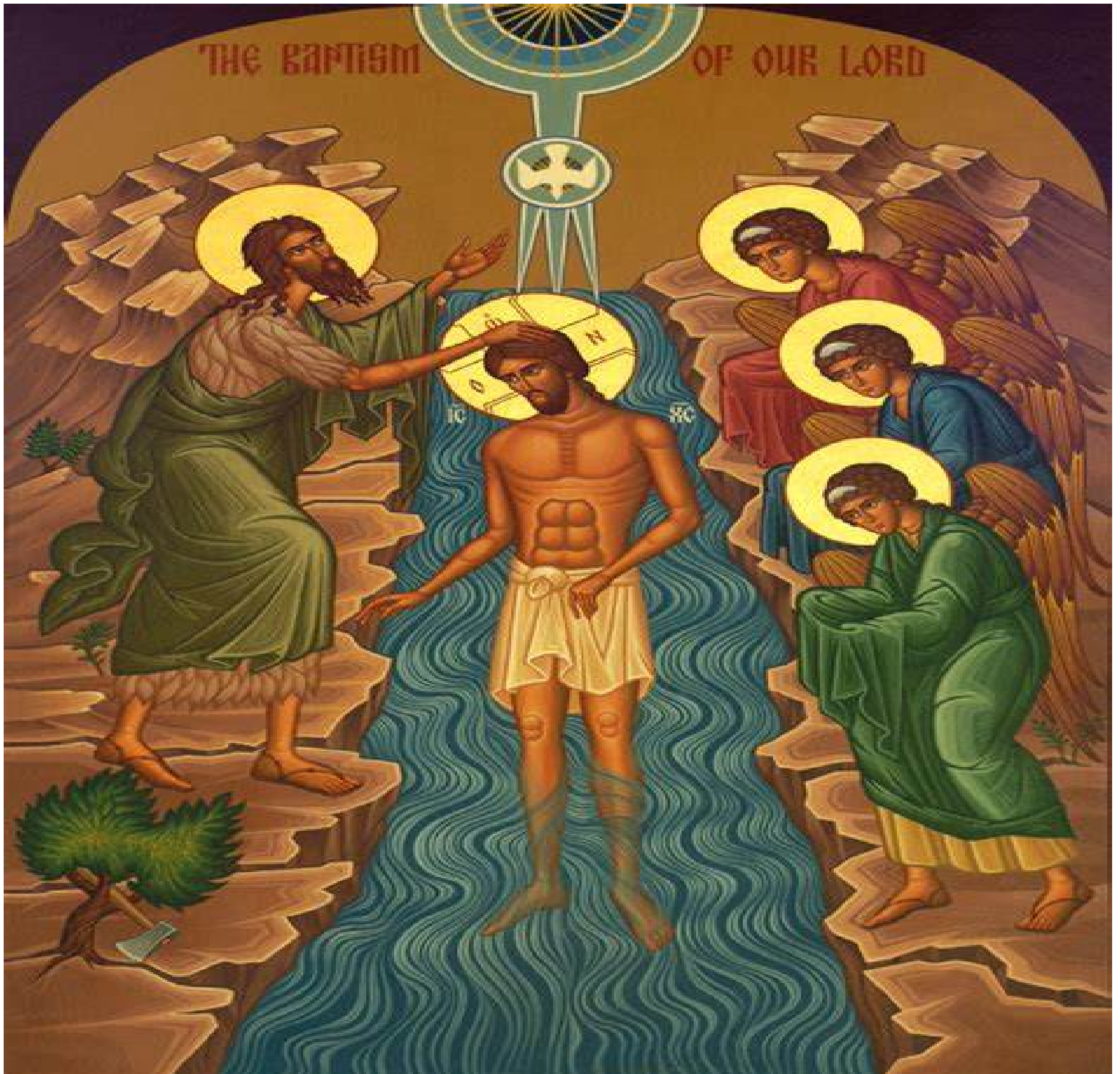


# VOICE

ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH



January - February 2024



**Epiphany of our Lord - January 6th**

**Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church**  
**Rev. Fr. Dean Nastos, Presiding Priest**  
**Fr. Deacon John Howard**

8210 Cypress Lake Drive ~ Fort Myers, Florida 33919-5116  
Ch. Phone: (239) 481-2099 Fax: (239) 481-0504 email: officeagoc@gmail.com  
Fr. Dean's email: revfrdean@gmail.com Website: Annunciation.fl.goarch.org  
Office Hours: Monday-Friday ~ 9:00 am - 3:00 pm  
Administrative Assistant: Donna Sowers

**PARISH COUNCIL**

**VOICE Editor**

Fr. Dean Nastos

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**Vice-President**

Michael Stamatopoulos

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**VISIT US ON FACEBOOK**

Annunciation GOC Fort Myers

**Annunciation Greek Orthodox Parish of Fort Myers Mission Statement**

The mission of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church Parish is to proclaim and live the Orthodox Christian Faith in its fullness as faithful brothers and sisters in Christ, and to welcome all who are seeking the truth of the Lord's presence, mercy and grace. We must focus as a family of believers in order to reach salvation in and through Jesus Christ. This sacred mission is fulfilled in the Holy Spirit by living our faith through worship, teaching, witness, outreach, service and fellowship. All Parish activities will succeed if only done for the glory of God. By using our own God-given gifts of Time, Talents, and Treasures we will accomplish this divine sacred work.

## Message from our Priest

JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2024

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

Well, we come upon another year. Time just keeps passing by. There are so many hours in a day, and so many days in a week, and so many weeks in a year, and so many years in a lifetime. Because our time in this world is limited, it has value. Nevertheless, how do we use this precious time? Do we use it for our Lord and our families, or do we waste it on trivial things? Do we use it constructively, or do we throw away this precious commodity on TV, gossip, and other useless pastimes?

There are many constructive uses of time. For example – prayer, scripture reading (or other religious reading), and attending services on Sunday and other days. Also, we could include sharing time and showing concern for our loved ones and those in need.

Our Parish has need of YOUR time for many things and in many ways. I hear our members say that they are always so busy. A person spends around 4 hours a day watching TV. Unfortunately, most shows on TV deal with killing and other related issues. I think we can cut back on watching TV and giving of ourselves to our Lord and His Parish. The many Ministries of our Parish could benefit from your time and talents.

St. Paul tells us to “Be transformed” (Romans 12:2). In other words, rethink your commitment to Christ and His Parish. Think about your time. Do you put it to good use or not? If not, why not start from TODAY to give more of it to Christ and His Parish?

So, as we enter the new year, I wonder how we’ll do this year. Will we be as busy? Will we make any better use of our time? In 364 days, when this is over, will we be looking back with joy, or with regret? Will we be looking at the future with anticipation, or with fear?

Happy New Year! The clock is ticking.

In Christ’s Service,

*Fr. Dean*

## Message from the Parish Council President

*To My Brothers and Sister in Christ,*

*Christ is Born!*

*Here we are moving into 2024 and we must pray that we do not have another year of Hurricanes and Covid related issues. We know that we are Annunciation strong, and we will move forward into the New Year remaining positive to the upcoming future and understanding that our Lord will continue to protect us no matter what we face!*

*I pray that you had a beautiful Christmas holiday with those you love. Keep your loved ones close to your heart as our Lord Jesus Christ keeps all of us.*

*Parish Update*

- *Once again, we had a very successful Turkey drive, Christmas Card drive and Ping Pong Pizzazz Raffle.*
- *Greek Fest is approaching fast on Feb. 16-18 Volunteers are needed! Please, please share your time and talents to help make this event very successful.*
- *Another large air conditioner expense is forthcoming for the Education Building.*
- *Our 3 metals doors are being replaced before the end of the year. They are for the kitchen and side storage area.*
- *Our Public Adjusters and Attorney are still hard at work trying to come to a compromise with the insurance companies so we can start to repair our roofs and grounds. Hopefully, we won't have to wait 1-2 years as many others are waiting for this to be settled.*
- *Thank you to John Xouris, Mike Martinjuk and Bill Plakas for their time, talents and treasures as Council members. New members are awaiting ratification from the Metropolis.*

*Special Events*

- *Vasilopita – Jan. 7 – please let Angela Esler know if you are baking.*
- *Glendi – Jan. 27– Please join us for a fun filled evening with food, live band and lots of good times. Perfect time to celebrate and we sure do have a good time!*
- *Greek Fest – Feb. 16-18. See Olympia and John Ruppe for areas that need volunteers.*

*As I always add to this note....We continue to grow with new families coming to our Church. Please walk around during Fellowship and introduce yourself. Remember we were all new at one time so let's make them feel welcome!*

*Blessings to all,*

*Cheryl Haught  
Parish Council President*

# Philoptochos Ministry

**January 2024**

Christ is Born! Glorify Him! Our Philoptochos chapter was very busy at the end of the 2023.



*Sunday of the Good Samaritan (11/12/23) honoring Philoptochos Members*

Thank you to all who made our Turkey Drive a huge success providing **175 turkeys** to needy families. Special thank you to Karen Hanley (our Turkey Lady) and the Pastrokos and Karras families for securing the turkeys to distribute to Gladiolus Food Pantry, Salvation Army, Children's Network of SWFL and parish families.

Our ladies were busy volunteering at Gladiolous Food Pantry and the Ronald McDonald House, too.



The annual Parish Christmas card was sent to all Annunciation families. Thank you to those who donated, as well as our Chair, Dr. Nina Gritzalis.

Through your generous donations, we donated three jumbo boxes of unwrapped toys to Operation Santa (Children's Network of SW Florida). Thank you to Marilena Midgley (chair).



Ping Pong Pizzazz (December 3) was a huge success. Proceeds from this event will help those in need in our Parish, SWFL charities, and our Metropolis/National Commitments. Thanks to all who supported this event. A special thank you to Tess Laurance and Melpo Ganatsios for their generous donation of time and effort and our new emcee, John Xouris.

We decorated our Church for Christmas and ended 2023 with a dinner at Prawnbroker's Restaurant.



**Annual Vasilopita – Sunday, January 7:** If you would like to bake a vasilopita to share during fellowship, call Angela Esler (443) 678-3870.

**General Membership Meeting:** Join us on **Saturday, January 20**, at **10 am** in the Education Building for our next meeting. All are invited to attend. Refreshments will be provided. Come see what our chapter has to offer.

Yours in Christ,

Angela Esler, Philoptochos President

# Religious Education Ministry

Religious Education

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Happy New Year! Welcome 2024!!

The Sunday School students re-enacted the Nativity of our Lord for their Sunday School Christmas Pageant on December 17<sup>th</sup>. Their beautiful voices telling the story of Jesus's birth and singing of Christmas Carols was beautiful and inspiring. A big Thank You to the Sunday School parents for all their hard work preparing for the pageant and providing the delicious foods and desserts.

The Christmas decorations on one of the trees in the Kontinos Hall were put together by our Sunday School children. Thank you to Angela Esler for providing the ornaments and encouraging the children to decorate the tree.

Sunday School classes will resume on Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to seeing everyone in the New Year!

We are always looking for volunteers who will help with the Religious Education program. Please contact Fr. Dean Nastos, 239-481-2099, or Mary Sue, [marys828@comcast.net](mailto:marys828@comcast.net), if you would like to be involved with our youth.

Mary Sue Gladis

Director, Religious Education



# Stewardship Ministry

## *Well done, good and faithful servant*

The stewardship committee would like to express our sincere gratitude to each one of you, for your outstanding stewardship throughout this past year. Your dedication and hard work in donating your time, talents and treasures have been instrumental in achieving our goal. It is truly inspiring to witness the dedication you have to our parish. I am grateful to be part of such a devoted family.

As we reflect on our accomplishments of the past year, we are faced with new challenges this year. We've increased our stewardship goal to \$200,000. Some may ask why, given that so many are stretched due to our economy, and all costs are increasing. Our parish is our spiritual home. Here we can pray, concentrate on the gifts our Lord has given us, realize the many blessings, and also face those troubles we feel. Just as we prepare to receive, through grace, the Eucharist, so should we prepare to give. In 2 Corinthians, 9:7 Paul writes, " Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

During the pledge drive we just completed, we asked all of you to dedicate your time, talents and treasure. For those of you who returned the pledge card, thank you! Those who are still praying on it, great! The challenges we face have strengthened our resolve, and through prayer, faith and our stewardship, we also have wonderful opportunities for growth and success. In the spirit of unity and shared purpose, let us enter the upcoming year with renewed energy and a collective commitment in the support of our parish. I am excited about the journey ahead and confident that, with your continued dedication, we will achieve remarkable things together. Thank you for your unwavering support and here's to a year filled with love, hope, joy and stewardship! May the Lord continue to bless all of us.

