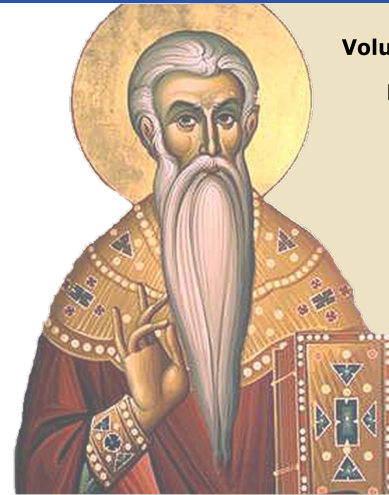


in Touch

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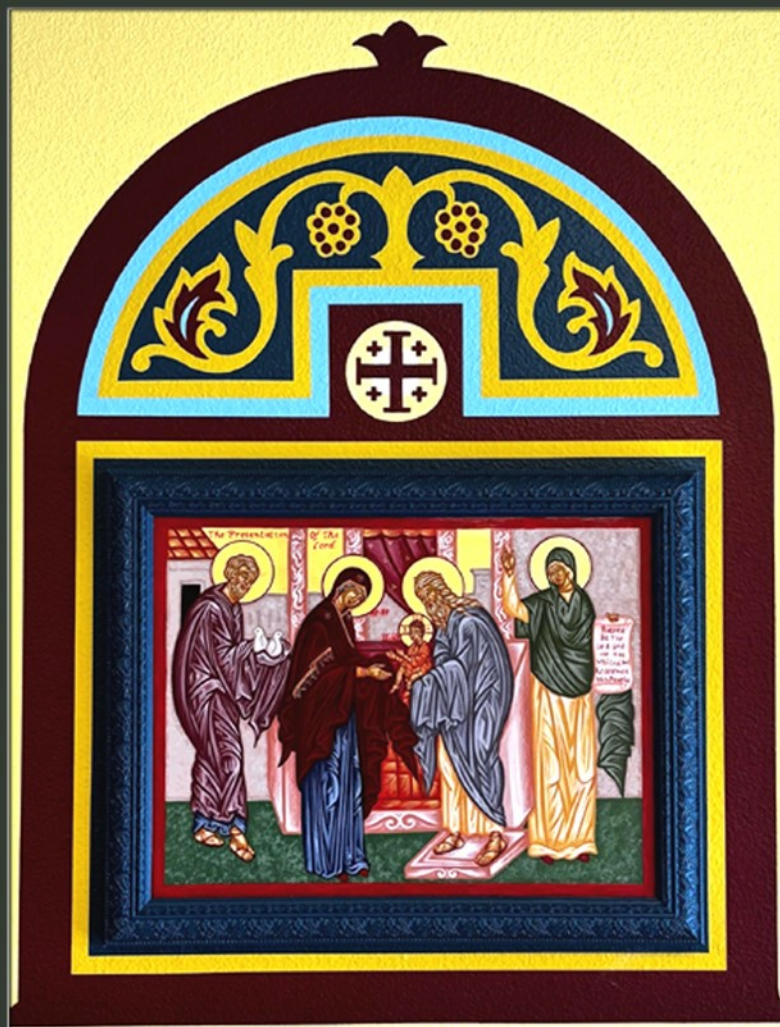
Vasilopita
Sunday • 2

The Presentation
of the Lord • 3

Parish Council
News • 4

A Journey
to Fulness • 4

St. Anna's
Philoptochos • 5



The Presentation of Christ
in the Temple
Sunday, February 2

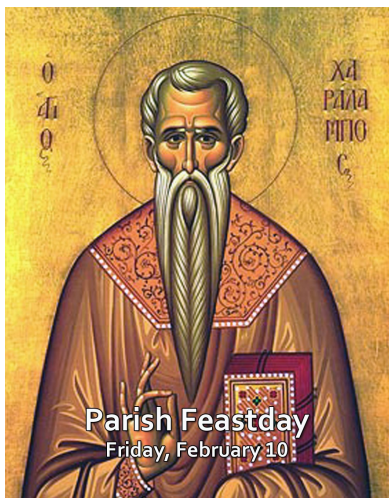


Lord, You know that men are flesh and blood; forgive them their sins and pour out Your blessing on all. — St. Haralambos

Vasilopita Sunday



Our Patron Saint: Haralambos, the Holy Priest-Martyr



At 113 years of age, Saint Haralambos fell asleep in the Lord. You might imagine that his last year was spent peacefully, but you would be wrong. In his final year on this earth, Saint Haralambos was put to the ultimate test, choosing to endure savage torture rather than deny his faith in Christ.

What type of people would torture a man at his age? What were his crimes? The pious saint only continued to preach, teach and baptize in the face of the

ultimatum given him by the local authorities. Saint Haralambos was not persuaded in the least, and was attracting more attention in his village. Finally ordered beheaded, as the executioner was carrying out his orders, a voice was heard from heaven, "Well done my good and faithful servant; enter now into the joy of your Master." At that moment, the saint gave up his life without having been executed.

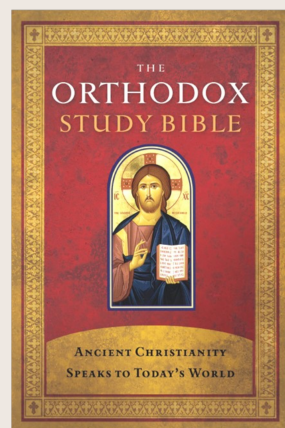
Praised in his festal hymn as "an unshakable pillar of the Church of Christ," Saint Haralambos is an example of how strong faith can give us courage to face anything in life.

This year, on Monday, February 10, our parish celebrates its patron feastday, commemorating our patron saint Haralambos. All are welcome to the Vesper Service at 5pm on Sunday, February 9, followed by a lovely reception, and then to the Divine Liturgy at 9am on Monday, Feb. 10.

Bible Study

Gospel of Saint Mark

All are welcome to join the lively discussions in the Tuesday morning Bible study group, meeting at 10am in the church library. The current study is on the Gospel of Saint Mark. We read, ask questions, discuss and learn from the Scriptures, and from one another! Personal Prayer Requests close each meeting.





The Presentation of the Lord in the Temple

“And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: ‘Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples; a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.’” (Luke 2:25-32)

Following the Old Testament Law, the first-born male children in ancient Israel were brought to the temple on the 40th day after their birth to be dedicated to God in remembrance of the Lord’s sparing of the lives of the first-born sons of the Israelites during the 10th and last plague that killed all the first-born sons in Egypt, “from the pharaoh’s son, who was heir to the throne, to the son of the prisoner in the dungeon” (Exodus 12:29). So, because the first-born son of each Israelite household was spared on the night of that first Passover, the first-born sons of subsequent generations were to be consecrated to God’s service in a special way, in gratitude for His mercy.

This religious rite was fulfilled in a new way in the bringing of the Christ child to the Temple by His mother, Mary, the Theotokos, and the Righteous Joseph, and is still celebrated in the life of the Orthodox Christian Church today, thousands of years later.

Today, Orthodox Christians, in order to fully participate in the process of conforming our lives and the lives of our children to the pattern of the life of Christ Jesus – “in whom there is neither Greek nor Jew, slave nor free, male and female” (Galatians 3:28) – bring not only our first born sons but all of our children, sons and daughters, to the Church for the 40-day blessing in order to dedicate and consecrate them to God and to offer prayers of thanksgiving to Him for the new life He has brought into being. New mothers are also prayed over, thanking God for having preserved them during childbirth. By this ancient service the Church affirms and blesses motherhood and family life and formally introduces the newborn child to the mystical life of the Church. (Summary by Fr. Steven Tschlis)

*By this ancient service
the Church affirms and
blesses motherhood*



The liturgical calendar of the Orthodox Church commemorates the Presentation of Christ in the Temple on February 2nd, the 40th day of His birth. The Presentation or Entrance of the Theotokos in the Temple is celebrated on November 21st when the child Mary was three years old. Both icons, shown here, are on the east wall of the Narthex in our church.



**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

Harry Bekiaris
Avery Brightwell
Angie Cholas
Virginia Dent
Catalina Raicicof

Vivian Teska
Demetria Themistocles
Solomon Woldesilassie
Ray Wysmierski
Linda Zakas

Parish Council News

By Ray Wysmierski, President

The Parish Council started the new year with a council meeting on the 21st of this month. Welcome to the new members of council, Avery Brightwell, Demetria Themistocles, and Catalina Raiciof.

We had robust discussions on ideas for fundraising opportunities, and I know Brooke Brightwell is taking that lead, please reach out to her if you want to help her venture into this endeavor.

Don't forget the memorial and Life-giving dedication tiles with forms in the fellowship hall with examples. This may possibly be my last In Touch update as we will be electing new officers once our votes and administrative documents are sent to the Metropolis.

It has been a flurry of activity these past two years, and the parish can see the

evidence with the improvements. We also hired a new officer manager in the last two years, and she has been a blessing. Our treasurer, Cynthia Bekharis has also done a tremendous job, and I was sorry to see her not to elect to run for council. She has also done the flurry of financial activity over the past two years. She has worked to invest our capital and put the church on good financial footing. And largely juggling our finances to cover the expenses, with all the projects we had going in 2023-2024.

