

# ASCENSION BULLETIN

GREEK ORTHODOX  
CATHEDRAL  
OF THE  
ASCENSION

4700 LINCOLN AVENUE  
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94602  
(510) 531-3400  
www.ascensioncathedral.org  
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## Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace goodwill toward men! (Luke 2:14)



This well known announcement was delivered to the humble shepherds as they watched their flocks at night in the foothills near Bethlehem. We can only imagine the thoughts that were going through their minds. Imagine, an angelic host—not

just one, but a choir of angels—announcing and singing to the shepherds that the Savior had been born! A message was given to these men, but they are told something more than Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The angles reveal the impact of that birth. The angels glorify God for this great and awesome event—God has become man. The result of God becoming man is “peace on earth and goodwill toward men”. His presence is peace! But, unfortunately, we forget about Him, that He is here with us.

Peace is something we all want but seems very illusive. We just have to look around us. There are wars and conflicts and problems all over the globe. The economic issues of today make people uneasy and worried. How can people have peace when food and gas prices increase; or when they lose their jobs as they watch our economy become weaker and weaker? St. Jerome comments: “On earth where every day is warfare”, and each day a

struggle. Why would a saint say this? Because he knew the difficulties of life. He knew our human nature, that we are shaken by the problems of life. St. Cyril of Alexandria adds that our struggle is even deeper than human problems; he says we are at war with God! Why, what would cause us to be at war with God? Because we do not know Him. Without a relationship with God we cannot know that He is indeed present with us. We war—we have no peace—because we have no hope. Before He came into the world we did not and could not know Him. We were at war with Him without knowing it. Ignorance of God led to hostility. Ignorance is not bliss but places us in a condition where we are in a constant state of being uneasy and unsure. In this state we struggle with all things including God. We want things on our terms and based on our understanding of the world around us. But we do not have all the answers, Christ does!

The coming of Christ into the world offers us the hope of peace on earth and goodwill toward all men. The birth of Christ sets in motion the process of salvation and reconciliation that ends our battle against God. We are made new in Christ. In this newness and in His presence we have peace. Because He has become like us, and He is one of us, and He understands us; He brings us peace. This is a

wonderful and awesome thing. Christ is our link to God. If we are willing to accept Him as Lord and God we will be at peace with Him. Christ comes into the world to establish His way and His truth. It is with His birth, His entrance into the world that the angels proclaim “peace on earth, goodwill toward all men”. Christ is born and what seems impossible is possible! Peace and goodwill become real and possible in Christ. But we must be willing to hear the message and respond to it. The shepherds could have ignored the message. However, they went to the Manger and saw the newborn Savior (see Luke 2:17).

If we accept “the truth” and “the way” that is Christ then we can see the beauty and glory and holiness of Him and all He created. Knowing this we have peace and assurance of who God is, and that He is with us always. This in turns allows us to offer goodwill towards others; we share His love and peace. As we celebrate the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us strive for more than just the typical Christmas. Allow yourself to know Him. Seek Him daily, in your prayers and in your reading of the Scriptures. Ask for His mercy and grace. Receive Him in the Eucharist. Be transformed by Him and His birth. May the hymn of the angels become your gift from Him: *Peace on earth and goodwill toward all!*

### The Services for the Nativity of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ (aka Christmas):

*The services for our Lord's Nativity will be as follows for this year.*

- Christmas Eve morning; the Royal Hours at 10 AM.
- Christmas Eve at 6 PM will celebrate the Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil the Great. Vespers Liturgies are offered for Pascha, Epiphany and Christmas. As the name implies, a Vespers Liturgy begins with vespers and then merges into the Divine Liturgy. Booklets will be available to follow the service but here is a brief outline: After the priest begins the service, the evening psalm (Psalm 103) is read; and petitions are intoned. Then the chanting of Psalm 140;

“Lord I have cried to You” and special hymns (called stichera) that reflect upon our Lord's birth. A procession with the Gospel follows with the chanting of the ancient hymn “O joyful light”. Next are Old Testament readings and prophecies. After the last reading from the Old Testament the Trisagion will be chanted by the Choir and we enter into the Divine Liturgy. If you are planning to receive Holy Communion on Christmas Eve and you are physically able, fast from after lunch.

- Christmas Day; Matins at 8:30 AM and the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom at 9:30 AM.
- Please note that during the time of Advent we try to follow the Nativity Fast if we are able. Not as strict as Great Lent until the 11th of

December. We fast to the best of our ability to recognize and honor the birth of our Lord.

#### *Additional Divine Services:*

The healing Mystery (Sacrament) of Holy Unction will be offered on Wednesday evening December 16th at 6:30 PM. This service is offered for the spiritual, physical and emotional healing and well-being. As it is a sacrament of the Church it is offered only to Orthodox Christians. Any questions please contact Fr. Tom or Fr. Michael.

Epiphany services are listed in the January calendar; as with Christmas, there will be a Vespers Liturgy on Tuesday evening (1/5) followed by the first blessing of the waters. Wednesday morning Divine Liturgy will be at 9:30 AM followed by the second Blessing of the Waters.



## Memorials

### CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

In Honor Of Peter Haikalis-Birthday Gift

- Henry & Angeline Mena
- + Aglaia Pappas  
Alexandra Vlahos
- + Andreas Tofini  
Mr. & Mrs. Argereos Giannikos
- + Andrew Tofini  
George & Jennifer Kontaxis; Savvas & Nancy Pantazis; Katerina Pantazis; Andy & Voula Pappas; Vijay & Mina Patel; Maria & Kyriakos Pantaris; Panayioti, Elli, Artemis, Christine & Sophie Tofini; Andreas & Maria Xiari; George Tofini;
- + Bill Dritsas  
Helen Koutsoukis
- + Evangelos Constantouros  
Alexandra Vlahos
- + Fani Kyriacou  
Maria Gerontides
- + Father Katinas  
Maria Gerontides
- + George Calimeris  
Alexandra Vlahos
- + Irene Maroulas  
Alexandra Vlahos
- + John Andronico  
Alexandra Vlahos
- + John Strouzas  
Alexandra Vlahos
- + Judith Howes  
Malena Adzich; John & Gracie DeZago; Demos & Evelyn Karas; Irene Mullin; Pan Arcadians; Cheryl Vawter; James & Argie Vlamis;
- + K Sullivan  
Clare & Alyce Karahalios
- + Katherine Koutoufas  
Maria Gerontides; Alexandra Vlahos
- + Mary Cardiasmenos  
Joanne & Gary Baca & Rich Calcagno; Clare & Alyce Karahalios
- + Mike Placorakis  
Cheryl Vawter; Alexandra Vlahos
- + Mother of Vicky Yancey  
Cheryl Vawter
- + Nickolas Jame Kouretas  
Alexandra Vlahos
- + Pamela McKean  
Clare & Alyce Karahalios; John & Eva Barakos; Mr. & Mrs. Jim Dakos & Sonia Dakos; Mary Johannes; Tula Marinakis & Family; Alice Sarafian & Family
- + Peter Diamont  
Alexandra Vlahos
- + Sam Pulos  
Andrew, Nancy & Mary Acuros; Joan & Skinner Anderson; Bessie Anton; Bruce Arasato; John & Eva Barakos; Bettye Jo, Brian & Ed Burnette; Ted & Georgia Chanos; Linda Everson-Sharp; Caliroy Hadjopoulos & Georgia Vournas; Edward & Bessie Margherio; The Owoc & Matsui Family; Katherine Mitzel; Virginia Ostrander; Kathryn Ostrander; John Papadakis; Jennie Portolos; Harry & Wendy Portolos; Sophie Portolos; George Psihos; Byron & Stephanie Scordelis; Patricia Shaterian; Gust & Marian Zagorites;
- + Stella Kouretas  
Alexandra Vlahos
- + Ted Diamond  
Alexandra Vlahos

- + Thalia Johns  
Maria Gerontides
- + Valsa Hadjopoulos  
Alexandra Vlahos

### MEMORIALS TO ASCENSION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

- +Mary Cardiasmenos
- +Katherine Walner
- +Judith Howes  
Mary & Andrew Mousalimous

### PHILOTOCHOS MEMORIALS

- +Sam Pulos  
Tom D.S. Young
- +Pamela McKean  
Don & Adrienne Mannis
- +Bill Menicou  
Philipp & Margaret Philipps

### FUNERALS

- 10/8/09 – Mary Cardiasmenos
  - 10/19/09 – Pamela Mary Mc Kean
  - 10/27/09 – Judith Lynn Howes \*
- May their memory be eternal!*



## Baptisms and Chrismations

### CHRISMATION

- 9/21/09 – Kimberly Lynn Papageorge  
Sponsor: Vickie Mavromihalis

### BAPTISM

- 10/10/09 – Jaylin Demetria Leon  
Godparents: Elaine Leon



## Weddings

- 10/3 James Simos II & Anna Maria Victor
- 10/11 Gregory James Simvoulakis & Valerie Elayne Kuchulis
- 10/18 Avraam Mike Giapitsoglou & Colleen Maureen Amick
- 10/24 Paul Fakaros & Anna Kagarakis

## PRAYERS

**Prayers for health and well being are requested for:** Niko Yfantis, Eleni Christon, Peter Panos, John Pulos, Stan Gaitanis, Jim Scurries, Stella Pappaloulamenos, Maria Sakkis and Cheryl Vawter

### President Obama Receives Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in the Oval Office

His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was received today at the White House in the Oval Office by President Barack Obama. This reciprocal visit to the one paid by President Obama earlier this year (April 7, when he made his first overseas visit to a Muslim country, Turkey) followed up on their conversations at that time on the subjects of the recently concluded environmental symposium on the Mississippi River and the re-opening of the Theological School of Halki.

“The President with his kindness and openness received me and my delegation with love and honor,” said His All Holiness to the Press as he was exiting the White House.

For the full story, please visit the archdiocese website at [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org)

## A Message from George Polyzos – Parish Council President

Fellow Co-workers In Christ,

As we approach the end of 2009, the Parish Council is asking for your support. Our biggest revenue stream comes from Stewardship. The problem we are facing is that Stewardship has decreased over the past few years.

We have two months left in 2009 to improve our Stewardship numbers. The Parish Council is not giving up and looking to next year. The time is now. With your assistance and donations we will turn these numbers around. Please understand that we have a large facility to maintain. There is light at the end of the tunnel.

Take a moment to reflect about what the Church means to you and your family. The Church will always be there for you, no matter what. When everything else fails, you can count on God's Home. Our community consists of approximately 1000 families. When one of us passes on or is sick, the pain is felt throughout the community. When there are happy times in one's family, the whole community rejoices. We are a big family at the Ascension Cathedral, and we need to take care of our home-Christ's Home.

There are many ways you can help. First and foremost, I am hopeful that everyone can increase their Stewardship for this year and continue to give next year. By now, you should have received your Pledge Cards for 2010. Please fill out the card and mail it back to the Church or bring it to us on Sunday. These Pledge cards help us to project Stewardship Revenue for the upcoming year. The easy part is completing the Pledge Card. I can only Pray that fulfilling the Pledge is just as easy.

Please do what you can to help the Church. Without Parishioners, we would not be a Parish. If there was no Church, then we would not be a family. Let us all come together and raise the Church to a level which it belongs.

Yours In Christ,  
George Polyzos  
Parish Council President

### Greek School Community Outreach this Holiday Season:

Christmas caroling the old fashion Greek way -- at your home! If you or someone you know in our parish will be homebound this holiday season and would like some of the students of the Greek school to come to your home one Saturday morning in December to sing traditional Greek carols, please email Eleni Bouras of the parent auxiliary board at: [eleni.bouras@yahoo.com](mailto:eleni.bouras@yahoo.com).  
**Merry Christmas!**



## From The Desk of Sunday School Director Renee Taylor

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.



For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations - Psalm 100:4-5. As Thanksgiving approaches, Sunday School enters the season of giving with several programs designed to help those less fortunate in the community.

### Did You Know?

According to a ten-year study conducted by the Gallup Poll in 2008, Americans spend \$768 on Christmas gifts each year – and that doesn't include the cost of Christmas dinner, cards, postage, photos, or holiday attire. This is not the spirit Christ was speaking of when he taught us to give to others.

In Matthew 25:35-40 our Lord tells us, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

We sometimes forget that there is a difference between a want and a need. While we all may want for nothing, others may need for something very important and it is in this spirit of giving that we share Christ's blessings with others. Here are several ways you can give this Christmas season:

- o Donate a grocery bag of canned and non-perishable food during our Holiday Food Drive. The Alameda County Community Food Bank has demand for 750,000 pounds of food for families in need. Grocery sacks and collection bins are located in the church narthex and the community center foyer.

- o Give generously to our Adopt-a-Family community service project. Sunday School students will pass a special tray on December 6 and 13 to collect donations for families in need within the Ascension community.

- o Contribute local retail store gift cards. Father Tom will distribute to families in need within the Ascension community. Mail or drop off gift cards in the church office.

- o Raise your voice in praise on December 20 as we present our annual Christmas play, "Live from Bethlehem" and bring joy to those with sorrowful hearts.

## COME JOIN US IN "AN AROUND THE WORLD COUNTDOWN TO 2010"

*The Biggest Celebration  
on the West Coast*

*Dinner and Dancing  
with DJ Stav and DJ Tasso*

December 31st, 2009 @  
The Ascension Cathedral  
4700 Lincoln Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94621

*General Admission  
(entry to venue @ 10pm)  
\$50 Before December 20th  
\$65 After December 20th*

*General Admission Dinner  
\$90-Adult Before December 1st  
(includes 1 free cocktail ticket)  
\$50-Child Before December 1st*

*\$110-Adult After December 20th  
\$60-Child After December 20th*

*\$125-Adult After December 20th  
\$75-Child After December 20th*

*Cocktail Reception 7:30pm  
Gourmet 4-Course Filet Mignon Dinner  
8:30pm  
3 Premium bars-Outdoor Smoking  
Patio-Lounge Area  
Complimentary Parking  
Visa, MC and Amex Accepted All Night*

For more information go to  
[www.greeknye2010.com](http://www.greeknye2010.com)  
For reservations please call Thalia  
Angelides (925) 376-3849



PLEASE NOTE: Mr. Christos Papoutsy has canceled both his December presentations of his book, "Ships of Mercy, The true story of the rescue of the Greeks from Smyrna, September, 1922" due to the illness of both his parents.



## Sacrificial Giving and Building the Church

Dear Brothers and Sisters In Christ,

I have a vision of Ascension in which Sunday morning Liturgy is so crowded that it's hard to find a seat and we need more clergy and more Liturgies just to handle the crowds. We need the Church in our lives, and so many more people need the Church who are not yet receiving it. I know for sure that most of the problems in the world would disappear if everybody came to Church on Sunday morning. But the reason we come to Church is not to solve the world's problems, but to receive Our Lord Jesus Christ into our hearts and lives. Let's cooperate with Him in building His Church, knowing that He will give us the gift of peace, love and joy when we permit Him to live in our hearts and guide our lives.

There have been times in my life when I wanted to do good and help make the world a better place, but the task seemed too daunting and the world too dark, and I didn't know where to begin. Sometimes I have felt trapped by my limited time and resources, and though I wanted to do more to help, I felt I just couldn't. But now I know where I need to begin, and I know I have all the resources I need to do the very best I possibly can, which is all that matters. I need to begin with myself. I need to reach out to God and ask him to cleanse me and heal me, and to come and dwell within me and guide my life. I need to listen to Him and do His will.

Putting God first in our lives is a crucial step in getting to know Him. We cannot know God and put Him in second place. With every moment in our lives we should be asking ourselves what God wants us to do. There are many things that God wants us to do, but they are all derived from two basic commandments: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength", and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself". We should strive to express this kind of love through everything we do.

One simple, practical way to express our love is through giving. Giving is a way of clearly stating that we care. When we begin to give, we show that we have love within us. When we begin to make sacrifices and give up things so that we can give more, we make a clear statement of our priorities - that our love for others is stronger than our love for the things we are giving up. This is why sacrificial giving is important - it helps cure us of the illnesses in our own hearts that cause us to love worldly things more than God. Through sacrificial giving we not only help to bring healing to others, but we also bring healing to ourselves.

Sacrificial giving is, well, "sacrificial". It's not easy when our hearts are still tied up with the things of this world. Even if our hearts are

# The Nativity Sermon

by Saint John Chrysostom

"I behold a new and wondrous mystery!  
My ears resound to the shepherd's song,  
piping no soft melody, but loudly chanting a  
heavenly hymn!

The angels sing!  
The archangels blend their voices in  
harmony!

The cherubim resound their joyful praise!  
The Seraphim exalt His glory!

All join to praise this holy feast, beholding  
the Godhead herein... on earth and man in  
heaven. He who is above now, for our salva-  
tion, dwells here below; and we, who were  
lowly, are exalted by divine mercy!

Today Bethlehem resembles heaven, hearing  
from the stars the singing of angelic voices and,  
in place of the sun, witnessing the rising of the  
Sun of Justice!

Ask not how this is accomplished, for where  
God wills, the order of nature is overturned.  
For He willed He had the powers He descend-  
ed. He saved. All things move in obedience to  
God.

Today He Who Is, is born! And He Who Is  
becomes what He was not! For when He was  
God, He became man-while not relinquishing  
the Godhead that is His...

And so the kings have come, and they have  
seen the heavenly King that has come upon  
the earth, not bringing with Him angels, nor  
archangels, nor thrones, nor dominions, nor  
powers, nor principalities, but, treading a new  
and solitary path, He has come forth from a  
spotless womb.

Yet He has not forsaken His angels, nor left  
them deprived of His care, nor because of His  
incarnation has He ceased being God. And  
behold kings have come, that they might serve  
the Leader of the Hosts of Heaven; Women,

that they might adore Him Who was born of a  
woman so that He might change the pains of  
childbirth into joy; Virgins, to the Son of the  
Virgin...

Infants, that they may adore Him who  
became a little child, so that out of the mouths  
of infants He might perfect praise;

Children, to the Child who raised up  
martyrs through the rage of Herod; Men, to  
Him who became man that He might heal the  
miseries of His servants;

Shepherds, to the Good Shepherd who was  
laid down His life for His sheep;

Priests, to Him who has become a High  
Priest according to the order of Melchizedek;

Servants, to Him who took upon Himself  
the form of a servant, that He might bless  
our stewardship with the reward of freedom  
(Philippians 2:7);

Fishermen, to the Fisher of humanity;

Publicans, to Him who from among them  
named a chosen evangelist;

Sinful women, to Him who exposed His feet  
to the tears of the repentant woman;

And that I may embrace them all together,  
all sinners have come, that they may look upon  
the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of  
the world!

Since, therefore, all rejoice, I too desire to  
rejoice! I too wish to share the choral dance, to  
celebrate the festival! But I take my part, not  
plucking the harp nor with the music of the  
pipes nor holding a torch, but holding in my  
arms the cradle of Christ!

For this is all my hope!

This is my life!

This is my salvation!

This is my pipe, my harp!

And bearing it I come, and having from its  
power received the gift of speech, I too, with  
the angels and shepherds, sing:

"Glory to God in the Highest! and on earth  
peace to men of good will!"

Choir is off and running or make that singing!  
Over a dozen young members of the parish  
have stepped forward to become part of an  
elite music group that will offer expanded life  
to the Parish worship as this next generation  
embraces our rich Orthodox musical tradition.  
The choir meets every Sunday at 12:30 p.m.  
for 45 minutes in the Educational Building,  
room 209. Auditions are still being accepted by  
appointment. For more information and audi-  
tions, contact Ascension Choir Director Yiorgos  
Vassilandonakis at [yiorgos@earthlink.net](mailto:yiorgos@earthlink.net).

