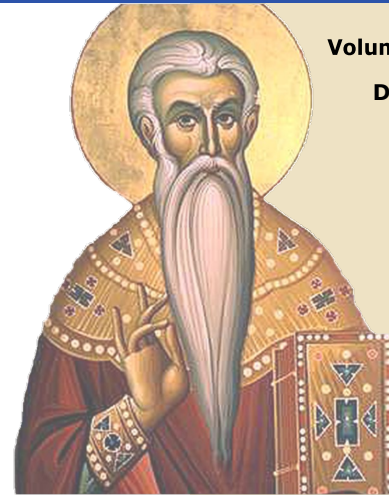


in Touch

Volume 32, Issue 12
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Christ is Born!



Glorify Him!

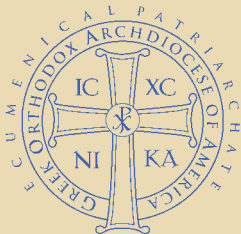
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Lord, You know that men are flesh and blood; forgive them their sins and pour out Your blessing on all. — St. Haralambos

30-year Anniversary

On Sunday, November 17, we honored Fr. Michael Pallad with a luncheon to celebrate his 30-year ministry at St. Haralambos. A large grazing table was prepared, we had a full social hall, and gifts were presented to both Fr. Michael and Presbyteria Kristin. Fr. Michael, thank you for your dedication to our parish!



“One Day, One Hymn” Singing Event

Last month, we welcomed a wonderful group of singers from throughout the Phoenix area - and even several from Northern California - as they recorded the Trisagion Hymn by Father John Finley for "One Day, One Hymn" sponsored by the Orthodox Christian Choral Fellowship (www.occfellowship.org). When finished, the video recording will be posted on our Facebook page.





The Greatest Gifts

“I will love You, O Lord. The Lord is my rock, fortress and deliverer!”

As the congregation exchanges the Kiss of Peace during the Divine Liturgy, the clergy say the above line, and reverence the Holy Gifts on the altar table.

Those words are with me as I write this month’s column, thanking God for blessing me with the opportunity to serve the Saint Haralambos Church community for the past 30 years. I also thank all those in attendance and those who prepared the wonderful luncheon last month celebrating this milestone.

Many good memories, many good people, along with many obstacles and challenges; they are all a part of life. With faith and trust in our good and loving God, and serving His Church for as long as I am able, I find myself looking back with thanksgiving, and looking forward with faith and hope.

In the last year alone, we’ve seen the construction of our Entry Portico, additional outdoor lighting, security cameras, and a fence around our church property. We celebrated the baptism and

chrismation of many new and beloved catechumens, blessed our family pets and provided Thanksgiving Dinner for 12 neighborhood families. These all don’t happen by accident or chance, but are the results of a good and dedicated church family, working together with the blessings of our Good and Loving God.

It is the same God that gives us the greatest gift in human history, which we celebrate this month: the birth of His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Given the name to help us remember and appreciate this most awesome gift, Emmanuel, which means “God with Us.”

It is the same God that gives us the greatest gift in human history, which we celebrate this month

Dear Saint Haralambos Church family, let us come together and celebrate our love of God, our love of one another, and our common love for our Church.

I wish all of you a very merry Christmas, and look forward to celebrating and worshipping together our Good and Loving Lord. Christ is Born; Glorify Him!



**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 2 p.m.

Parish Council

Cynthia Bekiaris	Vivian Teska
Harry Bekiaris	Solomon Woldesilassie
Deborah Chionchio	Mary Wysmierski
Angie Cholas	Ray Wysmierski
Virginia Dent	Linda Zakas
Dan Teska	

Parish Council News

By Ray Wysmierski, President

I trust everyone has had a blessed Thanksgiving, and looking forward to Christmas. Welcome back to all our snowbirds to our many projects that were nearing completion when you left. They are all completed! Viason who is sealing and striping our lot will be doing so next Apr. 5, 2025, when the weather is warmer.

