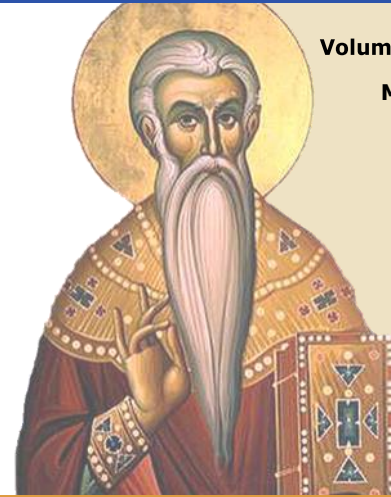


in Touch

Volume 31, Issue 5-6

May-June 2023



The Official Publication of St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church

*You ascended in glory,
Christ our God!*

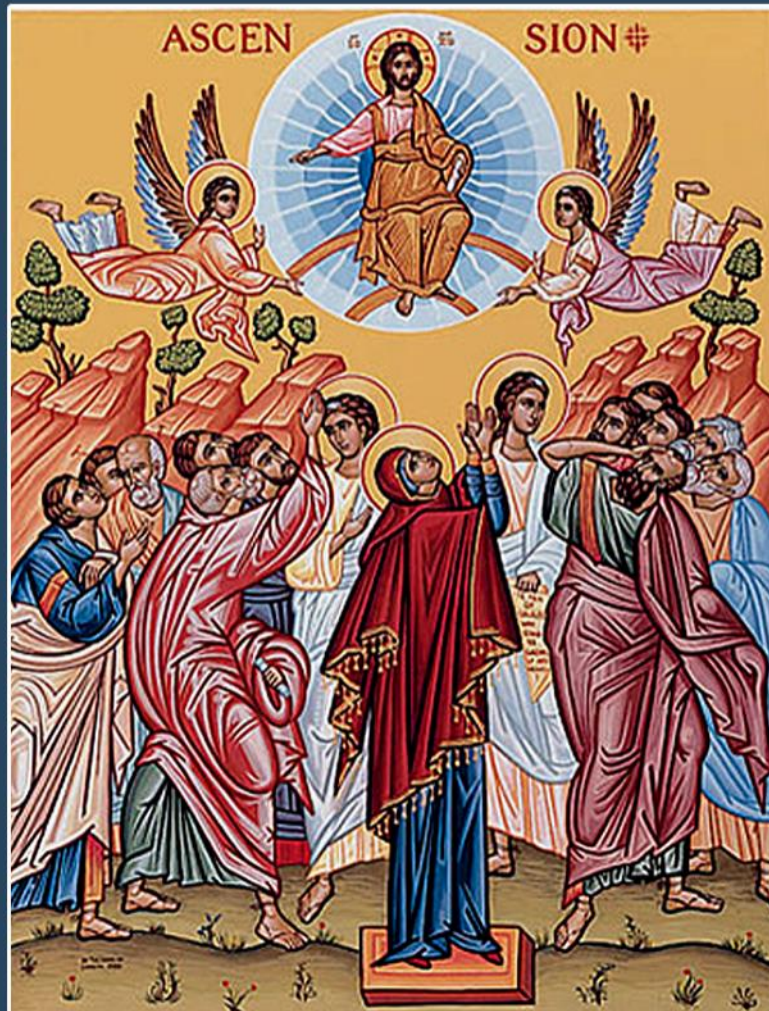
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Lord, You know that men are flesh and blood; forgive them their sins and pour out Your blessing on all. — St. Haralambos

Myrrh-Bearing Women

The myrrh bearers were women who were at the foot of the cross when Jesus was crucified, and who prepared the burial spices and came to the tomb first to anoint his body. The myrrh oils are what they brought to the tomb and how they were named. Many women had followed Jesus throughout His ministry. The myrrh bearers were the first witnesses that Christ had risen from the dead. The angel announced the resurrection of Christ to them and commissioned them to take the good news to the Apostles. On Good Friday, we sing the Lamentations poetically proclaiming their mourning. Our young women serve as Myrrh Bearers during this Good Friday Service. On the third Sunday of Pascha, Apr. 30 this year, we celebrate them. Our young women beautifully served as myrrh bearers in this tradition



Coin Drive

Thank you to all who donated to the Orthodox Christian Mission Center 2023 Coin Drive. The coin boxes were placed on the tables in the Fellowship Room throughout Great Lent. From the donations placed in the boxes, we were able to send our parish donation of \$180.



