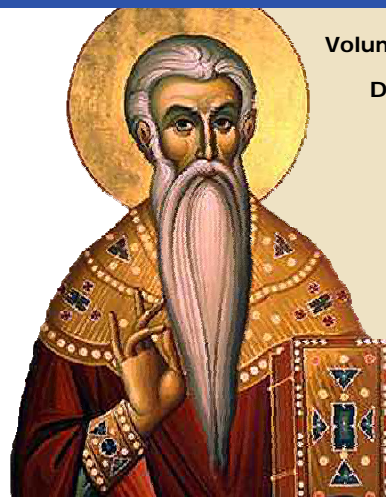


# in Touch

Volume 15, Issue 12

December 2007



The Official Publication of St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church

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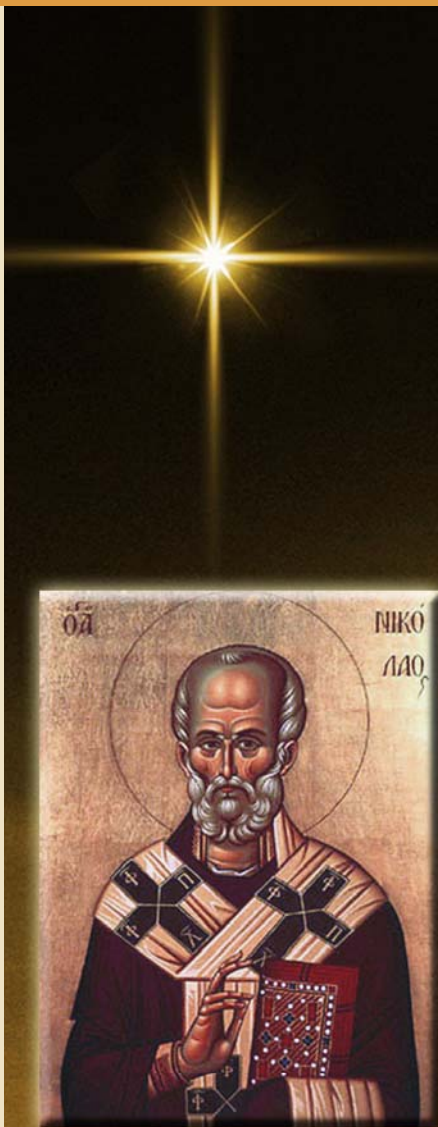
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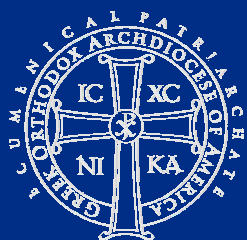
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*"For unto you  
is born this day  
in the city of  
David a Savior;  
which is Christ  
the Lord."*

*Luke 2:11*



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

*St. Haralambos*



# STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

*As our parish continues to grow, we hope each family remembers its Christian responsibility to care for our Church.*

Sunday, Dec. 16 is Stewardship Sunday, and we ask all parish families to return their 2008 Stewardship Pledge Card during the special Blessing the Lamp of Christian Stewardship service that follows the liturgy. As our parish continues to grow, we hope each family remembers its Christian responsibility to

care for our Church. In addition to supporting the operational expenses of our church, all parishioners should see how they can best respond to the many ministerial needs that help us grow in our faith. Stewardship goes beyond dollars and cents, and is a fundamental teaching of how we respond to the gifts that God has given us. All that we have is a gift from God, and by cheerfully giving to the church a portion of

our time, talents and treasures, God is truly glorified, we cultivate a spirit of generosity, and our church community continues to thrive. Stewardship materials will be sent to all our families. Please call the office if additional materials are needed.



## 20th Anniversary Greek Festival Roundup

By Greg Krochta, Chairman, 2007 Festival

The festive cheers of “OPA!” returned to our church grounds after a 1-1/2 year absence, and I still can’t get the ringing out of my ears! Our

20th Anniversary Festival is now officially “in the books” and I could not be happier with the outcome!

This year’s festival was a huge success in several ways. Of course, everyone usually bases success upon sales, and while I agree that this is a big factor (since this is our one



big money fundraiser each year) there are other measures as well.

Yes, we did well as far as revenue and profit is concerned (final financial

figures should be available in early December). But, more importantly, did you have a good time? Did you make the experience special for anyone else? Or, did you meet someone new and introduce him or her to the Greek culture and Orthodox faith?

How about our own church members? Did you learn something new about someone you’ve seen at Church and try to establish a new and even longer-lasting relationship with them?

