

THE ORTHODOX OASIS



“LET US NOT FORSAKE THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER...” HEBREWS 10:25

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
FILLED WITH LESS

8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024

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

The **FILLED WITH LESS** retreat cultivates health and wellbeing through the beauty of Orthodoxy and includes presentations on developing a peaceful mindset, taking care of His temple, combating overwhelm, and living intentionally.

HEALTHY LENTEN LUNCH AND SNACKS PROVIDED WITH \$25 REGISTRATION FEE

FILLED WITH LESS

Retreat



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

TINA JONES - TKANELOS@GMAIL.COM OR EMILY SANDSTROM - ECKUZAVA@GMAIL.COM

ASSUMPTION

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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NOTE: Oasis submission deadlines are the 10th of the month prior to publication

“FOR WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER IN MY NAME, THERE AM I IN THE MIDST OF THEM.”

-MATTHEW 18:20

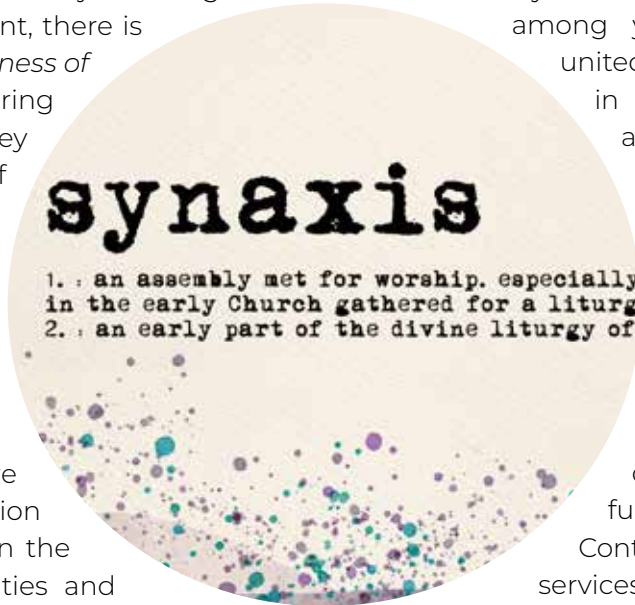
When the various Orthodox priests assemble on Sunday evenings during Great Lent, there is a palpable sense of the *fullness of the Church*. We are gathering once again here in the valley throughout the Sundays of Lent with fellow Orthodox Christians to experience this fullness and unity, which we share, but rarely experience. Participating in these services is a way of discovering a unique fullness, vital to our future in America. It is a temptation to enclose ourselves within the comfort of our communities and not venture beyond them. Lent calls upon us to restore through repentance the *proper order of things* both within and amongst one another.

There is a fervor for *restoration* ignited by the emerging adults in our communities, full of hope for a united Orthodox Church in America. Young adults do not see ethnic walls around their communities and they are gathering for fellowship. An effort is being made to put in place in the valley an Orthodox outreach ministry to the homeless organized under the leadership of FOCUS - The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve (focusnorthamerica.org). FOCUS North America is a national movement

of Orthodox Christians united in faith and joined by a desire to provide solutions to poverty in communities across America. The youth are on the ground floor of this effort seeking to put their faith into action.

It always has been the conviction among young adults that a united Orthodox Church in America would come about not from the top-down but from the bottom-up. It is easy to lose hope of a united Church when many communities do not respond to the changing demographics of converts seeking the fullness of Orthodoxy. Continuing to conduct services in a foreign language and importing priests to serve communities makes the point; change will only come from the bottom-up, but how?

It begins with each person making the effort to participate in Pan-Orthodox events. Get involved in FOCUS and the formation of an outreach center for the homeless. Attend the Pan-Orthodox Lenten Vespers at the various communities. A national Pan-Orthodox community of young adults (college-30s) called “Living Orthodox Ministry”, created at Holy Trinity, is hosting a retreat on March 30 – *Repentance: Redirecting our lives towards God*. On April 13, there is a Pan-Orthodox Women’s Retreat at Assumption. All of these activities





require a sacrifice yet hold the precious treasure of experiencing the Orthodox Church in a new way.

“Again I say to you, that if two of you should agree on the earth concerning any matter—whatsoever they ask for themselves—it shall come to pass for them from My Father Who is in the heavens. When two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them (Matthew 18:19-20).” The teaching is that if we *gather* without doing so in the name of Christ - He is not there. To gather in the name of Christ implies that the intent of assembling is to make His presence known. If Christ is present then that which is “agreed upon” is nothing other than to fulfill His will for us. This passage does not mean that God will grant us whatever we want, if it is not according to His divine will and purpose.

Christ’s divine will and purpose for us is clear in His last teaching before He went to the Cross. “Holy Father, keep in Your name those whom You have given Me, in order that they may be one, even as We....in order that all may be one, even as

You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, that the world might believe that You did send Me forth. And the glory which You have given Me I have given them, in order that they may be one, even as We are one (John 17:11,20-22).” The teaching is that “all” become one through their shared union in Christ. This union in Christ is a witness to the world of God’s presence in the Church. The absence of unity among Orthodox Christians is a testimony that our “gatherings” are in the name of *something* else. Moreover, the *glory of God* is the Divine Radiance, the light of Christ that shines through our acts of mercy and love displayed towards one another. The fullness of unity of all Orthodox Christians is present at every celebration of the Eucharist. It is Christ who makes us one in our worship but it us the faithful who are responsible for the unity that exists as we seek to serve the Lord together in the world.

In Christ’s Love,

✠Fr. Andrew



Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us together. Let us all take up Your cross and say: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest! (First Verse of Vespers for Palm Sunday).

Although this hymn comes to us from the very first service after Lent, it nonetheless embodies the spirit with which we should approach Great Lent. The church has now entered the period of the Triodion, the weeks leading up to Great Lent. The wisdom of the Orthodox tradition has established this period, mercifully, as a time where we are invited to gather together at the “trail-head” of the road to Golgotha. We slowly enter into the strict fast, characteristic of Great Lent, first by a week of not fasting at all! This is to remind us that we are *not to fast* like the hypocrites or the Pharisee in the Gospel, out of pride. We then fast from meat and then enter our strict fast as much as we are able with the express permission of a spiritual father, not on our own accord.



The purpose of Great Lent is to bring us who have strayed back to God. Throughout the course of the year, we stray from God. But in His great goodness and mercy, each year, He gently calls us back to Himself. We come to know Him by being obedient to His words and living a life in Christ. What does living a life in

Christ look like? Jesus reminds us that to live a life in Him, our life must resemble His life, which was entirely a giving up of Himself and serving others. Ultimately, He took up His cross, going to Golgotha to be crucified, and by His death, we have life everlasting. If we are to grow nearer to God, we must live His life, also taking up His cross and following Him. This is the invitation of Lent.

He doesn't call us to this alone however. The Holy Spirit *gathers us together*. This is the church, the **ἐκκλησία**, that Christ established before the beginning of time. The word church, **ἐκκλησία**, in Greek is a compound word, **ἐκ** and **καλέω** meaning to be called out of. Christ is calling us, all of us, whether we are already blessed to be in the Orthodox church or not, to Himself. What are we called to? We are called to *gather*, to assemble as the body of Christ. To be of “one heart and of one soul...holding everything in common”. We are being called to make Christ manifest in this world, not merely ‘representing’ Him, but RE-presenting Him to humanity. Imagine the effect the church, those called out to be the body of Christ, would have on the world if we assembled as His body.

According to some estimates, each person will meet 10,000 people over the course of their lives. When we gather as the body of Christ, we each plug ourselves and that community of 10,000 people by extension into the Lord Jesus. If every Orthodox Christian on earth *gathered* and *assembled* as the body of Christ, each of us bringing to Christ in our prayers our communities of 10,000, we would affect 2.4 trillion people.. That's the population of the earth 304 times over.

But what does gathering look like? At a very bare minimum, this means being present in the liturgical gathering of the church. The emphasis is on *present*. Our liturgies are not shows, they aren't weekly concerts of Byzantine Music, they aren't the regaling of tales from the scriptures, or weekly motivational speeches from the priests. The liturgy is "the work of the people". It is a real encounter with the living God. It is our active participation in the banquet of the Kingdom of Heaven, literally (and I mean literally, not figuratively) approaching a festal table with the Creator of the entire universe Who nourishes us with Himself. Our presence, a real, engaged, prayerful, participatory presence, is required here.

We also gather in the spirit of the fast. There is a reason that the Orthodox Church fasts the way she does. The church does not ask us to decide how we fast, rather the church prescribes days, times, and ways of fasting that are taken in conjunction with the council of a spiritual father to determine our ability to participate. In this way, we are all united and gathered together in a common fast and a common struggle. We are all, equally, called to do acts of mercy and to give alms to the poor. Finally, we are not only called to gather together in our fasting, but in our feasting too. We are to be gathered in fellowship.

This year, make it a point to speak to a priest about how you can fast, and gather with the church in this way. There will be more services every week during Lent-Come to these services and gather with the church in the eucharist. Participate and get involved in the services! We want anyone who is willing, "young men and maidens, elders with youths" to read the epistle during the Divine Liturgy, to read the Psalms during the Presanctified Liturgies on Wednesday nights, or to read the prayers at the

Akathist Hymn on Friday nights, and in this way to "praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is exalted".



Practice acts of mercy as much as you are able. Our Assumption community has organized many opportunities for outreach. On March 12, and again on April 2, we will be serving the unhoused with the ARIS Foundation in Tempe. On March 16 and April 20, we will be volunteering at Mom's Pantry. And on April 6, we are having a Community Outreach Day, where we can gather together to pack school kits for children around the world and participate in a blood drive.

Make it a point to try to attend the Pan-Orthodox Lenten Vespers services at the various churches throughout the Valley on Sunday nights during Great Lent. This is an opportunity for the Body of Christ, the church in the Phoenix area, to gather together in an even greater presence and to worship together with our other Orthodox brethren.

Finally, don't neglect to gather together in feasting as well. Every Wednesday evening, following the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, there will be a potluck in the fellowship hall. Gather together as the church for fellowship and a refreshment on the road to Golgotha, so that together, we may "all take up His cross and say: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!"

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

2024 is off to a great start! As always, the Epiphany services were touching, our bible studies are well-attended, and the ministries are doing great things. We welcome your feedback and questions. Contact the Parish Council President, Takis Makridis at pccpresident@assumptionaz.org.

2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Revenues	\$ 1,037,209
Expenses	1,068,955
Net Loss	(31,746)

The net loss was mainly contributed to lower than budgeted Stewardship Revenue.

Total capital improvements in 2023 were \$75,200. Major improvements include painting the Church’s interior, the Community Center and large classrooms, replacing two HVAC systems, replace the Church’s south facing windows and remodel the bathrooms in the old community center.

Thank you to the 328 families who registered as stewards in 2023 and all others who contributed for all our ministries.

Stewardship

Our 2024 budget is \$1,095,452, which is designed to not only maintain operations but also allow us to continue investing in new ministries within and beyond the church’s walls. Stewardship commitments are not dues or membership fees. Stewardship (in general, not only to Assumption) is how we express our conviction that everything we have is from God and that we are stewards of those gifts. Practically speaking, stewardship commitments allow us to set and update budgets, therefore bringing better discipline and planning to operations. Becoming a steward is easy: either

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

2024 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE GRID AS of Feb 9, 2024			
Pledges	Families	Totals	Avg Pledge
\$1-999	48	\$ 18,427	\$ 417
\$1,000-1,999	32	\$ 38,000	\$ 1,212
\$2,000-2,999	13	\$ 30,015	\$ 2,211
\$3,000-3,999	10	\$ 30,600	\$ 3,218
\$4,000-4,999	2	\$ 8,600	\$ 4,198
\$5,000-5,999	10	\$ 50,200	\$ 5,094
\$6,000-6,999	0	\$ -	\$ 6,000
\$7,000-7,999	0	\$ -	\$ 7,399
\$8,000-9,999	3	\$ 25,000	\$ 8,000
\$10,000-10,999	4	\$ 40,000	\$ 10,000
\$11,000-19,999	2	\$ 31,500	\$ 13,000
\$20,000-29,999	0	\$ -	\$ 20,000
\$30,000-40,000	0	\$ -	\$ 38,000
\$50,000+	0	\$ -	\$ 50,000
Totals	124	\$272,342	\$ 2,117

fill out a paper-based form in the narthex or do so online at www.assumptionaz.org/stewardship.

