



Christmas: Only Children (and the Child-like) Can See It



By Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann

“The eternal God was born as a little child.”...It is the words “child” and “God” which give us the most striking revelation about the Christmas mystery.

Yes, Christmas is a feast for children, not just because of the tree that we decorate and light, but in the much deeper sense that children alone are unsurprised that when God comes to us on earth, he comes as a child. This image of God as child continues to shine on us through icons and through innumerable works of art, revealing that what is most essential and joyful in Christianity is found precisely here, in this eternal childhood of God.



Christ said “become like children” (Mt 18:3). What does this mean? What are adults missing, or better, what has been choked, drowned or deafened by a thick layer of adulthood? Above all, is it not that capacity, so characteristic of children, to wonder, to rejoice and, most importantly, to be whole both in joy and sorrow? Adulthood chokes as well the ability to trust, to let go and give one’s self completely to love and to believe with all one’s being. And finally, children take seriously what adults are no longer capable of accepting: dreams, that which breaks through our everyday experience and our cynical mistrust, that deep mystery of the world and everything within it revealed to saints, children, and poets.

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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

General 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

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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
Genevieve Eagle

Military Service
LTC Gus Chamales

Premarital Education
George Pirotis, Diane Pirotis

Stewardship
Maria Koumantaros
Gus Chamales

2022 Parish Council
Ronnie-Sue Johnson—President
Alan Means—Vice-President
Mark Robinson—Treasurer
Christina Leinneweber—Secretary
Maria Koumantaros, Andrew Auter, David Orriss Jr., Kathy Johnson, Klaudia Cedeno, Zach Karanasos, Fenia Mavromichali, Tony Panagiotu

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

Flowers & Church Decorating
Kathy Rowley/Genevieve Eagle

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

Greek School
George Pirotis

Lazarus Group
Dean Hamos

Pilgrimage
Zach Karanasos

Prospora Baking
Deborah Talbot

Welcome
Gus Chamales

Parish Council

Next Parish Council Meeting will be Tuesday December 13th 2022

DECEMBER 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
27	28	29	30	Dec 1	2	3
Advent Fast: No Meat or Dairy						
James of Persia ● 8:45am Orthros 4 more	Oda of Brabant, Blind Princes ● 6:30am Orthros 2 more	Philomenos of Jacob's Well ● 6:30am Orthros ● 5pm Vespers, Orthros, DL at	Apostle Andrew Fast: Fish, Wine & Oil ok 3 more	Prophet Nahum ● 6:30am Orthros 3 more	Fast: Wine & Oil ok St Porphyrios 3 more	Prophet Zephaniah ● 6pm Vespers
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Advent Fast: No Meat or Dairy						
Great Martyr Barbara	Sabbas the Sanctified ● 6:30am Orthros 5 more	(services on Mon evening) ST NICHOLAS 2 more	Ambrose of Milan Fast: Wine & Oil ok 4 more	Patapios of Thebes ● 5:30pm Modern Greek 2 more	Conception of the Theotokos Fast: Wine & Oil ok 3 more	Thomas of Bithynia ● 6pm Vespers
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Advent Fast: No Meat or Dairy						
Sunday of the Forefathers ● 8:45am Orthros 3 more	Spyridon of Tremithous ● 6:30am Divine Liturgy 2 more	Herman of Alaska ● 6:30am Divine Liturgy 2 more	Martyr Thyrsus STRICT FAST 2 more	Eleutherios Eleutherios 2 more	St Dionysios of Zakynthos (tr) Prophet Haggai 4 more	Daniel and the Three Youths Dionysios of Zakynthos ● 6pm Vespers
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Advent Fast: No Meat or Dairy	Martyr Boniface STRICT FAST ● 6pm Beginning Greek 2 more	Fast: Wine & Oil ok Ignatius of Antioch John of Kronstadt 2 more	Juliana of Nicomedia STRICT FAST ● 6pm Vespers: St Anastasia ● 7pm Choir Practice	Fast: Wine & Oil ok Martyr Anastasia "Pharmakol" ● 6:30am Divine Liturgy 2 more	Nephon, Bp of Cyprus STRICT FAST ● 6:30am Orthros & 1st & 3rd 4 more	Christmas Eve Martyr Evgenia ● 8am Orthros 2 more
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Fast Free!						
CHRISTMAS ● 8:45am Orthros 2 more	Synaxis of Theotokos ● 6:30am Divine Liturgy 2 more	Protomartyr Stephen ● 6:30am Divine Liturgy	20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia ● 6pm No Services tonight ● 7pm Choir Practice	14,000 Infants Slain by Herod ● 5:30pm Modern Greek	Martyr Anyisia of Thessalonik ● 10am No Bible Study This W	+Fr Nestor Savchuk ● 6pm Vespers

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

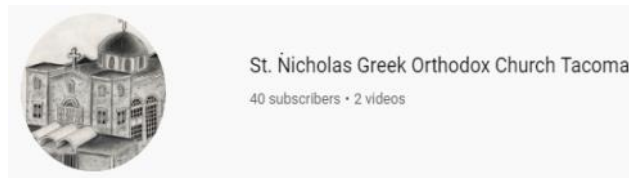
News and Announcements

Watch Services From Home, Live (it's working again)

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—

Parish Council & Audit Committee Elections

Sunday, December 4, 2022: This is an in-person General Assembly:

- Parish Council Nominations. Members of St. Nicholas can nominate themselves or another member in good standing
- We have **7** Council vacancies to fill
 - Current Council members accepting nominations for 2023:
 - Alan Means
 - Kathy Johnson
 - Current Council members continuing their term in 2023:
 - Christina Lienneweber
 - Zachary Karanasos
 - Mark Robinson
 - Fenia Mavromichali
 - Tony Panagiotu
- We have 3 Auditor positions to fill
- Election of the *Elections Committee*. This committee will administer the actual election on December 18.
- *Nominations for the Parish Council and Auditing Committee are accepted in writing, following the General Assembly. Nominations can be submitted in the drop box or mailed to the church office. The deadline for submitting nominations is Friday, December 9.*

Sunday, December 18, 2022:

- In-person elections of the Parish Council and Audit Committee.
- All stewards in good standing are eligible to vote. Voting will be by ballot, submitted into the ballot box in the lower hall

Serving on either Council or the Audit Committee is a ministry. Please prayerfully consider serving our Lord and our Church in one of these roles. If you have questions about serving on the Parish Council, please contact any of the current Council members or Father Seraphim.

