



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
303 Cullum Drive
Euless, TX 76040-4625

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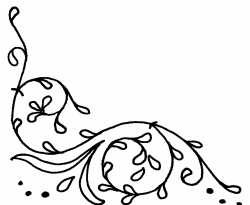


No Sponsorship This Month

If you would like to Sponsor the Forerunner

Next Month, Please Contact Greg

mrdigio@sbcglobal.net

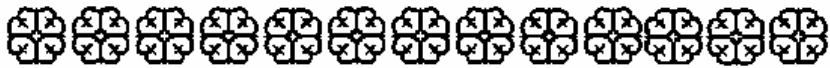




THE FORERUNNER

VOL. XXVI NO. 2

February 2010





THE FORERUNNER

Monthly Bulletin of
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
303 Cullum Drive ▪ Euless, TX 76040-4625
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Web Site: www.stjohndfw.info ▪ E-mail: parish@stjohn.tx.goarch.org
Volume XXVI ▪ Number 2

February 2010

Schedule of Regular Services at St. John's
Summer Schedule

Sunday, February 7:	Holy Liturgy,	9:30 A.M.
Sunday, February 14:	Holy Liturgy,	9:30 A.M.
Sunday, February 21:	Holy Liturgy,	9:30 A.M.
Sunday, February 28:	Holy Liturgy,	9:30 A.M.

Orthodox Calendar

*See enclosed calendar for dates, times, and places for the
Special services and other events this month*

Council Capsule

On January 10, the Parish Council was sworn in and a Special Council meeting was held to elect officers for the upcoming year. Those elected are: Barbara Vittas, President; Larry Leeders, Vice President; Terry Poriotis, Treasurer and George Moutafis, Secretary. The council extends its gratitude and appreciation to Harry Karegeannes, Bill Wright and Cynthia Pursley who have completed their terms.

I want to remind all parishioners that the first General Assembly of 2010 is on Sunday, February 21 following liturgy. We have a very important year ahead of us and need everyone's support and attendance at this General Assembly. Thanks to George Vittas and the Capital Campaign Committee and Joe Sullivan and the Building Committee we are about to embark on a exciting time of growth for our parish. August also marks our Parish's 30th anniversary and what better way to celebrate this milestone, than with groundbreaking of our new church building!

Barbara Vittas,
Parish Council President

Father Vasile's Message

Fasting abundantly

The idea that any Westerner has about fasting is strongly linked with renunciation, with giving-up, with sacrificing something for God. In the Eastern Orthodox Church however, fasting

achieves a much richer meaning. Fasting is not only about giving-up, but it is actually more about gaining, about being able to reach things that are possible only through this spiritual exercise.

In a legalistic understanding of salvation some believe that Christ has come on earth to fulfill a duty, to repair an offense that man has brought unto God. His sacrifice on the Cross satisfies this need and mankind enters again in God's favors. From this perspective fasting is a similar symbol: a personal sacrifice that one makes to step back into God's grace. This can be anything ranging from giving up chocolate to abstaining from Facebook for the Lenten period. But such frivolous renunciations really don't cut it into the genuine meaning of fasting. God doesn't need any of these sacrifices as He does not need the whole burnt offering of the Old Testament anymore. It is us, not God, who need the fasting rule.

Reducing the fasting to a symbol, to a mere idea of fasting, the entire exercise of Great Lent is perverted. Fasting becomes a theoretical notion that can be achieved through an act that involves little or no effort because, at the end, is not the fasting that is important, but only the idea of fasting. This intellectual reduction is yet another symptom of our brokedness, of the ontological separation between mind and heart. The mind creates an entire new reality that we confuse many times with the true authenticity of existence that only a heart open to God can see.

In this world, made-up by our minds saturated with secular values, the importance of the complete involvement of the body in fasting is forgotten, because for the mind a symbol is enough. But man does not exist in a fantasy of the mind, but lives in the real world, as a true person, body and souls, both physical and spiritual.

Christ saves the world not by spreading the idea of salvation, but coming down Himself, taking body from the Virgin Mary and physically becoming one of us; not a ghost, not a spirit, but flesh and bones. His death on the cross was not a symbol, but a painful reality. His resurrection was not a simple story full of morality, but the defining moment of a new stage in human existence. By reducing everything to symbols we end up living in our minds and missing the genuine existence.

In the Orthodox understanding man is utterly aware that living in a physical world, with a corrupted and fallen nature, the body is subject to passions that affect the state of his entire being. Controlling the body through fasting directs the entire human being towards God, because *“a body subdued by fasting brings the human spirit freedom, strength, sobriety, purity, and keen discernment.”* (St. Ignatiy Brianchaninov). In a paradoxical way by starving the body the entire human being is nourished spiritually and is able to *“ascend on high, to contemplate lofty things and to put the heavenly higher than the pleasant and*

pleasurable things of life.” (St. John Chrysostom).

We don't want however to reduce the experience of fasting to a mere vegetarian diet. The Great Lent is a period of total transformation, of metanoia, as the Greek fathers call it. The faster should strive to change his or hers entire way of life, redirecting priorities, seeking new avenues to God, striving for perfection in Christ. As St. Basil the Great advises *“True fasting lies in rejecting evil, holding one's tongue, suppressing one's hatred, and banishing one's lust, evil words, lying, and betrayal of vows.”*

From this perspective we can truly say, paraphrasing St. John Chrysostom, that fasting of the body is a feast for the soul. A soul liberated from the weight of an overfed body and nourished with the manna of virtues can reach into the spiritual heights, free of the passions that drag it to the ground. Such a soul can pray more, can forgive more, can love more. Fasting is not a simple renunciation but an exercise of love, as salvation is not an honor satisfying sacrifice but the greatest act of love ever seen.

Financial Report

Financial Report Thru 12/31/2009

Stewardship Pledge	\$140,090.00	
Stewardship Received	\$134,606.00	
Total Net Income including Doanations & Fundraisers		
Year	2008	2009
	\$170,560.00	\$164,102.00
Total Net Expenses		
Year	2008	2009
	\$188,160.00	\$171,034.00
Total Net Income		
Year	2008	2009
	(\$17,600.00)	(\$6,932.00)

2010 Stewardship News

As of 1/17/10 we have **61 pledges** for a **total of \$110,224**.

This means that 55 of last year's stewards have not yet committed for 2010. Remember, our **goal is \$185,000** and we need everyone's help to reach it. If you have not already pledged, we ask that you seriously and prayerfully consider doing so. Please help us

meet expenses by completing and submitting your pledge card today.

A big thank you to those of you who have already become stewards and to those who increased their pledge.

2010 Stewards

Alexander, Leo & Teresa
Arlington, Linda
Ballas, Andy & Pat
Berca, Sorin & Carmen
Blake, John & Harriett
Bogdos, George & Sotera
Bogordos, George & Kasandra
Brandon, Roberta
Cline, Tim & Angela
Dempsey, Walt & Dorothy
Feichtinger, Pavlina
Fondulis, Paul
Forcum, Ana
Fox, Mike & Kathy
Geil, Chris & Sandra
Genovezos, George & Olympia
George, Ken & Maggie
Gigliotta, Leonard
Hooe, Jane
Ibrahim, Basil & Mary
Jones, Daniel
Karegeannes, Harry & Ginny
Kerbow, Joe & Maria
Koumbarides, Nicos
Leeders, Larry
Leeders, Stacia
Maayeh, George & Lily
MacPherson, Doug & Andi
Manos, George & Vicki

Mavias, Michael & Mary
Medvic, Allison
Medvic, Nancy
Molhoek, Mike & Tina
Morcovescu, Serban & Anca
Nahatis, Arthur
Naval, Marc
Nicholas, Toni
Noulas, Athanasios
Nugent, Phillia
Pachares, Tony & Athena
Papadopoulou, Olga & Theoni
Papalioidis, Louie
Paulos, Sophie
Petercsak, Steve & Esther
Peters, Paun & Lynn
Plock, Eleni
Poletes, Bill & Rena
Poriotis, Terry & Gail
Rafailedes, Connie
Ruppel, John & Joanie
Russo, Joseph & Athena
Samaras, Johnny
Shah, Raj & Kirsten
Steffaro, Bob & Karen
Sullivan, Joe & Nina
Talleos, Peter
Tudora, Fr. Vasile & Pres. Mirela
Vittas, George & Barbara
Wright, Bill & Christine
Yiantsou, Dr. Chris & Margo
Zingas, Ari & Olga

Philoptochos News

Greetings! Thanks to all who supported our Poinsettia Fund-Raiser. Our Solae was beautified by a sea of red, and of course we

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were able to remember our loved ones during the holidays.

Hope you all have had an opportunity to get back into the swing of things in January. It seems as if it takes an entire month to recover from the holidays. St. Irene's had a full calendar last month. We hosted our Annual Vasilopita Auction in which we raised \$1300 to send to St. Basil's Academy. Thank you to those that supported our program, and of course the wonderful ladies who arrived early Saturday morning to bake the bread. Especially, thank-you to Toni Nicholas who does a beautiful job of coordinating our bake sales by the end of the day, she was covered in a sea of white (flour)! Next we had our Membership Tea and were blessed to have a National Board Member, Martha Stefanidakis, from Houston with us. She shared with us the roll that we all play in parish life. She so eloquently referenced us as an "Army of Women" who take on great challenges and responsibilities in our spiritual walk. We were most inspired and all had a great time, thanks to Rena Poletes for transforming our Paulos Center into a thing of beauty and to those that brought delicious goodies to share. It was a sign of your commitments in "our Army". Lastly, we were fortunate to collect approximately \$500 to send to our National Philoptochos as part of a relief effort for the Haitian tragedy. Thank you all for supporting this endeavor. I don't think any of us can relate to the devastation these people are facing. Let us keep them in our prayers.

On to February, please join us for our Valentine's Day Luncheon. St. Irene's will host this immediately following Liturgy on Sunday, February 14, 2010. Details will follow in an email and hand-out each Sunday. Please plan on attending, we expect a good crowd and as usual the food will be mouthwatering, so please make reservations early.

Our monthly meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2010 immediately following services in the Paulos Center. We hope to see you all there. We will be discussing our upcoming Festival of Tables slated for April 24, 2010. We have an exciting and well known guest speaker, Iron Chef, Michael Symon scheduled to speak that day as well as a book signing. I encourage you all to attend this meeting for all the details.

Due to the diligent efforts of several individuals we now have our Chapter's dates, times, forms and information on our Philoptochos page at: <http://www.stjohndfw.info/philoptochos.html> Please reference this page for any and all information regarding dates, events, meetings, calendars and of course we welcome your comments as well. This is a new adventure for us, we are excited in offering our information on line, and we hope you will be too.

With Christ's Love,

Bertha

Youth Ministries on the Move

With way over 900 registrants at the Metropolis Basketball Tournament, we do not need to even wonder if our GOYANS had a good time while in Dallas! We are proud of those in our chapter who played and appreciate the advisors who coached. Next year might be our year to win!

At this time our Church School classes are preparing speeches for the Oratorical Festival. Again, please discuss and encourage your child to work on this both in class and at home and of course discuss the topic with him/her! Your interest will show it is important enough for their effort. The parish Festival will be on Sunday, Feb. 28 in the sanctuary.

At this time we are aware of only one graduate from high school...Becky Blake. If anyone knows of another high school or college graduate within the parish, please contact me.

YOUTH MINISTRIES will meet on Sunday, January 31st following Divine Liturgy. We always welcome new members and are still looking for a male or two! As we enter into the second half of the year, we have lots to discuss and to plan.

Athena Pachares, Youth Ministries Coordinator
pachares@sbcglobal.net

GOYA

GOYA would like to thank Father Vasile, the parishioners and parents who attended and

supported us during the annual basketball tournament that was held in Dallas over the MLK weekend. We had a fun time with 15 GOYA/advisors attending and two Goyans, Dimitri Paybless and Alec Kime from St. Demetrios, who joined our boys team. In support of the Special Olympics, St. John's GOYA also donated \$150.

Last month, we held our elections. The new officers are:

Philip Sullivan, President
Maggie Molhoek, Vice President
Ovi Berca, Secretary
Peter Pursley, Treasurer

Our next meeting will be held on Sunday, January 7th, immediately following church school. One item we will discuss is the lenten retreat in Austin, on Feb 26th - 28th

Thanks,
Philip Sullivan, GOYA President

Orthodox Observer

We have recently learned that there are several parishioners that have not been receiving the Orthodox Observer. If you wish to receive this publication, you can contact them at 212- 570-3555 or go to www.observer.goarch.org

Gladsome Light Dialogues

Gladsome Light Dialogues are back in February with a new series concentrating on monasticism

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In a Western context, Monasticism is the most unknown face of Orthodoxy. A lot of questions arise about this particular group of people that choose to exit the world while paradoxically still praying for its salvation. We will have as guests a couple of monastic figures from our area that will share with us their calling and their experience in the monastery.

2/3/2010 Introduction to Monasticism
2/10/2010 The beginnings of monasticism
2/17/2010 A monk's perspective
2/24/2010 Evening Film Dialogues

Don't forget to visit our redesigned blog for additional info, materials and reflection at: <http://dialogues.stjohndfw.info>

Practical Faith

A Prayer on Fasting

By St. Nikolai (Velimirovic)

With fasting I gladden my hope in You, my Lord, Who are to come again.

Fasting hastens my preparations for Your coming, the sole expectation of my days and nights.

Fasting makes my body thinner, so that what remains can more easily shine with the spirit.

While waiting for You, I wish neither to nourish myself with blood nor to take life--so that the animals may sense the joy of my expectation.

But truly, abstaining from food will not save me. Even if I were to eat only the sand from the lake, You would not come to me, unless the fasting penetrated deeper into my soul.

I have come to know through my prayer, that bodily fasting is more a symbol of true fasting, very beneficial for someone who has only just

begun to hope in You, and nevertheless very difficult for someone who merely practices it.

Therefore I have brought fasting into my soul to purge her of many impudent fiancés and to prepare her for You like a virgin.

And I have brought fasting into my mind, to expel from it all daydreams about worldly matters and to demolish all the air castles, fabricated from these daydreams.

I have brought fasting into my heart, so that by means of it my heart might quell all passions and worldly selfishness.

I have brought fasting into my heart, so that heavenly peace might ineffably reign over my heart, when Your stormy Spirit encounters it.

I prescribe fasting for my tongue, to break itself of the habit of idle chatter and to speak reservedly only those words that clear the way for You to come.

And I have imposed fasting on my worries so that it may blow them all away before itself like the wind that blows away the mist, lest they stand like dense fog between me and You, and lest they turn my gaze back to the world.

And fasting has brought into my soul tranquility in the face of uncreated and created realms, and humility toward men and creatures. And it has instilled in me courage, the likes of which I never knew when I was armed with every sort of worldly weapon.

What was my hope before I began to fast except merely another story told by others, which passed from mouth to mouth?

The story told by others about salvation through prayer and fasting became my own.

False fasting accompanies false hope, just as no fasting accompanies hopelessness.

But just as a wheel follows behind a wheel, so true fasting follows true hope.

Help me to fast joyfully and to hope joyously, for You, my Most Joyful Feast, are drawing near to me with Your radiant smile.

(This prayer is included in the book, "*Prayers by the Lake*")

Choir Notes

Nothing to report this month.

Church School News

Dear Students and Parents,

Please remember that our church school class time has been extended to 45 minutes. This allows us to complete our lesson. We will dismiss the children from class upon completion of the day's lesson. Due to the variance in class start times, we also have to adjust the dismissal time. Organizational meetings should wait till classes are dismissed from the Paulos Center as well. Thank you for understanding.

This month the Middle School and Teen classes will focus on preparing for the Oratorical Festival. Encourage your teens to participate in the local Oratorical Festival.

Sunday February 14th, our focus will be on giving, in particular giving to our soldiers who are departing for the Middle East. If you could select a few items from the list we'll send home, provided by the USO website, and bring them to church, that would be great. The website says travel-sized toiletries are needed - shaving cream, deodorant and toothpaste are the "hot

ticket items" as well as beef jerky and chocolate bars. Following church, we will deliver the items to DFW Airport, Terminal B, Gate 15. We ask that you join us at the airport to help distribute goodies to the soldiers as they board the plane.

February Birthdays:

Chris Henry	14-Feb
Alex Genovezos	21-Feb
Demi Pursley	24-Feb

Praising Him,

Khanh Moutafis

Ageless Wonders

The Ageless Wonders are meeting on Tuesday, February 2, 2010, at 11:00 a.m. for a pot luck luncheon in the Paulos Center. We hope to view Takis video of their trip to Viet Nam and Cambodia. More details to follow!

Happy Valentine's Day to all ! Margaret

Building Committee

The Building Committee is continuing to look for options to replace the functionality of the Paulos Center via a cost effective first phase of the Church Hall expansion and renovation.

Thanks to all who stopped by and offered comments and suggestions at the December

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6th Open House review session. We will be presenting these options soon for review and approval to enable us to provide classrooms and offices for the parish prior to the Paulos Center demolition in order to make way for the new Church.

Joe Sullivan
Building Committee Chairman

Capital Campaign Committee

The Capital Campaign Committee is excited to be able to report the following status of the Campaign as of the 18 January 2010.

- Total Commitments - \$1,577,760
- Capital Campaign Fund Account Balance - \$249,880

We are humbled at the generosity displayed by these commitments and payments and we are strengthened by our fellow parishioners' demonstrated resolve to build the new church.

The Campaign will continue anew in 2010 as we strive to reach the ultimate goal of \$2,400,000, of which the first \$2.0 million will be for construction of the new church building.

During the first half of the year 2010, the Capital Campaign Committee's focus will be on working with the Parish Council and the Building Committee to finalize plans for the Paulos Center Replacement addition to the hall/church building. We must build the Paulos

Center Replacement and demolish the old building before we can start construction of the new church. This will take-up approximately the first half of the New Year during which time we hope our uncommitted parishioners will be able to make their commitments to the Capital Campaign Fund according to their abilities... At the same time, the CCC will be launching the Campaign BRIDGE program to Build communications, Report financial information; Involve new members; Discover new ministries; Grow our stewardship culture; and, Express our appreciation continually to those who are making it possible to “Build Our Future” with their commitments and contributions no matter what size. With the support of Fr. Vasile and the Parish Council, we hope to use the Capital Campaign and the development of the new church to prepare the Parish for the additional growth we expect with the opening of the new church and other renovated and expanded facilities over the next several years’ time.

As we have reported to the Parish at the various past Campaign events, a financially secure Capital Campaign Fund Account has been opened at a local bank and arrangements have also been made for acceptance of non-cash contributions in payment of commitments for those who desire to transfer securities to the CCFA. Please contact the Council Treasurer or any member of the CCC for further information and directions as to the steps to take when transferring securities.

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George Vittas, Chairman, Dr. Chris Yiantsou, Vice Chairman, Paun Peters, Nancy Medvic, Louis Papaliodis, Margaret Chokas and Harry Karegeannes.

Websites

Don't forget pay us an often visit at our parish websites <http://stjohndfw.info> and <http://dialogues.stjohndfw.info>. The sites are continuously updated with news and information about our faith. Also visit us on our new Capital Campaign website at <http://buildingourfuture.stjohndfw.info/>

Yours in Christ,
Sorin Berca, Website Administrator

Usher Schedule

1st Sunday: George Moutafis, Cynthia Pursley
2nd Sunday: Peter Talleos,, Raj Shah
3rd Sunday: Bill Wright, Tim Cline
4th Sunday: Barbara Vittas, Larry Leeders
5th Sunday: Nancy Medvic, Allyson Medvic

Acolyte Schedule

1st Sunday : Phillip Sullivan, Alex Genevesos, John Molhoek, Bennet Kerbow
2nd Sunday : Chris Eftemie, Ovidiu Berca, Phillip Sullivan, Chris File
3rd Sunday : Jackson Wright, Joey Basiliadis, Alex Genevezos, James Seals

4th Sunday : Luca Tudora, Ovi Berca, James Seals, Alex Shah

5th Sunday: Phillip Sullivan, Jackson Wright, Ovi Berca, James Seals

Coffee Hour Schedule

1st Sun.: Mr. & Mrs. Trevor Matheson

2nd Sun: Philoptochos

3rd Sun: Parish Council

4th Sun: Ageless Wonders

5th Sun: Parish Council (If Applicable)

Duties for hosts of Coffee Hour

SETUP

- Arrange pastries/food in a desirable manner on the appropriate tables in the parish hall.

- You are responsible for making the coffee. Make two pots: one regular, one decaf. Plug in before going into church. The instructions are in the kitchen.
- Prepare a tray with sugar, creamer, sugar substitute, mixing straws, a few spoons. Set with trash bucket.
- Put donation basket out with appropriate sign.

CLEAN UP

- Wash all dishes soiled, including coffee pots.
- Return sugar tray to kitchen and replenish it.
- Wash off hall tables and kitchen counters.
- Donation money will be collected by the Parish Council

6th ANNUAL VALENTINE'S DANCE

Sponsored by the Fort Worth Order of AHEPA Chapter 19

All Proceeds Contributed to the AHEPA Fort Worth Scholarship Fund

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13th, 2010, 7:00 PM

AT THE ST. DEMETRIOS COMMUNITY CENTER

2020 NW 21ST STREET

GREEK AND AMERICAN MUSIC, REFRESHMENTS, RAFFLE

Tickets Available at St. Demetrios

After Liturgy on Sundays

Contact: Angelo Spelios (angelo_spelios@yahoo.com)

George Vardakis (gwardakis@charter.net)

Any AHEPA Member for Ticket Information

\$15/person in Advance

\$20/person at the Door

Children 13 and Under (FREE ADMISSION)