



# St. John Of Damascus Orthodox Church Newsletter

September 2020

## *You are Welcome!*

...to all who desire to gather to follow Jesus Christ and manifest the Kingdom of God in the Divine Liturgy (common work) of His Church!

We look forward to growing in Christ, spending our days acquiring the Holy Spirit, and knowing the Father of us all together here at St. John of Damascus Orthodox Church!



## *A Word from the Saints*

Come, let us wonder at the virgin most pure, wondrous in herself, unique in creation, she gave birth, yet knew no man; her pure soul with wonder was filled, daily her mind gave praise in joy at the twofold wonder: her virginity preserved, her child most dear. Blessed is He who shone forth from her!

St Ephraim of Syrian

## **A New Year - Reclaiming Piety...**

Dear Faithful Members & Friends of St. John of Damascus Church, Christ is in our midst! He is and ever shall be!

September begins a new liturgical year for the Church - ie, us. It is the starting point for Orthodox Christians to enter (once again) into a cycle of life experiencing and celebrating the salvific events of the Triune God (Father, Son & Holy Spirit) for us and for the entire creation.

These major celebrations, the great feasts, these major components of God's actions for all humans, are now given to us to become part of our calendars. Our calendars can "mesh" now with the life of Jesus Christ. Throughout the year - making present again (the Orthodox understanding of "remembrance") those salvific acts in Christ's life - they can now become part of each of us's story. What we sometimes think of something that happened a long time ago becomes a present and motivating orientation & reality as each of us moves from day to day, week to week, and month to month. Salvation is not something that happened but is a reality for us to live in now. And so time itself becomes sanctified. And rather than time being an enemy moving us closer to death, God transforms it to lead us ever closer to neverending life. In the Church, in this liturgical life, it is here that time becomes our friend and leads us to salvation.

This year I pray that we will all grow in our participation in this wonderful cycle. May we humbly give ourselves over to living the life of piety that the Church provides. Pious acts are designed to open our minds and hearts to the Holy Spirit. They are physical manifestations of faith. Being present for feasts, listening to scriptures & hymns, saying prayers, presenting ourselves before icons, tracing the sign of the Cross across our bodies, orienting our relationship with daily everyday things like food, drink, money and even entertainment through fasting & feasting, bowing in humility to holy things - things that emanate God's presence, receiving God's loving presence in the Holy Sacraments: these are all part of the year of Grace we are being offered. I look forward to joining in this incredible journey with you!

With love in Christ, Fr. Michael



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## Many Years!

### Name Days

- 9 Ana Griebing, Anna Chkhikvishvili, Anna Hubler, Anna Kaminskaya, Anna Rahal, Anne Cooper, Annie Keeling, Kim (Anna) Klavzar  
17 Mat. Vickie (Vera) Federoff  
24 Peter Anderson  
Tekle Griebing

### Birthdays

- 4 Mark Rahal  
5 Gene (Nectarios) Francello  
6 Barbara Anderson  
9 Edward Lump  
Pres. Mary Velonis  
11 David Martot  
12 Challen Henry  
14 Veronica Rahal  
16 Bill (Vladimir) Moision, Sr.  
Liam Sullivan  
19 Sadie Perez  
Valerie Lane  
26 Nina Stone  
Makayla Kedroff Ward  
27 Manny Castañeda

### Wedding Anniversaries

- 5 Heather & Daniel Federoff  
6 Kelly & David Martot  
13 Sarah & Alan Michaud  
14 Veronica Rahal  
20 Nika & Craig Carlson  
Peter & Megan Franchak

## Memory Eternal!

### Anniversary of Repose

- 3 Archbishop Nikon Liolin  
Steve Hondros  
8 Helen Burge  
16 Paul Kopcha  
17 Bp Basil (Rodzianko)  
18 Rev. Dragan Filipovic died  
20 Mary Ellen Mishler  
21 Alex Sirpis  
25 John Kedroff  
26 Helen Vag  
28 Marie Syssock

### Don't See Your Celebration?

If your celebration was not included for the month, please let Fr. Michael know so he can update the parish records.

The aim of all Christian living... praying, studying, working and resting is to bring us before the awesome and renewing reality of the kingdom of God. Although God's kingdom may be described by many words (God's will, rule, power, lordship, majesty, glory and grace), put simply it is God's personal holy presence. To live in the reality of God's kingdom is to live in the presence of God -- with a sense of wonder, joy and thanksgiving in all circumstances and for all things.