In Christ's love,
Your 2022 Parish Council

Coffee Hour



COFFEE HOUR MINISTRY

PASSING THE TORCH OR SPOON

From Team Johnson to Team Charitou



With Joseph & Ronnie-Sue relocating to Arizona, they will no longer to be able to lead their **coffee** hour team. I'm deeply indebted to them for their love and labor in leading their team. They started off as members of a team; when the situation required it, they agreed to step up and become the team leaders. I cannot properly articulate my gratitude to them. Their shoes will be hard to fill.

Coffee Hour

However, Glory to God for all things because what is impossible for men is possible for God. God has provided Yianni & Sophia Charitou to take over leadership of the team. I'm truly thankful to our Lord & St Nicholas for putting in the heart such a capable and energetic couple the willingness to take over the leadership role.

The coffee hour teams are in imperative need of having more members on their team. You can help by volunteering to join the ministry. 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.

TEAMS:

Team Karanasos: Daphne Karanasos, Leader; Anna Wilson, Christina Gretty, Zach Karanasos, Angie Wilen, Ann Koopman, John Kouklis, Pres Maria Armatas and Lisa Ishchenko

Team Johnson: Joseph Johnson, Leader; Ronnie-Sue Johnson, Fenia Mavromichali, Barbara Phillips, Sandra Ciarochi, Yvonne Brandvold, Maro Kouklis, Lisa Lauderback and Yianni & Sophia Charitou

Team Chamales: Dr Ingrid Chamales, Leader; Karen Samaras; Marion Palas, Sally Hallis, Krysanthos Barnes, Rikky Kapes. Kathy Johnson and Sharon Kennedy

Team Pres Sophie: Pres Sophie Majmudar, Leader; Evy Kontos, Irene Misiewicz, Gloria Brown, Deborah Talbot, Klaudia Cedeno and Scott & Rachael Parrell

Men's Team: Ed Winskill, Leader; Dr Fred Ehret, Bill Samaras, John Cook, Hugh Winskill, Andrew Phillips and Alex Misiewicz

COFFEE HOUR SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER:

12/4/2022	St Nicholas Luncheon
12/11/2022	Team Pres Sophia
12/18/2022	Team Chamales
12/25/2022	Christmas

Modern Greek Language School



2022-2023 Modern Greek Language Classes, every Thursday, from 5:30 to 7:00 PM.
2022-2023 Beginners Greek Classes, Every Monday from 6:00-7:00 PM.

General Information: **The classes are open to everyone** who is interested to learn the Greek Language, History and Culture!

Teacher - George Pirotis

Contact Church Office - 253-272-0466

Purpose: The purpose of the Greek School is to promote the Greek letters, language, culture, and Hellenic Civilization. **The classes are open to all parishioners.**

Students will learn Grammar, Modern Conversational Greek and some of the Biblical - Ancient Greek Terminology.



NOTE: Modern Greek Class will be taking a "Holiday Break" starting Thursday November 24th. Class will resume on Thursday, January 12, 2023. The last beginners class of 2022 will be Monday November 28th. Beginners class will resume Monday, January 16th, 2023.

Philoptochos News

President's Message

Recent and planned Philoptochos activities are described below. Please check with the church office secretary if additional details are desired. Members continue to review our activities in light of the Covid restrictions and will try to schedule accordingly.

Holiday Food Certificate Drive - Every year Philoptochos spearheads a project to donate food certificates to families in the community for Thanksgiving and Christmas. This year we assisted eight families at four Tacoma schools, Boze, Blix, Downing and McCarver elementary schools for Thanksgiving. Additional assistance will be provided for Christmas. Our goal is to raise \$4,000 for this project. A flyer describing the project is a separate attachment in the Messenger.

Philoptochos members hosted a breakfast coffee hour on Sunday, Oct. 23, 2022 to start this project. Over \$4,300 (as of 11/11) has been donated towards our goal for this worthwhile project, including a generous donation from the Daughters of Penelope and AHEPA. Please continue with your donations. Donations can be made by mail (please make your check out to Philoptochos-memo holiday food certificates), at the church mailing address or through the church donation website.

Veteran's Day Luncheon - A Veteran's Day presentation and luncheon was held on Sunday, Nov. 13, 2022, after Divine Liturgy. Philoptochos members helped prepare this luncheon beforehand. This was a freewill offering with donations of \$710 going to the Fisher House at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. Fisher House provides comfort accommodations where military and veteran families can stay free of charge, while a loved one is in the hospital.

St. Nicholas Vespers & Feast Day - Members will assist with preparation of light meals for these events.

Vasilopita - Members will bake bread in the kitchen on Saturday, January 7, 2023. Volunteers are welcome to assist.

Philoptochos Membership - Our year starts in January and runs through December. Annual membership renewal requests will be mailed to all current members soon. We currently have 49 paid members. Please consider renewing your membership if you haven't already. We welcome new members as well. There is a lot of satisfaction in doing things for the common good and helping our church and the less fortunate among us.

Annual dues are \$30/year. Please contact the church office secretary if you would like the membership form.

Continued next page...

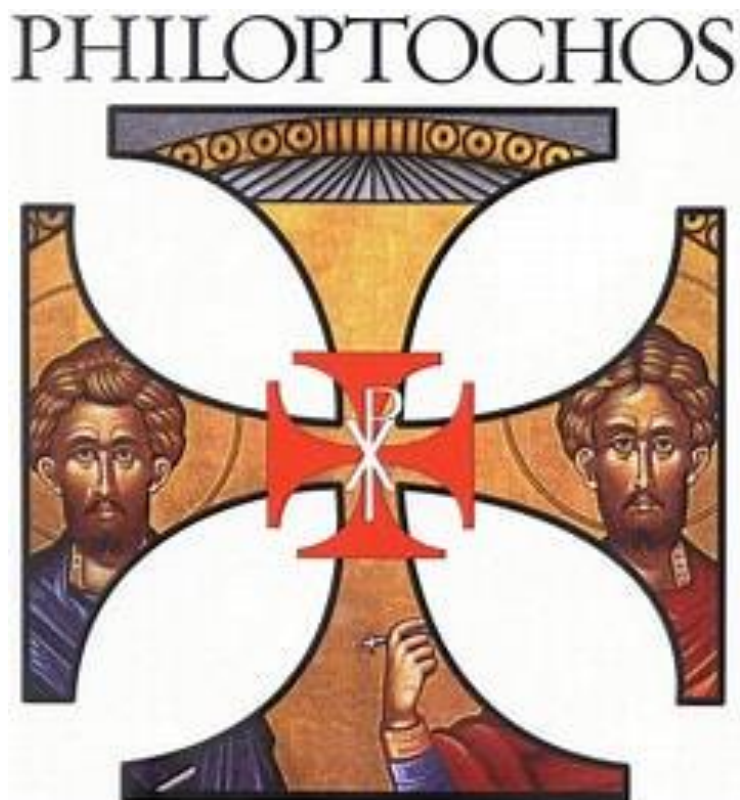
Philoptochos News

Philoptochos Member Meetings - Our next member meeting will be Thursday, January 19, 2023, at 10:00 in the upper hall of church. The meeting will be accessible by Zoom as well. Topics will include the planned soup and pie sale events in early 2023, ladies luncheon planning, and proposed budget for 2023. We invite members and interested parishioners to join these meetings and share their thoughts.

