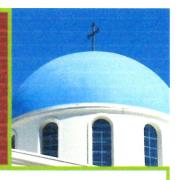
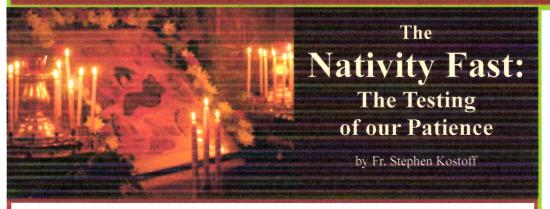
Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Church

December 2018 - January 2019

www.saintsophias.org email: stsophia.bellingham@gmail.com (360) 734-8745 510 East Sunset Drive Bellingham, Washington 98225





On November 15th we begin the forty day Nativity Fast, one of four seasons of the year during which we are called upon to intensify our spiritual lives through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. I would like to expand on this by emphasizing the necessary virtue of patience that accompanies any period of preparation in the life of the Church. We are directed to observe a fast as we prepare for the advent of the Son of God in the flesh. This is only for forty days, but that can seem like a very long period to make some alterations and adjustments in our lifestyles! Clearly, it has its challenges, all of which we are very much aware of. We know that the "sacred" number of forty – years or days - is a very scriptural number, always implying a period of expectation and fulfillment, a movement begun and completed in accordance with the express will of God. That could be the forty years of Israel's wandering in the desert, or the Lord fasting for forty days in the wilderness. Yet, less specifically, we need to understand the great length of time that Israel was forced to wait for its deliverance. If we think in terms of Abraham to Christ, we become aware of the 3 x 14 generations that Saint Matthew lists in the opening genealogy of his Gospel. That is a long history indeed, filled with God's providential care for His chosen people, but also filled with apostasy and betrayal on the part of Israel-a history embracing Israel's victories against its surrounding enemies, but also its subjugation and

humiliation at the hands of other enemies.

While this tumultuous and even torturous history of Israel was unfolding, the prophets were both exhorting and chastising the people, but also speaking of deliverance. Although this is a very complex development, there were clear indications among the prophets of a Messiah figure sometimes very human, but at times a transcendent figure - around whom and in whom these longings for deliverance were concentrated. He would be the Lord's Anointed, and as such he would proclaim deliverance and salvation to That profound and poignant Israel. sense of longing for deliverance is beautifully expressed in the two hymns found in the opening chapters of Saint Luke's Gospel, the first from Saint Zechariah [Luke 1:67-79) and the other, the Magnificat of the Theotokos [Luke 1:46-55]. One needs only to read the Book of Isaiah to get a sense of this messianic longing which took on universal dimensions, so that all the peoples of the earth would come to know the one true God and then come to Zion to worship Him. We read of the Son of Man, the Suffering Servant of the Lord, and of the Messiah throughout the prophetic books of the Old Testament. This basic human longing for regaining a "lost paradise" in one form or another was gathered around these mysterious figures "promised" by the prophets who, in turn, were those chosen by God to deliver God's word to the people of Israel. But many generations were



Christmas Services

at St. Sophia

Christmas Eve Day Monday, Dec. 24th 9:30 am Royal Hours 6:00 pm Vesperal Liturgy

Christmas Day Tuesday, Dec. 25th 8:45am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Epiphany Services

Friday, January 4th 9:30 am Royal Hours Eve of Theophany Saturday, January 5th 8:45 am Orthros

9:30 Liturgy and Aghiasmos 6:00 pm Great Vespers

> Theophany Sunday, January 6th

9:00 am Orthros 10:00 am Liturgy and Blessing of the Waters

11:45 Vasilopita Cutting and Auction 12:45 Blessing of the Bay at Marine Park

St. John the Baptist

Monday, January 7th 8:45 am Orthros; 9:30 am Liturgy disappointed that these prophetic promises were not fulfilled in their time.

If we can appreciate this sense of waiting and longing, we can understand better how we, as contemporary Christians, in a very modest sense, are re-living or actualizing the experience of Israel as we await the advent of our Lord in a specially designated period known as the Nativity/Advent Fast. designated forty days serves as a microcosm of Israel's testing and preparation. Waiting implies expectation. perhaps even a certain sense of excitement. (Ask your children about that!). But it also implies patience, stabilized and strengthened by trust and faith in God, especially when we encounter obstacles, temptations, doubts, diversions and distractions. Therefore, if Israel waited for the Lord's Anointed, so will we as the New Israel of God. Of course, we know and believe that the Messiah has come as Jesus of Nazareth, and our festal cycle again allows us to also re-live and actualize that advent on an annual basis, so as to renew our sense of fulfillment of the prophecies of old and to again "greet" the newborn Christ Child with great joy and thanksgiving to God for working out our salvation "in the midst of the earth." All Christian believers of all ages can experience a child-like joy in the birth of Christ, the Son of God Who became flesh. We have the decided advantage of knowing all of this in advance, and this has been expressed very powerfully in the Epistle to the Hebrews, wherein the author, after reminding the early Christians of the great faith of the saints who lived before Christ, further reminds them of the great privilege of having lived in the time of fulfillment: "And all these, though well-attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" [Hebrews 11:39-40].

We cannot join "the world" in its indifference to Christ. And we cannot descend to the level of the crass commercialization of Christmas. We are, after all, Christians! Our goal is to fulfill the words of the Apostle Paul" "I therefore... beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" [Ephesians 4:1-3]. This will test our patience, our trust in God, and our faith. It has never been otherwise.



8th Annual Blessing of the Bay

Sunday, January 6th, 2016 12:45 pm (After Coffee Hour at Church) Location: Marine Park Near Ferry Building



Warm Jacket and Shoe Drive Please search your closets for new and/or gently used jackets and shoes that you and/or your children no longer wear and donate them to the Lighthouse Mission before the cold weather hits. A donation box can be

found in the fellowship hall. Contact: Kim Weil

A friendly reminder: If you have done so already, as the end of the year approaches, please make sure your parish stewardship commitment is up to date. Thank you!

BOOKSTORE NEWS

We continue to offer our parish the opportunity to purchase items related to exploring and celebrating our Orthodox Christian Faith.

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS:

- #1 bestseller: THE ORTHODOX STUDY BIBLE (ancient Christianity speaks to today's world) This Bible includes insightful footnotes for interpretation.
- 2. THE ASCETIC LIVES OF MOTHERS
- 3. NEARLY ORTHODOX (great book for young people)
- WE PRAY (ages 2-10)
- 5. ORTHODOXY AND HETERODOXY

OTHER THAN BOOKS:

Christmas cards in packs of 15 or sold separately.

Christmas ornaments; censers and censer supplies. Greek coffee; spices for baking.

FOR THE CAR: visor clips; hanging crosses

ICONS: wide selection available and we also special order. WOOD PLAQUE: "Lord, Bless those who enter into this house......" 5"X 5" (prayer by St. Nikolai Velimirovic)

We invite you to visit and become acquainted with everything your bookstore offers; suggestions warmly accepted.

Blessed Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas from your bookstore staff.

A special thank you for your support.

Coffee Hour Hosts for

December 2018-February 2019

December 2 Effie Eissses, Kim Weil, Eleni Zobolas December 9 Ibtissam Mansour, Angelina Moussi December 16 Evelyn Lallas, Tula Trames, Harieklia Bryant

December 23 NO COFFEE HOUR December 30 Yanolla Boulos, Nahla Gholam

January 6 Jane Costello, Amber Owen January 13 Dorine Boulos, Marie Boulos January 20 Francine Tsoulouhas, Kathy Tsoulouhas January 27 Christine Gholam, Nadia Boulos

February 3 Marina Polichronakis, Effie Bachelor February 10 Eleni Zourkos, Nia Zourkos, Tammy Stavropoulos

February 17 PHILOPTOCHOS fundraiser lunch February 24 Effie Eisses, Kim Weil, Eleni Zobolas

Donations Wish List...

- + New altar server robes: Approximate cost: \$200 each. At 5 gold-colored robes desired of various sizes.
- + \$25 Safeway or Fred Meyer Gift Cards: preferably with inability to purchase alcohol or cigarettes
- + Olive oil for church candles: \$80 for three month supply.
- + 2 cubic foot Microwave for Church Hall: Approximately \$200
- + Movie screen for Church hall: varying prices.
- + Large oriental rug for church narthex entry area.
- + Cost of various "Welcome" and "Visitor
 Parking" signs for front lawn of church: \$75 each.
- + Speakers for Fellowship Hall.
- + Motion sensor security lights for parking lot and around church building.
- + Algae Removal Pressure washing of church dome (late Spring)

Our Condolences:

To Francine Tsoulouhas, on the passing of her father, Peter (Panagiotis) Kyriazis

To Jen Amundgaard, on the passing of her father, Tim.

May their memories be eternal!

Philoptochos Vasilopita Cutting and Auction

Sunday, January 6th

Parish Vasilopita Cutting will take place at the conclusion of the Liturgy. The Vasilopita Auction will take place during the coffee hour. Please bake and bring a vasilopita to sell for a great cause! Proceeds to benefit St. Basil Academy, the Philoptochos Sponsored orphanage located in Garrison, New York.

"A Journey to Fullness" Video Series

Shown during most coffee hours, beginning at 12:15 pm. This is a 16-video series designed to help introduce the richness and fullness of the Orthodox Christian Faith to the serious-minded Christian. Each video is about 15 minutes long.

Topics for November and December...

"When did the Orthodox Church Begin?"
"Characteristics of Orthodox Christianity"
"Mindset Matters" "A Healing Purpose" "Truth and Tradition"

Studies of the Orthodox Faith

Wednesdays Nov. 28th, Dec. 5th, Dec. 19th 6:30 pm coffee, 7:00-8:00 pm discussion.

We will meet at the home of Ben and Jen Amundgaard. (2838 McLeod, Bellingham). This class is intended for both present Orthodox Christians and those interested in becoming catechumens to convert to Orthodoxy. If you would like to participate, please see Fr. Michael.

Choir Notes

Come sing with us! Our next few rehearsals dates are:

- + Thurs. Dec. 6 th, 7 pm at Brooksana's home
- + Sun. Dec. 9 at 12:15 after coffee hour
- + Thurs. Jan. 3 at 7 pm at Brooksana's home
- + Sun. Jan. 13 at 12:15 after coffee hour

You'll notice that we are having rehearsals at two different times to accommodate as many as possible! We are working on our Christmas Music, and several traditional liturgical pieces.

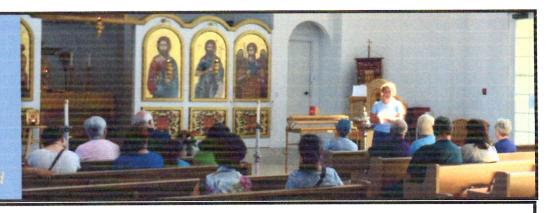
Bible Study

Meets most
Wednesdays
at 11:00 am in the
Church's McIntyre
Fellowship Hall.



How to Lead a Church Tour

Training offered on Sun. Dec. 2nd



Dear community of St. Sophia,

Can you believe two months have gone by since our Festival? I'm still thinking about what a wonderful event it was. You all worked so hard for the good of our parish! Thank you!

During the Festival it was my privilege, along with Fr. Michael, to welcome visitors inside the church and teach them about our Orthodox Faith. The building at St Sophia is so spectacular, it is a theology lesson in itself! Everything in it directs your attention back to Jesus Christ.

This year we had four tours a day, plus services and the chance to answer questions when people came in at other times. Many people stayed after the tours to ask more questions. The visitors also made use of the informational booklets in the narthex, and several people signed the guest book saying that they'd like to know more about Orthodoxy and perhaps become members of the church. This year Justina Macdonald was my assistant.

This is how the tours go: as we walk through the church, I describe to them the history of our community and the building, and the structure of the building. We start out in the narthex and I have them hold the beeswax candles and smell them while I explain that we light a candle and say a prayer when we come into church, not because it's a superstition like making a wish, but because that's how we begin to quiet ourselves down and leave the world behind when we come into church. Then we go from there, discussing the nave, the dome, the iconostasis and icons. I've noticed that people in Bellingham love nature, so I am careful to explain that we also love nature because it is a gift from God for us, and that it is doubly sanctified because of Jesus' incarnation when he took on flesh.

Then I have the people ask questions. They always ask about the difference with Catholicism. They also like to ask about the Theotokos and whether we read the Bible. Then to end the tour, I and Justina Macdonald sang the hymn of St Sophia, in two parts (with ison), so they can hear some of our music.

This year, for the first time, three people, all in different groups, broke down crying when they told me how much they liked the beauty of the church and the Orthodox theology. This was something new for me, and very humbling.

If you would like to be part of the ministry of doing church tours, I will be doing a training on December 2 at 12:15 after Liturgy. We'll meet in the narthex. Please ask me if you have any questions!

Presvytera Elizabeth

Prosphoro Baking Ministry

Nov. 18th Judy Moularas (4) Nov. 25th Kim Weil (4)

Dec. 2nd Tammy Stavropoulos (4)

Dec. 9th Jen Amundgaard (4)
Dec. 16th Adrienne Hunter (6)
Dec. 23rd Christos Christoforou (8)

Dec. 30th Brooksana Raney (6) Jan. 6th Judy Moularas

Jan. 13th Kim Weil

Jan. 20th Adrienne Hunter Jan. 27th Tammy Stavropoulos



JOIN US FOR GREEK DANCE!

Most Tuesday Evenings 6:30 pm Kids 7:00 pm Adults

Contact: Eleni Zobolas 847.226.9797 or

Star Vagelaras 610.999.7827



Important Dates

Sun. Dec. 9th Parish General Assembly

Sun. Dec. 17th Parish Council Elections

Sun. Jan. 6th Blessing of the Bay

Sat. Feb. 23rd Apokreatiko Glendi

Mon. Mar. 11th Great Lent Begins

Sun. Apr. 21st Palm Sunday

Sun. Apr. 28th Orthodox

Automatic Deposit or Credit Card Payment of Stewardship

If you are interested in stewardship giving by automatic deposit or stewardship, please call the church office.





"Philoptochos" Means "Friends of the Poor"

Our National Ministry Commitments for November

+ Ecumenical Patriarchate

Benefits the philanthropic programs and the charities of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

+ National Sisterhood of Presvyteres

Provides short term support for clergy and their families in a time of crisis.

Our National Ministry Commitments for December:

+United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) General Medical Fund
Provides financial resources for individuals in need of assistance not specifically covered by other
restricted National Funds or Programs

Our Commitment to Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos Charities:

+ St. Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center

Our Chapter Commitments to Local Charities in Whatcom County:

+ Brigid Collins Family Support Center + Kids'n'Cancer Camp Agape N/W
Family Promise- Homeless Family Shelter Program + Whatcom County Pregnancy Clinic

Upcoming Events:

+ Bake Sale: Sunday, November 18, after Liturgy

+ Christmas Tea: Saturday, December 15. Time and place to be announced

+ Vasilopita Auction to Benefit St. Basil Academy and Orphanage: Sunday, January 6 during coffee hour.



St. Sophia Parishioner, Jason Morgan, Participates in the "Crossroads" Program at Holy Cross-Hellenic College in Brookline, Mass.

My experience at Crossroad is one of those experiences that is hard to describe because of how awesome it was. However, I owe it to all the people that helped me go to try to put it into words. It started with me arriving in Boston, I had to wait for a little bit before I was picked up by a Crossroad staff. Once I was picked up I was taken to the campus of Hellenic College/Holy Cross and met my fellow "Crossroaders. There

were about thirty of us. That night we had dinner and started devotionals. A devotional is a reflection on the good things that happened each day and sharing them with the rest of the group. The next day, we started our class sessions, first was with priestmonk Fr. Maximos Constas who taught us about the scriptures. Next Dr. George Demacopoulos, who taught us about the history of the church and theology. We had seven class sessions with each. After that, we went to an activity called "Project Adventure" where the Crossroaders were split into three groups to do activities to bond with each other. Our days were mostly structured like this with two class sessions and some activity afterwards. We visited six churches: two Greek, one Coptic, two Antiochian, and one OCA. We also did things like "Liturgy on the Streets," in which we approached homeless people and fed them. We also visited a nursing home. After our Theology and Scripture classes we had classes with Dr. Albert Rossi who taught us about love and purity. We learned about "three stages of learning" that asked "Who am "Who is God?" and "Who is my neighbor?" At the end of each stage Crossroaders could share what they learned with everyone with an "open-mic night." This is the speech that I gave during the end of the second stage, which I will end with.

