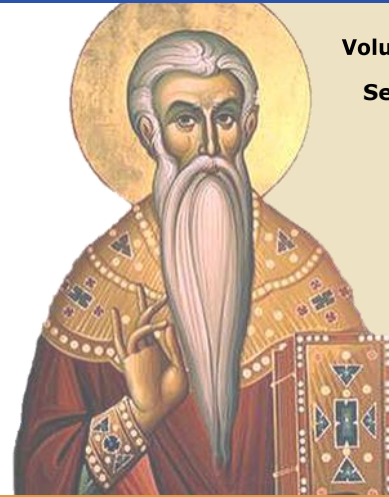


in Touch

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Prayer in the

**Nativity of
the Theotokos • 2**

**Prayer in the
Orthodox Tradition • 3**

**Parish Council
News • 4**

**Church
Ministries • 6**

**Adult Education
Class • 7**



Orthodox Christian Tradition

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

The Nativity of the Theotokos

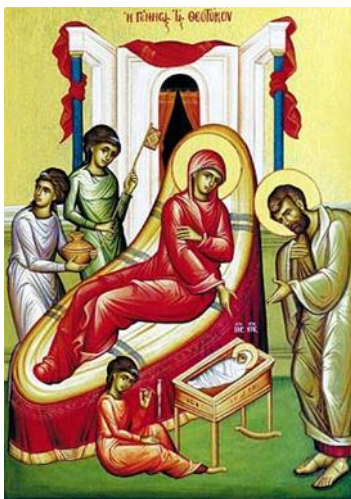
“Your birth, O Theotokos, brought joy to the whole world, for from you dawned the sun of righteousness, Christ our God. Freeing us from the curse, He gave us His blessings. Abolishing death, He granted us eternal life.”

On the 8th of September, the first major feastday of the Church Year which begins Sep. 1, we celebrate the birth of the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, the one woman chosen by God to give birth to His only-begotten Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As the above festal hymn recounts, it is a celebration of bringing joy into the whole world, since she is the one to give birth to the Savior of Mankind.

“According to the ancient tradition of the Church, the Theotokos was born of barren and aged parents, Joachim and Anna, about the year 16 or 17 before the birth of Christ. Joachim was descended from the royal line of David, of the tribe of Judah. Anna was of the priestly tribe of Levi, a daughter of the priest Matthan and Mary, his wife.” (www.goarch.org)

Mary’s parents, Joachim and Anna, were childless for most of their adult life, well into old age. They prayed together and separately that God would grant them a child, and promised to dedicate the child to God. God heard and answered their prayers, blessing them with their first-born daughter, Mary.

In another of the festal hymns, the Kontakion sings of the joy of Joachim and Anna, the gift of life through the grace of God. *“In your holy birth, Immaculate One, Joachim and Anna were rid of the shame of childlessness; Adam and Eve of the corruption of death. And so your people, free of the guilt of their sins, celebrate crying: “The barren one gives birth to the Theotokos, who nourishes our life.”*

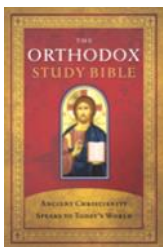


Known as the Righteous Ancestors of God, the Orthodox Church honors Joachim and Anna with their own feastday on September 9, the day following the feast of the birth of their daughter.

When the child Mary was three years of age, her parents brought her to be presented in the temple and dedicated to God. From the time of this presentation of Mary in the temple, which feastday is celebrated on November 21 in the Orthodox Church calendar, Mary remains in the temple until her annunciation from the Archangel Gabriel (celebrated on March 25) that she has found favor with God, and would be the one to give

birth to the Christ.

Joachim and Anna visited their daughter Mary frequently, until Mary was about 10 years old, when Joachim was about 80 years old, and Anna was 79. Church tradition teaches that both Joachim and Anna fell asleep in the Lord prior to the Annunciation of Mary.



Bible Study

All are invited to a new bible study with Fr. Michael, Wednesday mornings at 10 am. The first session is Sep. 6, followed by Sep. 13. No sessions are scheduled on the next two Wednesdays

(Sep. 20 and 27), and the weekly study will continue on Wednesday, Oct. 4. Sessions will be held in the church library.

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.





Prayer in the Orthodox Christian Tradition

(continued from last month)

To begin with, there is not enough room in this (or any other) newsletter, to give adequate space for examples of the various kinds of prayers found in the Orthodox Christian tradition. The prayers primarily come from the many worship services (Divine Liturgy, Vespers, Matins, Compline, etc.) but there are many others have been written for personal devotion as well.