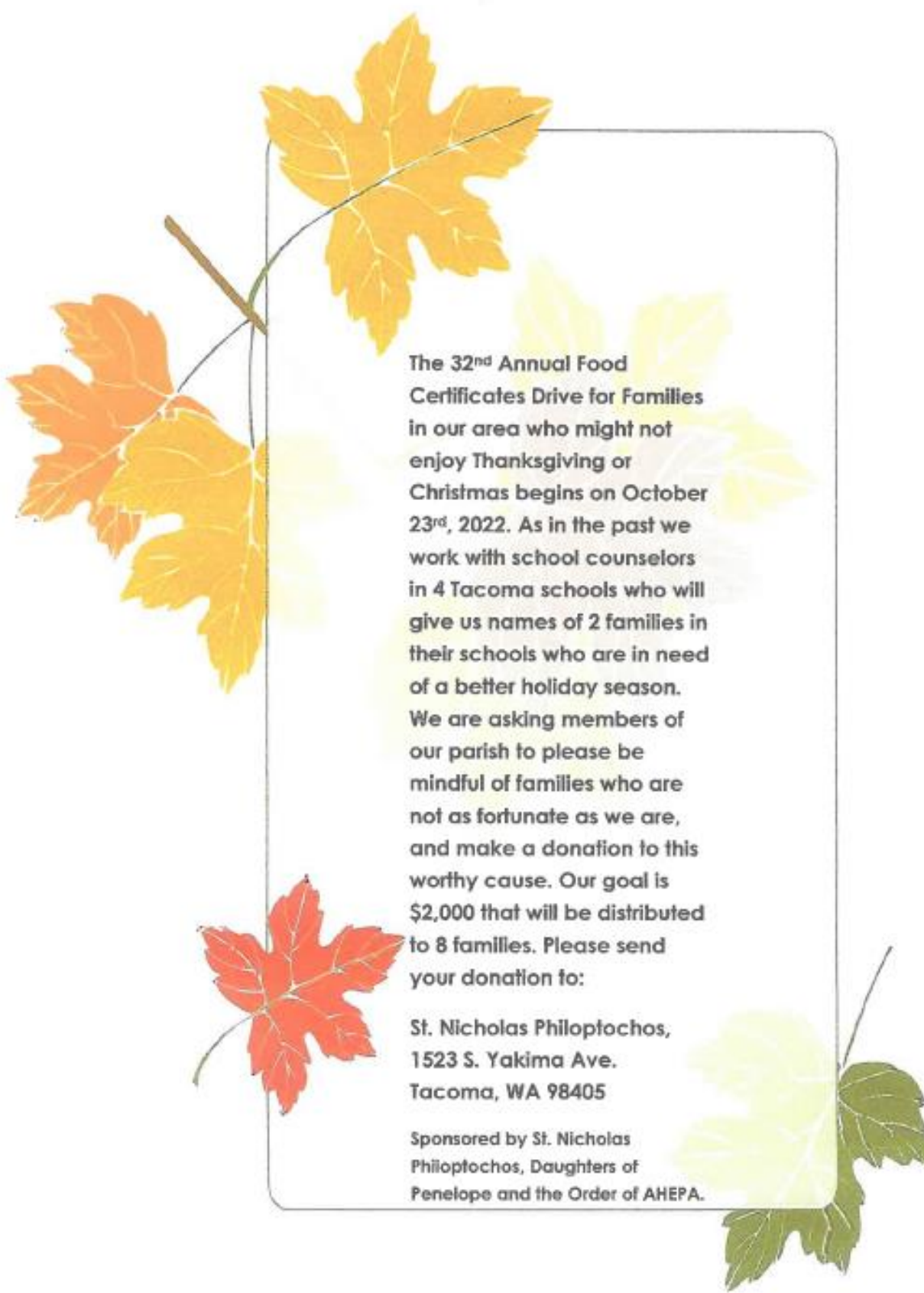
Outreach to others - Please take a few minutes to call and support the older members of our community during the pandemic. Human contact and interaction is so important during these trying COVID-19 times.

Thanks for your Continuous Support!

Jane Evancho



Philoptochos News Food Drive



The 32nd Annual Food Certificates Drive for Families in our area who might not enjoy Thanksgiving or Christmas begins on October 23rd, 2022. As in the past we work with school counselors in 4 Tacoma schools who will give us names of 2 families in their schools who are in need of a better holiday season. We are asking members of our parish to please be mindful of families who are not as fortunate as we are, and make a donation to this worthy cause. Our goal is \$2,000 that will be distributed to 8 families. Please send your donation to:

St. Nicholas Philoptochos,
1523 S. Yakima Ave.
Tacoma, WA 98405

Sponsored by St. Nicholas
Philoptochos, Daughters of
Penelope and the Order of AHEPA.

Building Committee

DECEMBER BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

After the Greek Festival the kitchen area was deep cleaned and bulbs from light fixtures were replaced, resulting in a brighter and more appealing interior appearance. To further enhance the ambience it was suggested to repaint the interiors and re-stain entry doors that lead into the kitchen, a proposal of which was approved by the Parish Council. The painting work should be done around the time this issue of the Messenger is distributed. Thanks to Alan Means and John Pangis for setting this up and making it happen.

