

The Word

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth"

John 1:14

Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ

What's New about the New Testament?

December 2013

"God Himself will be with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.' And He said to me, 'It is done!'"

Revelation 21:3-6

Written almost 2000 years ago, and often found covered with dust on a bookshelf, it is challenging for many to look upon the New Testament as offering anything *new*! What is it that makes the New Testament new and pertinent in the lives of people yesterday, today, and forever?

In the Apostle Paul's letter to the Hebrews, he refers to the constant, never-changing experience of Jesus Christ, Who *"...is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8)."* God does not change. Inasmuch as God is unchanging, mankind is quite the opposite. By design mankind is in constant transition through our experience of free will. We choose the capacities and actions of our lives, not only evoking continuity in our lives, but also provoking differentiation in the environment and lives of those around us.

This continuity brings change into our experience, but it does not necessarily bring forth *newness*. All too often lives in perpetual motion are witnessed, sadly growing toward nothingness, simply busy creating void. What then creates purposeful newness?

The message of Scripture conveys a simple and profound reality: with faithfulness in God, good things happen – with faithlessness in God, bad things happen. With the message of the New Testament, the *good things* become exceedingly more accessible; through Jesus Christ we are provided *newness* that brings the experience of God into your daily life. This experience of God is what the beloved Saint John writes about in Revelation as making all things new. With divine rejuvenation we move on from all experiences of darkness and pain, and move into the Light of eternity.

How do we experience this newness? We must experience Jesus Christ.

Christ, the Living Water Who makes all things new, has made Himself present and available for us. God is not bound by any limitations, and He may make Himself available to us any way that He wishes, yet there are capacities through which He has already established mediums of His active presence.

1) Reading Scripture – Jesus Christ is the incarnate *Logos* (Word) of God. When we read the Scriptures, we approach Jesus Christ.

2) Participation in the Sacramental Life of the Church – through participation in the Mysteries of the Church, the active presence of God becomes tangible through our union with Him.

3) Living Love – Saint John the Beloved writes, *"God is Love"* (1John 4:8). When love is actively chosen in daily life, we invoke the presence and activity of the Holy Trinity.

These three chosen experiences of Christianity provoke the newness that all of mankind truly needs. Through the person of Jesus Christ, God made Himself even more accessible to His creation, so that we may become new, not simply changing.

In these sacred days, let us continually offer praise and doxology to our Benevolent Lord for His presence and our newness!

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Fr. Luke



December Services & Readings

<u>Date</u>	<u>Service</u>	<u>Epistle</u>	<u>Gospel</u>
Dec 1	14th Sunday of Luke	Ephesians 2:4-10	Luke 18:35-43
Dec 4	St. Barbara	Galatians 3:23-4:5	Mark 5:24-34
Dec 6	St. Nicholas of Myra	Hebrews 13:17-21	Luke 6:17-23
Dec 8	10th Sunday of Luke	Ephesians 2:14-22	Luke 13:10-17
Dec 12	St. Spyridon	Ephesians 5:8-19	John 10:9-16
Dec 15	11th Sunday of Luke	II Timothy 1:8-18	Luke 14:16-24; Matthew 22:14
Dec 20	St. Ignatius the God-Bearer	Hebrews 10:32-38	Mark 9:33-41
Dec 22	Sunday Before the Nativity	Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40	Matthew 1:1-25
Dec 24	Eve of the Nativity	Hebrews 1:1-12	Luke 2:1-20
Dec 27	St. Stephen, the First Martyr	Acts 6:8-7:5; 47-60	Matthew 21:33-42
Dec 29	Sunday After the Nativity	Galatians 1:11-19	Matthew 2:13-23

December Acolyte Schedule

All Acolytes in attendance are asked to serve.

December Candle Duty Schedule

Dec 1	Chris Siefkas, Nick Livanos and Rose Hunter
Dec 8	Bruce Corcoran, Pete Gikkas and George Kokalis
Dec 15	Peter Eliades, George Georgeson and Scott Walters
Dec 22	Alex Slenkin, George Sotiras and Tony Kosmas
Dec 29	Chris Siefkas, Nick Livanos and Rose Hunter

CHURCH CLEANING

On Friday, December 13, we will be cleaning our beloved church again in preparation for the Christmas season and the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Cleaning will start at 9 am and all cleaning supplies will be provided. Looking forward to seeing you there, even if you can only come for a few minutes.