## Remembrance & Thanksgiving — The Worshiping & Working (Liturgical) Church Year

The liturgical year is a way of discipline in prayer, a pattern of worship, an anchor of support for the life of the Church. But it also has deeper significance.

The late George Florovsky, an eminent Orthodox theologian of blessed memory, has taught us that worship is a response to the call of God who has already made known His redeeming love to us through decisive events culminating in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. Worship has two major aspects: remembrance (anamnesis which means not only historical remembrance but also re-living the events commemorated) and thanksgiving (including praise and doxology).



Thus the liturgical year, by bringing unceasingly before us God's mighty deeds of salvation and the reality of God's kingdom in our midst, is the sanctification of time and thereby the true fulfillment of both personal and corporate aspects of our lives as Christians. Far from being simply a calendar, the liturgical year in the life of the Church -- the life of Christians living in community as brothers and sisters -- in awareness of God's kingdom, remembering the entire communion of Prophets, Apostles, Saints and all of God's people on earth and in heaven, being renewed by God's saving love, helping one another, witnessing to Christ's good news, and waiting for the fullness of the coming kingdom according to God's timing.

"If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord" (Rom. 14:8)

Orthodox worship proclaims the centrality of Christ. The liturgical year celebrates the presence of the mystery of Christ in the life of the Church and seeks to make the living Christ a renewing life-source for every Orthodox Christian.

Theodore Stylianopoulos,  
Preface to A Year of the Lord: Liturgical Bible Studies

# Coming to Church

Church Services  
Now Being  
Celebrated Outside

## Before You Arrive

We are currently holding services outside at the entry of the church. As such, there is plenty of room on the lawn and sidewalks for people to stand while maintaining safe distance (6ft) from each other. As long as we are outside, you DO NOT need to let us know you are coming prior to the service.

## On the Day of the Service

If you are feeling at all unwell on the day of the service, please stay home and take care of yourself. If you need to, contact your healthcare provider so he or she can give you guidance. Please also call Fr. Michael and let him know so he can include you in the church's prayers.

## Arriving at Church

You will need to check in when you arrive. Arrive and wait for the Greeters to greet and assist you. Please be patient. As you wait, find a shady spot. Standing in the sun can alter the reading of your temperature. If your temperature is over 100.4 you will need to go home and get care.

## Children

Parents, be prepared to keep your children close to you during the service.

Unfortunately, we are not able to have children using the playground at this time. Please speak to your children about this before

## Face Coverings

Remember all persons ages 8+ must wear face coverings during the service with the exception of serving clergy and assigned choir singers who are to remove theirs as they serve. Children ages 2 and under are NOT to wear face coverings.

## Social Distancing - 6ft

At all times we all must maintain social distancing standards

## Portable Shade & Chair

If you can, bring a portable chair and/or shade structure for yourself or someone else.

## Icons

Icons may be venerated by bowing (without kissing or touching)

## Candles

Candles are available for people to light in the church either before or after the service. Only one household at a time may be in the church at any given time. Candles may also be purchased. Speak with a Greeter for assistance.



## Weekend Services Live-stream

People can electronically attend the weekend services at St John via live-stream.

You can find the live-stream here...

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuzmdJHmKyTMAx3uqocW\\_1w/featured](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuzmdJHmKyTMAx3uqocW_1w/featured)

## Pastoral Visits

If you are not able to attend church please contact Fr. Michael to arrange a pastoral visit with Confession & Communion



## Bound for Salvation

The eleventh chapter of the Gospel of Matthew ends with Jesus proclaiming, "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." This teaching is often quoted among Christians of all denominations, but as we find ourselves in the grip of a pandemic and political turmoil the hardships borne by so many would be difficult to characterize as light. It may not be comforting to reflect on ages past or the burdens previously suffered by humankind including those Martyrs and Saints to whom we routinely pay homage in Orthodox worship. Although we remain at little risk of the physical martyrdom of Christian witness, does it not seem sometimes tedious to embrace and maintain a Christian life? Do not the crosses we are asked to take up often seem beyond our ability to lift and carry? Understanding that taking a single line of scripture to make an exegetical point may be misleading, an expanded view of Matthew 11 can be edifying. In context, Jesus has just finished the chastisement of the unrepentant cities in which He had worked miracles when He speaks further.

"I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:25-30)

His rebuke was directed at the Scribes and Pharisees who being devoid of humility appear before men to be wise yet full of pride. They delivered the Law as an encumbrance of ritual with the hypocrisy of personal indolence. He reiterates this again as Matthew testifies further.

"Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, 'The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers'". (Matthew 23:1-4)

Consider the formal definition of a yoke – "A wooden beam that is fastened over the necks of two animals and attached to the plow or cart that they are to pull". (Merriam-Webster 2012) A classical yoke is attached to a pair of beasts (oxen) so they would move their load forward in unison, for if not constrained each might seek their own direction. A common practice was to link a younger animal to an experienced elder to learn the task. Throughout the Old Testament, there are more than fifty references to the yoke and burden essentially all in the negative context of the captivity and oppression of the Hebrews. "It shall come to pass in that day

That his burden will be taken away from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil." (Isaiah 10:27 on the Assyrian captivity) In the New Testament, Christ's words in Matthew 11 are the first proclamation using the metaphor of the yoke expressed in a positive light. What a marvelous paradox to offer a yoke and burden that when taken up by those "lowly in heart" (humble) will deliver "rest for your souls" (salvation).

(Continued on last page)



# Parish Life

## Children & Teen Church School 1st & 3rd Sundays



The Church School teachers and organizers met and are planning on beginning classes (with all appropriate safety measures) in October. At the start, we will have classes on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month.

On Sunday September 27 we will have a “meet and greet” with some fun for all of our church school students and volunteers. PARENTS, please plan on staying a little while after Liturgy concludes.

We are very grateful for the love and commitment of our church school volunteers who are eager to continue this important ministry with our children

## Bulletins

We are planning on creating weekly bulletins with the hymn and scripture texts as well as more regular news about things going on in the parish. It will be available via QR code when people arrive. . If you have ideas about how to do this well, please contact Fr. Michael.



## Auxiliary News

The Auxiliary is planning on restarting cooking/baking sessions and is planning for a pre-Thanksgiving bake sale for the community.

Also, if people would like to purchase pierogis, nut rolls, etc. you CAN do so. Just speak to someone at church and they will help you.

We are still distributing Scrip. It is a great way to support the parish while making your usual day to day purchases. You can speak to Beth Brown at church or you can call her or email her at [missbeth2269@yahoo.com](mailto:missbeth2269@yahoo.com)

JOIN US!- To be part of this wonderful & active group contact Tanya Franchak.

## Education Sunday - September 20th

On Sunday Sept 20th after the Divine Liturgy we will celebrate a service of intercession (molieben) for all our students and teachers both in and out of church school.

We will also be praying for and celebrating those in our parish who have graduated this year. If you know of someone who has graduated this year that you would like to be remembered please contact me by Saturday the 19th.

## Adult Education Sessions

We have a number of opportunities for folks to discuss & grow in their knowledge of the Faith. Below is the current list of offerings.



### Saturdays at 3:00pm (via

Zoom) - Dn George is leading this class on the book Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology by Andrew Louth. If you are interested in attending contact him directly at [gshumaik@ucsd.edu](mailto:gshumaik@ucsd.edu)

### Tuesdays at 10:30am beginning on Sept 22 (via

GoToMeeting) - “Father’s Cafe” - This is a more informal gathering for people to come together (with their cup of caffeine or other beverage) to pray, hear and respond to a meditation/reflection on the Faith and ask questions and discuss matters re: Orthodox Christian living today. Info to come via e-mail.

### Wednesdays at 7:00pm beginning on Sept 23 (via

GoToMeeting) - This will be a more structured discussion-based class that will last 5-6 weeks. After this there will be a 1-2 week “break” and then another topic will be offered. Based on feedback we have received our first class will be “Walking the Line of Faith and Love: Witnessing to the Gospel in a Non-Orthodox Society”. This will be an exploration of what and how the saints have engaged and challenged the society in which the Lord have placed them.. Info to come via e-mail.

## Diamond Circle to Resume in October!

Our seniors group is planning to resume in October. It will take place on the usual 3rd Tuesday of the month.

Speak to Patty Pelachik for more details.

# Parish Life

## Security Committee



You may have already heard the good news on Security upgrades coming to St. John's church! The California Office of Emergency Services approved our funding application for \$77,020 through a selective security grant program for Non-Profit organizations. This money passes down from the U.S. Government's Homeland Security office through California's state agencies that identify religious and private service sites in neighborhood communities that may not otherwise receive protective assistance.

Our grant proposal, submitted in March 2020, identified enhancements on our property and within the church and social hall buildings that will increase the safety of our parish community. We demonstrated how specific upgrades will both deter intruders and improve the physical security of both people and property. Some examples include replacement of obsolete parking lot light fixtures, expansion of security camera coverage, fortification of window openings, and strengthening of entry door hardware and locks. Our proposal also included a plan for part time personnel to monitor security, which will be further reviewed when we receive our contract.

St. John's qualified for funding with a documented property assessment, a description of the full and joyful life of our good parish, and a high quality proposal that will enhance safety. We look forward to starting the project soon, as we also hope to return to a full parish life of fellowship serving, teaching, playing, and cooking. We are ever thankful to have this blessing to improve our property and will place this money toward a good purpose for all.

## Bishop Boris Scholarship Accepting Applications through September

During the month of September applications for the Bishop Boris Scholarship will be accepted by the Scholarship Committee. All applications must be submitted no later than September 30.

There are two different application forms. One form is for first time applicants. The other form is an update for individuals that have applied before. Individuals that have graduated from High School and are going to Collage or a Trade School are eligible to apply. Applications are available at Church or through email.

Please contact Ken Telles, Nino Kiria, or Mike Kapsimalis for details or if you have questions



## Please Remember to Support our Parish

With the pandemic and now the summer months upon us it is understandable that some people may have fallen behind on their pledges & offerings to the parish.

Please plan on catching up.

You can bring your offerings to a church service or you can mail it to PO Box 28291, San Diego, CA

92198



## Bound for Salvation (continued...)

It is important to remember that Christ took up another beam, another yoke to bear us to salvation - the wood of His Cross. This yoke was borne completely and voluntarily alone by Jesus having been abandoned by all except for a precious few. The message is clear. Regardless of the weight of our own crosses, they can be borne lightly if we yoke ourselves to Christ. "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Matthew 16:24) This is the witness of the Saints and Martyrs who lived and died assured that He was at their side, bound concurrently to their suffering and giving rest to their souls.

Much of the burden we feel in this life comes from the baggage that we acquire of our own volition. We attach ourselves to our passions both physical and emotional such that even when offered rest, we prefer the weight of our persistent wants and perceived needs to the lightness of the burden offered by our Lord. This is the essence of sin. The commandments of Christ are few in number and at the core humbly simple, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39)

Repentance for sin is the pathway home and always open to be traveled. St. Theophan the Recluse reflects, "And thus it happens: the Lord forgives sins, and the soul begins to walk in His commandments. The commandments are a yoke, but sins are also a burden. But as it turns out, the soul learns that the yoke of the commandments is as light as a feather, while the burden of sins is as heavy as a mountain. Let us not fear, therefore, to willingly take on the Lord's easy yoke and His light burden! In this way – and in this way only – we may find rest for our souls." Amen.

By Deacon George Shumaik



We are a parish of the Orthodox Church in America, committed to be the Body of Christ in North County San Diego, to witness to the Kingdom of God, and to be faithful to the life in the Holy Spirit as lived in the Holy Orthodox Church since the time of the Apostles.

## Parish Contact Information

### Church & Church Offices

Location: 16903 Espola Rd,  
Poway, CA 92064

Mail: PO Box 28291,  
San Diego, CA 92198  
Phone: 858-674-1931



### Rector/Pastor

Fr. Michael Anderson  
Cell Phone: 858-717-2172  
E-mail: powaypadre@aol.com



### Other Clergy

Dn. George Shumaik  
(858) 565-1914  
gshumaik@ucsd.edu

Fr. Al Federoff, retired



### Other Ministries

Choir: Carole Shumaik  
Prayer List: Birdie Worth  
Church School: Bill Moision  
Auxiliary: Tanya Franchak

### Website:

[www.stjohnofdamascus.org](http://www.stjohnofdamascus.org)

### Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnspoway>