

# The Word

January 2025

*“And the Word became flesh & dwelt among us, full of grace & truth.”  
~John 1:14*



## “Why don’t my kids come to church?”

Many parents and grandparents lament the fact that their children and/or grandchildren have little to no involvement in the church community and don’t prioritize attending worship services. After a childhood of regularly attending the Divine Liturgy, participating in youth ministries and fellowship gatherings, retaining our children in the life of the church is becoming increasingly difficult.

As parents, we naturally emphasize the ministries that were part of our own upbringing in hopes that they will have the same impact on our children as they did for us: Sunday School, GOYA, Greek dance and church basketball leagues. However, the unfortunate reality developing in our ever-growing secular world, is that involvement in these ministries do not have the lasting impact as they once did.

So, then what does?

The National Study of Youth and Religion from the University of

Notre Dame did a longitudinal study to track young people from their early teens through early adulthood, to identify commonalities in the 40% who remain active in their churches. The commonalities among those who were retained were:

- Daily prayer with their families, beyond meal prayers
- Regular discussion of the faith with their parents, throughout the week
- Parents who lived out the moral teachings of the church at home
- A trusted adult who was faithful—someone who was not clergy, and was outside of the immediate family

This same study found that the following had no effect on church retention:

- Sunday School
- Youth ministry (GOYA)
- Parish activities (sports/dance)

It’s uncomfortable and unsettling

to conceive that investing so much time, effort, and energy in all these areas have such little return on the continued involvement of our children. However, at some point it must be obvious that if we want our children to have an authentic and lasting connection with the church, it must have a foundation of prayer and a relationship with God.

We are forced to ask ourselves: Do I pray with my children beyond mealtime? Do I pray without my children? Do I discuss the faith with my children? Do I myself adhere to the teachings of Christ and His Church? Do my children have other adults in their lives who are additional examples of faith?

For those who are still actively raising their children, we have the responsibility to make an impact on the souls of our children by practicing (not just preaching) the faith every day. But we must do it NOW! It is commonly said that 75% of the time we spend with our children will be spent by age 12. Meaning,

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All services will be streamed.  
[Stream Services Here](#)

### December Services

Date	Service	Time
Wed., Jan. 1	St. Basil	8:30 am
Sun., Jan. 5	Sunday before Theophany	8:30 am
Mon., Jan. 6	Holy Theophany	8:30 am
Tues., Jan. 7	St. John the Baptist	8:30 am
Sun., Jan. 12	Sunday after Theophany	8:30 am
Fri., Jan. 17	St. Anthony	8:30 am
Sat., Jan. 18	Sts. Athanasios and Cyril	8:30 am
Sun., Jan. 19	12th Sunday of Luke	8:30 am
Sat., Jan. 25	St. Gregory the Theologian	8:30 am
Sun., Jan. 26	15th Sunday of Luke	8:30 am

## *Holy Theophany*

About the beginning of our Lord's thirtieth year, John the Forerunner, who was some six months older than Our Savior according to the flesh, and had lived in the wilderness since his childhood, received a command from God and came into the parts of the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. Then our Savior also came from Galilee to the Jordan, and sought and received baptism though He was the Master and John was but a servant. Whereupon, there came to pass those marvelous deeds, great and beyond nature: the Heavens were opened, the Spirit descended in the form of a dove upon Him that was being baptized and the voice was heard from the Heavens hearing witness that this was the beloved Son of God, now baptized as a man (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:1-22). From these events the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the great mystery of the Trinity were demonstrated. It is also from this that the present feast is called "Theophany," that is, the divine manifestation, God's appearance among men. On this venerable day, the sacred mystery of Christian baptism was inaugurated; henceforth also began the saving preaching of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

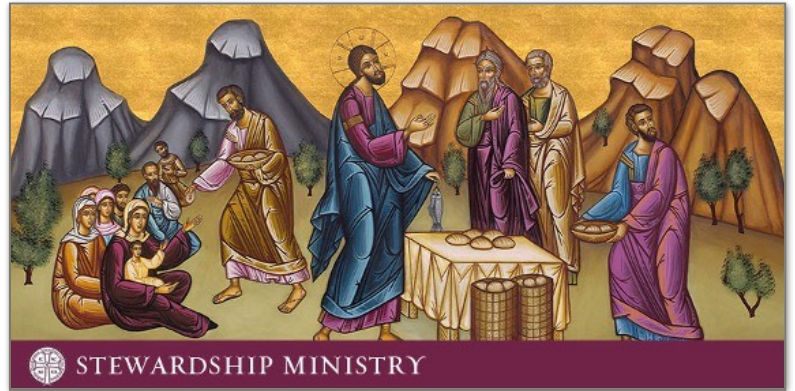


### *Apolytikion of Holy Epiphany*

Lord, when You were baptized in the Jordan, the veneration of the Trinity was revealed. For the voice of the Father gave witness to You, calling You Beloved, and the Spirit, in the guise of a dove, confirmed the certainty of His words. Glory to You, Christ our God, who appeared and enlightened the world.

## Stewardship

As we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany, let us remember that just as Christ revealed Himself to the world through baptism, we are also called to manifest our faith through our lives as stewards. This new year presents a fresh opportunity to renew our commitment to God by generously sharing our time, talents, and resources to support our Nativity of Christ parish community the many ministries of our church. Let us approach this year with gratitude for the blessings we have received and a renewed dedication to be faithful stewards of all that God has entrusted to us.