This festival was an outstanding opportunity to do these things, so I hope you took advantage of it. Remember, the stronger our parish becomes while preparing, hosting and



*(Continued on page 5)*

# PASTOR'S COLUMN

FR. MICHAEL PALLAD



Some Christmas stress may be inevitable; but we can all take steps to minimize it.

As much as we all look forward to celebrating Christmas, the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, few of us are able to escape the stress that comes with it. Some is simply the excitement of the holiday season, but much of it is a result of trying to do too much in too little time. And who tells us we have to do so much? We do! We put unrealistic expectations on ourselves before thinking about how much time and energy everything requires. Simply decorating the house takes time to dig out the decorations from storage, decide what to put up, untangle strings of lights, setting up ladders and step-stools, dusting and/or cleaning, re-arranging furniture to accommodate the decorations... and this is before putting up the tree!

The point of any celebration is to be able to enjoy it. The answer to enjoying the Christmas season is not moving to a deserted island until January or refusing to decorate or shop or bake or visit with friends. The answer is putting realistic limitations on the things we'd like to do, politely – but firmly – saying

no to other activities, and making the time to attend church services, especially Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy. That (and every other) liturgy will not be rushed! No hymns will be cut to save time! In fact, time just isn't a factor when worshipping in church together. The liturgy is a 'stress-free' zone, and everyone needs to realize the unmatched emotional and spiritual benefits that come from worshipping our Lord together in church.

Putting Christ back in Christmas is clever slogan we would do well to consider. Being in church on Christmas Eve is the most important, but not the only, way to keep Christ in Christmas. There are some in our parish who won't be able, for a variety of reasons, to be in church. For those who are homebound, in hospitals or other care facilities, for those who can't get out of work or family responsibilities, there are other personal devotions that can help keep the true meaning of Christmas close to our hearts and minds. This might take the form of personal reading of the Christmas scriptures and/

or personal prayer time. Each year, inspirational re-enactments of the Christmas story are televised and are great for helping us reflect on the Christmas message. Making time to send personal greetings (by phone, e-mail or card) to friends and family also helps. Writing one Christmas letter and sending copies to everyone on the Christmas list is becoming more popular because of the time saving advantages.

Making the effort not to over-extend ourselves during the Advent Season not only helps minimize daily stress, it also keeps us more in-line with the humble circumstances of our Lord's birth. It was not a wild party. No doubt Joseph and Mary must have felt some anxiety not being able to find a room at the inn, and being forced to find shelter outdoors in a stable surrounded by animals. Even so, this setting must have been more serene than the hustle and bustle of an inn filled to capacity!

The birth of our Lord into the world is a sacred event, the

(Continued on page 8)

*The birth of our Lord into the world is a sacred event, the purpose of which is the eternal salvation of humankind.*



**St. Haralambos  
Greek Orthodox  
Church**

**Rev. Michael Pallad**

[www.stharalambos.org](http://www.stharalambos.org)

## Sunday Worship

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

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

## Office

623-486-8665  
10320 N. 84th Ave., Peoria, AZ 85345  
[Office@StHaralambos.phxcoxmail.com](mailto:Office@StHaralambos.phxcoxmail.com)  
[FrMichael@StHaralambos.phxcoxmail.com](mailto:FrMichael@StHaralambos.phxcoxmail.com)

Hours  
Monday - Friday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

## Parish Council

Greg Krochta, President  
George Retsinas, Vice-President  
Stella Pagos, Treasurer  
Peter Tremoulis, Secretary  
George Christie  
Mary Manos

Dean Milonas  
Peter Retsinas  
Mary Wysmierski  
Ray Wysmierski

## Parishioner Profile



Mary Manos of Sun City has been a St. Haralambos parishioner since 1992 and has served on the Parish Council since 1993. As part of her Council duties, Mary is most likely the first person everyone sees when they enter Church where she dutifully staffs the candle stand managing the candle donations, new and lit candles and distribution of the Sunday bulletins.

She is also a member of Philoptochos and a former choir member. A native of Newport, N.H., Mary attended Greek school growing up and also taught Greek to young students for four years. Her husband is Arthur and the

couple has been married for 57 years. Arthur formerly served for many years as a chanter at St. Haralambos.

Mary worked as a banker in Massachusetts before the couple relocated to Florida where they were active members in St. Barbara's parish in Sarasota, Fla. Thereafter, the couple retired to Arizona where they have enjoyed playing golf and attending St. Haralambos. Mary also is a volunteer during the week helping with duties in the Church office. At home, Mary enjoys knitting, crocheting and reading.