The carpet in the church will be cleaned along with the chairs on Dec. 7. Harry and I will be cleaning out the parish council office that day as we wait for the carpet cleaners to complete the work. All able bodies to assist are certainly welcome!

Also on a good note, we are able to move forward with a raise for Father Michael, as voted on at the general assembly, which is 3% of his salary. We have recently been included in the Dorothy Ayan estate for a donation, so funds are available for that increase.

Please know we are always working toward the Archdiocese salary minimums, based on Father's years of service. Given the size of our parish and finances we will always work toward striving this, as the salary guidelines indicate. We always want to be fair and equitable with Father, and by no means slight him.

However, we also need to live within the resources of the church and be able to meet and continue a commitment we make to him.

In order to keep the commitments, we need increasing sustaining funds year to year. Fundraisers are perfect for a specific endeavor, not to sustain a church operating budget.

This is guidance we have received from the Metropolis regarding the compensation discussion. You have entrusted parish council to help manage

the church, please know we are doing so to the best of our abilities.

Please note that, Harry Calivas, is doing a remarkable job with our cell tower money, which he is investing for us at Wells Fargo Financial. The rate of return is exceeding our former cell tower lease payment by several hundred dollars, and we hold the sum from the sale of that lease. We now have a healthy rainy-day fund and Cynthia Bekharis has us in the black.

Let us continue to grow our finances so we can now focus on the positive outcomes of our church.

So far, our day-care tenant is with us for another school year as the lease expires in August of 2025. We pray that they continue to be a part of our community for many more years.

Harry Bekiaris is working on getting the front and eastside of the lots excavated to clean up after all the construction. I also know we would like to raise the church monument in front to inform any guests of our location, and service times as well.

We will also have the cross and dome illuminated on Dec. 2.

And finally, the doors will be repaired and will no longer be concerned for false burglar alarms and fines we have received from the city.

Any directed financial assistance is appreciated and welcome.

We give thanks to him who has provided for us in our times of need, and continue to do so with our magnificent congregation.

The council has been good stewards of managing the finances for God's house this year, even at times that were trying.

Parish Council Elections

Elections for Parish Council will be on Sunday, Dec. 8. Ballots will be available after Divine Liturgy for all parish Stewards.

We thank the following Parish Council members whose terms are finishing at the end of this year: Cynthia Bekiaris, Deborah Chionichio, Daniel Teska, Vivian Teska, Solomon Woldesilassie, Mary Wysmierski, Ray Wysmierski.

Christmas Angel Tree



Our Christmas Angel Tree this year is located in front of the glass window in the Observation area. Please note that 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 Dec. 15 deadline.

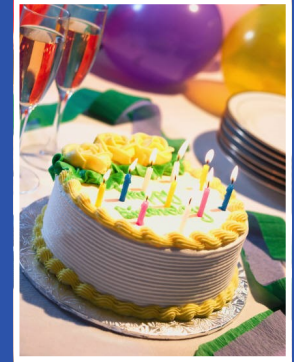
Christmas Food Drive

During the month of December, we are working with the City of Peoria Community Action Agency collecting food and Christmas gifts for 12 families. Please look at the list of families and food items in the Fellowship Room hallway. Donations can be dropped off to the church Monday – Friday, between 10am and 2pm, or on Sundays. Please bring all food and gifts for the Angel Tree by

Sunday, Dec. 15. Thank you for helping give a Merry Christmas to the less-fortunate in our community!



Birthdays



- Stella Pagos (1)
- Olga Carlson (6)
- Ethel Nicholas (6)
- Thomas Bryson (14)
- Leonidas Karandreas (17)
- Kathy Drivaras (21)
- Christos Kotsobeis (25)

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.

Community Christmas Card

Send Christmas greetings to our entire parish membership! Include your name on our beautiful new full-color icon Christmas Card for a donation of \$10 per family via check or credit card. Please print your name clearly, exactly as you would like it to appear on the card.

Clip and 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.

All submissions must be paid by the December 8 deadline

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)

Treasurer's Report

By Cynthia Bekiaris, Treasurer

Our investment from the sale of the cell tower lease is working hard. With the help of our advisor Harry Calivas, we are expected to get an annual return of 7.9%. This equates to about \$1,900 per month, far exceeding our expectations from the \$1,200 per month we were receiving from AT&T.



