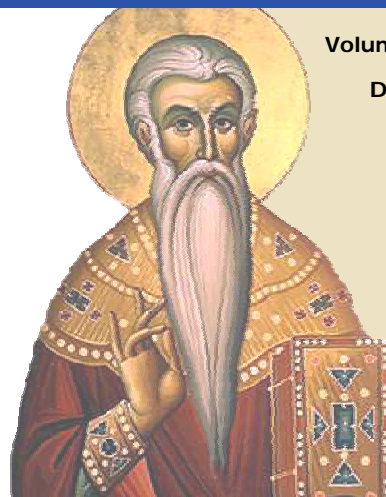


# in Touch

Volume 17, Issue 12

December 2009



The Official Publication of St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church

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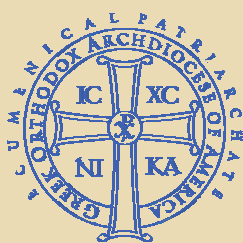
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*“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*



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

# STEWARDSHIP

BY ROBERTA SZKLARSKI

In the early church, the Eucharistic sacrifice was offered by all members of the church. Each person coming to the gathering of the Church brought with them everything they could spare for the needs of the Church. This meant for the sustenance of the clergy, widows and orphans, for helping the poor, and for all the good works of the Church. This is the Church that we as Orthodox Christians claim to be.

We also learn about the early Church in Acts 2 (43-47): "Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved."

Stewardship is not about calculations or percentages.

It can't be reduced to a number of hours of service or dollars offered. Stewardship is a way of life.

As Orthodox Christians, we are called to a new way of seeing things – a new way of life. Our stewardship is obedience to the greatest commandment to "love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength." We

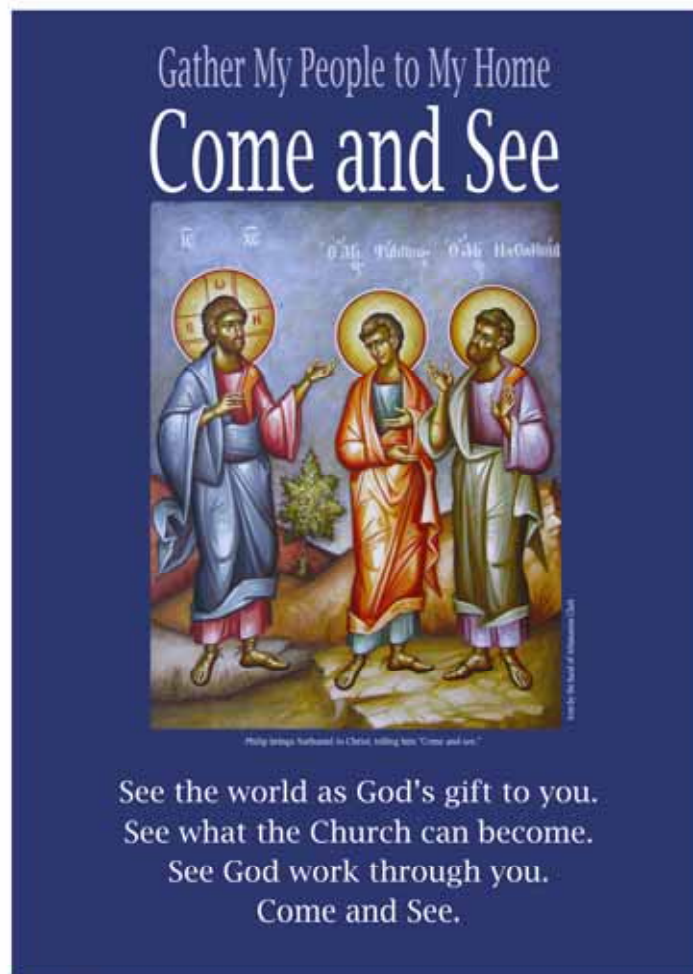
are called to bring others to commit their lives to Jesus Christ in such a way that leads to the joy of knowing Him personally and profoundly.

As Orthodox Christians, we see the world as God's gift, as a sacrament of God's presence and a means of communion with Him. And so we are able to offer the world back to God in thanksgiving as we say in every Divine Liturgy "Your gifts from Your own gifts..."

No matter how generously we support the Church, can we ever feel that we have given in proportion to the blessings we have received?

As you contemplate your stewardship commitment for 2010 please consider at

least the same as last year with an increase of 10%. The scriptures quote tithing 10% monetarily to God. It does not say a fixed amount or a minimum amount. The giving should be offered willingly and without regret.



STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

[www.stewardship.goarch.org](http://www.stewardship.goarch.org)



## The Peace of Christ

The quotation on the cover of this month's newsletter from the Prophet Isaiah should be pretty familiar among Christians. Because it is one of the many prophecies about the birth of the Messiah, it is read each year in the Royal Hours and Great Vespers of Christmas in the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church interprets the writings of the Prophet Isaiah in light of the birth of Christ the Lord.

Isaiah was preaching during the last half of the 8th century BC, and is known as one of the major Old Testament prophets. As with all the other OT prophets, except John the Baptist, he did not live to see the fulfillment of his prophecies. It's not hard to imagine that this was a difficult situation for Isaiah to deal with, but a true OT prophet (there were hundreds of false prophets) obediently spoke all that God instructed him to say, never knowing when his words would actually come to pass.

But as God never fails to keep his divine promises spoken through his prophets, the long awaited birth of the Messiah, born of a virgin in the city of Bethlehem, descended from King David, all took place just

as the prophets had foretold.

Our celebration of Christmas today should retain this important element of prophecy and fulfillment. Fortunately musicians throughout the ages have been inspired to retell the Christmas story set to a variety of musical traditions: from sacred oratorios to popular Christmas carols. Can any of us imagine celebrating Christmas without any music? We can sing carols and hymns together or we can listen to others sing them; either way, the gift of music not only adds to the beauty of the holiday season, it also helps to reinforce the true meaning of the feast.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given." The meaning of Christmas helps us bring to mind the love of God for all humanity. Jesus was born for us, for our benefit; not simply to give us a life of ease filled with our every desire, but for the benefit of our souls, to help lead us to eternal life in His heavenly Kingdom.

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you." (John 14.27) With these words, Jesus offers us something the world is not

capable of offering: real peace, peace of mind free of anxiety or fear.

St. Paul writes, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-8)

These words are written for our benefit. Too often we are quick to dismiss spiritual direction mistakenly thinking it has no direct bearing on the stresses of everyday life. So instead there are multitudes of people who desperately need peace in their lives, but have forgotten or are not aware of the proper places to find it.

This is why the message of the Christian gospel will always be applicable to every generation and culture. Peace of mind, a life without ever-present anxiety, is found in Christ not apart from Him. Developing a closer relationship with our Lord includes personal prayer and devotion, but also a strong

*(Continued on page 8)*

***The meaning of Christmas helps us bring to mind the love of God for all humanity.***



**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

Ray Wysmierski, President  
Mike Danielek, Vice-President  
Mary Wysmierski, Secretary  
Stella Pagos, Treasurer  
Angie Cholas  
Dave Fredericksen

Mary Manos  
Peter Retsinas  
Robert Szklarski  
Katherine Tally  
Peter Tremoulis

## Christmas Tree Angels



Tree Angels are on the Christmas tree in the Hallway to benefit needy Peoria families. Even during the busy holiday season, let's remember those less fortunate and offer to help our neighbors!

## Stewardship Sunday

Please join your church family for the special Stewardship Sunday service, which will be held on Sunday, Dec 13. During this service, everyone will contribute a portion of oil to the Lamp of Christian

Stewardship, which will be placed on the altar table. Every family is also asked to offer their 2010 Stewardship Pledge Card during this service. (Extra Pledge cards will be available in the Church office.)

## Easier Method for Parish Contributions

**Parish Pay** is a means of sending church contributions electronically via the internet. By going to our parish website ([www.stharalambos.org](http://www.stharalambos.org)) and clicking on the "Parish Pay" button, you are directed to the Parish Pay site to easily set up your account.

There are no costs to parishioners, and you decide how much and how often contributions are sent for stewardship, building fund or any other fund you designate. Contributions can be a one-time gift, or you can set up regular monthly payments to be deducted from a

checking or savings account or charged to a credit card. It is a safe and secure system.

Benefits are: eliminates the need for writing checks; automatically sends contributions even if you are ill or out of town, earns points, bonuses or mileage when coupled with credit card accounts.

For further information, please contact our Parish Council Treasurer Stella Pagos at 623-975-0027. Consider Parish Pay for all your church contributions beginning January, 2010.

## Parish Council Elections

Elections for new parish council members to serve a three-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2010 will take place on Sunday, Dec. 6. All parish stewards are reminded to cast their votes for the four

parish council openings following the Divine Liturgy. A table will be set up for stewards to sign-in for a ballot, and vote for the nominees of their choice.

## Food Drive

Please keep food donations coming in! We're working together with the Peoria Community Action Agency, and collecting canned and boxed foods to benefit needy families. We'll be collecting foods up until Sunday, Dec. 20. Collection boxes are in the main hallway.





## Parishioner Profile

Zoe Dress was born in Mason City, IA. Her family made many moves around the United States in search of a better life, finally landing in San Francisco.

She was married in 1958 and has 3 children, two boys and one girl, and one grandson.

Being Orthodox all her life, Zoe moved to Sun City West in 2001 and began looking for a church, finding St.

Haralambos here in Peoria. She has volunteered whenever needed at many church functions and can always be found in the pastry booth at our festival.

Zoe would like to see St. Haralambos continue to grow and enjoy our new church when it is finished. She is an interesting person and we are lucky that she found St. Haralambos.



## Philoptochos

By Charlotte Servetas, President

**CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!**

Christmas pot luck supper and celebration will be Monday, Dec. 7, at 6p.m. in the social hall. Spouses and guests are invited. A musical program will be presented by the Peoria High School choral group at 7p.m.

F.Y.I.

1. Diaper drive and monetary gift to Homeward Bound, our local holiday outreach program. We welcome your

help in the diaper drive, Nov. 8 - Dec. 8.

2. Philoptochos will co-ordinate a military care package program. Frosene Bravos will be the liaison to the Military Mom's Organization. A basket will be placed in the Narthex. A guideline list of needs is on the bulletin board. Thanks for your help!!

Remember those less fortunate by donating non-perishable food items for the food bank.

Merry Christmas to all!



## 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. 7, 2009.**

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)

# ORGANIZATIONS

## St. Christopher's Bookstore

### SAINT BASIL THE GREAT ON SIN, SUFFERING, AND SALVATION

George Zgourides, 2007 94pp.

Dr. Zgourides, the editor, writes, "Perhaps no other topics have concerned Christians throughout centuries as those of sin, suffering, and salvation." Furthermore, each of us has probably questioned why the Lord allows so much evil, disease and suffering in the world.

According to the Orthodox Church, "sickness and death are not manifestations of Divine retribution" for our sins. Rather, "God permits disease and death...for the eventual restoration of life available to all through Christ's death and resurrection."

Included is a short biography of "one of the most beloved of the Church Fathers, St. Basil the Great (c.330-379), who apparently suffered from a "medical infirmity" that prevented him from visiting "Churches under his care as he would have liked." While he wrestled "with his own human limitations, he had much to say about

sin, suffering and salvation." The following are quotes.

- This shell of mine must for certain fail...per chance God's mercy [allows] time for repentance... and extricates me from evils beyond human cure.
- The upright man is touched by neither loss, nor sickness, nor the other ills of life. For he walks in heart with God, gazes upon the future, and...weathers the storms that rise from earth.
- The faithless man never stands, but is always dragged along the ground with the serpent whom he follows.
- The most difficult of sciences is to know one's self...Our eye can not see itself.
- You are children of confessors. You are children of martyrs [who] have resisted sin unto blood. Use...the examples of those near and dear to you to make you brave.
- Pray only that the Lord grant me to take no step in anger, but to maintain charity, which behaves itself not unseemly and is not puffed up.
- All things are ordained by the Lord's love. We must accept anything that befalls us...All that happens to us is for our good, either for the reward of our patience or for the soul.
- You noble athletes of Christ...expect tribulation after tribulation, hope upon hope... Life is but a tiny interval compared with the endless age that is laid up on our hopes.
- Despondency and despair of our salvation are injurious to the soul. Trust, therefore, in the goodness of God...and He will say..."Lo! I am with you."
- Be of good cheer. There is salvation; there is amendment. The doors are not yet shut; sin is not the master. Make another effort; do not hesitate.

Dr. Zgourides wants us to interpret St. Basil's words for ourselves and apply those principles to our own lives that we think will be "of benefit in [our] own spiritual journey."

## Sunday School

By Mike Danielek – Sunday School Director

### **Post Card Campaign**

As some of our parents have noticed, we are sending out 'gentle reminders' to each of our students who were absent from Sunday school each Sunday. We have seen some results from this effort in contacting the families and we will continue if they are not in class.

### **Crafts**

We have begun our crafts program and you will become aware of our projects

every other week or so. Each project has a message linked to our Eastern Orthodox Faith.

### **High School Class Incentive Program**

In the high school class we have started an incentive program that will reward our students if they have 'perfect attendance' for the year. From the time they enroll in class until May 23, 2010 each student is eligible for this prize.

### **Schedule**

The schedule below is the remaining Sundays that there will NOT be class

from now until the end of the year.

- Dec. 27** Christmas (no school)
- Jan. 3** New Years (no school)
- Mar. 28** Palm Sunday (no school)
- Apr. 4** Pascha/Easter Sunday (no school)
- May 23** Year End Ceremony (no school)

### **Additional Information**

For additional information or if you would like to volunteer as a teacher or teacher's assistant, please contact the Church office or you can email Mike Danielek at [mdanielek1@cox.net](mailto:mdanielek1@cox.net).

## Building Fund — Fund Raising Update

### RESULTS TO DATE

- ‘\$10,000 Raffle’ netted \$10,200 dollars to the ‘Building Fund’.
- The Stella Vasquez luncheon donation and the ‘Denny’s Eat Out’ added an additional \$340.
- The Piggy Bank ‘Change for the Church’ has raised \$636.25 to date
- Art & Mary Manos, Roy & Maria Christian, Mary Dascalos and our St. Anna’s Philoptochos Society of Philoptochos have raised and donated \$4,500 to the ‘Fund’.

### CONTINUING FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES

Orthodox Observer: St. Haralambos purchased a 1/2 page ad in the ‘Orthodox Observer’ inviting the 790,000 Greek Orthodox who read the ‘Observer’ each month to join with us in our building fund campaign. Look for it next month.

Letter writing campaign to Greek Orthodox Parishes throughout the United States. We have sent out 300 letters to date with another 150 more letters to be mailed within the next 2 weeks. All the Council officers personally sign these letters as well as Father Michael. We have received two responses with \$200 added to the ‘Building Fund’ from parishes in Alabama and California. Our goal is to hear back from the other parishes in one form or another sometime this month. The parishes received the letters in late October and presented our request for donation during their November Parish Council meetings.

Wealthiest Greek Orthodox Campaign: The letters have been sent to 16 of the wealthiest Greek Orthodox in America. To date no responses have been received.

Renewal Campaign: Renewal and

Restoration of our Stewardship families will be taking place over the next 2-1/2 to 3 months. 66% of our stewards have not participated in our building fund as of today and now is the time to inquire as to why or why not they haven’t participated. Our goals are to enable each of our families to participate in the building of our future. We need everyone to participate in helping to create a new campus that will give us multiple opportunities for our youth with facilities and space to accomplish programs for Sunday School, Goya, Jr. Goya, Greek Dance, Greek School, Youth Retreats, Vacation Bible School, Christmas Pageants and Most Holy Lent and Holy Week Activities for our children and grand children. By Dec. 21, 2010 we must be out of this Church and move one-way or the other.

Communication: We will continue to include fund raising and construction information through our monthly articles in the ‘In Touch’ newsletter.

Pledge Renewal Campaign: Think about all who preceded us here at St. Haralambos. This will be our permanent home serving Peoria and the entire Northwest Phoenix Metropolitan area. We must carry the torch for our elders in their memory. God wants and intends for us to have the best, and if we all work together, we can accomplish ‘His Will’.

Following are the levels of pledges (or one time donation) toward 100% participation:

1. \$1 per week = \$52 per year = 3 year pledge of \$156
2. \$5 per week = \$260 per year = 3 year pledge of \$780
3. \$10 per week = \$520 per year = 3 year pledge of \$1,560

4. \$15 per week = \$780 per year = 3 year pledge of \$2,340
5. \$25 per week = \$1,300 per year = 3 year pledge of \$3,900
6. \$50 per week = \$2,600 per year = 3 year pledge of \$7,800
7. \$75 per week = \$3,900 per year = 3 year pledge of \$11,700
8. \$100 per week = \$5,200 per year = 3 year pledge of \$15,600
9. \$200 per week = 10,400 per year = 3 year pledge of \$31,200

**PUSH (Pray Until Something Happens) as you consider your ‘Building Fund’ pledge.**

### 100% Participation

May God’s Will Be Done! “Equal Sacrifice...NOT...Equal Giving”.

### BUILDING SCHEDULE

We will break ground contingent upon the following:

Financing: We have submitted an application for a construction loan to CHASE Bank. A construction loan for \$2.5 million has been requested. The submittal included all of our financial compilations for the past three years and a pro-forma that projects our income and expenses through the year 2020. We will know by the middle of December whether we qualify for these funds.

City Approval: Drawings and plans are moving through the City of Peoria for final approval. We expect to have approved drawings and plans by the end of December.

Building Pledge Renewal: We are pushing hard for 100% participation for the remainder of our stewardship families to our ‘Building Fund’.

(Continued on page 8)

## Birthdays



Martha Jannis (8th)  
John Ioannou (16th)  
Steve Mallos (17th)  
Leonidas Karandreas (18th)  
Peter Retsinas (25th)  
George Stivaktakis (26th)  
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.

## 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. Ambrose of Milan (7th)  
St. Daniel (11th)  
St. Lucia (13th)  
St. Sebastian (18th)  
St. Anastasia (22nd)  
St. Eugenia (24th)  
Nativity of Christ (25th)  
St. Simon (28th)  
St. Melania (31st)

## 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 Davis, Lee Feutz, John and Mary Karavaras.

## To My Dear Church Family

I can't thank you enough for all the cards, calls, visits, favors and even prepared food I received during my confinement. I am truly blessed to have such caring friends. With Christian love, Alice Hecht

## Pastor's Column

*(Continued from page 3)*  
connection with the Church. The Christian faith is meant to be lived together in community, not in isolation from one another.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given." Jesus is born for you! Let us all celebrate his holy birth together as one

Church family; praying together, singing hymns and carols together, and enjoying the fellowship that this parish has cultivated for so many years.

May this Christmas season bring all of you the peace of Christ now and throughout the new year.

## Building Fund — Fund Raising Update

*(Continued from page 7)*

### Estimate of Building Schedule

The anticipated schedule for the new project (contingent upon financing, City approval and building fund pledge campaign) is to bid the project between HANSEN CMG and CONCORD, the two top contractors after our selection process of December '07.

The tentative schedule is:

1. Issue city approved drawings middle of December 2009
2. Mandatory pre-bid meeting first week of January 2010
3. Bid opening first week of February 2010
4. Award bid second week of February 2009
5. Exchange of bonds, insurance certificates, schedule of values, final February 2010
6. Begin construction, last week of February 2010
7. Completion on or before November 15, 2010
8. Remediation List November 15, 2010
9. Commissioning of building December 2010
10. Final completion December 2010 - Certificate of Occupancy from City of Peoria



# DECEMBER 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
		Metropolis Clergy Retreat (Bible Class cancelled)		7:00pm Choir	9:00am Divine Liturgy St. Barbara	
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Parish Council Elections	7:00pm Philoptochos Christmas Potluck	10:30am Bible Study 7:00pm Parish Council		7:00pm Choir		
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Stewardship Sunday		10:30am Bible Study		7:00pm Choir		
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Sunday School Christmas Program		10:30am Bible Study		9:00am Royal Hours of Christmas 6:00pm Divine Liturgy Christmas Eve	Christmas Day (Church office closed)	
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>		
8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy						

# Parish Council Corner

By Ray Wysmierski, Parish Council President

I hope all have had a great and exciting opportunity to celebrate the Groundbreaking of our "New Beginning" with the fellowship hall at 75th and Greenway.

The event was marked by many who attended the weekend events to those who put in countless hours in preparation from logistics to the meal then the finale in breaking ground.

My fellow parish family members, The Time is Actually Here, It is Happening, We are Going To Build! So lets take that "Leap of Faith" and make your commitment, if you have not already done so, remember we have 12 months left at our current location.

It is imperative for every member to participate in at least one if not all of

the activities that will be taking place in months to come (fundraisers, fundraisers, fundraisers).

We need each and every member of our community to make this year and years to come successful.

The parish General Assembly was a great success with all the exciting information that was presented on behalf of the council members and the respective committees. Don't forget to vote for the council candidates that were presented at the assembly meeting, we have more candidates than openings, which is great.

Also remember The Stewardship Campaign for now and the future:

- Pledge. Help yourself and the Parish plan and manage.
- Give regularly. Help the Parish meet monthly commitments.

- Volunteer. Come see how to make our mission personal.
- Live Now. The \$325 stewardship of 1978 purchase \$1092 in 2009.
- Step Up to recommend Stewardship financial guidelines:
  - Start proportional giving at 2% of gross income
  - Tithe 10% of gross income
  - Or offer a minimum pledge of at least \$1000

I am looking forward to this new Church Liturgical year, and most importantly, our church filled to capacity( and then some) on Sunday mornings.

In Christ, Ray Wysmierski

## Taste of Greece