### Parish Council Elections

All Members in Good Standing of St. Haralambos church are encouraged to vote for new Parish council candidates on Sunday, Dec. 9, following the Divine Liturgy. Ballots will be available during the Coffee Hour.

## Chanter Training

Men and women interested in learning to chant for the Sunday Matins service are invited to attend the training sessions on Sunday mornings at 8:45 a.m. These sessions will take the place of the Sunday Matins service. The hymns are in English, and notated with staff notation, and maintain the musical style of Byzantine chant. Requirements for chanters include the ability to sing on pitch, and the desire to learn the melodies of one of Christianity's most ancient musical traditions.

### 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, Dec. 3, 2007.**

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)

Names (please print clearly)

## Festival

(Continued from page 2)

cleaning up after our festival, the more prepared we'll be for much bigger and better projects like building on our new church property!

As this year's chairman, I want to thank you all for coming together as a team to pull off another great festival. The talents of every single volunteer were needed and we could not have done it without you. I need to personally acknowledge a few individuals whose talents were indispensable without which the festival would have fallen flat.

First, my Co-chair Pam Lemons, who lead efforts on advertising, printing, sponsorship, liquor and soda orders, raffle prizes, our beautiful festival booklet, and about a million other things that inevitably kept me out of trouble and the festival running smoothly. Just before the festival began, I thought to myself, "surely there's something I'm forgetting and it's going to jump up and bite me." Without Pam as Co-chair, I'd be covered in teeth marks right now!

Second, I said it before and I'll repeat it here again: If the festival burned to the ground and all we had left was the food to serve, we still would have had a successful festival. Stella Pagos and the booth chefs were responsible for all of the great food. She gets my personal "Emeril Lagasse" award.

I received comments ranging from "Yummy!," to "We'd



put this food at the very top of all the food we've tasted at any festival, anywhere!," to "I felt like my family had just done the cooking."

Wow, those are great comments and I support what they said because it was that good. Finally, my personal "Hercules" award goes out to George Miller who was there from start to finish, whether it was with an idea, his huge heart, his physical efforts, or with his sultry "Master of Ceremony" voice. George was there every step of the way. Thank you for all you do George.

Thanks to everyone for making my job as Chairman this past year and a half an enjoyable and rewarding one. "Bravo" to all!

## IOCC Fundraising Event a Success



To All Arizona Orthodox Churches:

On behalf of the Phoenix Metropolitan Committee for IOCC, I would like to thank all of the Arizona churches for helping

to make this year's Wine, Cheese and Silent Auction a huge success. Thank you for your donations of food and auction items. Thank you to all who attended and contributed to the fun.

This year we raised over \$32,000 to benefit people in

desperate need throughout the many countries served by IOCC. Due to the incredible efficiency and effectiveness of IOCC every dollar of this money will be leveraged with almost seven dollars in government and other agency grants. That means our \$32,000 will have the effect of about \$240,000 in humanitarian aid.

Thank you all for your support of IOCC. With your help we can positively effect the lives of thousands of people in need.\

Yours in Christ,  
John Saliba, Chair of the Phoenix Metropolitan Committee

# ORGANIZATIONS



## *Philoptochos*

By Charlotte Servetas, President

“Christ is Born! Glorify Him!”

Christmas “Pot Luck” supper and celebration will be Monday, Dec. 3 at 6 p.m. in our Social Hall. Bring a wrapped gift for a child and please be sure to include age and gender on a tag. The gifts will be given to West Side Food Bank for distribution to children of migrant workers. A surprise musical program is also planned beginning at 7 p.m. Spouses and guests invited.

Diaper and baby wipes drive benefiting Homeward Bound continues thru Dec. 18. The basket for donations will be in the Social Hall.

Remember those less fortunate by donating canned foods or monetary donations for the Holidays.

At this special time of the year—spread good cheer, if only by “Smiling.”

Merry Christmas to All.

