

# THE ORTHODOX OASIS

## KAIROS

AN ANCIENT GREEK WORD MEANING  
'TO ENTER INTO AND PARTAKE OF THE  
TIMELESSNESS OF GOD'S KINGDOM'

ASSUMPTION

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

encounter · embody · engage

ANNUAL STATE-WIDE PAN-ORTHODOX

# WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT

*featuring Nutrition and Lifestyle Coach, Cynthia Damaskos and Ancient Faith Author and Podcaster, Molly Sabourin*



Holistic Christian Life  
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## SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024

HOSTED BY ST. BARBARA'S PHILOPTOCHOS  
ASSUMPTION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH | 8202 E. CACTUS ROAD, SCOTTSDALE 85260

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# Retreat



**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**

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# ASSUMPTION

## GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## “TIME MANAGEMENT” AN ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVE

BY ALBERT ROSSI, PHD AND JULIA WICKES, MA

The first thing to say, from an Orthodox perspective, is that there is no such thing as time management. We don't manage time. Time manages us if we allow the Lord to have a place in our schedule.

### Whose time is it?

Christ is everything, including the giver and owner of our time. He is the Way we format our schedule, the Truth about the meaning of time, and the flow of Life that moves us through time.

C. S. Lewis makes a profound point about time. He says that we usually regard time as our own. We start our day with the curious assumption that we are the lawful possessors of an upcoming twenty-four hours. With that hazardous assumption we then plot a matrix for our day, filling in time slots with tasks or restful moments. We might hope that we are managing our time in a way that will somehow please God. But when we begin with the assumption that time is ours, inconveniences and unexpected interruptions become intrusions into “my time.”

By contrast, we can begin with the assertion that time is not our own. Time belongs to the Lord and He has a plan for time that He desires us to accept for our own peace and joy.

### Adjusting our expectations

Those who are trying to use their time to do the

Lord's will must begin every day, and every moment, with Jesus Christ. One question might be, “Lord, what do you want me to do, now?” But an even better question is, “Lord, what do *you* want to do through me now?” This takes the emphasis from the ego and places it on the Lord.

If we believe that God has a plan for each moment, we can then be sensitive to each moment as it unfolds in unexpected ways. When we receive each moment as from the Lord we will begin to experience our time on earth as a series of *small deaths and resurrections*.

Every loss is a gift that God gives us so that He can give us more. It might be saying goodbye to high school or college days, a move from the old neighborhood, the loss of a job, the loss of physical or mental health. We might lose loved ones through separation or death. In degrees, the reactive thought might be, “This is the beginning of the end.” A more truthful thought would be, “This is the beginning of the beginning.” Death is the beginning of a new relationship with Christ, a fresh beginning of an entirely new life. Each loss and little death is a new beginning towards our ultimate beginning—heaven. As we adjust our expectations time takes on a new meaning.

### Sacrament of the present moment

Simple awareness of the presence of God is the power within the present moment. The present moment—now—is the only place where God is. He discloses Himself through the reality of the present moment. Nowhere else. This is a mystery we can participate



in by simply trying to be aware of His presence. Awareness, conscious contact with God, is the key.

## **Making the most of time**

There is a paradox inherent in the Orthodox approach to time. We do not “manage” our time yet we must be prudent and skillful in the way we use our time. We must plan without being a slave of our plans. So, we are back to basics. We need to allow the Lord to flow through us all the time, as best we can. Sometimes we must use the present moment to plan for tomorrow and the long-term future. But, again, it is the Lord doing the planning through us. When we finish the planning we can’t obsess about it or allow the plans to become larger than life. We must be stable in the present moment and flexible enough to change plans as the Lord directs, at a moment’s notice.

The truth is that we have all the time we need, and abundantly more, to do all that the Lord has us on the planet to do. He gives us our tasks and ministry, and resources with sufficient time. “And my God will supply your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 4:19) We, however, often have other ideas. Enter stress and dissatisfaction. We make our own stress, in large part.

## **Push pause**

To let the Lord work through us means that we give him space, and, of course, time. All too often we act reactively. Our responses often take the form of a stimulus-response reaction. Too many times we want to say, “Yes” to all the requests that come our way, and they all may have great merit. But then, one can get so overloaded and overburdened. However, it is not always easy to discern to what we should say “yes” or “no.” It does require growing closer to the Lord, to hear His voice and His direction. Often, we do not go in the direction to which He has pointed. However, we take comfort in the knowledge that He is the Great “GPS”. He is always ready to “recalculate” and reroute us.

One handy suggestion is to push pause as often as we can. We can pause between the stimulus and our

response, thereby gaining perspective. The pause itself is usually sufficient to break the reactivity cycle. We can become aware of something else going on besides the unconscious reaction. This is a fine opportunity to try to remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

A way to gain more conscious contact with God is to gently and quietly say, “Jesus.” His holy Name is an expression of belief, adoration, expectation of salvation and unity with Him and all the members of His body. His name is sacred and is a power He asked us to use. “Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name. Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.” (John 16:23) We need to know that when we use His Name we are acknowledging that we are his disciples. We pause and say His Name, as an act of obedience and surrender of the present moment. We can match this with an awareness of our breathing, centering us more inside our body.

We can simply say the one word, “Jesus,” to transfigure what is in front of us, or in our minds. The name Jesus can be a filter through which our thoughts, words and deeds have to pass to be freed from their impurities. Needless to say, this is severe spiritual warfare. It requires a forgetfulness of the self, a dying to the negative thoughts the ego wants to indulge.

## **Conclusion**

Time manages us because the Lord lives within the time He gives us. So, it is He, through the reality we call measured time, who manages, leads, nourishes and strengthens us. We don’t live life. Life lives us.

Time is our friend, not our burden to endure. We need only remember that we are in the holy presence of God. We can pause and say the Name of Jesus, thereby bringing us into His very life within us. While on earth we have an opportunity to “sanctify time.”

