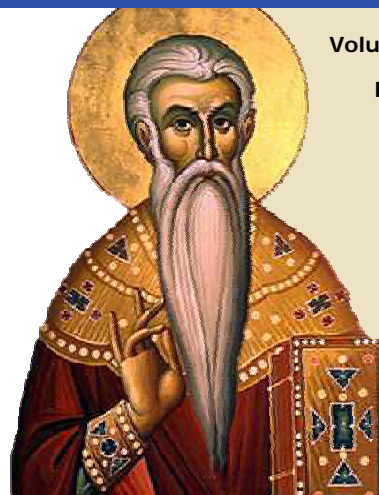


in Touch

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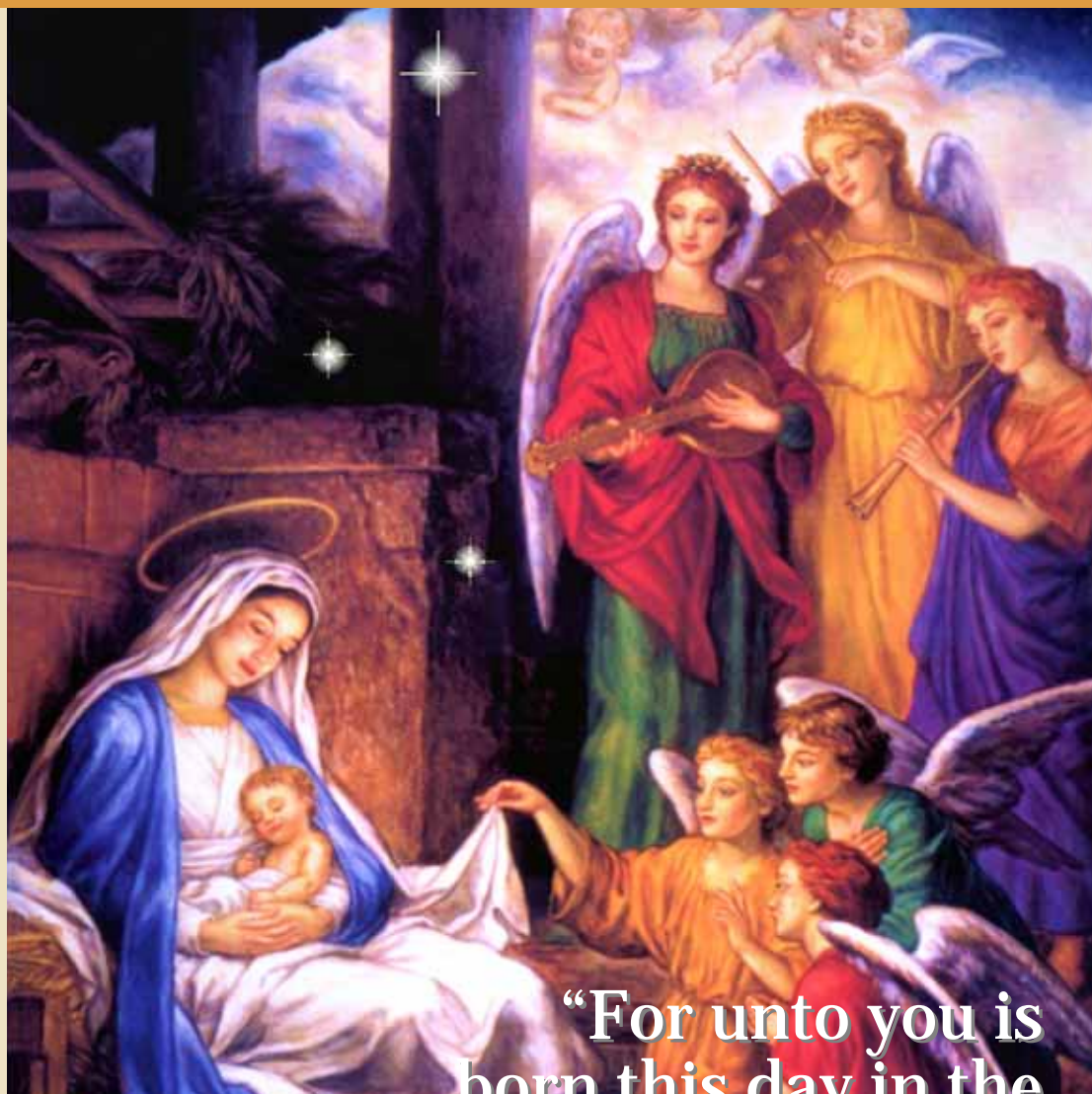
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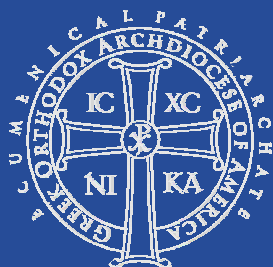
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**"For unto you is
born this day in the
city of David a
Savior; which is
Christ the Lord."
(Luke 2:11-12)**



