

# Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

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LIVE YOUR ORTHODOX FAITH



# ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

ΑΓΙΟΣ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ

## Is There a Santa Claus?

Is there a Santa Claus? The answer to this question is yes. His name is "Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker." He is also the patron saint of our church. Saint Nicholas was born at the turn of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and participated at the first Ecumenical Council held in 325 A.D. Prior to his participation at this monumental Church Council, he was Bishop of the city of Myra in Lycia, located in Asia Minor, Turkey.

Little is known of his early childhood, but as an adult it is known that like many Christians of his time, he was imprisoned by unbelievers for practicing The Orthodox Faith. He was later released from prison when Saint Constantine the Emperor gave religious freedom to all Orthodox Christians.

Saint Nicholas loved all people. He helped whomever needed help. He gave gifts to all children and thus became known as the Patron Saint to Children. He also became known as the Patron Saint of Travelers, sailors. Because he loved people, people loved him. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century his body was brought to Bari, Italy where it remains to this day.

It's traditional that when a building is consecrated as a church, relics from some saint are also placed within the Holy Table of that church. Thus many Orthodox churches have some relic of Saint Nicholas in their particular church such as the Archangels Church of Stamford, Connecticut & Saint Nicholas Church in Flushing, N.Y. Another interesting note is that The Roman Catholic community of Bari, Italy gave \$500,000 for the rebuilding the Saint Nicholas church that was also destroyed in the attack on the Twin Towers. You see, by the will of God Saint Nicholas continues to bestow gifts to his flock!

Yes there is a Santa Claus. His name is Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker.

*Father George S. Zervos*

Father George S. Zervos  
Parish Priest

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## Ecclesiastical & Church Calendars

- Sunday Dec 15<sup>th</sup>**      **Holy Forefathers of Jesus**  
Epistle Reading: 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:8-18  
Holy Gospel Reading: 11<sup>th</sup> Sun of Luke, 14:16-24 & Mt 22:14  
Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am  
Sunday School Pageant in the church proper
- Saturday Dec 21<sup>st</sup>**      **Hall Rental 2-4 pm**
- Sunday Dec 22<sup>nd</sup>**      **Commemoration from Adam-Joseph the Engaged**  
Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am  
Epistle Reading: Hebrews 11:9-10 & 32-40  
Gospel Reading: Matthew 1:1-25
- Dec 16<sup>th</sup>**      **Daisies Girl Scout Troop meets in Fellowship Hall 5:30-7pm**  
Will meet 1st and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month
- Christmas Eve  
Dec 24<sup>th</sup>**      **The Birth in the Flesh of Our Lord, God & Savior Jesus Christ**  
Divine Liturgy at . 6 : 30p . m .  
1. Antiphons are said  
2. Epistle Reading: Galatians 4:4-7  
3. Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:1-20
- Sunday Dec 29<sup>th</sup>**      **Sunday After the Birth of Christ**  
Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am  
Epistle Reading: Galatians 1:11-19  
Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:13-23
- Wed Jan 1<sup>st</sup>**      **Circumcision of Christ & Saint Basileius the Great**  
Divine Liturgy of Saint Basileius the Great at 9:15 am  
1. Antiphons  
2. Epistle Reading: Colossians 2: 8-12  
3. Gospel Reading: Luke 2: 20-21, 40-52
- Monday Jan 6<sup>th</sup>**      **Theophany of Our Lord, God & Savior Jesus Christ**  
**Agiasmos: Blessing of the Waters Service to Follow**  
Divine Liturgy at 9:15 am of Saint Basil the Great  
1. Antiphons  
2. Epistle Reading: Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7  
3. Gospel Reading: Matthew 3:13-17
- Sunday Jan 12<sup>th</sup>**      **Saint Tatiana the Martyr, Cutting of Vasilopetta**  
Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am  
Epistle Reading: Ephesians 4:7-13  
Gospel Reading: Matthew 4:12-17

As the church year comes to a end, I would like to inform you as of the many sacraments that took place at Saint Nicholas Church in 2013: 7 Baptisms, 0 Weddings (however, 3 Weddings are scheduled for 2014) 1 Funeral.

