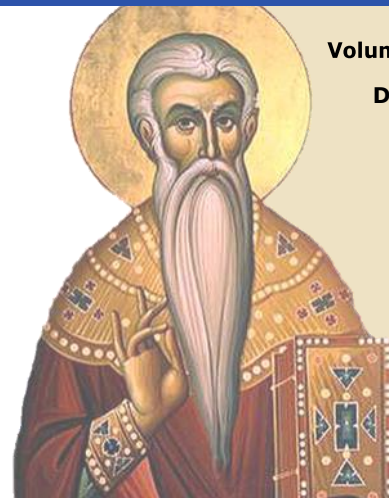


in Touch

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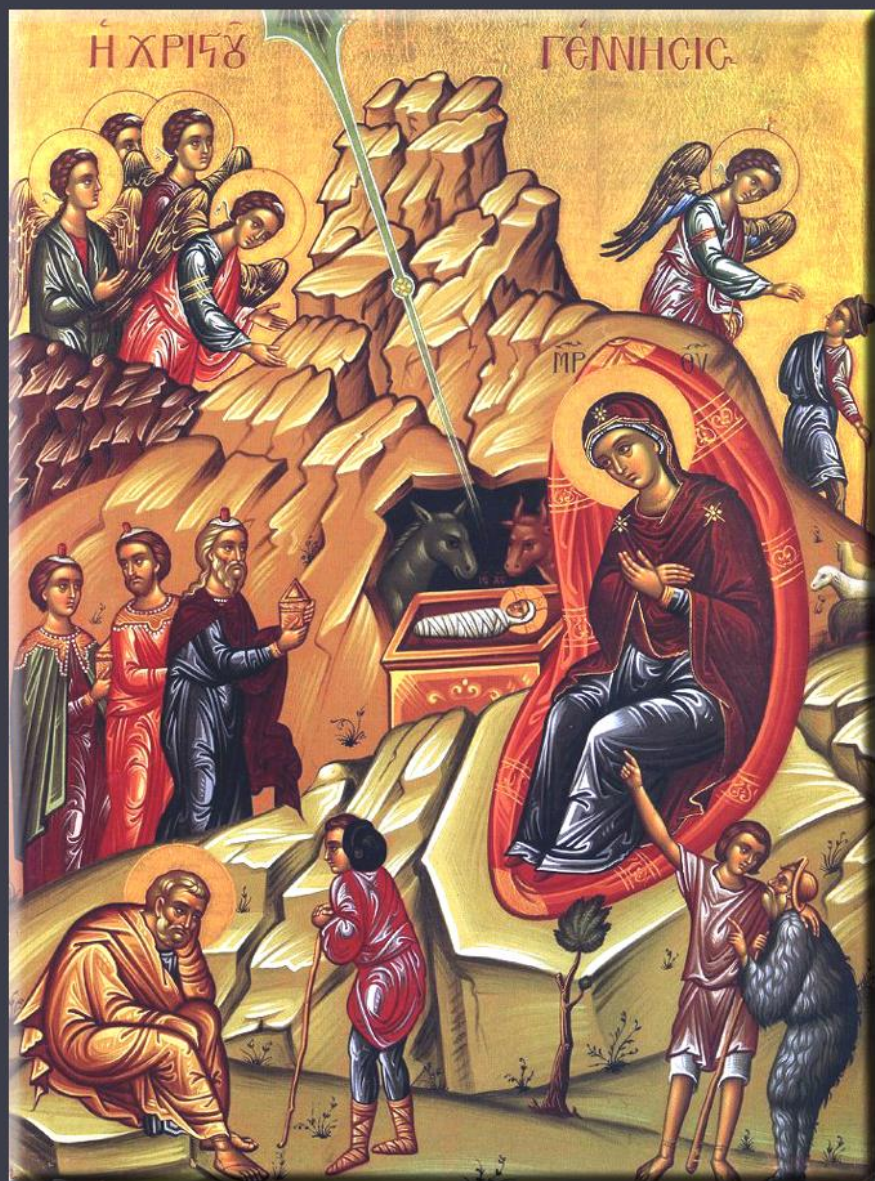
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Christ is Born! Glorify Him!