## Coffee Hour

Thank You to Our  
Coffee Hour Hosts/  
Sponsors

- Nov. 4 “Taste of Greece” Festival
- Nov. 11 Festival Appreciation Luncheon
- Nov. 18 General Assembly - Philoptochos
- Nov. 25 James & Elizabeth Gorman
- Dec. 2 Marius & Stella Pagos
- Dec. 9 John & Penny Obren
- Dec. 16 Gus & Bella Danos and George & Patty Christie
- Dec. 23 Available
- Dec. 30 Available

*Note: Due to publication printing deadlines, any modifications or changes to coffee hour listing will be noted in next month's newsletter.*

## *Parish Council Corner*

By Greg Krochta, President

By now the Festival has come and gone, the Thanksgiving leftovers may even be finished, and Christmas is only a few weeks away. That also means our 20th Anniversary dinner celebration is upon us, as we close out two decades of service to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ here at St. Haralambos Church in Peoria. For those of you who have been here since the beginning, you have seen many changes at our Church, and you are now hearing about bigger and better changes on the horizon. Thank you for getting us to this moment in our Church's history!

Rather than recap everything your Parish Council has done this year, let me tell you about just two things that stand out about this group that has made this year different than many others.

This past year we've addressed “the usual” items that typically face a council, and even had a few stumbles at the start, but then once “on step” we took a few bold steps forward. Improvements were made to our offerings collection and accounting processes not only to make it easier on us, but also to allow council members more time to spend with parishioners after church, rather than in the office.

The new Parish Pay program is also another finance and accounting improvement program that should – in time – prove beneficial to our Church as well. Our Church's Disaster Preparedness Plan is getting a major re-write to help us – like many others – be better prepared for the “unknowns” that can befall a community. As the year comes to an end, this council has put these and a few other new or improved processes in place that will prepare us for the future. And the future leads me to the second outstanding item from 2007.

When I took the President's office of the Parish Council in January, one of the first things I did was ask the group if they were ready to make tough, lasting decisions about our Church's future. Were we, as a group, prepared to continue the huge momentum that had begun at the end of 2006? After a resounding “yes,” and on the sage advice from our Building Committee, we selected an architect in Callahan Studios to help us design our future church and support buildings. Meetings with the architect and continued design enhancements are ongoing.

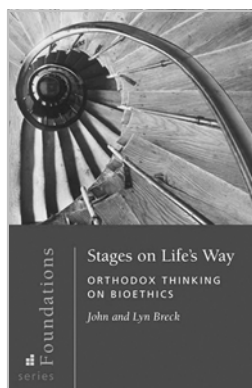
On the highest recommendation of our Capital Campaign Committee, we chose our

*(Continued on page 7)*



# ORGANIZATIONS

## *St. Christopher's Bookstore*



Stages on Life's Way: Orthodox Thinking on Bioethics, John and Lyn Breck, 2005, 249 pages.

This is a very thought-provoking book written by an Orthodox Priest and Presbyter. They define "ethics" to be a "...discipline that evaluates human behavior" and "lays the foundation on which we construct moral judgments...about...right and wrong."

Bioethics focuses "particularly on the bios, the physical, emotional and psychological aspects of human existence."

According to the authors, Holy Tradition and Holy Scripture, "will not give us pat answers" to moral questions concerning the use of new medical technologies, but they do give us the 'mind of the Church' needed to make moral judgments.

"Our belief that God is both the origin and the end of human life...bears directly on the question of how that life should be treated, including the limits to which it may be acceptably manipulated." Human life is sacred; Romans 3:8 insists that nothing good can come from evil and the taking of a human life is evil.

One of the most interesting chapters, "The Use and Abuse of Human Embryos," centers on a rather detailed discussion of the question, "When does life begin?" and

the related question of "When does a human life possess a soul?" Since it is very detailed, it contains a glossary of scientific terms the reader will learn. Scripture includes Jer 1:5: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you."

Another very pertinent chapter is the last one, "Care in the Final stage of Life," which identifies the point at which the soul leaves the body. It includes Orthodox views on euthanasia, assisted suicide, pain control and the withholding of food and water for dying patients.

The entire book is fascinating and almost all of it uses Holy Tradition and Scripture as well as science to support the Orthodox point of view on many controversial issues. This reader found this evidence very convincing. However, occasionally the authors seem to reveal their personal opinions about topics without citing Holy Tradition or Holy Scripture.

For example, our country's economic system is said to favor, "the rich and the strong over the poor and weak." Another example is when they proclaim, "our government responded" to terrorist attacks in our country "with a murderous, preemptive war." The book's subtitle presents the contents to be "Orthodox Thinking" not the authors' personal opinions. However, is "Orthodox thinking" against capitalism and war? Asking rhetorical questions will help remind the reader what is the authors opinion, which are unexpected and seemingly out of place at times, and what is Orthodox Dogma in an overall interesting book.

