

THE ORTHODOX OASIS

“GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND
PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL
TO THE WHOLE CREATION.”
MARK 16:15

ASSUMPTION
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

encounter • embody • engage



ASSUMPTION
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

JOIN US AS WE WELCOME
HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN GERASIMOS
**COMMUNITY CENTER
DEDICATION WEEKEND**

OCTOBER 26 - 27, 2024

DINNER | SATURDAY, OCT 26 | 5:30-10:00PM

LITURGY & LUNCHEON | SUNDAY, OCT 27

SAVE THE DATE

ASSUMPTION

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

CONTENTS

LETTER FROM FATHER Proclaiming the Resurrection	04
FEATURE ARTICLE Missions & Evangelism	06
PARISH COUNCIL REPORT Stewardship	08
SNAPSHOTS Recently caught on camera	12
ENCOUNTER Filling the Nets	14
EMBODY Meet Anastázius Kaejatídarján	16
ENGAGE Vacation Church School	18
KIDS PAGE Activities for the family	20
CALENDAR OF EVENTS Plan your schedule	21
BOOK SPOTLIGHT The Religion of the Apostles	22
MINISTRY DIRECTORY Find a way to plug in	23



06



04



18

STAFF

Rev. Fr. Andrew J. Barakos, Presiding Priest | priest@assumptionaz.org

Rev. Fr. Jacob Saylor | frjacob@assumptionaz.org

Accountant, Mrs. Tanya Garrison | accounting@assumptionaz.org

Director of Music Ministry, Mr. Anastázius Kaejatídarján | chant@assumptionaz.org

Youth Director, Mr. Nicholas Paris | youth@assumptionaz.org

Office Administrator, Mr. George Miller | office@assumptionaz.org

8202 E. Cactus Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85260

Office: (480)991-3009 | Info Line: (480)391-8182 "4"

www.assumptionaz.org

Office Hours | Monday 9 AM to 3 PM and Tuesday-Friday 10 AM to 2 PM

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

PROCLAIMING THE FOURTH ONE IN THE FIRE

When the three youths were asked to proclaim their faith in an idol and refused, they made an inspiring proclamation of *unconditional faith* in God:

"If our God whom we worship is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up (Daniel 3:17-18)."

Unconditional faith is a virtue that lies at the foundation of not falling away from discipleship which every Orthodox Christian is called to embrace by way of the Cross. The three youths had faith that God was capable of saving them but they also knew it was predicated upon His willing it or not. Their acceptance of the flames was a free and voluntary offering of themselves to bear **witness** to their faith. The word *martyr* means *witness*. They freely accepted the cross that had been laid before them. Thrown into the fiery furnace, they were found singing and praising God! Nebuchadnezzar then saw a theophany:

"Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counselors, "Was it not three men that we threw bound

into the fire?" They answered the king, "True, O king." He replied, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt, and the fourth has the appearance of a god (Daniel 3:24-25)."

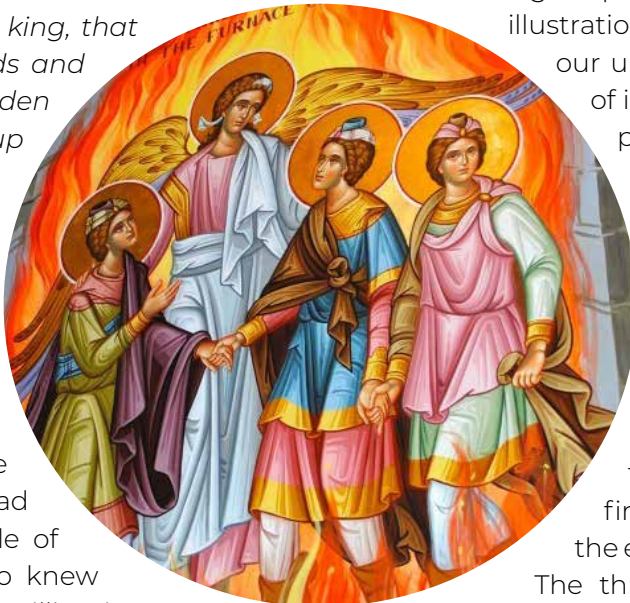
The Orthodox Church sees the fourth One in the fire as an appearance of Christ and the three youths in the fire as a foreshadowing of death and resurrection. The early church fathers used

the image of placing iron in a fire as an illustration of how to understand our union with God. A piece of iron is known by certain properties, it is cold, hard, and a particular shape.

Likewise, a fire is also known by its unique characteristics and properties. When iron is placed in the fire, it remains iron but now is known by the properties of that fire. It begins to glow with the energies of the fire itself.

The three youths in the fire become known by the properties of the *fire*, which is Christ. When we die and are resurrected everyone will face and encounter the unshakable Kingdom which is to come and God as that **consuming fire** (Heb. 12:29). This is how we are to understand that even in this life, we are called to enter into the *consuming fire*, which is God. Through thanksgiving in all circumstances, in prayer, and in worship, we become partakers of this Divine Fire.

"Let us be having gratitude' that is, let us keep



on giving thanks to God. For not only should we not be discouraged at present things, but even to show the greatest gratitude to Him for those future things (His unshakable Kingdom)...It is possible to worship God acceptably by giving Him thanks in all things,...both in temptations and in their abatement (Chrysostom).”

St. Paul came to know and proclaim Christ after an *unveiling* or an *opening up* of the scriptures took place in his life. To meet Christ *on the road to Damascus* is equivalent to discovering the Orthodox Church. For two thousand years, the Grace of God has illumined these scriptures through our theology, our worship, our hymnology, our iconography, and our way of life. How Orthodox Christians proclaim this good news is through our unconditional faithfulness in becoming partakers of this Divine Light, which is Christ. To partake of this responsibly is to do so *with the fear of God, with faith and with love.*

God is calling people to join and grow His Orthodox Church, I believe because He must think we are ready. It is of paramount importance that when they enter our houses of worship they find Christ in us and His Spirit dwelling in His holy house. When this is not the case, they leave and try another Orthodox community. Some express not finding the same Spirit that is already working in their hearts present in some of the communities.

The consequences of unfaithfulness are not only personal but have broad implications for others seeking Christ in the Orthodox Church. This is why remaining prayerful, watchful, vigilant, and mindful of preparing for Communion (to come with a repentant heart) is what we call the *Orthodox Way*. It is seeking to become partakers of this newness of life offered by Christ through prayer and confession. It is to strive every day to



align my life through obedience to the teachings of Christ. It is to die to the world as an end in itself and allow the grace of Christ to fill us with His joy and life. It is to be people of unconditional faith and acceptance of the crosses imposed upon us in this life. It is to become witnesses of the *fourth person in the fire*. Christ is not here to judge us but to heal us, to save us, and transform our lives through His Grace and Divine Love.

In Christ's Love,

✠Fr. Andrew



"We were in a remote region in the highlands of western Kenya. It was night, and we arrived at a house that was in mourning. A little girl, stricken mortally by malaria, lay on a large bed, as if sleeping peacefully. 'She was such a good child,' whispered her afflicted father. 'She was always the first to greet you.' We read a short funeral prayer, and I said a few words of consolation.

"That night, as the rain fell on the banana leaves and tin roof of the schoolhouse where we stayed, I reflected on the events of the day. Away in the darkness, I heard a drum beating and knew it came from the house of mourning. In my weariness, I wondered, 'Why am I here?' Various thoughts about missions came into my mind—preaching, education, civilization, development, peace, love.

"Suddenly, a light flashed across my exhausted mind and revealed to me the essence of the matter. 'You bring the good news—the hope of resurrection! Every human being has a unique worth, and each will rise again. Herein lies human dignity, value, and hope. Christ is risen! You teach them to celebrate the resurrection in the mystery of the Church. You offer a foretaste of it.' And in a fleeting vision, I saw, once again, the little African girl run up and be the first to greet me, as she usually did. She helped me to understand more precisely the heart of our Orthodox witness."

-Archbishop Anastasios of Albania (b. 1929-)

Often times, we complicate things for ourselves. We may find that we don't know what our calling is as Christians. We may want to share the gospels with others, with our family, with our co-workers, and yet we feel lost. Where do I begin? What can I say that won't offend? What is the gospel anyway? It isn't theological discourse, it's not a debate about science vs faith, it's not even charity or acts of love. It's all encapsulated in three words: "Christ is risen".

You've heard it over and over again, but pause and consider what's being said here. Jesus of Nazareth, a very real human being, likely a short, dark haired, somewhat smelly 33 year old man from the first century near east was brutally executed on a Friday, in what Fr. Thomas Hopko calls "a redneck corner of the Roman empire". And yet, here we are on the following Sunday, proclaiming that this short, dark haired, somewhat smelly 33 year old man is actually alive again. The dead guy is alive. And He's still alive today.

Once a parishioner of our church, commenting on Fr. Jacob's particularly zealous habit of walking down the aisles of the church in the early minutes

of Pascha, with a paschal torch in one hand and a burning censer in the other, yelling emphatically "Christ is risen!" said, "by the fourth or fifth time that we shouted "Truly He is risen!" back, I began to realize what it was that we were saying". It's a sobering thought. We gather in a church in the middle of the night, fittingly, because a dead man is no longer dead. What's more is that this now applies to us as human beings as well. Death is no longer Lord, for the Master of all things has destroyed its might.

What news this is! Death is powerless, there is a resurrection for every single person. So, what should we do now? We can always look to the scriptures and to the saints for answers. In the gospel we see that the women disciples of the Lord come to His tomb and find that He is gone! The angel tells them that He had risen and was no longer there. Christ Himself appears to these women and commissions them to go and proclaim the resurrection to His disciples. These women became the very first evangelists! This was the very first time the gospel, the good news of the resurrection, was preached by these women, the apostles to the apostles. These women ran to find the disciples, early on that Sunday morning and told them the familiar words: "Christ is risen!"

The disciples, however, did not respond "truly, He is risen!" as we are accustomed to. Rather, they replied along the lines of "What are you talking about? Are you crazy?" and they did not believe. A couple of the disciples even ran to the tomb to see, and they found it empty and they still did not believe. So, why did the women believe and the disciples doubted? They both saw the empty tomb, why the different response? The answer is that the women actually encountered the risen Lord. They saw Him and spoke to Him, they actually experienced Him. Likewise, those 11 disciples who doubted all believed beyond a shadow of a doubt (even if they were a week late) that Jesus had really risen when they also experienced Him and He appeared to them.

Jesus doesn't expect people who haven't had an experience of Him to go and proclaim the good news of His resurrection. He gives Himself to all who are willing to receive Him, and having experienced Him, He then commands them to go and to tell others about Him. He didn't tell the women "here,

take a candle, go home and come again next week". He tells them to go proclaim the news to others. To the disciples He doesn't say, "Go home and roast a lamb, throw a big party, stop all your spiritual efforts and exchange a special seasonal greeting for the next 40 days and then wait till next year". He gives them a HUGE task to accomplish, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

On the night of Pascha, we too encounter the risen Lord. Not in some symbolic theatrical way, but in a real tangible way. We see, taste, touch, smell, and feel the risen Lord in the eucharist. We are really there in the darkness of the tomb, we really watch the light come forth from the tomb, we hear the same words of the angel telling us that He is risen, and in like manner to the women, we also proclaim "to the disciples" within the church "Christ is risen!" over and over and over again.

But what about the next part? What about "go therefore and make disciples of all nations"? What happened to "teach them to obey all things that I have commanded you"? All too often we forget that part. And in doing so, we too fail to obey all things that He has commanded us as we neglect this, His very last commandment in the gospels. We cannot only proclaim the resurrection to the disciples, we are called to proclaim to all people everywhere. There are nearly 2 billion people in the world today who have never heard the gospel. There are even more people who have never heard about the truth of Orthodoxy.

So, what should we do? Obviously, not everyone can become a missionary. But, that does not exclude us from this calling. We all must acknowledge our apostolic identity as Orthodox Christians. Every single one of us plays a role in this proclamation of the gospel, not just the missionaries. If we ourselves feel called to go into the mission field, then we must give this very prayerful consideration. If, however, we do not feel called, then we must ask ourselves, "what will I do to make sure that my neighbor, who is called to such a life, is prepared and equipped to go and to proclaim the gospel?"

