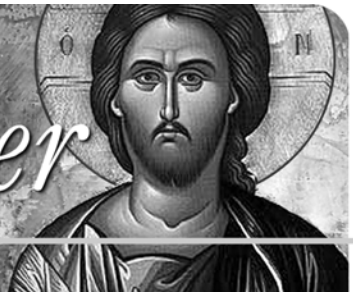


Mission Newsletter

The monthly communication of the Greek Orthodox Mission of South Orange County

Nov/Dec 2009 www.gomsoc.org (866) 350-1933 email: info@gomsoc.org



Parish Council

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Our Mission Statement

"To establish a Greek Orthodox Church in South Orange County which follows, preserves and continues our timeless religious beliefs and traditions and emphasizes our Hellenic heritage, customs and values."

Please email David Derks at dderks1707@aol.com with any monthly newsletter items

Opa! Greek festival showcases another local culture by ROBERT MANNIELLO

This article ran in the Orange County Register in their December 8 issue.

Always eager to learn about new settlers in SJC, I jumped at the chance recently to attend a local Greek community festival.

Visiting the Capistrano Business Center (Calle Arroyo) on a Sunday would prove to be delightfully entertaining, enlightening and full of wonderful gastronomical surprises.



The Greek Orthodox Mission of South Orange County families transformed the quaint pillared courtyard onsite into a platia (meeting place). A beautiful secluded setting for the Greek Dance Group of the mission to host a neighborhood party to support and showcase its Children's Dance Group. And people came.

Children dance during a Greek Orthodox Mission of South Orange County festival in San Juan Capistrano.

An unbeatable combination of tantalizing aromas of freshly prepared Greek delicacies, live bouzoukia music, children's folk dancing, Tavli (backgammon) tournaments and inner warmth upon arrival convinced this pilgrim columnist that the sojourn was a winner. No disappointments in any categories mentioned were in the cards.

St. Cecilia, patroness of musicians and church music whose feast day coincided with this household gathering, would have been proud. But it couldn't compare to family pride reflected in faces of parents and relatives as offspring and next-generation representatives spiritedly performed Greek folk dances in authentic regional wardrobe. Joy of life and tradition surged as you witnessed youngsters celebrating and preserving their culture through time-honored artistic renditions. Gazing in awe at the group's expertly synchronized steps, visions of a distant honeymoon trip to Greece brought dear memories to light. Yes, love made its presence known that day through gifted children.

Of course, food preparation and consumption, another cultural expression of Mediterranean passion, were plentiful and just delicious – mouthwatering lamb luncheon with Greek salad, spinach and cheese phyllo dough pies, or the never-ending picturesque specialty dessert choices with perfect Greek coffee. Oh my, ecstasy comes in many formats.

On this glorious day in SJC, I struck up vibrant conversations with attendees. They highlighted the mission's multiphase cultural lineage priorities. Always on Sundays is Divine Liturgy, a fellowship hour after adoration to meet new members, and also Sunday school youth activities. Additionally, Greek Language School, Greek Dance School and special events complete their current heritage docket.

Continued outreach growth efforts and active participation in upcoming scheduled SJC events make up immediate GOMSOC agenda issues. Look for them – you'll recognize the youngsters in gorgeous multicolored outfits. Experience cultural diversity and outstanding competition in group folk dance. You'll be glad you did.

"The driving force behind growing our mission is our children. We are very proud of them," said Irene Basdakis, president of GOMSOC, adding a poignant expression of love for family descendents. "The traditions of culture and heritage in the GOMSOC include Greek dance. We hope that through dance we can express the true meaning of the Greek culture and instill values in our youth that will be with them for a lifetime." (Article continued on next page)

And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

Luke 2:9-12



Greek Festival (Continued from page one)

Carrying multiple take-home delicacies, I balanced them precariously, but Irene spotted me and brought over another specialty to taste before my departure. Of course, I obliged and it was heavenly. Being wed to a Hellenic beauty has instilled manners – it's not polite to deny gifts from extended family members, especially food.

Getting word out that another marvelous cultural legacy has sprung up in our thriving SJC community melting pot is my pleasure.

As I look at the saved business-card inscription notes, I have to smile – "Don't just sit there – Greek dance!" Oh, yes. Opa!

Prime Timers

The Prime Timers are a group of retirees who donate their talents and treasures in a variety of ways and have played a vital role in the community, such as sponsoring the annual Christmas Parties. After Divine Liturgy each Sunday, many of them gather afterward for coffee to enjoy each other's company and conversation, which include visits from members of the Parish Council, friends and our Parish priest.



A specially catered lunch will be served at the Prime Timers' January 7 meeting which will be held at the Church at 12:30 p.m. The Tastes of Greece Restaurant is preparing a lamb dinner for us. Reservations are required, and the price will be determined closer to the event date. For more information contact Jim Constantine or Bert Dumais at (949) 412-9169.

GOYA

The Greek Orthodox Youth of America, or GOYA, is a national youth program of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Its main activities are fellowship, service, and social activities. The orientation and implementation of the program reflects the Orthodox Christian Faith, Tradition and Life. GOYA is open to junior high and high school grade Orthodox Christian teenagers. Teenagers should be in seventh through twelfth grades to participate.

For more information on GOYA, contact Sophia Konugres via email at sophit@sbcglobal.net.

Ladies Auxiliary

Everyone who attended the Ladies Auxiliary Christmas Party enjoyed the evening and graciously donated both a food item and a toy to help those less fortunate. The toys were given to the city of San Juan Capistrano's toy drive for military families and the food to a local food bank. Several members provided gifts for our "adopted" military couple Jonathan and Natalie. We also thank Tom and Tanya Tolmasoff for providing the gorgeous Christmas tree, as well as our Parish tree and another used as an opportunity drawing prize. Ladies Auxiliary graciously thanks everyone who helped prepare and clean up for the occasion!

Vasilopita Sunday is coming up on January 10, 2010, and volunteers are needed to bake or purchase and bring bread to be served by Father Andrew to parishioners. If you would like to participate please respond to Joanna Giangardella at joannasonya@aol.com or (949) 492-2465.

Beginning January 3, Parish members will each be assigned one Sunday during the year to host coffee hour. This is a great opportunity to support fellowshiping in our community! We ask that you bring light refreshments on your day. Coffee and paper goods will be provided to you. A reminder will be sent to you by email and followed by a phone message. Members will be assigned alphabetically. If you are unable to attend that day, we ask that you find a substitute. This process will help avoid having the same people to host multiple times.

The January-February Schedule:

- Jan. 3-Alevizos and Anzoulatos families
- Jan.10- Elaine Araposthathis and Basdakos families
- Jan.17- Bertok and Biddle
- Jan.24- Chiotis and Christopoulos
- Jan.31- Colby and E.J. Constantine
- Feb.7- Cuples and Cutrone
- Feb.14- Dadjou and Dafnis
- Feb. 21- John Dalis and Peter Dames

Visits from Fr. Andrew

Please contact Fr. Andrew if you know of anyone who is ill or in the hospital. He will try and visit all who are in need. Contact him at (909) 224-5046 or fatherlesko@msn.com.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Luke 2:13-14



Christmas Eve Vespertal Service

On Christmas Eve, we invite everyone to celebrate Christmas with us at a Vespertal Liturgy, which begins at 7pm.

Sunday School Christmas Program

For those of you who were present in church December 13 and for those of you who were not, please enjoy the beautiful pictures of our Sunday School Christmas Program taken by our church historian/photographer and board member Reggie Sellas. You can view the pictures on the 'Galleries' page at www.gomsoc.org.

Congratulations to all of our children and a huge thank you to Irene Constantine for all of her efforts in helping to make the Program so memorable!

Opportunities to Donate time, talent, treasures and . . . storage space!

We currently are looking for storage space for our Christmas Manger, which was used in the Sunday School Christmas Pageant. We thank Sam & Evgenia Kollias who graciously stored our Manger last year. We are also currently looking for an office safe to store important documents and other items securely.

If you are able to assist us with either of these items please contact Ann Rhodes at (949) 542-3445 or via email at annierhodes@gmail.com

Greek Language School



The Greek School Christmas party on December 11 was a huge success! You can view the event pictures on the 'Galleries' page at www.gomsoc.org.

We are currently in the middle of another wonderful year of children's Greek school and it's not too late to join.

Our new teacher, Tessy Tzoytzoyrakos is a native Greek speaker with extensive teaching experience.

The classes for the 2009/2010 school year are:

- Wednesdays: 4:00 - 5:30 for ages 4 - 6
- Fridays: 4:30 - 6:00 for ages 6 - 9; 6:00 - 7:30 for ages 10 and up.