*"Lord, You know that men are
flesh and blood; forgive them
their sins and pour out Your
blessing on all."*

St. Haralambos

CHRIST MULTIPLIES OUR GIFTS



Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, sent His Disciples into the crowd to ask that they give what they could for the benefit of all. May we be encouraged, knowing that He will bless our efforts and multiply our own gifts today, just as He did that day, making our individual sacrifice an abundance.

Stewardship Is...

- Submitting our will to God's will in turning away from the desires of the world in some small way.
- Our way of dealing responsibly with the things in our life that we think of as "ours."
- Giving back to God some small portion of all that He has given us to manage.
- Emphasized by Christ more often in the Gospels than any other direction on how to live our lives.



Giving our Gifts

"Where your pleasure is, there is your treasure; where your treasure is, there is your heart; where your heart is, there is your happiness." No doubt these words of St.

Augustine (354 to 430 AD) are based on the words of our Lord from his Sermon on the Mount, "for where your treasure is, there is your heart also." (Matt.6:21) But why do you think St.

Augustine's comments also mention pleasure and happiness? Perhaps because he understands the connection between being a happy person and a giving

person; a connection that is pleasing to God, as St. Paul wrote about in 2nd Corinthians: "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

St. Paul, we remember, was speaking here about making a financial gift to the Church in Jerusalem.

In December each year, we ask all our parish families to have the same mind and heart when considering their support of St. Haralambos Church for the coming year.

Is everyone aware that in 2007, we will celebrate the 20th anniversary of St. Haralambos Church? Several events will be planned throughout the year, celebrating our accomplishments, remembering the many remarkable and dedicated parishioners who have done so much for our parish and looking forward to a bright

and blessed future.

(Look for more anniversary information to follow in next month's newsletter.)

Looking forward to our 20th year, we are still working towards one very important goal,

and that is to see the financial offerings of our stewards cover the operating expenses of our annual budget. We should all be

aware of this goal, and each of us should take it upon ourselves to see how best we can help. We really do not want to depend on the additional income from our annual festival to meet our operating budget – that income should be used to support other ministries!

Some have offered a solution to request that all parishioners increase their annual giving by a certain dollar amount. This solution may seem equitable, but would really put an unfair financial burden on those who are already contributing a significant portion of their income. And this gets to the heart of the most traditional – and fair – concept of giving to the Church: percentage giving.

Starting in the Old Testament with a 10-percent tithe to the temple, the concept is that by offering a percent of God's blessings back to His church, each family will not be offering an

(Continued on page 5)

"The Church is the great sacrament of salvation that Christ has instituted in the world. It is the Ark of salvation, and the inaugurated Kingdom of God"



**St. Haralambos
Greek Orthodox
Church**

Rev. Michael Pallad

www.stharalambos.org

Sunday Worship

September - May
Matins: 8:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

June - August
Matins: 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy: 9:30 a.m.

Office

623-486-8665
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FrMichael@StHaralambos.phxcoxmail.com

Hours

Monday - Friday 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Parish Council

Larry Coor, President
Dave Fredericksen, Vice-President
Dean Milonas, Treasurer
Jane Milonas, Secretary
George Christie
Joan Coor

Mary Dascalos
Steve Hargan
Georgia Hargan
Greg Krochta
Mary Manos
Nick Milonas

PARISH NEWS

Christmas Services

As you see on the Community Calendar, since Christmas is on a Monday this year we will not have a Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy since only one liturgy can be celebrated each day. Therefore, Divine Liturgy will be held on Christmas morning, Dec. 25 at 10 a.m. The reading of the Royal Hours of Christmas will be held on Friday morning, Dec. 22 at 9 a.m.



Christmas Food Drive

Once again, our parish will be working together with the Peoria Community Action Agency in sponsoring 10 needy families for the holiday season. This project began last month with the collection of food for Thanksgiving, and continues this month collecting food

for Christmas. Please bring canned and boxed food to the church and leave it in the hallway.

The Christmas angel tree also will be up asking for help with Christmas gifts for needy families in Peoria, and through our Philoptochos,

for children of migrant farm workers.

Help will be needed to sort food, wrap packages and deliver items across the street to the Peoria Community center on Dec. 18 and 19. Thank you for your generous support!



Parish Council Elections

Elections for Parish Council will be held on Sunday, Dec. 10, during Coffee Hour. All stewards must sign the roster before picking up their ballot, vote for the candidate(s) of their choice and sign and return the ballot. Absentee ballots will be available for those who request them. Absentee ballots must be returned to the church office by Friday, Dec. 8 at 3 p.m.

Orthodox Observer

Does your family receive the *Orthodox Observer* at home? The *Observer*, published by the Archdiocese, is the official publication of news and events of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. It is the intent of the Archdiocese to deliver the *Observer* to the homes of every family in the Archdiocese free of charge.

If you have moved, or for some other reason you have not been getting your copy of the *Observer* sent to you, please call or send a note to our church office so we can, in turn, notify the *Observer* office and make sure all our families receive this publication. Note: For those with internet access, past and current issues of the *Observer* can be found at: www.goarch.org/en/news/observer/.



Pastor's Column

(Continued from page 3)

equal amount, but each will be making an equal sacrifice. And so when considering how much to give in support of the church, begin by thinking in terms of percent-giving, rather than a specific dollar amount.

There are no church membership dues, and we do not publish a dollar amount that all parishioners are expected to contribute. We do however, lay the entire process on your conscience to prayerfully consider what to give. C.S. Lewis once wrote, "I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare." He offers a different perspective, perhaps, but right in line with sacrificial giving rather than giving without any thought at all. As, Mother Teresa once said, "If you give what you do not need, it isn't giving."

Let's lose the idea that we'll give significantly to the Church when we win the lottery! Those odds are a bit lopsided. Christian giving does not come from our abundance or from hoped-for (prayed-for?) winnings. An unknown author offered this bit of humorous poetry,

"It's not what you do with the million if fortune should

'ere be your lot, but what are you doing at present with the dollar and quarter you got."

We should also remember that stewardship giving means also giving of time and talents to church ministries. We remember specifically the example of the patron Saints of the Ladies Philoptochos Society, Cosmas and Damian, brothers and physicians who, in remembrance of the charge of Christ to his disciples, "As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give," and they charged nothing for their medical services.

Every family in our parish should think how they can contribute to parish ministries. Do you have the call to serve our young people, to visit or offer assistance to the sick or shut-ins, help with liturgical needs such as singing or reading, prepare the offering bread (prosfora), memorial wheat (koliva) or church flowers, greet new members, help teach current members, assist with building maintenance, or offer to begin a new ministry? How is God calling you to serve in your church? Your response

to this call is the foundation of Christian stewardship.

In summarizing the meaning and purpose of the Church, Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh writes, "The Church is the great sacrament of salvation that Christ has instituted in the world. It is the Ark of salvation, and the inaugurated Kingdom of

God... The Church thus conceived is not just another human organization; it is a gathering of people who profoundly share the life of faith, the new life in Christ, the life in the Holy Spirit, the life of God. The Church can best be characterized as a 'communion of saints.'"

Dear Saints of St. Haralambos Church, our Lord Jesus Christ calls each of us to be cheerful givers, to share our blessings, to support those in need. As we begin our 20th year, and look forward to the next 20, let us begin 2007 with a renewed sense of cheerful giving, of humble worshiping and of building a church community that is alive in our desire to please God through all that we do!



ORGANIZATIONS

Philoptochos

"Christ is Born! Glorify Him!"