Old Community Center Is Now a Ministry House

We’re very excited about the work that’s been done here. As a reminder, in mid-2023 we decided the headaches, risk, and low rent levels were not worth it, especially when this building could be used to absorb overflow event demand and give our growing youth programs a dedicated place to meet. After completing some basic renovation and refurbishing work, we’re proud to report the old community center is now available as an additional meeting place for our ministries. As a Ministry House now the youth and young adults, Moms “N” Tots and College Students gather for discussions, fellowship and prayer in the chapel that was created in one of the back rooms (read more on page 15). Already, it’s been used dozens of times for youth events and other ministry gatherings.

Assumption supports ARIS Foundation

The Aris Foundation is a homeless mission that

serves the homeless population in Tempe. Each Tuesday evening Aris turns a parking lot into a place of refuge for those living on the streets. They provide food, clothes, necessary hygiene products, and other essential services such as dental and healthcare. Over the last few months Assumption parishioners have started volunteering their time and talents at Aris. In January Philoptochos cooked a meal alongside others from the parish and served it in Tempe. Since then, members from Assumption have volunteered on Tuesday nights by helping out on-site and by donating clothes, PB&J Sandwiches, and other items for those in need. **Assumption is scheduled to provide the meals and serve them on March 12, April 2 and May 14, please contact our Youth Director, Niko Paris for more information - youth@assumptionaz.org.** Be on the lookout for emails and announcements as we try to get behind this terrific opportunity to serve and express love to people in need.

Philotimo Award to Assumption's Dance Team

Our young adult dance group won the Philotimo Award at the recent Hellenic Dance Festival in Orlando, Florida. Our dancers had displayed a great example of hospitality and Orthodox values; for this, they were presented the "Philotimo" award. The word philotimo comes from the Greek root words "filos," meaning friend, and "timi," meaning honor. The meaning of philotimo extends far beyond the words friend and honor. Philotimo encompasses the concepts of pride in self, pride in family, pride in community, and doing the right thing. Take pride in what you do simply because you have taken the time and effort to do it. Help others simply because they need help. Do the right thing because you have a duty to do the right thing. Congratulations to our Dance Team!

Heavenly Coffee House (HCH)

The Coffee House has been self-financing and meeting all of its objectives and more. On any given day, you'll see parishioners visiting at HCH

as well as non-parishioners from the surrounding neighborhood. Our vision for HCH is just that: a friendly place for fellowship for our parishioners and evangelism within the surrounding community. Thank you to Abby Hakim for her outstanding leadership, and thank you to all the volunteers who contribute their time and talents to the operation for HCH. HCH is open daily 7:00 am to 2:00 pm except for Saturdays. Drop in with a friend and don't forget to buy HCH gift cards to give out to your friends or neighbors.

Upcoming Events – Save the Date

At the last general assembly, some people requested earlier notification, which we took note of and have already set a date. The Spring General Assembly will be held on Sunday, May 19, following the Divine Liturgy. We invite all stewards to attend. Please note that non-stewards may attend but will not be able to vote.

We have a date for the Dedication of our Community Center, which Metropolitan Gerasimos will be participating in. Please mark your calendars for Saturday, October 26 and Sunday, October 27. As a reminder, we paid off the loan for our Community Center on January 4, 2021, just years after finishing construction. We have been looking forward to this upcoming event where we can celebrate the grace we've experienced and generosity of our parishioners.

New carpet installation in the church

We have a "new" church! If you haven't seen it, we replaced all the carpet in the church and polished the marble floors. Thank you to all our volunteers who helped with moving and rearranging the furniture to make this possible.

Thank you to all of you!

Thank you for everything you do to make Assumption a source of hope and love to so many countless people. Look for opportunities to volunteer your time and talents, and pay toward your 2024 commitment pledge.

2024 FAITHFUL STEWARDS

Aaron & Rebekka Amacher
Dimitri Anagnostopoulos
Nick & Athena Anastos
Morfia Apostolis
Jonathan Azar & Megan Mullin
Rev. Fr. Andrew & Pres. Andrea Barakos
Lee & Ann Bartol
Tammy Belt
John & Elaine Bergquist
Alex & Andrea Boutselis
Tom Burke & Joanna Gonos
Dean & Mary Burton
Sotera Catsadimas
Helen Chakeres
Diane Christias
John & Eugenia Clark
Edward & Pam Conti
Elizabeth Contos
Blake & Paras Copenhaver
Christina Craig
Antonios & Roushan Christofellis
Janet Cummings
Gus Dandas
Jack & Shannon David
John & Mary Deffigos
John & Mary Demetropoulos
Joey & Sara DeMichele
Peter & Sharon Demogenes
Michael & Joni DiMino
Georgine Donahoe
Kostas & Caroline Economopoulos
Rodney Egnash
George Elias
Theodore & Evangeline Fotias

David & Marta Gambaccini
Thomas & Tanya Garrison
Todd & Tracy Gatesh
Chris & Anne Gavras
Gina Giannis
Van Goad & Irene Bafaloukos-Goad
Suzanne Guyan & Joey Cyganek
Abby Hakim
Diana Harris
Alvin & Jeannette Hollander
Kevin & Tina Jones
James & Linda Kalivas
Marika Kallonas
George Kalomas
Louis Kanios
Peter & Debbie Karas
Spiro Kircos
Christopher Kireopoulos
Louis & Maura Kireopoulos
Steve & Jennie Kireopoulos
Kathy Klausing
Nick & Vickie Koines
Michael & Sandy Konstas
George & Kayla Kossaras
Arthur & Carol Kostaras
Michael & Vera Kouvelas
Nicholas Kufner
Irene & Keith Kufner
Stacy & Ginger Logan
Takis & Vanessa Makridis
Anna Manos
Gregory & Susan Marmas
Alexander Mellas
Georgia Mellas

Nicholas & Roxana Mellas
Pete Mellas & Vanessa Gutierrez
Stephen Mellas
Andrew Metanias
Christos & Maria Mihaletos
George & Chloe Miller
John & Denise Millstine
Elias & Lama Mousa
Hayden & Inayah Myers
Jonathan Nassos & Jenni Pulos-Nassos
Donald & Lorraine Nemer
William & Sonia New
Chris & Lee Nicolopoulos
Kathy Nicolopoulos
Svilen Nikolov & Heather Wagner
Phoebe Orlando
Anthony & Sandra Papadopoulos
Chrysoula Papadopoulos
Harrison & Christin Pappas
Melanie Pappas
George & Dorothy Parides
Nicholas Paris
Angelo & Joyce Pateras
Peter & Penny Pefanis
Ken & Penelope Plache
Gus & Anna Plagianis
Andrew & Angela Poulos
Christina Pullos
Joanne Reichert
Elizabeth Riethmann
Demetra Rishwain & Michael Voeller
Mike & Antonia Ristagno
Andrew & Samira Rores
Chris Rotas

Linda Samalis
Michael & Savannah Samoszuk
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Christopher & Angela Syregelas
Tedy Tavlarides
John & Patty Throuvalas
William & Carole Tobey
Krystina Toscas
Gust & Barbara Tsikalas
Laura Tutelman
Maria Tutelman
John & Georgia Valos
Markela Wilson & Gina Giannis
Cynthia Wrasman
George & Helen Yannakopoulos
Bob Zack & Robin Hamilton
Frances Zaglifa
George Zaglifa
Nick & Nikki Zaglifa
Paul & Giana Zaglifa
John & Mary Zias

**Pledges received through 2/9/24
To submit a pledge, visit the website at
www.assumptionaz.org/stewardship*



ASSUMPTION
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

PREFERRED CATERERS

Thank you to John Mitchell and Michael Zistatsis for their generosity in providing delicious meals for many AGOC events at cost. John or Michael can be hired to cater your next event (large or small).

John Mitchell
480-797-9265 | yianiscatering@yahoo.com

Michael Zistatsis
602-550-4142 | michael@alexisgrillphx.com

ON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH

MATTHEW 16:13-18

MAY 26 - JUNE 1, 2024 | HEBER, AZ



ALL SAINTS CAMP

JOIN US

MAY 26 - JUNE 1, 2024 | HEBER, AZ

FOR CAMPER'S ENTERING 3RD GRADE
THROUGH 12TH GRADE (CLASS OF 2024)

REGISTRATION FEES

EARLY (THROUGH DEC 31, 2023): \$550
REGULAR (JAN 1 - APR 30, 2024): \$600
LATE (MAY 1 - MAY 15, 2024): \$650

REGISTRATION CLOSES MAY 15

CAMP SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE | CONTACT OUR CLERGY



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SNAPSHOTS *of life at Assumption*

PHILOPTOCHOS MEMBERSHIP TEA



WINTER YOUTH RETREAT

VASILOPITA



PREPARING THE GIFTS



SERVING - ARIS FOUNDATION



WINTER YOUTH RETREAT

JAN-FEB 2024

IF YOU HAVE PHOTOS YOU WOULD LIKE CONSIDERED FOR THE NEXT ISSUE, EMAIL TO OFFICE@ASSUMPTIONAZ.ORG

SERVING - ARIS FOUNDATION



MONASTERY TRIP



WOMEN'S MINISTRY STUDY

WINTER YOUTH RETREAT



THEOPHANY



PHILOPTOCHOS MEMBERSHIP TEA



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.

Hayden and Inayah Myers are a young couple who recently joined the Assumption community and embraced the Orthodox faith. Inayah and Hayden are both recent college grads. Inayah works as a coach and Hayden, having passed the bar last September, is working as an assistant attorney general at PSS (representing the Department of Child Safety in Juvenile Dependency matters). Their journey to Orthodoxy is one that was walked hand in hand as they both came out of two different religious traditions, Hayden, formerly a Protestant, and Inayah, formerly a Muslim.

Hayden started the journey first and, in his words, the short story of his conversion was, “I got into a debate with a Catholic and realized we were both wrong.” As a Protestant (though not very active in the faith) at ASU Law, Hayden became a member of the Christian Legal Society. In a society with mixed denominations, debate was inevitable, and sure enough, Hayden found himself in a dialogue spanning the length of 6 months. “Winning battles along the way”, he kept being asked the question: “How do you know your interpretation is right?”. This question bothered him and made him realize maybe he was not right, leading him to a deep dive into the core beliefs he held at the time. Realizing that he no longer could be a Protestant, he began his journey to Orthodoxy discerning Catholicism on the way.

Inayah's journey to Orthodoxy is intertwined with Hayden's rediscovery of his faith. Where Hayden's

conversion came at first with a more intellectual change, her conversion was more based off of heart and feeling. As their relationship grew deeper and the idea of marriage and a family was put on the table, both Hayden and Inayah began to realize they would want their kids



raised in their faith traditions. This led her to begin to defend Islam and Hayden to defend Christianity. Hayden took this as an opportunity to study the Islamic beliefs to better help teach Inayah who Christ and His church are. As more and more doubt was put onto Inayah's shelf of belief, the weight of the teachings of Islam was unbearable, and it snapped. This led her to accept Christ into her life and begin slowly to take up the Christian walk. In the process of finding Christ and preparing for marriage, she had to tell her family that not only that she was marrying a Christian, but becoming one herself. This brought on a new set of struggles to wrestle with, but amidst the struggle came fervent prayer for both Inayah and Hayden.

After Inayah accepted Christ and embraced Protestantism (just a few months before

Hayden's long debate), Hayden concluded that Orthodoxy was the right path and that once again they would have to change systems of belief. With hesitation, Inayah began to journey towards the Orthodox Church with Hayden and bounced around a few of the Orthodox Churches in the valley before coming to Assumption. It was upon her first visit that she heard and felt the beauty of the chant and saw the beauty of the icons - she knew she was home.

Hayden and Inayah's advice to those inquiring about the Orthodox church or looking to reignite the flame of faith is simply to show up and begin to experience the life of the church, not being afraid to ask whatever questions you have.

"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



Over the last year, the old place of gathering for the Assumption community has taken a new shape. What once served as our place of worship and latter community fellowship has now become once again a place of meeting and ministry. The old church building has now been converted into a functioning Ministry House. Having been painted last year by our youth and furnished by



generous donations, the house is now a place where all different people and ministries can come, meet, and draw nearer to Christ.

The house so far has mainly been used for youth and young adult events. The groups that have used this new space have met to learn about our faith, share meals, and do acts of service such as making sandwiches for the Aris Foundation or writing Christmas cards to those in prison. As we approach the spring, the house will continue to be a meeting place to gather and learn. For our young adults, Paul & Cindy Karos, guest speakers from Minnesota, will be coming to engage us in a discussion on Vocation. Our middle and high schoolers will also have the opportunity to meet and start the Lenten journey in the house during our Lenten Lock-in at the end of March. The entire community is invited to an **Open House on March 10th during coffee hour** where you can come and see the transformation that has taken place in this new space for our ministries.



GOYA

Lenten Lock-In

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH &
FELLOWSHIP TO KICKOFF THE LENTEN
SEASON.

Grades 6 - 12

MARCH 22-23
6 PM - 11 AM

Questions?
youth@assumptionaz.org





COMMUNITY SPEAKER EVENT MARCH 9, 2024

Paul & Cindy Karos of Matrona Ministries will offer two lectures.

11:00 am for Young Adults

Our Careers and Our Life in Christ: Where is the Synergy?
Join us as we explore the Orthodox perspective on work. As a bonus, we will do an exercise that will help us discern our natural gifts and talents that have been given to us by God.

3:00 pm for entire Parish Community

The Ultimate Building Project: The Human Person
Join us as we explore St. Paul's teaching on our life as a temple of the Holy Spirit. As part of our time together, we will do our own personal "home inspection."

5:00 pm Vespers

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

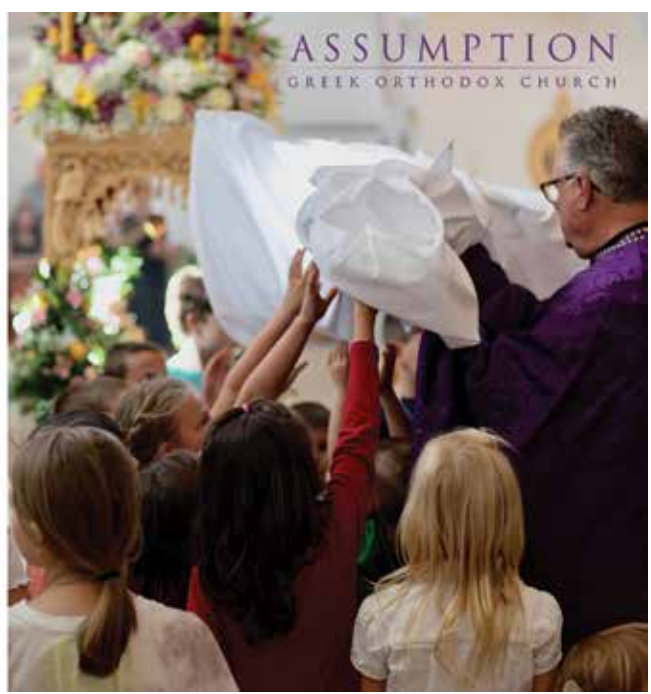
For more information contact Niko Paris at youth@assumptionaz.org

HOLY FRIDAY RETREAT

FRIDAY, MAY 3
9:45am (CHECK-IN) - 2:45pm (PICK-UP)
Open to All Sunday School Youth grades K-12
Lunch will be provided!



REGISTER BY APRIL 26
assumptionaz.org/holyfridayretreat



MEET...ABBY HAKIM

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” - Heb 13:2

Q Tell us about yourself, how you came to Arizona and became a member of Assumption. My name is Abby, I have over 30 years of customer service experience. My strongest skillset is my confidence in my interpersonal skills and my entrepreneurship. I was born and raised in the Holy Land, in the city of Nazareth. I was able to maximize my full potential with opportunities in Canada and was seeking another opportunity to leverage my skillset. I took the opportunity to move to Arizona. Throughout the drive on the way to Arizona, I asked my nephew to stop at the nearest church to light a candle. Low and behold, the church where we stopped was Assumption Greek Orthodox Church. I was connected to the beautiful church and knew this was somewhere I could call home. I started attending the church regularly and was drawn to the sermons given by Father Andrew. I was captivated by the passion he had for the church and his parishioners. Alongside of the wonderful sermons, I was able to build connections with the parishioners and felt instantly welcomed. From then on, I became an active member.

Q Can you give us some backstory on the Heavenly Coffee House (HCH) and how you came to manage it? My love for coffee and sweets is how it all started. I was always inspired to own my own business, specifically a coffee shop. It was during the pandemic where I saw the opportunity that this could be a great way to gather parishioners after church. I proposed a business idea to Father Andrew with the vision



I had. I dedicated a lot of time to brainstorming and researching to ensure that the Heavenly Coffee House is what it is today—from the logo, to the name, to the brand of coffee and the delicious homemade sweets. Father Andrew believed in my vision and with the support of the parishioners and the parish council, Heavenly Coffee House is now my living dream.

Q In what ways does the coffee shop create a welcoming atmosphere for members of the church and the broader community? Heavenly Coffee House is not only open to our parishioners but also the outside community of people with different backgrounds and beliefs. We offer an inviting and warm space for all community members to enjoy a peaceful environment where they can work with free Wi-Fi and socialize.

Q Can you share any specific initiatives or practices implemented in the coffee shop to promote a sense of gathering and community among patrons? Our biggest gathering takes place after liturgy on Sundays which is the greatest opportunity to have the Assumption parishioners as well as outside visitors enjoy some coffee and homemade treats. We also hold occasional luncheons for parishioners for the Loving Life +50 group.

Q How does the coffee shop staff embody the principles of hospitality in their interactions with customers?

Our number one priority is to ensure that the customers always feel welcomed and at home. Sometimes we hear clients say they feel like they are back in Greece! It is meant to be a place where rapport can be built with our customers. Our staff treat clients with care, patience and kindness. The Heavenly Coffee House is a Greek inspired café and some customers have never tried Greek coffees and treats. Therefore, our staff will take the time to explain what the different types of coffee/treats are while recommending suggestions based on what the customer is looking for.



