



NOVEMBER 2023

# VOICE OF ST. GEORGE

SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT  
74-109 LARREA ST.,  
PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



## THANKSGIVING IS A STATE OF BEING!

As we gather around the table for the Thanksgiving holiday this year, let us first prepare ourselves spiritually. In other words, let each of us take an inventory of the people and things for which we are thankful to God for bringing them into our lives.

It goes beyond mere "feelings" or cordial expressions of gratitude. Being grateful to God for the people in our lives and for the things that we need in order to live in peace and harmony is a matter of our very *being*. It is a matter of having within our very soul a personality trait that defines us as persons who live with gratitude to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, not only for our day-to-day existence, but for the opportunity to constantly turn to Him in prayer, seeking forgiveness of sins and wisdom to make decisions which bring about peace in our lives and blessings for others.

During the course of the Divine Liturgy, we come upon the Great Thanksgiving Prayer just before the consecration of the Holy Gifts. "[You are God...]. You brought us into being out of nothingness, and when we had fallen, raised us up again, leaving nothing undone until You could lead us to heaven and grant us Your future Kingdom. For all these things we thank You and Your Only-Begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit for all these blessings, both known and

*unknown, manifest or hidden, that have been bestowed on us...*" We are grateful to God for these things, since we cannot earn them by our own power. Indeed, we cannot save ourselves. Christ is our Savior.

Unfortunately, however, we live in a society in which people in general, rather than gratitude, hold entitlement in their hearts. Gratitude comes when we examine our souls and find humility. In humility, we can find that we take a lot of things — and people — for granted. Without God's gift of discernment, we find ourselves brainwashed by the media suggesting that we *deserve* things to be our way and for others to serve to our pleasure. When we don't get what we think we think we deserve, we get angry, resentful, abusive, and cynical, which are attitudes that spawn more sins.

We have the freedom to examine our conscience. Thanksgiving is a choice, and, as such, it is a virtue that we can have as a part of our very being. The best Thanksgiving holiday is one in which a person can go through the entire day without complaining about anything and expressing thanksgiving for everything — for our homes; our families; our co-workers; our health; our Church — and our salvation in our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.  
+FR.THEODORE

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Fr. Theodore Pantelis,  
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Deacon

## SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS by Deacon Euthym

*"Once emotions attach themselves to thoughts, they arouse more and more thoughts. The person loses himself in his thoughts and feelings as in a kind of virtual reality, unaware that he can stand back from them. His thinking has become compulsive, fed by the powerful combination of thought-desire-emotion which we call passion. Such is the life of the ego. Man's spirit is directed solely by the passions, and moves further and further from its Creator"....Hieromonk Damascene*

Creating our own virtual reality by losing ourselves in our thoughts, which are attached to feelings, creates a false narrative of our life. This does not bring us closer to God, rather we become our own god, obsessed with our thoughts and the emotions associated with them. We lose all objectivity and become an inauthentic shell of a spiritual person. God created us in His image and likeness and reminds us to place our thoughts and actions on how to imitate Him rather than creating our own universe, based on pride and making ourselves our own god. If, as the Scripture reminds us, all things work together for good to those who love God, our focus should be on loving God, seeing Him in every circumstance of our life, weaving Him in as the narrative of our thoughts and experiences, focusing on His narrative not ours.

*"Grace is given freely to those who endure rebuke, and nobody can imagine its grandeur."*  
Gerondissa Makrina

**"Forgive them they know not what they do"** or complete silence...these are the responses the Lord gave to His humiliation, his verbal and physical abuse, his extreme humility at the hands of those He created out of love....He endured, not for His sake, but for ours. He set the example for us to endure unfair suffering and rebuke in a way that transforms the other. It is a witness to endure, even a greater witness to endure without complaining, with grace. But here the Gerondissa goes once step further and declares that we cannot imagine the perfect grandeur that accompanies this humiliation. He wants us to participate fully in His love for eternity.

*"As I have come to understand, some people resemble the honeybee and some resemble the fly. Those who resemble the fly seek to find evil in every circumstance and are preoccupied with it; they see no good anywhere. But those who resemble the honeybee only see the good in everything they see. The stupid person thinks poorly of everything and takes everything in the wrong way, whereas the person who has good thoughts, no matter what he sees, no matter what you tell him, maintains a positive and good thought."...+ St. Paisios of Mt. Athos*

What we bring to every experience is our attitude, our expectations, our point of view, our faith. If we have a hopeless attitude, low expectations, a point of view that is self-serving and not God-glorifying, we will see everything in way that clouds the experience with evil thoughts, judgement, and a lack of love. If we bring hope, expect God's glory to be revealed, and see everything with Christ eyes, we will see and experience His grace in all things and those around us will experience it as well.