Our 2025 budget passed the general assembly and an additional motion on the floor was passed to provide Father Michael a 3% raise as funds become available. We were blessed to obtain a donation from the Dorothy Ayan Estate (God rest her soul) that will provide him a 3% raise for the next five years. The remainder of the fund will be used for much needed projects within the church building specifically, carpet and chair cleaning, grading the front lot, repairing our front doors, lighting of the portico dome cross, and setting aside any remaining funds for both A/C and Fire System issues that may arise.

Our Balance Sheet

Checking	64,876.44
	(with Ayan Donation)
Savings	32,019.96
Petty Cash	141.50
TOTAL	\$97,037.90

Investment **\$301,560.57**

Stewardship	89,066.93
Donations	42,203.94
TOTAL	\$131,270.89

We have completed and paid off three major project expenses in the FEMA Grant, Portico and Narthex Iconography totaling \$123,070.81. In addition we had another \$32,237.55 donated towards the Portico. Tile sales will continue in support of the Portico Fund. They are beautiful!

We continue to struggle with church maintenance expenses due to the age of our building exceeding our budget by over \$10,000. This is a priority due to the requirements of the day care on property. We are walking a thin line right now with our fire alarm system due to its age. If we have one more alarm due equipment failure, we will be required by code to replace the entire system at a cost upwards of \$60,000.

Stewardship Family Pledges Paid to date

1	\$9,000 - \$10,000
5	\$5,000 - \$8,999
4	\$2,000 - \$4,999
15	\$1,000 - \$1,999
18	\$500 - \$999
24	\$30 - \$499
67	\$89,066.93

This will be my last reporting as treasurer of St. Haralambos and thank all those who have supported this role these past two years. May God Continue to Bless our Church Family.



Greeters

We would love to grow our team of greeters! If you would like to join our Welcome Ministry, and can dedicate 1 Sunday a month to greeting, please see Lindsay Vardalos or Irene Nathanson. We'd love to have you join our team!

GriefShare Ministry

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” Matthew 5:4

Losing a loved one changes a life forever, and the journey of grief recovery isn't easy. Grief can make us feel alone and overwhelmed with emotions. Often we feel that others don't understand the depth of our pain.

Attending a support group is one of the most beneficial ways to find comfort and understanding during one's personal grief journey. Such support is now being offered at Saint Haralambos Church through GriefShare. GriefShare is a scripture-based support group that combines small group discussion with 30-minute videos which feature bereavement information and sharing from others experiencing loss.

Starting Jan. 18, 2025, the 13-week group will be hosted at our church on Saturdays from 10 am - Noon. The group is open to parishioners as well as to the public, and is designed for adults coping with the death of a loved one. While there is no cost to join, a Participant Guide, featuring invaluable exercises, tips, and resources is recommended and can be purchased for \$20. Limited scholarships are available to apply for.

To register for the series, contact the office Mon.-Fri. 10 am-2 pm at 623-486-8665 or visit www.griefshare.org. Questions can be directed to facilitators Ann Beranis at 630-251-9011, or Irene Nathanson at 574-344-9349.



Blessing of the Animals

The raffle winner from the 5th Annual Animal Blessing was Doina Horvatc. She was invited to attend the St. Haralambos event by our parishioner Stela Gabriela Filipide Baragau.



Are You a Steward of St. Haralambos?

We encourage all our parish families to send in the parish Stewardship form each year, together with their offerings of time, talents and treasure. If Saint Haralambos Church is the church you regularly attend, please consider becoming a steward, one who not only supports the church financially, but also with involvement in parish ministries and activities.

There are no Membership Dues in the Orthodox Church. Not only to support the continued ministries and functioning of our Church, our offerings show our willingness to return to God a portion of His blessings of time, talent and treasure. In addition, being a parish steward fulfills the Archdiocese requirements of being a Member in Good Standing, allowing you to serve as godparents and sponsors for Orthodox sacraments, as well as being able to vote at parish General Assemblies.