It is not unusual for Orthodox priests to get requests to bless new cars, new homes and businesses, vineyards and fields, requests for prayers before and after surgery, before and after travel, for the start of the school year, and the list goes on and on. (This “list” by the way, is found in the Orthodox Priest’s Prayer Book, so we are ready for nearly any occasion.)

And why not? Is asking help or blessings from God, or thanking God, ever going to be inappropriate? Let’s hope not.

Where does prayer originate from? When we read through Holy Scriptures we find many examples of prayer. Beginning with the Old Testament book, Genesis, did Adam and Eve pray in the Garden of Eden? They conversed with God, in a very real and intimate dialogue that many of us today would like to experience; but since Adam and Eve had everything needed in their life, did they need to pray as we pray today?

God was an active presence in the Garden of Eden, but even that wasn’t enough to ensure Adam and Eve’s obedience to God’s will. Could they have been praying for the strength to follow God’s commandment not to eat of the fruit of the tree of Good and Evil? There is no evidence found in Genesis, but one can only imagine how life might have been different if they had!

The first time we see the word “pray” in the bible is in Genesis Chapter 20, long after the Fall of Adam and Eve,

in a dialogue between the Patriarch Abraham and King Abimelech, who asked Abraham to pray to God for him. Prayer had become a means for man to communicate with God, primarily to ask for help and reconciliation after sinning against God.

Fast-forward to the New Testament, and in the many prayers of our Lord Jesus, we find something new and remarkable. In Chapter 14 of Saint John’s gospel, Jesus says, “Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” (John 14:13)

From this prayer and other New Testament examples, saying prayers “In Jesus’ name” is common in many Christian traditions.

...saying prayers “In Jesus’ name” is common in many Christian traditions.

In the 4th and 5th centuries, as the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was being defined and explained, prayers as well as corporate worship services such as the Divine Liturgy began with “In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Rather than contradicting praying in the Lord’s name, it further reinforced the doctrine of belief in one God in Three Persons, of which our Lord Jesus Christ is God the Son.

This is why prayers in the Orthodox tradition, whether directed to the Lord, the Holy Spirit or God the Father, typically begin with “In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,” or “Blessed is the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,” and end with the same, with the addition of “now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.”

(to be continued next month)



**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

623-486-8665
7950 W. Pinnacle Peak Rd., Peoria, AZ 85383
Office@StHaralambosAZ.com
FrMichael@StHaralambosAZ.com

Hours

Monday - Friday 10 a.m. to 2 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

We have been busy this summer fighting the heat, making sure you're cool in the church and begin to see the many projects the council has undertaken.

First let me say the surveillance cameras are up and running inside and outside of the church. If you want to see the views there is a monitor in the church office. The recorder is on constantly for 30 days at a time with Father and several council members having remote access via cell phone.

The wrought iron fence will start on Sept. 19 and will encompass the entire campus. The fence will be 3' high with manual gates on the westside and a remote gate electrified on the eastside entrance. It will be opened via a code with two additional transponder remotes in addition. The gate will be open during church and daycare hours.

The back wall in the northeast corner will be rebuilt on Sept. 12 and we will not be the shortcut for our neighbors. When this is complete along with the fence the campus will be secure.

The lighting of our property will be complete as the electrical contractor and their engineer have identified the lack of lighting coverage surrounding our property and they will begin construction around mid-September. No more darkness!

Having all these projects in place will consume the entire \$125,500 FEMA grant we will receive once we have paid for the work and present paid invoices to FEMA.

The PORTICO project is another one that will take place once we have the assembly approval. A contractor has been retained and it is moving forward,

however we will be taking a short-term loan to assist with the construction so please consider your donations NOW!

I am blessed to be directly involved in all these projects and know how rewarding and grateful to be a member of this parish council. Its also a blessing that the Lord has brought my family back to Arizona and the immediate area to be back with the parish family and on council again.

This is an exciting time to be on parish council too! Please reach out to Dennis or Irene to relate your interest. Yes, certain officers on parish council are busier than just being a member, your only commitment is 2-3 hours a month. Or if certain needs arise just a few hours more.

If you haven't considered filling out a stewardship card, please do so, we have room for you and your family. Cards are available in the narthex in the brochure holder on the table to your right as you enter the church.

Membership is Free we just ask that you give from your heart to support our church (maintaining it for our Lord), your blessings will be countless! We are calling on members old and new, we have a place for you!