## Name the Youth Choir Contest

Heavenly Voices...Celestial Singers...we need  
an inspirational name for the Youth Choir!  
Submit your favorite names to Ascension Choir  
Director Yiorgos Vassilandonakis at [yiorgos@earthlink.net](mailto:yiorgos@earthlink.net), or Sunday School Director  
Renee Taylor at [gr8\\_greek\\_girl@yahoo.com](mailto:gr8_greek_girl@yahoo.com) by  
December 20 and you could win a prize! One  
lucky winner will receive an Orthodox Study  
Bible.

## Mental Health Discussion: LIVING PEACEFULLY WITH MANIA

Monday, November 30th,  
7 pm, Richmond Room



Venetia Phillips and Dina  
Platias, two former Ascension parishioners liv-  
ing lives that shatter misconceptions of mania,  
return to share their 40 years of collective expe-  
rience with Bipolar Disorder. Bipolar Disorder,  
also known as Manic-Depressive Disorder, is a  
brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in a  
person's mood, energy, and ability to function.  
It is a mood disorder that affects literally mil-  
lions of people worldwide.

The Ascension Cathedral's Mental Health Com-  
mittee invites the greater San Francisco/Bay  
Area community to attend this discussion at  
7:00 p.m. in the Richmond Room at Ascension  
Cathedral, 4700 Lincoln Avenue in Oakland. A  
panel discussion as well as a question/answer  
session will follow. Refreshments will be served.

Ascension's Mental Health Support Group  
meets the second Monday of each month. For  
more information, call the church office at 510-  
531-3400 or email [Presvytera Elizabeth Tervo at estervo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Presvytera Elizabeth Tervo at estervo@sbcglobal.net).

Dates for Mental Health Meetings:

Monday Nov 30 Large Group Lecture

Monday December 14 Mental Health Small  
support group 7 pm

Monday January 11 Mental Health Small sup-  
port group 7 pm

## Christmas Concert



The annual Ascension Christmas  
concert, An International Christmas, will be  
held on Friday, December 11th at 8:00 p.m.,  
however, the doors open at 7:30 p.m. to the  
sounds of the Bellringers of the Golden Gate  
Boys Choir for early arrival. We are delighted  
to welcome the Young People's Symphony Or-  
chestra (YPSO) to the 2009 Christmas concert.  
YPSO is California's oldest youth orchestra and  
the second oldest in the USA. In the last few  
years the orchestra has traveled to Australia and  
China to perform. We're looking forward to  
hearing the sound of these young musicians in  
our cathedral. YPSO will join the Prometheus  
Symphony Orchestra along with guest soloists,  
soprano Susan Gundunas and bass Stephen  
Saxon, who share their talents with us once  
again. There is no admission for the concert,  
which includes a sing-a-long and celebrates its  
40th anniversary. Refreshments will follow in  
the Paris Community Center.

Mario DiGiovanni

## Choir Corner



### We haven't lost an Alto – we've gained a Bass!

Choir alto, Valerie Kuchulis was sung out in  
grand style by combined choir members of As-  
cension, Modesto, Sacramento (Annunciation)  
and San Francisco when she wed Modesto  
native Greg Simvoulakis on October 11th. We  
feared we'd be losing an alto to newlywed bliss  
but true to her word, we have gained another  
member. Greg will be singing with the choir in  
the bass section. Although he announced his  
concern that he hadn't sung much for over 20  
years he was assured that "we're still using the  
same notes." Congratulations to Valerie and  
Greg and "Welcome" Greg to our ranks.

## Youth Choir

Thanks to a terrific response, Ascension's Youth



# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN ENTERS FINAL STRETCH ONE FIFTH OF OUR GOAL REMAINS

FIRST GOAL OF 5 MILLION – REACHED IN 2006

SECOND GOAL OF 5 MILLION- REACHED IN 2008

THIRD GOAL OF 2.5 MILLION - 790,000 RECEIVED AS OF  
OCTOBER, 2009

BALANCE IS 1.7 MILLION

It is truly amazing that in a few short years, with God's blessings and the generosity of many, that we have reached the 10.8 million mark. As we approach the year's end we are renewed in our dedication and zeal to complete our task. Parishioners and friends continue to step forward with their gifts. In addition, after having completed their pledges, seventy individuals /couples have already renewed. These acts of generosity and love exemplify that "Spiritual Giving" is alive and well in our parish.

In the last bulletin we provided a detailed explanation as to the status of the Capital Campaign and rendering of the WALL OF GRATITUDE that will honor the donors who fulfilled their pledge.

*The Following are the categories the number of pledges received:*

<b>Founder's Gifts</b>	<b>Received</b>
\$1,000,000	3

<b>Leadership Gifts</b>	<b>Received</b>
Level 7 \$700,000	1
Level 5 \$300,000	2
Level 4 \$200,000	3
Level 3 \$150,000	1
Level 2 \$125,000	4
Level 1 \$100,000	8

<b>Lead Gifts</b>	<b>Received</b>
Level 9 \$90,000	1
Level 7 \$70,000	1
Level 6 \$60,000	3

<b>Special Gifts</b>	<b>Received</b>
Level 5 \$50,000	9
Level 4 \$40,000	2
Level 3 \$30,000	12

<b>Major Gifts</b>	<b>Received</b>
Level 2 \$20,000	29
Level 1 10,000	94

*\* Please note that gifts often exceed the base level*

## BEQUESTS: Wills, Living Trusts, Charitable Trusts and Life Insurance

Remembering and providing for Christ's Church even after one passes away is an amazing act of faith. We encourage that these bequests be designated to the Capital Campaign Fund /Maintenance Reserve Fund. We are grateful for the ones we have received to date. We hope and pray that this list will grow exponentially! Many other religions have made

this a mainstay in their ministry.

While these gifts are in the future they will provide for the well being of the Ascension Cathedral. We want to thank those who have already acted in providing for the church in their estate planning.

### Living and Charitable Remaining Trusts:

Dr. John & Eva Barakos	\$ 50,000
Paul & Elene Manolis	\$ 50,000
John & Clara Meniktas	\$ 25,000
Rev. Fr. Tom & Pres. Vaso Paris	\$ 80,000
Demetrios & Charla Theodoropoulos	\$ 50,000
James & Argie Vlamis	\$ 50,000
Constance Joy Paris	5% Of Living Trust

### Life Insurance Policies: Designated or Recently Modified for Ascension Cathedral Capital Campaign/Maintenance Reserve Fund.

Jason Hill	\$50,000
Sally Hill	\$25,000
John Henderson	\$2,500

### New Pledges:

David and Nancy Georgiou Chilimidis	\$10,000
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### Recent Renewals:

\$10,000 George and Marcia Argyris total gift is now \$20,000
\$10,000 Dean and Dena Valavanis total gift is now \$20,000
\$ 1,000 Dennis and Evie Karas total gift is now \$6,000

For information regarding the Capital Campaign do not hesitate to call any of our committee:

Apostolopoulos, Chris	925-838-6344
Christopoulos, Dan	510-653-4478
Contreras, Cesar	925-937-1527
Gialis, Michael	510-339-7481
Haikalis, Peter	925-705-7520
Haikalis, Susan	925-705-7520
Karas, Demos	510- 410-0155
Kassouf, Carol	510-581-2707
Kolokotronis, Jim	415-755-6141
Konstantopoulos, George	510-428-0204
Katopodis, Jerry	925-938-7696
Lambert, Blair	707-480-3468
Magganas, Athan	510-525-6776
Meniktas, Dean	925-376-9719
Paris, Fr. Tom	510-531-9002
Scott, Rev. Anthony L.	212-316-3525
Theodoropoulos, Demetrios	925-258-5433
Triggas, Costa	925-631-0377
Vawter, Mike	925-743-1986
Vlamis, James	925-846-3549
Woods, Maria	925-256-7391
Zaferes, Fr. Tom	510-531-3400
Zafiratos, Manny	510-317-6915

On behalf of the Capital Campaign Committee, we want to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and a Glorious Christmas.  
Jim Vlamis



THE LORD'S DAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>**Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) @ Patriarch Athenagos Orthodox Institute, 2311 Hearst Ave., Berkeley</p> <p>* Orthros begins one hour before Liturgies</p>		<b>DECEMBER 1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
		Clergy Retreat 12/1-12/3 7:00 pm Parish Council OCF @PAOI	10:30 am Historical Society Workshop 1 – 3pm Moms & Tots 4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids <b>NO Paraklisis or Bible Study</b>	9 am Senior Adult Center	9:30am Divine Liturgy; <b>St. Barbara</b> 6pm-7:30 JOY/HOPE Family Game Night	
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
10 am Divine Liturgy; <b>St Nicholas Greek School Christmas Program Stewardship Cards Returned</b>	4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids 6:30pm – 8:30 Greek School for Adults	OCF @ PAOI	10:30 am Historical Society Workshop 1 – 3pm Moms & Tots 4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids 6:30pm Paraklisis & Bible Study	9 am Senior Adult Center	<b>8pm “An International Christmas” Concert</b> 	9:30am Divine Liturgy; <b>St. Spyridon</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
10 am Divine Liturgy <b>General Assembly Meeting &amp; Elections</b>	4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids 6:30pm – 8:30 Greek School for Adults 7pm Mental Health Small Support Group	7:00 pm Parish Council Philoptochos Christmas Dinner OCF @ PAOI	10:30 am Historical Society Workshop 1 – 3pm Moms & Tots 4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids 6:30pm Paraklisis & Bible Study	9 am Senior Adult Center		Sunday School Pageant Rehearsal
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
10 am Divine Liturgy <b>Sunday School Christmas Pageant</b> 	4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids 6:30pm – 8:30 Greek School for Adults	7pm Philoptochos Meeting	10:30 am Historical Society Workshop 1 – 3pm Moms & Tots 4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids	No Senior Center <b>Office Closed</b> <b>10am The Royal Hours</b> <b>6:00pm Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great; Christmas Carols to follow</b>	<b>The Nativity of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ</b> 9:30am Divine Liturgy; Christmas Carols follow 	
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>JANUARY 1</b>	<b>2</b>
10 am Divine Liturgy; <b>St Stephen the Protomartyr</b>	4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids 6:30pm – 8:30 Greek School for Adults		10:30 am Historical Society Workshop 1 – 3pm Moms & Tots 4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids	9 am Senior Adult Center	9:30am Divine Liturgy <b>St. Basil</b> 	
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
10 am Divine Liturgy	4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids 6:30pm – 8:30 Greek School for Adults	10am Royal Hours 6pm Vesperal Liturgy <b>1st Blessing of the Waters</b>	9:30 Divine Liturgy <b>2nd Blessing of the Waters</b> 10:30 am Historical Society Workshop 1 – 3pm Moms & Tots 4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids	9:30 Divine Liturgy <b>St. John the Baptist</b> 9 am Senior Adult Center		
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
10 am Divine Liturgy <b>Philoptochos Vasilopita</b> 	4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids 6:30pm – 8:30 Greek School for Adults		10:30 am Historical Society Workshop 1 – 3pm Moms & Tots 4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids 6:30 pm Paraklisis & Bible Study	<b>Folk Dance Festival</b> 9 am Senior Adult Center 	<b>Folk Dance Festival</b> 	<b>Folk Dance Festival</b> 
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
10 am Divine Liturgy <b>St. Anthony Folk Dance Festival</b> 	9:30am Divine Liturgy <b>St Athanasios Folk Dance Festival</b> 4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids 6:30pm – 8:30 Greek School for Adults 	7 pm Parish Council	10:30 am Historical Society Workshop 1 – 3pm Moms & Tots 4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids 6:30 pm Paraklisis & Bible Study	9 am Senior Adult Center	<b>Presentation of the Theotokos to the Temple</b>	
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
10 am Divine Liturgy	4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids 6:30pm – 8:30 Greek School for Adults	7 pm Philoptochos Meeting	10:30 am Historical Society Workshop 1 – 3pm Moms & Tots 4:30pm – 6pm Greek School for Kids 6:30 pm Paraklisis & Bible Study	9 am Senior Adult Center		9:30am Divine Liturgy <b>Three Hierarchs</b>
<b>31</b>						
10 am Divine Liturgy						

### Important Upcoming Dates

- November 29 – Thanksgiving weekend, no Sunday School instruction
- December 6 –Yoplait Yogurt Lid donations benefiting Breast Cancer Research end
- December 20 – Sunday School Christmas Pageant following Divine Liturgy
- February 7 – Godparent's Sunday Luncheon and afternoon Super Bowl party





## Philoptochos News

It is with great feelings and excitement that I am writing in the December Bulletin and would like to start by thanking all those that volunteered in November for their time and hard work for the following:

1. Saturday, October 31st, we hosted a lovely luncheon at the Claremont Hotel honoring our past President Mrs. Eleni Apostolopoulos, PANTA AXIA.

2. Sunday, November 8th, we had Artoklasia and Koliva for St. Kosmas and Damian holiday and remembered all our deceased Philoptochos members.

3. Thursday, November 12th, we had a Bake Day for the Holiday Kitchen and Shut-Ins.

4. Tuesday, November 17th we cooked for the Holiday Kitchen.

In addition, Philoptochos would like to thank everyone who donated to the Saints Cosmas and Damian collection in November. With a donation from Philoptochos, over \$700.00 will be sent to the National Philoptochos in New York. They, in turn, will send our donation as well as the donations from each Philoptochos chapter in the Archdiocese to our Patriarch Bartholomew who uses these funds for charitable work in and around Istanbul

(Constantinople).

The Philoptochos Christmas Dinner will be Tuesday evening December 15th at 6:00 PM. Please RSVP to either Valerie Greer 510-522-5188 or Litsa Miller 510-569-2876 by December 10th.

Donations for the annual Poinsettia Christmas Tree will be accepted in memory of your loved ones. Please send your checks to the church made out to Philoptochos. Please include in the memo that the donation is for poinsettias.

To all our parishioners, the Vasilopita Auction and Breakfast will be January 10th after the Divine Liturgy. Breakfast will be \$12.00 for adults and \$8.00 for children. Please call Jane Silva 925-376-6049 or Valerie Greer 510-522-5188 for more information or to RSVP.

Looking forward to our annual Christmas Concert on Friday evening, December 11th. Anyone interested in donating bake goods for the evening reception will be greatly appreciated.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday January 26th 2010 at 7:00 PM.

Thankfully by Gods Grace and everyone's help we have opened the doors for a successful year. Please join us and lets all grow together gracefully with Gods Blessings.

Yours in Christ, with Love  
Litsa Miller  
President

## Ascension Mom & Tots

We are a group of mothers who meet weekly with our children for a playdate and fellowship. Please contact Pres Elizabeth estervo@sbcglobal.net if you would like to receive weekly emails about locations through our Yahoo group.

9/9	Lagios House
9/16	Tervo House
9/23	Jordan Park
9/30	ZOO
10/7	Play Café
10/14	Jordan Park
10/21	Tervo House
10/28	Pumpkin Patch
11/4	Play Café
11/11	Tumble & Tea
11/18	Tervo House
11/25	NO MEETING
12/2	Play Café
12/9	Tumble & Tea
12/16	Tervo House
1/6	Play Café
1/13	Tumble & Tea
1/20	Tervo House
1/27	Lagios House

### CONT FROM PG 3, SCRIFICAL GIVING AND BUILDING THE CHURCH

ready, it can still be difficult for purely practical reasons. I'd like to offer a few thoughts that may help make sacrificial giving a little easier and more doable for you.

A simple starting point is to make gifts on a regular schedule, preferably weekly or every other week, or lined up with the schedule on which you receive your income. My bank offers free online banking so I just have my bank send a check every week, but I know many banks don't offer this service for free. If that is the case, you can just write your own checks every week or, if you feel it's worth it, pay for the service. Regular giving helps reduce the chance that any single gift is going to lower your checking account balance to a dangerous level, and gives you time to gradually adjust your spending based on your current balance if necessary. This is an easy starting point to giving sacrificially, because "adjusting your spending" to permit your giving to continue is the very definition of giving sacrificially.

Once you are giving regularly, you can start trying to gradually increase the size of your gifts little by little. This will start to gradually squeeze your account balance and net cash flow, which will force you to prioritize and make choices in your spending, which again is the very point of sacrificial giving. It helps us eliminate the things that are less worthwhile so we can add in things that are more worthwhile.

Once you are giving sacrificially on a regular

schedule and gradually increasing your giving, you will eventually get to a point where it looks like you are going to have to start reducing your giving or skip a regular gift because your balance is declining and you are afraid you will start bouncing checks. At this point the only way to continue is to make a budget. If you are married, you have to make the budget together and negotiate over every line item if necessary until you both reach agreement. If you followed the above process, you are already giving a lot, an amount that you think may be too much. Start your budget by putting in that amount for your giving, and then work out based on your income how much you can spend on all the other line items. This will be challenging, but it may also help reveal to you where you are spending your money and help you identify areas where you can make real savings that will allow you to keep giving at your sacrificial rate and probably even increase it in the future.

Making a budget and tracking your spending and income takes time and dedication, as well as the cooperation of both parties if you are married. This also helps reveal one of the important benefits of sacrificial giving - it transforms the rest of your life as well. Not only will you give of your money, but you will reclaim your time from wasteful or less worthy things and apply it to more worthy and more fruitful things in order to help support your giving and

reduce your expenses. I like to begin each day with 20 to 30 minutes of prayer. It surprised me when I discovered that the more time I spent in prayer, the more time I seemed to have throughout the rest of the day. I found that when I invited God into my heart in the morning, He would guide me throughout the rest of the day and help me make good use of it. Not only that, my whole family started praying. Even my young children are leading the prayers and have memorized many prayers by heart, and we conclude prayer by asking each other for forgiveness and giving each other a big hug.

Edith and I have made choices to give up certain things, to cut waste in various areas, and all in all I'd say our lives have actually changed for the better. We're probably eating more healthily. We're giving our time and attention to each other instead of to various entertainments and diversions. We feel better on the inside because our lives are more aligned with our inner values. All in all, it has been a big improvement.

May God bless you and your family with the gift of sacrificial giving.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Gowan  
Stewardship Chairman

Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Ascension  
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Oakland, California 94602-2598

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*Remember Your Loved Ones and Help the Poor with the  
Ascension Philoptochos Poinsettia Christmas Tree*



This holiday season the beautiful Poinsettia Christmas Tree decorated by the Ladies Philoptochos will once again grace the soles of our Cathedral.

You can participate by making a donation in any amount. The funds you donate help cover the cost of the tree and enable Philoptochos to help the poor of our community. On the lines below, please write the first names of your loved ones so that they can be remembered by our priests at all of the Christmas and Epiphany Liturgies.

First Name of Living

First Name of Deceased


**Please return this form and a check by December 20, 2006. Make checks payable to Ascension Philoptochos and mail to:  
Ascension Cathedral, 4700 Lincoln Avenue, Oakland CA 94602.**



**House Blessing Request**

Following the Great Feast of Epiphany on January 6th, the clergy of Ascension Cathedral will be available to visit your home or business for the traditional blessing with the Holy Water.

Please fill out the following request form and mail it to Fr. Michael Tervo at 4700 Lincoln Ave. Oakland, CA 94602. Please be sure to have a bowl with water, vasiliko, and an icon of Christ available at your home.

Yes... I would like to have my home or business blessed with the Holy Water of Epiphany! Please contact me at:

First Name, Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Day Time Phone Number (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

What days and times of the week are best to visit? \_\_\_\_\_