottom

Chapter 11: The Bottomless pit = Chapter 13: Beast from the Sea

άβυσσος – avyssos (abyss)

θάλασσα – Thalassa (sea)



Bible Study

George Pirotis (Modern Greek Class Teacher): άβυσσος comes from the Greek word βυσσός (vysos – bottom of space). When the “ά” is added at the beginning of the word it indicates the opposite, thus avyssos means a space without a bottom. The space becomes so big that you are talking about the infinite. The word άβυσσος has been used to describe the incredibly diverse, opposite opinions of individuals who will never agree nor compromise. During the period of Homer (about 800 BC) they believed that άβυσσος meant Hades. In **Genesis 7** the Great Flood (κατακλυσμός – cataclysm) was described by the Greeks as: the doors of abyss opened and all the waters came down to cover the earth. Their perception of άβυσσος is dark, cold and big with no end.

Wikipedia: Δαίδαλος (Daedalus) and Ικάρος (Icarus) who were father and son in Greek mythology, attempted to escape from Crete by means of wings that Daedalus constructed from feathers and wax. Daedalus warns Icarus first of complacency and then of hubris, instructing him to fly neither too low nor too high, lest the sea's dampness clog his wings or the sun's heat melt them. Icarus ignores Daedalus' instructions not to fly too close to the sun, causing the wax in his wings to melt. He tumbles out of the sky, falls into the sea (abyss – άβυσσος), and drowns.

Father Seraphim: This is an accurate description of man's “Fall”. We thought we could be as God (believing the devil's lies) soaring to the highest of heights, but only to fall past the level of Paradise in the Garden of Eden, into the άβυσσος! It's difficult to meaningfully imagine a concept of our human existence without an awareness of the άβυσσος. It's even at the core of our psychological experience, let alone the spiritual realities that are actually there. It's a definitive thing that most of us are tempted to avoid and be afraid of. Ultimately, it's the fear of death. Why are there so many problems dividing people from one another and creation itself? Why is there animosity, wars, divorce, etc.? Theologically speaking, since the Fall, every single one of us is surrounded by an άβυσσος separating us from one another. It's only the power of fearless love that can extend itself across the abyss. “*The mass of men live lives of quiet desperation*” as Thoreau said, because they instinctively know they are surrounded by an abyss. Love is always the center of the Gospel message because love is “me extending myself” across the abyss. Jesus Christ crossed the abyss first. Metropolitan Anthony Bloom had a saying, “when you say *I love you to someone, you are telling them, ‘you will live forever’*”.



St. Sophrony (in the middle)

St. Sophrony of Essex

† 1991

Spiritual son of St. Silouan

E.S.: *The writing of his biography was not a human work. It was his own work...and when the Archbishop of Cyprus ordained our beloved spiritual father, Fr. Zacharias, hierodeacon, he was asked to give a word. And he prayed to Silouan. He sat and immediately wrote, what can I tell you? Something that supersedes human measure. His answer and aid came immediately.*

Bible Study

A.E.: And you, Elder, you must have had personal experience with the boldness of St. Silouan.

E.S.: Let me tell you, holy abbot, the story of this boldness. On the second day of Pascha [Monday of Bright Week], in either 1930 or 1931, an educated Russian hermit monk, he was an engineer, came to visit me in my cell at the Monastery of St. Panteleimon's. "Fr. Sophrony, how will we be saved?" I loved this person. He was a very gentle and sweet person, but also very clever. I prepared him a cup of tea, gave it to him, and told him, "Stand on the edge of the abyss and when you feel that it is beyond your strength, break off and have a cup of tea."