If you have not already done so, please take a moment to complete your 2025 Stewardship Pledge. Forms are available on line [www.nativityofchrist.org/giving](http://www.nativityofchrist.org/giving) or in the Church Office.

### *How to donate to the Nativity of Christ from your IRA if you are over 72*

Using a **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)** is a great way for folks over 72 with an IRA who need to withdraw funds to meet a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) to contribute to Nativity's Beyond 50 campaign or Stewardship fund. The money you contribute to Nativity using a QCD is not included in your adjusted gross income on your tax return, which is a better option than listing the donation as a simple charitable contribution. According to the IRS:

*A qualified charitable distribution (QCD) is generally a nontaxable distribution made directly by the trustee of your IRA (other than a SEP or SIMPLE IRA) to an organization eligible to receive tax deductible contributions. You must be at least age 72, when the distribution was made. Also, you must have the same type of acknowledgment of your contribution that you would need to claim a deduction for a charitable contribution.*

### *A Lasting Gift for the Church – (Planned Giving)*

A bequest or gift through your will is one of the simplest ways to make a lasting gift to the Church. Please consult your financial advisor for advice. A suggested wording: *I hereby bequeath the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ as a charitable bequest to the Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Church of Novato (Tax ID23-7122395) to be used for charitable purposes of the Church.*

Fr. John's article continued from page 1

the impact of praying and speaking to them about the faith is critical before adolescence.

So, what do we do if our children are adults?

St. Paisios of Athos famously said, "When your children are young, tell them about God, when they are old, tell God about your children." As our children grow older, our spoken word may not have as much impact as it once did. We must never cease to pray to God that He will guide and protect our children, illuminating their hearts with His Divine presence.

At Nativity of Christ, we will continue to provide Sunday School, youth ministries and parish activities because they certainly enhance our family's experience in the life of the church. However, if our involvement is not founded on prayer and an authentic relationship with Christ, than the fragile roots of our children's faith will soon be broken by the secular world we are called to reject.

May God continue to bless us in the 2025 New Year as we strive to make our faith intentional for our children, but most importantly, ourselves.

2024 marked the 55th Anniversary of Nativity of Christ and the final year of the Beyond 50 Plan. It's been an inspirational journey with significant accomplishments every year. In 2024, funds were once again donated and released from the Beyond 50 restricted funds to enhance and support the diverse and uplifting ministries of our Parish. Each Beyond 50 Plan goal continues to receive inspirational progress.

## Initiate New Church Membership

### Strategies: Catechumens/City of Novato

#### Catechumens

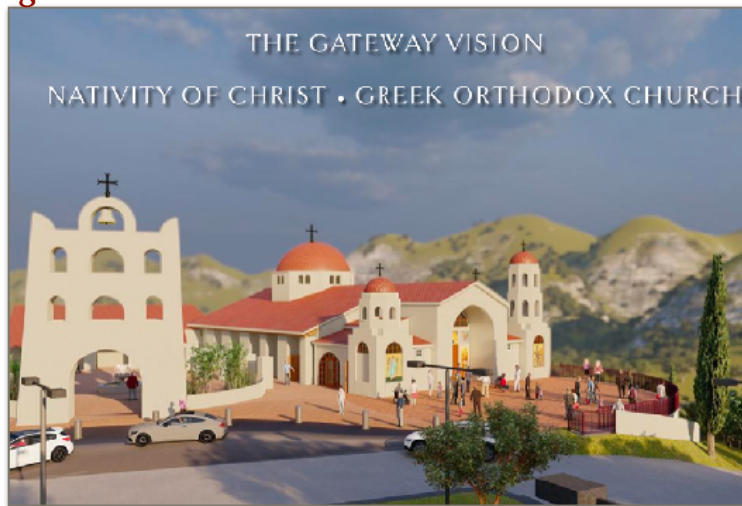
In the coming months, a structured series of discussions will be offered for the several individuals that have expressed interest in learning more about the Orthodox faith. This series will be open to all, but primarily focused to those potentially preparing to be received into the Orthodox Church.

#### Online Interview

Fr. John was interviewed by THE ORTHOCHAT. The episode covers various topics on the Orthodox faith and is now available on Spotify.

#### Evangelism

Susan Siefkas and Floretta Burrows once again hosted a table at the Holiday Market to speak to individuals curious about our faith as well as assist with the Church Tours at the Marin Greek Festival.



#### City of Novato

In 2024, Christ Kamages and his team at CJK studios continued to dedicate significant time for the major projects of the Beyond 50 Plan but specifically with the City of Novato. The Master Plan & Precise Development Plan was submitted earlier this year and on December 16, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the proposed projects. We anticipate final approval from the Novato City Council on February 25, 2025.

Through the generosity of our stewards and donors, all 2024 expenses related to city fees, civil, geotechnical, traffic, and structural engineers have been paid through restricted funds. Nativity of Christ received additional donations in 2024 and there is currently \$180,000 remaining in the Narthex Gateway restricted fund. We also again thank Christ and Pat Kamages for their donation of architectural fees.

### Expand and Support Existing Ministry: Ministries Director

In October of 2023, Eleni Kelley was hired as our new Ministries Director on a part-time basis. She has brought tremendous energy and structure to new ministries with consistent gatherings for men and women on Fridays, and for our families on the first Sunday of every month. Through this established line-item on our Parish budget, we're grateful for our stewards to ensure our ministries are alive and vibrant.