By the way, Brilliant Blessings Daycare is zooming right along, they are constantly improving our space and are a true major steward to our church. They do their utmost best to be an excellent tenant and ultimately a mission for exposing our faith.

Remember it is said "When one door closes, another door opens". As I have said to many, "I work for Jesus", and again the blessings are countless.

FEMA granted our application for the extension until Dec. 31.

Birthdays



Angie Cholas (4)
Jessie Baruti (5)
Katherine Tally (7)
Lloyd Covault (9)
Solomon Woldesilassie (16)
Efrosini Curran (19)
Trenton Wilkins (20)
Raymond Wysmierski (20)
Jane Milonas (22)
Lydia Ghebrehiwot (25)
Mogos Asfaha (27)

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.

Treasurer's Report

By Cynthia Bekiaris, Treasurer

The chart below represents our year to date finances. Please note that the numbers to the left represent our Income and Expenses with a deficit of \$10,148.02.

This is the result of several factors; lower than expected donations, A/C and Fire Equipment repairs along with higher than budgeted Insurance, Utilities and Building Maintenance costs.

We will need a Budget Committee to prepare our 2024 Budget before our Fall General Assembly.

If you are interested in helping improve our current position, please contact the Parish Council Treasurer at: shgocparishcouncil@gmail.com



Orthodox Church Prison Ministry

Visit With a Letter of Encouragement

“I was in prison and you visited me.” Mt. 25:36

Those living in isolation, while paying the penalty for poor choices, still have a purpose and God still has a plan for each one. Imagine the impact you could make by planting seeds of encouragement that could help change lives forever.

Although the Prison Correspondence Program has been put on hold indefinitely, we still have the opportunity to reach out and follow God's message. This is NOT a pen pal program and is open to ALL parishioners. You will not receive correspondence back from an inmate.

Mail will be sent directly to Orthodox Church Prison Ministry. A member of the OCPM team will read your letter (or card) and give it to an inmate needing to hear the words you've written. Women's messages will be given to women, and men's to men.

Letting someone know you are praying, and taking the time to send messages of hope and inspiration can help an inmate find that purpose and plan that God has for him or her.

If interested in this ministry, please email me and I will send you more information on what and how letters should be written and the OCPM address.

Judy Morley, Baba100908@yahoo.com



Church Ministries: What is God Calling You to Do?

The Church as the Body of Christ, is the community of faithful believers who worship God together, are instructed with God's teachings and are blessed with His loving grace through participation in the holy Sacraments. Though the sacred and unbroken bond between Jesus Christ and His Church may be lost on some modern-day Christians, it is clear both from Holy Scripture and the teachings of the Church Fathers that Christianity is not to be lived alone, in seclusion apart from the Church community.

St. Paul, in addressing the love of husbands and wives, relates this love to the relationship between Christ and the Church in his letter to the church in Ephesus. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her." (Eph 5:25). St. Cyprian, 3rd century Bishop of Carthage, put it quite plainly, "He cannot have God for his Father who has not the church for his mother." The Church, in other words, is not just a place we visit on Sunday mornings, but rather a community, a family, a gathering of faithful who work, play, struggle, learn, forgive and grow in their faith and work as Christians.

Most of us come to a point in our lives when we ask ourselves, "What is my purpose? Why am I here?"

The answer will be different for each person, but with a common foundation for every human being: We are here in this

world, as part of God's creation, to live as His children – to glorify Him and build up the Church by using the good gifts that He has given us. With this understanding as knowing that God gives each of us gifts not for us, but to be used by us for the benefit of others, and to glorify Him as the Giver of Gifts, we can begin to know our purpose. When this happens, when we begin to understand and fulfill our God-given purpose in this life, we begin to feel a sense of joy and enthusiasm to find new ways to put our God-given gifts to use.

This is why the ministries of the Church play such an important role. Church ministries are opportunities for parishioners to put their God-given gifts and talents to work, whether in education, the arts, administration, hospitality, prayer, etc.

Beginning next month, everyone will have the opportunity to learn about and become more involved in the ministries of Saint Haralambos Church. Tables will be set up during the Fellowship hour to visit with ministry leaders and learn more about the various ministries.

Our parish ministry directors are Debbie Chionchio and Lindsay Vardalos. They will be explaining more about our October Sunday Ministry Tables over the next several weeks.

Name Days

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

St. Symeon (1st)

St. Sozon (7th)

St. Efrosynos (11th)

St. Niketas (15th)

St. Euphemia (16th)

Sts. Faith, Hope and Love (17th) and their mother Sophia

St. Euphrosyne (25th)

St. Chariton (29th)

St. Gregory (30th)

Evangelist Basic Training

A new program, Evangelist Basic Training (EBT) is coming to St. Haralambos Church this month, beginning Monday, Sep. 11.