Christmas "Pot Luck" supper and celebration will be Monday, Dec. 4, at 6 p.m. in our Social Hall. Bring a wrapped gift for a child and please be sure to include the age and gender on a tag. The gifts will be given to West Side Food Bank for distribution to children of migrant workers. Additionally, the Peoria High School Choral Group will sing a medley of holiday songs beginning at 7 p.m. Spouses and guests invited.

Please remember to support our activities including:

Canned foods and monetary donations to feed the less fortunate of our community. Donations can be dropped off in the office hallway until Dec. 18.



Diaper drive benefiting Homeward Bound continues through Dec. 11. The collection basket for diapers is in the Social Hall.

Tsoureki (Christmas Sweet bread) on sale on Sunday, Dec. 10. Cost is \$6 per loaf with proceeds going to Philoptochos Charities.

Next meeting: Jan. 8, 2007 at 7 p.m.
Merry Christmas to All!
Charlotte Servetas, President



Coffee Hour

Please Offer to Host or Sponsor the Sunday Coffee Hour

For a \$20 donation, the Social Hour Committee will be happy to prepare the coffee hour on your behalf. Please see Stella Pagos after Liturgy for details. Thank You, St. Anna's Philoptochos



Thank You to Our Coffee Hour Hosts/Sponsors

Nov. 5 John Callas,
Martin and Maria Maciejewski
Nov. 12 Kalliope Chafoulas
Nov. 19 Chris Birtsis,
John and Penny Obren
Nov. 26 James and Elizabeth Gorman

Dec. 3 George and Sharon Speros,
Ann Morley
Dec. 10 Kim and Dorothy Ayan,
Steve and Cindy Strategos
Dec. 17 Mary Dascalos
Dec. 24 Ray and Mary Wysmierski,
Tom and Margaret Michailidis
Dec. 31 Mary Harrington

We also would like to extend a special thank you to the ladies who prepare the Prosfora for the Divine Liturgy: Mary Harrington, Christina Harris and Michelle Krochta. Your efforts are truly appreciated.

ORGANIZATIONS

Sunday School

Welcome back to all of our Sunday School Students and parents. We began our year on Sept. 10, the first Sunday after the Labor Day and we will finish the Sunday before Memorial Day on May 20. We have 36 students enrolled in class from pre-school through 12th grade.

This year's teachers and volunteers are:

- Monique Klabis - Pre-School
- Kristin Pallad - Primary 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades, Christmas Pageant director and Vacation Bible School volunteer
- Michele Krochta - 4th, 5th and 6th grades and Vacation Bible School volunteer
- Mike Danielek - 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th



and 12th grades, Sunday School director

- Connie Scouffas - felt board instructor, substitute teacher and Vacation Bible School volunteer
- Chryss Danielek - snack coordinator and bulletin board coordinator.

Beginning in January, each month we will feature a different instructor and their curriculum.

We had a very rewarding Vacation Bible School this past summer. We are in need of several volunteers to help this wonderful activity for our very young Orthodox student

participants. Please contact the Church office if you would like to participate and get involved with Vacation Bible School.

St. Christopher's Bookstore

This month we introduce all of you to two books that should be on all of your bookshelves:

Introducing the Orthodox Church: Its Faith and Life, written by Anthony M. Coniaris; softbound, 220 pages, \$18. An excellent text for all Greek Orthodox who want to rekindle our history and way of life as we should live according to our Holy Traditions, Sacraments and Orthodox Prayer.

Contemporary Moral Issues Facing the Orthodox Christian, written by Stanley S. Harakas; softbound, 185 pages, \$15.50.

Have you ever wondered how our Orthodox Fathers view the vital issues of abortion, divorce, capital punishment, euthanasia, astrology, the occult, or the

donation of human organs? This volume speaks specifically to these topics as well as many other subjects of interest especially in our world today.

Stop by your St. Christopher's Bookstore and browse the selection of many books, children's books, icons and other items of interest. Many items make wonderful gifts this Christmas season. We can also special order items for you if you have a special event. Remember, shipping and handling costs must be added to all special orders and be sure to allow sufficient time for ordering and shipping to receive your order.



ORGANIZATIONS

Investment Committee



The members of the St. Haralambos Investment Committee are John Obren, Dimitri Spanos and Kimon Ayan. The Investment Committee serves as an advisory panel for the parishioners and presents ideas to the Parish Council for the investment

assets to obtain maximum returns. Periodically the committee will report to the Parish Council and the General Assembly. Additionally, Dimitri Spanos has written a comprehensive Policy Statement, which the Committee abides by.