*"He who created us without our help, will not save us without our consent."*..Augustine

If we put our faith in God, if we consent to allowing Him to be in our life, if we put our trust in Him, that is where we will find salvation. When the disciples in the boat hit the storm, they woke up Christ to save them. He calmed the storm and then rebuked them for their lack of faith. God is present always... but because He respects our free will and created us out of love, He waits for us to consent, to invite Him, to welcome Him into our lives. Let us begin each day by inviting Him in, to open the door of our hearts to hear His voice and experience His grace.

*"So those who wish to live virtuously should not hanker after praise, be involved with too many people, keep going out, or abuse others (however much they deserve it), or talk excessively, even if they can speak well on every subject."*...St. Diadochus

*What a great piece of advice... live virtuously. This is done by avoiding distractions, worldly praise, being a*

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## SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS, *Continued*

busybody, or trying to exact vengeance on those who have wronged us, and finally controlling our tongue. It is this discipline that brings us toward holiness. Virtue is the product of a desire for God and living according to placing that relationship first in our life.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

On **Sunday, October 22, 2023**, our Sunday School sponsored their annual “Pumpkin Painting” project. Along with our students, parents and various members of our parish and our Philoptochos joined in. His Grace, Bishop Spyridon, along with Deacon Euthym and Fr. Ted offered prayers for our Sunday School and words of inspiration. We are most grateful to God for Louka, who directed the project.

Sunday School class from **November 12th** to **December 3rd** will focus on our relationship with Christ the Savior through prayer. Indeed, prayer is the vehicle by which we communicate with God, and this communication is not only accomplished with words, but is it a communication that involves our hearts and souls.

Every word in the Lord’s Prayer, for example, involves the relationship of God’s love for us and our love for God, so that we can be blessed in “the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” This blessing is also related to our relationships with one another. We ask our parents to support our Sunday School program by bringing their children with them in order to join in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and to partake of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Following the Divine Liturgy on Sundays we have the opportunity to help parents and children understand the importance of prayer and the love of our Lord.

This relationship begins with knowing the reason for which Christ our God was born into the world. It was “for us and for our salvation,” as we proclaim the Creed of our Faith.

The Birth of Christ into the world is known, in Orthodox Christian terminology, as “The Nativi-

ty of Christ.”

This year’s **Sunday School Christmas program**, which will be presented on **Sunday, December 10th**, will emphasize the Orthodox Icon of the Nativity of Christ by having our students position themselves in accordance with the traditional Icon of the Nativity, as passages from Holy Scripture explain the Icon with our students themselves being the figures that appear in the Icon.

Preparations with our students for our Sunday School Program will begin on **Sunday, November 12th**. It will be a rewarding experience for both parents and children as they become “features” of the “living” Icon of the Nativity.



Our Sunday School “Pumpkin Painting” project on Sunday, October 22nd was exiting and fun for all. Pictured above, left to right, are: Our project leader, Louka; Presvytera Petula, Fr. Ted, Deacon Euthym, His Grace, Bishop Spyridon, Sunday School Coordinator, Athena Snarskis, and Philoptochos President, Rhonda Latkovic.



Pictured above with Fr. Ted, children and their parents came together to thank God for the gift of food for both the body and the soul as we celebrate the harvest season. The Sunday School “Pumpkin Painting Project” was a rewarding arts and crafts fellowship opportunity for all.

## PHILOPTOCHOS

On Saturday, September 14th, our Philoptochos kicked-off the new Ecclesiastical Year by participating in the annual “Paint El Paseo Pink Walk” to raise funds for cancer research. The “Paint El Paseo Pink” walk is sponsored by the **Desert Cancer Foundation**. St. George was represented by **27 of our Philoptochos members** who participated in the event. In addition, our Philoptochos Chapter **donated \$1,100** to the Desert Cancer Foundation in support of this important cause.

On Monday, October 23, 2023, our **Philoptochos General Members Meeting** took place. A **delicious pastitsio luncheon** was prepared by **Margarita Pagoulatos and Irene Stambolos**. The 2023-2024 Philoptochos Calendar was presented and approved. This calendar is posted on the bulletin board in our parish hall.