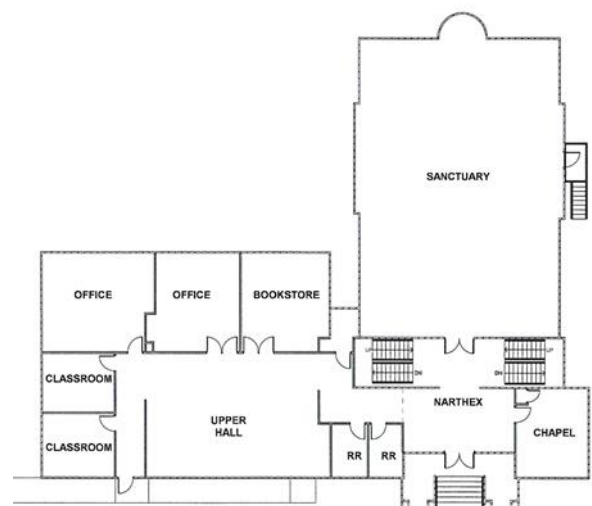
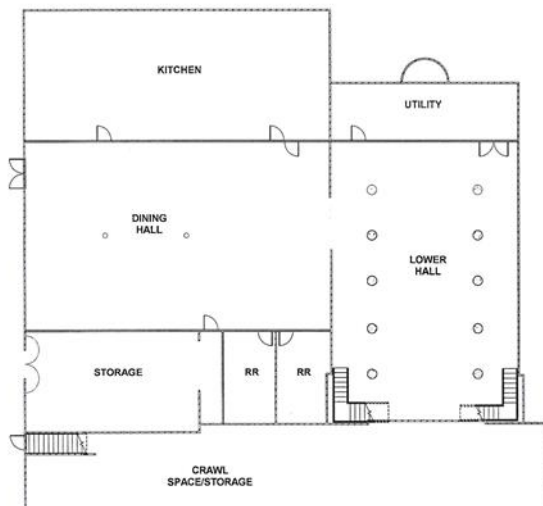
Short term roofing fixes at the Upper Hall and Dining/Kitchen roofs are still in the works, along with re-inspecting the Sanctuary attic space for possible moisture intrusion, and providing some preventative maintenance measures at existing upper roof scuppers.

With the completion of the Narthex Renovation, there are still some large long-term church campus repair and renovation issues to address, the most immediate being the afore mentioned Upper Hall and Dining/Kitchen roofs. Beyond short-term band-aid fixes, hurdles for long term roofing solutions and the costs involved.

Besides replacing existing roofing, the Upper Hall would require a new roof structure with adequate drainage slopes, and expensive rigid thermal insulation to bring it up to code. The Dining/Kitchen roof, given its long history of leaks over the last several years, would likely require significant dry rot repairs, and for permitting expensive rigid insulation as well.

In short, a coordinated long-term plan of the church campus as a whole is desired in order to take care of the overdue leaky Upper Hall and Dining/Kitchen roofs in a wise and efficient manner.

Below are floor plans of the church that were recently drawn, with the intent to have a template as a means to sketch future renovation ideas. More information and specifics on at least one possibility will be coming up in the next Messenger.



Cover Story Continued...



Thus, only when we break through to the child living hidden within us, can we inherit as our own the joyful mystery of God coming to us as a child. The child has neither authority nor power, yet the very absence of authority reveals him to be a king; his defenselessness and vulnerability are precisely the source of his profound power. The child in that distant Bethlehem cave has no desire that we fear him; He enters our hearts not by frightening us, by proving his power and authority, but by love alone. He is given to us as a child, and only as children can we in turn love him and give ourselves to him. The world is ruled by authority and power, by fear and domination. The child God liberates us from that. All He desires from us is our love, freely given and joyful; all He desires is that we give him our heart. And we give it to a defenseless, endlessly trusting child.

Through the feast of Christmas, the Church reveals to us a joyful mystery: the mystery of freely given love imposing itself on no one. A love capable of seeing, recognizing and loving God in the Divine Child, and becoming the gift of a new life.



Fr Alexander Schmemmann, +1983
*Excerpt from Celebration of Faith, Vol. 2:
 The Church Year by Fr. Alexander
 Schmemmann,
 St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1994.*



MILITARY MINISTRY NEWS

We are sorry that this page was omitted from the November 2022 Military Ministry News, please accept our apologies and enjoy this article.

November is always a big month for our ministry because November 10th is the Marine Corps Birthday, and November 11th is Veterans Day. But before we elaborate on those two events I am happy to report that after several years of hounding, I finally received a photo of Robin Griffin from his days in the Navy. You can see from the attached photo that Robin hasn't changed a bit from his Navy days,



Robin Griffin
United States Navy
Cold War
Joyce Kalivas-
Griffin's husband



days, with the exception that Joyce probably has him on a tighter leash than he enjoyed back in the 70's. During the festival Robin took time to share some photos and a ship's book from the BIG E, The USS Enterprise. The book was from one the cruises on which Robin served. As always, we are extremely grateful to all of our veterans for their service, and I am extremely grateful to all who share photos from their days in uniform. THANKS ROBIN

November 10, 1775. Birthday of the United States Marine Corps. The Corps is 247 years young this year. As always, we shall wish them a Happy Birthday during the Veterans Day presentation that will be held on November 13th. How many of these St. Nicholas Marine family members do you recognize?



ST. NICHOLAS AKATHIST MINISTRY

Ministry of Akathist, Prayers for the Departed



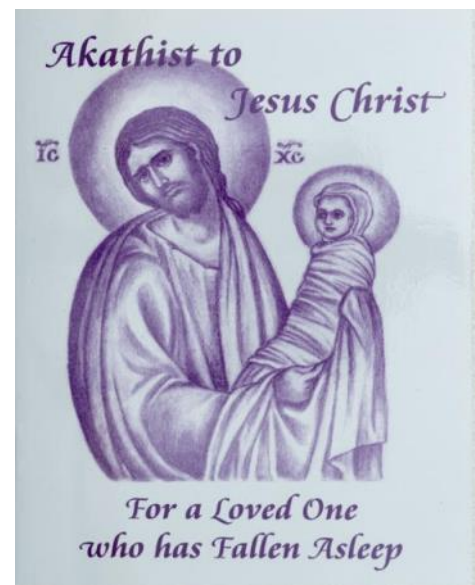
Thank you to all who are involved in this wonderful ministry at Saint Nicholas. In offering the gift of praying the Akathist to Jesus Christ for a Loved One who Has Fallen Asleep, it is a great comfort to family and friends of the departed ones.

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



St. Nicholas Bible Study

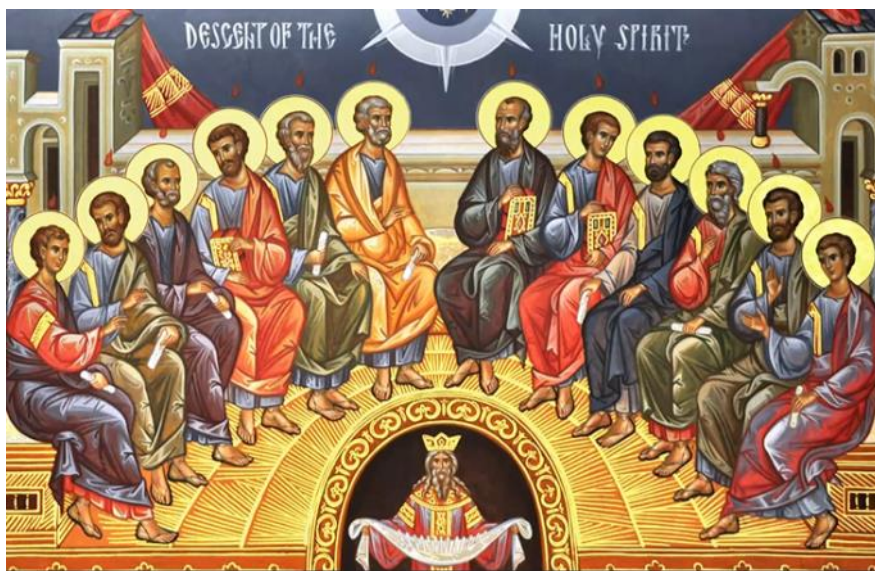
The Book of Acts

What happened when St. Mary Magdalene gained audience before Emperor Tiberius?

Sunny E: She attended a dinner party at the home of Emperor Tiberius and everyone was talking about this Jesus of Nazareth, Who supposedly died and rose from the dead. She said she had actually been a witness to this and confirmed that it was true. The emperor picked up an egg and said that he would no more believe that someone could rise from the dead than this egg could turn red. When the egg turned red in his hand he was very shaken, but was reluctant to accept it.

Father Seraphim: By the way, that is why we dye eggs red at Pascha. Why was she in Rome in the first place? It's because she was a Roman citizen and was called as a witness at Pontius Pilate's trial. She was a very wealthy and well-known figure and Roman citizen. From the Roman's perspective, Christ was unjustly executed. We think of the Romans as the bad guys, but Pontius Pilate was brought to trial for his decision. He was found guilty and put into exile. If you read the Church Fathers about Pontius Pilate, they don't speak definitively, but there are some stories of him repenting. His wife, Claudia Procula, is a saint in the Orthodox Church. This is to illustrate the fact that there are so many things going on at the same time. We need to develop the awareness that if we want to see things in "3D", we have to be aware of all these things happening simultaneously. What we're accessing here is not some abstract story, but the full picture of everything that happened.

Pentecost



In this icon St. Paul is included amongst the "12" (instead of Matthias).

We also call Pentecost the "Descent of the Holy Spirit". Note the "tongues of fire" over the head of each Apostles.

Genevieve E: Is St. Paul considered an Apostle of the "Twelve" – because that would make them thirteen? **Note: Information discovered after class:** Everything I read indicated that Paul's designation was "Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles".

Father Seraphim: No, he's not considered one of the twelve. But he does identify himself as "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ". It is confusing. He might be considered an apostle of the "Seventy".

Nectarios O: Aren't Mark and Luke also considered apostles?

Father Seraphim: Yes, and they are technically numbered among the "Seventy". So the Apostle Luke, who is the author of the **Book of Acts** and the **Gospel of Luke**, is a Gospel writer and Apostle and com-

St. Nicholas Bible Study

panion of Paul, but his official designation is Apostle of the Seventy. At the time of Pentecost, Saul (before Paul's conversion) was persecuting the Church. The reason he is included in the icon above, is to show his status as equal to the Apostles and to show that the grace given to him is equal in magnitude to the Apostles. The figure (with the crown) at the bottom of the icon is a personification of the world. The white cloth that he is holding is the grace of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the whole world.

John Alan M: The part that is coming through loud and clear for me is that the Holy Spirit is not only a Person, but is capable of so much action.

Father Seraphim: What is the means that your prayers are heard? Once it's heard (if it's heard) across what metaphysical space does something from God travel and enact whatever it is that we call divine providence? What's the mechanics of the prayer and its response? How would you actually picture it? I'll give you some options:

You're a broken person or a person who is struggling under a situation.

You're trying to give thanks to God for a positive outcome in your life.

So, there's you and the icon of the Mother of God, for instance, and there's this ether between you. You generate a prayer that's faithful and true and not conflicted and travels to God and because He's merciful, He hears your prayer. You're not sure how He will react, but you trust His decision and accept it. Is this how you picture the process of prayer? What we're trying to establish here is called the spiritual infrastructure. So, what is that infrastructure?

John Alan M: I think it was St. Paisios who said that your prayer starts at the point of pain. But it is and it's not repentance. You look at the news of the week which is full of insane things and you say to God, "I'm hurt by what's happening". I think we're meant to pray that way and offer those individuals and the circumstances from the point of our personal pain. The Holy Spirit visits us.

Father Seraphim: This is what we're after. There's a human energy that is proper to our human nature and there's a divine energy that is proper to the Divinity. What happens, with the infrastructure (if you want to call it that), is that our human energy, when spurred - the pain and repentance are reached, and it becomes passive. Our human energy in its fallen state always takes an aggressive and active role. It's always seeking and grasping in its fallen state. In a repentant state that is always motivated by pain, the out-of-control human energy becomes more passive and then it draws the action of the Divine energy which is brought about by the Holy Spirit. Then there is a synergy (συνεργία - a together energy) that occurs when the Holy Spirit is actively praying within us, because the human side has become soft, pliable and child-like. The mechanics of the prayer is our softness and submission to the Holy Spirit, which includes our energy (on the human side). Our softness is the product of the prayer. He takes the human energy and carries that to the Throne of the Father. The direction of travel, as the Fathers teach us to pray, is inward. We shouldn't picture our prayer floating off into space. We have to remember that the Kingdom of God is within and we're like a wheel, like St. Dorotheos of Gaza said, *"If we were to love God more, we should be closer to God, and through love of him we should be more united in love to our neighbor; and the more we are united to our neighbor the more we are united to God."*

Sunny E: How is that different from "Zen" - any human action is futile?

Father Seraphim: Going back to my Philosophy class in college, whenever doing a comparison, speed it to its end-point. The word is teleology - where does this idea go if you follow it all the way down? It's like two ships that leave port at the same time - their courses may differ by only a degree, and you can't detect that difference until they are deep into their journeys. Zen's teleology ultimately leads to the utter disappearance of the person all-together. Our teleology is the complete opposite. It leads to the complete recapitulation of the person in total solidity. The "Great Divorce" by C.S. Lewis is a fantasy tale, but is the perfect example of this. The more that we are in Christ, even though it is paradoxical, the more we become soft and passive before the Holy Spirit. Our teleology is that, like in the "Great Divorce", you be

St. Nicholas Bible Study

come a “giant”, you become full and “you” and there is no “you” like you! The Kingdom is going to be populated with giants. When we’re seeking to become passive before the Holy Spirit, let’s not confuse passivity with humility.



Orthodox Road: Rediscovering the Beauty of Ancient Christianity.

“Imagine something that is much like a wheel with numerous incomplete spokes that can grow and move from the perimeter to the center. In the center is Christ, who beckons all of us to move toward him. The only path to this center is love. One spoke symbolizes our lives, the other spokes represent our neighbors. As all of the spokes move closer to the center, they also move closer to one another. It is impossible to move toward the center without simultaneously coming together with the other spokes.”

Father Seraphim: The closer we get to the center which is in the heart, the closer we’re connected outside of that – it’s like a paradox. The Holy Spirit carries that energy (intention), when the heart becomes soft, to the Throne of the Father. We are then pulled into that action of grace. Only God can accomplish the connection between two individuals who don’t have the energy to involve each other in their hearts, namely love. It’s impossible for true love to exist without the energy of the Holy Spirit. Human love can exist, but the conquering of the boundary between two individuals is impossible without the Holy Spirit. You can look further into the theology of marriage. Put simply, this is why the Orthodox wedding service does not have “till death do we part” because that is not the vision. We’re trying to get as close as we can using our human energy, and then we’re letting go and letting the impossible become possible which is the Divine Energy of the Holy Spirit carrying that intention and energy of each of us and making us something that we could have never been before. That’s what marriage is. I’m paraphrasing St. Ignatius Bryanchaninov who gives a really close analysis of this. If this topic interests you, I suggest reading St. Ignatius Bryanchaninov’s “The Arena”. Regarding pain, which John Alan brought up, Elder Ephraim encouraged praying in this way: In the absence of pain, the restraint on ourselves is also absent. Pain actually pierces that and allows human energy to calm down and then attract the action of grace. When human energy is self-willed, it pushes the grace of the Holy Spirit away because He is humble, by nature. If our human energy is assertive, He defers to us. If our human energy is soft and pliable, then that attracts the free and humble grace of the Holy Spirit.

Thank you to Father Daniel Lattier, pastor of St. Herman’s Orthodox Church in Port Townsend, who was our guest Bible Study teacher, November 4. Here’s part of his lesson:



Luke 24:49 “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” When does that “power from on high” come? At Pentecost. But in a way, Pentecost continues. We are increasingly, with our theosis (deification), waiting to receive that “power from on high”, it’s not just a one and done thing. Where is Jerusalem? In us. **Psalms 50:18-19** “Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem. ¹⁹Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.” The walls of Jerusalem refers to the walls of our hearts, because we have let enemies in. Once He rebuilds the walls of our hearts to keep the enemies out (the demons), then we can offer that continual sacrifice at the altar of our heart. “...tarry in the city of Jerusalem”, is something that we do till we die and really for all of eternity.

ST. NICHOLAS FLOWER MINISTRY



Miracle Working Icon of St. Anna the Mother of the Mother of God
and the relic of St. Athanasios the Great

Archimandrite Sergius, abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery, traveled from Pennsylvania so that St. Nicholas and St. Herman's Orthodox Church in Port Townsend could share in the blessing of the Miracle Working Icon of St. Anna. Abbot Sergius also gifted St. Nicholas with a portion of the relic of St. Athanasios the Great.

ST. NICHOLAS PRO-LIFE MINISTRY

A message from Shawn Carney, President/CEO of 40 Days for Life:

The impact your prayerful presence has on abortion workers INCREASES as a campaign goes on. On day 1 of our 40 Days for Life vigil, your witness makes abortion workers curious. On day 5, it makes them angry... ..but by day 20, day 30, and day 40, **your willingness to stand vigil in heat, cold, rain, wind, and even snow touches their hearts—and leads many to reconsider their line of work.**

A number of abortion workers have left their jobs this campaign—and reports are still coming in. 40 Days for Life director of outreach Ramona Trevino recently did a whirlwind tour of 40 Days for Life campaigns across upstate New York. At one location, Ramona said “Planned Parenthood's security guard seems to be "warming up" to vigil participants, even standing up for prayer warriors when an



Another abortion worker seems to be softening as well. "A volunteer forgot one of the vigil signs," Ramona said. "A Planned Parenthood employee rescued it and kept it in the facility to return to the volunteer the next day."

Will these Planned Parenthood employees be the next to quit? Time will tell...so

ST. NICHOLAS PRO-LIFE MINISTRY



40 DAYS FOR LIFE UPDATES

In spite of New York's radical pro-abortion government, the pro-life movement is alive and well in the Empire State! Here's the rest of Ramona's report from the road.



Corning, New York

In 1893, a girl named Margaret Higgins was baptized at St. Mary's Church in Corning, New York. Unfortunately, when young Margaret grew up, she declared war on the Church and pioneered one of the 20th century's deadliest ideologies.

Today she's better known by her first husband's last name—Sanger.

After praying at the Corning 40 Days for Life vigil, Ramona gave a talk at St. Mary's Church, a visit that deeply moved campaign volunteers.

"We were talking last night about the symbolism," said John from the Corning campaign leadership team. "First, it was the baptism of Margaret [Sanger]. Then, last night, we had Ramona speak about being lured into Planned Parenthood, becoming a clinic manager, and then 40 Days for Life prayed her out."

St. Nicholas Pro-Life Minsitry



Watertown, New York

The Watertown 40 Days for Life campaign appears to be taking a toll on the local Planned Parenthood facility.

"Planned Parenthood has been closed several days during the 40 Days for Life campaign," reported Flora, the local 40 Days for Life leader. "I believe our presence is bad for business."

The unexpected closures have led to increased opportunities to reach out to Planned Parenthood clients. When one young woman arrived at the closed facility, vigil participants were able to drive her to a local pregnancy help center. They also helped her find housing.

"I don't want to think about what this vulnerable young lady might have decided had Planned Parenthood been open and we weren't there," Flora said. "I believe a baby was saved because 40 Days for Life volunteers were present."



SCRIPTURE & PRAYER

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" —Revelation 21:4-5

Father, you are the God of hope. Your word fills us with the vision of the world to come, when every tear will be wiped away and death will be no more. Father, how we need that hope, how we are strengthened by that vision! Keep our hearts focused on heaven and diligent in the labors of earth. As we struggle against the culture of death, root our souls in the assurance of victory.

Submitted by: Genevieve

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 prospophora 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.



PROSPHORA

LEHEM-ARTOS-BREAD

Following the Word Through Scripture

This month we will finish the references to **bread/lehem/artos** that are found in 1 Kingdoms. This narrative at the end of the book flips back and forth between Saul and David, and so I flip back and forth in the retelling. We left David and his men living a double life in the land of the Philistines, and the Philistines deciding to go to battle against Israel. Achish, a Philistine king under whose protection David was living and who believed David to be loyal to him, desired to take David and his men with him to the battle.

Meanwhile, Saul, king of Israel, became very afraid upon seeing the army of the Philistines encamped against them. God is no longer speaking to Saul, since in his heart he has turned away from God, even having killed all of God's priests at Nob, and their families, and their cattle, and attempting to kill God's anointed, David. Taking matters into his own hands, Saul sought a woman with a divining spirit. Saul asked the woman to bring up Samuel for him (Samuel had died). She told Saul, *"I saw gods ascending out of the earth...A man is coming up, standing upright, and he is covered with a mantle."* Saul discerned this to be Samuel. Whatever it was, it spoke to Saul and told him the kingdom would be given to David, and that the Lord would deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.* The next part of the story is found in verses 20-22 below.

*1 Kingdoms 28:20-22: Saul fell prostrate on the ground, for he was very afraid because of Samuel's words. He was also weak since he had not eaten any food all that day and night. Then the woman came to Saul and saw his weakened condition. So she said to him, "Behold, when your handmaiden heard the sound of your voice, I put my life at risk and I obeyed the words you spoke to me. Now hear the voice of your handmaiden, and let me set a piece of **bread/lehem/artos** before you. Eat and you will have strength when you go on your way."*

Up until now, I do not remember any other passage about bread like this one. The words Saul sought did not strengthen him, they weakened him, and then he refused the nourishment offered by the woman. He had to be coaxed to eat. The original languages tell us that she desired to set lehem/artos before him, but what he finally ate was matzah/azumos, which means unleavened. It seems to me to represent a reversal of the events in chapters nine and ten when Saul is first anointed.

Flipping back to David and Achish, when the Philistines gathered to battle the other kings of the Philistines rejected David and his men, telling Achish that David would reconcile himself to Israel by turning on the Philistines in battle. They told Achish to send David back to Ziklag. When David and his men returned and entered the city of Ziklag, they found it burned and all the women and children gone. Israel's old enemy Amalek had been there. David consulted the Lord, who told him he would be successful in pursuing them and retrieving the captives. In their pursuit, they found an Egyptian man as per the verses below.

*1 Kingdoms 30:11-12: They found an Egyptian man in the field and brought him to David. They gave him **bread/lehem/artos** and he ate, and they let him drink water. They also gave him a piece of fig cake. After eating, his strength came back to him, for he was without **bread/lehem/artos** or water for three days and three nights.*

This Egyptian man was a servant of an Amalekite and had been left behind when he fell sick. These verses about bread are what we are accustomed to seeing, readily received, giving strength and life. The Egyptian man, upon receiving his life back, led David and his men to the Amalekites. David successfully attacked and recovered everything that had been taken and more, because the Amalekites also had with them plunder from the south of Colthi, Judah, and Caleb. When David got back to Ziklag he sent some of this plunder to the elders of Judah, and to his friends, and to all the places where David and his men would pass through.

PROSPHORA

Meanwhile, the Philistine army battled Saul and his army. The Philistines prevailed. Saul, his three sons, and his armor-bearer all died together on that same day. This is the end of 1 Kingdoms, also known as 1 Samuel, and again, or still, what stands out to me is the contrast between Saul and David. Saul is clutching, seeking to make things happen on his own according to his own wishes, and it leads to the demise of his household and his kingship. David is generous, follows the law of the Lord, and waits on Him for things to unfold. David is increasing.

To be continued...

Deborah Talbot-

**There is an interesting study note on page 349 of the Orthodox Study Bible on how the Fathers of the Church interpret this passage of 1 Kingdoms (1 Samuel) 28:7-25.*



STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY NEWS

As we approach the end of the year the holiday season will soon be upon us, and life will become more fast paced. I often find myself scampering about trying to complete a never-ending list of “honey dos” while simultaneously trying to find time to enjoy our family and friends. I am always amazed by how fast the year has gone by but looking back on the year and reflecting on those things for which I am grateful always provides me a sense of peace.

I am grateful that the good Lord has blessed us with Father Seraphim, Father Daniel, and Father Irenaeus as our spiritual leaders, and for their wonderful families who do so much to support the events at our church.

I am grateful for Ronnie-Sue because of her leadership as our Parish Council President. I am also grateful for the members of the parish council who generously gave of their time and talent, as they successfully led us through another challenging year. Bless your hearts!

I am grateful for the wonderful women of Philoptochos whose kindness and compassion are demonstrated during all the major events that happen at our church. They support us during our baptisms and our weddings. They support us in our times of grief by hosting the Makaria when our loved ones pass away. They raise money to support those in need at our church and in our community. They honor our youth and our veterans. They grant us unconditional love and support, and we are truly blessed by their devotion to our church.

I am grateful for the many new people who through God’s grace were brought to our church and have become a part of our orthodox family. Some were already orthodox, and many were chrismated about six months ago. Several are now going through Father Seraphim’s chrismation class in preparation for their baptism at Easter time. How blessed we all are to see our St. Nicholas family grow.

I am grateful for the past festival leaders who helped guide and mentor this year’s determined festival committee. Together they were able to rebuild an organization that was dormant during the COVID years and suffered the loss of stalwart leaders like Miss Ely, Mrs. Georgopoulos, Mrs. Turlis, and others. Everyone worked together to breathe life back into the festival, and thanks to the leadership of Bill Samaras and Evy Kontos, the 2022 St. Nicholas Greek Festival was a great success.

And finally, I am grateful to all of you who have given generously of your time, talent, and treasure as loyal stewards of our church. You make our church a wonderful home to worship our Lord and Savior, and we feel so blessed by your kindness!

As a regular part of the end of the year our church is tasked with seeking new volunteers to fill vacant seats on the parish council and for different ministries. We are also tasked with doing our best to complete our stewardship pledge for 2022 and with submitting a new stewardship pledge for 2023 (attached). Expedient submission of both enables our parish council to close out the books for this year, and it enables them to prepare a realistic budget for 2023.

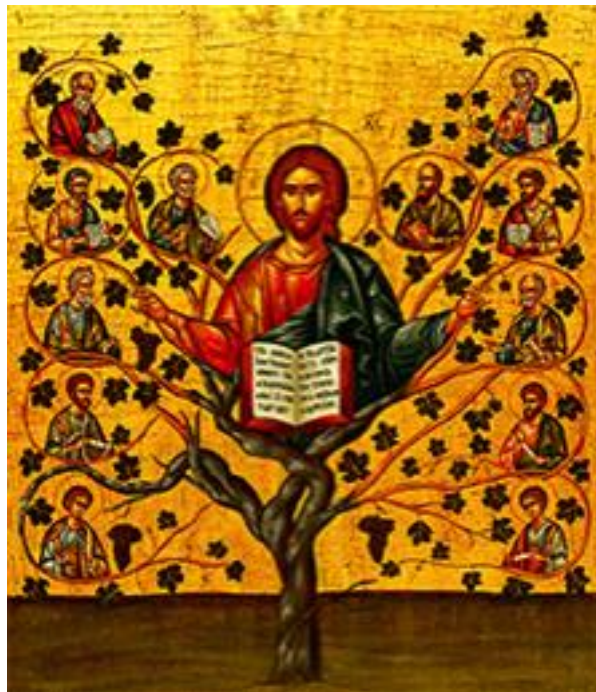
STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY NEWS

Tithing is our best means of meeting our operational expenses and fulfilling an important part of our orthodox faith. Please consider what you graciously tithed this past year, and please do your best to round that amount to the next higher number when determining your pledge for 2023. Doing so will enable our church to grow; it will enable us to replace our furnace before winter is fully upon us, remodel our upper hall, it will allow us to perform other essential maintenance, and it will enable us to begin planning for the remodeling of our upper hall. We are sincerely grateful for all that you have done for our church in the past, and we are grateful for anything that you are able to provide that will help lead us into the future.

St. Nicholas is our church and our spiritual home. It is an honor to call you our brothers and sisters in Christ, and it is a distinct privilege to serve with you as disciples in our orthodox faith.

May the good Lord grant you peace this holiday season as we celebrate his birth, and may you be blessed with a safe and prosperous New Year.

Gus



STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY NEWS

The stewardship ministry is extremely grateful to all of the following who have supported our church by completing a stewardship card or by making a contribution of time, talent and treasure. YOU make St. Nicholas the wonderful place that it is to worship our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We cannot thank you enough!

Donations and or Stewardship Commitments as of November 23, 2022

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Maria and Kosta Aggelidakis •	Leonidas and Despina Alatsis•
Patra Alatsis •	Sonny and Irene Angelos •
Richard and Marlene Angelus•	Paul and Dolores Apostle •
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STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY NEWS

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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.

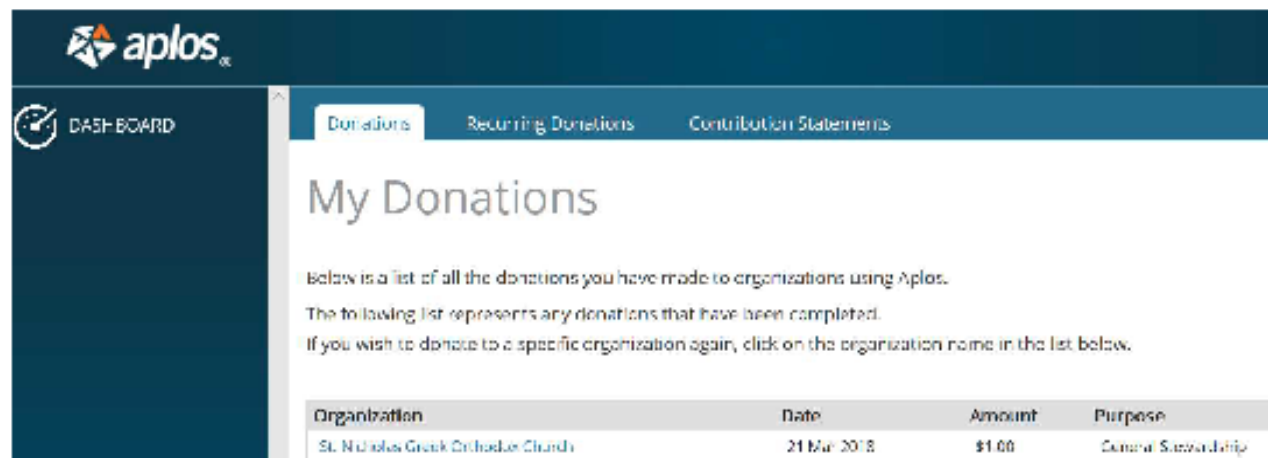
I want parishioners to enjoy greater flexibility in making Church donations and receiving an accounting of their annual to date contributions at any time of the year. Many of you have asked and inquired about the possibility of accounting for your donations automatically on-line. It is now a reality. 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.



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

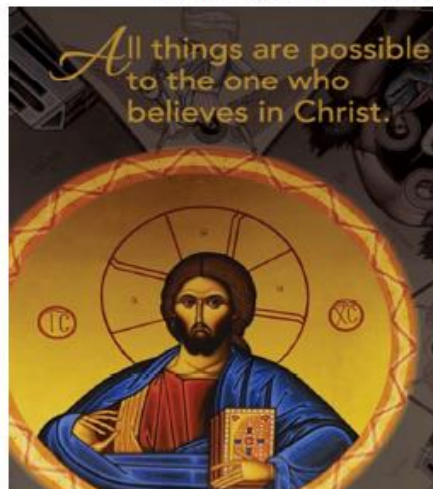
AT CHURCH:

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.

2023 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 Majumdar

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)

"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.

2023 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 2023 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.....

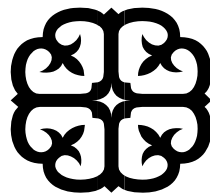
Saint Nicholas Messenger

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

1523 S Yakima Ave

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