03/12/2021

A Christmas Spectacular St. Stefanos – Greek Orthodox Church, St. Petersburg, Florida



On Saturday, December 4th at 6:00 p.m., the St. Stefanos parish presents, “One Small Hand Reaches Out to the Starlight”. The community is hosting a Christmas journey through time in narration, music, instruments, and dance to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Christmas pageant is written and directed by Choir Director John Arambages.

Over the last 6 months, Mr. Arambages used his musical and artistic talents to dedicate his time to draft this production to be shared with our community, live and on our YouTube channel. He was inspired to share a realistic viewpoint of the Nativity. With dedication and faith, he extracted historical elements from the Nativity that are less known. For example, the Ode of the Theotokos (Η Ωδη της Θεοτοκου). The text is taken from the Gospel of Luke where Mary greets Elizabeth, and Elizabeth praises Mary for her faith. Mary responds with what is now known as the Magnificat, one of the eight most ancient Christian hymns. It will contain live music, instruments, singing, dancing, costumes, and historical readings. The pageant will be presented by the St. Stefanos Choir with a cast of 75 family and friends from the Tampa Bay are community, in English and Greek.

St. Stefanos is a tight knit community on the west central gulf coast of Florida with a rich history. In late 1961, approximately 30 families came together to form the parish. The founders were businessman, professionals, and labor people who not only worked hard in their day jobs to support their families but also worked hard to build a church and maintain the Greek language and culture. Our dedicated founders endured obstacles that all immigrants faced, yet persevered and raised money to find a location, architects, builders, and iconographers to build the church. In 1965 a three-acre site was purchased, and the last Sunday of September 1965, groundbreaking ceremonies for the new St. Stefanos Greek Orthodox Church took place. St. Stefanos has cherry wood pews, gold and crystal kandilia (hanging lamps) that adorn the walls of the sanctuary and were imported from Corfu, Greece. Large hands painted icons are from Greece. The Holy Altar contains the relics of the St. Haralambos the Priest-Martyr, St. Anysia the Martyr, and the Holy Fathers at Raitho in Sinai. The building and dedication of the church was completed in 1968. The church continued to grow! In February 2001, St. Stefanos celebrated the Dedication of a new Educational Building, which houses the church office and the priest's office, a small library, and several classrooms for Sunday school, Greek School and various ministry meetings and events during the week. The St. Stefanos Parish Family has now grown to over 200 families and continues to excel in its outreach to the people of the Greater St. Petersburg Area.

Recently in December of 2020, St. Stefanos welcomed Father Sampson Kasapakis, his wife Presvytera Mallory, and his children Sophia, Chris, and Evangelia, to the St. Stefanos family. Fr. Sampson is a graduate of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and was ordained to the priesthood in September of 2015. He has served at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Tarpon Springs, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Pensacola, FL and currently St. Stefanos in St. Petersburg. In addition to his service to the St. Stefanos community, Fr. Sampson serves the Holy Metropolis of Atlanta Ministries as the Clergy Representative of the Hellenic College Holy Cross Alumni Board, the Week 5 Director of St. Stephens Camp and as the Chairman and Director of the Hellenic Dance Festival.

Please join us live on our YouTube channel to see this original, creative, and beautiful Christmas presentation. Tickets may be purchased online, and donations can be made through PayPal. Let's welcome the Advent season together as one Orthodox Christian family!

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