On Saturday, November 11, 2023 everyone is invited to the Philoptochos “Welcome Back to the Desert” Cocktail Party from 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. A “fee will offering” to our Philoptochos Chapter may be given to those who attend. However, it is not required. Greek “mezethakia” will be available to all, along with beverages. See the enclosed flyer.

On Sunday, November 12, 2023, everyone is invited to join in the Philoptochos “Paint & Sip” experience. **\$15 is requested for registration** so that painting materials can be prepared for participants. Beverage containers will serve as the “canvas” for painting decorative scenes of fellowship in celebration of the season. The enclosed flyer will provide more details and information. We are most grateful to **Louka** for leading us in this rewarding fellowship event.

The Annual Philoptochos Christmas Luncheon will take place at Sun City on Sunday, December 9th, beginning at 11:30 a.m. Please refer to the enclosed “Philoptochos Christmas Luncheon Flyer” for details regarding the requested donation and menu selections.

Sign-up sheets for the Philoptochos “Welcome Back to the Desert” Cocktail Party and the “Paint

& Sip” event are available in our parish hall.



Pictured above, courtesy of Margarita Pagoulatos, is a group picture of our Philoptochos members and associate members who participated in the “Paint El Paseo Pink Walk” for cancer research on September 14th.



Pictured above: Margarita Pagoulatos (left) and Irene Stambolos (right) prepared a delicious pastitsio luncheon for those participating in the October Philoptochos General Members Meeting.



35 members of our St. George Philoptochos Chapter attended the Philoptochos General Members Meeting on Monday, October 23rd .

## AHEPA

**Next meeting starts at 6pm. November 14th.** The November meeting will be a **Backgammon Night**. Bring your board if you have one. Drinks and appetizers will be provided. However, **an R.S.V.P. is needed**.

Also, bring a potential new member for the November or December meeting. If they join at the end of this year, next year is included. If you are  
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## AHEPA, Continued

on the list and are a member of another Chapter, now is a great time to transfer, or reinstate with us. Membership application is [HERE](#).

**Chapter 528 dues are \$85.00 a calendar year.**

Online dues payment can be made [HERE](#).

Our December Meeting will be a Christmas Party. Please see the attached flyer.

## ST. GEORGE PARISH FALL SPIRITUAL RETREAT



Pictured above: Fr. Josiah Trenham, pastor of St. Andrew Antiochian Orthodox Church in Riverside, California offered two addresses on the role of the Holy Mother of God for our eternal salvation during our St. George Parish Fall Retreat on Saturday, October 28th.

The St. George Parish Fall Spiritual Retreat, held on Saturday, October 28, 2023, was a great success. Over 50 participants were inspired by the two lectures given by **Fr. Josiah Trenham**, founder of Patristic Nectar Publications and pastor of St. Andrew Antiochian Orthodox Church in Riverside, California.

Fr. Josiah spoke about the Personhood of the Most Holy Mother of God and Her role in our lives. He reminded us that the Most Holy Mother of God is truly "*Greater in honor than the Cherubim, and in glory greater beyond compare than the Seraphim*" -- the Cherubim and Seraphim being the greatest angels of God. He reminded us that She is, in essence, "the Orthodox Way of Life," which is synonymous with the "life" of our Holy Church.

Many thanks to **Peter Snarskis**, who set up our microphone and video system; to **Tina Veroulis**, for "checking-in" and welcoming our retreat at-

tendees, while also assisting in providing morning refreshments; to **Margarita Pagoulatos** and **Presvytera Petula Pantels** for coordinating the catering services and serving the luncheon buffet.



Pictured above: There were over 50 participants in our St. George Parish Fall Parish Retreat on Saturday, October 28th.

## OUR REPAVED PARKING LOT

Over the month of September, with the help of **Peter Snarskis**, our parking lot was repaved in order to meet safety and aesthetic needs ahead of our 2024 Greek Festival and the general use of our property going forward.

As the 2023-2024 year progresses, there will be more needs that will require attention in order to maintain our facilities in good working order.

Any additional stewardship that our people can offer will always be appreciated and we ask our parishioners to consider adding to their stewardship giving, through prayer and according to their means.



Pictured above is our newly paved parish parking lot, with freshly painted markings. Special thanks to Pete Snarskis for his daily overseership as the work for this project was being performed.

## 2024 ST. GEORGE GREEK FESTIVAL

Preparations for our St. George Greek Festival are ramping up. Following the New Year, we will be making way for storage of Festival menu items. Those who would like to volunteer for our **Greek Festival**, scheduled for **Saturday and Sunday, February 17-18, 2024**, in order to serve as chairpersons for the various Festival stations, are asked to contact **2024 Greek Festival Chairman, George Argyros**. Also, monetary support is always welcome. Checks to **St. George Greek Orthodox Church** can be sent to our address at: 74-109 Larrea Street, Palm Desert, CA 92260 with "2024 Greek Festival Fund." Note: There will be a **Festival Meeting on Monday, November 13th at 4:00 p.m.** at our parish hall.

## ST.GEORGE FALL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Our St. George Fall General Assembly is scheduled for **Sunday, November 19, 2023**, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Agenda items include financial statements for the year, updates on facility needs, a review of our parish ministries, as well as the need for candidates to serve as members of the 2024 Parish Council.

For full participation in the proceedings of our parish General Assembly one must be a Stewardship member of our parish by way of having fulfilled a 2023 Parish Stewardship Pledge Card and having become current in the 2023 Parish Stewardship contributions toward one's pledge.

### ST. GEORGE PARISH CALENDAR – NOVEMBER 2023

**Sunday Services...Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.**

Saturday, November 4th.....ST. RAPHAEL FEAST DAY at St. Raphael Antiochian Orthodox Church in Thousand Palms...Orthros-9:00 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, November 7th.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, November 8th..ARCHANGELS MICHAEL & GABRIEL  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Thursday, November 9th.....ST. NECTARIOS THE WONDERWORKER  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Saturday, November 11th.... Philoptochos "Welcome Back to the Desert" Cocktail Party  
4:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 12th.....Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy: Honoring our Veterans of the Armed Forces/ "Paint & Sip" Party- 12:00 noon

Monday, November 13th.....Philoptochos General Members Meeting  
11:30 luncheon/12 noon meeting  
2024 Greek Festival Meeting - 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 14th....Bible Study- 10:00 a.m.  
AHEPA Meeting - 6:30 p.m. (Bible Study-6:00 p.m.)

Wednesday, November 15th-ADVENT Begins

Sunday, November 19th.....Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy...Fall General Assembly

Tuesday, November 21st.... PRESENTATION OF THE HOLY THEOTOKOS IN THE TEMPLE  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m./ Bible Study-11:00 a.m.

Thursday, November 23rd...Thanksgiving Day

Saturday, November 25th....ST. CATHERINE THE GREAT MARTYR  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, November 28th....No Bible Study

# Welcome Back to the Desert Cocktail Reception!

sponsored by The St. George Ladies Philoptochos Society  
(this is a free will donation event)

Saturday, November 11th, 2023

4:00 pm - 6:30 pm

St. George Church Hall

*Join us for complimentary Greek appetizers!*

*Refreshments including soft drinks, wine, &  
beer!*

*Greek music!*



RSVP by 11/5/23 via text or email to  
(714) 875-4661

Come join us at St. George Church, Palm Desert, CA

# PAINT & SIP Party

SUNDAY

November 12th @ 12:00 PM

Hosted By: Philoptochos

Bring your friends and join us for a fun  
afternoon with an instructional  
painting class, appetizers and wine!



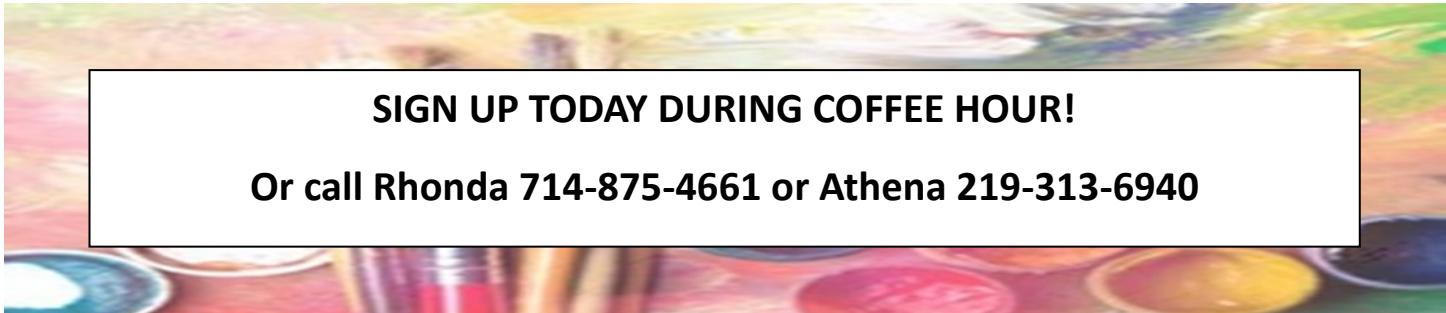
**\$15**

**per person**



**SIGN UP TODAY DURING COFFEE HOUR!**

Or call Rhonda 714-875-4661 or Athena 219-313-6940



# ST GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

74109 Larrea St, Palm Desert, CA – 760-568-9901

FR. Ted Pantelis 760-880-5869 – Mrs. Athena Snarskis 219-313-6940

## SUNDAY SCHOOL 2023/24 FAMILY CALENDAR

*Sunday School Class – Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the Month.*

*Outreach Project events – TBA each month see below*

Sept 10	Regular class schedule	
Sept 17	Regular class schedule for SERVICE PROJECT	
Sept 24	Family Worship Sunday (class not held)	
Oct 1	Family Worship Sunday (class not held)	
Oct 8	Regular class schedule	
Oct 15	Family Worship Sunday (class not held)	
Oct 22	Regular class schedule – HARVEST PATIO PARTY!	
Oct 29	Family Worship Sunday (class not held)	
Nov 5	Family Worship Sunday (class not held)	
Nov 12	Regular class schedule - Nativity Practice	
Nov 19	Regular class schedule - Nativity Practice	
Nov 26	Regular class schedule - Nativity Practice	
Dec 3	Regular class schedule - Nativity Practice	
Dec 10	"LIVING ICONS OF THE NATIVITY" PROGRAM	
Dec 17	Family Worship Sunday (class not held)	
Dec 24	Family Worship Sunday (class not held)	
Dec 31	Family Worship Sunday (class not held)	
Jan 7, 2024	Family Worship Sunday (class not held)	
Jan 14	Regular class schedule	
Jan 21	Family Worship Sunday (class not held)	
Jan 28	Regular class schedule – SERVICE PROJECT TBA	

# 2023 CHRISTMAS CARD



Dear Parishioners,

Once again, our community of St George Greek Orthodox Church of the Desert will be preparing a Parish Christmas Card. We are certain that all of you will want to participate in this very popular and meaningful Christmas Blessing.

Please join the many families of our parish in expressing Christmas Greetings to fellow members and friends by completing this form. A donation of \$20.00 should be enclosed along with this form and made payable to St. George Greek Orthodox Church of the Desert. You can mail it to 74109 Larrea St., Palm Desert, CA 92261 or give to Tina Veroulis in the office. We would appreciate the return of the form by November 25, 2023.

Please print your name, as you would like it to appear on the card on the line below. (PLEASE PRINT)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Deadline: November 25, 2023



# CHRISTMAS POT-LUCK

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME – PLEASE RSVP**

This will be a pot-luck dinner, please bring your favorite dish feeds 12, please email or call so we do not duplicate dishes, beverages and bar provided by AHEPA Chapter 528.

**Tuesday 12/12/2023**

**6:00 pm at**

**St George Church**

- 74109 Larrea, Palm Desert CA 92260

**RSVP by 12/05/2023**

**Ahepa528.org**

**Contact@ahepa528.org**

**Wynn @ 760.832.2825 mobile/text**

**or leave message with Fr Ted**

**Please bring a wrapped gift  
(no more than \$15 value)  
for a fun gift exchange game.**

# **Philoptochos Christmas Party**

**Dec. 9th 11:00 am  
Sun City Clubhouse  
38180 Del Webb Blvd, Palm Desert**

*Please Join Us! Bring a Friend!*

-RSVP by December 4th-

Luncheon Price \$60.00 per person includes:

Buffet luncheon with Tri-tip steak & baked fish, salad, potatoes, rice pilaf, seasonal vegetables & bread plus a special dessert. Coffee, iced tea, & water included. Cash Bar.  
\*Vegetarian meal option is available.

*Cash Bar! Music! Hostess Gift! Raffle!*

\*\*\*\*\*  
**I am attending: (Name)** \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*  
**I am bringing a guest: (Name)** \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Total Number Attending:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment Type:** Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Check \_\_\_\_\_ CC \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Payment Amount:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I prefer a: \*Vegetarian Meal (circle)**