This schedule may change depending on the ages and levels of the students who enroll. Registration fee is \$35 and tuition is \$395. To download a registration form, go to the 'Culture' page at www.gomsoc.org.



Memorials

Juanita Elethfer (from John Dalis). May her memory be eternal!

FDF Scholarships

The trustees at FDF will be presenting five scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 Savings Bonds in San Jose in January. All deserving young adults in our diocese are eligible for this award. Deserving means not only participation in FDF but also in other church ministries at our mission and their own communities. The only requirement is that your child attends the upcoming FDF weekend next month.

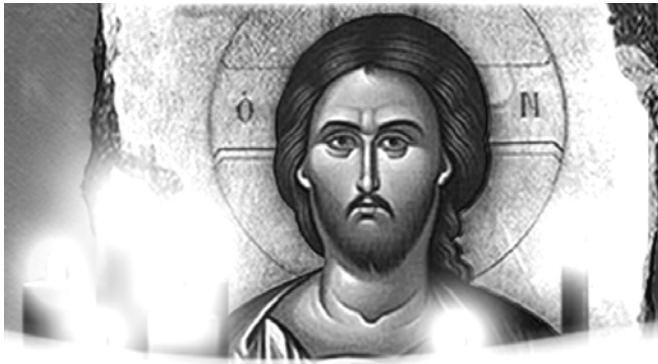
Father Andrew has been given the task to recognize one or two dancers at our mission, to write letters of recommendations on their behalf and to forward this information to FDF. In the letter of recommendation, he will need to discuss your child's involvement in the activities of our mission including Sunday school, GOYA, as well as mentioning additional community services that take place outside of our mission and anything else you wish to share about your child. The FDF Board of Trustees will be happy to consider all as potential recipients from all the churches that participate at FDF for one of the awards.

If you would like to forward your child's name for consideration, please email Father Andrew at fatherlesko@msn.com with your child's name, address, contact information, why your child deserves this award as well as all the information in the second paragraph above. If Father had his full say, we are sure he would forward all of our children's names; however, only 5 dancers from all of FDF will be recognized.

We have recently found out about the parameters of these scholarships and were brought to our attention. In working with Father Andrew, we want to make sure that EVERY FDF dancer/parent is aware of these scholarships. Please act as soon as you can in order to give adequate time for Father Andrew to make his recommendations and then forward everything to FDF since the competition is less than four weeks away.

Publicize Your Event

Join our electronic weekly bulletin list with links to all underlined items! We also have the newsletter available at our official website, as well as email updates on all church events. For submissions to the weekly bulletin and e-Bulletin please contact Sam Konugres at sam.konugres@sbcglobal.net or (310) 204-0605. For submission to the website and this newsletter, contact David Derks at dderks1707@aol.com



GREEK ORTHODOX MISSION
of SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY
Stewardship

Stewardship 2009 & 2010
By SALLY MEYERHOFFER

The months of October and November were a very special time for our Greek Orthodox Church in South Orange County. Starting mid October through November 15 we hosted six Fall Open Houses throughout South Orange County. We would like to thank Argie Cupples, Tony & Irma Trikas, Mike and Caroline Peros, Penny Marustos, Brady & Alysia Jennings, and Tracey & Josh McCarter for graciously opening their homes and giving of their time and treasures to our community. Their stewardship of donating their homes provided a wonderful time for food, drink, fun and most of all fellowship. We enjoyed the company of current parishioners, new faces as well as neighbors of some of our hosts; it was truly a wonderful time!

On Sunday, November 8 we kicked off Stewardship 2010 in our courtyard at church with a light luncheon after liturgy, hosted by our Ladies Auxiliary. During this very special month we worshiped together as we have every Sunday and also celebrated special Sundays dedicated to our Stewardship and Father Andrew spoke about the many facets of Stewardship giving. We learned more about our stewardship goals, how we can volunteer our time, talents, and the financial requirements of operating our church and our vision for the future.

For the first time On November 22, the final Sunday celebrating the beginning of Stewardship giving for 2010, we asked parishioners to bring their pledge commitment card and place it in a special tray, indicating the time, talent and treasure that they will offer as a member of the Church, the Body of Christ on earth. This

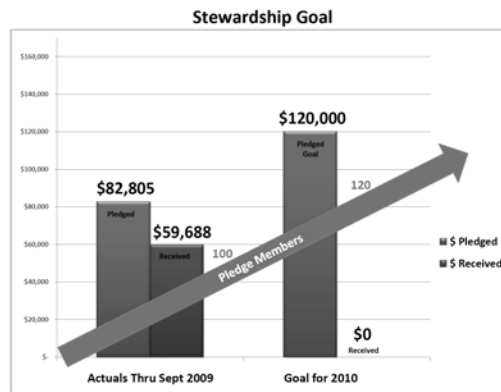
was the first time in the history of our church where parishioners have pledged toward the upcoming year prior to its beginning.

With 2009 almost coming to a close, we at the Greek Orthodox Mission Church in South Orange County are truly thankful for you and your family here in our church. As we move into 2010, we

would like to complete the final chapter of our 2009 Stewardship program. Currently the church has 100 families who have pledged a total of \$82,805 in treasures and has received \$59,688 or 72% of those pledged treasures to date. Completion of your Stewardship commitment for 2009 will allow our church to meet our financial obligations ensure the success of the Parish Ministries programs undertaken for the spiritual needs of the families entrusted to our care and our efforts in meeting the challenge of spreading Christ's Word, our Orthodox Faith and cultural traditions. Your gestures are

priceless contributions to the ongoing existence of our church.

The Greek Orthodox Mission Churches pledged membership goal for 2010 is 120, our pledged treasure goal is \$120,500 and our major fundraising goal is \$92,500. During the course of the upcoming year, our major fundraiser will be held in October and will provide an opportunity for our entire community come together in stewardship by giving of themselves whether it be your time, your talents, or your treasures or any combination. We look forward to the entire community participating in our October event. For more information, please contact any one of the Parish Council members.



GREEK ORTHODOX MISSION OF SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY
Capistrano Business Center, 27129 Calle Arroyo, Suite #1803, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
WEBSITE: WWW.GOMSOC.ORG EMAIL: INFO@GOMSOC.ORG

2010 GROWING OUR FAMILY DONATION CARD

In gratitude for God's blessings, I/we pledge to contribute for Christ's work at the Greek Orthodox Mission of South Orange County the total amount of: \$ _____. I would like to contribute in the following manner:

\$ _____ weekly \$ _____ monthly \$ _____ quarterly \$ _____ semi-annually \$ _____ annually

I would like to donate my services/time to _____

Name _____ Telephone Number (____) _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

The History of Giving

by JOHN HARRIS



The foundation of giving is revealed in the Old Testament from as far back as Abraham (Genesis) and Moses (Exodus) "They brought yet onto him free offerings every morning...the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much." The faithful, from long ago, knew to give of themselves and what they had to sustain the mission of God. Years later Gregory the Theologian writes, "You will never overcome God's generosity, even if you give away all that you have...And however much you bring to Him, always more remains. Nor will you give anything that is your own: for all things flow from God."

With this in mind, Christians brought with them everything they could spare for the needs of the church. This meant for the sustenance of the clergy, widows and orphans, for helping the poor, and for all the good works of the Church. This is the Church that we as Orthodox Christians claim to be.

Many arguments have been made as to what is, or is not, important to give and how much. What is apparent is that stewardship is not about calculations or portions or percentages. It cannot be reduced to a number of hours of service or dollars offered. Stewardship is a way of life and as Orthodox Christians we are called to a new way of seeing things. 'We can never give enough to God for the blessings He has given us.' As many will recall through our educations, both religious and other, when an individual has very little and shares what they have with another the gesture is very weighty.

The scripture is filled with stories of individual sacrifices and acts of courageous giving that need not be repeated. In reality, when one individual gives what they can, and then the next, and the next, no matter how small, the strength of these gifts from the soul grows like conviction into a wonderful presence that is our hearts souls and minds...our Church.

As Orthodox Christians, we see the world as God's gift, as a sacrament of God's presence and a means of communion with Him. And so we are able to offer the world back to God in Thanksgiving as we say in every Divine Liturgy "Thine own of Thine own we offer to thee..." From an Augustinian perspective all that is, all that we are, is His.

We as Christians, throughout history, have imbued our literature with the beauty of giving and religion reminding me of a favorite poem to end with.

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour. (WB)
Just give.

Participating Stewards

We would like to thank the following families who are Stewards of our Parish. Your stewardship provides the foundation for our Parish ministries and our efforts in meeting the formidable challenges that promote the spreading of Christ's words and our Orthodox Faith.

Alevizos, Chris & Demie
Antzoulatos, Michael
Arapostathis, Elaine
Athans, Paula
Basdakos, John and Irene
Bertok, Kenneth & Christina
Biddle, Mercie
Birchard, Mike and Maria
Chiotis, Chris and Jill
Christopoulos, Jim and Joanne
Constantine, E.J. and Irene
Constantine, Jim and Mary
Copes, Manuel & Rose
Cupples, Argie
Cutrone, Chrysoula
Dadjou, Michael and Arica
Dafnis, Steve and Pam
Dalis, John
Dames, Peter
Dereschuk, Lee & Yianna
Dolley, Denise
Domingot, Josep and Mia
Marie (Doulaverakis) & William
Engelbrecht
Dumais, Bert & Louise
Easley, Johnathan & Eleftheria
Ellis, David and Georgiann

Ellis, Pamela
Farr, Emory & Clio
Ferrell, Robert & Bessy
Fidopiastis, Niki
Georgious, Theodore and Anita
Georgantopoulos, Dimetrios & Effie
Giakos, Dennis & Anne
Giziotis, George J.
Giziotis, Eleni G.
Gullan, Alvaro
Harris, John & Melissa
Hepler, Stephanie
Hepler-Garofalow, Anna
Christina
Huber, Michael & Lorainne
Jennings, Alysia & Brad
Kaffen, Jim and Melissa
Karavantes, Ann
Karnazes, Nick and Fran
Karnezis, Ted and Pat
Katsiametis, Dino
Kennedy, Irene
Keratzides, Andrew and Maria
Koclanakis, Heidi and Jean
Kollias, Harry & Linda
Kollias, Sam and Evgenia

Konstantarakis, Joseph & Sophia
Konugres, Sam and Sophia
Koutroulis, James and Linda
Kraft, Michael and Maria
Kyriazis, John & Annmarie
Kyriazis, Kristine
Kyritsis, Greg & Vassie
Leon, John & Lynnea
Lesko, Rev. Fr. Andrew J
Lewis, James & Demetra
Loukides, Mr & Mrs Lucas
MacNamara, Kenny & Helen
Madura, Ron and Maria
Marutsos, Penny
Matty, Gus & Thelxe
Matty, Sharon
Melachouris, Nickolas & Molly
Meyerhofer, Gary and Sally
Nicholas, John and Konstantina
Nickolin, Nick and Helen
Nollar, Joseph and Rene
Papas, Deno
Pappas, Dino & Catherine
Parissis, Kelly & Christos
Pasvacitis, George & Nikki
Pearson, John & Charlena

Peros, Mike and Caroline
Polis, William and Helen
Psaros, George and Helen
Redmond, Bill and Erini
Rigas, Denny and Cindy
Scaglione, Dina
Selberis, John and Georgia
Selberis, Michael J and Michelle
Sellas, Reggie
Sfakianakis, Emmanuel & Ariana
Stamos, Chris & Suzanne
Stavrou, Bob
Stavroulaki, Kalliopi
Stewart, Ruaridh and Sylvia
Takos, Angelo and Chrisa
Takos, Dino and Lauren
Tolmasoff, Tom and Tanya
Tonge, Danny and Mary
Travis, Irene and Kurt
Trikas, Tony & Irma
Valaskantjis, George & Georgia
Valaskantjis, Nikiforos and Georgia
Vardakostas, Lia
Zervos, Sophie S.

**Greek Orthodox Mission
of South Orange County**

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**METROPOLIS OF
SAN FRANCISCO**



Greek Orthodox Mission of South Orange County

Capistrano Business Center
27129 Calle Arroyo, #1803
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693
Phone: 866.350.1933 or 949.542.3447 (new office phone)

Website: www.gomsoc.org

Sunday Liturgies

Orthros (Matins) 8:45 a.m.
Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Directions from the 5 freeway:

Exit Ortega Highway. Depending on your direction, head East on Ortega Highway. Turn right onto Rancho Viejo Road, proceed to the end. Turn right onto Calle Arroyo, until it ends and enter the parking lot on the right side. The building (#1800) is right there. Our suite #1803, is near the fountain.

Directions from J Serra without use of the freeway:

Start out going East on Junipero Serra Road toward Rancho Viejo Road. Turn right onto Rancho Viejo Road. Follow the same directions as above.