

2023/2024 Academic Year

A Message to Parents

At your Orthodox Marriage service we prayed that God would bless you with, *“The sight of sons and daughters.”* We asked God to grant you, *“Children for education in the faith.”* There has never been a point in history where holding our precious children close to the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ has been more crucial.



Our society is an increasingly secular and morally ambiguous one. *Our kids need a spiritual compass and support to navigate our complex digital world.*

Our church school is here to complement the home based Orthodox Christian life. Nothing can make up or replace living the faith out in your home- in prayer, virtue, and spiritual formation. St. Katherine is here to support you and reinforce the spiritual foundation you plant in your home. Our lives in the church and in our homes should not be disconnected from each other.

It is in the church that your children will be with friends, learn about the Gospel of Christ, the core teachings of our Orthodox Faith, and the central message of Jesus Christ’s love in their life. The church cannot accomplish this alone- we need your help living it in your day-to-day lives.

A child’s spiritual life begins with the experience of worshipping God. Every Sunday, it is our responsibility to bring our children to the Divine Liturgy which begins at 9:30 AM, much later than most schools begin during the academic week. We should begin by teaching our children to enter God’s house with reverence- to venerate the icons, light candles, offer prayers for the sick, suffering and their own salvation.

This beautiful model is not achievable if sporting activities take on the priority in our lives that was once held by our Lord and His Church. Our priorities in life are always defined by the choices that we make. We pray all together as one family that Christ and His Church remain at the center of our lives.

In His Service and love,

+Fr. Demetre

Matthew 19:13-14 *Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

2 Timothy 3:15 *And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

Matthew 18:2-6 *And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.*

Youth Coordinator & Parish Council Liaison: Jo Ann Parris (407) 353-2547; jparris3@hotmail.com

Educational & Spiritual

From its earliest days, the Church placed great emphasis on a program of nurture, edification, and catechesis, or instruction in the faith. Before baptism, converts participated in a yearlong process of daily, intense instruction. The process continued for a year thereafter, to insure that each member of the Church was a knowledgeable and articulate missionary of the Gospel. In addition, the Church remained ever-mindful of the scriptural admonition to train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6). In fidelity to this ancient tradition of the Christian community, our parish endeavors to provide a complete program of religious and cultural instruction for both children and adults.

Sunday School

Our Church School is a dedicated teaching ministry of our Orthodox Christian religious faith in which our parish enjoys a sense of justifiable pride. Its devoted teachers have long provided our children with creative, mature, resourceful instruction, and caring love in the treasury of our Orthodox Christian faith and Orthodox traditions. While the example of parents and the ethos of an Orthodox home are paramount in the process of religious formation, formal religious instruction in the faith and praxis to live the faith in Christ is also necessary. Our school, under the spiritual guidance of Fr. Demetre Mott, together with the dedicated teaching and administrative volunteer staff of men and women in the service of our Lord Jesus, stands ready to enter into partnership with the parents of our students in this vital process.

Our program consists of grades Pre-K through Grade 12 with a teaching and administrative staff of dedicated volunteers in the service of our Lord. Each Sunday during the school year, all families are earnestly encouraged to attend the Divine Liturgy that begins at 9:30 a.m. together. After Holy Communion, children go to their respective classes that will run for 45 minutes. Parents are encouraged to participate in Coffee Fellowship while waiting for the Sunday School classes to conclude.

Director: Lukia McLean | (239) 380-4214; kiamou3@gmail.com

Greek School

Our community is blessed to have an outstanding Greek Language program led by a dynamic team of teachers. The program is structured taking into account age and ability. The Greek School has three major presentations during the year: Oxi Day, Greek Independence Day & Graduation. Please feel free to contact the church office or Vasiliki for more information or an application.

Director: Vasiliki Lempesis (239) 307-8557; metropoulos@yahoo.com

Oratorical Festival

Introduced in 1983, the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival provides Greek Orthodox teenagers the opportunity to write and talk about their faith. The Oratorical Festival Program begins at the parish level and is divided into three divisions:

Elementary Division (local festival only) for students in grades 4–6, Junior Division for students in grades 7–9
Senior Division for student in grades 10–12

Director: Pete Albanis (773) 251-2773; palbanis@forthepeople.com

Myrrhbearers

Young ladies of our community are invited to participate in the Good Friday services and other special liturgical celebrations throughout the year including visits from our hierarchs.

Director: Jo Ann Parris (407) 353-2547; jparris3@hotmail.com

Youth Choir

The youth choir commenced in 2022 and focuses on teaching our youth the hymnology of our church as well as an appreciation and better understanding of the Divine Liturgy

Director: Fr. Demetre

Altar Servers – Acolytes

The word acolyte comes from the Greek and means attendant that is free from sin. Acolytes or altar boys have a very important role in the Orthodox Church services. They help priests and bishops better serve God and the Church. Altar boys represent the angels of the church because they are pure and are always ready to assist all those who need them. It is a great honor to serve as an acolyte.

The most important thing young boys must realize is that when they are an acolyte or altar boy, people are depending on them and look up to them to better reach God through prayer. Altar boys are an example to others so they must always be calm, pious, and ready to serve. Altar boys should be in the altar by the beginning of the Divine Liturgy in order to assist the priest in each of the processions. If you have any questions, please contact Father Demetre.

Directors: Paul Manos (239) 777-8838; manossteel@aol.com

Michael Karras

Fellowship

JOY/HOPE

The mission and goal of the Hope & Joy ministry is to lead our children into experiencing the Holy Orthodox Faith, creating strong bonds with their Orthodox friends and building the foundation of our Orthodox faith through worship, fellowship and service.

We welcome all children from preschool through 5th grade to join us throughout the year for our gatherings which include summer swim parties, back-to-school roller skating, campfire parties, Holy House, our Holy Friday retreat, and much more. There is no fee for joining the Hope & Joy ministry and we welcome parent participation and involvement.

Directors: Mila Kanellopoulos (407) 923-6012; miladrsilva@gmail.com

Georgia Withers (714) 357-3465; georgiawithers1@gmail.com

Little Lambs

Little Lambs is a meetup for the youngest members of our church, from newborn to 4 years old, with their caregiver. We gather on Sundays in the cry room following Holy Communion. We share a snack, sing songs, read stories, and learn about being an Orthodox Christian. Our Sunday gatherings will follow the Sunday School calendar. We also meet up once a month outside of church for fellowship and fun.

Director: Presbytera Natalie (727) 946-4079; Natalie.mott87@gmail.com

GOYA Ministry (Greek Orthodox Youth of America)

The Greek Orthodox Youth of America (GOYA), ministers to our youth grades 7– 12. Our GOYA program holds monthly meetings/activities, participates in Metropolis events and provides help at our Festival along with many more activities. There is no fee to join GOYA.

Directors: Steven Calakos (609) 805-2648; scalakos@gmail.com

Marina Floratos (484) 477-6313; marina.floratos@gmail.com

Cultural

Hellenic Dance

The mission of the Hellenic Dance Ministry is to teach Greek dances to our children. Students learn dances from many different regions. Through these dances, children gain a deeper understanding of Greek history and culture and, of course, they have fun together!

Meetings are scheduled on specific Sundays after church. Our program is open to all children in grades 1-12 (three separate classes are held simultaneously), and no prior experience is necessary to join in.

Directors: Tina Ketis (239) 777-3980; jtketis@gmail.com

Soula Theo (239) 961-7343; theosoula@yahoo.com