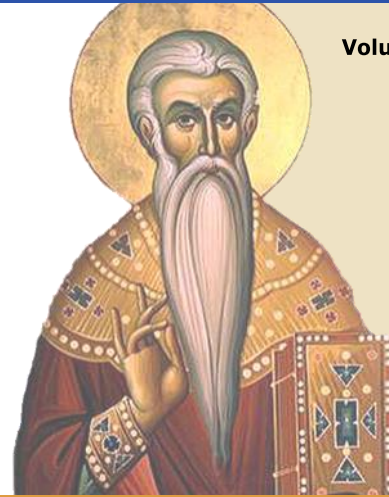


in Touch

Volume 31, Issue 3

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The Official Publication of St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church

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First Sunday of Great Lent
The Sunday of Orthodoxy



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

Lent Guidebook Available

The 2023 Lent Guidebook, with information on the annual Lenten Journey, was sent via email, and printed copies will be available on Sundays.

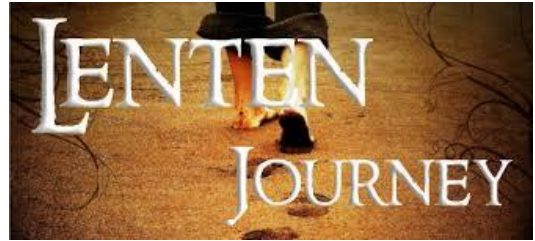
Please check the Community Calendar in this newsletter or on our website (www.stharalambos.org) to see dates and times of weekday church services and events.

The Lenten Compline service is held on Tuesday evenings at 7 pm, followed by a 30-minute film on the lives of the saints shown in our Fellowship Room. Refreshments will be available.

The Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts will be celebrated at 9 am on Wednesday mornings, followed by a Lenten breakfast in the Fellowship Room.

The Akathist Hymn is prayed on Friday evenings at 7 pm for the first five Friday evenings during Lent.

Holy Week services are scheduled for each day during the week, culminating in the Saturday evening Resurrection Service and Divine Liturgy very early on Sunday morning, Apr. 16, followed by the Vespers of Love at 1 pm.



Phoenix-area priests greet Archbishop Elpidophoros last month for the 2023 Leadership 100 meeting in Phoenix.

Front Entry Portico Project

Help Us Reach Our Goal!

We are well on our way to funding the construction of a front entry portico for the entrance of our church: \$46,000 of the \$110,000 goal has been donated!

Can you help with a gift this month? Donations of any amount are greatly appreciated to help us build this wonderful addition to our building. Donate online at www.stharalambos.org or checks can be made payable to Saint Haralambos Church and sent to the church office.





The Triumph of Orthodoxy

Because the ancient tradition of icons is unfamiliar to many non-Orthodox Christian traditions, a fair amount of misinformation exists concerning the proper function and use of iconography.

The text below is reprinted from the Archdiocese website (www.goarch.org) to help reinforce the proper history and understanding of the place of icons in Orthodox liturgical and private worship.

"The Sunday of Orthodoxy is the first Sunday of Great Lent (this year on Mar. 5). The dominant theme of this Sunday since 843 has been that of the victory of the icons. In that year the iconoclastic controversy, which had raged on and off since 726, was finally laid to rest, and icons and their veneration were restored on the first Sunday in Lent. Ever since, this Sunday has been commemorated as the "Triumph of Orthodoxy."

The Seventh Ecumenical Council dealt predominantly with the controversy regarding icons and their place in Orthodox worship. It was convened in Nicaea in 787 by Empress Irene at the request of Tarasios, Patriarch of Constantinople. The Council was attended by 367 bishops.

Almost a century before this, the iconoclastic controversy had once more shaken the foundations of both Church and State in the Byzantine empire. Excessive religious respect and the ascribed miracles to icons by some members of society, approached the point of worship (due only to God) and idolatry. This instigated excesses at the other extreme by which icons were completely taken out of the liturgical life of the Church by the Iconoclasts. The Iconophiles, on the other-hand, believed that icons served to preserve the doctrinal

teachings of the Church; they considered icons to be man's dynamic way of expressing the divine through art and beauty.

The Council decided on a doctrine by which icons should be venerated but not worshipped. In answering the Empress' invitation to the Council, Pope Hadrian replied with a letter in which he also held the position of extending veneration to icons but not worship, the last befitting only God.

The decree of the Council for restoring icons to churches added an important clause which still stands at the foundation of the rationale for using and venerating icons in the Orthodox Church to this very day:

The Council decided on a doctrine by which icons should be venerated but not worshipped.

"We define that the holy icons, whether in color, mosaic, or some other material, should be exhibited in the holy churches of God, on the sacred vessels and liturgical vestments, on the walls, furnishings, and in houses and along the roads, namely the icons of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, that of our Lady the Theotokos, those of the venerable angels and those of all saintly people. Whenever these representations are contemplated, they will cause those who look at them to commemorate and love their prototype. We define also that they should be kissed and that they are an object of veneration and honor (timitiki proskynisis), but not of real worship (latreia), which is reserved for Him Who is the subject of our faith and is proper for the divine nature. The veneration accorded to an icon is in effect transmitted to the prototype; he who venerates the icon, venerated in it the reality for which it stands".

(Continued on page 5)



**St. Haralambos
Greek Orthodox
Church**

www.stharalambos.org

Rev. Michael Pallad

Sunday Worship

Matins: 8:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy: 10 a.m.

[Services live online](#)

Office

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FrMichael@StHaralambosAZ.com

Hours

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

Parish Council

Cynthia Bekiaris	Dan Teska
Deborah Chionchio	Vivian Teska
Virginia Dent	Mary Wysmierski
Hope Evangelinos	Ray Wysmierski
Anna Kinniburgh	Solomon Woldesilassie

Parish Council News

By Ray Wysmierski, President

Great Lent is upon us as we all prepare for Pascha. Your council met on Feb. 13. We had another full agenda.

The agenda had many pressing issues.

Fr. Michael, Dan Teska, and Harry Bekiaris presented our plan to Peoria for the fencing of our property. In the meeting the city provided many additional details they wanted included in our plan. We will begin to put together our information for the upcoming daycare negotiations. Our property has been treated for weed prevention. If you begin to see unsightly areas of weeds please let Harry Bekiaris know and he will contact the company to come out and re-treat. Your stewardship is so very important, so if you haven't filled out a pledge card, please pick one up to complete, they are located at the candle stand. (Please look at the article (page 6) on the true meaning of stewardship)

The doors to our church have been serviced and are now fully restored to operational condition. Thanks to Harry

and Cynthia for staying on top of the repair company.

We are awaiting the donation of a ventless hood to complete the certification of our kitchen.

The Portico donations are still needed as we continue to move forward with building this beautiful structure onto our church.

Fr. Michael has been moved to his new office, located in the old crying room just to your right when entering the church.

Let us remember, that Lent is for care, compassion and forgiving, just as Jesus has done for all of us.

I will keep you informed of our current events as they unfold.

Remember, the Portico donations are still needed, if you haven't received a stewardship card, please call the office to get one or pick one up at the candle stand.

Your council is committed to running the church as a finely tuned machine.

Birthdays



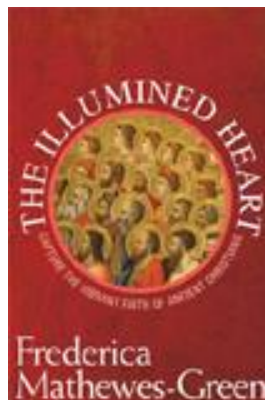
- Dina Surman (1)
- Costa Androulakis (2)
- Joselyn Braddock (2)
- Paraskevi Tsioutsopoulos (4)
- Kathryn Macrides (7)
- Mary Davis (11)
- Christina Gardner (16)
- Carly Macrides (16)
- Patricia Christie (17)
- Malia Panousopoulos (19)
- Estelle Zaruba (19)
- Nick Milonas (23)
- Adeline Braddock (31)

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.

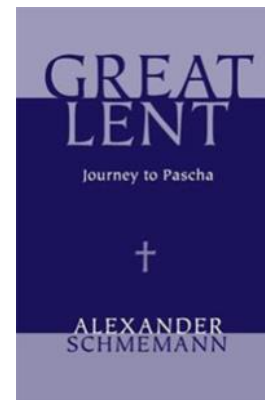
Book Club

St. Haralambos Book Club will have their first meeting on Mar. 2 at 4 pm to discuss *The Illumined Heart* by Frederica Mathewes-Green.

At last month's planning meeting, it was agreed that the group would meet at 4 pm every first Thursday of the month at church.



The book selection for April is *Great Lent: Journey to Pascha* by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann. If you missed the planning meeting and would like to join the group,



or if you have any questions, let Irene Nathanson know. Consider joining this club for thoughtful exchange and fellowship!

2023 Stewardship Families

Bekiaris, Harry & Cynthia
Bravos, Frosene
Bryson, Tom & Joan
Carlson, Olga
Chionchio, Debbie
Christian, Thalia
Conklin, Maria
Contes, Jamie
Covault, Lloyd & Angela
Davis, Mary
Deming, Janet
Dent, Virginia
Evangelinos, Parry & Hope
Farr, Paula
Farr, Kevin
Farr, Jeff & Judy
Finch, Dennis & Marina
Giannias, Elaine
Hartsel, Barbara
Javaras, Harry
Jolly, Judith
Kinniburgh, Bob & Anna
Lafayette, Henry & Maria

Lazzelle, Estelle
Levendi, Mary
Loukas, Christos & Peggy
Magnani, Sharon
Mavridis, Christos
Michas, Peter
Milonas, Nick & Jane
Munteanu, Mirela
Nathanson, Irene
Nicely, Edna
Pagos, Stella
Servetas, Charlotte
Singleton, Melanie
Stratos, George & Irene
Tally, Katherine
Tsfay, Ocbai & Genet
Teska, Dan & Vivian
Tsioutsopoulos, Demetre & Holly
Vasquez, Argyro
Woldesilassie, Solomon & Lydia
Wysmierski, Ray & Mary
Yannakopoulos, George & Helen
Zakas, Speros & Linda



Camp Agapi Fundraiser

We have some exciting news to announce! This month we are involved with the 2023 Camp Agapi fundraiser. Camp Agapi is a camp in Arizona that children with cancer and their families can go to spend a few days to relax and put their troubles away for a few days.

[Click here to donate.](#) We have joined the live auction, and by clicking on this

link, you can donate to the Auction. All money goes to the Camp to make Kids with cancer feel we are caring about them.

Please know that the families that benefit from your fundraising efforts truly appreciate what we are able to do for them. Even The smallest gesture means the world to them.



Clergy Column

(Continued from page 3)

An Endemousa (Regional) Synod was called in Constantinople in 843. Under Empress Theodora. The veneration of icons was solemnly proclaimed at the Hagia Sophia Cathedral. The Empress, her son Michael III, Patriarch Methodios, and

monks and clergy came in procession and restored the icons in their rightful place. The day was called "Triumph of Orthodoxy." Since that time, this event is commemorated yearly with a special service on the first Sunday of Lent, the "Sunday of Orthodoxy".

A NEW PERSPECTIVE



It was Sunday and the parish council members were counting the Sunday offering in the church office as the trays were being brought in from Divine Liturgy. One faithful parishioner found his way back to the church office and politely inquired, "How much do I owe?"

This well-intentioned parishioner was asking if he was up-to-date on his pledge, but his question reveals something about our thought process in offering our gifts to the Church.

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

Many Greek Orthodox parishes have embraced the process of stewardship, by which we offer our gifts to the church according to our blessings. Many continue to operate in a dues system. And some operate under a hybrid Stewardship-with-a-minimum system.

IMPLICATIONS OF A DUES SYSTEM

The idea that as a parish we are able to set an amount that is fair for all the faithful, the payment of which makes them members in good standing with rights and privileges, is flawed for a number of reasons.

Is it fair to think that the elderly widow living on Social Security, the successful real estate developer, the banker, the young tradesman with a growing family, the teacher and the lawyer each have received the same material blessings and have the same ability to give?

To set a specific required dues amount places an undue burden on some, but most often it underestimates the individual's ability to support the church.

JUST ANOTHER BILL

The dues system also diminishes the joy of giving and turns it into just another bill to be paid. It's important to give with joy from our heart. As St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, "So let each one *give* as he intends in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Gregory the Theologian writes, "You will never overcome God's generosity, even if you give away all that you have.... And however much you bring to him, always more remains. Nor will you give anything that is your own; for all things flow from God (Or 14.22)."



RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS

We often hear economists talk about the balance of payments. This concept also applies to our offering to the Church. We can never give enough to God for the blessings He has given us. We are always in a deficit position. But when we set a dues amount, whatever it may be, it implies that if we pay this amount, then we have fulfilled our obligation to the Church. "I paid my dues, now I get to vote, receive sacraments, and express my opinion on how the parish should be run."

STEWARDSHIP WITH A MINIMUM

Many parishes attempt a sort of hybrid system of Stewardship with a minimum. This sends the contradictory message to parishioners that we trust you to give as you have been blessed, but are not willing to take that leap of faith. When we deal with minimums, we also have to realize that there is always a number of faithful who will be excluded when we have minimums and dues.

We need to be reminded that God never gives to us in minimums and our giving should never be guided by a minimum. Orthodox Christianity is not about minimums, it is about maximums. Jesus gave the maximum for us. We now carry on His ministry with maximum giving. And from a practical point of view, minimums have a funny way of becoming maximums.

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is our response to God's grace and moves us from grace to gratitude. Just as we love because God

first loved us (I John 4:14), we give because God first gave to us.

The question of the Psalmist "What shall I give to the Lord in return for all His benefits towards me?" (Ps 116:2), is answered in every liturgy when the celebrant calls us to "offer ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God."

One January day, nearly 20 years ago, a young parish council president was just getting accustomed to his new duties when someone placed a stack of checks in front of him to be signed. As he quickly signed each check, his pen was suddenly stopped by the sight of a check that had been placed before him for his signature. It was the salary check for his priest – the priest who had baptized him, for whom he served as an altar boy, to whom he had gone for confession and whom he loved and respected as his spiritual father.

It was one of the most humbling experiences of his life. And the amount of the check seemed ridiculously small in consideration of the effect that this priest had on the lives his parishioners.

This is the same feeling we should have when we make our stewardship offering to the Lord – humility, appreciation, thanksgiving, joy, respect, and love.

THE EARLY CHURCH

In his book on the Eucharist, Fr Alexander Schmemmann explains that in the early church, the Eucharistic sacrifice was offered by all the 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: A WAY OF LIFE

A young man had taken his girlfriend to a high-priced restaurant. As the young couple looked over the menu the young woman scanned the prices of the entrees, and then turning to the young man she asked, “How much do you love me?” Continuing to scan the menu, the young man replied, “Probably more than the corned beef, but not as much as the broiled lobster.”

Stewardship is not about calculations or portions 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 “Thine own of Thine own we offer to thee...”



• STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES •

DEPARTMENT OF
STEWARDSHIP, OUTREACH & EVANGELISM
GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
83 St Basil Road Garrison, NY 10524
646/519-6161 • Stewardship@goarch.org

MARCH 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9:00am Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts	2 6:00pm Journey to Fullness	3 7:00pm Akathist Hymn: 1st Stanza	4 9:00am Divine Liturgy Saturday of Souls
5 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy First Sunday of Lent	6	7 7:00pm Lenten Compline	8 9:00am Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts	9 6:00pm Journey to Fullness	10 7:00pm Akathist Hymn: 2nd Stanza	11
12 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Second Sunday of Lent	13	14 7:00pm Lenten Compline	15 9:00am Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts	16 6:00pm Journey to Fullness	17 7:00pm Akathist Hymn: 3rd Stanza	18
19 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Third Sunday of Lent	20	21 7:00pm Lenten Compline	22 9:00am Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts	23 6:00pm Journey to Fullness	24 7:00pm Great Vespers: Feast of	25 9:00am Divine Liturgy Annunciation to the Theotokos
26 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Fourth Sunday of Lent	27	28 7:00pm Lenten Compline	29 9:00am Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts	30 6:00pm Journey to Fullness	31 7:00pm Akathist Hymn: Complete	