Reflections on what St. Sophrony meant by his quote:

Father Seraphim: There's a dual movement here. Compare the soul to a ballet dancer and our spiritual life is like a ballet, you'll see movements of the soul. Those movements can be characterized (as St. Silouan teaches) by movement towards the abyss, where we are reluctant to go. But we have to cultivate the willingness to move towards the abyss, which is the first movement. The first movement we have to master is the willingness to go out towards the abyss. The second movement is to take a step back when we can no longer bear it. When we regain our strength, then repeat 1 and 2. That's the beginning of love. Notice he doesn't say descend into the abyss. Our personal ἄβυσσος is ultimately the fear of death. Inevitably, we are going to be forced by circumstances, to peer over the edge of the abyss. For some, it will be a cancer diagnosis, for others, extreme difficulties with family members, others will face the cross of loneliness and for some a financial crisis. It won't just be minor problems, but the threat of the abyss.

Genevieve E.: Most alcoholics have to hit rock bottom before they can truly turn their lives around and quit drinking. It doesn't mean they won't face temptation and daily struggles, but they have to sink dangerously close to the abyss before they can begin the process of recovery. This is so similar to those who are unrepentant sinners. They, also, have to face the abyss and reach out for the only hand (Jesus Christ) that can save them and put them on the path of repentance. Even St. Peter temporarily lost his faith when turmoil arose as he was walking on the sea towards Christ, and he started sinking into the abyss. **Matthew 14: 28-31** "And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." ²⁹So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" ³¹And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Father Seraphim: Looking at **St. John's Gospel**, chiastically, you see at the literary core (the 6th chapter out of 21) the crossing of the Sea of Galilee where Christ takes us across this chaotic sea, over the abyss, to the safe harbor. St. Peter was walking over the abyss. We know he could swim, his livelihood was immersed in the sea; he was facing his own personal abyss. It wasn't about the water, it was about the ἄβυσσος. We can apply the elder's teaching about the "tea" to our own lives and, hopefully, find salvation on the day of Judgment if we attempt to face the edge of the abyss just once in our lives because we responded to His love. That's the recipe for salvation.

Elder Sophrony continues:

The next day, I ran into Elder Silouan, with whom I had not yet had personal contact, but I could sense his spiritual strength. And he said to me, "Was Fr. Vladimir with you yesterday?"

I didn't answer him, that is, I didn't say, "yes, he was," rather I said, "Perhaps I said something wrong?"

Silouan answered, "No, but what you told him was beyond his strength, beyond his measure. Come and let's talk."

Bible Study

That's how he called me to speak with him. And because of this phrase, "Stand on the edge of the abyss and when you don't have any more strength, rest a little and have a cup of tea," our relationship began, our spiritual connection. Afterwards, I went to the Elder and he taught me regarding, "Keep your mind in hell and despair not."

St. Silouan received this message from Jesus Christ, Himself. He was so willing to follow Christ that he lived at and descended into the abyss constantly. St. Sophrony said that during WWI, St. Silouan's heart was filled with so much love for his fellow man that the Lord allowed him to bear humanity's suffering as it was happening. What St. Silouan was telling Elder Sophrony regarding his talk with Fr. Vladimir was that what he said was correct, but the priest wasn't ready to hear it yet, it was too much. The most mature form of spiritual life in Christ is "Keep your mind in hell and despair not." We are dealing with the existential relationship between the ἄβυσσος and despair. The existentialist philosophers, Friedrich Nietzsche, Søren Kierkegaard, Jean-Paul Sartre, Picasso, etc., were adept sailors on the sea of existence and not to be trifled with. They had a tremendous capacity to go far beyond what most human beings are capable of. They sailed out to the abyss; but the problem was they were sinking and they despaired because they didn't have Christ. They didn't have love. We need to take St. Silouan's statement, "Keep your mind in hell and despair not.", to heart even though we might not be able to put it into practice. What we are called to practice is these repeated forays into the abyss.

A.E.: *This is great love of wisdom, Elder.*

E.S.: *Great love of wisdom...And you know how I feel, holy abbot? What I suffer because of this? What did the Lord mean with the phrase, "Keep your mind in hell," which was for Silouan the pronounced removal of grace for a whole hour before the appearance of Christ? He clearly saw his eternal destruction and after this the Lord appears without any word, He didn't say anything...for a moment. And when this happened, without any word, without words, he began to pray for all humanity and it became a state of being, not a thought, but a state of being. And when the Lord said, "Keep your mind," Silouan saw Him. This is why it was only Silouan who understood the depths of the word regarding this state. For us self-reproach is appropriate, but not this state. And the conversation, his talk with Christ, was very, how to say it...very brief. This is what he said:*

St. Silouan: *"I see demons."*

Jesus Christ: *"The proud suffer from this."*

St. Silouan: *"But how can I become humble, Lord?"*

Jesus Christ: *"Keep your mind in hell and despair not." And then He left.*

St. Sophrony wants to make sure that we understand that Christ's statement, "Keep your mind in hell and despair not", is for the spiritually mature. There's a relationship between when you approach the abyss and when you are in the abyss. We instinctively recognize a threat to our existence. That's why the dragon in **Revelation** is coming out of the sea because he's trying to leverage the fear of death by trying to get everyone to bend the knee to Antichrist. Because of fear, most people will. It doesn't matter if you are Orthodox Christian or not; only those who are practiced at the "spiritual ballet" (a voluntary movement out to the abyss) who will not bend the knee to Antichrist. Antichrist's plan is to choreograph this so that he will be the one to save the multitudes from imminent death and destruction. When reading the Saints, most of them will express an urgency to take action now. This action is what St. Silouan describes.

Alan M: Are the beast of the sea and the beast of the earth a combination creature known as the dragon from the abyss?

Bible Study

Father Seraphim: They symbolically represent two distinct figures who will take two different roles. There is the Antichrist and his assistant or forerunner. Antichrist will copy Christ. Just as Christ had an obscure birth, so will Antichrist. As Christ was born of the tribe of Judah, Antichrist will be born of the tribe of Dan (as some Saints believe). He will have a forerunner, just as St. John the Baptist was Christ's forerunner. As Christ was revealed at Theophany by the Holy Spirit, there will be a moment in time when the "anti-trinity" will be revealed. As Christ's baptized are anointed on the forehead at Chrismation, so there will be the false anointing of Antichrist's followers with the mark of the beast.

Alan M: I've been thinking about how demons distract, destroy and disintegrate and how they are so profound. There's something about our faith that says we are not to be afraid of the demons or give them respect and to understand what Christ will do for us in those moments when we are threatened.

Father Seraphim: One of the ways that this can be concretely practiced is to understand that if we are followers of Christ, a movement out to the abyss will sometimes look like leadership. Leadership, to me, is a good word to describe what a Christian is. A leader is someone who stands apart and becomes a point of reference for those who are following but also a target for those who wish to stop the people who are going that direction. A call to be peacemakers will also make us a target.

Submitted by: Genevieve Eagle



ST. NICHOLAS PRO-LIFE MINISTRY

ST. NICHOLAS PRO-LIFE MINISTRY



Assembly of Bishops Joins Other Christians in Filing Amicus Brief in Major Abortion Case before the U.S. Supreme Court

The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America has consistently and unequivocally recognized the full humanity of every person beginning at the moment of conception. This position is informed by Scripture and Holy Tradition and is validated by modern science, which confirms that a new, distinct human organism comes into existence at conception.

The United States Supreme Court will soon hear a major case, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which challenges the precedent set by *Roe v. Wade* that legalized the abortion of unborn children nationwide. The Assembly of Bishops is pleased to announce that, together with other Christians, including the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, it is joining an amicus ("friend of the Court") brief advocating on behalf of these unborn children before the U.S. Supreme Court. The brief argues that, among other things, these unborn children "are our family, our brothers and sisters. Like all members of the human family, they should be treasured and loved."

**Conservative US supreme court justices signal support for restricting abortion in pivotal case
Case poses a direct threat to the legal underpinnings of the landmark 1973 *Roe v Wade* ruling that
guaranteed the constitutional right to abortion.**

The Guardian: Jessica Glenza, December 1, 2021

Conservative justices in the US supreme court have signaled their support for curbing abortion access during oral arguments in the most important reproductive rights case in decades, threatening the future of abortion access across the country.

Campaigners have warned the case poses a direct threat to the legal underpinnings of Roe v Wade, a landmark 1973 decision that guaranteed the constitutional right to abortion. In their lines of questioning on Wednesday, liberal justices warned against abandoning important legal precedent, while conservatives argued for reviewing it.

"The constitution is neither pro-life nor pro-choice ... and leaves the issue to the people to resolve in the democratic process," said the conservative justice Brett Kavanaugh, who was controversially appointed to the bench by former president Donald Trump.

The case is named for Dr Thomas Dobbs, the head of Mississippi's health department and the official seen as the chief enforcer of the law, and Jackson Women's Health Organization, the last abortion clinic in Mississippi. The court is expected to issue a decision on the case in June 2022, but oral arguments offer clues to the justices' thinking ahead of the ruling.

The case centers on whether the state of Mississippi can ban abortion at 15 weeks' gestation, roughly nine weeks before bans are permitted under current law.

Hundreds of protesters gathered outside the court to show support for, or opposition to, abortion rights

ST. NICHOLAS PRO-LIFE MINISTRY

– one of the most contentious issues in the US. Some held signs that read “Abortion is healthcare”, while abortion opponents held signs reading “abortion is murder” and “repent or perish”.

Dobbs is the first abortion rights case to be heard by the new, conservative-dominated bench. Trump successfully confirmed three justices to the court, and thus created a new conservative supermajority with six of nine justices leaning to the right. While far from a foregone conclusion, questions from conservative justices appeared to show there was not a majority to uphold Roe v Wade in its current form.

Conservative justices including Kavanaugh indicated an interest in overturning Roe, and allowing states to determine their own laws. In that scenario, more than half of US states are expected to ban or severely restrict abortion access.

But they also considered upholding Mississippi’s 15-week abortion ban, which would not overturn Roe but would substantially weaken it.

Liberal justices challenged Scott Stewart, the solicitor general of Mississippi, on whether the state’s argument was fundamentally religious; whether overruling Roe would lead to other rights being overturned, such as gay marriage and the right to contraception; and how the court’s legitimacy would be affected by potentially overturning such an important decision.

Referring to the 1992 supreme court ruling *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v Casey*, which reaffirmed abortion rights and prohibited laws imposing an “undue burden” on abortion access, the liberal justice Stephen Breyer said the court should not bow to political pressure in overturning Roe. He said such a ruling would “subvert the court’s legitimacy”.

Perhaps the harshest questioning came from Justice Sonia Sotomayor, who asked how the court could overturn a “watershed” case such as Roe with its reputation intact.

“The right of a woman to choose, the right to control her own body, has been clearly set since *Casey* and never challenged. You want us to reject that line of viability and adopt something different,” Sotomayor said.

Sotomayor said Mississippi brought its new challenge purely because of changes on the supreme court bench.

“Will this institution survive the stench this creates?” Sotomayor asked, saying it would give the impression that the constitution and its interpretation is based purely on politics. “If people think it is all political ... how will the court survive?”

Conservative justices adopted different lines of questioning, including whether the constitution is “neutral” on the question of abortion; whether there was a right to abortion in the “history and tradition” of the US; whether viability was an “arbitrary” line; and whether a case can be overruled because it was “egregiously wrong” at the time it was handed down.

Kavanaugh questioned Julie Rikelman, an attorney for the Center for Reproductive Rights who represents the Jackson Women’s Health Organization, about whether the court should be involved in abortion rights at all. He asked her to respond to Mississippi’s argument that, as he put it, “the court has been forced ... to pick sides on the most contentious social debate in American life.”

ST. NICHOLAS PRO-LIFE MINISTRY

Rikelman said that the court had already heard and rejected those arguments and abandoning abortion as a constitutional right would not be neutral: “The constitution provides a guarantee of liberty.”

The conservative justice Amy Coney Barrett, also appointed under Trump, asked whether women could simply “terminate their parental rights” at the end of a pregnancy by giving a child up for adoption, instead of seeking an abortion.

“There is, without question, an infringement on bodily autonomy which we have another contexts like vaccines,” said Coney Barrett. “But it doesn’t seem to me to follow that pregnancy and parenthood are all part of the same burden.”

Chief Justice John Roberts, also conservative, appeared to express interest in upholding Mississippi’s 15-week ban. “Viability,” generally regarded as 24 weeks, “doesn’t have anything to do with choice,” said Roberts. “Why is 15 weeks not enough time?”

Abortion rights advocates had considered the court’s decision to hear the case to be a warning sign. The court could have cited the precedent set by Roe to refuse to hear the case, but the fact it was accepted for oral arguments meant at least four justices saw merit in revisiting Roe v Wade.

A ban on nearly all abortions at or after 15 weeks would represent a huge blow for abortion access across the county. To allow such a restriction, the court would need to issue a ruling that would overturn or substantially weaken Roe v Wade, which in many states is the only legal protection guaranteeing the right to abortion access.

If Roe v Wade were overturned, 26 states are expected to move to make abortion illegal. About 40 million women of reproductive age, or about 58% of the people who can get pregnant in the US, live in states considered hostile to abortion rights. Law enforcement experts believe criminalizing abortion, again, would lead to a public health crisis and a wave of prosecutions.

The case comes after conservative justices allowed Texas to undermine Roe within its borders. As a result, Texas’s law has effectively ended access to the vast majority of abortions in America’s second largest state geographically, where more than six million women of reproductive age reside.

St. Nicholas Pro-Life Ministry:

Since the Supreme Court has made no decision yet, St. Nicholas Pro-Life Ministry asks for continued prayers for those who are in positions of power to open their hearts and seek God’s wisdom and guidance in their decision-making.

Submitted by: Genevieve

ST. NICHOLAS AKATHIST MINISTRY

Ministry of Akathist, Prayers for the Departed

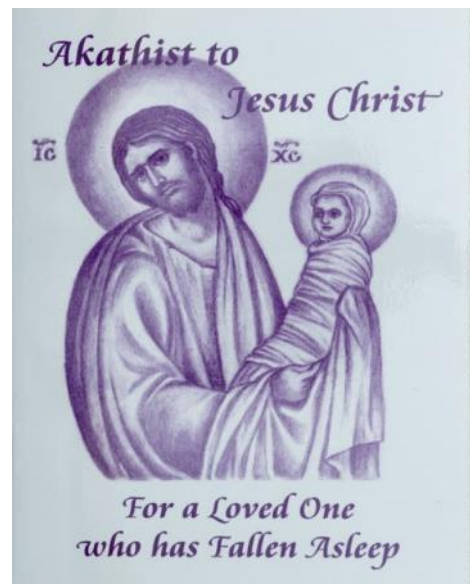


Thank you to all who are involved in this wonderful ministry at Saint Nicholas. In offering the gift of praying the Akathist to Jesus Christ for a Loved One who Has Fallen Asleep, it is a great comfort to family and friends of the departed ones.

When we offer these prayers for the newly departed, it also helps us in many ways. **May God bless your gift of prayer.**

If you are interested in knowing more about this ministry, or would like to be involved, please contact the church office.

Thank you again,
Kathy Rowley



PROSPHORA

PROVIDING PROSFORO

Your own of your own we offer unto You, on behalf of all and for all.

Despina Ampatzis brings the offering the first Sunday of every month.

James Horton brings the offering the second Sunday of every month.

Please know that you who are not on the baking rotation are welcome to bring the prospora and/or artoklasia for an occasion (for instance your name day, or a big feast day such as St. Nicholas or Dormition). The procedure would be to contact Father Seraphim and discuss it with him before the actual day, and to have the offering there in time.