Erato Black Barkas Foundation

As many parishioners know, Erato Barkas left all the assets of her Trust to the St. Haralambos Building Fund. Based on her wishes a Foundation was established earmarking the funds to be used to build a new church.

"I am pleased to report that the legal formalities have been completed," said Kimon Ayan, chairman, Investments Committee. "The total funds of \$530,000 were transferred to the Foundation and these

funds have been invested and are now earning interest. Thanks to Erato's generosity we now have a magnificent start toward building our new St. Haralambos Church."

It should be noted and Mr. Ayan would like it to be known to parishioners, that in his capacity as executor and trustee of Erato's Estate, he has not received fees or compensation of any kind for his work.

Younger Generation

On Tuesday, Oct. 17, the Younger Generation (parishioners ranging in ages from 20s to 50s) met at the Community Hall for an evening of dessert, fun and fellowship. The group had a great time getting to know

one another and welcoming some new faces. The group will continue with additional activities in 2007. Look for information in the weekly Sunday bulletin or in this newsletter.

Ladies – and Gentlemen, too!

Do you know there is a special gift you may present to our Lord? It is the prosfora (Greek for "offering bread"). This bread is specially baked for the purpose of being used for Holy Communion during the Divine Liturgy. This is usually baked in the home by a family and it is a most meaningful gift.

We invite you to join us at church in the near future for those who wish to learn the art of preparing this Holy Bread. There is more to know about the prosfora which we will explain during the preparations. This is a special blessing for a family to participate in.

Please call Christina at (623) 875-7768 or Mary at (623) 872-8809, if you are interested in learning more. We look forward to having you join us.

In Christ's love, Christina Harris and Mary Harrington



Community Christmas Card



We will again be providing parishioners the opportunity to send Christmas greetings with a beautiful full-color icon greeting card to all our parish families. For each family name, the cost is just \$10.

Please print your name clearly, exactly as you would like it to appear on the card. You may mail this form to the church office or sign up on Sundays during the Coffee Hour. Please make checks payable to: St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church. **The deadline is Monday, December 4th, 2006.**

Please include my family's name in this year's Community Christmas Card.
Enclosed is my check for \$10.
(Please return to the church office)

Name (please print clearly)

Memory Eternal

Our love and sympathies to the family of Louise Constant, who fell asleep in the Lord on Nov. 3. May God grant eternal rest to her soul, and may her memory be eternal.

Assisted Living, Hospitalization

The following parishioners may not be able to be with us physically, but are still loved members of our parish. Please remember them in prayer: Marianthy Bravos, Orin and Mary-Jean Davis, Alice Massahos and George Poulos.

Name Days

Many years/ *Chronia Polla* to those named after the following saints:

St. Theodore of Alexandria (3rd)
St. Barbara (4th)
St. Savvas (5th)
St. Nicholas (6th)
St. Sebastian (18th)
St. Anastasia (22nd)
St. Eugenia (24th)
St. Simon (28th)
St. Melania (31st)

Basha's "Thanks a Million" Program

The "Thanks a Million" Basha's program raises money for churches and we have been a participant for several years. The store donates one percent of the total sales linked to our church members. Last year, the Thanks A Million program donated more than a quarter of a million dollars to Arizona schools, churches and nonprofits. We earned \$103.74 for purchases from our parishioners. It's easy to get started! To register, mention the Churches' Group ID number – 23212 at the time of your next visit. You need register only once to be eligible.

Birthdays



Martha Jannis (8th)
Sue Ward (10th)
Kay Brown (11th)
John Ioannou (16th)
Steve Mallos (17th)
Connie Scouffas (27th)

If you don't see your name, or those of family members, and would like to be included on the monthly birthday listing, please send the information to the church office.



"I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you took me in." (St. Matthew 25:35)

Our Lord teaches us to see and respond to those who are in need and who may be less fortunate than us. With this in mind, early this year, our Parish undertook the challenge of joining with three other Peoria Christian communities in the Habitat for Humanity Coalition to build a new home in Peoria.

