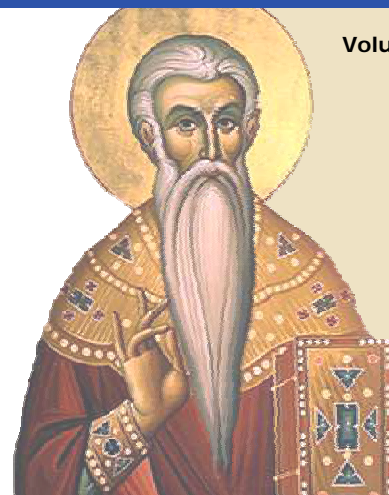


in Touch

Volume 17, Issue 1

January 2009



The Official Publication of St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church

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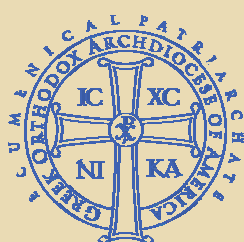
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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Join the fun on
**Vasilopita
Sunday**
January 11



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

The Feastday of Theophany



...the dove appearing over Jesus' head representing the Holy Spirit, and the words of God the Father declaring Jesus as His Beloved Son.

On the 12th Day of Christmas in the Orthodox Tradition, we celebrate the feastday of Theophany or Epiphany, which commemorates not just the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ, but the revelation of the Holy Trinity. A look at the icon of the feast, reminds us of this by showing John the Baptist next to Jesus, the dove appearing over Jesus' head representing the Holy Spirit, and the words of God the Father declaring Jesus as His Beloved Son.

In the Orthodox tradition, the Church sanctifies holy water following the Divine Liturgy on the eve of the feast as well as on the feastday itself, Jan. 6. See the calendar for service times, and be sure to bring a small container with you if you'd like to take some of the holy water with you.





Learning to prioritize the day's activities

"We're constantly making choices about the way we spend our time, from the major seasons to the individual moments in our lives. We're also living with the consequences of those choices. And many of us don't like those consequences – especially when we feel there's a gap between how we're spending our time and what we feel is deeply important in our lives."

"My life is hectic! I'm running all day – meetings, phone calls, paperwork, appointments. I push myself to the limit, fall into bed exhausted, and get up early the next morning to do it all again. My output is tremendous; I'm getting a lot done. But I get this feeling inside sometimes, 'So what? What are you doing that really counts?' I have to admit, I don't know."

Sentiments like these, taken from "First Things First" by best-selling author Stephen Covey ("The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People"), are often echoed by younger students as well as retirees: how do we cope with such hectic lifestyles? And how can

we make time for the "things that really count?"

The answer offered by Covey might not be what you'd expect. Not everything happening during the day is equally important or urgent, so his solution begins with learning to prioritize the day's activities. He doesn't talk about taking things out of a person's schedule as much as he insists on prioritizing the events for each day.

It is an unfortunate reality that for many people, including Orthodox Christians living in the Phoenix valley, Sunday morning church attendance often suffers because of busy work and family schedules. Somehow, the notion that Sunday mornings offer much-needed "downtime," has taken root in the minds of many families. Isn't the start of a new year a great time to re-think our priorities as Orthodox Christians?

Having some downtime is very important, and in many cases, needs to be planned like any other activity. But not on Sunday morning! Sunday

morning is not downtime; it is our Sabbath, and we must remember to keep the Sabbath holy, dedicated to worshiping God with our church family.

Sunday, for Orthodox Christians, is the day of the Resurrection, the day our Lord miraculously and triumphantly came out of the tomb in which he was buried. Every Sunday of every year since that time, has been dedicated to liturgical worship in the Orthodox Church. No other parish activity has taken or will take its place, and all other family and work-related activities should be scheduled around it.

