

THE MESSENGER

ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

MISSION STATEMENT

To bring all children, youth and young adults closer to Christ and His Church through religious education, fellowship and various other events on a parish and national level.

DATES TO REMEMBER!

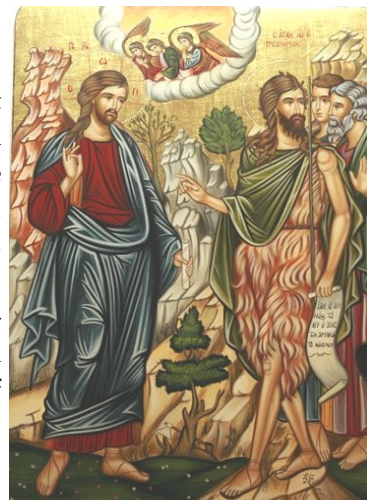
- **JANUARY 6TH**
Holy Theophany
- **JANUARY 9TH**
Sunday School Resumes
- **JANUARY 30TH**
Three Hierarchs Feastday
("Greek Letters" Day, celebrating Greek Education)

FRIENDS OF THE BRIDEGROOM

BY TIM PRATTAS

Beloved in the Lord.

As a New Year begins, the Church celebrates a great feast in the calendar: Holy Theophany. This feast is when God revealed Himself to the world during His baptism in the Jordan River. As the Son of God was baptized by St. John the Baptist, the Father's voice was heard from the heavens saying, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). It was a revelation for all humanity: Jesus was not a simple man, a great prophet or a "really good person", but the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.



This feast is associated with the Great Blessing of the Waters (Μέγας Αγιασμός). The Church blesses the waters for us to drink, as a reminder that we need to become holy, and to take home and bless them, showing us that God does not leave our lives when we depart from Church, but stays with us every single moment.

In this pursuit of holiness, St. John the Baptist reminds us: "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled" (John 3:29). In the end, St. John the Baptist—and all who follow Christ—are just "friends of the groom".

St. John the Baptist was praised by the people as a man of God and a person who was speaking the Truth; yet, when Christ appeared, St. John said to his disciples to follow Jesus. As member of the Church, we see the same thing with the Saints. This month, the Church celebrates figures such as Sts. Basil the Great, Anthony the Great, Athanasios and Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Cyrus and John the Unmercenary and countless others. All of them helped the world know about Christ—either through theological writings or their philanthropy. Yet, all of these Saints are not the Bridegroom. Their great works were not meant to bring praise for themselves, but for the world to get to know Christ!

As Christians, we are called to live Christ-centred lives, for "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). We pledged it in our baptism, and we should keep our promise: may we be **friends of the Bridegroom**. Just as we are happy when our friends and relatives are married, we should be joyful when the Name of Christ is glorified. Being friends of the Bridegroom is sometimes difficult or unpopular, but it is also the greatest honour that can be bestowed upon us. Think for a moment: only friends of the Bridegroom will feast with Him in the eternal wedding banquet (or, as we know it, the Kingdom of God). My prayer for all is that we realize what a great honour it is to be friends of the Bridegroom and come closer to Him every day.

May 2011 be a year we are true friends of the Bridegroom Christ! Καλή Χρονιά!

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CHRISTMAS RETREAT & PAGEANT A GREAT SUCCESS!

On Sunday, December 5th, our Sunday School had its annual Christmas Youth Retreat and Pageant. With over 200 children and youth, the day began with participants attending Matins. The Retreat had various activities for all the children and youth, which included cookie decorating, Christmas tree ornaments (angels, Nativity scenes and other ornaments), along with making cards for people at St. John the Compassionate Mission. The Retreat also organized the collection of donations for people at the Mission. After the Divine Liturgy and the luncheon, students took part in the Christmas Pageant, in which the younger children wore costumes of the "characters" of the Christmas Story (the Theotokos, St. Joseph, the angels, animals found at the stable, shepherds and the wise men), while the older students read shorts speeches they wrote on how they witness and show their Christianity in a pluralistic world, especially during Christmas time. It was a wonderful event, in which everyone showed how much they support our Sunday School program.



The Principal of our Sunday School would like to thank:

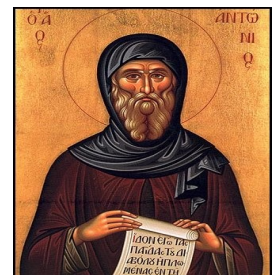
- the volunteers, Sunday School teachers and donors, for their immense contributions in making this day a success;
- all who assisted with the I.T. of the event;
- the parents and grandparents, who brought their children and grandchildren to attend this great event;
- the Youth speakers, whose words were inspiring as we approached the Great Feast of Christmas;
- to all who donated to the Mission, for helping so many people have a merrier Christmas;
- Mrs. Linda Hudson, the Chair of this event, for helping to make all this possible;
- our Priests, for their spiritual guidance;
- and finally, our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is due all the glory and praise forevermore.

Και του χρόνου!

This Month, We Celebrate...
St. Anthony the Great

The 411...

Feastday	January 17th
Lived	251-356 A.D.
Type of Saint	Monastic



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Εάν θέλετε ο π. Κωνσταντίνος να επισκεφθεί το σπίτι σας για Αγιασμό, επικοινωνήστε με το γραφείο μας στο 416-425-2485 ή μέσω e-mail στο st.demetrios@greekcommunity.org.

If you would like Fr. Konstantinos to bless your home, please call the Church at 416-425-2485 or e-mail the Church Secretary at st.demetrios@greekcommunity.org.

Website of the Month: www.anastasis.org.uk

The website of Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, one of the members of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Committee for the Translation of Liturgical texts, one can find translations of:

1. Orthodox Church services, some of which have never been translated before, and
2. Sermons, letters and other non-liturgical writings of Church Fathers (Sts. Athanasios of Alexandria, Theodore the Studite and Ephraim the Syrian).

It's a great site to understand our rich services!



ABOUT HIS LIFE...

A Saint from Egypt, he became a monk after hearing the words of Christ in the Gospel ("sell all you have, give it to the poor and follow Me" - Matthew 19:21). He helped Christians not renounce their faith during the persecutions and during the Arian heresy. He is known as the "Father of Monasticism". His biographer was St. Athanasios the Great (who is commemorated on January 18th). St. Anthony fell asleep in the Lord on January 17th, 356, living about 105 years.



St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
Religious Education Newsletter

30 Thorncliffe Park Drive
Toronto, ON M4H 1H8
Tel: 416-425-2485
Fax: 416-425-2954
st.demetrios@greekcommunity.org

**WANT THIS NEWSLETTER IN
YOUR INBOX? E-MAIL US!**

STDemetriosTORONTO

@GMAIL.COM

The third Greek Orthodox Church in Toronto, St. Demetrios Church was founded in 1962. Since then, our Church has been the spiritual home of thousands of Orthodox faithful from Toronto and vicinity. It is one of the four Churches of the Greek Community of Toronto. The Religious Education programs have been attended by many children, youth and young adults. Our tireless staff works to promote the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Parish Priests

Rev. Fr. Konstantinos Pavlidis

Rev. Fr. Triantafillos Porfiris

Religious Education Director

Basile Polidoulis

Religious Education Advisor

Komissa Polidoulis

Homiletic Speakers

John Kapsalis, Tim Prattas

5-and-Under Class Teachers

Linda Hudson, Georgia Vlahos, Patty Tsiolis

JK-SK Class Teachers

Despina Epaminondas, Chrysoula Kapogiannis

Gr. 1 Class Teachers

Kathe Bouzios, Eleni Skandalakis

Gr. 2 Class Teacher

Kassiani Logotheti

Gr. 3 Class Teachers

Vicky Nikolaos, Vasilis Papagiannis

Gr. 4-5 Class Teachers

Elena Qirjazi

Gr. 6-7 Class Teachers

Georgia Panagiotopoulos-Grivogiannis,

Eftila Qirjazi

Gr. 8-9 Class Teachers

Kiki Zourbanos, Fotini Kapsalis

Gr. 10-12 Class Teacher

Chrysostom Makropoulos

Young Adult League Leaders

Vicki Vokas, Niko Sotiropoulos

Re-Catechism 4

Praying Together: The Divine Services

Where?

*St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
(30 Thorncliffe Park Drive, Toronto, 416-425-2485)*

When?

Every other Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.

The Sessions

Tuesday, January 25th, 2011

Holy Water Everywhere: Agiasmos & House Blessings

Tuesday, February 8th, 2011

Peace and Health: Artoklasia & St. Phanourios Blessings

Tuesday, February 22nd, 2011

May their memory be eternal: Funerals, Memorials & Trisagia

Tuesday, March 8th, 2011

Singing God's Praises in the morning: Matins & Hours Services

Tuesday, March 22nd, 2011

An Evening Sacrifice: Vespers & Compline Services

Tuesday, April 5th, 2011

Ask Us: Services Q and A

All Are Welcome! Come and Join Us!

"Free Babysitting offered at each session"

For more information, e-mail us at

stdemetriostoronto@gmail.com