We look forward to Pascha, that will be here before you know it. Let us begin to prepare in our hearts to continue to express the love in our church to fellow parishioners.

Birthdays



Nicholas Wysmierski (4)
Koula Ratliff (5)
Peter Vardalos (11)
Lisian Basha (22)
Harry Calivas (24)
Dennis Georgen (24)
Speros Zakas (24)
Elizabeth Baxter (28)
Stephanie Baxter (28)

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.

A 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, and the value of learning about one tradition over another.

Each evening session begins with a delicious dinner, then explores the origins of Orthodox Christianity with a brief video segment and further discussion.

All class sessions begin with dinner at 6pm in the Fellowship Room.

- Session 5: Thursday, Feb 6: Mindset Matters
- Session 6: Thursday, Feb 13: A Healing Purpose

- Session 7: Thursday, Feb 20: Truth and Tradition
- Session 8: Thursday, Feb 27: How Do I Understand the Bible?



St. Anna's Philoptochos Society

By Anna Kinniburgh, President

The new Year 2025 started with numerous activities at St. Haralambos, starting Jan. 5 - 6 Holy Theophania, and the blessing of the water.

Jan. 12 Sunday, Father Michael blessed the Vasilopita and divided into pieces for the different ministries of the church. One of the pieces was for the Clergy and Father Michael was the coin winner. We wish and pray for a healthy new year to him and his family.

Stella Pagos, Hope Evangelinos, Anna Kinniburgh and Sofia Dorios made Vasilopitas that were sold on silent auction. All were sold and we thank all who were so generous.

At the National Philoptochos convention, held last July, it was approved to expand our Vasilopita commitment to include continuous support for St. Basil academy and Youth Program services, to benefit the young adults of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.

The amount we raised with your genericity was \$502 and will be sent to the above. Thank you all who purchased our Vasilopita.

On Jan. 19 was the Orthodox wedding ceremony for Brooke and Avery Brightwell, with family guests and the congregation in attendance following with a reception for all.



Stewardship

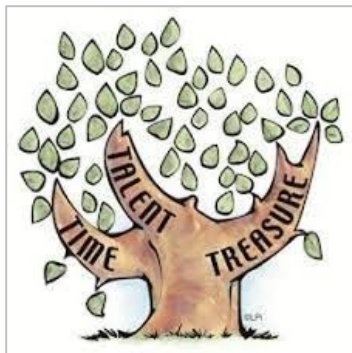
The 2025 Stewardship brochures have been mailed to all parish families. Additional brochures will be available in the Narthex and the church office. Please print legibly, and enter your contributions of time, talents and donations. Completed brochures can be mailed to the office or dropped off on Sundays.

We continue to remind everyone that there are no Membership Dues in the Orthodox Church. To become a Member in Good Standing is to complete and return each year the Stewardship brochure in which we pledge to offer our time, talents and treasure in support of our Church, in recognition that everything that we have is a gift from God.

The teaching on Christian Stewardship remains consistent to help us learn to be good stewards: we give back to God what is already His. We come into this world with nothing, and we leave it with nothing.

All that we have in this life comes from God's blessings. Returning back a portion to God through His Church, is our way of acknowledging the source of our blessings.

Our financial contributions should be a percentage of our financial resources. This continues the biblical teaching of tithing of percentage giving rather than setting a fixed amount applicable to all families. Above all, our offerings should be cheerfully given, recognizing our desire - not simply obligation - to give back to God a portion of our blessings we receive 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."

Lent Readers Needed

Lent begins on Monday, Mar. 3, and our parish is looking for those interested in being a reader for the Lenten services. If you are interested in being a reader, please meet in the library immediately following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, Feb. 9 for a brief meeting to go over responsibilities and to begin making the schedule. If you are unable to attend the meeting but would still like to be a reader, reach out to Lindsay Vardalos at 480.580.4904 by Feb. 9.

FEBRUARY 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 10:00am GriefShare
2 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	3	4 10:00am Bible Study	5	6 6:00pm A Journey to Fullness	7	8 10:00am GriefShare
9 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy 5:00pm Great Vespers for Saint Haralambos Reception Following	10 9:00am Divine Liturgy Saint Haralambos	11 10:00am Bible Study	12	13 6:00pm A Journey to Fullness	14 Valentine's Day	15 10:00am GriefShare
16 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy The Prodigal Son	17 Presidents' Day	18 10:00am Bible Study	19	20 6:00pm A Journey to Fullness	21	22 9:00am Divine Liturgy Saturday of Souls 10:00am GriefShare
23 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Meatfare Sunday	24	25 10:00am Bible Study	26	27 6:00pm A Journey to Fullness	28	