

JUNE-JULY 2016



Voice of St. George

**SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF THE DESERT**

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



PENTECOST: TIME FOR A HOLY COUNCIL!

Inside this issue

Two events come before us this summer: 1) Pentecost Sunday, and, 2) The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Christian Church. Pentecost Sunday this year falls on Sunday, June 19, 2016 and the "first-in-1,200-years" Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Christian Church convenes from June 16-June 27, 2016 on the island of Crete—coinciding with Pentecost Sunday.

Pentecost Sunday is the celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of fiery tongues upon the Holy Apostles, giving them the power to preach the Gospel of our Risen Christ our God and Savior in various languages so they can give the message of Eternal Life in Christ to every corner of the world. It is the Day on which the Church's mission to all nations begins and the "New Jerusalem" takes

form.

The account of this Holy Day is recorded in the Book of Acts (2:1-13). Pentecost is the "Chrismation" of all followers of Christ, Who are Baptized in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, making them, collectively, the Body of Christ—that is, His Holy Church. It is the "world-wide" version of each person's own participation in the Sacrament of Holy Chrismation following the Sacrament of Baptism.

In essence, as we have died and resurrected with Christ, the Holy Spirit ushers us into the Kingdom of God here on earth, as well as in heaven.

The rudiments of applying the ministry of the Church have always been formed through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Again, we read in the Book of Acts 5:5, how, when the

Apostles needed to determine how the Gentiles were to be received into the life of the Church, they gave themselves over to prayer, looking for guidance from the Holy Spirit. Through prayer and with Christ's Divine Love, they found the way by which Gentiles could be received into the life of the Church. This is the prototype of all of the Ecumenical Councils of the Orthodox Church, including the Holy and Great Council that is scheduled to take place in Crete in June.

As to whether this Council will be known in the future as an *Ecumenical Council*, Fr. John Chryssavgis, Archdeacon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate says, "In the final analysis, there is only one test, and that is retrospective: namely a council's acceptance and adoption by the people of God (the *pleroma*, the *sen-*

Pentecost: Time for a Holy Council.....pg.1
Sunday School,
Stewardship.....pg.2
Philoptochos,
AHEPA.....pg.3
Scrip,
Birth Choice of
The Desert.....pg. 4

Special Insert containing the following:
– *The Holy and Great Council*
– *June/July 2016 St. George parish Calendar*

The 2016 JUNE/JULY Voice of St. George is dedicated to the St. George Philoptochos in honor of their deeds of charity on local, Metropolis and Archdiocese levels.

Mailing Address
St. George Church
P.O. Box 4755
Palm Desert, CA 92261
Tel: (760) 568-9901
FAX: (760) 568-9492
Email: stgeorgepd@aol.com
website: www.go-stgeorge.org
-Fr. Theodore Pantels, Pastor
-Dcn. Euthym Kontaxis, M.D.

sus fidelium or consensus ecclesiae) [i.e.: the faithful people of the Church from generation to generation]. (*Toward the Holy and Great Council*, pg. 11).

The long-anticipated agenda for the Holy and Great Council includes the following concerns:

1. The structure and leadership of the Orthodox Church in America, Australia, Europe and beyond the borders of the traditional Orthodox Patriarchal countries and territories. (These countries and areas are known as the *Diaspora*).
2. The granting and recognizing of “autonomy” and “autocephaly” in terms of self-governance of the faithful in a particular country or region.
3. Dealing with the questions as to how the Church is administered as a geographical body outside the borders of the traditional ancient Orthodox Patriarchates and how such administrative “independence” is proclaimed.
4. The *diptychs* (defining the official list of canonically ordained Orthodox Christian Bishops in the world).
5. Dealing with and accepting a common Orthodox Christian Calendar. (Around the world today, two calendars are in use among Orthodox Christians: The Julian Calendar and the Gregorian Calendar. Unity suggests the use of only one calendar).
6. Dealing with the impediments of Holy Marriage.
7. The regulations for fasting.
8. Bilateral and multilateral dialogues with the various Christian denominations and religions throughout the world.
9. Orthodoxy and its ministry in the Christian world at large.
10. The Orthodox Church’s stand on moral and ethical issues in the world—issues of: peace, freedom, justice in the contemporary world.