# *Beyond 50 2024 Review*

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attention as they physically represent the way in which we care for God's home. Painting the exterior of our large hall is a primary example. Nativity again expresses gratitude to the Antonis family who donated the \$40,000 in labor.

Within the Master Plan and Precise Development Plans submitted to the City of

Novato, are renderings for an elevator which will address our current accessibility issue. Once final approval is received from the City Council, Nativity will be able to pursue the important topic of accessibility with potential completion in 2025.

## *Increase and Expand Financial Resources: Nativity of Christ Preschool*

One of the most exciting accomplishments of 2024 was the opening of our Nativity of Christ Preschool! Through the hard work of Eleni Kelley and our Preschool Advisory Committee (Fran Corcoran, Daphne Cummings, and Kathy Marshall), our very own Angelina Susmani was hired as our Preschool Teacher/Director.

The Preschool is currently three, full-days a week for those 2 – 5 year olds. There are currently three students enrolled, and we look forward to expanding enrollment. This program would not be possible without the financial support of the Beyond 50 Plan and the stewards of Nativity of Christ.

## *In Closing*

The Beyond 50 Plan served as a tremendous exercise for the future development and growth of Nativity of Christ. Even though we technically have completed this five-year strategic plan, the established goals will continue to serve as a constant guide. It will indeed be exciting and ultimately fulfilling to complete the remaining capital projects of the Plan which will only be accomplished through the engagement of our faithful.

## *Expand and Increase Service to Poor and Needy: Sack Meals*

In 2024, Nativity continued to make sack meals for St. Vincent De Paul every month. 1,500 sack meals were made in 2024 alone, making our grand total nearly 7,500 sack meals over the past five years! We're grateful to our donors who provided the \$10,000 needed to make these meals over this period. We thank Elaine Chyrklund and Mary Kay Stratigos for spearheading this effort!



## *Improve and Enhance Existing Facilities: Maintenance and Accessibility*

Our facilities continue to receive our constant



# *New Parish Council Members*

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## *Pete Stathis*

Pete has been a part of the Nativity family since 1967 when his parents Gus and Sophia moved to Marin County. He has been very active in the Church from a young age, whether serving in the altar, attending Sunday School, or participating in the GOYA, the dance group, or the Nativity basketball team.

Pete met his wife Dina at Nativity and they have been blessed with three beautiful children, Dean, Sophia and Bella, son-in-law Sam Morgan, and grandchildren Evie and Anthony. In his free time, Pete enjoys coaching CYO and Special Olympics basketball and spending time with his family. Pete served on the Parish Counsel many years ago and is honored to return and serve his Parish and community.



## *George Sotiras*

George Sotiras is a lifelong member of Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Church and always shared his passion for the Raiders with Fr. James Adams, of blessed memory. His family were founding members of this beautiful community and it will always be the focal point of their lives. George has loved every minute of his 12 years of teaching and is equally excited to be rejoining the Parish Council to work, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, and continue to help this community grow and thrive.



# Philoptochos

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## Upcoming

January 5: Vasilopita Celebration Brunch  
January 7: Philoptochos meeting  
January 26: Philoptochos Membership Sunday  
January 31: Johnathan's Place Dinner

## Next Meeting

Our next meeting is a board meeting on Tuesday, January 7. The meeting starts at 7:00 pm and will be a Hybrid meeting. Join us at church or online with Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89308132395?pwd=UaIcosjks2XMAO9yuH0SDcUEmNrlLm.1>

Meeting ID: 831 5831 3960      Passcode: phil

## Did you know...Philoptochos

### History

Starting in the 2000's, Philoptochos formed a partnership with International Orthodox Christian Charities to build two children's medical clinics in Africa, one in Woliso, Ethiopia, and another in Parktown, Zimbabwe. In addition, Chapters participated in an AIDS walk-a-thon to raise funds to support Orthodox children in Ethiopia who had been orphaned due to AIDS.

## Vasilopita Sunday and Brunch

The parish will celebrate the Vasilopita on January 5. Philoptochos will be serving a delicious brunch during our community gathering after Liturgy.

## Membership Drive

Sunday, January 26 is Philoptochos' annual membership day. Please join us following Liturgy and renew your membership or sign up to join Philoptochos.

## Yiayia's Attic

Thank you to all who donated to our Attic. It was a great success, and the funds will be used to continue to support our Philoptochos projects and programs.

## Harvest Luncheon

A big thank you to all who helped make and serve the delicious food at the Harvest Lunch on November 10. People enjoyed the opportunity to break bread together, and all of the food was wonderful. Thank you to Irene Meehan, Gigi Medan and everyone who helped make this event a success.

## Welcoming Home

At a recent appreciation event, held at Homeward Bound in Hamilton, two Nativity of Christ Philoptochos members, Irene Meehan and Patricia Kamages, were invited guests and attended representing our church parish. Under the



leadership of Irene, our parish worked together to provide a completely furnished apartment for a formerly homeless single working mother and her young family of three. It was a very gratifying, emotional, and inspirational work of faith for all our parish members to work with these ladies responding to the critical needs of a young family in need. The process and results produced a fantastic and most satisfying outcome. Based upon our relationship with Welcoming Home, we have named them the Marin Greek Festival Charity Partner for 2025. We at Nativity of Christ look forward to our ongoing relationship and continue working with Welcoming Home to serve the critical needs in our community.