I'd like to invite each and every single person to attend a workshop on May 18. Dr. Nathan Hoppe will

be visiting Assumption to present to us the topic "Your Apostolic Identity as Orthodox Christians". Dr. Nathan Hoppe is an OCMC missionary, and the longest serving missionary at that, serving in Albania for 26 years and counting. In that amount of time, he has helped in the resurrection of the Orthodox church in Albania following Communism, fostered growth in parishes throughout the country, survived multiple wars, lost his wife, and raised a family in Albania. Now, during his sabbatical, he has graciously chosen to travel the United States to share this message and rekindle our zeal for mission work. Compare this with St. Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, and we begin to realize that apostles, ministers of the gospel still exist in our church today!

This workshop is open to everybody, and proclaiming the gospel is something that is not for a select few, but for all Orthodox Christians. Christ has charged the church as a whole with this mission and we must continuously and actively participate in it. Many people say that they feel unprepared, untrained, or unqualified to speak the gospel, usually saying "I'm afraid I'll say something wrong". Pascha is a reminder that those uneducated and formerly cowardly fishermen were made to be wiser than all when they preached the gospel. We can receive education by coming to the workshops that Assumption will host on evangelism to prepare us. And above all else, remember that the gospel is not complex, but this good news is summarized in three words: Christ is risen!

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

By the time you are reading this, we will be saying, "Christos Anesti, Alithos Anesti!" (Christ is Risen, Truly He is Risen!)

The Lenten season is a blessed time as we renew and refresh our relationship to Christ by participating in the richness of the services and traditions of our church. Bible studies and Catechism classes were well-attended during Lent and our ministries remained incredibly active. Meanwhile, church attendance has approached 500 on normal Sundays, reflecting a unique zeal from long-time parishioners, newcomers, and even inquirers. This is a special moment in the life of the church and it's worth pausing to reflect on how blessed we've been as a congregation.

We welcome your feedback and questions. Contact the Parish Council President, Takis Makridis at pcpresident@assumptionaz.org.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Revenues	\$365,515
Expenses	\$268,945
Net Income	\$96,570

Net Income is a result of very strong January and February stewardship receipts.

Stewardship

Thank you to the 231 families who registered as stewards in 2024 and all others who contributed for all our ministries.

Our stewardship revenue for the first three months of 2024 is much higher than what it was in the first three months of 2023! However, this also reflects different seasonality patterns than in prior years. More generally, a working group has emerged to develop educational materials

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

2024 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE GRID AS of April 16, 2024

Pledges	Families	Totals	Avg Pledge
\$1-999	101	\$ 38,890	\$ 385
\$1,000-1,999	60	\$ 71,432	\$ 1,191
\$2,000-2,999	20	\$ 43,600	\$ 2,180
\$3,000-3,999	12	\$ 37,200	\$ 3,100
\$4,000-4,999	7	\$ 28,600	\$ 4,086
\$5,000-5,999	15	\$ 75,400	\$ 5,027
\$6,000-6,999	1	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000
\$7,000-7,999	0	\$ -	
\$8,000-9,999	3	\$ 25,000	\$ 8,333
\$10,000-10,999	5	\$ 50,000	\$ 10,000
\$11,000-19,999	5	\$ 70,600	\$ 14,120
\$20,000-29,999	0	\$ -	
\$30,000-40,000	0	\$ -	
\$50,000+	2	\$100,000	\$ 50,000
Totals	231	\$546,722	\$ 2,117

2024 Stewardship Budget = \$825,352

on stewardship. We believe this is especially important with so many newcomers joining the Orthodox faith from different traditions.

For example, it's easy to incorrectly conclude that stewardship commitments are dues or membership fees. They're not! We believe that stewardship is how we express our conviction that everything we have is from God and that we are stewards of those gifts. We define stewardship much more broadly than dollars and cents. The time and skills donated by, literally, hundreds of parishioners are also vivid demonstrations of how much this community loves our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. That said, we benefit from having physical (and online) cards that we ask parishioners to fill out because it lets us plan. One way in which the parish council exercises good stewardship is through thoughtful planning and budgeting, which your stewardship cards allow us to do more effectively.

Becoming a steward is easy: either 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 hope that many of you had the opportunity to visit the Ministry House when we held “Open House” in March to see the renovations and refurbishing work. Already, it’s been used dozens of times for youth events and other ministry gatherings coming together to learn about our faith, and share meals.

Assumption supports ARIS Foundation

We continue to support the Aris Foundation, a 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. We are looking for volunteers to cook meals that are served in Tempe to the homeless. You can also help by donating clothes, PB&J sandwiches, and other items.

Be on the lookout for emails and announcements as we take advantage of this terrific opportunity to serve and express love to people in need. For more information, please contact the office at 480-991-3009 or office@assumptionaz.org.

Heavenly Coffee House (HCH)

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 its operation.

HCH is looking for part time staff. For inquiries, please contact cafe@assumptionaz.org.

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

The Spring General Assembly will be held on **Sunday, May 26**, following the Divine Liturgy. We invite all stewards to attend. Please note that non-stewards may attend but will not be able to vote.

Also mark your calendar for the Dedication of our Community Center on **Saturday, October 26 and Sunday, October 27**. Metropolitan Gerasimos will be joining us for this special event. As a reminder we paid off the loan for our Community Center on January 4, 2021, just years after finishing construction.

We are planning a beautiful weekend event. That Saturday evening, we’ll host a cocktail reception, followed by a formal dinner featuring NY steak, vegetables, roasted potatoes, and select wines. The cost of the dinner is \$150 per person. The dress is cocktail attire. On Sunday after Liturgy, we will host an informal luncheon with a Southwestern theme of tacos, rice and beans, chips and salsa—which, by the way, is one of our Metropolitan’s favorite cuisines. The luncheon is free for everyone. What is a celebration without dancing? There will be Greek music and dancing in the Plaka and Community Center as we celebrate our past and anticipate the next steps in our community’s journey.

Please mark your calendars for this important date. If you are available and interested in volunteering, please reach out to one of our planning committee members: Christina Craig, Christina Dimtsios or Christina Pullos after church services or by email ckc_atthefountain@cox.net.

Thank you to all of you!

The energy and interest in our faith and our community is high. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, but it’s manifested through the hospitality and warmth you create in every encounter you have. Thank you for everything you do to make Assumption a source of hope and love to so many countless people.

2024 FAITHFUL STEWARDS

Nick & Ekaterina Adamopoulos
Demitri & Carolyn Adarmes
Catherine Agra
Aaron & Rebekka Amacher
Laz Amanatidis & Popy Skagos-
Amanatidis
Dimitri Anagnostopoulos
Nick & Athena Anastos
Morfia Apostolis
Apostolos Argyros & Lisa Milano
George & Vasso Athanasopoulos
Sarante "Sandy" & Julie Athenson
Jonathan Azar & Megan Mullin
Rev. Fr. Andrew & Pres. Andrea Barakos
Lee & Ann Bartol
Tammy Belt
Lou & Judie Beratis
John & Elaine Bergquist
Ronald & Maria Betzig
Daniel & Melissa Bill
Alex & Andrea Boutselis
Stephen Bull & Lana Gialamas-Bull
Tom Burke & Joanna Conos
Dean & Mary Burton
Sotera Catsadimas
Helen Chakeres
Diane Christias
Tony & Roushan Christofellis
Rebecca Christopoulos & Jesse DaSilva
Brad & Georgia Cinto
John & Eugenia Clark
Scott & Maggie Cole
Frank & Elaine Columbus
Edward & Pam Conti
Elizabeth Contos
Blake & Paras Copenhaver
Christina Craig
Helen Cummings
Janet Cummings
Gus Dandas
Jack & Shannon David
Voula Davis
Shannon Dawson
John & Mary Deffigos
John & Mary Demetropoulos
George & Janis Demetruiliias
Joey & Sara DeMichele
Peter & Sharon Demogenes
Alexandros & Kelly Demos
Michael & Joni DiMino
Robert Dmitrick
Georgine Donahoe
Sandra & David Douglas
Kathy Drivas
Kostas & Caroline Economopoulos
Rodney Egnash
Nick & Angie Eliades
George Elias

Christopher & Elizabeth Exline
Theodore & Evangeline Fotias
Angela Gallios
David & Marta Gambaccini
Thomas & Tanya Garrison
Todd & Tracy Gatesh
Chris & Anne Gavras
George Gialamas
Gina Giannis
Victoria Gildner
Van Goad & Irene Bafaloukos-Goad
Christian A & Michaela C Gonzalez
Suzanne Guyan & Joey Cyganek
Abby Hakim
Diana Harris
Mary Hiras
Michael Hiras & Sophia Fountis
Alvin & Jeannette Hollander
John & Coralia Ioannou
Joseph Jalaf
David & Alice Jasmer
Kevin & Tina Jones
James & Linda Kalivas
Laurie Kalivas & Robert Gibney
Marika Kallonas
George Kalomas
Louis Kanios
Nick & Dena Kantaros
Peter & Debbie Karas
Petros & Kiki Karidas
Dimitrios & Ekaterine Kariotoglou
Rick & Anna Kariotoglou
MaryAnn Kaufman
John & Virginia Kavvathakis
Spiro Kircos
Christopher Kireopoulos
Louis & Maura Kireopoulos
Steve & Jennie Kireopoulos
Kathy Klausung
Nick & Vickie Koines
Demetre & Louisa Kondylis
Michael & Sandy Konstas
Mary Kontos
Thomas & Harriet Kosmitis
George Kossaras
George & Kayla Kossaras
Arthur & Carol Kostaras
John & Valerie Kostas, Jr.
Dean & Angela Koumoutzis
Michael & Vera Kouvelas
Nicholas Koziris
Irene & Keith Kufner
Nicholas Kufner
Bill & Evie Kypreos
Anthony Latonis
Chris & Helen Livanos
Stacy & Ginger Logan
Charleen Lucia

Marika & Roula Makridis
Takis & Vanessa Makridis
Tony & Susan Makridis
Anna Manos
Gregory & Susan Marmas
Pamela Maydanis
Peter & Christina Maydanis
Ed & Andrea McNamara
Bob & Claire McNeal
Alexander Mellas
Georgia Mellas
Nicholas & Roxana Mellas
Pete Mellas & Vanessa Gutierrez
Stephen Mellas
Andrew Metanias
Mariann Mihailidis
Nicholas & Irene Mihailidis
Christos & Maria Mihaletos
George & Chloe Miller
John & Denise Millstine
James & Irene Mourikes
Elias Mousa & Lama Hana-Mousa
Evie Musallam
Hayden & Inayah Myers
Susie Nakhla
Jonathan Nassos & Jenni Pulos-Nassos
Mary Ann Nassos
Tom & Loretta Nations
Donald & Lorraine Nemer
William & Sonia New
Chris & Lee Nicolopoulos
Kathy Nicolopoulos
Svilen Nikolov & Heather Wagner
Helen Noplos
Phoebe Orlando
Thomas & Beverly Orr
Paul J & Erin Panagos
Alex & Toni Pandi
Anthony & Sandra Papadopoulos
Chrysoula Papadopoulos
Jennifer Papadopoulos
Harrison & Christin Pappas
Melanie Pappas
George & Dorothy Parides
Nicholas Paris
Angelo & Joyce Pateras
Peter & Penny Pefanis
Elenitsa Pena
Ken & Penelope Plache
Gus & Anna Plagianis
Andrew & Angela Poulos
Steven & Catherine Poulos
Christina Pullos
Alexander Regan
Joanne Reichert
Elizabeth Riethmann
Demetra Rishwain & Michael Voeller
Mike & Antonia Ristagno