The Word

Monthly Newsletter

published by

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**Fr. Luke Palumbis, Pastor
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December 2013



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Parish Activities & Ministries

Philoptochos

Coffee Hour

A big thank you goes out to the Filenathes for hosting the Breast Cancer Awareness Coffee Hour. With your generosity we raised over \$600 to donate to the cause. We are looking for someone to host the coffee hour for **Dec. 1, 8, 22 and 29**. There are quite a few birthdays in December; how about celebrating with a coffee hour!

It's Loukomathes Time Again!

Last year's Loukomathes Coffee Hour was such a success we decided to host it again. On **Dec. 15**, bring your sweet tooth to church. Please refer to page 5 for more information.

Harvest Luncheon

A good time was had by all at our Annual Harvest Luncheon. The proceeds will be used to help serve our local charities and help with our Metropolis and National Philoptochos obligations.

Turkey Bomb

Thanks to all who brought in turkeys. Together we were able to give 43 turkeys to the Food Bank in Novato.

Light the Path Luncheon – Dec. 7

Don't miss out on this wonderful event. The money raised from this event goes towards The Bishop Anthony Philotochos Student Aid Endowment Fund. It is through this fund that our future priests, educators and pastoral assistants are supported in their education.



Community Christmas Card

It is that time of year when we start accumulating names for our Community Christmas Card. Please keep in mind that 100% of the net proceeds go directly to the Retired Clergy Association to help priests and presbyteres who retired prior to a retirement system being put into place by the Archdiocese. These funds are desperately needed, so please be generous with your donations. **The deadline for the Community Christmas Card is Dec. 8.**

It's Social Time Again on Dec. 14

It's time for gathering with friends and family, and also a time for giving. At this social we would like to support the wonderful cause of making blankets for children in the Pediatric Cardiac Care Unit at UCSF.

A small fleece blanket may seem like a small gesture on the outside, but it is very meaningful and appreciated by the children who are so ill and their parents who are so worried. Making the blankets together as a community is a wonderful, warm event. Seeing the finished blankets piled high at the end of the night gives a concrete sense of helping, more than a monetary donation might give. As a community, we have made and donated close to 100 blankets in two years! I hope that we will be able to do it again this year. Please refer to the flier on page 9 for more information.

Don't Be Left Out!

Vasilopita Sunday January 5, 2014

January is around the corner and it is time to pre-order your Vasilopita. The proceeds go directly to St. Basil Academy. Please refer to the flier on page 10 and get your order in on time. **Deadline for pre-ordering is Dec. 29.** There will also be a limited quantity available during coffee hour.

Our Dec. Outing

Attending the "Light the Path" Luncheon on **Saturday, December 7.**



December Birthdays

Dora Protos 12/13; Erene Sotiras 12/16; Amalia Walters 12/24; Maggie Vassiliou 12/27; Carrie Clark 12/29; Doris Roland 12/31; and Betty Saris 12/31.

Dates to Remember

Dec 5 General Meeting Following Divine Liturgy
Dec 7 "Light the Path" Luncheon
Dec 8 Deadline for Christmas Card
Dec 14 Social 5:00 pm
Dec 15 Loukomathes Coffee Hour
Dec 29 Deadline to pre-order Vasilopita

Parish Council Elections

Voting to elect members to serve on the 2014 Parish Council will be held on **Sunday, December 8, 2013 from 11:30 am until 1:30 pm.** Only those members in good standing sacramentally with the Church and who have fulfilled or are current with their pledge for 2013 may vote.

Youth Education News

Christmas Pageant

This year the Sunday School Christmas Pageant will take place in church following the Divine Liturgy on **Sunday, December 22.** Rehearsals for the pageant will take place at church on **Sunday, December 8, and Sunday, December 15, from 11:30 am - 12:30 pm.** Be sure to bring a sack lunch to rehearsals. We encourage as many children as possible to participate in this event for our Church's Feast Day.



Angel Tree Program

During Advent, the Angel Tree will be in the Narthex so you can select the "angels" for whom you would like to purchase gifts.

If you would like to buy a present for a child or senior who otherwise might not receive one, you may choose an angel from the "angel tree" in the Narthex. Return your gift unwrapped to the Narthex by **Sunday, December 15.** Monetary contributions to buy Christmas presents are also gratefully accepted.

Thank you to **Elaine Chyrklund and Christina Foster** who have graciously agreed to coordinate the Angel Tree again this year.

Youth Activity Grades K-8

Let's bowl!! Save the date: **Saturday, January 11** for the 3rd annual youth bowling outing. More details (time, location, cost, etc.) to follow. Look for a flyer to go home via Sunday school and a community email. Mark your calendars, invite a friend, and plan to participate in this fun afternoon of fellowship.

Continued on Pg. 4

Parish Activities & Ministries

Nativity's North Star Ministry

Over the last four consecutive Sundays following the Divine Liturgy, an experience called "The North Star Ministry" has been discussed.

The star seen in the icon of the Nativity is the very star referenced in Holy Scripture as illuminating the way to the infant Lord. Jesus Christ Himself was the destination, and the star illuminated the pathway to Him. Those who recognized and committed to this journey were deemed as "wise." The three wise men from the East, who followed the illumined path to Christ, made this journey because they knew that the experience of Jesus Christ would edify their lives.

Upon completion of their journey, the three wise men found the experience that addressed their true needs -- they found the experience of the Lord.

The Lord, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is present and found in the life and experience of the Orthodox Christian Church! Jesus Christ is as present in the life and experience of Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Christian Church as He was in Bethlehem 2000 years ago!

Now, where is the illumined pathway that leads to 1110 Highland Drive?

Collectively, and as individuals, we must be the source of light that illumines the pathway to Christ at Nativity, just as the star did 2000 years ago. The Light of God fills us at each Divine Liturgy, and from Sunday morning we have the opportunity to reflect that Light into the world around us -- always pointing the way back to the source of Light... to Jesus Christ, Who we find at Nativity of Christ, the same way that the angels, animals, shepherds, and wisemen found Him 2000 years ago in a manger.

To allow the Light of God to illumine from us, we must do the following with the unpretentious love of God:

1) Make Contact -- approach a family member, a friend, a neighbor, a stranger and make contact with them. No Christian exists in isolation!

2) Communicate -- after having made contact with someone, be conscientious as to what is being communicated through our connection. Communication always takes place, intended or unintended, verbal or silent, conscious or unconscious. Consciously communicate the love of God!

3) Develop Relationships -- no two relationships are the same, however, for Christians the foundation of the relationship must be consistent -- the Love of God. Through your intended contact, and conscientious communication, develop relationships with those around you that are built upon the experience of Jesus Christ...that are built upon Love.

Remember the message of the great Cappadocian Fathers of the Church... "Preach the Gospel at all times, yet only when necessary use words."

Through our Christian experience of Contact -- Communication -- Relationships, the pathway to Christ will become illumined. All should yearn for the experience of Jesus Christ. When an individual feels that experience through one of His faithful (that means you!), the individual will innately be drawn to its source. Remember, the source is God Himself, Who is found in "the Nativity Cave" of Novato at 1110 Highland Drive; as individual faithful we serve as conduits of God's love -- delivering It as we continually receive It in the life of the Church.

Be the fixture that delivers the Light of God to another, and do it today! Make contact, communicate, and develop a relationship, for such glorifies God!

Hierarchical Divine Liturgy & More...Sunday, December 22

We are blessed to have our Arch-Shepherd, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos, celebrate the Divine Liturgy with his family -- the Nativity community -- this month on **Sunday, December 22**. His Eminence will remain in Novato throughout that Sunday to be with us at our 2nd Annual Nativity Celebration -- Tree Lighting, Christmas caroling and cookies in the courtyard, and performance of Dickens' "A Christmas Carol!"



The Feast Day of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker

Our closest sister parish, Saint Nicholas Orthodox Christian Church in San Anselmo, celebrates its parish feast day this month, with the following schedule:

**Festal Vigil:
December 5th - 7:00pm**

**Hierarchical Divine Liturgy:
December 6th - 9:30am**

Following the Divine Liturgy on December 6th, fellowship will take place, including a 'visit' from Saint Nicholas! All are encouraged to attend divine services at Saint Nicholas Orthodox Christian Church to pray with our brothers-&-sisters in Christ on their parish feast day!