# Charitable Giving

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## Holy Monastery of the Theotokos, Dunlap:

**\$1,000** The Monastery of the Holy Theotokos the Life Giving Spring is a women's monastery built on a hill overlooking St. Nicholas Ranch. Founded in 1993 by Bishop Anthony, the monastery is currently home to 21 nuns. A spiritual oasis of Orthodox Christian worship and spirituality, the monastery welcomes pilgrims throughout the year.



## Holy Assumption Monastery, Calistoga: \$1,000

Holy Assumption Monastery is part of the Orthodox Church in America Diocese of San Francisco and the West, under the omophorion of His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin. From its home on the banks of the Napa River in Calistoga, California, Holy Assumption Monastery welcomes faithful pilgrims and visitors of all backgrounds.



## Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute, Berkeley (PAOI): \$500

The PAOI exists to educate, communicate, promote, and sustain the traditions, values, teachings, and culture of Orthodox Christianity. The Institute advances a witness of Orthodoxy through the Master of Arts in Orthodox Christian studies; offering academic lectures; a Rare Book Room and museum; publishing; sponsoring the Orthodox Christian Fellowship at the University of California at Berkeley and the Graduate Theological Union; offering programs to the faithful of the Bay Area.



## St. John Monastery: \$1,000

The Monastery of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco was founded in 1996 as a community of Orthodox Christian monks. Currently the brotherhood consists of about 12 monks and novices.

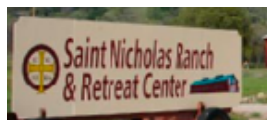


**San Francisco Metropolis: \$6,000** The San Francisco Metropolis is here to Proclaim the Gospel of Christ; Teach and spread the Orthodox Christian Faith; and energize, cultivate, and guide the life of the Church in the Western United States of America according to the Orthodox Christian Faith and Tradition.



## St Nicholas Ranch & Retreat: \$1,000

St. Nicholas Ranch seeks to provide programs for the spiritual renewal and growth of the faithful, in an atmosphere promoting the wholeness of the individual, body, mind, and spirit, and to be a resource center for parish needs, offering religious education, retreats, conferences, and



leadership development programs for all ages, reaching out especially to the youth.



## Hellenic College Holy Cross School:

**\$5,000**

At Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, its mission is to prepare men and women for leadership by creating an environment that fosters growth in knowledge, faith, and service.



## Orthodox Christian Fellowship: \$500

The vision of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship is to be the loving presence of Christ and the Orthodox Church on college campuses; to be an integral part of students' spiritual formation by challenging them to explore the Faith; and to inspire students to commit to living an Orthodox Christian way of life daily.

## OCMC: \$2740

Support a Mission Priest (SAMP) is a development program of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center that offers monthly financial assistance to indigenous priests in extremely poor areas around the world. Through SAMP donations, the priest is able to apply himself more fully to the needs of the parish, and hierarchs are able to ordain more clergy to meet the growing needs of their flock.



## Sparkle Foundation: \$1,000

Sparkle Foundation's vision: Create a world where all women and children have a sparkle in their eyes. With women helping women, they believe that can happen. Whether it is making your holiday easier on your family or using our collective resources to help you find a better situation, the Sparkle Foundation aims to help make that happen.

**Gilead House: \$1,000** Gilead House transforms the lives of homeless, single mothers and their children through empowering life skills programs, mentoring, and transitional housing. They provide an environment that reflects their faith in God's love.



## Boy Scouts of America-Troop 200: \$1,200

The BSA is committed to creating a welcoming, safe environment where Scouts can freely express themselves, share their experiences, and become the best version of themselves by learning from and respecting each other.





# Charitable Giving

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**Raphael House: \$1,000** Since 1971, Raphael House has been at the forefront of providing for homeless and low-income families in the San Francisco Bay Area. Raphael House is a 100% privately funded and community-supported organization whose goal is to achieve long-term housing and financial stability.

## Project Mexico and St. Innocent Orphanage: \$1,000

Since 1988, Project Mexico has been building homes for some of the most impoverished families in Northern Mexico. Every home is constructed over the course of four days and built with volunteer labor. St. Innocent Orphanage provides each boy with a sense of spiritual direction, a public education enhanced by private tutoring, an active program of athletics and extra-curricular activities, and a lasting sense of family and belonging, fostered by unconditional love and support from all of the staff and volunteers within their ministry.



**National Alopecia Areata Foundation: \$500** NAAF was established in 1981 with one clear goal; to offer support to individuals affected by alopecia areata. NAAF's various support programs and resources offer different ways to create a sense of community amongst individuals with alopecia areata and their families.



**Camp Taylor: \$500** Camp Taylor was founded in 2002 with the mission to help pediatric heart patients overcome the emotional and developmental challenges that accompany the disease through medically supervised camp programs. As youth experience summer camp staples like swimming, arts and crafts, horseback riding, and archery, along with heart health education and vital emotional support, they share a sense of growth and achievement with children and families in similar circumstances. Campers return home empowered to take charge of their health and pursue fulfilling lives.



Nativity of Christ is proud to offer this donation in loving memory of **Elektra Fourakis** who cherished her experience at Camp Taylor.



**Friends of Hogar Rafael: \$500** Friends of the Hogar Rafael Ayau

(FHRA) was organized in 2007 and is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable organization, committed to providing financial support for the children of the Hogar Rafael Ayau and San Miguel del Lago in Guatemala. The FHRA provides financial assistance to help fund adequate shelter, food, educational, work-study, recreational and spiritual opportunities for the children, enabling them to live a full life.

**Gubio Project: \$500** Gubbio provides a sacred space and sanctuary for unhoused people with daily provisions, supplies, and chaplaincy necessary for those living on the streets.



**Philoxenia House of Rochester, MN: \$500** Philoxenia House offers free temporary housing to individuals and families visiting the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and also provides spiritual healing and comfort. The need for additional housing has prompted the campaign for the building of "Philoxenia Village" with the capacity to accommodate up to 20 guests.



**North Marin Community Services: \$10,000** The group provides educational, enrichment, and support services in Novato. Families can utilize its childcare, after-school educational and enrichment programs, and family counseling services. Additionally, low-income adults, parents, immigrants, and seniors can access their emergency food pantry, temporary rental assistance program; job-seeking, financial planning, and immigration services; and one-to-one guidance from their case manager/advocates to help link people to essential community services.



**Homeward Bound: \$1,000** Homeward Bound of Marin is the primary provider of Marin County homeless shelters and services for homeless families and individuals in Marin County, California. Catch up on the latest news and events in its efforts to end homelessness.

**Center for Domestic Peace: \$1,000** Mobilizes individuals and communities to transform our world so domestic violence no longer exists, creating greater safety, justice and equality.



**Ritter Center: \$1,000** Ritter Center helps prevent homelessness and improve the health and well-being of individuals and families living in poverty in Marin County.

# *Nativity Pageant*

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## *Nativity Presentation*

On December 15, the children of our Sunday School reminded us of the peace and love that is given to the world through the Birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We thank Daphne Cummings for once again coordinating this year's Christmas program as well as all the teachers and parents for encouraging the participation of our students. May our Lord's Birth continue to inspire us to live with peace and love.





## *Baptisms*

Oliver Pogni - January 20

Margo "Argiro" Kelley - June 1

Nikolas Johnson - June 29

Genevieve "Helen" D'Onofrio Corcoran - October 26

Isabella "Elizabeth" Elena Domenichelli - December 1

## *Weddings*

Michael Curry & Nicole Vassos - May 12

Kyle Corcoran & Mary D'Onofrio - October 26

Andreas Fourakis & Megan Wright - November 9

## *Funerals*

Beatrice Picras - December 30 (2023)

Alexandra Edrich - January

Antiopi Patrinellis - March 22

Steve Petrakis - April 1

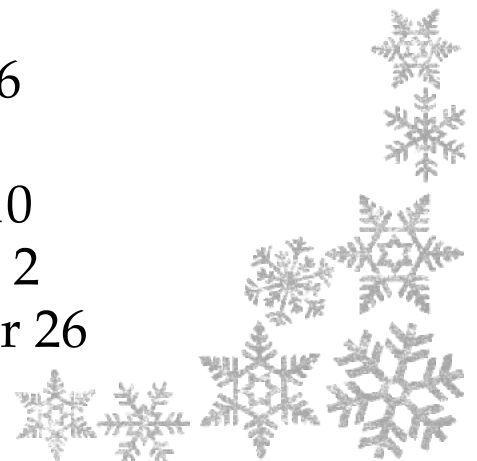
Alex Mantalvanos - April 6

Michael Lagios - April 7

Theodora Petsis - August 10

Anthony Scott - September 2

Evangelia Madias - December 26



# Sunday School

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*"And suddenly, a voice came from heaven, saying 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am very well pleased.'"*  
Matthew 3:17

## Class Meetings Dates

January 5, 12, 19, 26

## A Joyful Christmas Pageant

It was truly wonderful to gather together as a parish to hear and see our children tell the story of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thank you to all the children who participated in the pageant; thank you also to our pageant director, Daphne Cummings for her leadership of this celebration; and to our teachers and parents who took time to help with rehearsal and facilitation of the beautiful Christmas presentation.



## Baptism Hymn

*"All those who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, Alleluia."*

Did you know? We sing this hymn not only at the Sacrament of Baptism, but also on the following feast days: Christmas, Theophany, Lazarus Saturday, Pascha & Pentecost

Wishing you a Blessed New Year!

We look forward to worshipping with you and seeing you in class this month!

## SONs

The SONs gathered in December for a Christmas gift exchange and wonderful fellowship. Join us January 17 at Pod Brew in Novato for our next SONs Night.



# St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

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## St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

Dates for the parish oratorical festival, as well as the Metropolis Oratorical festival are forthcoming. More information on preparing speeches on the topics below is available at <https://www.goarch.org/-/oratorical-25>.

### Senior Division (Grades 10-12)

#### TOPIC 1

His All-Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch, is recognized as the highest Primate in the Church. This title signifies a unique leadership role within the Orthodox Church, where authority and primacy are balanced with equality among Patriarchs. Discuss the practical implications versus the theoretical aspects of His All-Holiness' role in the Orthodox Church. What does it mean for him to be both "first among equals" and "first without equals"?

#### TOPIC 2

The Seven Ecumenical Councils are regarded as seven of the most important parts of Church History, which came after the completion of the Bible. Pick one of the Council's and explain why it is important.

#### TOPIC 3

The Bible is full of figures, both good and bad, who, while not talked about frequently, can be hugely helpful in understanding both salvation history and our place in it. Pick a lesser-known figure from the Bible, explain who they are, how they fit into the Biblical narrative, and what we can learn from them.

#### TOPIC 4

While every church building is different, there are specific guidelines and practices that describe how and why they are built the way they are. Research them, and then explain their theological significance.