- Basic fears, roles, and goals of evangelism are covered.
- No in-person classes to attend. It's all online.

Try it. It's free!

Here's what Brad Abramson says about this program: *I highly recommend Evangelist Basic Training to anyone who*

would like to learn how to share their faith, but who might not feel comfortable doing so. EBT provides short, easily understandable, practical ways to share one's faith, in a conversational and non-threatening manner. And the course is easy – it's all online and takes only minutes per lesson. Don't miss this opportunity!

Sign up at www.desertdeacon.com and look for the "Sign Up for EBT" tab. Any questions, call or text Deacon Raphael Abraham at 623-693-3203. Thank you!

Adult Education Class: Journey to Fullness

Why learn about Orthodox Christianity? Today, perhaps more so than in previous generations, the Christian Church has become divided into hundreds of different denominations. This naturally leads to questions about the differences between them.

The best way to answer those questions is to start at the beginning, and look at the origins of the Christian faith and see how it developed over time. It's a fascinating history that reveals a single united church for the first 1,000 years!

The Journey to Fullness is a 16-session course (the first 10 this Fall, and the final

six in the Spring of 2024) that helps answer these questions. The roots and origins of Orthodox Christianity are explored with brief video segments, followed by a series of discussion questions.

The sessions will be held on Tuesday evening beginning September 12, starting with dinner at 6pm in our Fellowship Room. All are invited: Orthodox, non-Orthodox, family members, friends and neighbors.

Pre-Registration is required, so please return the Registration Form (page 8) before the Sep. 24 deadline!



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
Tsioutsiopoulos, Demetre & Holly
Vardalos, Peter & Lindsay
Vasquez, Argyro
Woldesilassie, Solomon & Lydia
Wysmierski, Ray & Mary
George & Helen Yannakopoulos
Zakas, Speros & Linda

A Journey to Fullness

An Introduction to the Fullness of the Original Christian Faith

FIRST 10 SESSIONS*

Tuesday, Oct 3, 6pm	Session 1: Is this Trip Really Necessary?
Tuesday, Oct 10, 6pm	Session 2: What is the Orthodox Church?
Tuesday, Oct 17, 6pm	Session 3: When did Orthodoxy Begin?
Tuesday, Oct 24, 6pm	Session 4: Characteristics of Orthodox Christianity
Tuesday, Nov 7, 6pm	Session 5: Mindset Matters
Tuesday, Nov 14, 6pm	Session 6: A Healing Purpose
Tuesday, Nov 21, 6pm	Session 7: Truth and Tradition
Tuesday, Nov 28, 6pm	Session 8: How Do I Understand the Bible?
Tuesday, Dec 5, 6pm	Session 9: When We Say God (Part 1)
Tuesday, Dec 12, 6pm	Session 10: When We Say God (Part 2)

Registration for the final six sessions will take place in January 2024.

“A Journey to Fullness” Registration Form

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>EVENING AGENDA</u></p> <p>6:00pm: Dinner</p> <p>7:00pm: Class Presentation</p> <p>7:30pm: Discussion/Q&A</p>	<p>Dinner and all class sessions will be in the Fellowship Room.</p>
<p>Name(s) _____</p> <p>Email _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p>	
<p>REGISTRATION FEE \$65/person; \$110/couple (Includes 10 dinners and individual Workbooks)</p>	
<p>PAYMENT METHOD Cash or Check (payable to St. Haralambos Church) \$_____ (enclose with Registration Form) Credit Card (Available weekdays in the Church Office or Sundays during Coffee fellowship.22)</p>	
<p>If mailing the Registration Form, please enclose payment and send to: St. Haralambos Church, 7950 W. Pinnacle Peak Road, Peoria, AZ 85383. <u>Registration Deadline is Sunday, September 24, 2023.</u></p>	

The Great Feast (Luke 14)

In the Gospel of Luke we read of the man who planned a great feast and invited many people. When it was time to serve the dinner, they were all too busy – one with his farm, one with his bride, another with his oxen. We can become so busy making a living that we forget to make a life. God gets crowded out of our lives over the most unimportant things.

At the first Christmas when Jesus was born, there was no room at the inn. And today we still have no room for Jesus. We crowd Him out with so many things.

In The Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis shows how the devil captures us, not by preventing encounters with God, but by whispering in our ear that we are “just too busy right now. We’ll get to that soon. But just not right now.”