## *Parish Council Corner*

*(Continued from page 6)*

own Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Office of Parish Development to lead us into the start of our Capital Campaign. Personal and written interviews have been conducted and analyzed, your input and feedback has been received and we should be well on our way to making a decision on what our desires and affordability will allow us to build first on the new Church property located at 75th Avenue and Greenway Road.

Wrapping up my column and 2007 allows me to see that although the year has had its challenges, we have relied on

the strong hearts and souls of the people on our Parish Council and all of the advisory committees that have given so much to get us to where we are today. Thank you.

I ask you to choose and support the Council in 2008 anyway that you can by volunteering to fill any open council or committee seats, and with your votes and prayers to help them all in their continued progress. It has been an honor to have served as President of your Parish Council in 2007, but an even bigger honor for me to have worked with and been inspired by all of these dedicated parishioners! God Bless!

# FAMILY NEWS

## *Birthdays*



Martha Jannis (8th)  
John Ioannou (16th)  
Steve Mallos (17th)  
Leonidas Karandreas (18th)  
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.

## Assisted Living, Hospitalization

The following parishioners may not be able to be with us physically, but are still loved members of our parish, and we ask you to please remember them in prayer: Orin and Mary-Jean Davis, Alice Massahos, Nikita and Josette Reisler and Effie Stathopoulou.

Recuperating from recent hospitalizations: Zoe Dress, Elaine Giannias-Winn, Estelle Lazzelle and Kathy Lampropoulos.

## Baby Shower

Mary Wysmierski's mom, Helen Sigel, is having a baby shower for Mary on Saturday, Dec. 8 at 12:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall at St. Haralambos Church. Lunch will be provided and all are welcome. Please RSVP to Lee Retsinas

## *Name Days*

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

St. Theodore of Alexandria (3rd)	St. Sebastian (18th)
St. Barbara (4th)	St. Juliana (21st)
St. Savvas (5th)	St. Anastasia (22nd)
St. Nicholas (6th)	St. Eugenia (24th)
St. Daniel the Stylite (11th)	St. Stephen (27th)
St. Spyridon (12th)	St. Simon (28th)
St. Lucia (13th)	St. Melania (31st)

## Simple Fund-raising Opportunity



By participating in Bashas' "Thanks A Million" program, a percentage of each purchase can be directed to St. Haralambos Church. Just sign up at Bashas for a "Thank You" card and have your card programmed with Group ID number 23212. This program will run through Mar. 31, 2008. For further information, go to [www.bashas.com/charity](http://www.bashas.com/charity).

## *Pastor's Column*

(Continued from page 3)

purpose of which is the eternal salvation of humankind. You will not find this Christmas message advertised during the prime time TV line-up. The cost is way beyond most parish (and even Archdiocese) budgets, and besides that, it is a message that offers nothing for sale - there is nothing to buy.

Some degree of Christmas stress may be inevitable in our society today; but we can all take steps to minimize it.

We don't have to be at every celebration, we don't have to break our budget with shopping, we don't have to please everyone else. It is much less stressful to slow down, set limits, do fewer things and enjoy them more, and recognize the greatest gift of all: God's immeasurable love for us. It is a gift we can never fully repay, but we can certainly take time to say 'thank you,' say, around 6:30 p.m. on the 24th?

Merry Christmas to all!



# DECEMBER 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b> 6:00p.m. Gala 20th Anniversary Banquet
<b>2</b> 8:45am Chanter Training 10:00am Divine Liturgy	<b>3</b>  7:00pm Philoptochos	<b>4</b> 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy St. Barbara	<b>5</b>  	<b>6</b> 9:00am Divine Liturgy St. Nicholas  7:00pm Choir	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> 8:45am Chanter Training 10:00am Divine Liturgy Parish Council Elections	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>  7:00pm Parish Council	<b>12</b> 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy St. Spyridon	<b>13</b>  7:00pm Choir	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 8:45am Chanter Training 10:00am Divine Liturgy Stewardship Sunday	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>  	<b>20</b>  7:00pm Choir	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> 8:45am Chanter Training 10:00am Divine Liturgy	<b>24</b> 9:00a.m. Royal Hours of Christmas  6:30p.m Christmas Divine Liturgy	<b>25</b> Christmas Day (Office closed)	<b>26</b>  	<b>27</b>  7:00pm Choir	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 8:45am Chanter Training 10:00am Divine Liturgy	<b>31</b>					