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The Great Doxology, although proper to the service of Orthros, is regarded by many as the beginning of the Divine Liturgy. If nothing else, it is certainly a bridge between orthros and the divine liturgy. This grandiose, antiphonal hymn stands as the climax of the morning service of orthros. One would imagine that the climax would be in the middle of the service, with building action and falling action and a resolution to conclude the service, as one might experience at any performance. However, the divine services are not a performance of any sort, but a participation in the life of Christ. The peculiar placement of the Great Doxology at the end of the service of orthros, yet at the beginning of liturgy, while simultaneously somehow outside of both of them speaks volumes about time in the Orthodox experience.

In the Orthodox understanding of time, there exist two ‘types’ of time. The first, which we are most familiar with is ‘chronos’. Chronos is the linear progression of time, which Father Alexander Schmemmann in his well known work *For the Life of the World* depicts as “nothing but a line of telegraph poles strung out into the distance and at some point along the way is our death.” It’s rather grim. The other ‘type’ of time, however, is radically different. “Kairos” represents a divine moment, an opportune and qualitative experience which transcends this linear progression of “chronos”.

The Divine Liturgy takes place outside of time (chronos) but within God’s timelessness (kairos). The liturgical cycle, which transforms our *chronos* into *kairos*, is meant to elevate us to “meet the Lord in the heavens” (1 Thess 4:17) at the mystical table set before us in the Divine Liturgy. Thus, the Great Doxology at the end of the Orthros service and before the beginning of the Divine Liturgy

is meant to elevate our hearts and minds to contemplate the greatness of God, and to bridge heaven and earth. This hymn, with its fervent invocation of “Glory to God in the highest,” serves as a conduit, bridging the finite with the infinite, the temporal with the eternal, drawing us upward to our God Who is in the heights, Who is to be glorified in the highest.

These things are not merely symbolic, despite what the tendencies of our present culture say. A “warping of time” is what occurs every Sunday in the Divine Liturgy. Heaven and earth come together in this divine moment, outside of time, somehow present now in the 21st century, yet also on the last day, the eternal eighth day in the Kingdom of Heaven. It is for this reason that the priest exclaims, following the Doxology, “Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. It is for this reason that at various times in the liturgy we “remember” things that have not yet occurred, for instance we “remember all that came to pass for us, the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into the heavens, the throne at the right hand **and the second and glorious return.**” How can we remember the second coming if it hasn’t happened for us? The answer is as simple as it is complicated: Because we have stepped outside of time, and we stand in the Kingdom of the Heavens, in the kairos of God.

In essence, the Great Doxology, nestled at the juncture of Orthros and the Divine Liturgy, serves as a beacon guiding believers beyond the confines of earthly time, inviting them to partake in the eternal and sacred encounter with the divine—an encounter that transcends the boundaries of mere chronology to embrace the fullness of God’s timeless reality.

# The Great Doxology

Glory be to you who have shown the light.

Glory in the highest to God, and on earth peace, goodwill among men.

We praise you, we bless you, we worship you, we glorify you,  
we give thanks to you for your great glory.

O Lord, heavenly King, God the Father almighty,

O Lord only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit.

O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us, you who take away the sins of the world.

Receive our prayer, you who sit at the right hand of the Father, and have mercy on us.

For you alone are holy, you alone are Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Every day I will bless you, and I will praise your name forever, and to the ages of ages.

Grant, O Lord, that we may be kept this day without sin.

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our Fathers, and praised and glorified is your name to the ages. Amen.

Let your mercy be upon us, O Lord, even as we have hoped in you.

Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes. (3x)

Lord, you have been our refuge from generation to generation. I said: O Lord, have mercy on me.

Heal my soul, for I have sinned against you.

Lord, I have fled to you for refuge. Teach me to do your will, for you are my God.

For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we shall see light.

Continue your mercy to those who know you.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3x)

Glory... Both now...

Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

# PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

The Parish Council couldn't be more excited about what's in store in 2024 at Assumption.

In case you missed our November 2023 General Assembly, we'll provide a recap of some of the highlights. To keep the content pithy, this will take a discussion and answer format.

### What are the parish council's goals?

To help the clergy drive their vision for Assumption. We do this in a few ways. First, we are interested in helping ministries grow and become self-sustaining. Second, we tackle a host of administrative responsibilities that concern the smooth functioning of the church—from tactical building/maintenance matters to planning and coordination. Third, we focus on AGOC's financial stability because we know this is a prerequisite to ministry expansion.

The Parish Council is comprised of twelve parishioners (you can meet them here: <https://assumptionaz.org/parishcouncil>). Our backgrounds are different, from early career to retired, from small business owner to corporate manager. Our diverse backgrounds are a major strength, but most importantly, we prioritize unity (and we just like each other a lot).

### What does ministry expansion refer to?

First, let's talk about why financial stability is a prerequisite. The first stewardship dollars that come in pay our utilities, because we can't really function without electricity and water. Next we pay our clergy. The next dollars pay other obligations, which are far-reaching: renting our copier to grounds-keeping to archdiocese assessments. Whatever is left goes to ministry,

## STEWARDSHIP REPORT

2023 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE GRID AS of January 2, 2024

| Pledges         | Families   | Totals            | Avg Pledge      |
|-----------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| \$1-999         | 143        | \$ 59,583         | \$ 417          |
| \$1,000-1,999   | 80         | \$ 96,967         | \$ 1,212        |
| \$2,000-2,999   | 40         | \$ 88,450         | \$ 2,211        |
| \$3,000-3,999   | 18         | \$ 57,915         | \$ 3,218        |
| \$4,000-4,999   | 11         | \$ 46,180         | \$ 4,198        |
| \$5,000-5,999   | 16         | \$ 81,505         | \$ 5,094        |
| \$6,000-6,999   | 3          | \$ 18,000         | \$ 6,000        |
| \$7,000-7,999   | 2          | \$ 14,797         | \$ 7,399        |
| \$8,000-9,999   | 3          | \$ 24,000         | \$ 8,000        |
| \$10,000-10,999 | 6          | \$ 60,000         | \$ 10,000       |
| \$11,000-19,999 | 3          | \$ 39,000         | \$ 13,000       |
| \$20,000-29,999 | 1          | \$ 20,000         | \$ 20,000       |
| \$30,000-40,000 | 1          | \$ 38,000         | \$ 38,000       |
| \$50,000+       | 1          | \$ 50,000         | \$ 50,000       |
| <b>Totals</b>   | <b>328</b> | <b>\$ 694,397</b> | <b>\$ 2,117</b> |

so if not much is left, this means there's not much ministry we can do.

Some ministry can be done directly via the clergy. Confession, hospital visits, and studies in Orthodoxy are handled directly by the priests. But generally when we think of ministry we think of things like the youth programs, the Good Samaritan Fund, Project Mexico, and so on. Ministries can be inward- or outward-focused, meaning they can look in and try to address the needs of parishioners or outside our four walls at the needs of the broader community (or world).

AGOC's vision has been that both are important and that the needs within our walls and outside our walls are so great that we constantly need to be trying to grow existing ministries while launching new ones.

### How (and why) has the Oasis changed?

The Oasis historically was a way to find out about events and activities taking place. But



with a real-time Google calendar and constantly updated website, that felt like an inferior use of Oasis real estate. So, instead, we pivoted the Oasis to be content-driven. The goal is for it to become “a ministry” instead of being “about ministry”. This means you’ll find more Orthodox writing in the Oasis—it’s less like a newspaper and more like a book. Skimming won’t work as well.

But developing more introspective content takes time—a lot. That is one of the reasons why the Oasis is released every two months. AGOC will still include “save the date” and other event updates, but for the most real-time updates, be sure to check out the website and, specifically, the calendar, in addition to signing up on Assumption’s email group. Every Saturday, an email is sent with upcoming event notices.

### What is the annual budget for 2024?

We approved a 2024 budget of \$1,095,452, which is \$55,830 (or 5.4%) higher than 2023’s budget of \$1,039,622.

| 2024 BUDGET EXPENSES     |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Payroll                  | \$ 440,819         |
| National Ministries      | 116,988            |
| Utilities                | 81,155             |
| Clergy Medical Insurance | 74,650             |
| Capital Expenditures     | 50,000             |
| Banquet Hall             | 50,000             |
| Outreach Ministries      | 37,000             |
| Maintenance and Repairs  | 30,000             |
| Other                    | 214,840            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>\$1,095,452</b> |

### How is the budget developed?

There are numerous schools of thought on how to develop a budget. We use an approach

that triangulates on a number via multiple methods. First, we do what’s called a “bottom-up” analysis of all the anticipated expenses and how they will flow into the following year. Second, we think about strategic goals and desired projects and what these will cost. Third, we develop stewardship and parishioner growth assumptions to see if there will be adequate inflows to match the expected outflows.

A common joke in budgeting is that the outflows are very certain (e.g., Cox isn’t going to give us a Christmas present in the form of free internet in December) whereas the inflows are highly uncertain. This is why we graciously request every single person reading this to complete their stewardship form as soon as possible. It helps us immensely with planning.

### How do I submit a stewardship form?

Easy. You can do it online [here](#) or fill out a paper copy and return it by mail or in the narthex.

### How is the annual budget allocated?

We presented the following table to show the breakdown of key expense captions:

### What else was covered at the Assembly?

Lots! But we’re out of room here. Keep an eye out for the spring 2024 General Assembly and be sure to attend.

### Current Parish Council Members:

- Takis Makridis (President)
- Tony Papadopoulos (Vice President)
- Spiro Kircos (Treasurer)
- Christina Pullos (Secretary)

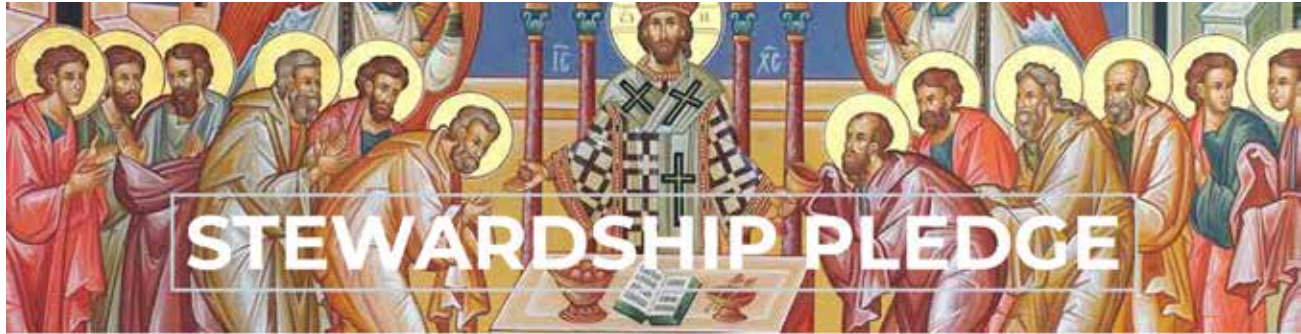
- Dimitri Anagnostopoulos
- Melisa Bill
- Christina Craig
- John Dimtsios
- Kathy Klausing
- Sally Solomon
- Jim Stamas
- Teddy Tavlarides

Nick & Katerina Adamopoulos  
 Demitri & Carolyn Adarmes  
 Christ & Christina Agnos  
 Catherine Ann & Popy Skagos-  
 Amanatidis  
 Aaron & Rebekka Amacher  
 Laz Amanatidis & Popy Skagos-  
 Amanatidis  
 Dimitri Anagnostopoulos  
 Nick & Athena Anastos  
 Maria Apostolatos & Artin Knadjian  
 Kiki & Vas Apostolis Tsontakis  
 Peter & Carol Aravosis  
 Ann Argyropoulos  
 Apostolos Argyros  
 John Ashby  
 George & Stella Athanas  
 Joseph & Vasso Athanasopoulos  
 Sarante "Sandy" & Julie Athenson  
 Athanasios Augoustatos  
 Paul & Christine Babey  
 Evan & Jewelie Bachanos  
 Jo Ann Baldwin  
 James Bancroft  
 George & Kristine Banis  
 Rev. Fr. Andrew & Pres. Andrea Barakos  
 Shawn & Michelle Barker  
 Lee & Ann Bartol  
 Jerome & McCall Bauersfeld  
 Daniel & Eriana Baum  
 Garrett Beltd  
 Tammy Belt  
 Taren E. Bennion  
 Lou & Judie Beratis  
 John & Elaine Bergquist  
 Ronald & Maria Betzig  
 Daniel & Melissa Bill  
 Peter & Gina Bills and Conflitti  
 George & Mary Ann Bissias  
 Georgia Botsios  
 Clent & Soula Boudreaux  
 Patrick Boukis  
 James & Hilda Bourdamis  
 Elaine Bowman  
 Nektarios & Julia Brokalakis  
 Tom Burke & Joanna Conos  
 Gary & Pamela Burris  
 Jimmy & Margarita Carres  
 Sotera Catsadimas  
 Helen Chakeres  
 George & Alexandra Chondropoulos  
 Nick & Julie Chondropoulos  
 Diane Christias  
 Tony & Roushan Christofellis  
 John & Eugenia Clark  
 Andrew & Irene Clary  
 Scott & Maggie Cole  
 John & Shiann Collins  
 Ronald Collins & Athena Kaviris  
 Frank & Elaine Columbus  
 Edward & Pam Conti  
 Elizabeth Contos  
 Olivia Contos  
 Blake & Paras Copenhaver  
 Demetri (James) Cotronakis  
 Craig Craig  
 Janet Crommings  
 John Curth  
 Nick Daddario  
 Thanos & Marguerite Dalianes  
 Gus Dandas  
 Jack & Shannon David  
 Michael & Sherine David  
 Voula Davis  
 Shannon Dawson  
 John & Mary Deffigos  
 John & Mary Demetropoulos  
 George & Janis Demetruilas  
 Peter & Sharon Demogenes  
 Alexandros & Kelly Demos  
 Michael & Jon DiMimo  
 Dorothy Dimtsios  
 John & Christina Dimtsios  
 Robert Dmitrick  
 Georgine Donahoe  
 Sandra & David Douglas  
 Kathy Drivas  
 Peter Economopolous  
 Rodney Egnash  
 Nick & Angie Eliades  
 George Elias  
 Christo & Sandra Eliopoulos  
 Chris & Sophie Evangelides  
 Christopher & Elizabeth Exline  
 Timothy & Karla Floor  
 Theodore & Evangeline Fotias  
 George Fotiadis  
 Angela Gallios  
 Frantzeska Gallo  
 David & Marta Gambaccini  
 Thomas & Tanya Garrison  
 Chris & Anne Gavras  
 Nicholas & Judith George  
 Jordan & Christyann Geotas

Tassos & Katina Gianakakos  
 Gina Giannis  
 Christian A. & Michaela C Gonzalez  
 James & Popy Govas  
 Suzanne Cuyan & Joey Cyganek  
 Abby Hakim  
 Billy Halax  
 Amelia Hellwig  
 Mary Hiras  
 Michael Hiras & Sophia Fountis  
 Alvin & Jeannette Hollander  
 Peter & Mary Houlis  
 Maria Houpis  
 Diane Hubbard  
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 Tony & Lindsay Ishak  
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 Joseph Jalaf  
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 Daniel & Nicole Johnson  
 Kevin & Tina Jones  
 Jeanine Kaileh  
 James & Linda Kalivas  
 Laurie Kalivas & Robert Gibney  
 Marika Kallonas  
 George Kalomas  
 James & Aphrodite Kandilas  
 Nick & Dena Kantaros  
 Diane Kappa  
 Jeannie Karamigios  
 Peter & Debbie Karas  
 Petros & Kiki Karidas  
 Dimitrios & Katherine Kariotoglou  
 Rick & Anna Kariotoglou  
 John & Virginia Kavthachakis  
 Fanny Kechajias  
 Thomas J Kenrick  
 Anthony & Nickolette King  
 Spiro Kircos  
 William & Meghan Kircos  
 Christopher Kireopoulos  
 Steve & Jennie Kireopoulos  
 Kathy Klausung  
 Kenneth & Sophia Kobs  
 David & Maria Kockinis  
 Nick & Vickie Koines  
 Demetre & Louisa Kondylis  
 Jimmy & Nora Konstantopoulos  
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 Arthur & Carol Kostaras  
 John & Maria Kostaras  
 Joseph Kostas  
 John & Valerie Kostas, Jr.  
 Tiffany Kostas  
 Georgia Kotsovos  
 Spiros & Krista Kotsovos  
 Philip & Angela Koufidakis  
 Anthei Kourinis  
 Dean & Angela Koumoutzis  
 Nikos & Jennifer Fotini Kourouglou  
 Michael & Vera Kouvelas  
 Nitsa & Tina Kovas  
 Nickolas & Anna Koziris  
 Irene & Keith Kufner  
 Bill & Evie Kypreos  
 Charlie & Patty Ladas  
 John & Katerina Lambrou  
 Anthony Latonis  
 Weston & Angela Leopold  
 Craig & Joanne Lewandowski  
 Luke & Maria Lipnos  
 Chris Livanos & Helen Tangalos-Livanos  
 Stacy & Ginger Logan  
 Charleen Lucia  
 Takis & Vanessa Makridis  
 Tony & Susan Makridis  
 Anna Manes  
 Luke & Kara Manuel  
 Gregory & Susan Marmas  
 John & Anna Maroulis  
 Pamela Maydanis  
 Peter & Christina Maydanis  
 Richard & Jennifer McCormick  
 Michael & Stacie McKenzie  
 Ed & Andrea McNamara  
 Bob & Claire McNeal  
 Georgia Mellas  
 Nicholas & Roxana Mellas  
 Pete Mellas & Vanessa Gutierrez  
 Stephen Mellas  
 Andrew Metamias  
 Anastasia Migas  
 Mariann Mihaillidis  
 Nicholas & Irene Mihaillidis  
 George & Chloe Miller  
 Debbie Morel  
 Constantine & Debbie Moschonas  
 Christina Mounkes

James & Irene Mourikes  
 Elias & Lama Moura  
 Christina Musallam  
 Evie Mustalam  
 Susie Nakhla  
 Marc & Terah Nassos  
 Tom & Loretta Nations  
 Bettie Neckopulos  
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 William & Sonia New  
 Christopher Nicholson  
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 Helen Serelis  
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 Douglass & Juliet Shewmaker  
 Hanadi Shraiky  
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 Cynthia Wrasman  
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 Lance & Kerri Rouse  
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 Jerry & Amanda Zannis  
 J.B. Zervos  
 John & Mary Zias



# STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE

ENCOUNTER *Christ*

EMBODY *His Church*

ENGAGE *The world in His Name*

We encounter Christ in worship, by prayer and serving our neighbor. Unity in Christ makes us members of one another with a common mission and goal in life - everlasting life in God's Kingdom. In Christ, strangers become friends. Collectively, we are a witness to the world of God's holy family who loves one another, serves those in need and practices forgiveness. Our prayer is that everyone will find a ministry that they are passionate about and begin serving the community in new and greater ways.

Find Your Ministry | Contact Christian Gonzalez, Director of Ministries at christian@assumptionaz.org

**In gratitude for God's blessings, I/We submit a Stewardship Commitment to Christ and His Church the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for 2024.**

## FAMILY CONTACT INFORMATION

Full Name

Occupation

Spouse Name

Occupation

Home Address

Email

Phone

## CHILDREN (UNDER 18)

Full Name

Date of birth

Full Name

Date of birth

Full Name

Date of birth

ASSUMPTION  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Please submit your 2024 Stewardship Pledge to Assumption Greek Orthodox church  
8202 E. Cactus Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85260 or complete online at [www.assumptionaz.org/stewardship](http://www.assumptionaz.org/stewardship)



# SNAPSHOTS *of life at Assumption*

PHILOTOCHOS JINGLE & MINGLE



DECEMBER SNOW

IN-HOME GATHERING



OUTREACH EVENT



BOOK CLUB CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION



SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT





# NOV-DEC 2023

IF YOU HAVE PHOTOS YOU WOULD LIKE CONSIDERED FOR THE NEXT ISSUE, EMAIL TO [OFFICE@ASSUMPTIONAZ.ORG](mailto:OFFICE@ASSUMPTIONAZ.ORG)

FIRST FRIDAYS



FIRST FRIDAYS



PHILOPTOCHOS BAKE SALE

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



COOKIE DECORATING



YOUTH CENTER (OLD HOUSE) REMODEL

# women's ministry

SEEKING STRENGTH IN SCRIPTURE

NEW STUDY BEGINNING JANUARY 24TH  
WE WILL MEET EVERY WEDNESDAY  
CHOOSE MORNINGS @ 10 AM OR EVENINGS @ 6:30 PM

ASSUMPTION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
COMMUNITY CENTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
EMAIL [L.ASTAVAS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:L.ASTAVAS@GMAIL.COM) OR  
[TAMMYBELT3@GMAIL.COM](mailto:TAMMYBELT3@GMAIL.COM)



REGISTER TODAY!



# ALL SAINTS CAMP 2024!

CAMP SHADOW PINES | HEBER, AZ  
MAY 26 - JUNE 1

[WWW.ALLSAINTSCAMPARIZONA.ORG](http://WWW.ALLSAINTSCAMPARIZONA.ORG)

REGULAR REGISTRATION: \$600 JAN. 1-APRIL 30  
LATE REGISTRATION: \$650 MAY 1-MAY 15

***“It is fitting to fish well and diligently, as the Lord foretells, saying, ‘Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men’ (Matt 4:18). And again he says through the prophets, ‘Behold, I send many fishers and hunters, says the Lord’ (Jer 16:16), and others. For this reason, it is very fitting for us to cast nets, so that an abundant multitude is caught for God” - St. Patrick***

Filling the nets is an opportunity to hear the stories of those who have journeyed into the Orthodox Church through our parish and have filled the nets of Christ.

Garrett Beldt is a catechumen at Assumption. He was formally made a catechumen just a couple months ago but has been participating in the liturgical life of our parish for almost a year. First finding Orthodoxy during Holy week of this past year, Garret was struck by the reverence and beauty of the faith. Though he did not understand what was happening, he knew he wanted to learn more.

Garrett grew up in a nominally Lutheran household but was not actively involved in the life of the church. Shortly before coming to Assumption, Garrett felt a spark to figure out how he would live his life and how God was supposed to fit in it. Searching for the true conviction of Christ, Garrett started attending an evangelical church and reading into the history of the Church. Stumbling across the writings of

the Fathers such as Clement of Alexandria and The Didache, Garret began to realize that if he could find people still living like those whom these early fathers wrote to, he would be able to find the true faith.