Heidi Kubiak  
Stewardship Committee Chairperson

Presented to Parish Council Dec. 16th..

Pledged plus non pledged total: \$171,200! **Exceeding** our goal of \$160,000.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

## **2024 ANNUNCIATION EVENTS CALENDAR JANUARY - MARCH 2024 \*\*\***

**Mon., Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> - St. Basil the Great Liturgy - 9:30 AM**  
**Sat., Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> - Epiphany Liturgy & Great Blessing of Waters – 9:30 AM**  
**Sun., Jan. 7<sup>th</sup> - Philoptochos Vasilopita Cutting following Liturgy**  
**Wed., Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> - GOYA Meeting**  
**Sat. Jan. 20<sup>th</sup> - Philoptochos Meeting - 10:00 AM**  
**Mon., Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> Catechism Class - 6:00 PM**  
**Tues., Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> Inquirers Class - 6:00 PM**  
**Sat., Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> - Parish Glendi - 6:30 PM**  
**Mon., Jan. 29<sup>th</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> Catechism Class - 6:00 PM**  
**Tues., Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> Inquirers Class - 6:00 PM**  
**Sun., Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> - Godparent Sunday**  
**Mon., Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> Catechism Class - 6:00 PM**  
**Tues. Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> Inquirers Class - 6:00 PM**  
**Wed., Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> - GOYA Meeting - 6:00 PM**  
**Mon., Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> - Philoptochos Meeting - 6:00 PM**  
**Tues., Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> Inquirers Class - 6:00 PM**  
**Fri. – Sun., Feb. 16, 17, 18 - 2024 GREEKFEST**  
**Mon., Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> Catechism Class - 6:00 PM**  
**Tues., Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> Inquirers Class - 6:00 PM**  
**Sun., Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> - Triodion Begins**  
**Mon., Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> Catechism Class - 6:00 PM**  
**Tues., Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Inquirers Class - 6:00 PM**  
**Mon. Mar. 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Catechism Class - 6:00 PM**  
**Tues., Mar. 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> Inquirers Class - 6:00 PM**  
**Sat., Mar. 9<sup>th</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of Souks Liturgy – 9:30 AM**  
**Mon. Mar. 11<sup>th</sup> - Philoptochos Meeting - 6:00 PM**  
**Wed., Mar. 13<sup>th</sup> - GOYA Meeting - 6:00 PM**  
**Sat., Mar. 16<sup>th</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of Souls - 9:30 AM**  
**Sun., Mar. 17<sup>th</sup> - Annunciation Feastday Luncheon following Liturgy**  
**Mon., Mar. 18<sup>th</sup> - GREAT LENT BEGINS**  
**- 7<sup>th</sup> Catechism Class - 6:00 PM**  
**Wed. Mar. 20<sup>th</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> Presanctified Liturgy - 6:00 PM**  
**Fri., Mar. 22<sup>nd</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> Salutations - 6:00 PM**  
**Sun., Mar. 24<sup>th</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent - Sunday of Orthodoxy**  
**- Parish General Assembly Meeting following Liturgy**  
**- Vespers for Annunciation - 6:00 PM**  
**Mon., Mar. 25<sup>th</sup> - Annunciation Liturgy - 9:00 AM**

**\*\*\* Subject to change\*\*\***



# **ANNUNCIATION PARISH**

## **PRESENTS**

### **THE ORTHODOX CHURCH: ITS FAITH, LIFE, AND WORSHIP**

**Join us for a new study course that offers insights to understand and live our Orthodox Faith to its fullest**

**WHEN: MONDAY NIGHTS  
January 22 - March 4**

**TIME: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM**

**WHERE: Conidaris Education Building**

**All you need to bring with you is a thirst for knowledge, paper and pen for notes and your smile.**

**Please contact the Parish Office (239) 481-2099 if you would like to attend by JANUARY 12<sup>TH</sup>.**

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

**Jan. 22 - Orthodox Spirituality  
Jan. 29 - Salvation  
Feb. 5 - The Sacraments - Baptism & Chrismation  
Feb. 19 - The Eucharist  
Feb. 26 - Holy Confession  
Mar. 4 - Unction, Priesthood & Marriage  
Mar. 18 - Church Tour**

**ANNUNCIATION CHURCH  
INQUIRER'S CLASS  
SPRING SCHEDULE 2024  
TUESDAYS 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM**

**This class is about teaching the Orthodox Christian Faith to those who are inquiring(wanting) about becoming an Orthodox Christian. This class is open to all, not to only just those wanting to become an Orthodox Christian. Please bring with you a pen and some paper to take notes, if you wish.**

**Book - "Introducing the Orthodox Church: Its Faith and Life"  
by Fr. Anthony Coniaris. The cost of the Book is \$30.00**

- Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>            Class 1 - Introduction &  
                                  "The One, Holy, Catholic & Apostolic Church"  
                                  Book - Read Chapters 1 & 2**
- Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>            Class 2 - "What we believe about Jesus & the Holy Trinity"  
                                  Book - Read Chapters 3 & 4**
- Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>            Class 3 - "What we believe about the Divine Liturgy" (Part. 1)  
                                  Book - Read Chapter 5 & 6**
- Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>            Class 4 - "What we believe about the Divine Liturgy" (Part 2)  
                                  Book - Read Chapters 7 - 9**
- Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>            Class 5 - "What we believe about Salvation"  
                                  Book - Read Chapters 10 & 11**
- Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>            Class 6 - "What we believe about the Sacraments"  
                                  Book - Read Chapters 12 & 13**
- Mar. 5<sup>th</sup>            Class 7 - Church Tour  
                                  Book - Read Chapters 14 - 17**

**All participants must REGISTER with Fr. Dean by JANUARY 9, 2024.**

**Contact the Parish Office at (239) 481-2099 to REGISTER.**

# **GODPARENT**

## **SUNDAY**

### **FEBRUARY 4<sup>th</sup>**

We are excited to announce that Godparent Sunday will once again be sponsored by our Religious Education/Sunday School Program.

This day will allow our Godparents and Godchildren to “reconnect” with each other and help us understand the joy and beauty of that special relationship!

Please note the following:

- \*\* Children INVITE your Godparent to Divine Liturgy as soon as possible!
- \*\* Godparents INVITE your Godchildren to Divine Liturgy as soon as possible!
- \*\* Godparents and Godchildren should prepare themselves so they can participate in Holy Communion TOGETHER!

### Invitations will be given to every child in order to be sent to their Godparent(s).

If a child asks you to be a Stand-In Godparent, please consider accepting the invitation and being with that child on Godparent Sunday and Participate in Holy Communion TOGETHER.

Candles will be available for both Godparent and God child in the narthex for \$3 each.

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#### **Our Little Bookstore**

Looking for a religious gift? A special book or Icon? A Holy Week Book? Prayer rope bracelets? Did you know we have Feta in the bookstore refrigerator for sale? We also carry Pastitsio noodles, Greek coffee, Frappe mix, semolina and other items. Come visit our Bookstore after Sunday Liturgy. We have Baptismal kits, Baptismal Martyrika (witness pins), Wedding accessories, funeral cloth. See Virginia Headley or any of our Parish Council Members for assistance. Don't see something we may be able to get it for you.

## **2024 FLOWERS FOR FEAST DAY ICONS**

Flowers always add beauty to whatever they adorn. It has always been a tradition among our Orthodox Churches to decorate Holy Icons with flowers when the Feast Day is being celebrated.

Please contact the **Church Office** and donate towards the flowers you would like as soon as possible. As always, this will be done on a *first come, first serve basis*. The names of those who donate the flowers will be listed in the "VOICE" Newsletter the month *after* the Feast Day is celebrated. Thank you for your support in this project and may our Lord continue to bless you. Please make your check payable to: **ANNUNCIATION CHURCH**

<b>Flowers for St. Basil the Great Icon - Jan. 1st</b>	<b>\$45.00 TAKEN</b>
<b>Flowers for Epiphany Icon - Jan. 6th</b>	<b>\$45.00 TAKEN</b>
<b>Flowers for St. John the Baptist Icon - Jan. 7th</b>	<b>\$45.00 TAKEN</b>
<b>Flowers for St. Anthony Icon - Jan. 14th</b>	<b>\$45.00</b>
<b>Flowers for Sunday of Ten Lepers Icon - Jan. 21st</b>	<b>\$45.00</b>
<b>Flowers for Sunday of Zacchaeus Icon - Jan. 28th</b>	<b>\$45.00</b>
<b>Flowers for St. Tryphon Icon - Feb. 4th</b>	<b>\$45.00</b>
<b>Flowers for St. Vlassios Icon - Feb. 11th</b>	<b>\$45.00</b>
<b>Flowers for St. Theodore of Tyron Icon - Feb. 18th</b>	<b>\$45.00</b>
<b>Flowers for Pulican &amp; Pharisee Icon - Feb. 25th</b>	<b>\$45.00</b>
<b>Flowers for Prodigal Son Icon - Mar. 3rd</b>	<b>\$45.00</b>
<b>Flowers for Last Judgment Icon - Mar. 10th</b>	<b>\$45.00</b>
<b>Flowers for Expulsion of Adam &amp; Eve Icon - Mar. 17th</b>	<b>\$45.00</b>

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### **2023 & 2024 Flowers for Feast Day Icons**

Flowers for Good Samaritan Icon - Nov. 12th - Kostas & Rosalie Doikos  
Flowers for St. Katherine Icon - Nov. 25th - Angela Zotos & Dennis Sobieski  
Flowers for St. Stylianos Icon - Nov. 26th - Angela Zotos & Dennis Sobieski  
Flowers for St. Barbara Icon - Dec. 3rd - Kostas & Rosalie Doikos  
Flowers for St. Nicholas Icon - Dec. 6th - Cheryl Haught  
Flowers for Holy Forefathers Icon - Dec. 10th - Kostas & Rosalie Doikos  
Flowers for Nativity of our Lord Icon - Dec. 25th (on the 24th) - Pamela Strikis  
Flowers for St. Stephen Icon - Dec. 31st - Athena Fisk  
Flowers for St. Basil the Great Icon - Jan. 1st - Athena Fisk  
Flowers for Epiphany Icon - Jan. 6th - Pamela Strikis  
Flowers for St. John the Baptist Icon - Jan. 7th - Cheryl Haught

**Thank you for your Donations!**



**Catechism Tour**



**James Rogers Award Receipts**

**2023 Archangel Michael Awards**

On November 11th our 2 Recipients Karen Hanley and Virginia Headley received their award in Atlanta from His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios. These ladies of our Parish were chosen because of their faithful dedication and service to our Lord Jesus Christ and to our Parish. May our Lord continue to bless them always with health and protection.



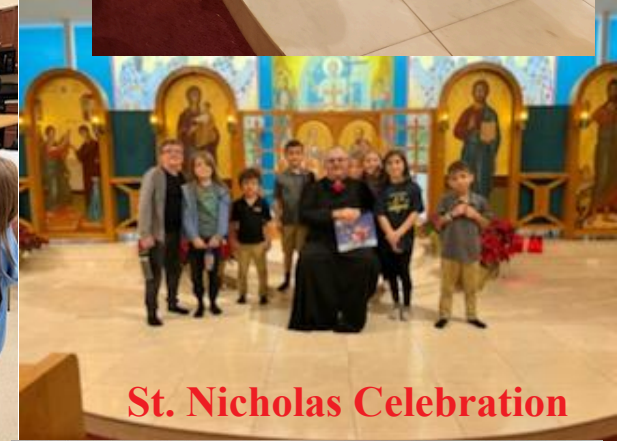
**Ladies Philoptochs Volunteer's**



**Turkey Drive**



**WISHING YOU BLESSINGS AND PROSPERITY IN THE NEW YEAR!**



**St. Nicholas Celebration**



49th Annual Fort Myers  
**GREEK FEST**  
February 16-18, 2024

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church  
8210 Cypress Lake Drive, Fort Myers

11 a.m. - 11 p.m.  
Friday & Saturday

11 a.m. - 7 p.m.  
Sunday

- Authentic Greek Food
- Dance Performances & Live Music
- Greek Taverna
- Vendors for Shopping
- Curbside Carryout  
11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Friday Only  
*Preorder only. Contact church office in advance for menu.*
- Orthodox Church Tours
- Kidzone & Games
- Kids Under 12 FREE Admission
- \$5 Adult Allows 3-Day Admission
- FREE Parking