Andrew & Samira Rores
Chris Rotas & Abigail Scheid
Lance & Kerri Rouse
Linda Samalis
Michael & Savannah Samoszuk
Periandros & Evanthia Samothrakis
John Sampanes
Rev. Fr. Jacob & Pres. Jordan Saylor
Erik & Kristina Schumacher
Helen Serelis
George & Traci Sgouros
Hanadi Shraiky
Joseph A Silvestri
Jim & Sandra Skarlis
Constantin Solomon
Sally Solomon
Scott & Eleni Sommerschield
George & Diane Sotos
George & Effie Sourvanos
Dimitri & Jewel Spanos
James & Joanna Spear
James & Laurie Stamas
Carol Stamos
Linda Stehling
Sean & Stephanie Stephenson
Christopher & Angela Syregeles
Markos & Pamela Tambakeras
Alexandra Tangalos
Maria Tangalos
Stephanie Tangalos
Teddy Tavlarides
Andreas & Maria Theodoru
Jim Thomas
Georgianna Thomopoulos
John & Patty Throuvalas
William & Carole Tobey
Krystina Toscas
Nick & Joan Treantafeles
Gust & Barbara Tsikalas
Konstantinos Tsilimidos
Marvin & Eleni Tucker
Jonathan & Rahal Tuoti
Laura Tutelman
Maria Tutelman
Thomas & Bessie Tzavaras
Ray & Dee Unks
John & Georgia Valos
Jason & Betsy L Vines
Ed Weiss & Stephanie Demogenes
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



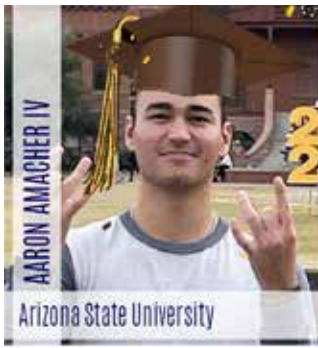
ASSUMPTION
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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 | yianniscatering@yahoo.com

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



AARON AMACHER IV

Arizona State University

Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience



ANGELINA ANAGNOSTOPOULOS

Desert Mountain High School

Plans to attend University of Arizona



LUKE BAMRUD

Grand Canyon University

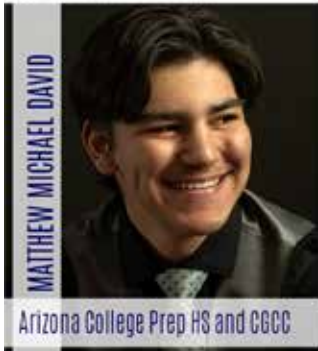
Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology



GLORIA COLE

Laurel Springs School

Plans to attend Arizona State University (Finance)



MATTHEW MICHAEL DAVID

Arizona College Prep HS and CCCC

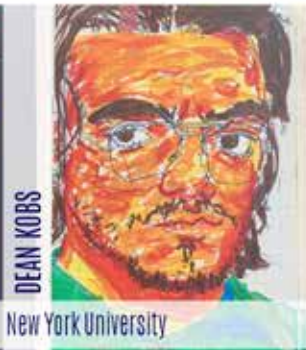
Plans to attend Arizona State University (Engineering)



ISABELLE EXLINE

Pinnacle High School

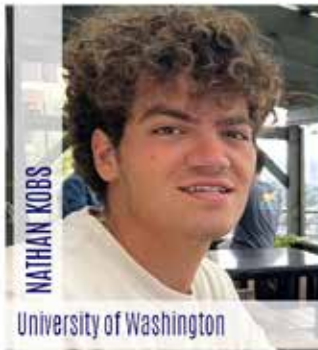
Plans to attend University of Arizona



DEAN KOBBS

New York University

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Film & Television



NATHAN KOBBS

University of Washington

Bachelor of Science in Biology



MICHAEL LEWANDOWSKI

Arizona State University

Degree in Supply Chain Management



LUCAS PARIS

Grand Canyon University

Bachelor of Science in Finance



NIKO PARIS

Grand Canyon University

Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Health Science



JONATHAN SCOUROS

Chaparral High School

Will attend University of Nebraska Omaha (Finance)



NICK SPELLUS

Arizona State University

Bachelor of Science in Supply Chain and Data Analytics

SNAPSHOTS *of life at Assumption*

SUNDAY SCHOOL



LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

GREEK STREET FAIR



ORATORICAL FESTIVAL



PALM SUNDAY



ONE OF MANY CHRISMATIONS

MAR-APR 2024

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

SERVING - ARIS FOUNDATION



SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS



FIRST FRIDAYS



LENTEN POTLUCK



MOMS & TOTS CLEAN MONDAY KITE FLYING



SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY



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.

David Bonaventura is a catechumen at Assumption. This spring, not only will he be graduating from Pinnacle High School, but he will be welcomed into the Orthodox Church through Chrismation. His journey to Orthodoxy has been a long path, starting at a young age with a conviction that God truly does exist. Born into a Catholic family, he was baptized as a child but did not practice the faith. His general religious upbringing was more focused on being a good person than anything else. Throughout his time surrounded by the Catholic church and its members, he was often told that “we are basically Orthodox” by peers, an Eastern Catholic bishop, and others he met. Though he did not know about the Orthodox faith, this phrase he did not understand became a seed that would later blossom into fruit.

In his sophomore year of high school, he decided to pick up once again his faith in Christ and join the Protestant church where he became an active member of his community. After a while of being Protestant, he began to slowly question the beliefs held by the church he was attending. One thing that really stood out to him was in the verse in the 16th chapter of Matthew, where Christ proclaims that the “gates of hades will not prevail” against the church. As a Protestant, David expressed how this did not seem to line up with the beliefs that the entire church fell and the Protestant reformers had to rescue it. Amongst other scriptural contradictions, David found in his Protestant church, he began to look back at the seed of Orthodoxy that was

planted many years ago. Through YouTube and funny memes on Instagram, David became acquainted with this ancient faith. He even had a daughter of an Orthodox priest in his business club at school who became a person he could ask questions to. After turning to a video of



Orthodoxy on YouTube and hearing, “Get off the internet and talk to a priest,” David decided to do a quick Google search and stumbled across the closest Orthodox parish to him, Assumption.

After meeting with the priests and having many conversations with Fr. Jacob, who answered all of the questions he had without shying away from anything, David began to realize he had found his home in Orthodoxy. As the journey continued, he began to see clarity in the teaching of the church and its traditions. He also saw a change in his own life through the people at school. Orthodoxy, or Christ through His Church, began to open his heart to other people he would not have interacted with before.

When asked to give advice to those looking into the church, David emphatically and quickly said to speak with a priest and find a spiritual guide. Likewise, when asked what he thought proclaim meant, David responded that to proclaim means sharing the faith with all people.



THANK YOU!

2024 Outreach Day

On Saturday, April 6, 2024 Assumption parishioners donated blood to meet the shortage in the Metro Phoenix area, and assembled and sent 220 School Kits for IOCC to distribute throughout the world as needed! Glory to God!



vitalant.
Blood Donation



At our April Philoptochos meeting, we kicked off the **Center Yourself Ministry** - We had a flower bar set up to create our own floral arrangements.

The centerpiece of our table reminds us to center ourselves around Christ. As sisters in Christ, we are all on the journey together. Each woman added the following message to their centerpiece:

It is the Holy Spirit who makes us find joy in each flower, the exquisite scent, the delicate colour, the beauty of the Most High in the tiniest of things. Glory and honour to the Spirit, the Giver of Life, who covers the fields with their carpet of flowers, crowns the harvest with gold, and gives to us the joy of gazing at it with our eyes. O be joyful and sing to Him: Alleluia!

Akathist Glory to God for All Thing, Kontakion 3

CENTER YOURSELF MINISTRY

ANNUAL PHILOPTOCHOS CRAB FEAST

THANK YOU!

The annual St. Barbara Philoptochos Crab Feast was held on March 2, 2024 with almost 300 people in attendance. Friends old and new, from our parish and beyond, enjoyed an evening of fellowship and delicious food.

The event raised over \$54,000 which will be used to directly support over 36 ministries locally, regionally, and nationally. Thank you to everyone who attended, donated and/or volunteered to make it a huge success!



MEET...ANASTÁZIUS KAEJATÍDARJÁN

“In that day you will say: “Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted.” - Isaiah 12:4

Q How has your experience of leading services at Assumption Greek Orthodox Church evolved over the past three years, particularly in relation to the theme of “proclaim”?

I think the more that we hear the hymns and see the icons and pray basically, the more we understand the Christian story and our place therein, and then we become able to proclaim the beautiful truth in a more holistic and conscious way than previously. I hope that is what is happening.

Q Could you share some insights into the significance of the Byzantine tradition and its hymns, especially during the Lenten season?

It's all connected. There's the exaltation of the holy cross, which is the same feast that Mary of Egypt is going to Jerusalem for, and which makes an appearance in her vespers doxasticon. And on another level, before lent even begins in the weeks leading up to it, we're going through these themes of exile and the many falls of man, but then once lent begins, we have the Triumph of Orthodoxy, St Gregory, the ladder of divine ascent, and those two I've already mentioned, and then you realize every week is like a rung on that ladder: the ladder extended for us to come back from our own exile.

Q What personal or spiritual growth have you noticed within yourself as you've immersed in the practice of chanting the hymns of the Triodion throughout Lent?

It's a serious process, which is definitely ferrying us to somewhere important. And just as though it were a six week long ballad, we can't skip to the destination without going through the process. That would ruin the destination for us, or mar, somehow, our capacity to receive the mystery. All that is to say, the process is undeniable, and its effects are potent. As for personal growth, we'll see in the end whether I've really gained anything. May the Lord guide us.



Q How do you approach the responsibility of proclaiming through your chanting, particularly considering the deep theological and emotional themes embedded within the hymns?

I hope I am singing them with their due dignity, and by singing them, I hope I am helping people to pray. I want it always to create an atmosphere of prayer. I think when I make a mistake, I distract myself from prayer, and thus likely distract others too.



Q Looking ahead, how do you envision continuing to evolve in your craft of proclaiming through chanting, and what aspirations do you hold for the future of your role within the church community?

The first thing is prayer of course, and to continue the journey that I mentioned in the first question. But in addition to that, I hope to compose more music, and to make the tradition more accessible to everyone. I don't think that psalmody belongs only in the church, but in the home also.

Q In what ways do you believe your chanting serves to connect the congregation with the spiritual essence of the Lenten journey?

Part of it is that it is like reciting wrote prayer, in that the hymns are meant to invite us to pray, to involve our mind in the process, and to inspire us to pray about things we might not have thought to pray about otherwise. For instance, maybe in the moment gratitude is the last thing on my mind, but there's something in the hymn which makes us think about giving thanks to God, and by that we're inspired to pray in a thankful way.



Q Have there been any particular moments or hymns during this Lenten season that have resonated with you on a profound level? If so, could you elaborate on their significance?

The prokeimenon at Monday (Sunday night) vespers. There are two of them, and they alternate from one week to the next, but the one for odd-numbered weeks. The one which says, "Turn not away thy countenance from thy servant for I am afflicted. Quickly hearken unto me; attend to my soul and deliver it." It comes from the 68th Psalm. This verse and the rest of the Psalm is worth reading and the rest of the 9th kathisma as well.

If you are interested in learning more about the Byzantine tradition of chanting, Anastázius conducts chant classes throughout the year. Check the [calendar page](#) on the website, send an email to chant@assumptionaz.org, or call the church office at (480)991-3009 for more details.



This Year's Vacation Church School program will take place from June 3rd – June 7th. **REGISTER NOW!**



2024 VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL
LIVING THE LITURGY
JUNE 3 - 7, 2024 | 9:00 AM - 12:00 NOON
Open to All Youth grades K - 5th
REGISTER BY MAY 28
<https://assumptionaz.org/youth#vcs>

Assumption's Vacation Church School is available to all youth from Kindergarten through Fifth Grade! This week-long event serves our parish's youngest members and is led by a committed and enthusiastic leadership team of parents, young adults, and high school youth.

Hosted each summer, our community's summer day camp begins each morning at 9:00 am and ends at 12:00 noon.



Throughout the week, youth spend their time learning about our timeless and relevant Faith while having a blast hanging out with one another. This year, our kids will take a journey into the church services, learning how we are supposed to "live the liturgy" in a fuller way. They will get an opportunity to spend time with our priests, chanter and other amazing volunteers of our community each day as they rotate through our many rotations such as chant, athletics, devotionals and arts and crafts.



This program provides our youth with the opportunity to grow closer to Christ and deeper in community with their fellow Orthodox peers.

To sign your children up for this fantastic ministry of our church, please visit assumptionaz.org/youth#VCS and register by May 28th!

ENGAGE

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 CAMPERS 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



ALL SAINTS CAMP

WWW.ALLSAINTSCAMPARIZONA.ORG

KIDS PAGE

TRIVIA QUESTIONS

USE THE BIBLE VERSE REFERENCES FOR HELP, IF NEEDED

1. "_____ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)
2. What gift is granted to those who believe in the name of the Son of God, according to 1 John 5? (1 John 5:11-13)
3. What does the word Immanuel mean? (Matthew 1:23)
4. How many days and nights did Jesus fast in the wilderness? (Matthew 4:1-2)
5. What casts out fear, according to 1 John? (1 John 4:18)
6. The lamp of the body is the _____. (Matthew 6:22)
7. Who did Mary Magdalene see sitting on the stone that was rolled away from the tomb? (Matthew 28:2)
8. In what is known as the Great Commission, Jesus asked the disciples to go and make disciples of all the nations and to baptize them. In whose name did Jesus ask the disciples to baptize? (Matthew 28:19)
9. How many times is the word PROCLAIM used in Psalms?

ANSWERS: 1. Jesus Christ, 2. Eternal life, 3. "God with us", 4. Forty days and forty nights, 5. Perfect love, 6. Eye, 7. An angel of the Lord, 8. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 9. 42 times (in 12 translations)

COLORING FUN

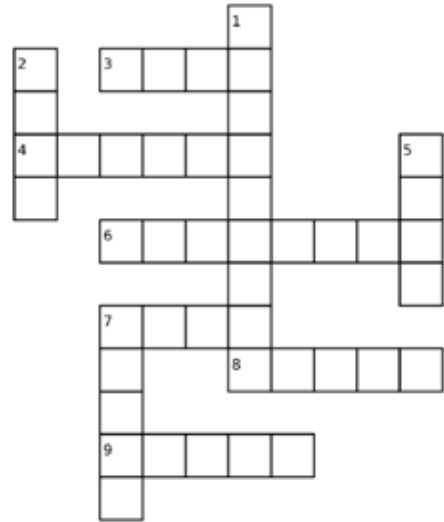
HOLY PENTECOST



Source: [Orthodox Education Blogspot](http://OrthodoxEducationBlogspot)

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Christ Is Risen



DOWN:

1. What we celebrate 40 days after Pascha
2. What we do NOT do for the whole week following Pascha
5. A week-long summer activity with friends from church
7. What the tomb was when the myrrh-bearing women went Easter morning

ACROSS:

3. What is depicted above the heads of those shown in the icon of Pentecost
4. The third person of the Trinity is called the Holy _____
6. To make known publicly (theme of this month's Oasis)
7. Items dyed red to crack open when celebrating Christ's resurrection
8. First word in the response when someone says "Christ Is Risen"
9. Number of youths in the fiery furnace in book of Daniel

ANSWERS: Down: 1. Pentecost, 2. Fast, 5. Camp, 7. Eggs, 8. Truly, 9. Three
Across: 3. Fire, 4. Spirit, 6. Proclaim, 7. Eggs, 8. Truly, 9. Three

LEARN A NEW WORD

proclaim | verb:

To preach or announce a message publicly and with conviction. In Mark 16:15, Jesus tells His disciples to, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone." To proclaim the Good News, we can use more than words. How we live our lives often "proclaims" this Good News the loudest.

CALENDAR EVENTS

sundays...

8:00 am Matins

9:30 am Liturgy

10:45 am Sunday School (through May 19)

tuesdays...

5:00 pm Children's Greek School (through May 21)

7:30 pm Chant Class (through Jun 4)

6:30 pm The Art of Prayer Class (begins Jun 4-Jun 25)

wednesdays...

9:30 am Moms & Tots (1st & 3rd Wednesday each month)

6:00 pm Sr GOYA Events (May 15)

6:30 pm Young Adult Ministry Events (May 8)

thursdays...

5:30 pm Adult Greek School (through May 23)

7:00 pm Women's Book Club (May 23)

saturdays...

8:45 am Mom's Pantry (May 18 and Jun 15)

6:00 pm Chant Class

HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS

MAY 3 @ 9:45 am | Holy Friday Youth Retreat

MAY 8 @ 6:30 pm | Young Adult Ministry

MAY 9 | Philoptochos Social

MAY 11 | Metropolis Oratorical Festival (Belmont, CA)

MAY 11 @ 11 am | Loving Life +50 Lake Pleasant Boat Tour

MAY 12 | Camp Agape Collection (after Liturgy)

MAY 14 @ 4:30 pm | ARIS Foundation Serving Homeless

MAY 15 @ 6 pm | Sr GOYA Year End ExtravaganzaFestathon

MAY 18 @ 9 am | Serving at Mom's Pantry

MAY 18 | Missions & Evangelism Workshop

MAY 19 | Sunday School Graduation

MAY 23 @ 7 pm | Women's Book Club

MAY 26 | Spring General Assembly (after Liturgy)

MAY 26 - JUN 1 | All Saints Summer Camp

MAY 28 @ 7 pm | Women's Book Club End of Year Dinner

JUN 3 - JUN 7 @ 9 am - noon | Vacation Church School

JUN 4 - JUN 25 @ 6:30 pm | Art of Prayer Catechism (Tues)

JUN 6 | Philoptochos Planning Meeting (Board Only)

JUN 9 @ 6 pm | Loving Life +50 Summer Concert Event

JUN 14 - 20 | Project Mexico 2024 Homebuilding Trip

JUN 15 @ 9 am | Serving at Mom's Pantry

JUN 30 - JUL 5 | National Clergy-Laity Conference (CA)

MAY-JUN

SPECIAL SERVICES

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 (with 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

MAY 5 | Great & Holy Pascha

1:00 pm Agape Vespers

MAY 8 | Synaxis of Holy Powder which emitted from the tomb of Saint John the Theologian

8:00 am Matins and 9:00 am Liturgy

MAY 10 | Renewal Friday

8:00 am Matins and 9:00 am Liturgy

MAY 10 | Third Monday After Pascha

5:00 pm Vesperal Liturgy

MAY 20 | Saints Constantine & Helen

5:00 pm Vesperal Liturgy

JUN 12 | Apodosis of Pascha

4:45 pm Leave-Taking of Pascha

5:00 pm Great Vespers

JUN 13 | Holy Ascension

8:00 am Matins

9:15 am Liturgy

JUN 22 | Saturday of Souls

8:00 am Matins

9:00 am Liturgy

6:00 pm Great Vespers

JUN 23 | Holy Pentecost

8:00 am Matins

9:30 am Liturgy

JUN 24 | Nativity of the Forerunner John the Baptist

8:00 am Matins and 9:00 am Liturgy

JUN 28 | First Friday After Pentecost

5:00 pm Vesperal Liturgy



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

The Religion of the Apostles Orthodox Christianity in the First Century

by Father Stephen De Young

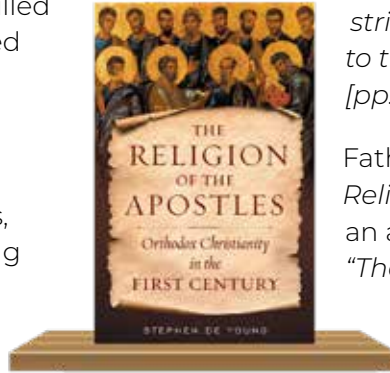
In his book, "The Religion of the Apostles", Father Stephen De Young makes the bold proclamation that the religion of ancient Israel and Judea continued to be practiced during the first century within newly formed "Christian" communities. In the book, he explains that the apostles who helped create and lead these communities did not think they were creating a new religion. Rather, they thought Jesus Christ had fulfilled the Messianic prophesies contained within Scripture.

In somewhat academic language, Father De Young provides an account of the theology, teachings, and practices of the apostles during the first century. As explained in the preface, his account is laid out topically rather than chronologically. For example, the first section explores the way God is described in Scripture and the way God was experienced as multiple Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Many Old and New Testament examples are provided as well as secular and cultural examples.

In the next section, Father De Young explains how other beings such as angels and demons were perceived and how ancient people interacted with them. This section also discusses three problems affecting God's world: sin, death and the dark principalities and powers; and God's plan to overcome them.

The third section is about the creation of the world and its salvation, including our human salvation. Biblical terms such as order, chaos, justice and judgment are explained in relation to our role as human persons through whom God acts in His creation.

The last section focuses on the assembled people of God, from the time of Moses to the time of the apostles to the current Orthodox Church. It includes insight into the way the Torah or God's Law is interpreted and applied in the life of these communities. "[T]he Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 directly, strictly, and literally applies the Torah to the life of the Christian Church." [pp. 244]



Father Stephen De Young states "The Religion of the Apostles" also serves an apologetic purpose. He proclaims, "The life of the Orthodox Christian Church is a direct continuation into the present day of the religious life of the apostles, just as their religious life was a continuation of the life of the people of God since the beginning of creation." [pp xvii]

Publication Info | Chesteron, IN, Ancient Faith Publishing, 2021, 271 pages

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

LEARN

ASSUMPTION MINISTRY DIRECTORY

ADULT EDUCATION

Fr. Andrew Barakos | priest@assumptionaz.org

ALL SAINTS CAMP

George Miller | info@allsaintscamparizona.org

ALTAR GUILD

Sally Solomon | sally.solomon@cox.net

ARIS FOUNDATION OUTREACH

Niko Paris | youth@assumptionaz.org

BANQUET HALL & FACILITIES RENTALS

Christina Pullos | rentals@assumptionaz.org

BOOKSTORE

Sandra Douglas | bookstore@assumptionaz.org

BUSINESS

Irene Kufner | ikufner@kufnerbookkeeping.com

Tina Kanelos Jones | tina@focustutorsaz.com

CHRISTMAS ANGEL TREE

Tammy Belt | tammybelt3@gmail.com

HEAVENLY COFFEE HOUSE

Abby Hakim | cafe@assumptionaz.org

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY

Anastázios Kaejatídarján | chant@assumptionaz.org

DANCE GROUPS

Evan Tsagaris | greekdance@assumptionaz.org

GREEK SCHOOL

Sandra Papadopoulos | greekschool@assumptionaz.org

LIBRARY

Loretta Nations | library@assumptionaz.org

LOVING LIFE +50

Helen Noplos | hnoplos@aol.com

MOMS & TOTS

Talia Curtis | taliakcurtis@gmail.com

MOM'S PANTRY

Christina Pullos | cgpullos@gmail.com

OASIS NEWSLETTER

Laurie Stamas | lastamas@gmail.com

PARISH COUNCIL

Takis Makridis | takis.makridis@equitymethods.com

PHILOPTOCHOS

Cynthia Wrasman | cwrasman@keficalyst.com

PROJECT MEXICO

Fr. Jacob Saylor | frjacob@assumptionaz.org

RETREATS & CAMPS

Niko Paris | youth@assumptionaz.org

STAYING IN TOUCH

Sally Solomon | sally.solomon@cox.net

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Christian Gonzalez | christian@assumptionaz.org

WELCOME MINISTRY & VISITORS

Melisa Bill | melisamariebill@gmail.com

WOMEN'S MINISTRY BIBLE STUDY

Laurie Stamas | lastamas@gmail.com

Tammy Belt | tammybelt3@gmail.com

WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

Pres. Andrea Barakos | bookclub@assumptionaz.org

YOUNG ADULTS

Niko Paris | youth@assumptionaz.org

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

Cool Off

with your favorite iced drink!

HOURS

Mon-Thu 8:00am-1:00pm

Fridays 8:00am-12:00pm

Saturdays Closed



Scan QR code to
ORDER ONLINE



Heavenly 
COFFEE HOUSE



ASSUMPTION
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

8202 East Cactus Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

PRST STD
US Postage
PAID
Phoenix, AZ
Permit #5514

Return Service Requested