Spring General Assembly

All are encouraged and invited to attend our Spring General Assembly, to be held on Sunday, May 28, in our Fellowship Room following services.

As a reminder, the General Assemblies are open to everyone; however, only Members in Good Standing, current in their Stewardship pledge, are eligible to vote on

any issues during the Assembly

We look forward to seeing everyone on May 28. General Assemblies are scheduled twice each year, and are your best means of staying informed on parish events, activities and plans, and provides opportunities to offer your thoughts and suggestions.

Front Entry Portico Project

Help Us Reach Our Goal!

The parish council will soon be deciding on which proposal will be awarded the contract to build the Front Entry Portico. This beautiful addition to our building is quickly moving from “dream” stage to becoming a reality!

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 40-day Ascension of the Lord

The Lord Jesus passed forty days on earth after His Resurrection from the dead, appearing continually in various places to His disciples, with whom He also spoke, ate, and drank, thereby further demonstrating His Resurrection. On this Thursday, the fortieth day after Pascha (this year on May 25), He appeared again in Jerusalem. After He had first spoken to the disciples about many things, He gave them His last commandment, that is, that they go forth and proclaim His Name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. But He also commanded them that for the present, they were not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait there together until they receive power from on high, when the Holy Spirit would come upon them.

Saying these things, He led them to the Mount of Olives, and raising His hands, He blessed them; and saying again the words of the Father's blessing, He was parted from them and taken up. Immediately a cloud of light, a proof of His majesty, received Him. Sitting thereon as though on a royal chariot, He was taken up into Heaven, and after a short time was concealed from the sight of the disciples, who remained where they were with their eyes fixed on Him. At this point, two Angels in the form of men in white raiment appeared to them and said, "Men of Galilee, why stand gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, Who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven" (Acts 1:11). These words, in a complete and concise manner, declare what is taught in the Symbol of Faith concerning the Son and Word of God. Therefore, having so fulfilled all His dispensation for us, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended in glory into Heaven, and sat at the right hand of God the Father. As for His sacred

disciples, they returned from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, rejoicing because Christ had promised to send them the Holy Spirit. (Source: www.goarch.org)

Ten days after His glorious ascension, the Lord fulfilled His promise to His disciples by sending the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, this year celebrated on Sunday, June 4.

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of

Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4)

Such, therefore, are the reasons for today's feast: the coming of the All-holy Spirit into the world, the completion of the Lord Jesus Christ's promise, and the fulfilment of the hope of the sacred disciples, which we celebrate today. This is the final feast of the great mystery and dispensation of God's incarnation. On

this last, and great, and saving day of Pentecost, the Apostles of the Savior, who were unlearned fishermen, made wise now of a sudden by the Holy Spirit, clearly and with divine authority spoke the heavenly doctrines. They became heralds of the truth and teachers of the whole world. On this day they were ordained and began their apostleship, of which the salvation of those three thousand souls in one day was the comely and marvelous first fruit. (Source: www.goarch.org)



**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](#)

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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

Happy Pascha, Christ is Risen! The Parish Council is moving right along for the best interests of the Parish. Thank you for all your tremendous support, love and understanding. It is with great excitement that we have completed the lease negotiations with Brilliant Blessings daycare, and we have an 18-month lease extension. We are excited that we have such a great addition to our church.

We are blessed that they feel at home in our church.

We welcome your generous support for the portico, as we enter the next phase getting bids for construction. The portico offers an even greater sense of our Orthodox faith, as an extension to St. Haralambos's edifice. We still need your support for completing the project.

I completed the Journey to Fullness, which is primarily a new inquirers class, and it is so good to see more new faces that are seeking Orthodoxy in order to convert to our 2000 year old faith. Especially, several young men who you may see in our worship services. If a face is unfamiliar, take a moment and say, "hello" and welcome. By the way, the class is a very good refresher for the seasoned Orthodox. You can never learn too much. Besides, the biggest reward is sharing our faith with potentially new Orthodox Christians.

As I mentioned before in the last newsletter, Father, Vivian Teska, and

myself will be attending the clergy-laity conference in Dunlop, California, at St. Nicholas Ranch. I will describe our experience in the next newsletter.

Let us all help our face-book page and hopefully our website with sterling photographs of our activities and beautiful church. You can send them to me at, rwysmier@gmail.com or Fr. Michael.

A special Thank you! to Anna Kinniburgh and all her wonderful helpers, for the delicious Palm Sunday luncheon. Success!

All of our doors are finally repaired with the right company, long awaited parts, and the wonderful service of Harry Bekiaris. "Thank you." Harry heads up the maintenance ministry and is doing a super job.

On another note, the original Hobart refrigerator has died and you may have seen two white non-commercial refrigerators in its place, thanks again to Harry for bringing them from our storage trailers. We will be in the process of removing the old one as it needs to be dismantled to remove it. If you have time and talent, I am sure the Philoptococ can use your help in making more room to work in the kitchen.

And finally, the security fence, is still moving along. We are in the process of securing a surveyor to consolidate our property into one lot as required by the city. I hope to have more information as we progress.

From the Heart

By Irene Nathanson

A sincere thank you to all who graciously volunteered to assist with the many greeting and ushering duties during this Lenten season. The additional help from Parish Council was invaluable and displayed what can be accomplished through dedication and teamwork. Altogether, you created a warm, orderly, and welcoming environment for all

parishioners and visitors of Saint Haralambos to enjoy at a most holy time of year! I am in gratitude to: Cynthia and Harry Bekiaris, Deborah Chionchio, Angie Cholas, Maria Conklin, Hope Evangelinos, Anna Kinniburgh, Maria Lafayette, Melanie Singleton, Sharopima William, Solomon Woldesilassie, and Mary and Ray Wysmierski.

Birthdays



May

Beylul Russom (1)
Kristen Benjamin (5)
Charlotte Servetas (5)
Shirley Germenis (8)
Despina Tremoulis (8)
Megan Pallad (10)
Lourdes Kotsobeis (16)
Constantine Teska (16)
Tony Panousopoulos (18)
Voule Kapetanakis (19)
Nicoletta Crough (21)
John Zafiroopoulos (22)
Genet Tesfay (23)
Anita Calivas (26)
Katherine Stithem (26)
Barbara Hartsel (29)

June

George Theoharatos (6)
Edna Nicely (7)
Nile Solomon (15)
Stavroula Dodd (18)
Niat Solomon (18)
Maria Conklin (19)
Duane Schepers (22)
Eleni Teska (23)
Andreanna Zafiroopoulos (25)
Madelyn Pritchard (27)
Anna Kinniburgh (29)
Bereket Russom (29)
Nadia Schepers (30)

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

The Saint Haralambos Book Club met last month to discuss the book, *Great Lent: Journey to Pascha* by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann. This timely classic explores the meaning of the Lenten season and “draws on the Church’s sacramental and liturgical tradition to suggest the meaning of Lent in our life.”

The group continues to meet on the first Thursday of the month at 4 pm. If you enjoy reading and fellowship, consider joining June’s gathering to discuss *The Open Door: Entering the Sanctuary of Icons and Prayer* by Frederica Mathewes-Green. Contact Irene Nathanson at ireneOrRena@cox.net for information.