This Parish project involved two components. First, beginning in the early spring a small but dedicated group of our parishioners (Katrina Anderson, Roy Christian, Stephanie and Christine Danos, Dennis Georgen, Nick Pappas, Melanie Perrault and George and Rachel Retsinas) labored to frame up the home. By late summer the Aguillar family home was finished and it was dedicated last month on Saturday, Oct. 7.

The second component of the project involved a financial commitment to help raise the money needed by Habitat for Humanity to make the project a reality. Each church community was asked to contribute \$15,000.

Now some might ask why we, as a Parish, would agree to this arrangement while we are planning to build a new church. It's really quite simple. Aside from the Christian community outreach opportunity, this money can be raised without negatively impacting our ability to fundraise for our own building project.

The State of Arizona allows for a dollar for dollar tax CREDIT on your Arizona state income tax when making contributions to certain charitable organizations. Habitat for Humanity qualifies for this special tax treatment.

What's the difference between a charitable tax credit and a charitable deduction that you itemize? A charitable tax credit is much more favorable to you. A charitable tax credit reduces your Arizona tax liability dollar for dollar. In other words, it gives to your favorite qualified charity what you

would otherwise pay to the State in income tax. Charitable deductions on the other hand, such as we make to the Church, are itemized and subtracted from gross income to determine the amount of our taxable income.

Here's how a charitable tax credit compares to an itemized deduction.

Gross Income	\$50,000	Gross Income	\$50,000
Itemized Deductions	10,000	Itemized Deductions	9,600
Net Income	40,000 (taxable)	Net Income	40,400
AZ TAX	\$1,000	AZ TAX	\$1,025
		Charitable Tax Credit	400
(Illustrative purposes only)		TAX Due	625

Note: If you itemize, the charitable tax credit is also deductible on your Federal return thus also reducing your US income tax.

Even if you do not owe any Arizona state taxes at the end of the year, if you withheld any amount larger than your tax liability, your charitable tax credit will result in a larger income tax refund from the State.

The maximum allowable contribution for the charitable tax credit is \$400, and the contribution must be made in the current calendar year (2006) to qualify for the charitable tax credit that year. Consult your tax advisor for complete details.

The calendar year is coming to a close and the time to make your 2006 contribution is running out. When making your contribution, please complete and mail the form below, directly to Habitat for Humanity. You will receive an acknowledgement from Habitat for the contribution to use when filing your taxes.

We thank our volunteers for their labor of love, and encourage all parishioners to offer whatever financial gift they are able to make in support of our Habitat for Humanity project.

Habitat for Humanity of the West Valley
17749 N. El Mirage Rd. Ste. #2
Surprise, AZ 85374 623-583-2417

Core Coalition

Church: St. Haralambos Church

Name: _____

Check Enclosed: \$ _____

Address: _____

Visa or MasterCard #: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Expires: _____ Dollar Amount: \$ _____

Phone: _____

Signature: _____

*Please make checks payable to Habitat for Humanity of the West Valley.

Habitat for Humanity does not attempt to give tax advice. Please contact your tax professional with further questions or if you wish to confirm that you qualify for this tax credit. No goods or services were provided in consideration, in whole or in part, for this gift. All gifts are transferred promptly to the program designated.



DECEMBER 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 8:45am Matins 10:00am Div. Liturgy	4 8:00am Matins 9:00am Div. Liturgy St. Barbara 6:00pm Philoptochos Pot Luck	5 10:30am Bible Enrichment	6 8:00am Matins 9:00am Div. Liturgy St. Nicholas	7 7:00pm Choir	8	9
10 8:45am Matins 10:00am Div. Liturgy Parish Council Elections	11	12 8:00am Matins 9:00am Div. Liturgy St. Spyridon 10:30am Bible Enrichment	13	14 7:00pm Choir	15	16
17 8:45am Matins 10:00am Div. Liturgy Stewardship Sunday	18	19 10:30am Bible Enrichment	20	21 7:00pm Choir	22 9:00am Royal Hours of Christmas	23
24 8:45am Matins 10:00am Div. Liturgy	25 9:00am Matins 10:00am Div. Liturgy Christmas Day	26 10:30am Bible Enrichment	27	28 7:00pm Choir	29	30
31 8:45am Matins 10:00am Div. Liturgy Sunday Before Theophany						