Cash Raffle,  
Top Prize  
\$20,000

- 2ND PRIZE \$3,000 / 3RD & 4TH PRIZE \$1,000 EACH
- YOU CAN BE 1 OF 4 WINNERS
- ONLY 1,200 TICKETS SOLD

Portion of Net Proceeds:



NO PETS. SERVICE DOGS ONLY.  
NO BACKPACKS ALLOWED  
ALL ITEMS SUBJECT TO SEARCH

[www.greekfestfortmyers.com](http://www.greekfestfortmyers.com)  
239-481-2099

## 2023 PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Our Parish held its 2023 Parish Council Elections on Sunday, Dec. 3rd. We had 2 Candidates for 2 positions to serve for a 3-year term starting in 2024 and ending in 2026. Congratulations to **Heidi Kubiak and Art Turnas** who were reelected to serve another term. We pray our Lord will bless the 2 returning Parish Council members with all good things that come from above.

## THANK YOU TO OUR PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS WHO HAVE COMPLETED THEIR TERM

Our entire Parish would like to thank the Parish Council member who has completed his term in 2023. **John Xouris** served on the Parish Council over these past 3 years with great commitment and leadership. He offered his Time, Talents and Treasures faithfully in order to move our Parish forward to help meet the needs of every member. We know he will continue to serve our Parish in various ways just as he did as a member of the Parish Council. May our Lord continue to bless him with all good things from above.

49TH ANNUAL FORT MYERS



FEBRUARY 16-18, 2024

ANNUNCIATION GREEK FEST  
www.GreekFestFortMyers.com

*Thank You for being a Sponsor!*

## Yes-to-the-Fest Sponsorship Form

Help make Greek Fest a Success! Please make a Tax Deductible donation to help pay expenses. Festival expenses are anticipated to be ~\$140,000! You can donate in honor or in memory of a loved one. When your donation is received, your name is added to our display board. Thank you for your support!

To Pay by Credit Card:

Call (239) 481-2099:

Mon-Fri 9:00am – 3:00pm

Or

Return Form and Check to  
8210 Cypress Lake Drive, Fort  
Myers 33919

Church Email:  
officeagoc@gmail.com

Payment due February 2nd  
Payable to Annunciation  
Greek Orthodox Church

Yes-to-the-Fest options:	Contribution circle choice(s)
• Bounce Houses for Kids Zone	\$500
• Legs of Lamb for Aegean Cafe	\$350
• Pails of Pepperoncini	\$225
• Paper Products (Plates, Flatware, Napkins)	\$200
• Grape Leaves for Dolmades	\$175
• Kalamata olives	\$150
• Saganaki Cheese	\$125
• Cartons of Tomatoes	\$100
• Case of Gyros	\$80
• 2 cases of Greek Fries	\$60
• Monetary amount to be used "as needed"	_____ Enter your desired amount
Name: _____	Total Amount:
Street Address: _____	\$ _____
City, _____ State: ____ Zip: _____	___ Check
Phone: _____	___ Cash
Email: _____	___ Credit
Web-Site: _____	



ANNUNCIATION GREEK FEST  
 SPONSOR AGREEMENT  
[www.GreekFestFortMyers.com](http://www.GreekFestFortMyers.com)

**FEBRUARY 16-18, 2024** *Thank You for being a Sponsor!*

Sponsorship Level	Benefits	Contribution (circle one)
<b>GOLD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your large logo banner sponsoring one of our five major tents (Band, Tavern, Yiasou, Bakery, or Aegean Café)</li> <li>Logo shown in Greek Fest Welcome Tri-Fold (8,000 to be distributed)</li> <li>Logo shown on an oversized A-Frame placed in the middle of the grounds thanking all Gold/Silver/Bronze Sponsors</li> <li>Business advertised on <a href="http://www.GreekFestFortMyers.com">www.GreekFestFortMyers.com</a></li> <li>Logo posted and boosted via Facebook</li> <li>8 admission passes and \$80 in food gift certificates</li> </ul>	<b>\$1,000</b>
<b>SILVER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Logo shown in Greek Fest Welcome Tri-Fold (8,000 to be distributed)</li> <li>Logo shown on an oversized A-Frame placed in the middle of the grounds thanking all Gold/Silver/Bronze Sponsors</li> <li>Business advertised on <a href="http://www.GreekFestFortMyers.com">www.GreekFestFortMyers.com</a></li> <li>Logo posted and boosted via Facebook</li> <li>4 admission passes and \$40 in food gift certificates</li> </ul>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>BRONZE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Logo shown on an oversized A-Frame placed in the middle of the grounds thanking all Gold/Silver/Bronze Sponsors</li> <li>Business advertised on <a href="http://www.GreekFestFortMyers.com">www.GreekFestFortMyers.com</a></li> <li>Logo posted and boosted via Facebook</li> <li>2 admission passes and \$20 in food gift certificates</li> </ul>	<b>\$250</b>
<p><b>JPEG Logo and payment due February 2nd Payable to "Annunciation Church"</b></p>	<p>Company/Personal Name: _____</p> <p>Street Address: _____</p> <p>City, _____ State: ____ Zip: _____</p> <p>Phone: _____</p> <p>Email: _____</p> <p>Web-Site: _____</p>	<p>Amount: \$_____</p> <p>___ Check</p> <p>___ Cash</p> <p>___ Credit</p>

To Pay by Credit Card: Call (239) 481-2099: Mon-Fri 9:00am – 3:00pm  
 Or Return Form and Check to 8210 Cypress Lake Drive, Fort Myers 33919  
 Church Email: [officeagoc@gmail.com](mailto:officeagoc@gmail.com)



# Anunciation Greek Orthodox Church

## The Nick Karras Memorial Grand Raffle

**Greek Fest 2024-** Here we go another year to raise money for the building fund of our beautiful Church at Anunciation Greek Orthodox Church in memory of our beloved Nick Karras.

Tickets are ONLY \$50 and our goal is to sell 1200 tickets with everyone's support and help. This year there will be 4 cash prizes available. Grand prize \$20,000, second prize \$3,000, third prize \$1,000 and 4<sup>th</sup> prize \$1,000. Great Gift ideas!