Enclosed herein is a brochure from our Holy Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople outlining some of the aspects leading up to and including the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Christian Church. Also, an extensive write-up appears in the recent edition of *The Orthodox Observer*.

+FR. THEODORE

SUNDAY SCHOOL END-OF-THE-YEAR



CEREMONIES — Sunday School

“End - of - the - Year” ceremonies on Sunday, June 5th are always informative and inspiring.

May our Lord grant His many and rich blessings to **Dr. Jim Christopoulos** and his wife, **Gloria**, for their tireless efforts in coordinating our Sunday School program for this year. We also offer prayers of gratitude to God for **Deacon Euthym Kontaxis, M.D.** and his wife, **Krisann**, for their assistance in teaching our Sunday School children. In addition, we are grateful to our Lord for the parents who bring their children to Sunday School and who participate in their religious education. Above all, we are grateful to God for giving us His children so that their souls can be molded according to the teachings and spiritual discipline of our Holy Orthodox Christian Faith.

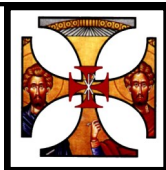
STEWARDSHIP — As we approach the summer months, we need to remind one and all that any extra Stewardship offering will be a great blessing for our St. George parish.

Anyone who has not yet submitted a 2016 Stewardship Pledge Card *and* contributed to the financial needs of our parish by virtue of fulfilling his or her pledge is fervently and prayerfully asked to do so at this time.

If there are any questions or concerns regarding Stewardship, in general, or regarding your own participation in our Stewardship efforts, please address them to the parish priest so that he can have a chance to make clarifications and/or corrections, since we all serve our Church for God’s glory.

Let us think of Stewardship as our personal *voice* in proclaiming our Faith to the general community around us. This *voice* is a voice that is to be heard *worshipping* Christ our God, as well as to be heard *proclaiming* that Christ is truly God—a proclamation with words and with deeds. Why not be a part of it? Glorifying God gives purpose to our everyday chores.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS



Our last General Meeting was on May 16th at the Old Spaghetti Factory. It was a nice way to end the season. We had 24 members and guests attend. **Alice Pulos** made all the arrangements and we thank her very much. See Photo. We will resume our meetings in September. Have a great summer!

Have spare change in your pocket or wallet? Would you like to lighten the load? Put your spare change into the specially marked cups "Mochas for Missions" on the tables in the Hall. Mochas for Missions support our Mission churches. We will be collecting through Pentecost.

Have you renewed your Membership yet? Are you thinking of joining the Philoptochos? Please do so. Of the \$45 membership fee, \$15 goes to National, \$15 goes to Metropolis and \$15 stays here with us. If you have any questions or need a membership envelope, see **Linda Kallis** or **Annette Lewis**.

In May, we sent donations to support the Salvation Army and Coachella Valley Rescue Mission and in June we support a student for a year through the Ophelia Project.

We need Coffee Hour Hostesses or Hosts for the months of June and July. See **Linda Petalas** or **Linda Kallis**.

– LINDA KALLIS,
Philoptochos President



Pictured above are some of the ladies who gathered for the May 16th Philoptochos General Members' Meeting at the Old Spaghetti Factory. The next general meeting will be in September.

AHEPA NEWS



The summer schedule for AHEPA members holds many opportunities for participation in many worthwhile AHEPA Family events and projects:

June 23 - July 23, 2016—An opportunity for study at a fully accredited U.S. University. Information is available on the AHEPA 528 website: www.ahepa528.org.

Summer 2016: We are planning to have representation at the **2016 AHEPA Western Regional District Convention** hosted by District 20 on **June 23-26, 2016**. The following month the **Supreme Convention** will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, taking place between July 24-29.

November 6, 2016. We look forward to supporting the **Veterans Day Celebration**, as led by **Louise Dobbs Barringer, St. George Outreach Chairperson**. (Veterans Day 2016 is Friday, November 11th.)

November 12, 2016 -This year, the Thanksgiving Dinner will be hosted by AHEPA Chapter 528 and Philoptochos at St. George Church. Save the date from now!

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE CLERGY-LAITY CONGRESS



The 43rd Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress of our Holy Archdiocese will take place in Nashville, Tennessee on July 3-8, 2016, with the theme, *You are the Voice of Christ in a Changing World*.

The Congress will take place immediately after the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church on June 18-27th in Crete. To follow the developments related to this important Clergy-Laity Congress access the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese website: www.goarch.org.

The National Philoptochos Congress, as always, will be held in conjunction (same time and place) with the Archdiocese Clergy-Laity Congress. Philoptochos is the "heart and soul" of our Church's philanthropic work in the world.

THE SCRIP PROGRAM

The **Scrip Program** chaired by **Presvytera Petula Pantels** is an exciting fundraising project for the Church. Scrip turns everyday shopping into cash for our Church when families use retail gift cards to pay for everyday purchases (like gas and groceries). As soon as a parishioner orders a gift card, a rebate will go directly to our Church. Presvytera Petula will be working with her committee over the summer to set up the program. The Scrip Program will begin in the fall.

– LINDA KALLIS,
Parish Council Member

CHOIR NEWS

The choir is now “off” for the summer. Congregational singing is very much encouraged. Plan to participate in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy by bringing with you the voices that God has given you to glorify His Holy Name.

The choir will officially be “off” for the summer after **Pentecost Sunday (June 19th)**. The Choir is preparing for the Divine Liturgy for Pentecost, which will be celebrated with many special hymns related to this great feast day.

BIRTH CHOICE OF THE DESERT

Birth Choice of the Desert is an abortion alternative organization staffed with trained and compassionate volunteers who lovingly help any pregnant woman or girl, no matter what her situation may be. All of their services are free and confidential. It is a place where friendship is offered along with emotional support and material resources that a woman or girl may need. No matter how impossible a situation may seem, help is always available.

Fr. Ted has joined with **Fr. Howard Lincoln** of Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in Palm Desert to stand up to preserve the lives of the pre-born children and to encourage all who love Christ our God, Who is the Life and Resurrection of all people, to support the work of Birth Choice

of the Desert. It is a ministry to both men and women of our community, bringing spiritual healing and strength to pregnant women and the fathers of the pre-born children.

With the celebration of Pentecost, as we call upon the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, to guide and protect our own lives, let us work with the same Spirit in guiding and protecting the lives of others.

To volunteer to help with needed tasks in support of the Birth Choice of the Desert ministry, or to make a much needed monetary contribution, contact Birth Choice of the Desert at (760) 775-5683 (that’s 760-775-LOVE) and visit the website: www.desertbirthchoice.org.

2016 FESTIVAL FINANCIALS

The 2016 Festival financial report will be sent out separately in an upcoming June edition of *The Ladder*. It will include profit and loss, and net profit. The report will be accompanied with an analysis and related information.

Any of our parish members in good standing who want to view financial information regarding the 2016 Festival may do by contacting our parish office at (760) 568-9901.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GREEK FESTIVALS

St. George: June 3-5, 2016 @ 10846 Downey Ave. Downey, CA 90241; \$2, Seniors and kids under 12 Free: Info: www.stgeorgedowney.org, (562) 862-6461

St. Spyridon: June 10-12, 2016 @ 3655 Park Blvd., San Diego, CA 92103; \$3, Free on Friday. Info: www.sdgreekfestival.com, (619) 297-4165

Prophet Elias: June 11-12, 2016 @ 1035 Inland Center Dr., San Bernardino, CA 92402 Info: www.propheteliaschurch.org, (909) 885-6213

St. Paul: June 24-26, 2016 @ 4949 Alton Parkway, Irvine, CA; \$3, Info: irvinegreekfest.com (949) 733-2366