Resetting Our Priorities

Just as we budget our financial resources to reflect our priorities, we can re-set our allocation of time. We are all busy, but not all of that busy time is well-spent. We may need to say no to certain demands on our time, opening our schedule to God’s prompting. We can live each day anticipating the opportunities he places in our path to offer our gift of time.

For Further Reflection...

Are you a contributing member of the body of Christ? Are you actively serving God and sharing Him with others? Are you contributing to peace and unity within His body? Do you worship regularly? Take a moment to evaluate your life in light of these principles.

We are called to apply our gifts, training, abilities, education and skills to the tasks that God places before us. If we do this humbly and prayerfully, the body of Christ will function to its full potential.

The Biblical motivation for giving is grace; giving is an act of worship in response to the generosity of God. You are to give, Paul says, “as God has prospered you.” II Corinthians 8 and 9 teach clearly, “He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” God blesses those who give with generosity.”

Giving is a way to thank God for His grace and generosity. The question is not, “How much do I give to stay in the club?” or “What are the dues?” but “How can I thank God for my many blessings?”



STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF STEWARDSHIP

OUTREACH & EVANGELISM

www.stewardship.goarch.org | stewardship@goarch.org

The Stewardship of Time

A Time for Every Purpose Under

Ecclesiastes 3



A Time for Every Purpose Under

Ecclesiastes 3

The Stewardship of Time

“Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

Psalm 90:12

The first long-term Orthodox Christian missionary priest from America to East Africa was sent by Archbishop Iakovos in mid-1980s. As he gradually assimilated into the local culture, he found the local concept of time to be a most difficult adjustment, and upon his return to America, liked to quote the Kenyans who loved to tell him, “White men have watches. We have time.”

Our brief time on earth is God’s gift. As faithful Christians, we are accountable for our stewardship of this precious gift. The American scientist, Thomas Edison said, “Time is not a commodity that can be stored for future use. It must be invested hour by hour or else it is gone forever.”

“Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow.”

Psalm 144:4

Our lifetime is a small bit of eternity, “a fleeting shadow” (Psalm 144), which we receive as

stewards. Time is a precious gift that we dare not waste. Like the three stewards in the Parable of the Talents, one day God will call each one of us to give account of how we have used the time entrusted to us.

“...a time for every purpose under heaven.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1

There is “a time for every purpose,” as the verse from Ecclesiastes instructs us, “a time to plant, a time to reap...” The challenge is to appropriately allocate our time to the various purposes that make claims on it. The passage teaches us to make the most of God’s great gift of time.

The Gift of Time

“The greatest gift I ever received,” said a young attorney, “was a gift I got one Christmas from my dad. He gave me a small box with a note inside that said, ‘Son, this year I will give you 365 hours, one hour every day after dinner. We’ll talk about what you want to talk about, go where you want to go, play what you want to play.’”

The young attorney continued, “My dad not only kept the promise of his gift, but he renewed it every year – and it’s the greatest gift I ever had in my life. I am the result of his time.”

The most personal, most appreciated and most unique gift that you can give is the gift of time – *your* time. That valuable 24 hours a

day that only you can spend. Depending on your profession, your time may be worth hundreds of dollars an hour. But the time you give to another person and the Church is priceless.

Our children need our time, helping shape their lives by word and by example. The time we give to our children is an investment in their lives that is not wasted.

Spending Time with God

As Christians it is also important to value the time we spend at church in worship, service and activities. Every member of the Body of Christ plays a role, according to their gifts, in the life of the local church. The church is not a social club, but rather a place where people of faith gather for worship, fellowship and service.

Most importantly, we gather together in worship, praising and thanking God for the blessings in our lives and hearing His Word. Of the 168 hours in every week with which we have been blessed, we offer back the short time we spend in church on Sunday morning and other services, gathered together as the Body of Christ. We are united in prayer and united in Holy Communion. We become His hands and feet carrying out His work in the world. As we offer ourselves and our time as His Church, we are part of something much bigger than we can imagine – much bigger than the project we support, the service we provide, the prayer we offer.

SEPTEMBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 9:00am Divine Liturgy Beginning of the New Church Year	2
3 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	4 Labor Day (Church Office Closed)	5	6 10:00am Bible Study	7	8 9:00am Divine Liturgy Birth of the Theotokos	9
10 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	11	12	13 10:00am Bible Study	14 9:00am Divine Liturgy Elevation of the Life-giving Cross	15	16
17 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	25	26	27	28	29	30