Q Could you describe any events or activities hosted by the coffee shop that foster a spirit of togetherness and fellowship?

Aside from luncheons, we create a seasonal menu during the holidays and Great Lent. Our aim is to offer a diverse and limited time menu to captivate different seasons while still enjoying the taste of Greece.

Q In your opinion, how does the coffee shop contribute to the overall mission and values of Assumption Greek Orthodox Church?

We exhibit and foster the fruits of the Holy Spirit while we serve our community's parishioners. I believe



it is very sacred that we had an opportunity to open a coffee shop on the grounds of a place of worship that brought people together. The coffee shop would not stand alone without the faith and support that is shared amongst the parishioners to ensure the mission and values of the church are carried out consistently.

Q Can you share any personal experiences or anecdotes that demonstrate the impact of the coffee shop on individuals' sense of belonging and community within the church?

Aside from the Heavenly Coffee House being a place where many can grab their morning coffee, it is also a place that welcomes external visitors into a community. My personal experiences that demonstrate someone's sense of belonging is significantly to those who have no relation to faith and have looked up "coffee shop near me" on Google. I can only imagine what it may feel like as someone who does not share a similar belief to walk into a coffee shop on church grounds. We strive to ensure a welcoming and friendly environment. The feedback we have received from such customers include that they feel a sense of peace. They look forward to coming to grab their coffee and/or treat and sit on the patio staring at the palm trees with a sense of serenity. A lot of new coming customers ask the Heavenly Coffee House staff to tour the church out of curiosity of what Orthodox entails.

The Heavenly Coffee House is in need of bakers! If you would like to volunteer, please reach out to Abby in the HCH.

*Traditional
Lenten*

LAGANA BREAD

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EATEN ON CLEAN MONDAY

*Limited
Supply,
Order Now*

Heavenly 
COFFEE HOUSE



LENTEN VESPERS

SUNDAY EVENINGS
DURING LENT

MARCH 24 | ST. GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN
ORTHODOX CHURCH, PHOENIX, 6 PM

MARCH 31 | ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ROMANIAN
ORTHODOX CHURCH, GLENDALE, 6 PM

APRIL 7 | ST. SAVA SERBIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCH, PHOENIX, 6 PM

APRIL 14 | ST. KATHERINE GREEK ORTHODOX
CHURCH, CHANDLER, 6 PM

APRIL 21 | STS. PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX
CHURCH IN AMERICA, PHOENIX, AZ, 6 PM



Fellowship Ministry for Seniors

What is Loving Life + 50? We are a fun-loving group of adults (over 50 years of age) that gather once a month to socialize. To put it plain and simple, sometimes we just meet at the Heavenly Coffee House to have lunch, go to the movies, visit local museums or attractions, have picnics in local parks or attend concerts. We try to carpool whenever we can. We meet mostly on Tuesdays but try to mix it up with a Saturday or Sunday after church so we can include people in this group who are still working.

The spirit of this group is to get to know the other people in the community that we don't get to know in the course of attending Church. We might sit next to the same people and recognize their faces but we don't know who they are and what common interests we may share. Since the inception of the Church (1987) we have come together as a close-knit community, with one goal of building the Church, and growing together. As we have grown, lots of people have come and gone, each contributing to the look and feel of our Church, and we have done a great job. But as we have grown, it is easy to lose contact with those around us. The friendships

that I have made within the community of Assumption are ones that I treasure and want to continue to grow this important ministry and enjoy life with these friends.

Our schedule includes the following upcoming events:

Tuesday, March 26th | Free concert at Kerr Cultural Center in Scottsdale at 10:30 AM, featuring a Studio Viola recital and Tea.

Tuesday, April 9th | Trip to Phoenix Botanical Gardens at 10:30 AM. It is a free admission community day.

Saturday, May 11th | Lake Pleasant boat tour. More details to follow.

Sunday, June 9th | Free concert at McCormick Stillman Railroad Park at 7:00 PM. Bring your blankets & chairs to enjoy "Candle in the Wind," the Elton John experience. Pack a picnic or bring money to purchase food and drinks on site.

We sure hope you can join us; we would love to get to know you!

To be added to our email list contact Helen Noplos at hnoplos@aol.com or 602-418-6726.

ENGAGE



International Orthodox Christian Charities

Donate funds to help purchase school kits for children

EACH \$20 FUNDS 1 KIT!

Our goal is to provide 150 kits

WE WILL ASSEMBLE KITS TOGETHER ON APR 6

Make checks payable to Assumption with "IOCC SCHOOL KITS" noted in the memo OR scan the QR code to donate online



Saturday, April 6, 2024

— **HELP THOSE IN NEED** —

Community Wide Event

For more information, contact:

Irene Kufner @ ikufner@kufnerbookkeeping.com

Betsy Vines @ betzcooks@aol.com



DONATE BLOOD

to help the local Phoenix community

VITALANT STAFF WILL BE AT ASSUMPTION ON APR 6 FROM 10:30AM - 2:30PM



CALENDAR EVENTS

sundays...

8:00 am Matins
9:30 am Liturgy
10:45 am Sunday School

mondays...

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

tuesdays...

5:00 pm Children's Greek School)
6:30 pm Catechism & Theology Class (begins Mar 26)
7:30 pm Chant Class

wednesdays...

9:30 am Moms & Tots (1st & 3rd Wednesday each month)
10:00 am & 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study (ends Mar 12)
6:00 pm Sr GOYA Events (Mar 6, Apr 3 and Apr 17)
6:15 pm Lenten Potluck (begins Mar 20 through Lent)

thursdays...

5:30 pm Adult Greek School
5:00 pm Philoptochos Board Meeting (Apr 4)
6:15 pm Philoptochos General Meeting (Apr 4)
7:00 pm Women's Book Club (Mar 28 and Apr 25)

fridays...

6:00 pm First Fridays (Mar 1 and Apr 5)

saturdays...

8:45 am Mom's Pantry (Mar 16 and Apr 20)
6:00 pm Chant Class

KIDS PAGE

Due to the the significant number of calendar events during Great & Holy Lent leading up to Pascha, the kids section has been minimized for March-April. It will return in full next issue. Thank you for understanding.



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

HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS

MAR 1 @ 6:00 pm | First Fridays
MAR 2 @ 5:30 pm | Annual Philoptochos Crab Feast
MAR 5 @ 10:30 am | Loving Life +50 Trolley Ride
MAR 6 @ 6:00 pm | Sr GOYA
MAR 9 @ 11:00 am | Guest Speaker event (Youth & YA)
MAR 9 @ 3:00 pm | Guest Speaker event (entire parish)
MAR 10 | Ministry House Open House during coffee hour
MAR 12 | Assumption Feeding & Serving the Homeless
MAR 16 @ 8:45 am | Serving at Mom's Pantry
MAR 22-23 | Sr GOYA Lock-In
MAR 24 | Godparent Sunday & Pancake Luncheon
MAR 26 @ 10:30 am | Loving Life +50 Free Concert
MAR 28 @ 7:00 pm | Women's Book Club
APR 2 | Assumption Feeding & Serving the Homeless
APR 3 @ 6:30 pm | Sr GOYA
APR 4 @ 5:00 & 6:15 pm | Philoptochos Meetings
APR 9 @ 8:00 am | Loving Life +50 Botanical Gardens Trip
APR 5 @ 6:00 pm | First Fridays
APR 6 | Community Outreach Day
APR 13 | Philoptochos Lenten Women's Retreat
APR 17 @ 6:30 pm | Sr GOYA
APR 20 @ 9:00 am | Serving at Mom's Pantry
APR 25 @ 7:00 pm | Women's Book Club
APR 27 | Pancake Breakfast & Palm Crosses after Liturgy
APR 28 | Philoptochos Pascha Bake Sale
MAY 3 @ 9:45 am | Holy Friday Youth Retreat

COLORING FUN



Source: <https://sparks4orthodoxkids.com>

MAR-APR

MAR 3 | Sunday of the Prodigal

Meatfare week begins

MAR 9 | Saturday of Souls

8:00 am Matins and 9:00 am Liturgy

10:00 am Memorial Service

5:00 pm Great Vespers

MAR 10 | Judgement Sunday

Cheesefare week begins

MAR 16 | Cheesefare Saturday

8:00 am Matins and 9:00 am Liturgy

10:00 am Memorial Service

MAR 17 | Forgiveness Sunday

5:00 pm Forgiveness Vespers

MAR 18 | Clean Monday (Great & Holy Lent Begins)

7:30 am Lenten Matins

3:30 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

6:00 pm Great Canon of St. Andrew (Part I)

MAR 19 | Great & Holy Lent

7:30 am Lenten Matins

6:00 pm Great Canon of St. Andrew (Part II)

MAR 20 | Great & Holy Lent

7:30 am Lenten Matins

5:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts & Potluck

MAR 21 | Great & Holy Lent

7:30 am Lenten Matins

6:00 pm Great Canon of St. Andrew (Part IV)

MAR 22 | Great & Holy Lent

7:30 am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

5:30 pm Akathist Hymn

MAR 23 | Commemoration of Miracle of Kollyva

8:00 am Matins and 9:00 am Liturgy

10:00 am Memorial Service

5:00 pm Great Vespers

MAR 24 | Sunday of Orthodoxy

6:00 pm Great Vespers of Annunciation (@ St. George)

MAR 25 | Annunciation of the Theotokos

7:30 am Matins and 9:00 am Liturgy

MAR 27 | Great & Holy Lent

5:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts & Potluck

MAR 29 | Great & Holy Lent

7:30 am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

5:30 pm Akathist Hymn

MAR 30 | Second Saturday Great & Holy Lent

5:00 pm Great Vespers

MAR 31 | Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

6:00 pm Pan-Orthodox Vespers (@ St. Katherine)

APR 1 | Mary of Egypt

7:30 am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

APR 3 | Great & Holy Lent

5:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts & Potluck

APR 5 | Great & Holy Lent

7:30 am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

5:30 pm Akathist Hymn

APR 6 | Third Saturday Great & Holy Lent

5:00 pm Great Vespers

APR 7 | Sunday of the Holy Cross

6:00 pm Pan-Orthodox Vespers (@ St. Sava)

APR 10 | Great & Holy Lent

5:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts & Potluck

APR 12 | Great & Holy Lent

7:30 am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

5:30 pm Akathist Hymn

APR 13 | Fourth Saturday Great & Holy Lent

5:00 pm Great Vespers

APR 14 | Sunday of St. John Climacus

6:00 pm Pan-Orthodox Vespers (@ St. John the Baptist)

APR 17 | Great & Holy Lent

5:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts & Potluck

APR 18 | Fifth Thursday Great & Holy Lent

6:30 pm Great Canon of St. Andrew

APR 19 | Great & Holy Lent

7:30 am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

5:30 pm Akathist Hymn

APR 20 | Fifth Saturday Great & Holy Lent

5:00 pm Great Vespers

APR 21 | Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt

6:00 pm Pan-Orthodox Vespers (@ Sts. Peter & Paul)

APR 24 | Great & Holy Lent

5:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts & Potluck

APR 26 | Great & Holy Lent

7:30 am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

APR 27 | Lazarus Saturday

8:00 am Matins and 9:00 am Liturgy

5:00 pm Great Vespers

APR 28 | Palm Sunday - Holy Week Begins

6:30 pm Bridegroom Matins

APR 29 | Holy Monday

8:30 am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

6:30 pm Bridegroom Matins

APR 30 | Holy Tuesday

8:30 am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

6:30 pm Bridegroom Matins

MAY 1 | Holy Wednesday

8:30 am Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

3:00 pm Holy Unction

6:30 pm Matins of the Mystical Supper (W/ Unction)

MAY 2 | Holy Thursday

8:30 am Vesperal Liturgy of the Mystical Supper

6:30 pm Holy Passion Matins

MAY 3 | Holy Friday

8:30 am Royal Hours

3:00 pm Un-Nailing Vespers

7:00 pm Graveside Matins (Lamentations)

MAY 4 | Holy Saturday

9:30 am Vesperal Liturgy St Basil

11:15 pm Great Canon of Pascha

11:59 pm Resurrection Service & Divine Liturgy of Pascha



Great Lent Journey to Pascha

by Father Alexander Schmemmann

Great Lent emphasizes the importance of gathering as the Body of Christ to fully participate in the Lenten Journey. In beautiful and readable language he explains the purpose and goal of the Church services starting before Lent begins, during the forty days of Lent, through Holy Week and ending with the Paschal services. “For each year Lent and Easter are, once again, the rediscovery and the recovery by us of what we were made through our own baptismal death and resurrection.” [pp. 15] As a bonus, Great Lent includes an Appendix “Holy Things for the Holy” which contains Father Schmemmann’s thoughts on the importance of frequent communion.

If you have ever wondered why it is important to worship in person with the rest of the congregation, this is the book for you. Five Sundays before Lent, the hymns and scripture readings highlight some aspect of repentance, preparing us for the road ahead. In Great Lent, Father Schmemmann states “Knowing our lack of concentration and the frightening “worldliness” of our life, the Church knows our inability to change rapidly, to go abruptly from one spiritual or mental state in another.” [pp. 17]

After these preparatory Sundays, the Lenten Season begins along with its prescribed fasting. Father Schmemmann gives gentle insight into

the reasons we abstain from certain foods, electronics and secular activities. He states “the purpose of Lent is not to force on us a few formal obligations, but to “soften” our heart so that it may open itself to the realities of the spirit, to experience the hidden “thirst and hunger” for communion with God.” [pp. 31] For Schmemann, this can only be accomplished by personal fasting and communal gathering for Church services.

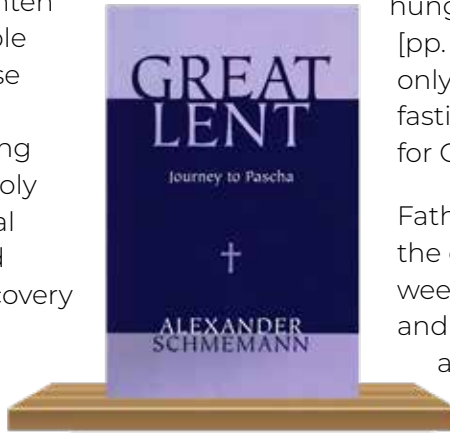
Father Schmemann demystifies the different weekday and weeknight services, their purpose, and the importance of attending at least one of each. On

Wednesday nights, the Church celebrates the Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified

Gifts and Father Schmemann provides insight into and history of this Eucharistic feasting during a time of Lenten fasting. He also describes our walk with Jesus starting on Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday and our rejoicing on Great and Holy Pascha.

My first time through Lent was like being caught up in a thundery whirlwind. Father Schmemann breaks it down into gentle breezes and manageable gusts while emphasizing the importance of gathering to participate as the Body of Christ.

Books spotlighted here, as well as a wide range of other meaningful works to strengthen your spiritual journey, are available in the Assumption Bookstore or St. Michael's Library. For further information contact: bookstore@assumptionaz.org.



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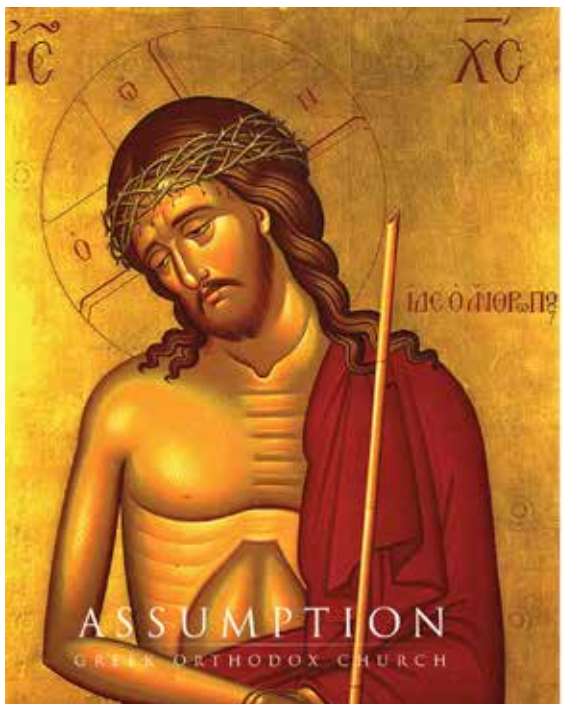
YOUTH (K-12) - FIRST FRIDAYS, GOYA, ETC.

Niko Paris | youth@assumptionaz.org

TO ACCESS THE FULL MINISTRY DIRECTORY WITH MORE INFORMATION CLICK ON THE QR CODE BELOW



CONNECT



- April 27 | Saturday of Lazarus**
 Matins, 8:00 am
 Divine Liturgy, 9:00 am
 Annual Pancake Breakfast & Palm-Folding (following Liturgy)
 Great Vespers, 5:00 pm
- April 28 | Palm Sunday**
 Matins, 8:00 am
 Divine Liturgy, 9:30 am
 Bridegroom Matins, 6:30 pm
- April 29 | Holy Monday**
 Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 8:30 am
 Bridegroom Matins, 6:30 pm
- April 30 | Holy Tuesday**
 Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 8:30 am
 Bridegroom Matins, 6:30 pm
- May 1 | Holy Wednesday**
 Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 8:30 am
 Holy Unction, 3:00 pm
 Matins of the Mystical Supper (with Unction), 6:30 pm
- May 2 | Holy Thursday**
 Vesperal Liturgy of the Mystical Supper, 8:30 am
 Holy Passion Matins, 6:30 pm
- May 3 | Holy Friday**
 Royal Hours, 8:30 am
 Annual Holy Friday Youth Retreat, 9:45 am
 Un-Nailing Vespers, 3:00 pm
 Graveside Matins (Lamentations), 7:00 pm
- May 4 | Holy Saturday**
 Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil, 9:30 am
 Great Canon of Pascha, 11:15 pm
 Resurrection Service & Divine Liturgy of Pascha, 11:59 pm
- May 5 | Great & Holy Pascha**
 Agape Vespers, 1:00 pm

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE 2024



ASSUMPTION
 GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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 Scottsdale, AZ 85260

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