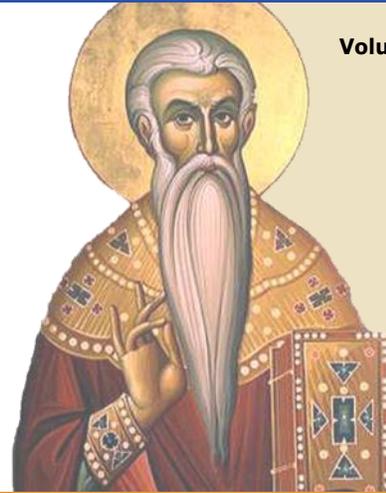


in Touch

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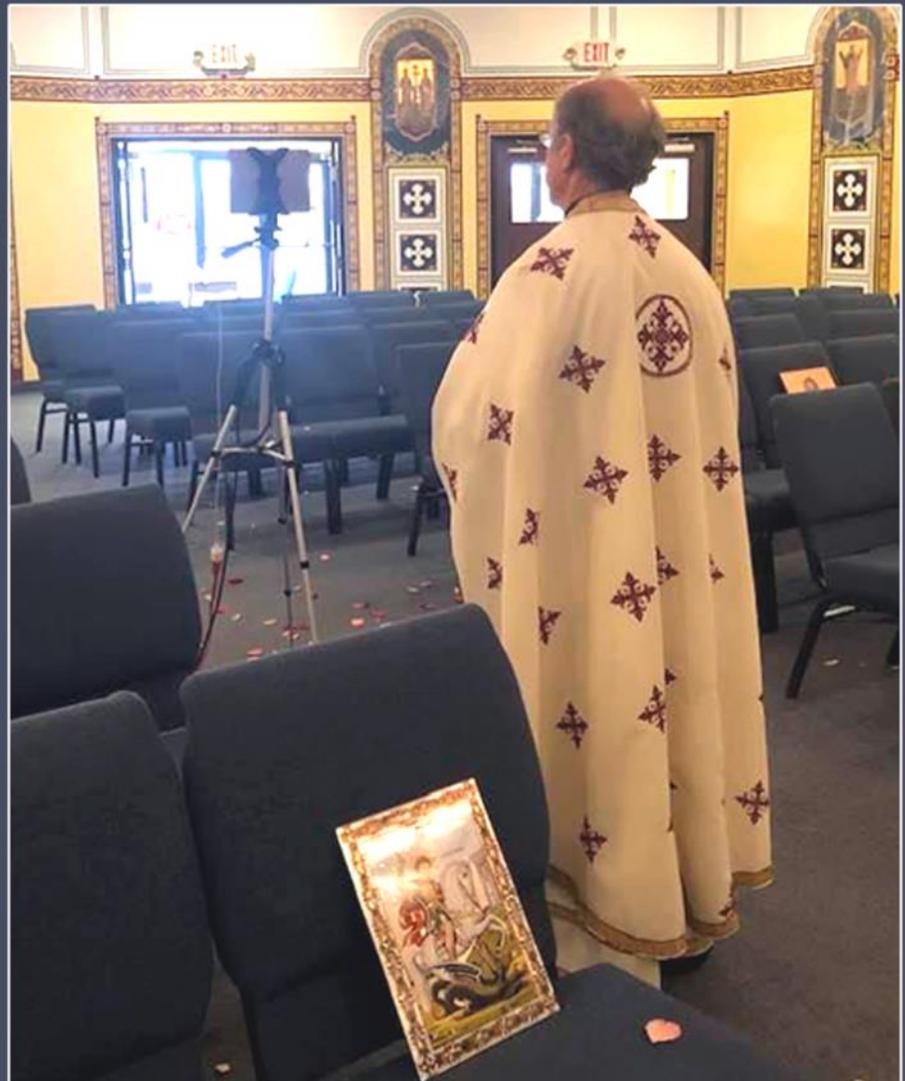


The Official Publication of St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church

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Will They Return?



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



Will They Return to Church?

Eventually, when social distancing is no longer required, and churches can re-open their doors, everything will go back to normal; except for one thing: the majority of parishioners (those with internet access) will have a new question to consider: Why go back?

Here are some of the benefits I've heard from those watching church services at home: saves gas, no worries about arriving late, no need to dress up, always a good seat, and, of course, should something more important come up, just click "cancel" and come back to watch at a more convenient time.

An impressive and persuasive list! If "going to church" on Sunday morning is just to watch the liturgy, it's easy to see why many would choose the comforts of watching from home.

Let's continue by asking a basic question: Are we looking at the Divine Liturgy as performance art, as something beautiful to see and hear? The hymns are beautiful, the gospel readings teach important lessons, the interior of the church is visually appealing as well. So with respect to what we see in the church and hear in the liturgy, the answer could be yes!

Now let's follow up with another question: Is there something more to coming together on Sunday morning to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, other than what we see and hear?

Some may say, "Of course! It's the Sacrament of Holy Communion!"

And they would be right; partially. If the main purpose of the Divine Liturgy was only to receive the Sacrament of Communion, parishioners would

time their arrival to walk into the Communion line, and once the sacrament had been received, would leave and return home. Larger parishes, needing to increase efficiency, would see the benefit of creating drive-through windows, moving parishioners along without the need to get out of their cars. Tired of waiting in line? Call ahead for an appointment; the Church must be sensitive to the needs of its people! (sarcasm intended)

The Divine Liturgy, as corporate worship (as opposed to private prayer), is more than the words, prayers and hymns, all of which can all be listened to or read privately. The Divine Liturgy, as corporate worship is more than being surrounded by artistic beauty and iconography, all of which can all be found in books and on internet posts. The Divine Liturgy, as corporate worship, is more than a brief "spiritual pit-stop" to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion, only to quickly move on with the rest of the day's activities.

The fact that the great majority of parishioners, in trying to help slow the spread of the coronavirus, have not been able for so many weeks now to come together for the Divine Liturgy, has created an opportunity to remind all of us of the purpose and meaning of Sunday morning worship.

Jesus taught His disciples, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20). And later, towards the end of the Last Supper, He makes the following request, "Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19)

The Divine Liturgy, as corporate worship (as opposed to private prayer), is more than the words, prayers and hymns

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**St. Haralambos
Greek Orthodox
Church**

www.stharalambos.org

Rev. Michael Pallad

Sunday Worship

Matins: 8:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy: 10 a.m.

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Hours

Monday - Friday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Parish Council

Philip Bell	Anna Kinniburgh
Angie Cholas	Ted Manos
Roy Christian	Ken Wrona
John Hrapchak	Valla Wrona

Parish Council News

Council members: President Anna Kinniburgh, Vice President Ken Wrona, Treasurer Phillip Bell, Secretary Valla Wrona, and members Roy Christian, Angie Cholas, John Hrapchak, and Ted Manos.

President Anna Kinniburgh and all the members of the parish council hope and pray that everyone is well and that God will protect us all.

Treasurer Dean Milonas submitted his resignation to be effective this month. At the parish council meeting on Apr. 9, Phillip Bell was nominated as the new treasurer. We thank Dean for his service to the council.

Much has happened since the last InTouch article. All services are now being broadcast online, thanks to the efforts of Fr. Michael and Alexandra, and we have visitors signing in from all over the country. Dennis Georgen, Kay Fulghum, Presvytera Kristin, Alexandra Pallad, and Meghan Pallad have been chanting and reading with Fr. Michael. The beauty of Pascha continues if only in our homes. Also, a donation link has been added to the website to allow for candle or other donations with a prayer request. You may still send in your donations with a check or call or email with your prayer requests.

Frosene continues to work on the database of parishioners' information for our Bright Arrow Technologies (www.brightarrow.com) account to help with church communication. Please contact the office if you need to update your contact information.

A contingency plan that includes an emergency response team is being spearheaded by Dennis Georgen in order to address the current crisis or any other crisis that could occur in the future. Please

contact him if you believe you could be of help.

We are investigating a plan to invest in a solar system to help with our utility bills. We will know more in the coming months. If the proposal would be beneficial, we hope to proceed with it by the end of the year in order to obtain the tax benefit that ends this year.

Our neighbors have contacted Fr. Michael because of the problem with people driving erratically and doing fishtails in the yard which causes rocks to be thrown into the neighbors' yards. It is also causing a problem by uprooting the pre-emergent weed control that was put down. As a solution, we are currently looking at bids for a fence and gates surrounding the property. This will also help with security.

At the end of March, we have received 109 pledged stewards and have received 30% of the pledged amounts. The amount pledged is \$103,005, which is 82% of our budgeted amount.

The General Assembly which normally takes place in May will have to be rescheduled for the summer or fall. The following are the preliminary results from the festival. We received \$101,168 gross. Expenses were \$60,972. Our profit was \$40,196. Some of the income categories have not been included in the current report, so a final report will be sent once it is ready.

The next parish council meeting is scheduled for May 7, at 7 pm. We have been having Zoom meetings. If you wish to observe, please contact Fr. Michael prior to the meeting so that he can email you the link and the password.

Name Days

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

St. Irene (5th)
Prophet Job (6th)
St. Christopher (9th)
St. Simon (10th)
St. Glykeria (13th)
St. Symeon (24th)
Sts. Constantine and Helen (21st)
Sts. Theodosios and Theodosia (29th)

Stewardship Committee

By Butch and Maria Lafayette, Co-chairs
Christ Has Risen, Christos Anesti

Let us begin by apologizing for missing the April Stewardship message. We also want to thank you for your continued generosity of time, talent, and treasures to the church during this troublesome period. Many of you have continued to provide your time and talent to assist the parish's transition to virtual presence. Additionally, the various ministries within the parish continue to perform their important efforts with your ongoing support.

We are pleased to report that as of the end of March the parish has received pledges from 109 stewards for a total of \$103,000 with an average pledge of \$945. We would also like to share that as of the end of March the parish has received over

\$31,000 in pledge donations, putting us slightly ahead of our quarterly projection.

We have continued to work on Stewardship issues albeit remotely. We have been attending stewardship webinars sponsored by the Archdiocese. The purpose of these virtual meetings is to assist parishes in addressing stewardship issues while our collective doors are closed. As you can imagine, like our individual circumstances, the church's on-going operating expenses continue, whether we are physically attending weekly services or not. In order to facilitate ease of on-going and one-time donations, the parish has recently implemented a "Light A Candle and Say a Prayer" link on the parish's home page. Thank you in advance for utilizing our new online donation feature.

Clergy Column

(Continued from page 2)

So the disciples did "this," the breaking of bread and sharing the common cup of wine, in remembrance of, and in the presence of, our Lord, Jesus Christ. This is how Christians first celebrated this most precious and sacred gift, the means of remembering and continually receiving Him through the sacrament.

But the Church does this together, physically present, gathered together in one place; not just to watch, and not just to listen. We come together in faith, to thank and worship our Lord and Savior, in a beautiful dialogue of clergy and laity.

We remind one another, "Christ is in our midst!" and we respond, "He is and always shall be!"

The priest offers prayers, "In peace, let us pray to the Lord," but the priest does not respond, the people do: "Lord, have mercy." (By the way, I've tried praying and singing with others online – it doesn't work! The time lag is too long; we need to be together.)

It may look and sound the same online, but participating at home can never take the place of being present together. Yes, in times of illness or where there is no local Orthodox Church, online streaming serves a good purpose. But those are exceptions, and not the rule.

The practice of corporate worship for Orthodox Christians means that we leave the comfort of home and join our brothers and sisters in the Lord as the Body of Christ, the ecclesia, the Church. It is our common work, our most sacred responsibility. There is power and strength and grace, and the presence of Christ in our corporate worship.

When the churches re-open the doors, I pray it is your desire to return. If it is, then return with humility and thanksgiving to be with our church family, to offer our prayers to God with one voice and one heart. There really is no substitute.

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

Birthdays



- Beylul Russom (1)
- William Georgen (3)
- Charlotte Servetas (5)
- Shirley Germanis (8)
- Despina Tremoulis (8)
- Megan Pallad (10)
- Tamara Kurilova (12)
- Roy Dent (13)
- Hermela Desta (13)
- Anita Dai (15)
- Lourdes Kotsobeis (16)
- Finley Nicholas (17)
- Tony Panousopoulos (18)
- Aspen Paoly (18)
- Voule Kapetanakis (19)
- Alexandra Pallad (19)
- Nicoletta Theoharatos (21)
- Constance Waters (21)
- Mr John Zafiroopoulos (22)
- Kosta Christakos (23)
- Yiorgos Papamatheakis (23)
- Genet Tesfay (23)
- Anita Calivas (26)
- Katherine Stithem (26)
- Ann Morley (28)
- Mrs Christy Zarate (28)
- Barbara Hartsel (29)
- Eve Devolites (30)

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.

St. Anna's Philoptochos Society

By Reni Milonas, President

Christ is risen from the dead, by death He has trampled down death, and on those in the tombs He has bestowed life. Christ Has Risen, Truly He Has Risen!

Christos Anesti!!

This year's resurrection is one for the books. We normally would bring red eggs for Father Michael to hand out, decorate the Kouvouklion with flowers, have a procession around the church and celebrate together with lit candles for the rising of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. None of the above occurred. The Covid-19 virus really changed our life and we've had so much time on our hands... While I watched the online Holy Week services Father Michael held, it was very surreal seeing the church empty and yet peaceful viewing from home. I for one am grateful for the opportunity to worship with everyone online.

Another thing that's been different is participating in monthly Philoptochos meetings with the Metropolis President Jeannie Rangles via Zoom. Last night I met with 53 Philoptochos Presidents and we were blessed to have his Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos join us. Meeting on Zoom has been informative, casual, and endearing. The message that was stressed last night was to send donations for Social Services. The Metropolis Philoptochos is assisting those struggling during this Covid-19 virus and they need donations to provide the assistance. If you would like to make a donation please contact me at rmilonas@cox.net for the address.

Locally, St. Anna's Philoptochos made a donation to the West Valley Food Bank

and to the Giannias Fund, which is a discretionary fund for Father Michael to use to help our stewards in need.

May's commitments:

National Philoptochos:

75th Anniversary Founders Fund: \$25
(OCF) Orthodox Christian Fund: \$50

Our scheduled commitments for various charities for the year 2019-2020 total \$4,728. This is why your continued support is so vital to help us achieve our goals.

How you can help

- Become a Philoptochos member.
- Host a Sunday Coffee Hour.
- Make a free-will donation into the Coffee Hour donation basket.
- Shop at the Deli/Bake Sales.
- Join us at our annual Palm Sunday Fish Luncheon.
- Link your Fry's card to the Fry's Community Rewards Program.
(Enter the St. Haralambos Church Account #VJ497 when enrolling.)

Pray for the people infected with the Covid-19 virus and that a vaccine and cure will be found soon. Stay in touch with one another and be kind to one another. Remember, this too shall pass.

Please consider joining our legacy of philanthropy and embrace our message of fellowship and faith in action through ministry to others. I wish all of you a safe and joyous summer and may God bless you and your families with His Holy Grace.



MAY 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Myrrh-bearing Women	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 7:45am Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy Paralytic	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Samaritan Woman	18	19	20	21 9:00am Divine Liturgy Sts. Constantine and Helen	22	23
24 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy Blind Man	25	26	27	28 9:00am Divine Liturgy Ascension of Christ	29	30
31 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy						