

December 17, 2023



# THE IMAGE...

(Jn 12:45 & 14:9; Heb 1:3; Col 1:15)

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

Publication of St. John of Damascus Orthodox Church, Poway, CA

28<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—TONE 3  
SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS  
HOLY PROPHET DANIEL AND THE  
THREE YOUTHS

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**Welcome!**

...to all who have gathered to follow  
Jesus Christ & manifest the Kingdom of  
God in the Liturgy of His Church. If this is  
your first time with us, give us a chance to  
get to know you and fill out a visitor card.

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### **A Word from the Holy Fathers**

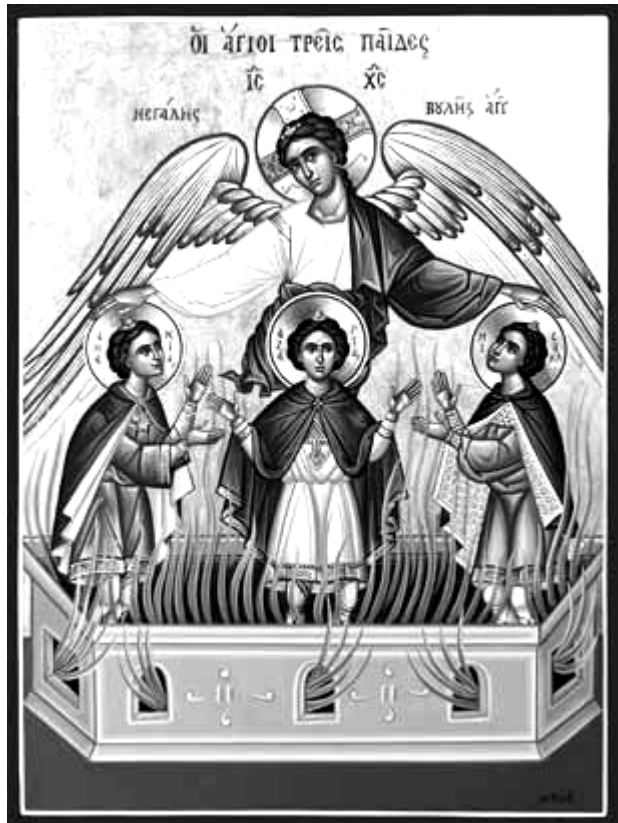
For it was to Him no lowering to put on  
what He Himself had made. Let that  
handiwork be forever glorified, which  
became the cloak of its own Creator. For  
as in the first creation of flesh, man could  
not be made before the clay had come  
into His hand, so neither could this  
corruptible body be glorified, until it had  
first become the garment of its Maker.

—*St. John Chrysostom*

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**Include Something in the Bulletin or  
Be Included in our Weekly E-mails**

E-mail [info@stjohnofdamascus.org](mailto:info@stjohnofdamascus.org)  
with your request.



ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS ORTHODOX CHURCH + THE DIOCESE OF THE WEST + THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

## Parish Life

### Ministry Directory

Below are the people who coordinate various ministries in our parish. Feel free to contact them to find out how to offer your God-given time and talents to the life of our community.

Adult Ed— Fr Michael

Altar Servers—Subdeacon Ken Telles

Auxiliary President — Tanya Franchak

Candle Stand — Gene Francello

Choir—Carole Shumaik

Church School — Bill Moision & Sally Menig

Counters — Fr Michael

Diamond Circle Seniors — Jim & Patty Pelachik

Electric Church Sign Messages—John Thayer

Fellowship/Coffee Hour — Linda Kedroff

Flowers/Decorating—Diane Worth

Greeters — Valerie Lane

Handmaidens — Sally Menig & Desiree Geralt

Koliva — Fr Michael

Parish Council Vice-President—Patty Pelachik

Prospora — Fr Michael

Readers at Divine Liturgy—Bill Moision

Security Committee — Parish Council

Scrip Sales—Gene Francello, Valerie Lane

Social Media —Evan Keeling & Iryna Thayer

Sunday Commemoration Loaves— Fr Michael

Consider taking part and helping this group make St John's the wonderful lively parish it is. For information on how to contact any of the above please speak with Fr Michael.

### STEWARDSHIP (PLEDGE/TITHE) FORMS FOR 2024

PLEASE SUBMIT TODAY

It is once again time to fill out and submit our tithe/pledge forms so that we can prepare for the coming year. Dmitriy Panasenko will has forms for everyone. There are 3 parts:

- General Information—names, addresses, birthdays, name days, wedding anniversaries, etc.
- Time & Talents—indicate by number who in your family would like to be involved in which areas of ministry in the parish for the coming year. This section also includes consent or non-consent to use photos of you, and a place to indicate your desire to officially be a member of the parish.
- Financial Offering—indicate what your financial offering for the year will be. There is a chart to remind us to consider offering the “first fruits” of the blessings we receive.

Please submit your forms by **TODAY** to Ed Lump, Dennis Stavrou or Fr. Michael. Thank



### 2024 Wall Calendars Available (with Feasts, Fasts, Scriptures Readings)

The wall calendars for 2024 have arrived and are available in the narthex in the back of the church. \$10 donation is requested.

## Parish Life

### **Christmas Bake Sale Baked Goods, Pierogies, Cabbage Rolls, Nut & Fruit Rolls Available**

Due to the hard work of our Auxiliary members we had a wonderful turn out for our pre-Christmas Ethnic Food & Bake Sale Yesterday.

We do still have "inventory" available for purchase today for those who would like to add a little something special to their Christmas celebrations.

You can make your purchases after Divine Liturgy in the Church Hall.

Also, if you made a pre-order, please be sure to pick it up today.



### **Viewing of Episode of The Chosen w/ Discussion Today**

Today around 12:20pm after Fellowship Hour we will have a viewing of "Season 2 Episode 5 "Spirit"

We will have a short discussion afterwards.

All are welcome!



### **Purchase Gift Cards Through Our Scrip Coordinator & Help our Parish**

Scrip gift cards raise money for St. John's Auxiliary. When you buy Scrip cards, the store makes a donation with NO extra expense. Use the cards for your regular monthly purchases or gifts for loved ones and support our parish's ministry. Cards are available for gas, groceries, Amazon, restaurants and many other stores.

See Carmen Brown after Liturgy for more information or to purchase your cards.

### **Charity Collection for Christmas for Poway Families**

Each year St John's works with local agencies to adopt families to provide some support for their Christmas celebrations.

This year we helping 2 families: one with 2 adults & 5 children and another family with 2 adults and 4 children.

A basket will be put out at the end of the service at the veneration of the cross.

Please give as generously as you are able.



### **Online Giving System**

We have an online giving system that enables people to be able to manage their giving to our church.

You can set up automatic ongoing donations each month to cover your pledges. You can also use the system to make occasional donations for things like charities, flowers, candles, memorial donations, etc. You can even pay for your bookstore purchases.

There is an option to cover the bank processing fees if you would like to do that.

Not only is this a convenience for you it helps reduce the work required of our Counters on Sundays

Visit [www.stjohnofdamascus.org](http://www.stjohnofdamascus.org) and click on DONATE or scan the QR below with your phone.



## Today's Worship — Hymns

### TROPARIA

#### Resurrection—Tone 3

Let the heavens rejoice!  
Let the earth be glad!  
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.  
He has trampled down death by death.  
He has become the first born of the dead.  
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,  
and has granted to the world  
great mercy.

#### Forefathers—Tone 2

Through faith You justified the Forefathers,  
betrothing through them the Church of the  
Gentiles.  
These saints exult in glory,  
for from their seed came forth a glorious fruit:  
she who bore You without seed.  
So by their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy  
on us!

#### Prophet Daniel & the 3 Holy Youths—Tone 2

Great are the accomplishments of faith,  
for the three Holy Youths rejoice in the fountain  
of flames as though in the waters of rest;  
and the Prophet Daniel appeared  
a shepherd to the lions as though they were  
sheep.//  
So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our  
souls!

### KONTAKIA

#### Prophet Daniel —Tone 3

When your pure heart was purged by the Spirit,  
you became a vessel of clear prophecy;  
you saw things far away as though they were  
near at hand.  
When cast into their den, you tamed the lions.//  
Therefore, we honor you, blessed prophet,  
glorious Daniel.

#### Forefathers—Tone 6

You did not worship the graven image,  
O thrice-blessed ones,  
but armed with the immaterial Essence of God,  
you were glorified in a trial by fire.  
From the midst of unbearable flames you called  
on God, crying:  
"Hasten, O compassionate One!  
Speedily come to our aid,  
for You are merciful and able to do as You will!"

### PROKEIMENON

**Tone 4** — *(Song of the Fathers)* Blessed are You, O Lord God of our Fathers, and praised and glorified is Your Name forever! *(Song of the three Holy Children, v. 3)*

*v: For You are just in all that You have done for us! (v. 4)*

### ALLELUIA

**Tone 4** — V. Moses and Aaron were among His priests; Samuel also was among those who called on His Name. (Ps. 98:6)

V. They called to the Lord and He answered them. (Ps. 98:6)

## Today's Worship — Scripture Readings

### Epistle — Colossians 3:4-11

<sup>4</sup> When Christ who is our life is revealed, then you will also be revealed with him in glory.

<sup>5</sup> Therefore, put to death what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, depraved passions, lust and greed (which is idolatry). <sup>6</sup> Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming on the children of disobedience. <sup>7</sup> You also used to live in them when you lived among these people; <sup>8</sup> but now, put them all away: anger, rage, evil, slander, and shameful language. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another. You have put off the old self with his doings <sup>10</sup> and you have put on the new self who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of his Creator. <sup>11</sup> Here, there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free; but Christ is all, and in all!

### Gospel — Luke 14:16-24

<sup>16</sup> But Jesus replied, "A certain man gave a great banquet and invited many people. <sup>17</sup> At supper time, he sent out his slaves to tell those who were invited, 'Come, for everything is ready now!' <sup>18</sup> But they all began to make excuses.

The first told him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please have me excused!'

<sup>19</sup> Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen and I must go try them out. Please have me excused!'

<sup>20</sup> Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come!'

<sup>21</sup> That slave came back and reported these things to his lord. At this, the master of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the city, and bring in the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind.'

<sup>22</sup> The servant said, 'Lord, it is done as you commanded, and there is still room!'

<sup>23</sup> The lord then told the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled! <sup>24</sup> For I tell you that none of those who were invited will taste of my supper.' "

### Dates for 2023

#### **FASTS**

Nativity Fast/Advent Nov 15-Dec 24

#### **FAST-FREE WEEKS**

After Christmas Dec 25-Jan 4

### KNOWING THE MASTER'S MANGER

In the opening verses of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah we find the following words: *"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken: 'Sons have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's manger, but Israel does not know; My people does not understand'"* [Isaiah 1:2-3]. With these words the prophet begins his extended denunciation of his people, calling Israel back in repentance to loving fidelity to their covenant God.

They needed to be called back. At that time in around the seventh century BC they not only worshipped Yahweh their God, but also Baal, the fertility god, the god of the storm and of rain and life. Doubtless they regarded it as a kind of syncretistic ecumenism, a broadness of sympathy and generosity of devotion. They probably also regarded it as keeping up to date: Yahweh might have been appropriate for the time of their desert sojourn, but for their life in agricultural Canaan, they needed now a more agricultural god. Yahweh might have been okay for the Bedouin part of their history, but Baal was more suited for their settled life on the land. Anyway, Israel then worshipped both Yahweh and Baal, and attributed their agricultural prosperity primarily to the latter.



What the majority in Israel considered ecumenical broadness of mind, Isaiah considered simply as apostasy and unfaithfulness. Yahweh was their God, and Baal, the god of Canaan, had nothing to do with them. Devotion to Baal therefore was pure adulterous idolatry, a spiritual defection from their true Husband and Protector. Adultery, as everyone then knew, was punishable by death. What else then could Israel expect for its apostasy?

The prophet Isaiah therefore began his ministry by calling Israel to recognize this fact. But he did not just announce judgment and destruction, but also called Israel back to repentance and forgiveness and life. Yahweh their God did not desire their death, but their repentance. He was willing to sit down and reason with them, and promised that if they would but repent, though their sins were like scarlet, they would become white as snow [Isaiah 1:18].

For now, though, Isaiah began by pointing out their ingratitude. Any father in those days could legitimately expect gratitude and obedience and respect from his sons. But though Yahweh had reared and brought up Israel, giving them life and protecting them as a father did his sons, He received no gratitude, obedience, or respect from His people. And it was worse than that—even dumb animals knew where their food came from. The ox knew its owner, and the donkey knew its master's

## Our Life in Christ

manger, and they waited by that feed trough every day for the master to pour in food for them to eat. Both ox and donkey (the usual domestic beasts of burden) knew the sound of their master's footsteps, and had gratitude to him for filling the manger. They knew who to thank for their food, and prosperity, and life. But Israel somehow did not know who to thank. Israel was dumber than their farm animals. They regarded their food and agricultural prosperity not as coming from Yahweh, but as coming from Baal. Israel did not know their master's manger.

This ox and donkey, by the way, found their way into the Nativity icon and into every Christmas scene ever since. When we see the Nativity scene, either eastern or western, we see the ox and the donkey standing by the manger over the newborn Christ. Why? Neither Saint Matthew nor Saint Luke mention any animals in their narratives. But the Church, reading this prophecy of Isaiah, beheld the Master's manger and thought of Jesus. For what was the Master's manger to which the prophet here referred? Surely it was the manger into which the newborn Christ Child was laid! Thereafter the place of the ox and the donkey was assured in any picture of the Nativity of Christ.

The prophet Isaiah speaks to us today as well, for we no less than ancient Israel have trouble knowing the Master's manger. We also fail to see that our life, strength, prosperity, and food come from God. We imagine that our ability to find food and earn our daily bread comes from ourselves. We get up each morning and go to work and labor hard at our forty hour a week jobs to earn our living. Surely our food comes from ourselves? We forget that the strength and health by which we labor come as gifts from God. More than that, our very ability to rise every morning and get out of bed come as gifts from God. For one day we will not rise from our beds, but the doctor will come and pronounce us dead and draw the sheet over our faces. No labor for us that day. That day will mark the end of God's gift of life to us.

All the more reason today to know our Master's manger, and to recognize that all that we have comes from Him. Oxen and donkeys know who their true benefactors are, and we should be at least as smart as they are. As we bend over our daily mangers and sit at our tables to eat our daily bread, let us give thanks to God, and know that all that we have and ever will have comes from Him.

*Source: Fr Lawrence Farley, [oca.org/reflections](http://oca.org/reflections)*



## LOOKING AHEAD

*The following are services & parish events **IN ADDITION** to the usual weekend services (Sat 6pm & Sun 8:30am).*

### Mon Dec 18

7:00pm — Orthodox Christianity 101

### Wed Dec 20

10:30am — Father's Café

7:00pm — Adult Ed—The 12 Apostles: A Primer

### Mon Dec 22

11:30am — Confessions

4:30pm — Confessions

6:30pm — Confessions

### Sat Dec 23

6:00pm — Great Vespers followed by Confessions

### Sun Dec 24—Christmas Eve

8:30am — 3rd & 6th Hours

9:00am—Divine Liturgy immediately followed by Vespers for Nativity

6:00pm — Vigil for Nativity

### Mon Dec 25—Christmas

8:30am — 3rd & 6th Hours

9:00am—Festal Divine Liturgy

**For more dates & links please visit our website: [www.stjohnofdamascus.org/calendar](http://www.stjohnofdamascus.org/calendar)**

*Confessions are held on Saturdays after Great Vespers or by appointment with Fr Michael.*

## Many Years!

### *Birthdays*

Philip Kedroff	12/18
Irene Stone	12/19
Vera Klavzar, Abigail Lorelli	12/20
Nicholas Spanovich	12/22
Kyra Federoff Toth	12/23

### *Wedding Anniversaries*

Mark & Katrina Griebing	12/21
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### PARISH CONTACT INFO:

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**Priest:** V. Rev. Michael Anderson, Rector

**Email:** [powaypadre@stjohnofdamascus.org](mailto:powaypadre@stjohnofdamascus.org) — **Phone:** (858) 717-2172

**Attached Clergy:** V. Rev. Alexander Federoff, Retired & Dn. George Shumaik

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