When Garrett finally came to Assumption and began to immerse himself in the life of the church, the questions within his soul were answered, and his eyes were opened in a deep way. The confusion and questions of how to live the Christian life properly were suddenly quenched, and clarity was felt. Though he has a long way to go in understanding the beliefs of the faith, his advice to those seeking the Truth or living this life is to always ask questions. Do not be afraid to ask the priests at this parish or others you might know. There is an answer to your questions, but you will not know it unless you ask. To listen to the full interview with Garrett visit [assumptionaz.org/fillingthenets](http://assumptionaz.org/fillingthenets)



# ENCOUNTER



# MEET...NITSA KOVAS

***“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.” - Ephesians 5:15-16***

Nitsa Kovas, an octogenarian with an indomitable spirit, embodies youthful exuberance and a profound love for humanity. Her vibrant outlook on life, a blend of gratitude and an unwavering work ethic, is rooted in a childhood shaped by the turmoil of World War II.

Born in 1939 in Piraeus, Greece, amidst the backdrop of global conflict, Nitsa's upbringing was framed by the principled actions of her parents, who owned a candle factory. Her father, a figure she reveres to this day, epitomized goodness, and her parents' religious convictions transcended mere gestures, quietly extending aid to those in need without seeking recognition.

“My father was a very good person. My parents were very religious. And I don't mean that they were zealots, doing crosses in the streets, and proselytizing. But they did so many good things to help other people that we never even knew about.” Nitsa recalls a time when her father risked his life to buy penicillin for a man with tuberculosis. Another time, when a poor woman in the village died, he secretly paid for her funeral.

For Nitsa, the true richness of life lies not in material wealth or status, but in connecting with people. Her joy emanates from engaging with others, spreading cheer even during her own hospital visits by regaling nurses and doctors with Greek folklore and recipes. “I like people. I talk to people. I want to make people feel good.



Even if I'm when I'm sick, like in the hospital, I feel much better because I make everybody feel good. The nurses, my doctors, they all pile up in my room. I've been very many times now, they all come because I talk to them in Greek, I tell them Greek recipes, I tell them Greek mythology, so everybody likes it, they come. So that makes me happy.”

In fact, it was volunteering in a hospital that has been Nitsa's greatest joy in life, serving as a candy striper in the 1950s offering her a profound perspective on resilience and the true essence of suffering. “That was the best experience too in my life, seeing people sick fighting for their life. I never say ‘I have a headache’ again. Complaining for a little headache isn't right. Where do we live? And how can we do things like that? I mean, they're suffering in here.”

In her role as a caregiver for her daughter, grappling with mobility challenges, Nitsa remains a beacon of unwavering support and love, embodying the essence of maternal care despite her age.

Her profound love for humanity is deeply rooted in her faith. She credits the Lord for the constant



presence of people around her, a testament to the grace she feels she receives. "I'm not rich, I'm not beautiful, but God must give me something, because people are always around me and I'm around people. I love people!" Her commitment to meeting people where they are, without judgment, echoes her belief in the sanctity of relationships and the inclusivity of faith, especially the youth. "Let the teenagers go [to church] with a nose ring or blue jeans and shorts. At least they will hear something good, better than being on the streets!"



When reflecting on her life's lessons, Nitsa offers a poignant compilation:

- ✘ **Love one another.** "Be more loving with each other. Smile more, have a kind word to say! Leave everyone with a kind word, because maybe it's the last word you ever tell him or her."
- ✘ **Be kind.** "Don't tell people they look bad. Cheer them up. Cheer people up. Even if they are sad and grouchy, they'll smile for you."
- ✘ **Do acts of mercy.** "Don't just say, I'm a good Christian. Give too. Maybe somebody needs it more than me."
- ✘ **Work never hurt anybody.** "Work doesn't hurt. As a matter of fact, it makes you more

proud. More proud when you work. And no matter if you work for money or if you work with somebody or if you're doing something good for somebody, it doesn't hurt. Work doesn't hurt. Worries do."

- ✘ **Money is not everything.** "Money doesn't mean anything. Because we never have enough. If we have 10, we'd like to have 20. Don't go after the money. It's not everything. Because, we came naked and we're gonna leave naked. You know, my mother used to say that."
- ✘ **Faith first.** "Faith first, not because I'm a judge now. You've got to have faith. Don't ask God 'give me this and give me that'. No, I want enlightenment so I can do the right thing. It's the most important in my prayers for my children too and for everybody."
- ✘ **Stay young at heart.** "God gives me the strength. At my age, I can still run and I can still wear blue jeans. I'm a golden teenager now. We have golden this, golden that, I'm a golden teenager. I become a golden teenager now for my daughter. I have to do that for my daughter but I'm happy."



In the tapestry of her life, Nitsa Kovas threads together lessons of love, kindness, work ethic, spiritual depth, and the eternal pursuit of a youthful heart. Her wisdom, distilled from a life steeped in compassion and faith, resonates as an enduring guide for generations seeking purpose and fulfillment.

# EMBODY

## Philoptochos - Join the Journey

**○** *Lord Jesus Christ, we bow our heads before You, and with humble hearts we give thanks to You for the abundant blessings which You have poured for upon us.*

As we reflect on the introductory words of the Philoptochos prayer, we begin to learn and understand what the organization's mission is to us and our community. We invite you to learn more, be inspired and join us on this life-long journey of service to glorify God.

The Greek Orthodox Ladies of Philoptochos Society was established over 90 years ago with the mission of serving the poor and those in need. Nationally, the Society consists of 26,000 members in 400 chapters that raise and distribute \$1.7M in funds to 100s of charities and missions across the world.

Locally, at Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, our chapter is named after St. Barbara, our patron Saint. We are blessed to have over 110 members who are dedicated and faithful to fulfilling our mission through Philanthropy, Promotion, Preservation and Participation. Throughout the year, we commit to doing good works through activities like making Hygiene Kits for the International Orthodox Christian Charities, baking delicious Greek pastries, decorating the Epitaphio and the church with beautiful flowers for Holy Friday before Easter, and hosting events like Crab Feast as a fundraiser and a new event like the OXI Greek Glendi and Dance. Through these activities and much more, we act as an extension of the hands of Christ to serve those in need. This past year, our chapter was able raising funds and distributing over \$65,000 to support 37 charities and ministries.



We invite every woman of all ages to join us on this journey and become a Philoptochos member in 2024. We welcome all existing and new members to come participate on **January 9th at 12pm** to help cook and feed the homeless from the ARIS Foundation in Tempe. Then on Saturday **January 27th at 11am** at our Church Community Center, we welcome you to come celebrate at our Annual Philoptochos Membership Tea. Don't forget to wear your hat (tea party attire)!

*“We also ask You, O Lord, to guide our deliberations, our decisions, our fellowship and all our labors, so that in all we do, or say, we may bring glory to Your Holy Name, of the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” Amen*

For more information on St. Barbara Philoptochos, the work we do, and/or how to get involved, please contact: Maria Kostaras at [mkostaras62@gmail.com](mailto:mkostaras62@gmail.com) or Maria Blasi at [meblasi67@gmail.com](mailto:meblasi67@gmail.com).

ANNUAL PHILOPTOCHOS CHARITY BENEFIT

# CRAB FEAST

FOOD • PHILANTHROPY • LIVE & SILENT AUCTION • FELLOWSHIP • FUN

**SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 2024**  
**5:30 - 10:00 PM**

ASSUMPTION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH COMMUNITY CENTER  
8202 E. CACTUS ROAD, SCOTTSDALE

**TICKETS \$75 PER PERSON**

*Catered by Alexi's Grill*

Our menu this year features  
Gourmet Hors D'oeuvres, Mixed Greens Salad,  
King Crab Legs, Spaghetti with Brown Butter & Mizithra Cheese,  
Garlic Bread and Limoncello Mascarpone Cake

*A variety of sponsorship levels are available.*

Purchase tickets & sponsorships  
or donate online: <http://bidpal.net/crabfeast2024>  
or scan the QR code provided

**CONTACT: ANGELA 480-688-3591 OR JOANNE 480-703-4453**

*A portion of the proceeds will support StreetLightUSA,  
a recovery home and counseling center  
for teen victims of sex-trafficking.*





## TRIVIA QUESTIONS

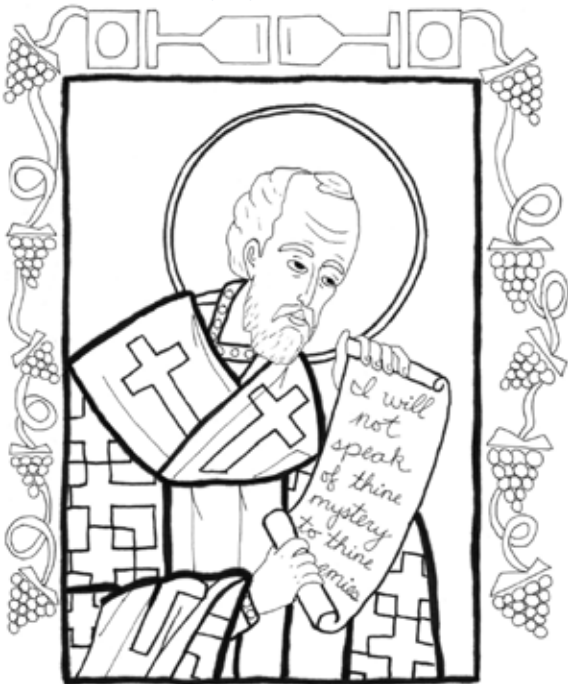
USE THE BIBLE VERSE REFERENCES FOR HELP, IF NEEDED

1. According to the creation account in Genesis 1, on what day did God create man? (Genesis 1:26-31)
2. What body of water was parted so that the Israelites may cross to the other side? (Exodus 14)
3. How old was Abraham when Isaac was born? (Genesis 21:5)
4. What name was given to Jacob because he had "struggled with God and with men, and prevailed"? (Genesis 32:28)
5. What was heard from heaven during Jesus' baptism? (Mark 1:11)
6. In which river did John baptize people? (Matt 3:6)
7. Who baptized Jesus? (Mark 1:9)
8. In what form was the Spirit seen descending from heaven during Jesus' baptism? (John 1:32)

ANSWERS: 1. Sixth, 2. The Red Sea, 3. 100 years old, 4. Israel, 5. "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.", 6. The Jordan, 7. John the Baptist, 8. Dove

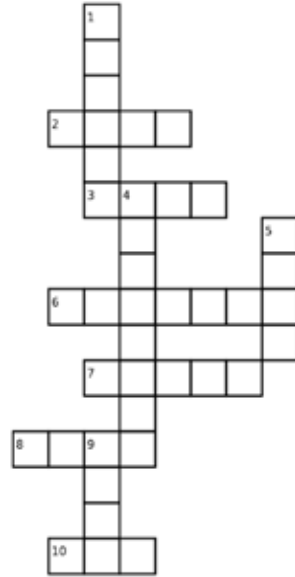
## COLORING FUN

Source: <https://sparks4orthodoxkids.com>



THE REMOVAL OF THE RELICS OF  
ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM  
Commemorated on January 27th

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



### DOWN:

1. The ancient Greek word for time.
4. Feast day commemorating the baptism of Christ.
5. Something measured in minutes and hours.
9. The most important thing Christ asks us to do.

### ACROSS:

2. How we can talk to God or ask the saints to intercede for us.
3. To look for, search, or strive after.
6. Sacrament where we are mystically born into spiritual life.
7. What we are immersed in during baptism.
8. Set aside for a special purpose.
10. The opposite of old.

ANSWERS: Down: 1. Kairos, 4. Epiphany, 5. Time, 9. Love, Across: 2. Pray, 3. Seek, 6. Baptism, 7. Water, 8. Holy, 10. New

## LEARN A NEW WORD

**kairos** | noun:

It is one of two words that the ancient Greeks used for time; the other being "chronos". Whereas chronos refers to chronological or sequential time, kairos refers to "God's time" and signifies a good or proper time for action. It is the deepest and truest form of time and is not measured in hours, minutes or seconds.



# JAN-FEB

## sundays...

8:00 am Matins  
 9:30 am Liturgy  
 10:45 am Sunday School  
 12:30 pm Chant Class

## mondays...

7:00 pm OCF at ASU (College Student Group)

## tuesdays...

6:30 pm Catechism & Theology Class (resumes Jan 16)

## wednesdays...

9:30 am Moms & Tots (1st & 3rd Wednesday each month)  
 10:00 am & 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study (begins Jan 24)  
 7:00 pm Greek Dance  
 6:00 pm Sr GOYA Events (Jan 24, Feb 7 and Feb 21)  
 6:30 pm Young Adult Ministry (Jan 17 and Jan 31)

## thursdays...

6:30 pm Chant Class  
 5:00 pm Philoptochos Board Meeting (Jan 4 and Feb 1)  
 6:15 pm Philoptochos General Meeting (Jan 4 and Feb 1)  
 7:00 pm Women's Book Club (Jan 25 and Feb 22)

## fridays...

6:00 pm First Fridays (Feb 2 and Mar 1)

## saturdays...

9:00 am Mom's Pantry (Jan 20 and Feb 17)

## HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS

**JAN 1** | Office & Heavenly Coffee House Closed  
**JAN 4 @ 5:00 & 6:15 pm** | Philoptochos Meetings  
**JAN 5 @ 6:00 pm** | Blessing of the Waters  
**JAN 6 @ 11:00 am** | Blessing of the Waters  
**JAN 7** | Sunday School Resumes  
**JAN 7 @ 11:30 am** | Parish Council Oath of Office  
**JAN 9** | Aris Foundation Outreach  
**JAN 9 @ 11:00 am** | Loving Life +50 Lunch & Games  
**JAN 12 - 14** | Annual Youth Winter Retreat in Prescott  
**JAN 15** | Office & Heavenly Coffee House Closed  
**JAN 24** | New Women's Bible Study begins  
**JAN 27 @ 11:00 am** | Philoptochos Membership Lunch  
**FEB 1 @ 5:00 & 6:15 pm** | Philoptochos Meetings  
**FEB 10 @ 11:00 am** | Loving Life +50 Potluck & Paints  
**FEB 15 - 18** | Greek Folk Dance Festival (FDF) in Anaheim  
**MAR 2 @ 5:30 pm** | Annual Philoptochos Crab Feast

## SPECIAL SERVICES

### **JAN 1 | Circumcision of Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ**

7:30 am Matins and 8:30 am Liturgy of St. Basil

### **JAN 5 | Eve of the Theophany**

6:30 am Royal Hours  
 4:30 pm Vespereal Liturgy  
 6:00 pm Blessing of the Waters

### **JAN 6 | Theophany of Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ**

8:30 am Matins  
 10:00 am Liturgy  
 11:00 am Blessing of the Waters

### **JAN 10 | Gregory of Nyssa**

7:30 am Matins and 8:30 am Liturgy

### **JAN 16 | Vigil For St. Anthony the Great**

7:30 pm Great Vespers  
 8:30 pm Matins (Vigil)  
 9:30 pm Liturgy (Vigil)

### **JAN 29 | Synaxis of The Three Hierarchs**

5:00 pm Vespereal Liturgy

### **FEB 2 | Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in Temple**

7:15 am Matins  
 8:30 am Liturgy

### **FEB 10 | Hieromartyr Haralambos**

9:00 am Liturgy at St. Haralambos

### **FEB 23 | Polycarp the Holy Martyr & Bishop of Smyrna**

7:30 am Matins  
 8:30 am Liturgy



\* FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE MOST ACCURATE INFORMATION USE THE QR CODE TO LINK TO THE ASSUMPTION CALENDAR ONLINE.

# BOOK SPOTLIGHT

## Time and Despondency: Regaining the Present in Faith and Life

by Nicole M. Roccas

Idleness. Apathy. Restlessness. Procrastination. These are symptoms of what early Christian theologians called despondency (acedia), a spiritual sickness rooted in a lack of care or effort. A condition as old as the ancients, despondency thrives in today's culture of leisure, anxiety, and digital distraction. *Time and Despondency* is a penetrating synthesis of ancient theology, spiritual memoir, and self-help practicality. It envisions despondency as the extension of a broken relationship with the experience of time. Driven by the fear of death and the anxiety of living, despondency drives us to abandon the present moment, forsaking the only temporal realm in which we have true

fellowship with Christ. The remedies offered by time-honored Christian thinkers for this predicament constitute not only an antidote to despondency but also stepping stones back to the present moment. In regaining the sacredness of time, we re-encounter the Resurrection of Christ in the dark and restless moments of our lives.



### About the Author:

Dr. Nicole Roccas has been researching and writing about time from both a historical and theological perspective for nearly ten years. In addition to being a writer and editor, she lectures at the Orthodox School of Theology at Trinity College (Toronto). You can find more of her writing on her Ancient Faith podcast and blog, *Time Eternal*. Nicole has a PhD in History from the University of Cincinnati. A native of Wisconsin, Nicole currently lives in the Toronto area.

## COMMUNITY SPEAKER EVENT MARCH 9, 2024

Paul & Cindy Karos of Matrona Ministries will offer two lectures. The morning session at 11:00 am for Young Adults will be "Vocation from an Orthodox Perspective." The community-wide afternoon session at 3:00 pm will be "Foundation and Pillars of Life."

*Matrona Ministries provides Orthodox Christians with tools and services to spiritually navigate the challenges and struggles of daily life in contemporary culture.*

**SAVE THE DATE**

For more information contact  
Niko Paris at [youth@assumptionaz.org](mailto:youth@assumptionaz.org)

# ASSUMPTION MINISTRY DIRECTORY

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## ADULT EDUCATION

Fr. Andrew Barakos | [priest@assumptionaz.org](mailto:priest@assumptionaz.org)

## ALL SAINTS CAMP

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