Seal from the Monks at St. Anne's Skete on Mt. Athos, a gift to St. Nicholas Church in Tacoma, WA.

PROSPHORA

LECHEM-ARTOS-BREAD

Following the Word Through Scripture

We are following “bread” through Deuteronomy and have arrived at chapter twenty-three. Here bread is mentioned in the context of neighborliness and hospitality.

*Deuteronomy 23:4-8: An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord forever, because they did not meet you with **bread(lechem/artos)** and water when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Mesopotamia to curse you. Nevertheless, the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam, but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loved you. You shall not address them with peaceful words and good wishes all your days forever. You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land. The sons of the third generation born to them may enter the assembly of the Lord.*

The ammonites and Moabites are descendants of the sons of Lot, who is Abraham’s nephew. The notes in the study Bible compare these people to heretics who employ subtle and deceitful arguments against the Holy Trinity and states there is no peaceful coexistence or good wishes for heretics or heresy. The Edomites are the descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Israel. Earlier in Deuteronomy the Lord warned the Israelites to respect the Edomites. He told them that the sons of Esau at Mt. Seir were in dread of the Israelites, and that He would not give the Israelites any of the Edomite holdings at Mt. Seir. They were told to buy food and water from the sons of Esau and to pass by them. And the Egyptians, of course, had been hospitable to the Israelites in the famine four hundred years earlier.

And now we have come to the last verse in this book mentioning bread, which echoes the first verse in this book mentioning bread.

*Deuteronomy 29:1-8: ...You saw all the Lord did before you in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land—the great trials your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders. Yet the Lord your God has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day. He also led you forty years in the desert. Your clothes did not grow old on you, and your sandals did not wear out on your feet. You did not eat **bread(lechem/artos)**, nor did you drink wine or strong drink, **that you may know** He is the Lord your God. Then you came to this place; and Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out against us in war, and we struck them. We took their land, and gave it as an inheritance to Reuben, to Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh. Therefore heed all the words of this covenant, to do them, that you may understand all these things you are doing.*

In summary, the things that happened in the wilderness and that are recounted in Deuteronomy are so that the Lord **might make you know** that man shall live by every word proceeding from the mouth of God, **that you may know** He is the Lord your God. All the afflictions we have in life—our wilderness—are to bring us to metanoia, also known as repentance, a knowing that comes after acquiring some knowledge, and for which the humbling of affliction seems to be a prerequisite to reach through the hardness of our hearts and bring us to that knowing. When we bear the affliction in humility, we find that faith and hope increase and raise us above the world of sense and human reason to a place of knowing God by experience, which brings us more abundant life (John 10:10).

Man shall not live by bread alone...bread, remember, first appears in Genesis 3:19 after the fall of man and the entrance of death, and is the thing we focus on while trying to avoid death...but by every word proceeding from the mouth of God man shall live...the Lord Jesus Christ is the Word of God and the Bread that came down from heaven who even now infuses us with abundant life in the Thanksgiving Offering of bread and wine which is the Divine Liturgy.

PROSPHORA

With this we have followed bread through the first five books of the Old Testament known as the Pentateuch and also called the books of the law. The next section of the Old Testament is comprised of the books of history. In the Septuagint manuscript, the books of history are eighteen in number: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Kingdoms and 2 Kingdoms (aka 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel), 3 Kingdoms and 4 Kingdoms (aka 1 Kings and 2 Kings), 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles, 1 Ezra and 2 Ezra, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, and 3 Maccabees.

To be continued...

Deborah Talbot--



Donations and Pledges

On line Donations now possible

ON-LINE DONATIONS

The donation section of the Church’s website has been revamped to include a link to a new on-line donation form. The form allows one-time donations, setup for automatic recurring donations, and selection of donation purpose. There is also a note section to inform Church accounting of special handling needs, such as memorial donations or address changes. Church on-line donations are directed to the Church through WePay (a Chase Bank Affiliate) and Aplos Software, LLC. Donors contributing on-line receive an email thanking them for their donation. In addition, through a link in the donation notification, each donor can setup their own Aplos account to view a list of on-line donations, manage recurring donations, and to view and print a contributions statement.



Please be aware that in converting to this software I noticed multiple duplicative account names. In some instances, I will need to merge duplicate accounts so the contribution statement accurately combines into one statement both the on-line donations and check and cash donations. The unique identifier for this purpose is a valid email address.

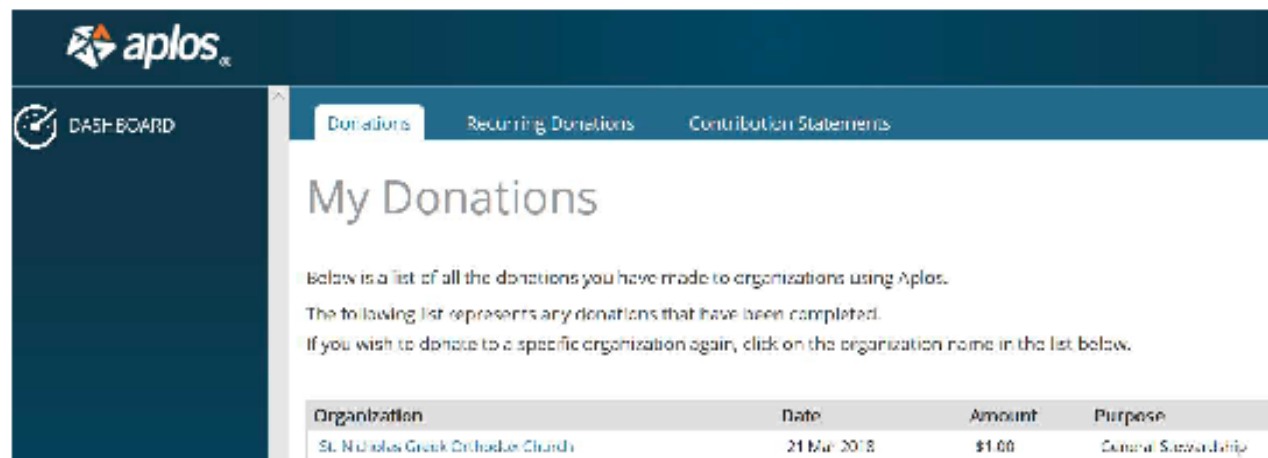
I want parishioners to enjoy greater flexibility in making Church donations and receiving an accounting of their annual to date contributions at any time of the year. Many of you have asked and inquired about the possibility of accounting for your donations automatically on-line. It is now a reality. If you have any problems or questions with this new service, please let me know. As your treasurer, I am here to serve you!

In Christ,

Mark Robinson

On-Line Contribution Instructions:

- 1) On a computer or mobile device, go to the Church’s website – www.stnicholastacoma.org
- 2) Select the  button. This takes you to the Church’s donate page!
- 3) Select the gold colored donate  button at the bottom of the page.
- 4) You will now be taken to the page to make your donation. Simply complete the form.
- 5) From the contributions email you receive, select the link to setup your own Aplos account. An account history page will be available. The first tab will show only on-line donations, the second tab allows accounting for recurring donations, and the third is for contribution statements listing on-line, check, and cash donations.



The screenshot shows the Aplos software interface. At the top left is the Aplos logo. Below it is a navigation menu with 'DASH BOARD' and three tabs: 'Donations', 'Recurring Donations', and 'Contribution Statements'. The main heading is 'My Donations'. Below the heading, there is explanatory text: 'Below is a list of all the donations you have made to organizations using Aplos. The following list represents any donations that have been completed. If you wish to donate to a specific organization again, click on the organization name in the list below.' Below this text is a table with the following data:

Organization	Date	Amount	Purpose
St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church	21 Mar 2018	\$1.00	General Stewardship

OUR MISSION

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church proclaims and teaches the Gospel in accordance with the Orthodox Faith; sanctifies the faithful through God's grace in worship, the Divine Liturgy, and other sacraments; enhances parishioners' spiritual life; and adds to the faithful by receiving individuals into the Church through instruction, baptism, and/or chrismation.

COMMIT YOUR TIME AND TALENT TO ASSIST WITH GOD'S WORK

St. Nicholas has several ministries that exist to fulfill our parish mission and serve our community. Giving of our time and talent through these ministries is just as much an act of stewardship as giving financially. If you would like to contribute your time and talent through one of our ministries, please visit our website to see a list of active ministries: stnicholastacoma.org/ministry-center.

HOW TO RETURN THIS CARD

BY MAIL:

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church
 Attn: Church Treasurer
 1523 S. Yakima Ave.
 Tacoma, WA 98405

AT CHURCH:

Drop your completed card into the secured dropbox on the stewardship table in the downstairs hall.

Stewardship contributions can be fulfilled with cash, check, credit card, or through online donations at stnicholastacoma.org/donate. For more information, please visit: stnicholastacoma.org/stewardship.

Please PRINT your information clearly

Name (F/M/L):

DOB (M/D/Y):

Email:

Telephone:

Spouse:

DOB (M/D/Y):

Email:

Telephone:

Household Information

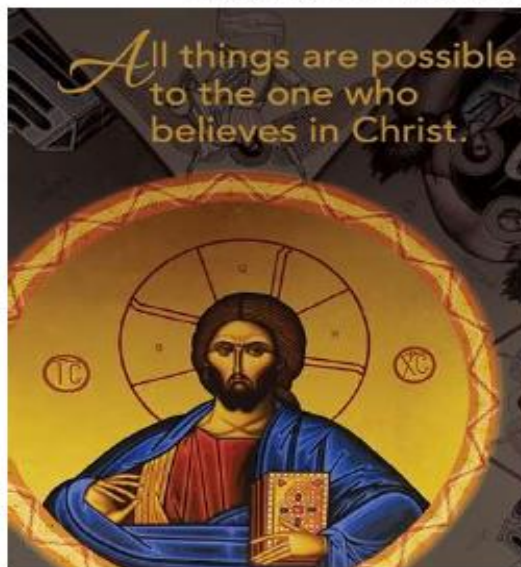
Address

City/St/Zip

Dependent Children

Name (F/MI/L)	DOB (m/d/y)	Orthodox
.....(Y/N)
.....(Y/N)
.....(Y/N)
.....(Y/N)

2022 STEWARDSHIP CARD
ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
TACOMA, WASHINGTON



"Stewardship is an opportunity to examine our priorities and values, to express our thankfulness, to give of ourselves, and to grow in grace. It allows us to participate in the work of God. Giving is not a substitute for commitment - it is an expression of our commitment."
Fr. Seraphim Majmudar

"Those who seek the Lord shall never want for any good thing." (Psalm 34:10)

OUR DONATIONS ARE IN THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS CONTINUED BLESSINGS GIVEN TO US. OUR DONATION REFLECTS HOW MUCH WE ARE BLESSED AND HOW THANKFUL WE ARE; HOWEVER, WE ARE AWARE THAT GOD EXPECTS US TO GIVE SACRIFICIALLY TO HIS WORK.

2022 STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT

Stewardship contributions cover all of our parish operating expenses. An average contribution of approximately \$2000/year from each family would enable our parish to meet its operational expenses without depending on Festival revenue.

I/We offer a minimum stewardship pledge of \$...../year or \$...../month in 2022 to support God's work.

I/We understand that by participating in supporting our parish financially and by committing my/our Time and Talents, I/we shall be a member(s) in good standing at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church.

SIGNATURE.....

Saint Nicholas Messenger

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

1523 S Yakima Ave

Tacoma, WA 98405

Address Service Requested