#### TOPIC 5

As the world grows increasingly tumultuous and fearful, today's youth appear to be more anxious about the future. Discuss Christ's role as the bringer of hope and how that fits into modern life.

### Junior Division (Grades 7-9)

#### TOPIC 1

Philanthropy is an important part of the Church's mission. It involves more than giving money. Why is it important to support people in different ways besides just donating? In what ways can we offer support, and how can these other forms of help make a difference in the lives of individuals and the community?

#### TOPIC 2

In Psalm 4, we are told to "be angry, but sin not." Why would we be encouraged to be angry? How does anger fit into the life of an Orthodox Christian?

#### TOPIC 3

The Orthodox Church is filled with repetition: we sing "Lord, have mercy" dozens of times every service, we sing the Paschal Troparion all throughout Pascha, and we repeat the same Divine Liturgy every single time. What is the importance of repetition in the Orthodox Church?

#### TOPIC 4

The Russian Orthodox novelist, Fyodor Dostoevsky, once said that "Beauty will save the world." What is the role of beauty in the Church and in the world at large?

#### TOPIC 5

What is the symbolism of the liturgical vestments worn by a deacon, priest, and bishop, and how do these vestments reflect and correlate to their specific roles and responsibilities within the Divine Liturgy?



# December Events

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## GOYA

GOYA had their monthly gathering in December with a tremendously educational discussion about the events surrounding the Nativity of our Lord.



## December Ladies Night

We had a wonderful Ladies Night on December 13. Thank you to Gigi Medan for hosting. Join us January 10 at Bella in Novato for our next Ladies Night.



## Sack Meals

On December 19, we gathered once again to prepare over 150 meals for St. Vincent de Paul for the dining room. Sign up and join us Thursday, January 9 at 9 am at Nativity of Christ for our next Sack Meals prep morning. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508094AAA72FAAFF2-54084235-january>.



# December Happenings

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## Sparkle Event

This year Nativity of Christ again hosted Sparkle for their annual gift giving event. They were able to provide joy for 97 families, which included 274 lives.



## December Sunday Funday

We had a wonderful Sunday Funday on December 1. Join us January 5 for our next Sunday Funday.



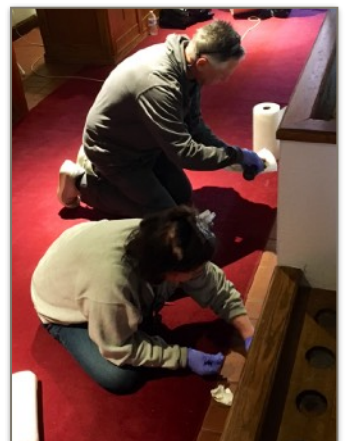
## VIPs

After Divine Liturgy for St. Spyridon, the VIPs gathered for a delicious lenten meal and meaningful fellowship. In anticipation of our Lord's Birth, the group joyfully sang Christmas carols and sang happy birthday to those celebrating their birthday in December: Erene Sotiras and Fr. John! Join the VIPs for the Divine Liturgy on January 7 and fellowship for next month's gathering!



## Sanctuary Clean Up

On Saturday, December 7, a group of parishioners, with tools and elbow grease, set about cleaning the narthex. Thanks to Greeters Bill Adams, Dina Camamis, Rose Hunter, Pat Kamages, Angie Kozas, Michele Manos, Dan and Stacey Weeks for all their efforts. A special thanks to Tina Zachariou for also cleaning the service books in the sanctuary.



# January Events

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**In Our Faith**  
**"ERA"**

**January 5th**

Join Us for Divine Liturgy & Sunday School  
Followed by Vasilpoita Blessing, Friendship Bracelets,  
& Jumpy House in our Fellowship Hall

JOIN US FOR OUR

**VIP LUNCHEON**

TUE **7** JAN

FOLLOWING  
HOLY LITURGY

BELLA BOUTIQUE  
NOVATO

*Jan. 10th*  
FRIDAY 6-9PM

SIP & SHOP  
DRINKS & NIBLES  
10% OFF PURCHASES  
& GIVEAWAYS

**SONS**

FRIDAY JANUARY 17TH, 2025  
6:30 PM

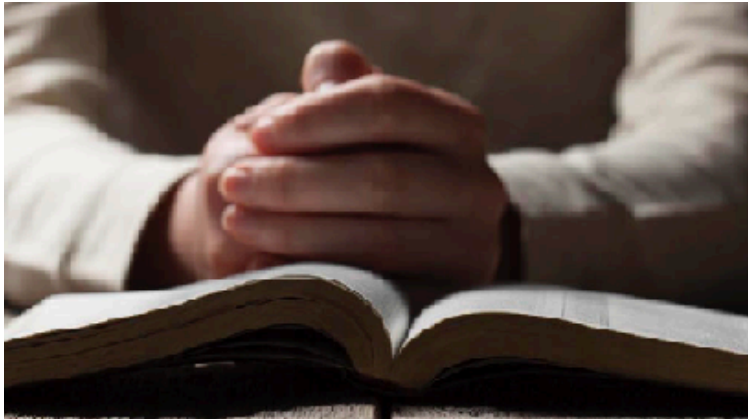
*Barley*

**Kick Off the New Year in Good Company**

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**PODS BREWS**  
Brewery & Taproom  
Novato, CA





# BIBLE STUDY

Tuesdays 9 am on Zoom.

## SACK MEAL PROJECT

FOR THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL'S FREE DINING ROOM

<b>WHEN</b>	<b>WHERE</b>
Thursday January 9th	9-11AM NOC Kitchen
<b>VOLUNTEERS</b>	<b>NEEDED</b>
4 Volunteers for Sandwich Making	4 Volunteers for the Assembly Line
<b>SIGN UP HERE</b>	
<a href="https://tinyurl.com/January024" style="color: white; text-decoration: none;">https://tinyurl.com/January024</a>	
<b>CONTACT</b>	
Elaine Chyrklund at <a href="mailto:elainechyrklund@gmail.com" style="color: white;">elainechyrklund@gmail.com</a> or Mary Kay Stratigos at <a href="mailto:mkstrate@gmail.com" style="color: white;">mkstrate@gmail.com</a>	



Help prepare 150 sack meals for the needy in our community. If you are unable to volunteer, monetary donations are welcome. Cash or check payable to Nativity of Christ Memo: Sack Meal  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508094AAAAA72FAAFF2-54084235-january>

# COMMUNITY CRAB FEED

A BENEFIT FOR  
THE PAN CRETAN CHAPTER OF  
MARIN & SONOMA COUNTIES





& NATIVITY OF CHRIST  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH



SATURDAY,  
FEBRUARY 1ST, 2025

DELICIOUS GREEK APPETIZERS & CRAB BAR INCLUDING GREEK BEER & WINE  
 DRAWING & SILENT AUCTION  
 PERFORMANCE BY NATIVITY OF CHRIST MINOAN DANCERS

# January Name Days

Connect • Engage • Grow

It is the practice of our Church to give the name of a Saint to a newborn child. By assuming the name of a Saint, we honor the Saint, and we also provide the new Christian with an example worthy of emulation. The Saint then becomes the Patron of the child, and we pray that, through the Saint's intercessions, God will guide and protect the child throughout the child's life. Each month, we will be acknowledging in our monthly bulletin those celebrating their name day.

If by chance we accidentally missed someone's name day, we ask that you please contact the Church Office so that we may correct our records. We extend our prayers to all those celebrating their name day this month and beseech our heavenly Father to grant them many years!



## **Jan. 1: St. Basil**

Bill Adams  
Bill Capetanos  
Vickie Diamond  
Vasiliki Eftimiou  
Vasilis Fourakis  
Vickie Hatos  
Vasiliki Lourdis  
Bessie Mitskaris  
Bill Powers  
Betty Saris  
Vasilios Soldatos  
Vicki Trapalis  
Vasiliki Tzafopoulos  
Betty Zootis

## **Jan. 6: Theophany**

Fran Corcoran  
Frank Hontalas

## **Jan. 7: St. John the Baptist**

Joanne Argyres  
Ioannis Barmperis  
John Canellos  
John Capetanos  
Yianni Capetanos  
Joanna Castro  
John Cavender  
Bruce Corcoran  
Jeanette Eftimiou  
John Ferber  
John Fradelizio  
John Hamill  
John Hunter

Jon Kakleas  
JoAnne Kambur  
John Kocolas  
John Kosturos  
John Kratsas  
John Malatras  
John Papadopoulos  
Joan Patropulos  
Joanna Rizzuti  
John Rouman  
Joanna Ruffcorn  
Yianni Simos  
Johanna Squires  
John Stockton  
Joanna Tangalakis  
John Triantafyllos  
Yiannis Valakitsis  
Yiannoula Vlachos  
John Vrattos  
Wyatt Jon Webber

## **Jan. 15: St. Paul**

Alexandros El-Far

## **Jan. 17: St. Anthony**

Tonia Birmpakou  
Anthony Chrisanthis  
Antonios Darakis  
Antonios El-Far  
Raisa Gagas  
Antoinette Griffin  
Anthonia Kosmas  
Anthony Kosmas  
Antonia Lendaris

Anthony Mancini  
Santino Mancini  
Antonette Markatos  
Antoni Mavrantonis  
Antonio Rishwain  
Mario Saldana  
Anthony Saris  
Antonia Touras  
Antonios Touras

## **Jan. 18: Sts. Athanasios & Cyril**

Dawne Cerecedes  
Broderick Athanasios Chester  
Athan Kozas  
Tom Kozas  
Thanos Livadas  
Athanasios Papageorge  
Soula Papanikolaou

## **Jan. 22: St. Timothy**

Timothy Chyrklund  
Tim Farmer

## **Jan. 23: St. Dionysius**

Diane Flohr

## **Jan. 24: St. Xenia**

Xenia Botaitis  
Xenia Kuvelis

## **Jan. 25: St. Gregory**

Grigorios Antonellis  
Greggory Keller  
Gregory Siefkas

## **Jan. 28: St. James**

Dimitri Brzycki

# 2025 Stewardship Pledges (as of December 27, 2024)

Connect • Engage • Grow

Presiding Priest  
Fr. John & Pres. Stephanie  
Kocolas

Priest Emeritus  
Fr. Constantine Efstathiou

Pres. Evelyn Adams

Adams, Bill & Lisa

Albanes, Joseph

Arango, Pat

Argyres, Andreas & JoAnne

Bechaka, Sonia

Botaitis, Demetri

Burrows, Bil & Floretta

Castro, Jeff & Joanna

Capetanos, Bill & Chrisoula

Chyrklund, Chris & Elaine

Constantin, Gus & Mary Jane

Corcoran, Bruce & Fran

Cummings, Nathan & Daphne

Curelaru, Viorica

Daifotis, Kimon & Cindy

Efstathiou, Paul & Kristen

Farmer, Tim & Eleni

Flohr, Dave & Diane

Fotinos, Vivian

Fourakis, Vasilis & Effie

Fradelizio, John & Georgia

Gagas, Charles & Claire

George, Ann

Geron, Diana

Gikkas, Pete & Vickie Hatos

Haginicols, Amalia

Hamill, John & Athanasia

Harvey, Robert & Elaine

Hontalas, Frank & Eve

Hunter, John & Rose

Jianas, Alex & Diana

Kalabokes, Chris

Kalabokes, Matthew & Elina

Kanas, Nick &Carolynn

Keller, Ed & Karen

Kelley, Stephen & Eleni

Klobuchar, Alec & Maria Pavolou

Kokalis, George & Debbie

Kokalis, Nick & Lena

Kozas, Nonda & Nicole

Kozas, Tom & Angie

Kuvelis, Dean & Denise

Kuvelis, Xenia

Lagios, Shiela

Livadas, Carl & Stacy Drakousis

Livanos, Nick & Patti

Madias, Constantine & Marti

Madias, Theodore

Malatras, John & Olivia Teter

Mandanis, Marjorie

Manesis, Alexandria

Manos, Michele

Marshall, Philip & Kathy

Mavromihalis, Steve & Vickie

Medan, Dushan & Gigi

Meehan, Tom & Irene

Misthos, Eileen

Morales, Marlon & Andrea

O'Connor, Wayne & Betty Zootis

Panagotacos, James & Diane

Papanikolaou, Marina

Passaris, Teodoro & Eleni

Perivolaris, Nick

Perivolaris, Sara

Petracopoulos, George & Gina

Petracopoulos, Thelma

Pineda, Andy & Matina Seremetis

Roland, George & Doris

Rouman, Steve & Liz

Ruffcorn, Oren & Joanna

Sandoval, Irene

Scanagatta, Roman & Eleni

Selmi, Cathy

Selmi, Helen

Sideris, Stassie

Siefkas, Chris & Susan

Silverberg, Jonathan & Cristina

Sotiras, Erene

Sotiras, Maria

Stathis, Pete & Dina

Stathis, Sophia

Stenros, Skip & Stella

Stratigos, Nikolas

Stratigos, Sophia

Stratigos, Spiro & Mary Kay

Tacticos, George

Touras, Antonios & Antonia

Triantafyllos, John & Laura

Tzafopoulos, Vasiliki

Vallas, James & Judy

Vasileios, Vasilaros

Vasilopoulos, Nick & Eileen

Gordon

Vlachos, Spiro & Argyro

Walters, Amalia

Walters, Scott & Karen

Weeks, Dan & Stacey

Yakumithis, Michael & Marika

Zaccardelli, Dennis & Kathryn

Zachariou, Michael &

Constantina

Zahariudakis, Dimitrios &

Charoula

# January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Divine Services - 8:30 am <i>St. Basil</i> Office Closed	2	3	4
<b>5</b> <b>Sunday before Theophany</b> Orthros 8:30 am Liturgy 9:30 am <i>Sunday School</i> <i>Blessing of the Waters</i> <i>Vasilopita Brunch</i> <i>Sunday Funday</i> Minoans Dance Practice	<b>6</b> <b>Divine Services- 8:30 am</b> Holy Theophany	<b>7</b> <b>Divine Services - 8:30 am</b> St. John the Baptist VIPs Luncheon Philoptochos General Meeting 7 pm	<b>8</b> Minoans Dance Practices <i>Fast Day</i>	<b>9</b> Sack Meals 9 am	<b>10</b> Ladies 6:00 pm at Bella <i>Fast Day</i>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> <b>Sunday after Theophany</b> Orthros 8:30 am Liturgy 9:30 am <i>Sunday School</i> Minoans Dance Practice	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Bible Study 9 am Parish Council 7 pm	<b>15</b> Minoans Dance Practices <i>Fast Day</i>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <b>Divine Services- 8:30 am</b> St. Anthony Men's 6:30 pm at Pods Brews <i>Fast Day</i>	<b>18</b> <b>Divine Services- 8:30 am</b> Sts. Athanasios and Cyril
<b>19</b> <b>12<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke</b> Orthros 8:30 am Liturgy 9:30 am <i>Sunday School</i> Minoans Dance Practice	<b>20</b> Martin Luther King Day <i>Office Closed</i>	<b>21</b> Bible Study 9 am	<b>22</b> Minoans Dance Practices <i>Fast Day</i>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <i>Fast Day</i>	<b>25</b> <b>Divine Services- 8:30 am</b> St. Gregory the Theologian
<b>26</b> <b>15<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke</b> Orthros 8:30 am Liturgy 9:30 am Philoptochos Membership Sunday <i>Sunday School</i> Minoans Dance Practice	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Bible Study 9 am Mailing Team 10 am	<b>29</b> Minoans Dance Practices <i>Fast Day</i>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Jonathan's Place Dinner <i>Fast Day</i>	<b>Feb 1</b> Community Crab Feed



Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Church  
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www.nativityofchrist.org

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**& NATIVITY OF CHRIST  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

**20th ANNIVERSARY**

**SATURDAY,  
FEBRUARY 1ST, 2025**

DELICIOUS GREEK APPETIZERS & CRAB  
BAR INCLUDING GREEK BEER & WINE  
DRAWING & SILENT AUCTION  
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