You can call the church office to reserve your lucky ticket at 239-481-2099 Monday through Friday from 9 AM until 3 PM, or message me at 239-470-4294 or see me at Church every Sunday to sell or purchase tickets. You can also purchase them at Nick and Stellas's Family Sports Pub...You will also be able to order your tickets online at [www.annunciation.fl.goarch.org](http://www.annunciation.fl.goarch.org)

I'm asking everyone to please support this event so we can make it the most successful ever! Our Church needs your help. Nick will be shining down on us all again this year.

Thank you for all of your support,  
Stella Karras and family.



Rev. Protopresbyter Constantine Nastos, Proistamenos

8210 Cypress Lake Drive, Fort Myers, FL 33919 web: [www.annunciation.fl.goarch.org](http://www.annunciation.fl.goarch.org)

Telephone 239-481-2099 Fax 239-481-0504 email: [officeagoc@gmail.com](mailto:officeagoc@gmail.com)

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church  
The Nick Karras Memorial Grand Raffle

Grand Prize \$20,000

2nd Prize \$3,000, 3rd Prize \$1,000, 4th Prize \$1,000

\$50 per ticket

Only 1,200 tickets sold!

Drawing at 7pm February 18th, 2024

Winner need not be present to win

Sponsored by Nick and Stella's Family Sport Pub

Thank you for your Generous Support!

Proceeds benefit Church Building Fund

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church Fort Myers

8210 Cypress Lake Dr Fort Myers, FL 33919 Phone: 239-481-2099

No. 0123

Don't forget to visit the 2024 Greek Fest for great food and lots of fun February 16 - February 18 (Fri-Sat-Sun) at 8210 Cypress Lake Drive, Fort Myers, visit for more info [www.greekfestfortmyers.com](http://www.greekfestfortmyers.com) or call 239-481-2099

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Mail this form and donation to: ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
8210 CYPRESS LAKE DRIVE, FORT MYERS, FL 33919

MONEY MUST BE RECEIVED BY 6 PM February 18, 2024

Terms and Conditions

Tickets must be purchased to be eligible to win; tickets must be purchased by 6 PM on Feb. 18, 2024. Cash earnings will be available in a form of a check, which will be available for disbursement within 7 business days; remaining funds go to AGOC Building Fund. Drawing will be held on Feb. 18, 2024 at 7 PM ET. Must be legal US resident 18 years of age or older to qualify. Do not have to be present to win. Winner must provide social security number and all income will be reported as taxable income. Winner must present the winning ticket stub and government issued ID to claim the prize. The logistics of the disbursement will be mutually arranged. Prize money must be claimed by May 18, 2024 (90 days) or ticket is voided and money reverts to Annunciation Church ownership.

Date received: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Sold by: \_\_\_\_\_

PAYMENT METHOD:

Cash  Check # \_\_\_\_\_  Credit Card: V MC Disc AmEx

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_ Billing zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Number of tickets \_\_\_\_\_ @\$50.00 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE USE ONLY

Authorization # \_\_\_\_\_

# of tickets \_\_\_\_\_

Tickets #(s)

**TO: ALL PARISHIONERS**

**FROM: FR. DEAN & PARISH COUNCIL**

**RE: CHURCH USAGE FEE**

**DATE: DECEMBER 21, 2023**

In accordance with the Archdiocese Uniform Parish Regulations (UPR) the Parish Council has established a Church Usage Fee and guidelines to clarify the eligibility of **Members** and **Stewards** requesting the celebration of the Sacraments or the Rite of Burial at this Parish. These services may be requested by **Members** of other Orthodox Parishes and are subject to a different fee schedule. These definitions and the Church Usage Fee go into effect as of **January 1, 2024**.

**MEMBER**

In accordance with the UPR a member of the Annunciation Parish or any other Orthodox Parish, is anyone 21 years old or older who been Baptized and or Chrismated according to the Sacraments of the Orthodox Faith. If married, in the Orthodox Church, and is subsequently divorced and has received a Church divorce according the procedure of the Orthodox Faith.

**STEWARD**

A Steward is a member, as defined above, either single or married, who has filled out and submitted the Time & Talent sheet and Financial Pledge Card for the current year and remains current until such time as the Financial Pledge is fulfilled. As a Steward of this Parish there is **NO** set fee for the Sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, Wedding or for the Rite of Burial. Honorariums may be required for the services as outlined below.

**CHURCH USAGE FEE**

If a member or a member acting as a Sponsor is **NOT** a Steward at the time that the Sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, Wedding or the Rite of Burial is scheduled with the Parish Priest, the member is required to pay, within the appropriate timeframe as determined by the Parish Priest, the Church Usage Fee of **\$800.00** to the Parish. The member is also required to pay an Honorarium, as determined by the Priest, to the Priest and the Chanter. The Parish Council has authorized the Parish Priest to approve any deviations from the fees outlined above.

## **SACRAMENTAL DATES FOR 2024**

According to the Orthodox Faith and our Holy Greek Orthodox Church the following information is to be used for the proper scheduling of Sacraments within our Holy Orthodox Church. These days are to be followed and adhered to by the Clergy and our laity. A Sacrament can be conducted on one of the non-permissible days only if absolutely necessary and then only by special permission of our Metropolitan.

### **ADULT CHRISMATIONS**

Chrismations may take place on any day of the week throughout the year (except Good Friday). A Chrimation will take place only after proper instruction with the Parish Priest and discussion of the appropriate day and time for the Chrimation.

### **BAPTISM**

Baptisms **CANNOT BE CONDUCTED** on the following days:

Eve of Epiphany & Epiphany - January 5 & 6

Great Lent - March 18 - April 27 (allowed but discouraged)

Holy Week - April 28 - May 4

**PASCHA** - May 5

Falling Asleep of Theotokos Fast - August 1 - 14 (allowed but discouraged)

Feast of Falling Asleep of Theotokos - August 15

Christmas Fast - November 15 - December 11 (allowed but discouraged)

Christmas Fast - December 12 - 24

Christmas Day - December 25

### **WEDDINGS**

Weddings **CANNOT BE CONDUCTED** on the following days:

Eve of Epiphany & Epiphany - January 5 & 6

Great Lent - March 18 - April 27

Holy Week - April 28 - May 4

**PASCHA** - May 5

Falling Asleep of Theotokos Fast - August 1 - 14

Feast of Falling Asleep of Theotokos - August 15

Beheading of St. John the Baptist - August 29

Exaltation of the Holy Cross - September 14

Christmas Fast - November 15 - December 11 (allowed but discouraged)

Christmas Fast - December 12 - 24

Christmas Day - December 25

**MEMORIALS:** Cannot be held on the following Sundays: **Apr.28, May 5, 12, June 23**

**FUNERALS** Although a *Funeral is NOT a Sacrament* but a prayer service, they are permitted on any day of the week throughout the year **except on Sundays and Good Friday.** There is no exception to this rule.

This information is provided by the **Registry Department of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.**

### 2024 HOUSE BLESSING INFORMATION

The Feast of Epiphany (January 6<sup>th</sup>) is one of the many joyous Holy Days in the Orthodox Church. The Holy Epiphany commemorates the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ in the waters of the Jordan River. Woven within the traditions of the Orthodox celebration of the Feast is the blessing of the homes of the faithful. The purpose of blessing homes is to show our acceptance of God's sanctification and to reveal the home as what it was created by God to be: a way to His Kingdom. It also shows that the **"church in the home"**, the family, is a reflection of the Church. This year Fr. Dean will be blessings from **Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> thru Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>**.

Listed below are the days and times Fr. Dean will be able to bless your home. Please complete the form below and return it to the Church Office or to Fr. Dean personally **NO LATER THAN JANUARY 4<sup>TH</sup>**. Please be flexible with your schedule on that day. You will be notified a day or two before the approximate time of Father's visit. If you are unable to be home for Father's visit because of conflicts or illness, please call the Church Office and reschedule.

When Fr. Dean comes to your home, the following should be observed:

1. **Have as many family members there as possible.**
2. **Set a place either in the dining room or kitchen with the following items:**
  - A. **An Icon**
  - B. **A medium sized bowl with water filled a quarter way in it**
  - C. **A white dish towel**
  - D. **A candle**
  - E. **Incense (optional)**
3. **Print the FIRST NAMES of all family members on a sheet of paper.**
4. **Please remember that since Fr. Dean will be making many visitations, DON'T FEED THE PRIEST.**
5. **PLEASE TURN ALL LIGHTS ON IN THE ROOMS TO BE BLESSED.**

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Please **CIRCLE** the day and time you wish Fr. Dean to come to your home:

**DAY - MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY**

**TIME - 9:00 – 12 Noon 1:30pm – 4:30pm 6:00pm – 9:00pm**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE** \_\_\_\_\_

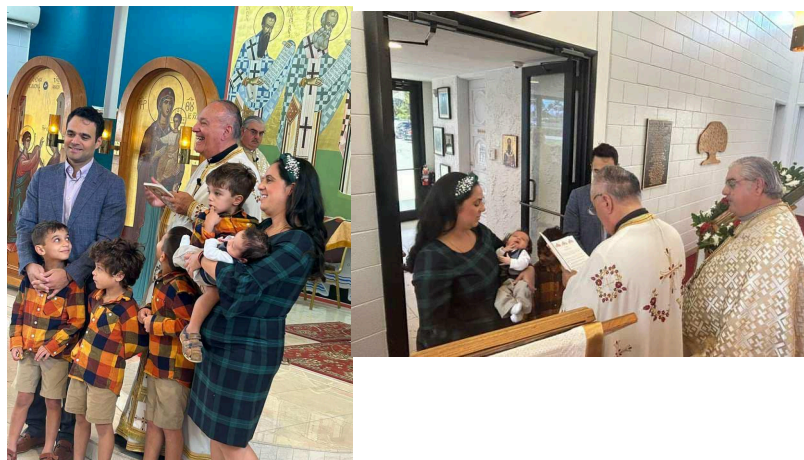
### 2023 SACRAMENT, BLESSING & RITE REGISTRY

#### 40 DAY BABY BLESSING

Alexander Pastrikos received his 40 Day blessing in our Parish on November 26th. He is the son of Andrew and Joanna Pastrikos and the brother of Nicholas, Nektarios, Joseph, and Ioannis. His Grandparents are Fr. Nick and Presvytera Sandy Pastrikos and Stella Karras. May our Lord continue to bless him and grant him many years.

#### FUNERAL RITE

Mike Lemonakis fell asleep in the Lord and his funeral was held in our Parish on November 17th. Mike was 90 years old. We offer our prayers and sympathies to his son **John** and to the rest of the him family. May his memory be eternal and may life be unto the family.



## STEWARDSHIP GUIDELINES

The following **Stewardship Guidelines** have been established to define a **Steward in good standing** within our Annunciation Greek Orthodox Parish.

1) **CANONICAL & SPIRITUAL GOOD STANDING:**

- a) Any member who has been baptized into the Orthodox Faith or has entered the Orthodox Faith through Chrismation.
- b) Any member, if married, **must** have been married within a Canonical Orthodox Church. If only married civilly, he/she is not in good standing and therefore, cannot become a Steward of this Parish.
- c) A member must participate in the worship services of this Parish on a regular basis and partake of the Holy Sacraments (**Holy Confession & Holy Communion**) on a regular basis. Must keep the rules and fasts, to train and teach the young according to the faith and spirit of Orthodoxy, to respect the Clergy, the ecclesiastical authority, and all governing bodies of the Church, to be obedient in matters of faith and ecclesiastical order, and to cooperate in every way towards the welfare and prosperity of the Parish and the success of its sacred mission and ministries.

2) **FINANCIAL GOOD STANDING:**

- a) Any member, over 18 years of age (except a full-time student), who turns in a Stewardship Pledge Card within the current calendar year (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31) is considered a Steward.
- b) A Steward is eligible to vote at any regular or special General Assembly Meeting or at the Election of Parish Council if he/she is current with his/her financial Stewardship Pledge.
- c) A Steward who wishes to vote at a Regular or Special General Assembly Meeting or at the Election of Parish Council and is present on that day, has until the commencement of the Meeting or Election of the Parish Council to become current in his/her financial Stewardship Pledge.
- d) **A Member MUST fill out, sign and send in a Financial Stewardship Pledge Card in order to be considered a Steward of this Parish.** A member who only sends in money without first filling out, signing and sending in a Financial Pledge Card will not be considered a Steward and the money will not be credited towards his/her Financial Stewardship Pledge.

A Steward is considered in good standing if he/she meets the Canonical, Spiritual and Financial applicable requirements as stated above. The Canonical and Spiritual requirements must be verified by the **Priest**. The Financial requirements must be verified by the **Priest and the Parish Council Treasurer**.

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

So here we are, at the dawn of 2024. I wonder how we'll do this year. Will be even more busy? Will we try to make better use of our time? There is a passage of scripture that I believe can be of help to us as we look forward to the year ahead. The passage is Ephesians 5:15 - 17 and here is what it says: *"See then that you walk cautiously, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is."* I think that in this passage St. Paul presents some important lessons that we need to consider.

First of all, we must be very careful how we live because our time on this earth is limited. In Psalm 90:10 we read, *"The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."* Now, I realize that for some of you younger readers, 70 or 80 years sounds like a long, long time. In fact, I can remember when I thought anyone over 40 was ancient. But no longer, it is all rather relative, isn't it? I also know neither you nor I have a guarantee of adding even one day more to our lives. Scripture tells us not to count on tomorrow because tomorrow may not come for you or for me. All we have is right now.

St. Paul tells us that we must make "the most of every opportunity." And he gives us a reason, "because the days are evil." The mistake that you and I make almost every day is that we get caught up in the here and now and we fail to deal with the eternal, the things that will last forever and ever. We have become "overloaded" by going here and there. As a result, we soon begin only bumping into ourselves coming and going because we have overloaded our lives in the area of commitments.

St. Paul tells us, "...do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." What do you think the Lord's will is for you in this new year? Do you think He wants your mind so saturated with worries and anxieties that you can't think spiritual thoughts? Do you think He wants your calendar so crowded that you don't have time for the important things? What do you think the Lord's will be for you this year?

First of all, establish your priorities. Hopefully, you believe the Lord should be a part of your life. When you begin to establish priorities, who have to decide just where He stands in your life. So ask yourself, "Who or what is most important in my life? Of course, I'm hoping that your answer will be, "My relationship with Christ, is most important to me." If so, then put that at the top of your list of priorities and say, "This will affect my decisions, my scheduling, my relationship with others, and my whole outlook on life. "Therefore, when Sunday Liturgy rolls around neither rain nor shine nor football will interfere with my being in Liturgy, because He comes first in my life. I'll worship the Lord and nothing will interfere with that."

You need to schedule definite time each day to pray and to read the Scriptures. Pray for yourself, pray for your family and pray for people around you. Pray for the Parish, your Priest and for the Ministries. Never underestimate the power of your prayers for others. Through your prayers you will be a blessing to others, and you'll be blessed as you grow in your faith and trust in the Lord!

You must spend time with your wife and children. Spend time with your wife so the two of you can just talk without any interruptions. Spend time with your children, they're growing up ever so fast. Make sure that you spend quality time with your children. Make sure that your family is very high on the list.

Finally, and most importantly, learn how to live today. The two greatest enemies of time are regrets for things we did in the past, and anxiety about what will happen to us in the future. Many of us are living either in the past or in the future.

Life is what happens to you while you're making plans to do something else. True, isn't it? Another year has come and gone. A new year stretches before us. Help us Lord, to redeem the time. Help us to use the 8,760 hours of this year the wisest way we can for You, and for Your glory.

Have a Happy New Year!



## JANUARY 6TH EPIPHANY DAY

This Feast Day is one of the greatest days of the Christian year. It ranks in importance with Christmas and Easter. In many parts of the world, this Feast Day is celebrated with even greater solemnity than Christmas itself. In English, we are accustomed to hearing this Feast Day called "Epiphany" a word which mean "manifestation" or "appearance." On this day, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist (he is called "the Baptist" because he baptized Christ.) Epiphany day is also called "Theophany" which means "God shows himself to us." The importance of this Feast Day lies in the fact that for the first time the Holy Trinity was revealed for all mankind to know and believe, (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit). When Jesus Christ was baptized in the River Jordan, a voice was heard from the heavens above saying, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased." The Father whose voice was heard from the heavens was God. The white dove was the symbol of the Holy Spirit which descended upon Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Thus, we have the Holy Trinity being revealed to all that day, almost 2000 years ago. This is why we call this day the day of *illumination* (light) and *manifestation* (appearance). The Holy Trinity made its appearance, and we have been illuminated by this wonderful truth and blessing. The Greek Orthodox calls this day *Ta Fota*, which means the day of "Lights." On this day we have the traditional blessing of the waters. Since the waters of the Jordan were blessed by the presence of Jesus Christ, it is a source of Divine Grace and blessing and we bless ourselves and our homes with the waters of the "Sanctification Service" which is held every January 5th and 6th.

The service on January 5th is called the Aghiasmos, or Service for Blessing Holy Water. On this day all Holy Water bottles are filled and given to the faithful to use during the year in their home. The service on January 6th is called Megas Aghiasmos, or Great Service for Blessing Holy Water, and the water that is blessed is given to the faithful to drink. The Priest also blesses all Orthodox homes with the sanctified water of the Epiphany Service. In many parts of Greece and in the Southern States of America, the traditional blessing of the waters is observed; and then a cross is thrown into the waters and young men dive into the water to get the cross. This is all part of the celebration of this great Feast Day of our church.

Epiphany Day is a day of illumination and sanctification. Let us pledge ourselves to a greater participation in the sacramental life of the Church of Christ. When the Priest blesses our homes, let us all pray that the blessing of the Epiphany Season be with us throughout the year and may our homes be sanctified with our prayers, Christian living and spiritual direction in our lifetime.



ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

# GLENDI DINNER DANCE

Live Greek band by John Demas Band , Greek dancing, food, drinks and fun!

\$75 per person • \$40 for 21 years old and younger  
hors d'oeuvres 6:30pm / Dinner & Dessert following  
Total of 160 tickets will be sold! You won't want to miss!

**SATURDAY • JANUARY 27, 2024**  
**ARTHUR KONTINOS HALL**  
**8210 CYPRESS LAKE DR.**  
**FORT MYERS, FL 33919**

CALL THE CHURCH TO RESERVE  
A SEAT OR TABLE NOW! 239-481-2099 or  
PURCHASE TICKETS WITH LOUISE AFTER CHURCH