If, for some reason, you have gotten out of the habit of regularly (at least once/month) attending Sunday morning services, or have stopped preparing to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion, please take the start of the new year as an opportunity to re-evaluate what is really important in life. For Orthodox Christians, keeping the Sabbath holy is a

(Continued on page 8)

For Orthodox Christians, keeping the Sabbath holy is a commandment 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 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
FrMichael@StHaralambos.phxcoxmail.com

Hours

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

Parish Council

George Retsinas, President
Ray Wysmierski, Vice-President
Roberta Szklarski, Secretary
Stella Pagos, Treasurer
Mike Danielek
Olga Fredericksen

Mary Manos
Peter Retsinas
Katherine Tally
Peter Tremoulis
Mary Wysmierski



Dr. Philip Mamalakis

Parish Council Election Results

Congratulations to the following newly elected members of our parish council: Angie Cholas, Dave Fredericksen, Peter Retsinas and Katherine Tally. The parish council installation will take place on Sunday, Jan. 4, and we wish them, along with the other council members, a new year of continued progress in administering the events and activities of our parish.

We would also like to thank George Christie and Olga Fredericksen, whose terms expired last month, for their service on the council.

Marriage Enrichment

Why is it that so many couples begin marriage as soul-mates, but over time act like roommates, and even end up as cellmates? We all began our marriages with the hopes of having a peaceful, intimate, supportive and loving marriage until the very end. Why is it that most people seem to be enduring their marriages rather than enjoying them? Did God intend us to endure our marriages, or to thrive in them? Isn't marriage about living happily ever after, or is that just a message we get from Hollywood?

Join Dr. Philip Mamalakis, professor of Pastoral Care at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, for a time of Lenten reflection and renewal. We'll explore how God wants us to live happily

ever after in marriage, and how to build a marriage that you look forward to coming home to each day. He'll discuss how couples grow apart and against each other, and offer some real, faith-based strategies and perspectives on how to deepen your connection to your spouse, and to God.

This one-day marriage workshop is being sponsored by St. Haralambos Church, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Assumption Church and St. Katherine's Church, and will be held at Holy Trinity Cathedral on Saturday, Mar. 14 at 9 a.m. It is open to married couples from all valley Orthodox parishes. The workshop includes lunch and will finish at 3:30 p.m. More information regarding registration will be forthcoming.

Parish Feastday Celebration

Everyone is invited to the celebration of the feastday of our parish, beginning with Great Vespers on Monday, Feb. 9 at 7 p.m. followed by a wonderful reception hosted by the members of our Philoptochos. Divine Liturgy will be celebrated the

following morning, Feb. 10, at 9 a.m. Finally on Sunday, Feb. 15, our Parish Council will be hosting our annual feastday dinner, following services. More details to come in next month's newsletter.

2008 Greek Festival Financial Report

INCOME

Booth Income	61,977.50
Program Book	3,360.00
Vendors	2,300.00
Donations	1,182.50
Misc	40.40
TOTAL INCOME	\$68,860.40

EXPENSES

Booth Expenses	16,555.30
Entertainment	3,969.12
Labor	2,507.92
Promotions	3,180.38
Rentals	3,289.63
Supplies	1,372.80
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$30,875.15
NET INCOME	\$37,985.25

Notes

1. \$750.00 income outstanding 2. Detailed income and expenses are posted at church.

House Blessings

Start the New Year with a special family event, according to the traditions of the Holy Orthodox Church, asking God's blessings for your home and your family!

Please complete the form below to indicate your preferred date and schedule your house blessing. Mail the form to the church office, or bring it with you to church on Sunday. You will be contacted by our secretary to confirm your day and time.



House Blessing Request Form

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR PREFERENCE

Zone 1: South of Peoria Ave. and West of 83rd Ave.

_____ Tuesday, January 6 _____ Sunday, January 11
 _____ Thursday, January 15 _____ Wednesday, January 21

Zone 2: North of Peoria Ave. and West of 83rd Ave.

_____ Wednesday, January 7 _____ Monday, January 12
 _____ Saturday, January 17 _____ Tuesday, January 20

Zone 3: North of Peoria Ave. and East of 83rd Ave.

_____ Thursday, January 8 _____ Tuesday, January 13
 _____ Sunday, January 18 _____ Thursday, January 22

Zone 4: South of Peoria Ave. and East of 83rd Ave.

_____ Saturday, January 10 _____ Wednesday, January 14
 _____ Monday, January 19 _____ Tuesday, January 27

St. Christopher's Bookstore

THE FORGOTTEN MEDICINE

by Archimandrite Seraphim Aleksiev,
1994, 72pp.

As Orthodox Christians, we all believe in eternal life and should be seriously concerned with our salvation. Would you be willing to spend an hour of your time to dramatically increase the likelihood of your salvation? If so, then this book is for you.

Archimandrite Aleksiev begins with the story of a traveler looking for a place to stay the night. Unfortunately, each of the first three people who invite him to be their guest lived in filth. The fourth one had a home that was clean, so the traveler chose to stay there.

"The only guest who can make our soul happy is God, since we are created for God." It's our sins that contaminate our souls and make them uninviting for the Holy Spirit. The author says, "There are only two kinds of water that can wash away the filth of sin: the water of baptism and the tears of repentance."

He calls sin a "spiritual disease. What medicine provides the miraculous cure" for our sins? The "forgotten medicine," Holy Confession. Many of us convince ourselves that our sins are so small that we don't need Holy Confession. However, Archimandrite Aleksiev points out that small sins lead to more small sins until we're in the habit of sinning, "dulling our moral consciousness."

Furthermore, many of us think that confessing our sins during our nightly prayers is sufficient. However, we're forgetting that the Lord gave the power to "bind and loose" sins only to the Apostles and their successors, the clergy. Holy Confession humbles us far more than asking God's forgiveness in solitude.

Also, the author warns us not to wait until we get seriously ill to take Holy Confession, in case we are incapable of speaking or remembering our sins.

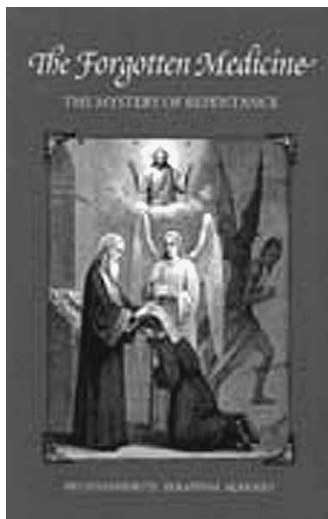
"God has promised to forgive [us] if we repent today, but He has not promised any where that [we] will live until tomorrow."

***"The only guest
who can make our
soul happy is God,
since we are
created for God."***

St. Mark the Ascetic is quoted as saying, "The Lord does not forgive the sins of the man who does not repent." We really need to confess frequently, so "there

is a great probability that death will find us when we are standing." (Clean of sin) Truly, "only those who have confessed" before taking Communion "benefit from it." Archimandrite Aleksiev says that taking Communion without confessing our sins first is like applying ointment to a wound without cleaning it first.

When we receive Holy Communion, we receive our Savior into our hearts. "When we are expecting a guest" we clean house. "How much more carefully should we prepare our souls when we are about to welcome the greatest Guest...Jesus Christ!"



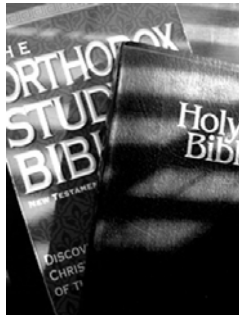
Sunday School

Why do I have to go to Sunday School?

- It is essential for us to understand that the primary purpose of Sunday School is the achievement of spiritual growth.
- We should attend Sunday school to promote the spread of our Greek Orthodox Faith, Biblical principles and develop a strong moral compass.
- A Sunday school serves as the means for our students to come together for a common cause and in this way it unites our youth...who will become our future and the Church's future.
- Attending Sunday school is an excellent way to make a small contribution towards the spread of the principles of Orthodoxy...student by student... household by household.
- Being a student of a Sunday school can pave for us a path of approaching God and understanding what He has to say.

- It is the students 'stewardship' contribution to his or her Church.

As parents you need to remind yourselves that the '**apple doesn't fall far from the tree**' and each child is like '**a chip off the old block.**'



If you complain and criticize or bad-mouth...spread rumors... gossip about other parishioners...or employ any number of excuses for not attending Divine Liturgy on Sunday... that is **exactly** what your children will think of the

rest of their lives about the Church and Sunday School.

Is that what you want to be responsible for?