Our financial contributions should be a percentage of our financial resources. This continues the biblical teaching on deciding an appropriate amount each year. It is fair because percentage giving is not a fixed amount applicable to all families, and it is 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 we receive from Him.

The 2024 Stewardship brochures are available in the Narthex and the church office. Please print legibly, and enter your contributions of time, talents and treasure. Completed brochures can be mailed to the office or dropped off on Sundays.

Name Days

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

- St. Myrope (2nd)
- St. Theodore of Alexandria (3rd)
- St. Barbara (4th)
- St. Savvas (5th)
- St. Nicholas (6th)
- St. Ambrose (7th)
- St. Daniel (11th)
- St. Lucia (13th)
- St. Modestos (16th)
- St. Sebastian (18th)
- St. Juliane (21st)
- St. Anastasia (22nd)
- St. Eugenia (24th)
- Nativity of Christ (25th)
- St. Simon (28th)
- St. Melania (31st)

2024 Stewardship Families

Abbitt, Demetra
 Asfaha, Moges
 Bachanos, Evan & Jewelie
 Basha, Genti & Elda
 Bastell, Rudy & Suad
 Bekiaris, Harry & Cynthia
 Berhe, Almaz & Mogos
 Brightwell, Avery & Brook
 Bruno-Doster, Jenny
 Bryson, Tom & Joan
 Calivas, Harry & Anita
 Carlson, Olga
 Chionchio, Deborah
 Cholas, Angie
 Christian, Thalia
 Christie, Paul & Patricia
 Conklin, Tom & Maria
 Cotton, John & Ali
 Covault, Lloyd & Angela
 Danielek, Michael & Chrissy
 Deming, Janet
 Dent, Virginia
 Dodd, Stavroula

Evangelinos, Parry & Hope
 Farr, Jeff and Judy
 Finch, Dennis & Marina
 Germenis, Dennis
 Giannias, Elaine
 Gryparis, Demetri & Magda
 Hartsel, Barbara
 Horne, Kevin and Denise
 Huth, Cynthia
 Javaras, Harry
 Jolly, Judith
 Kinniburgh, Anna
 Lafayette, Henry & Maria
 Lazzelle, Estelle
 Levendi, Mary
 Mavridis, Christos
 Meyer, Herman
 Milonas, Nick & Jane
 Nathanson, Alan & Irene
 Pagos, Stella
 Pallad, Fr. Michael & Kristin
 Pappas, Irene
 Parker, Dale & Patricia

Raiciof, Catalina
 Ratliff, Koula
 Russom, Bereket
 Sambol, Patricia
 Servetas, Charlotte
 Singleton, Melanie & Bryan Frost
 Soles, Samuel
 Surman, Dina
 Tally, Katherine
 Tesfay, Ocbai & Genet
 Teska, Dan & Vivian
 Themistocles, Demetria
 Theoharatos, George & Lisa
 Thieke, James & Lucy Schouten
 Trakas, Georgia
 Tripsas, Basil & Ann
 Tucker, Marvin & Eleni
 Vardalos, Peter & Lindsay
 Woldesilassi, Solomon & Lydia
 Wysmierski, Ray & Mary
 Yiannakopoulos, George & Helen
 Zakas, Speros & Linda
 Zaruba, Estelle

DECEMBER 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	2	3	4 9:00am Divine Liturgy St. Barbara, John of Damascus 10:00am Bible Study	5	6 9:00am Divine Liturgy St. Nicholas	7
8 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Parish Council Elections	9 9:00am Divine Liturgy Conception of St. Anna	10	11 10:00am Bible Study	12 9:00am Divine Liturgy St. Spyridon	13	14
15 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	16	17	18 10:00am Bible Study	19	20	21
22 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	23	24 Christmas Eve 9:00am Royal Hours of Christmas 10:00am Divine Liturgy Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ	25 Christmas Day 10:00am Divine Liturgy The Nativity of Christ	26	27	28
29 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	30	31 New Year's Eve				