Prosforo Bakers for the rest of December 2013:

15<sup>th</sup> Louise Hill

22<sup>nd</sup> Maria Stanton

24<sup>th</sup> Joanne Christ

29<sup>th</sup> Christine Cheronis



*May the peace and hope of  
Christ's birth  
be with you now and in the days ahead...*

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*Kathleen's Favorite Poem to Encourage Your Faith:*

*He who made the mighty planets  
and flung them into space;  
now guides them in their Orbits  
and keeps them in their place.  
The Ruler of the Earth and Skies  
its sustainer and its source;  
will surely guide my life abright  
and keep it on its course.*

(I found this poem in a greeting card, and have loved it ever since. Do you have a favorite poem that encourages your faith? Tell us, and we would love to share it!)



## CHOIR NEWS



On November 17, the choir hosted its annual luncheon. We thank first of all—Jerry Newburg, who prepared 70 delicious stuffed chicken breasts. Thanks also to all the choir members of St. Nicholas and St. Elias for bringing the wonderful sides and desserts.

As always, members of choir and all youth were gratis. Through the community's generosity and two anonymous donations, \$547.00 was collected. We cannot thank you enough. As was mentioned, part of the proceeds go to our Stewardship commitments to National Forum as well as MFGOX, our Diocese responsibility. Also, we will be needing some new music for Easter and our newest project—new choir robes!

During the dessert time, our Choir performed the Cherubim Hymn which we sang at the area ecumenical concert a few weeks ago. With embellishments and solos it was a massive hit. We even did part of it in Greek, which I forgot to lead in the fellowship hall. Father George thanked all of us for our dedication to our choir. New members are always welcome. Again, thanks to Nick Manno and Tom Getska for always joining us in these endeavors.

Presvytera Anne

### SAINT NICHOLAS HONOREE

On Dec. 8, Mr. George Theofilactidis was honored before our congregation for his many years of service to St. Nicholas. His gift and certificate were shown in Cincinnati this past September by His Eminence Bishop Nicholas. Father George presented George with a beautiful Icon and certificate signed by His Eminence. The many things George has done for our Church were highlighted by Father. Axlos! Mr. George Theo.

Afterwards, a delicious luncheon sponsored by the Theofilactidis and Singleton families was enjoyed by all. Todd surpassed himself in preparing this luncheon in honor of our Saint Nicholas Parish as well as for his father-in-law.

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We are sad to say goodbye to one of our long-time parishioners and supporters of St. Nicholas and the Erene Society. Mrs. Norma O'Kelley has moved to Las Vegas to be with her son and daughter-in-law. She will be missed by all of us.

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*May Their Memory Be Eternal*

### MEMORIALS

John & Nikita Fanaritis  
*Magda hosted a luncheon,  
prepared by Todd Singleton, in their memory.*

Julia Matjoulis

Vasiliki Skelepetas

Triantafilia, Zissimos & Mary Pappas

*Coffee hours hosted in memory of the above by Connie  
Mignoli, Elizabeth Frederick, and Betty Pappas*

# ERENE SOCIETY

On Saturday, December 7, the Saint Nicholas Ladies Erene Society held their 46<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas Balkan Luncheon. To say it was another success is to put it mildly. Well over one hundred luncheons were served. The Spinach and Cheese pies were accompanied by a refreshing salad and delicious baklava. All who came complimented the chefs.

There was a baked goods table, a white elephant table and a hand-made section with lovely scarves, hats, washcloths, etc. Also displayed were the items to be raffled off. This will take place on Sunday, the 15<sup>th</sup>.

I wish to thank ALL of you who helped to make this such a wonderful event. Those who baked, those who set up, those who donated their time and talents, those who served, those who dealt with the raffle and entry tickets and those who cleaned up afterwards. Thank you Chairwoman—Christina Anderson.

Lastly, I thank all of you who came to support this beautiful endeavor.

Athena Constantine, President



## YASSOU FAVORITES CALL FOR RECIPES

Yassou Favorites and More has been a successful project and we are now ready to develop a revised edition! Thank you everyone for your past support. There were several parishioners who did not submit a recipe for the original cook book in 2008. We also have several new parish families and individuals since that time. We are welcoming additional recipes for any category. We also particularly welcome vegetarian, egg free, milk free, and gluten free recipes. Please e-mail your complete recipe to Liz Frederick, [mfred323@windstream.net](mailto:mfred323@windstream.net), or by mail, at 323 Palmer St., Jamestown, NY, 14701. I thank you in advance of your additional support. Liz Sklepetas Frederick

# NOTICES



## PARISHONERS IN ALTERNATIVE LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Helen Douvlos:

Rouse County Home, 701 Rouse Ave., Youngsville, PA 16371

Shelia Hollobaugh:

Kane Nursing Home, 100 High Point Dr., Kane, PA 16735

Katherine Nianiatos:

Ecumenical Home, 100 St. Francis Dr., Bradford, PA 16701

## KNOWN TO BE RECUPPERATING FROM SURGERY

- Athena Dimitri - at home
- Betty Pappas of Olean, NY

## KNOWN TO BE HOSPITALIZED

- George Cheronis

*We offer our prayers to all of the above.*

# THANK YOU!

As 2013 closes, I wish to thank all of the Acolytes who faithfully assist in the Altar every Sunday and during the weekly Divine Liturgies:

Nick Verleni, Anthony Marano, Louis Tsitso, John Matjoulis, Jr., Christian Duro, Alexander Dimitri . Christodoulous Christodoulou and our newest younger member—Tristan Kum.

*Father George*  
Father George

I also want to personally thank Teresa Duro for the wonderful Job she has done this past year preparing the Sunday Bulletins. Thank you Teresa .

# BAPTISMS



The Baptism of Anthony D. Deppas took place on November 9, 2013. Mr. Timothy K. Anderson was the Godparent. Anthony is the son of John and Debra Deppas. Congratulations!



## COUNCIL CORNER

By Jim Cheronis, Council President • 12/10/13

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

Last month we held the annual General Assembly, where we gathered as stewards of St. Nicholas Parish to review the business of the church. We discussed our finances, our goals from last year, and our goals for 2014. We also heard from committee chairpersons like Ladies' Erene, Sunday school and Choir, and we nominated folks for various committees. We even had 5 nominees for the 3 open seats on Parish Council!

After the meeting, I was left with the feeling that our parishioners are somehow becoming a bit more energized and involved with the life of the church. I thank God for this blessing, and I am grateful to be a part of our Orthodox community.

As we approach the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I think about His miraculous birth, and how this history-changing event affected humankind for all time. My wish is for us all to be uplifted and invigorated throughout this Christmas season. May we all feel a sense of renewal, of re-birth to our Orthodox faith, and with our commitment to Him and to our beloved St. Nicholas parish.

I wish you all a blessed Christmas Holiday and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

With love in Christ, Jim Cheronis, Council President

# THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

The Nativity of Our Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ has been celebrated with all solemnity and joy since the very earliest period of the Church.

Until the 4th century this Feast was kept on January 6, when the Church also remembered the Baptism of Our Lord in the River Jordan. It was called the Theophony and was dedicated especially to the manifestation of God in the flesh. ("Theophany" means the "showing forth of God.")

The early Church knew that there was a mystical relationship between the first and the Second Adam, between the one that brought death into the world and the One Who brought life and salvation. According to very ancient tradition, Christ, the "Second Adam," was born on the same day on which Adam, the first-created one, was born--that is, on the "Sixth Day," which corresponded to the sixth day of the first month (January 6th on the Julian Calendar).

## FIGHTING ERRORS

In the fourth century many errors were being taught, especially by the followers of Arius. They denied that Jesus was of the same substance as God; they believed that He was only the highest of created beings (a false teaching that has again become fashionable in our own days). According to this error, Orthodox Christians could not celebrate the birth in flesh of God Himself (which is called the Doctrine of the Incarnation), but only the birth of a very special creature who was not in reality God,

In order to combat this heresy it was agreed that the commemoration of the Birth of the Son of God should be separated from the Feast of His Baptism: the Church intended by this to make even clearer the truth about the incarnation. Many different dates were suggested for the celebration of Christmas, but in order to remove a temptation from the Christians of that time it was decided to use December 25. The Romans had a pagan festival on this day called *dies natalis Solis invicti* - ...a celebration of the return of the sun to summer, as if renewing itself. The Romans used this day as an excuse for unbridled merry-making and immorality (much as it has again become in the 20th century). Since the Church had already decided to establish a separate Feast-day for the Nativity of Christ, December 25 was chosen in order to preserve the faithful from the temptation to participate in pagan revels. The Church Fathers also wanted to make use of the symbolism of the sun on that day, thinking to ennoble or elevate the pagan feast to a Christian understanding because Christ is often spoken of in the New Testament as the "Sun of Justice," "The Light of the World," etc. (The fact, that the early Church deliberately chose a pagan feast for the celebration of Christmas has been confused in the minds of many modern sectarians--viz., Jehovah's Witnesses--who do not understand the authority of the Church, and are themselves latter-day Arians.)

## THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

By establishing the Feast of the Lord's Birth on December 25, the Church did two things; first, she clearly rejected pagan ideas about life, death, birth, etc., and showed that Christ had come to replace those lifeless and gloomy teachings (see the article on Reincarnation elsewhere in this issue); secondly, the Church confessed her undying faith in a great dogma: that God had taken flesh from a woman and come to dwell among and save men.

In the center is the cave in which the Saviour was born; the two animals fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah (1 3): "The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel does not know Me, and the people has not regarded Me". Surrounding the cave, the whole of creation offers what it can in thanksgiving to the new-born Saviour: "Angels their song, the heavens a star, the Magi gifts, the shepherds wonder, the earth a cave, the wilderness a manger, and we the Virgin Mother" (from Christmas Vespers). At the bottom are two details handed down in iconographic tradition: two women wash the Child and St. Joseph is tempted to doubt the Virgin Birth by the Devil disguised as a shepherd.



At the same time, by means of special hymns and prayers on this day, Orthodoxy instructs the world in ways of holiness and morality, wishing to kindle in the hearts of people a determination to be reborn from a life of sin to a life pleasing to God.

As one writer explains: "Not in glory and magnificence, but in poverty, wretchedness and humiliation does the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth appear in the world; not a luxurious palace, but a humble cave, receives the King of those who reign and the Lord of those who rule. By this we are shown the greatness of humility, poverty, meekness and simplicity, and the ruinousness of pride, riches, vainglory and luxury .... By this it is suggested to us that the Lord receives all and everyone: He is pleased by unlettered simplicity, when it is united to faithful fulfillment of one's calling, to purity Of conscience and life; and He does not reject human wisdom, when it knows how to submit itself to illumination from above and make use of its learning for the glory of God and the benefit of one's fellow men"

(Orthodox Word, Vol. 3, //16-17, 1967).

# TRUTH - POWER - LOVE

*Bishop Athenagoras Kokkinakis has written a treatise on Truth - Power - Love. This is the third of three excerpts:*

Today we are often captives of fear. It seems that fear has become again the characteristic of our lives. However, we do not fear the liberating fear of God, but rather the enslaving fear of man. And it is true that in our effort to dissolve our fears we devise many escapes. Knowledge and power are considered by many as the only remedy capable of extracting fear from our beings. Nevertheless we have failed. Neither knowledge nor power has succeeded in freeing us from fear. For we are afraid of the very things with which we seek to protect ourselves.

We must realize, moreover, that the infallible advice, the most effective weapon against fear, is not to be found in the realm of matter: the antidote for fear is love. This is what the Disciple of Love reveals to us in his first epistle. "Perfect love casteth out fear" (I John 4:18). We are afraid because we do not love, or because our love is not whole but incomplete.

The followers of Christ, the founders of our civilization, succeeded in proving the Gospel real and living because they had no fear. Love dissolved their fear and bolstered their courage and strengthened their faith. They loved and believed in Christ and were bold enough in declaring, in the words of St. Paul, that they were capable of doing everything so as to overcome all obstacles with the strength they received from the love of Christ (Philip. 4:13).

Perhaps we do have strength and perhaps we do have courage. But for strength and courage to materialize in a genuine way we must not love things abstract and vague, but people. And we must love others not only as social and ethnic representatives, but above all as images of Him Who became man for our sake. This love is the perfect love, the love that saves. This love is the fulness of the values of life. The truth that we possess only in terms of love is cleansed and perfected. And the power we acquire in love alone is saved and is transformed into a source of common good and benevolence.

Our experience makes us recognize these facts both as certain and real. And Christ, the incarnate Son of God, stands in history as a living proof of all these. If we want additional proof of these, then, it is sufficient for us to examine ourselves, or to ask our friends, or to peruse the pages of history. From such sources we receive the one and only answer: Love saves, love strengthens, and love elevates.

† BISHOP ATHENAGORAS



# 2013 STEWARDSHIP LIST

Anderson, Greg & Christina  
Anderson, Tim & Rachel  
Bechakas, Costas  
Bechakas, James & Marisa  
Bechakas, John and Toulia  
Bechakas, Michael & Heather  
Bechakas, Terry & Soultana  
Beers, Mary  
Benchley, M&M Andrew  
Bertrand, John & Victoria  
Bruner, Kenneth & Helen  
Cheronis, James & Christine  
Christ, James Sr. & Tara Family  
Christ, Terry & Joanne  
Constantine, Athena  
Constantine, Terry  
Coustenis, Virginia  
Crandall, Chad, Brittany & James  
Cretekos, Kathryn  
Cummings, Bryan  
Cummings, Virginia C  
Decker, Jim & Kathy  
Dejesus, Carmelo & Jessica  
Deppas, Greg  
Deppas, Lou & Melissa  
Deppas, Ryan  
Dimas, George & Dorothy  
Dimas, Louis & Thomaidha  
Dimitri, Adam & Kelly  
Dimitri, Athena  
Dimitri, John, Julie, Alex  
Dimitri, L Michael & Joann  
Duro, Christian  
Duro, Teresa  
Elia, Mark & Vanessa  
Enserro, Ethel & Stephanie  
Fanaritis, Magda  
Feell, Theodora  
Fislinger, Tom & Leslie (Keri)  
Frederick, Elizabeth S.  
Gedz, Basil G  
Giopulos, John & Shirley  
Grieco, Eleanor & Donato  
Hanson, Jason & Cherie  
Hastas, Suzanna B  
Hill, Louise H.  
Jamesson, Kaliope  
Johnson, Merle & Elaine D.  
Johnson, Mark J & Sara Jane  
Jonesthis, Athena  
Juvelis, Nicholas G. & Martha  
Kianos, Robert & Michelle  
Kianos, Violet  
Kress, Eric & Natalie, Kylie, James  
Kum, David & Wendy (Kassie, David, Trison)  
Lampropoulos, Stephanie  
Louis, L. Terry  
Lundmark, Jason  
Luzzi, Anna  
Marano, Maria & Kim  
Marano, Tony & Nancy  
Matjoulis, John T  
Matjoulis, John Jr.  
Matuszewski, Paul & Diane  
McCandless, Nicolette  
Michos, Alexandra  
Michos, Crist & Robin  
Michos, Elizabeth  
Mignoli, Constance  
Mihal, Paul & Marguerite  
Morrison, Heath & Kathleen  
Newburg, Elizabeth & Jerry  
Noni, Ordella M  
O'Kelley, Norma T  
Panteli, Pantelis & Linda  
Pappas, Elizabeth (Betty)  
Piaschyk, Damian & Sabrina  
Psychos, Constance  
Rafael, Presvytera Claire  
Rafael, Timothy, Chryssanthe & Family  
Raptis, James G & Demetra  
Rigas, Gus & Rheba  
Rigas, John & Doris  
Rigas, Michael  
Rigas, Tim  
Riolo, Mary Michos  
Ross, Anna P  
Saines, James  
Searls, R. Ted & Laretta C.  
Silo, John & Barbara  
Snell, William & Affroula  
Spanos, George & Mary Ann  
Spiridon, Dean & Linda  
Stanton, Dean & Maria, Ashley  
Theofilactidis, George & C Kathleen  
Theofilactidis, Lazaros & Courtney  
Tsitso, Evdoxia  
Tsitso, Nicholas L  
Tsitso, Spiro  
Turner, Bill & Angie  
VanGinhoven, Mary Jane  
Verleni, Gust  
Verleni, Nick & Helen  
Voulgaris, Anthony & Helen  
Zorich, Ronald & Voula

**Stewardship giving is the most appropriate way to preserve our Faith and Church for you, your family and, yes, for the outside community who look up to us. The Church needs you as you need the Church.**



METROPOLIS OF DETROIT  
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