2023 Stewardship Families

Abbitt, Dimetra
Asfaha, Moges
Berhe, Almaz
Bekiaris, Harry & Cynthia
Bravos, Frosene
Bryson, Tom & Joan
Carlson, Olga
Chionchio, Debbie
Cholas, Angie
Christian, Thalia
Conklin, Maria
Contes, Jamie
Covault, Lloyd & Angela
Danielek, Michael and Chrissy
Davis, Mary
Deming, Janet
Dent, Virginia
Dodd, Voula
Evangelinos, Parry & Hope
Farr, Paula
Farr, Kevin
Farr, Jeff & Judy
Finch, Dennis & Marina
Gardener, Semos
Giannias, Elaine
Gryparis, Demetri and Magda
Hartsel, Barbara
Javaras, Harry
Jolly, Judith
Kapetenakis, Voule and Cathy

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
Pallad, Fr. Michael & Pres. Kristin
Pappas, Irene
Servetas, Charlotte
Singleton, Melanie
Stratos, George & Irene
Surman, Dina
Tally, Katherine
Tsfay, Ocbai & Genet
Teska, Dan & Vivian
Tsioutsopoulos, Demetre & Holly
Vardalos, Peter & Lindsay
Vasquez, Argyro
Woldesilassie, Solomon & Lydia
Wysmierski, Ray & Mary
Yannakopoulos, George & Irene
Zakas, Speros & Linda



Oratorical Festival

Congratulations to Bethel Samuel who placed First in the Senior Division District Oratorical Festival on Sunday, Apr. 28, and to Adonna Gebregiorgis who placed Second in the Junior Division!

They now move on to give their talks at the Metropolis Oratorical Festival which

will be held on Saturday, May 13 at Saint Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center in Dunlap, California.

For those who were not able to listen to the speeches, we are printing them here for your enjoyment.



Bethel Samuel

Speech Topic: During times of crisis, our faith is tested. How are Orthodox Christians taught to understand and manage pain and suffering?

Reverend Father, honorable judges, fellow speakers, ladies and gentlemen, good morning!

For what reason do good people experience suffering? Why doesn't God simply prevent people from making awful decisions that would harm others, or better yet, why doesn't He simply "turn back time" and stop the sin from ever happening? These seem to be some simple questions that some people may pose. By asking these questions, we reveal our continued misunderstanding of God's magnificent gift of free will, "but if I do what I do not desire, I am no longer the one doing it" (Romans 7:20). Free will is the capacity to make judgments about what is good or bad between different things. This was given to us, so that we can choose to have a relationship with him. And without free will there would not be a purpose to life.

Suffering and Pain is what makes our relationship with God stronger. It tests our faith and connection with him. If you occupy your mind with negative thoughts such as "God is upset with me," "God is not good," "worse things are going to occur," and so on, you will find it difficult to feel the peace that God offers us in Scripture, "and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7). Instead of blaming or accusing God as the reason for an unpleasant thing happening to us, we should look to the bible for answers. The adversities we go through are transformed into a route that leads to righteousness, redemption, and glory. Our faith is tested everyday with every decision, every consequence, and every achievement. It is our job to remember that God is with us.

Both suffering and pain can show up in many numerous ways. It does not necessarily have to be damaging or

scarring, it can be something as simple as getting a cramp while running, losing your keys, or getting a bad grade. In any kind of scenario God can play the same role. A few years ago my aunt died. It was unexpected and took quite a toll on my family. We didn't ask God to bring her back or to even take us to her. Instead we asked him to help us through our grieving, to remind us of all the good things we have right in front of us, and to take her to a better place (the kingdom of heaven). All we need is God's presence in our time of suffering, "behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" Matthew 28:20. He is here for us, not to end our suffering but to hold our hand through the pain.

When we deliberately choose to worship despite our suffering, something tremendous happens. We are not ignoring reality; rather, we are redirecting our focus from worry to praise. We remind ourselves of who God is by filling our minds with the holy scripture, "not only this, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope." (Romans 5: 3-4). The adversities we face are what keeps us going, we have the opportunity to improve and grow when we suffer. Suffering also leads to hope and faith because it can create a new relationship with God, a relationship that is new, a relationship that is stronger and more lasting.

Suffering and pain makes us stronger, "but after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, will make you perfect, restore you, and make you strong, firm, and steadfast." (1 Peter 5:10). When our faith and our relationship with God is strengthened we begin to learn who he is, not just things about him. Pain and suffering is temporary, it will end, and when it does our relationship with God should be enhanced, and only then will we be ready to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Oratorical Festival

Adonna Moges

Speech Topic: Jesus models and teaches humility throughout His life and ministry. Discuss the challenges of living according to Jesus' teachings in a society that does not necessarily emphasize humility.

Reverend Father, honorable judges, fellow speakers, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

Being a Christian in this day and age is not easy. There are distractions all around us to drive us away from our faith. We are told to focus on living our lives through Jesus' teachings. We live in a world where humility isn't common but advertising what we have is. So, how can we live a life with humility and through the word of God and still have a successful and happy life? We can lead a life of humbleness without bragging and chasing material things.

"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before the fall. Better to be lowly in spirit along with the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud." (Proverbs 16:18-19). I understand this verse to mean that excessive pride harms your faith and relationship with God. The humble, whether they own vast materials or things, will live a happier and fuller life. The verse can also mean that your friends and the people you align yourself with can influence the way we act and behave. As the saying goes "tell me who your friends are, and I will tell you who you are." One of the many reasons we come to church is to meet Christians who want to lead a God-centric life and to develop a relationship with God in accordance with these beliefs. My fellow Christians, I believe unrestrained pride does not align with our faith, but modesty does. We should not think we are better than everyone else. We are all equal in God's eyes and God created us in his

image.

"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your father in heaven" (Matthew 6:5). Again, this verse illustrates that we do not need to brag about our virtue to enter heaven. You do not need anyone's praise or validation. As a teenager, I may feel the need to post on social media when I get new shoes or clothes. But that should not be the case. We live in a materialistic world where everyone wants to show off what they have. But you do not need to always have to announce what you have in a never-ending desire for others to like you. The only endorsement you need is from God as His love is not conditioned on what you do or do not have.

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'" (Hebrews 13:5) This verse demonstrates that the love for money will not make life better but coming to terms with what you have, knowing God will always be with you, does. Money may pay for things you need to survive: health, food, and shelter. Although money pays for everything, it does not love or know what is best for you. The satisfaction money gives you lasts a couple of hours but the love that God gives you lasts an eternity.

So with a parting thought we as Christians should be humble in our faith. We should be content with what we have. And refrain from bragging and showing off for others. For God, and living our lives through His teaching, is all that is important.



Unity in the Church

“The Church is the unity of all worlds, earthly and heavenly, of angels and men, of the living and the dead. We obtain real communion with God and we participate in God’s uncreated energy. God does not stay in heaven, directing history from there. He directs the world with His uncreated governing energies. We do not aim at appeasing God, but to heal ourselves, so that the vision of God becomes light for us and not fire. Furthermore, in the Church we live eternal life starting from now. We do not simply await the life to come, but we experience and enjoy it from the present. The Kingdom of God, according to the Fathers, is not life beyond the grave, but communion with God, above all, the vision of the uncreated Light.”

Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos
The Illness and Cure of the Soul in the Orthodox Tradition



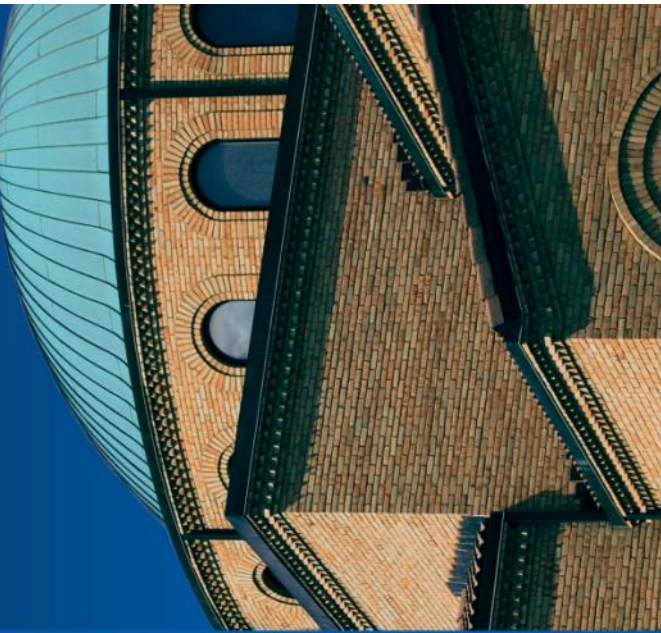
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Our Church Our Spiritual Home



Home is safe and familiar. It is where we belong. Our Orthodox Christian Church is our spiritual home. It is a place of prayer, comfort, spiritual healing, and celebration. We are at home in the fragrance of incense, the sound of hymns and prayers, the physical touch of kneeling, bowing and making the sign of the cross, and the taste of Holy Communion and antidoron (the blessed bread). You may have been brought to the Orthodox Church on your 40th day, or the Orthodox Church may have been the destination of your spiritual journey. For both, the Church is a spiritual home to which we may always return. We are brothers and sisters in Christ – a family.

One Orthodox Christian author writes about the Ekklesia (the Church), “This Ekklesia exists when the dispersed, divided, self-preoccupied people unite and become a family, where people see one another as brothers and sisters with God as their common father, and try to share whatever they have and whatever they are, and be united in heart and soul” (P. Faros in Functional and Dysfunctional Christianity).

Our Church is so much more than a building. It is where we turn for comfort, support and healing. It is where we make true Christian friends that last a lifetime. No matter

where we go in the world, we can come home to the Orthodox Church to be surrounded by the same familiar elements: altar, iconostasion (icon screen), pulpit, altar table, tabernacle, iconography, baptismal font, candles and more.

Church is not so much a place as it is what we are together. We are called to be the Body of Christ to witness to God in the world. When we truly become members of the Church, transfigured by our faith and worship, we become what the Church was intended to be. As Saint Paul writes to the Ephesians, “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also mem-

bers of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19).

We enter our spiritual home not to be entertained, but to be a part of a community of believers. We receive Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. As we pray, worship and serve together, we become His Body. To be truly a member of the Church as the Body of Christ requires our presence and our engagement with one another -- in worship, study and service to others. We grow spiritually as a family. We give sacrificially as we acknowledge that all we have comes from God.

From our spiritual home we are sent out as “phosphoroi” - bearers of His light in the modern world, setting an example by our mutual understanding and love. As we do so, we pray for each other, listen and learn from each other, disagree respectfully, restore civility, and find a common purpose.

In our spiritual home, we grow together as we share our spiritual life. We give sacrificially to support our local parish because when we give of our first fruits we set our priorities on God and have a constant reminder that all we are and all we have are His.

We are stewards of the Gospel and stewards of our parish. We see our church, not as it is, but as it could be. We offer our treasure and ourselves sacrificially, so that, as members of the Body of Christ, we may reach our full potential in Him.

□...in the Church we live eternal life starting from now. We do not simply await the life to come, but we experience and enjoy it from the present. The Kingdom of God, according to the Fathers, is not life beyond the grave but communion with God...□

–Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos



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MAY 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 6:00pm Parish Council	4 4:00pm Book Club	5	6
7 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:30am Philoptochos	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	22	23	24	25 9:00am Divine Liturgy Ascension of Christ	26	27
28 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:30am Spring General Assembly	29 Memorial Day	30	31			

JUNE 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 9:00am Divine Liturgy Saturday of Souls
4 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Pentecost	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy All Saints Day	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	26	27	28	29	30	