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

Front Entry Portico

Construction on the Exo-Narthex (Entry Portico) is progressing. Following the initial demolition and grading, the concrete footings for the front columns have been poured.

Access to the church is from the west side parking lot and through the backyard for those parking on the east side.

Due to increased construction costs, we're asking for additional donations to ensure this beautiful project will be completed as designed, and on time for our parish feastday in February 2024!

Donations may be made online at www.stharalambos.org (click Online Donations and Prayers, then click on "Donate" and select "Entry Portico" from the drop-down menu) or sent to the church office. Thank You!



Christmas Food Drive and Angels

Our parish Christmas Angel Tree this year is located in the church Narthex. There is a sign-up sheet for each Angel.



Donations are gladly accepted and shopping can be made by the Angel Tree team. All gifts must be wrapped and placed under the tree by the December 13 deadline.

We are also preparing Christmas food boxes for 10 families with the City of Peoria Community Action Program. Food donations can be brought to the church until the December 13 deadline.

Blessing of the Animals

It was a beautiful morning last month for the 4th annual Blessing of the Animals! They are loving members of our families!



Adult Education

Join the Tuesday evening classes to increase your knowledge and appreciation of Orthodox Christianity. Held this month on Tuesday, Dec. 5, 12 and 19, enjoy fellowship with the other participants beginning with dinner at 5 pm, and followed by the evening class presentation at 6 pm. All are welcome!





Stewards or Members of the Church?

The timeless message of Christian Stewardship remains constant: we return to God a portion of the gifts we receive from Him for two reasons: 1) as a way of offering thanks to God for His blessings; and 2) in accordance with God’s teaching of tithing, or giving a 10% offering, of our resources that come from Him: Time, Talents and Treasures.

Recognizing this, that all we have in this world comes from God, it becomes a joy to give back, to thank God for His loving kindness. We give, as Saint Paul writes to the Church in Corinth, cheerfully: “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2Cor. 9:7)

On Sunday, Dec. 17, we will celebrate Stewardship Sunday, and remind ourselves of our responsibility as Stewards of God’s Church, and of all that God has blessed us with.

So we consider, throughout our lives, and as an annual renewal on Stewardship Sunday, ways in which we can give back a portion of our Time, Talents and Treasures, in support of our church, of His Church.

There are no Membership Dues, there is no required minimum or maximum donation. But we should all take seriously caring for our Church, and


not leaving its care to others. Our financial contributions should be a percentage of our income, regardless of the source. This is both a fair and biblical approach to making regular offerings to our Church.

It is a fair approach because percentage giving is not a fixed amount applicable to all families, and biblical because of the teaching of the tithe, or a 10% gift back to the Church.

Above all, our giving should be cheerfully given, recognizing our desire - not simply obligation - to give back to God a portion of our blessings from Him.

Being a Steward of St. Haralambos Church implies much more than membership. Our parish will continue to grow according to how each of us gives our time, talent and treasure in support of our mission to be a “loving Christ-centered community whose mission is to keep, practice, and proclaim our Orthodox Christian faith as a living presence to those around us.”

Being a Steward of St. Haralambos Church implies much more than membership.



**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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Parish Council
Cynthia Bekiaris
Deborah Chionchio
Virginia Dent
Hope Evangelinos
Anna Kinniburgh
Dan Teska
Vivian Teska
Mary Wyszmierski
Ray Wyszmierski
Solomon Woldesilassie

Parish Council News

By Ray Wysmierski, President

Season's Greetings and blessings to our St. Haralambos Church Family.

As we begin to wind down to an end of 2023 and look forward to 2024, let us all try to be in attendance for the general assembly on Dec. 3. Please be in attendance if possible as we will be presenting items we have accomplished and items to address for the future. We also will be having three council members with their terms ending this year. Please give prayerful consideration to running for council, remember it's only a 2-year commitment, unless you decide to run again.