"The Road to Wisdom"

It is with a burdened heart that I write the way to wisdom is suffering. Let's start with how I know this, on June 5, 2004 my father died from a heart attack, I was three years old. So, all of my life I was trying to find my earthly father in other men. Also, I suppose that I was lucky because my mom is a therapist, so I had someone to talk with. Anyway, I still suffered because everyone around me was getting attention from their earthly father, but I was not. It took me eight years to finally understand that I was not going to find my earthly father. This was when my wisdom started to grow, I was starting to understand death and suffering. After I came to this realization, I started to understand the purpose of suffering. The purpose of suffering, in my case, was so that I could be the ear and healer for those who hurt, felt anger, or anguish. Because if you suppress emotion it will build up and when you release it, it will be more damaging to yourself and the others around you. And from this my faith grew because I started to understand that it is painful that I don't have my earthly father, but my Heavenly Father was more important. Therefore, I started to build my faith and I started to see the beauty in everything. And I will admit that life with suffering is hard, but if you can find that person to talk to and choose to let emotion to go through you. You will overcome your suffering and grow wisdom about life and faith. Granted your suffering will always be with you and it will ebb and flow, but you will gain control of it. And that is where wisdom thrives.

Jason Morgan

Liturgical & Events Calendar

DECEMBER 2018

St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church Bellingham, Washington

Michael

wed tue mon Confessions by appointment 6:00 Great Vespers 14th Sunday of Luke St. Barbara 8:45 am Orthros 9:00 Matins 10 am Divine Liturgy 8:45 am Orthros St. Nicholas 11:15 Youth 9:30 am Liturgy 11:00 am Bible Study Catechism Confessions by 8:45 am Orthros 11:30 Coffee appointment **Greek Dance** 9:30 am Liturgy Fellowship 6:30 pm Young 6:30 pm Studies of 6:00 Great Vespers Dancers the Faith 7:00pm Adult Dance 13 St. Eleftherios 15 H 10th Sunday of Luke 9 10 St. Spyridon 8:45 am Orthros 8:45 am Orthros 10 am Divine 9:30 am Liturgy 11 am Philoptochos 8:45 am Orthros Liturgy **Greek Dance** 9:30 am Liturgy Christmas Tea 11:15 Youth 6:30 pm Young Catechism 11:00 am Bible Study Dancers Confessions by **PARISH** 7:00pm Adult Dance appointment **GENERAL ASSEMBLY** 6:00 Great Vespers 11th Sunday of Luke 6 9:00 Matins 8:45 am Orthros 10 am Divine Liturgy 11:00 am Bible Study **Christmas Pageant** Confessions by 11:30 Coffee appointment Fellowship 6:30 pm Studies of PARISH COUNCIL 6:00 Great Vespers the Faith **ELECTION** Sunday 27 26 Eve of Nativity 24 Holy Nativity Before the Nativity **Christmas Day** 8:45 am Orthros 10 am Divine Liturgy 9:30 am Royal 11:15 Youth Catechism Hours 8:30 am Orthros 11:30 Coffee 9:30 am Liturgy Fellowship 6:00 pm Vesperal 12:30 Christmas Lituray of St. Basil No Vespers Caroling Sunday 31 After the Nativity 8:45 am Orthros 10 am Divine Liturgy 11:15 Youth Catechism 11:30 Coffee Fellowship 6:00 pm Great 12 noon Q&A w/ Fr. Vespers

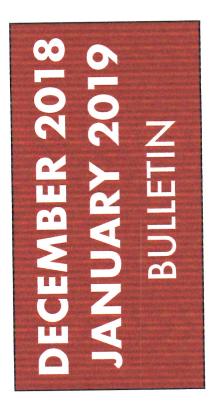
JANUARY 2019

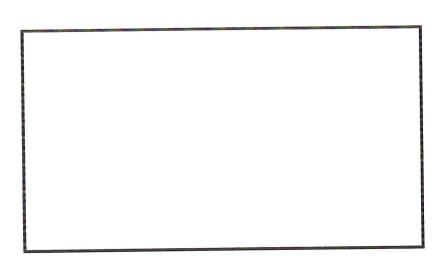
Liturgical & Events Calendar St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church Bellingham, Washington

mon-		tuo	wed	thu	fri	sat
ПОП		tue	vveu	triu	11.1	Sat
		New Year's Day	2	3		4 EVE OF 5 THEOPHANY
		9:30 am Liturgy of St.			9:30 am Royal Hours of Theophany	8:45 am Orthros 9:30 am Liturgy & Blessing of the Waters (at Church)
				7pm Choir Practice		6pm Great Vespers
	7	8	9	10	11	
330 Vasilopita Auction 2:45 Blessing of the 3ay at Marine Park Synaxis of St. John the Baptist 8:45 am Orthros 9:30 am Liturgy	Orthodox C Assocation I	Washington Orthodox Clergy Association Mtg. at	9:00 Matins			
		St. Sophia	6:30 pm Studies of			5:00 Confessions by Appointment 6:00 pm Great
			the Faith			Vespers
Sunday After 13 Theophany 3:45 am Orthros 10 am Divine Liturgy 11:15 Coffee Hour Fellowship 11:15 Youth Catechism 12:15 Choir Practice	14	15	16			
			9:00 Matins 11:00 am Bible Study	St. Anthony the Great 8:45 am Orthros 9:30 am Liturgy	Cyrl, Patriarchs of Alexandria 8:45 am Orthros 9:30 am Liturgy	5:00 Confessions by Appointment 6:00 pm Great Vespers
12th Sunday 20 of Luke 3:45 am Orthros 0 am Divine Liturgy 11:15 Coffee Hour Fellowship 11:15 Youth Catechism 11:45 Q&A with Fr.	21 2:	22	23	24	1 25	5
		6:30 pm Studies of		App 6:00	5:00 Confessions b Appointment 6:00 pm Great Vespers	
			tho , all.			
	28	29	Three Hierarchs: 30 Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom 8:45 am Orthros 9:30 am Liturgy	3	i	
	of St. John the Baptist 45 am Orthros	Synaxis of St. John the Baptist 45 am Orthros 30 am Liturgy	Circumcision of our Lord St. Basil 8:45 am Orthros 9:30 am Liturgy of St. Basil 7 Synaxis of St. John the Baptist 45 am Orthros 30 am Liturgy 14 14 15	New Year's Day CircumcIsion of our Lord St. Basil 8:45 am Orthros 9:30 am Liturgy of St. Basil 7 Synaxis of St. John the Baptist 45 am Orthros 30 am Liturgy Assocation Mtg. at St. Sophia 14 15 16 9:00 Matins 11:00 am Bible Study 21 22 23 9:00 Matins 11:00 am Bible Study 6:30 pm Studies of the Faith 11:00 am Bible Study 6:30 pm Studies of the Faith 24 25 26 27 Three Hierarchs:30 Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom 8:45 am Orthros 28	New Year's Day	Circumcision of our Lord St. Basil 8.45 am Orthros 9:30 am Liturgy of St. Basil 8.45 am Orthros 9:30 am Liturgy of St. Basil 8.45 am Orthros 9:30 am Liturgy of St. Basil 8.45 am Orthros 9:00 Matins Orthodox Clergy Association Mig. at St. Sophia 1:00 am Bible Study 6:30 pm Studies of the Faith 1:00 am Bible Study 9:00 Matins Orthos 9:00 Matins 1:00 am Bible Study 9:00 Matins Orthos 9:00 Matins 1:00 am Bible Study 9:00 Matins Orthos 9:00 Matins 1:00 am Bible Study 9:00 Am Liturgy 9:00 Am Liturgy 9:00 Matins 1:00 am Bible Study 9:00 Am Liturgy 9:00 Am Lit

St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church

510 E. Sunset Dr. Bellingham, WA 98225





2019 House and Business Blessings

Please fill out this form and Fr. Michael will call you back to schedule an appointment a house/business blessing. For the house blessing, please have a table, bowl of water, a sprig of basil, and an icon of Christ. If you know someone who may not see this notice but would like their home or business blessed, please contact Fr. Michael. House blessings begin after January 6th. House blessings are not done on Mondays.

Home / Business Blessing Request Form

Name:	Address:	
Preferred time: Morning Aftern	n Evening	
Phone:	Email:	



Please cut out either of these forms and return to:

St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church 510 E. Sunset Drive, Bellingham, WA 98225 or call (360) 734-8745





Please Help Support our Sunday School Program...

... by adding your name to the St. Sophia Parish Christmas Card.

Suggested donation: \$20, but any amount would be appreciated! Please turn in by December 9th.

Proceeds will benefit the Sunday School program. If donating by check, please make payment to St. Sophia GOC and in memo write "Sunday School"

Name(s) as you would like it to appear on the card (Please print):

Please give this envelope with donation to any Sunday School teacher or leave in the collection tray at Liturgy.

Thank you for supporting the spiritual education of our children!