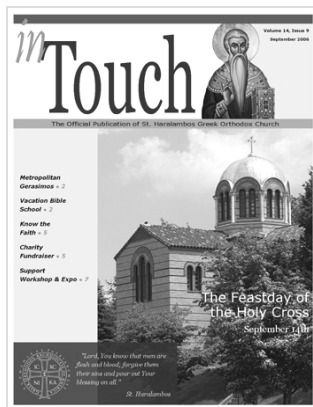
The best thing for each of us to do is fill the seats (pews) each and every Sunday morning... **cultivate the commitment... be the tree and the block!**

Managing Editor Needed

Our parish monthly newsletter needs someone to manage its monthly production. What is involved? Here are the responsibilities:

- Prepare the monthly production calendar
- Send production calendar to parish organizations
- Collect and edit rough copy
- Send for formatting
- Proofread final copy
- Develop new columns and features

Interested parishioners should send an email to Fr. Michael at FrMichael@StHaralambos.phxcoxmail.com



Coffee Hour

Thank You to Our Coffee Hour Hosts/Sponsors

Nov. 30 Pam Lemons

Dec. 7 Alice Hecht - Anna Yacyshyn

Dec. 14 Parish Council

Dec. 21 Aphrodite Devolites

Dec. 28 Available

Jan. 4 Available

Jan. 11 Vasilopita Sunday

Jan. 18 Available

Jan. 25 Available

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

Birthdays



Louise Karmeris (1st)
 Jim Christian (2nd)
 Areti Karandreas (3rd)
 Nina Milonas (4th)
 Tyke Solomon (6th)
 Peter Stamas (11th)
 Sophia Mallos (14th)
 Elaine Giannias Winn (14th)
 George Pikoula (20th)
 Dimitri Theoharatos (22nd)
 John Obren (23rd)
 Catherine Jie Baxter (28th)
 Mary Wysmierski (29th)
 Reni Milonas (31st)
 Frosene Yelton (31st)

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.

Sacraments

May God grant many years to the newly baptized: Despina Tremoulis (Nov. 12, 2008), Lemonia, Eleni, Angelo and Irene Panas (Nov. 12, 2008), and George Stivaktakis (Nov. 29, 2008).

Congratulations to Hector and Litsa Saenz, whose marriage was blessed on Sunday, Dec. 7, 2008.

Congratulations to Michael Hansford, who was Chrismated into the Holy Orthodox Church on Sunday, Dec. 14, 2008.

We wish them all many years of good health and happiness .

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, Fannie Huzinec, John and Mary Karavaras, Eva Nicolaides, Nikita and Josette Reisler, Charlotte Servetas, and Ray Wysmierski .

Name Days

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

St. Basil the Great (1st))	St. Mark of Ephesos (19th)
St. Malachi (3rd)	St. Euthymios the Great (20th)
Epiphany (6th)	St. Timothy (22nd)
St. Gregory of Nyssa (10th)	St. Xenia (24th)
St. Tatiani (12th)	St. Gregory the Theologian (25th)
St. Anthony the Great (17th)	St. Ephraim the Syrian (28th)
St. Athanasios (18th)	

Pastor's Column

(Continued from page 3)

commandment of God, not a suggestion. The way Orthodox Christians have been keeping the Sabbath holy is through regular Sunday worship and receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

May our good and loving God grant us the gifts of time and wisdom to re-evaluate our lives and our schedules, and to make the time for things that really count!

JANUARY 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	5 9:00am The Royal Hours of Epiphany 6:00pm Vespersal Liturgy of St. Basil (Pre-Epiphany) Blessing of the Waters	6 9:00am Divine Liturgy Epiphany Blessing of the Waters	7 9:00am Divine Liturgy St. John the Baptist 7:00pm Choir	8 10:30am Arizona Orthodox Clergy Council St. George Church	9	10
11 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Vasilopita Sunday	12 7:00pm Philoptochos	13	14 7:00pm Choir	15	16	17 9:00am Divine Liturgy St. Anthony the Great
18 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	19	20 7:00pm Parish Council	21 7:00pm Choir	22	23	24 9:00am Divine Liturgy Parish Council Training Holy Trinity Cathedral
25 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	26	27	28 7:00pm Choir	29	30 9:00am Divine Liturgy The Three Great Hierarchs	31