A preview of the agenda roughly will be the treasurers report, FEMA project, total costs of that project, complicating factors that affect that project, let's unclutter the church and storage containers, the portico project, and where do you want to see the church in 5-10 years. We can also solicit members to be on a strategic plan committee with Father Michael.

We have a lot of irons in the fire, and we need your help. Remember, this is YOUR church too and cannot be operated by a few.

Also be aware that this month will be a focus on renewing your stewardship to

give back to God what he has provided us. Our Lord loves a cheerful giver. Take a moment to read the attachment I have included with this update on page 7-8. We need to be thankful for all God has bestowed upon us this past year, the good, the challenges yet, the latter is still with us in many ways. Again, I say we can't do this alone (Father and the council), please consider the council as we need your voice.

As I always say "working for Jesus", as I believe the time and talent will be recognized by him and he will bestow his gifts. I know personally he has given me good health and the strength to persevere with all the activity at the church, as too with others who give their precious time. "Do so with your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not human beings" Colossians 3:23.

So please enjoy time over this holiday with family and friends, and by the time this newsletter is published you will see a fence and an increased illumination around our church. And the portico will be on its way to completion.

Please consider your gift to the church, by giving back to God for what he has done for you.

Book Club

Attention readers: plan to join us! The St. Haralambos Book Club will begin in January and meet once a month through the month of May. Our first meeting will be Jan. 15 at 1 pm in the church Library. Let Irene Nathanson know if you will be attending and if you have title suggestions. The first book will be announced in next month's bulletin.



Community Christmas Card

Include your name on our beautiful new full-color icon Christmas Card which will be sent to all our parish families! For each family name, we ask for a donation of \$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 Sunday, Dec. 10, 2023.**

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)

St. Anna's Philoptochos Society

By Anna Kinniburgh, President

We had a busy new month with our baking for Thanksgiving, which was very successful. All funds raised helped to pay for our commitments and unexpected bills, such as we helped to repair the walk in refrigerator freezer in the kitchen which is necessary to have.

We will be baking again in December for our Christmas sale.

Please sign up for our memorial Dove Trees. Fr. Michael will read all the names on special memorial on Dec. 31.

All of us at St. Anna's wish everyone a Merry and peaceful Christmas and may God Bless us all with a Happy New Year.



Christmas Bake Sale

St. Anna's Philoptochos is accepting pre-orders for delicious bakery fresh goodies ready for your Christmas enjoyment or gift giving. Please see order form below.

Quantities of some items may be limited, so all orders must be submitted no later than Wednesday, December 13, to assure you get everything you want.

Philoptochos 2023 Christmas Bake Sale Order Form

Place orders by Dec. 13, 2023 - Circle Pick Up Date, Sunday, Dec.17, or Dec. 24, 2023

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Item	Cost Each	Quantity	Total
Baklava (8X8 pan)	\$25		
Koulouria (with sesame) pkg of 12	\$7		
Koulouria (no sesame) pkg of 12	\$7		
Kourabiedes - pkg of 8	\$7		
Melomakarona - pkg of 8	\$7		
Rice Pudding - 16 oz	\$7		
Spanakopita (8X8 pan - frozen)	\$12		
Tsourekia (with sesame)	\$10		
Tsourekia (without sesame)	\$10		
Total			\$

You may fill out this form and give to any Philoptochos member or send your order by email to: stellapagos@yahoo.com or by text to: 623-975-0027.

Please make Checks Payable to: St. Anna Philoptochos

Birthdays



- Stella Pagos (1)
- Olga Carlson (6)
- Ethel Nicholas (6)
- Kay Fulghum (9)
- Leonidas Karandreas (17)
- Jean Baxter (19)
- Kathy Drivas (21)
- Christos Kotsobeis (25)
- George Stivaktakis (26)

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

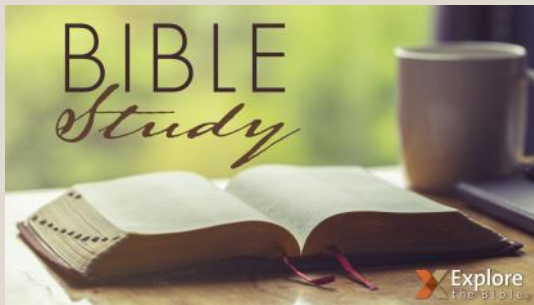
By Cynthia Bekiaris, Treasurer

This year has been fraught with under-budgeted cost overruns on multiple projects and unexpected building repairs. Our next year will require significant budget cuts to keep pace with our ever-rising expenses.

We pray all members attend the Fall General Assembly where we will discuss the 2024 Budget for our beloved Church.

Bible Study

The Wednesday morning Bible Study continues each Wednesday morning at 10am in the Church library. All are welcome!



Thanksgiving Food Drive

Thank You to all who donated towards our annual Thanksgiving Food Drive with the City of Peoria Community Action Agency, providing Thanksgiving dinners for 10 families. Your generosity is truly appreciated!



	Jan 1 - Nov 22, 23
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
3400 · YOUTH	85.00
3000 · TOTAL ORDINARY INCOME	133,194.19
3700 · OTHER INCOME	205,812.69
Total Income	339,091.88
Expense	
66900 · Reconciliation Discrepancies	-0.25
5040 · BOOKSTORE	17.50
5450 · YOUTH GROUP	116.00
7200 · FUNDRAISER	117.20
5100 · FEAST DAY - HOLIDAY	208.62
4700 · PROFESSIONAL FEES	585.00
5800 · BANKING	757.90
4500 · LITURGICAL	780.57
4150 · Business Assessment	1,048.38
5020 · CANDLE	1,065.80
5300 · EDUCATIONAL	1,193.59
5200 · CHARITIES-	2,204.31
4025 · MINISTRY OTHER	3,065.90
4200 · OFFICE	4,226.25
4900 · INSURANCE	7,833.60
4050 · OFFICE PAYROLL	17,910.77
4100 · CHURCH ASSESSMENTS	18,354.84
4300 · UTILITIES	20,133.99
4400 · FACILITY	23,313.18
4000 · MINISTRY	149,379.89
7500 · CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	164,026.92
Total Expense	416,339.96
Net Ordinary Income	-77,248.08
Net Income	-77,248.08

The above numbers include the dedicated fund to the Portico consisting of \$76,000 in income and \$81,421 in expenses.

	Nov 22, 23
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1000 · GENERAL CHECKING	20,290.88
1015 · SAVINGS	
1016 · Ayan	22,040.64
1017 · Kitchen	3,030.14
1015 · SAVINGS - Other	32,849.41
Total 1015 · SAVINGS	57,920.19
1020 · PETTY CASH	141.50
Total Checking/Savings	78,352.57
Total Current Assets	78,352.57
TOTAL ASSETS	78,352.57
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	0.00

The above cash on hand includes money dedicated to the Portico in savings.

Offering Our Blessings

The God who came to us at Bethlehem continues to come to us today. In every liturgy He comes to us as the Word of God, bringing words of eternal life through the Scripture readings and the sermon. Through the Sacrament of Communion He comes to be born again and again in the shabby stables of our hearts. He comes constantly through prayer. He blesses our marriages as He did that in Cana of Galilee. He stands by our sick bed, laying His healing hand upon us through the prayers of the priest. He comes again and again in so many, many ways through the many ministries of His Church. He comes with healing and forgiveness; He comes with strength and guidance. He comes and when He comes, as the Bible says, "the blind see, the lame walk, and the prisoners are set free."

It is by offering our blessings back to God that He will be able to continue His forgiving, healing, liberating, empowering, transfiguring, loving ministry through the Church. For God, Infinite though He be, has chosen to work through us, through our gifts, to continue His saving work in the world today.

Father Anthony M. Coniaris



STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF STEWARDSHIP,
OUTREACH & EVANGELISM

www.stewardship.goarch.org

Well done good & faithful servant

Matthew 25:23



STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

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Christina Meares

For additional copies of this brochure and additional resources for Stewardship, Outreach & Evangelism, please visit orthodoxmarketplace.com

There was a man who took a shovel into his backyard each day to dig up a box containing money that he had buried in the ground. Every day he would look at it, count it, and then bury it again.

One day he dug in the usual spot and found that his box and the money were gone. He let out a cry, which brought his neighbor to ask what was the matter. Upon hearing what had happened, the neighbor asked, "What's all the fuss? You weren't using it anyway. Maybe the person who has it now will use it to do something good!"

In the Gospel of Matthew, we read the Parable of the Talents, in which a man leaving on a long journey called three of his servants and entrusted to each a certain sum of money measured in talents. To one he gave five, to another he gave two and to the third, he gave one talent. Upon his return, the man called his servants to give account for the money with which he had entrusted them. The first two, by wise use of the money had doubled the amount they had received. To these he praised with the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord."

The third servant, who had received one talent, out of fear, had buried the talent in the ground. Upon the man's return, this servant returned to him only the one talent. In anger, the man called him a "wicked and lazy servant," and taking away the one talent, he gave it to the servant who had ten.

Jesus gave us this parable for us to consider the gifts that God has given us. Although we all receive different gifts, there is no difference in God's reward for what we accomplish with them. If you want to be a faithful servant, then take whatever you have and offer it faithfully to the Lord. It is not about how much ability you have, it is what you do with it.

The gifts we receive are to be multiplied. They are not to be buried in the ground. About this, Saint Gregory the Great wrote that hiding our talent in the earth, is to use our gifts only for earthly things.

"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee." Deuteronomy (16:17)

In the time of Jesus, a talent referred to substantial amount of money. The message to us today is that God gives each of us something of considerable value and expects good stewardship and a return on what He has given. Although Jesus speaks to us about money in the Parable of the Talents, He is really talking about something far more important.

Whatever blessings we receive, we are to multiply them. We were given our church – our local parish – built by our ancestors and all who have gone before us. We are to grow it – to multiply it – by adding to the number of faithful and growing her ministries. In the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy (16:17), we read, "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee."

When we cling tightly to our wealth, we are like the man, when forced to swim from a sinking ship, couldn't bear to leave his money behind. He strapped his gold to his body, but as he swam toward shore, the weight of the gold pulled him under and he drowned. Do we own our money or does our money own us?

God gave us his love – do we multiply it or do we keep it for ourselves?

God gave us the Gospel – do we multiply it or do we keep it for ourselves?

God gave us the Church – do we multiply it or do we keep it for ourselves?

Our gift to God and His Church is a sacred act, a form of worship, and a response to all his blessings in our life -- our bodies, our family, the environment, our time, our faith, our neighbor.

Stewardship is our spirituality in action, our faith in action, our theology in action.

Stewardship is personal – between Jesus and us – an expression of love and commitment. A response to all that he has given us.

Some day we will stand before God and show Him what we did with all that He entrusted to us. If we have been faithful stewards of our gifts, He will say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord."



DECEMBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy General Assembly	4 9:00am Divine Liturgy Sts. Barbara, John of Damascus	5 5:00pm Journey to Fullness	6 9:00am Divine Liturgy St Nicholas 10:00am Bible Study	7	8	9 9:00am Divine Liturgy Conception of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary
10 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	11	12 9:00am Divine Liturgy St. Spyridon 5:00pm Journey to Fullness	13 10:00am Bible Study	14	15	16
17 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	18	19 5:00pm Journey to Fullness	20 10:00am Bible Study	21	22 9:00am Royal Hours of Christmas	23
24 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Sunday before the Nativity of Christ 6:00pm Evening Vespers Christmas Eve	25 9:00am Divine Liturgy The Nativity of Christ Christmas Day	26	27 10:00am Bible Study	28	29	30
31 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy						