

An Invitation to Membership at St. George Greek Orthodox Church Become Part of our Family!

St. George Greek Orthodox Church serves to proclaim the ancient Eastern Orthodox Faith to all in Kern County. Although we are a member of the Greek Orthodox Church, we are a vibrant, ethnically and culturally diverse community with members of many varied backgrounds – some who were born in the Faith, many others who converted to the Faith. We are more than just a place for worship on Sundays - we are an active Orthodox Christian community with a wide variety of ministries.

We invite you to come and experience the Faith of the Apostles – The Faith of the Orthodox!!



"It has become fashionable to attend a church which fits the attended, but we Orthodox have never succumbed to fashion, and rather than attend a church which fits itself to us, we attend the Church which Christ founded for us, and then try to fit ourselves to Him."

You are welcome to join us in worship.

Parish Ministries

Our Parish is a busy place, bustling with activity and lots of opportunities **for you** to participate in the many ministries which make St. George Greek Orthodox Church a special place:

- **Philoptochos Society:** The Philoptochos (“Friends of the Poor”) Society provides spiritual fellowship and important service to our community by fundraising to aid those in need. They also promote the charitable, benevolent, and philanthropic purposes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, through instructional programs, presentations, lectures, seminars and other educational resources.

And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.
- **Coffee Social:** Fellowship is an important part of our Faith. Join us after Divine Liturgy every Sunday when we share a common meal and get to know other members of our Faith. If you are so moved, you can also choose to sponsor a lunch as well.

Hebrews 13:16
- **Choir:** Praising God with their voices, our Choir has a long tradition of music in the Church. If you have any interest in music, please consider joining our choir.
- **Prosforo (Holy Bread):** Prosforo is used in the preparation of the Eucharist (serving as the “Body of Christ”) and for distribution at the end of Divine Liturgy as “Antidoron” (“in lieu of Gift”). If you would like to offer bread for the Eucharist, please let us know. If you don’t know how to make it, a guide for making Prosfora is included on our website under “Ministries”.
- **St. Amilia Fellowship (Mothers Group):** Open to all moms, even if your kids are in school during the day.
- **Website:** Keep in touch with the parish schedule, news and other valuable links at our website at www.stgeorgebakersfield.org. The website is update often. By visiting our website you can also sign up to receive our weekly bulletin via email, which includes the Sunday Gospel and Epistle readings, thoughts from the Saints, the hymns for the Sunday Liturgy, and other news and notes. Included are also a series of links to sites that contain a great deal of information regarding the Ancient Eastern Orthodox Faith.

Educational Ministries

St. George Greek Orthodox Church offers a wide array of educational ministries for every segment of our community. No matter what your age or level of experience, we have a ministry that can help provide an enriching and rewarding educational experience.

- **Faith / Inquirers Class:** This class meets Wednesday evenings after Vespers to explore the rich heritage of the Ancient Orthodox faith.
- **Orthodox Christian Fellowship** – A place for college students to share fellowship, challenges, and their Faith
- **Religious Education:** We offer structured educational programs from preschool to high school.
- **Premarital Education:** An essential part of the wedding process in the Orthodox community, this class helps couples prepare for Holy Matrimony.

*An Athonite elder said: "A monk does not just study dogmas; he lives by them. When he reads the Holy Scripture or the patristic writings, he is not doing it to gain knowledge but to learn a language of ineffable words with which God speaks through one's prayer."
- Sayings of the Desert Fathers*
- **Greek School:** Basic Greek is taught weekly to those who are interested in learning this ancient language of the Church.
- **Bookstore:** Inside the Hall we have a bookstore filled with a wide variety of books for all ages, icons, prayer ropes and other items for sale.
- **Altar Servers:** Young men learn about the services of the Church and how to properly serve in God's Holy Altar.
- **High School and Junior High Youth Groups:** The Youth Directors hold a weekly fellowship of the teens in the parish to engage them in the faith and offer time for fellowship amongst their peers.
- **Vespers Service:** Weekday evening prayer services are held Tuesday thru Saturday nights in Church

Social Ministries

Our Church constantly offers opportunities to both serve our fellow man and enjoy one another's company. Here are just a few examples of the regular social events of our community.

- **Youth Events:** Our Youth Directors organize weekly youth activities in addition to our informative religious education program through our Church School. provides the opportunity for us to spend time together in a camp environment, enjoy the majesty of the Sequoias, and attend Divine Liturgy at the Monastery of the Theotokos of the Life Giving Stream.
- **Greek Food Festivals:** Our annual Fall and Spring Greek Food Festivals are one way we share our cultural heritage with the community, drawing thousands of participants from all over Kern County. It's also a great time for getting to know all your fellow parishioners. All Parishioners are needed for food prep. *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.*
-Ephesians 13:15
- **Church School Picnic:** Before the summer break, our community gathers for a picnic celebrating the educational accomplishments of our young people and to encourage them in the learning of the faith.
- **Easter Picnic:** Each year after Pascha, we gather Sunday afternoon for an Agape service and picnic to celebrate the resurrection by breaking the fast and proclaiming "Christ is Risen, Truly He has Risen."
- **Christmas Party:** A chance for us to come together with our families, and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas
- **Summer Camp:** Our children attend summer camp at St. Nicholas Ranch in Dunlap, CA and make friends for a lifetime while learning about their faith.
- **Family Camp** – Held every January at St. Nicholas Ranch in Dunlap, CA, this

Christian Stewardship

Christian Stewardship is...

- ❖ Learning how to be a responsible and concerned caretaker of Christ's Church; it is learning how to enjoy Church life and be happy in Church work, for in Her dwells the fullness of the Spirit of God.
- ❖ Our active commitment to use all our time, talent and treasure for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love.
- ❖ Caring for the needs of others.
- ❖ Offering one's self to God as He offered Himself to us.
- ❖ What a person does after saying "I believe..." as proof of that belief.
- ❖ Devotion and service to God and His Church as persons, as families, as parish, as diocese/metropolis, as national Church and as Church universal.

*From **Oriented Leadership** by William & McKibben*

At St. George, we encourage all members to **tithe**.

"I am the Vine; You are the branches."

Membership Benefits

By becoming a pledging member of St. George Church, you not only receive the satisfaction of knowing you are helping proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but your membership entitles you to many other benefits:

- Participation in our General Assembly meetings, including voting rights.
- Discounts for Hall and Park Rentals, Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

Contact Us!

We are here Tuesday through Sunday (closed Monday) to help our community members with all their needs.

St. George Greek Orthodox Church
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Choir Director	choir@ourparish.us
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Bookstore	bookstore@ourparish.us
Website and Bulletin	editor@ourparish.us
Facebook	www.facebook.com/groups/175227557308/
Young Adults Facebook Page	www.facebook.com/groups/167317129958745/
For administrative needs and all other inquiries (including Hall and Park Rentals), please contact the church secretary	secretary@ourparish.us

Appendix A: A History of Our Parish

It was during the late 1800's and early 1900's that many immigrants from Greece came to the Bakersfield area. The railroad was the main attraction for many of these individuals and families, because then, as today, railroad activity was a large part of the Bakersfield economy. Other settlers engaged in farming and other businesses that supported the railroad and the railroad workers. Included in this was the operator of the first silent movie theater in Bakersfield. Others operated fresh fruit stands, confectionary stands, restaurants, shoe shine stands, and barber shops. Some were popcorn and/or peanut vendors who operate their stands "on wheels" on many of the street corners in downtown and east Bakersfield.

As the numbers of these early settlers increased, they felt the need, like other ethnic groups at the time, to organize themselves to promote the general welfare of their people, their Faith, and their heritage. The first formal organization of Greeks in Bakersfield happened in 1923 and was called "The Socrates". While this organization was charged to help these immigrants and their families maintain their Faith and heritage, it was also tasked with helping them assimilate into the land of opportunity called America. This included helping them learn English, fostering "Americanism" to the youth, and preparing them to become naturalized American citizens. The upholding of American ideals was a common practice among the early Greeks.

As the group grew, they began the process of looking for property to help provide a focal point for their community. They accomplished this in 1924 by the purchase of a piece of property at 401 Truxtun Avenue, where they build a small hall that served as place for both religious and social gatherings. That same year, the name of the community was formally changed to, "The Hellenic American Community of Bakersfield". God bless the founders of our parish and the first Board of Directors A. Simos, D. Simos, Ch. Papailias, A.K. Panteloupoulos, Angelos D. Pavlow, Geo. M. Vehetis, A. Papazafiroopoulos, Peter Gekas, Peter Samios, John P. Asimakopulas and A. Bassilopulos. In 1925, a baptismal font was purchased and donated to the Church by Mr. Bill Christy. This font continues to be used in our Church today. During this decade, in 1929, the Order of AHEPA of Bakersfield was established.

After this time the community continued to grow, from less than 100 families to over 200 families by the early 1930's. It was at this time that the community decided that they needed a separate Church. They built a small Church behind their hall in 1932, with Father Luis Skidatari officiating at the laying of the cornerstone. On April 23, 1932, the name of the community was changed to, "The Hellenic Community of St. George Greek Orthodox Church". Fifty-one signatures were required to make this change. In 1936, the first Sunday School and Greek Schools were established with Irene Carnakis serving as the teacher.

Up until this time and through 1944 the community did not have a permanent priest. This changed in 1944 with the appointment of Father Vasilios Markopoulos as the first permanent priest. Later that year, the first choir was established under the leadership of Irene Carnakis with Petsie Mellas Balasis serving as the organist.

In 1947, the community purchased the adjacent property at 405 Truxtun and constructed our present Church building. The building that had previously served as our Church was sold. The group that purchased the Church building moved it to the corner of Niles Street and Oswell.

The earthquake of 1952 devastated many parts of downtown Bakersfield. Unfortunately, our community was not spared. The newly built Church suffered some damage to the bell towers and the hall located next to the Church (which was built in 1924) suffered extensive damage as well and was condemned by the city. It remained standing for a few years afterward as the basement area of that building was still able to be used. Eventually, the building was demolished.

In 1956, His Grace Bishop Demetrios of the Fourth Diocese of Los Angeles officiated at the dedication of our Church. He was assisted by Rev. Naom Nitsiotis of San Bernardino and our assigned priest, Father John Bersentes. Mr. Pete Apostolos served as the Godfather of the Church. Mr. Apostolos was the individual who donated the land now known as Hellenic Park (the site of our Greek Food Festival) to the community.

In 1966, the foundation was laid for our present hall, with Father Andrew Daregas officiating.

In 1974, the 50th anniversary of the community was celebrated and the first Greek Food Festival was held.

An educational building was constructed in the back of Hellenic Park in 1981.

Today, St. George is truly a pan-orthodox home to nearly 100 families from a variety of backgrounds, with an active schedule of religious and social events. All of this has been made possible through the pledges and donations of people like you.