***** Nativity will celebrate the Divine Liturgy for Saint Nicholas on the evening of December 5th at 6:00 pm.**

Christian Stewardship

Be Wise as Magi!

In the Biblical account of our Lord's Nativity, the path-way to Christ was illumined by a star, and those who recognized it and committed to the path are called wise – the three wisemen! These wise men from the East, who we call Magi, came to the presence and experience of Jesus Christ, and upon glorifying the infant Lord made a prepared offering to God – gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

In the same tradition, all those served by the Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Christian Church have the same opportunity to become wise in the eyes of God!

As Orthodox Christians we affirm that the Lord is present in the life of His Church – as Saint Paul taught, the Church is the Body of Christ! When we consciously commit to an active life in the Church, we embark upon the same journey as did the Magi, who journeyed to Bethlehem from Persia.

An intergral part of our committed journey is to follow in the example of these wise men and make offering to God. Your stewardship offering is the very same act as the Magi laying down the offering of gold, frankincense, and myrrh in front of the infant Lord and His mother, our Panagia!

You are invited to follow the Light of God to a committed life at Nativity. Through your active commitment, you are invited to make offering to Christ, as did the Magi – but rather than offering gold, frankincense, and myrrh, you are invited to offer your time, talents, and treasures.

Do you recognize Jesus Christ at Nativity?
Will you commit to Him?
Will you make offering to Him?
Will you be wise in His eyes?

Be wise and join the Magi by becoming a 2014 Steward of the Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Christian Church. In the tradition of the Magi, who manifest their stewardship at the birth of Jesus Christ, please complete and return your 2014 Stewardship Commitment Card to the church office by this December 25th.

May our benevolent Lord bless our offerings as He did the offerings of the Magi!

May we choose to be wise in our relationship with the Lord!



We're Having Loukoumathes!!



Bring Your Sweet Tooth to
Church
for a Delicious Fasting Treat!

Sunday, December 15, 2013
Immediately Following Divine
Liturgy

\$5.00 per serving

All Proceeds to Benefit the
Philanthropic
Work of Philoptochos

Second Annual
FESTIVAL OF THE NATIVITY

Sunday, December 22, 2013

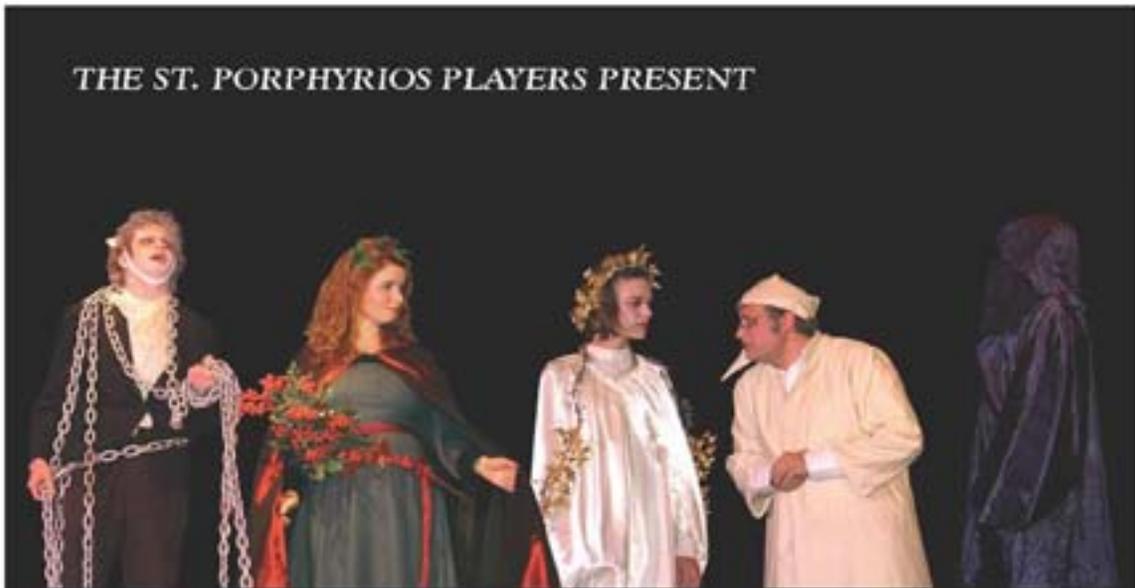
(RAIN OR SHINE)

5:30 PM—Courtyard Lighting Ceremony

6:15 PM—Caroling & Refreshments

7:00 PM—Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol"

THE ST. PORPHYRIOS PLAYERS PRESENT



Charles Dickens'

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Church

1110 Highland Dr., Novato, CA 94949

www.nativityofchrist.org - 415-883-1998

Play Admission: "Free Will Offering"

NATIVITY OF CHRIST

C H U R C H C A L E N D A R

2 0 1 3

DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>1 14th Sunday of Luke Orthros 8:30 am Divine Liturgy 9:30 am • Sunday School follows</p> <p>Northstar Ministry Parish Presentation</p>	<p>3</p> <p>• Bible Study 10:00 am</p>	<p>4</p> <p>• St. Barbara Divine Liturgy 9:30 am</p> <p>• Greek School 4:15-5:45</p> <p>• Folk Dance Practice</p> <p>• Akathist Hymn to the Nativity of Christ 5:30 pm</p> <p>• Adult Ed 6:00 pm</p>	<p>5</p> <p>• Adult Ed - Topic: New Testament 10:00 am</p> <p>St. Nicholas of Myra</p> <p>• Divine Liturgy 6:00 pm</p> <p>• Philoptochos General Meeting following Liturgy</p>	<p>6</p> <p>• Hierarchical Divine Liturgy of St. Nicholas of Myra 9:30 am at St. Nicholas Church in San Anselmo followed by Luncheon</p>		<p>7</p> <p>• Bishop Anthony Student Aid Endowment Fund Brunch -- "Light the Path" -- Here at 11:00 am</p>
<p>8 10th Sunday of Luke Orthros 8:30 am Divine Liturgy 9:30 am • Parish Council Elections</p> <p>• Sunday School follows</p> <p>• Pageant Rehearsal 11:30 am-12:30 pm</p>	<p>10</p> <p>• Bible Study 10:00 am</p> <p>• Parish Council Meeting 7:30 pm</p>	<p>11</p> <p>• Greek School 4:15-5:45</p> <p>• Folk Dance Practice</p> <p>• Akathist Hymn to the Nativity of Christ 5:30 pm</p> <p>• Adult Ed 6:00 pm</p>	<p>12</p> <p>St. Spyridon</p> <p>• Divine Liturgy 9:30 am</p> <p>• Adult Ed - Topic: New Testament following Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>13</p>		<p>14</p> <p>• Parish Social 5:00 pm Blanket Tying for UCSF and Calamari Dinner</p>
<p>15 11th Sunday of Luke Orthros 8:30 am Divine Liturgy 9:30 am • Sunday School follows</p> <p>• Pageant Rehearsal 11:30 am-12:30 pm</p> <p>2014 Festival Organizational Meeting</p>	<p>17</p> <p>St. Dionysios</p> <p>• Divine Liturgy 9:30 am</p> <p>• Bible Study following</p>	<p>18</p> <p>• Greek School 4:15-5:45</p> <p>• Folk Dance Practice</p> <p>• Akathist Hymn to the Nativity of Christ 5:30 pm</p> <p>• Adult Ed 6:00 pm</p>	<p>19</p> <p>• Adult Ed - Topic: New Testament 10:00 am</p>	<p>20</p> <p>St. Ignatius, the God-Bearer</p> <p>• Divine Liturgy 9:30 am</p>		<p>21</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Sunday Before Christmas Orthros 8:30 am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy 9:30 am Christmas Pageant</p> <p>Courtyard Reception (5:30 pm) followed by "A Christmas Carol" Performance (7:00 pm)</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Royal Hours of Christmas 9:30 am</p> <p>Eve of the Nativity of Christ</p> <p>• Orthros 5:00 pm</p> <p>• Divine Liturgy 6:00 pm</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>• Wedding 4:00 pm</p>	<p>27</p> <p>St. Stephen, the First Martyr</p> <p>• Divine Liturgy 9:30 am</p>		<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Sunday After Christmas Orthros 8:30 am Divine Liturgy 9:30 am</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Jan. 1</p> <p>St. Basil the Great</p> <p>• Circumcision of Christ Divine Liturgy 9:30 am</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Royal Hours of the Epiphany 9:30 am</p>		



NATIVITY OF CHRIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

2013-14

Mark Your Calendar!

**Annual Christmas Pageant
December 22 - Following Liturgy**

**Come be a part of re-enacting the
Christmas Story**

**Open to All Youth!
Plan to attend both Rehearsals
following Sunday classes**

**Two Rehearsals for Pageant
11:30-12:30**

Sunday, December 8: Casting

Sunday, December 15: Costumes distributed

Bring your lunch and join in!

If you have questions and/or can help/volunteer

**Please contact
Gigi Pappas Medan**

707-996-6167

gandd2@comcast.net

PARISH SOCIAL SATURDAY DECEMBER 14TH AT 5:00 PM

Help make blankets for children in the hospital Enjoy fellowship & Calamari dinner

At this time of year it's time for gathering with friends and family but also a time for giving. At this social we would like to support the wonderful cause of making blankets for children in the pediatric cardiac care unit at UCSF.

A small fleece blanket may seem like a small gesture on the outside but it is very meaningful and appreciated by the children who are so ill and their parents who are so worried. Making the blankets together as a community is a wonderful, warm event. Seeing the finished blankets piled high at the end of the night gives a concrete sense of helping, more than a monetary donation might give. As a community we have made and donated **close to 100 blankets** in two years!

Here's an excerpt of a letter sent to our congregation from Beatrix Musil, Child Life Specialist at the UCSF Pediatric Heart Center:

"On behalf of the heart center at Benioff Children's Hospital, I would like to thank you for your generous donation of beautiful fleece blankets last winter. Being able to give a blanket to a child who comes to the hospital is a welcoming gesture and often helps the child to settle in faster and feel comfort throughout the entire hospital stay. The patterns of the blankets were so beautiful and it was evident how much love went into making them. Thank you so much for thinking of the children in the hospital and helping make their experience a much better one."

Our parish Joy/Hope group will be making Gingerbread Houses before the parish social and hopefully stay for the blankets and dinner.

No experience is needed to make the blankets. We will sit together, enjoy each other's company and tie knots.

Our Parish Council and Philoptochos have donated towards the cost of the fleece fabric as have generous individual donors. Additional donations are greatly appreciated.

Calamari & Fries Dinner is \$8,
\$5 for children under 12





Annual Vasilopita Sale

Sunday, January 5, 2014

Minimum Donation: \$15.00

All proceeds benefit the children of St. Basil Academy

Name: _____ Contact Number: _____

Number of Loaves: _____ @ \$15.00 Each

I have enclosed my donation of: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: Philoptochos

Pre-Order Deadline: December 29, 2013

Sacraments and Rites

Baptisms

November 9 **Dimitris Alexander**, son of Stavros and Crystal Santorineos. Sponsors were Christos and Salma Santorineos.

"As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Memorials

October 27 **John Ivantcho, Raymond (Romanos) Pezzuto, Angeliki and Stefanos Ivantcho**

October 28 **John Gigounas**

November 10 **Franklinos Boides Mavromihalis, Areti Boides Mavromihalis**

"May their memory be eternal."

Christmas Flower Donations

If you would like to contribute toward the cost of the poinsettias and other items used to decorate our church during this Christmas season, please mail your donation, bring it directly to the church office or place it in the offering tray. Please mark your check **"Flowers."** All contributions, large and small, are appreciated.



Youth Education Activity Sundays



KEEP THEM IN YOUR PRAYERS

Please use this list to pray for members of our parish and others who are sick or in need of God's care.

- Fr. James Adams
- Elaine Cunningham
- Fr. Constantine Efstathiou
- Kathleen Trimble Mackechnie
- James Kolyvas
- Alexandra Edrich
- Fr. Haralambos Fox
- Connie Martigopoulos

From time to time, we may remove names that have been on the list for awhile. If you feel a name should remain on the list, or if you would like a new name placed on the list, **please contact the office.**





Nativity of Christ
Greek Orthodox Church
1110 Highland Dr., Novato, CA 94949

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Dated Material



*St. Barbara,
the Great Martyr
December 4*

Let us honor Saint Barbara, for she has broken the snares of the enemy; and like a sparrow, she, the all-modest maiden, was delivered out of them by the help and weapon of the Cross.