



The History of Christmas Carols



Carols were first sung in Europe thousands of years ago, but these were not Christmas Carols. They were pagan songs, sung at the Winter Solstice celebrations as people danced around stone circles. The word "carol" is derived from the old French word "caroler", which means dancing around in a circle. It was derived from the Latin "choraula", which in turn came from the Greek

"Chorus" (χορός).

Carols used to be written and sung during all four seasons, but only the tradition of singing them at Christmas has really survived. Early Christians took over the pagan solstice celebrations for Christmas and gave people Christian songs to sing instead of pagan ones.

In AD 129, a Roman Bishop said that a song called "Angel's Hymn" should be sung at a Christmas service in Rome. Another famous early Christmas hymn was written in 760 AD, by Comas of Jerusalem, for the Greek Orthodox Church. Soon after this, many composers all over Europe started to write 'Christmas carols'. However, not many people liked them as they were all written and sung in Latin, a language that most ordinary people didn't understand. By the time of the Middle Ages (the 1200s), most people had lost interest in celebrating Christmas altogether. This was changed by St. Francis of Assisi when, in 1223, he started his Nativity Plays in Italy. The people in the plays sang songs that told the story during the plays. Sometimes, the choruses of these new carols were in Latin; but normally they were all in a language that the people watching the play could understand and join in! The new carols spread to France, Spain, Germany and other European countries.

One of the earliest carols that derived from these times was written around 1410. Sadly only a very small fragment of it still exists. The carol was about Mary and Jesus meeting different people in Bethlehem. Most carols from this time and the Elizabethan period are untrue stories, very loosely based on the Christmas story, about the holy family and were seen as entertaining rather than religious songs. They were usually sung in homes rather than in churches! Traveling singers started singing these carols and the words were changed for the local people.

When Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans came to power in England in 1647, the celebration of Christmas and singing carols was stopped. However, the carols survived as people still sang them in secret. Carols remained mainly unsung until Victorian times, when two men named William Sandys and Davis Gilbert collected lots of old Christmas music from villages in England.

The most popular Christmas carol in America, according to the music industry, is "White Christmas" by Bing Crosby. Sadly, it does not mention anything about the birth of Christ, the Virgin Mary, or make reference to anything Christian. In the late 19th century, Americans began to embrace Christmas as a family holiday. Since that time, many carols have been written, some religious and some festive but not Christian. As Christmas became more commercial, artists & businesses became more involved with our Christmas traditions, including song lyrics. This Christmas, let us reflect on some of the more traditional songs such as "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" where the lyrics embrace the Gospel of Luke singing; "Good tidings of comfort and joy." The Gospel of Luke 2:10 reads; "Then an Angel said to them I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people."

Merry Christmas / Καλά Χριστούγεννα, Fr. Bill Tragus

December 2012

- Sun 2nd: Goya meeting / Greek Dance practice
- Tues 4th: Prime Timers 12:30 pm
- Wed 5th: Greek School
- Wed 5th: Vespers St. Nicholas / Temecula 6:30
- Thur 6th: Liturgy of St. Nicholas 9:30 at St. Basil
- Sat 8th: Bible Bowl St. Steven Cathedral
- Sun 9: Cash for Gold & Appetizers after Liturgy
- Tues 11th: Bible Study 7:15 pm
- Wed 12: Greek School
- Fri 14 Ahepa Xmas Dinner Beckham Grill Pasadena
- Sat 15th: Parish Xmas Party 6:30 p.m.
- Sun 16th: Sunday School Xmas presentation
- Wed 19th: Greek School (Final Rehearsal)
- Sun 23rd: Greek School Presentation
- Tues 25th: Liturgy 9:30 am (Nativity of Jesus)
- Thurs 27th: Tour LA w. Fr. Bill (GOYA event)
- Mon 31st: Vespers / Artoklasia 6:30 p.m.

January 2013

- Tues 1st: Liturgy, 9:45 am – St. Basil Feast day
~ We will cut Vasilopita for all who attend
- Thur 3rd: GOYA Broom Ball 9:00 p.m.
- Sun 6th: Vasilopita Cutting for all Ministries
- Sun 6th: GOYA Meeting following Church

Prime Timers ~ Dec 4th: Our next luncheon will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 4th Please join us at Tastes of Greece at 1:00 p.m. 30012 Crown Valley Parkway, Laguna Niguel (949) 495-2244 Contact Bert Dumais (949) 412—9169.

Cash for Gold & Silver Fundraiser ~ Dec. 9th: Come make money and support our Dance Group at the Cash for Gold fundraiser on December 9th from 12 pm - 2 pm. For more information see the enclosed flyer.

Bible Study ~ Tues, Dec 11th: Please join us for the study of scripture & church tradition on Tuesday, Dec. 11th at 7:15 p.m. upstairs in the Church hall. Refreshments will be served. For more info, please email frbill@stbasiloc.org.

Ahepa Christmas Dinner / Guest Speaker Fr. Bill Tragus ~ Dec. 14: Hosted by Pasadena Chapter #373 at Beckham Grill and Crown Bar in Pasadena. 6:30 appetizers, 7:30 dinner. \$50 per person. Includes steak or salmon dinner. Reservations required. Contact Steve Tripodes at (626) 449—0966.

St. Basil Christmas Party ~ Sat. Dec 15th: Join us for the 2nd annual Christmas "Giving Tree" Potluck. Saturday, December 15, 2012 • 6:30 to 9:30pm. Hosted by Jim & Melissa Kaffen. (949) 661-6006, 28352 Avenida La Mancha (gate code: key, key 7789) SJC, CA 92675. Please bring a favorite family recipe or libation to share. We will provide homemade soup and a main dish. The "giving tree" will be in the courtyard (optional...bring a wrapped "white elephant" gift for a grab bag gift exchange) God bless and hope to see you soon, Jim, Melissa, Peter, Mary & Zoe.



Operation Christmas Child 2012. Our Sunday school produced over 50 boxes to send to children around the world. All the boxes will arrive by Christmas Day.

Save The Date ~ Joy Xmas Party ~ Sat. Dec. 8th

Come and enjoy an afternoon of games, lunch and a visit from a special guest at the home of Fr. Bill & Pres. Mia, 11:00 am - 3:00 pm. Parents and siblings are also invited. We will have food for the kids and adults. JOY is K - 3rd grade. For address and directions, email Pres Mia at presmia@yahoo.com Please RSVP so we can plan on lunch.

MINISTRY CONTACTS

- Parish Council:** Reggie Sellas: rsellas@aol.com
- Sunday School:** Anna-Nicole: annanicole777@gmail.com
- Greek School:** Tessy: tessyjoy7@gmail.com
- GOYA:** Sandy Rains: sandyrains1@gmail.com
- Greek Dance:** Lia Vardakostas: lia1@cox.net
- Altar Boys:** Fr. Bill: frbill@stbasiloc.org
- Stewardship:** Katie VanHarten: vanhartenk@msn.com
- Philoptochos:** Fran Karnazes: yiayiafran@yahoo.com
- AHEPA:** Bob Stavrou: bstavrou@cox.net
- Prime Timer's:** Bert Dumais: bert.dumais@cox.net
- Chanting:** Bert Dumais: bert.dumais@cox.net
- Vacation Church School:** Pres. Mia: presmia@yahoo.com
- Apokries:** Steve Dafnis: steved@quizglass.com
- 4th of July:** Sam Konugres: sam.konugres@sbcglobal.net
- Parish Directory (2012):** Sally: meyerhofer@cox.net

GOYA Calendar - November 2012

GOYA Meeting ~ Sun December 2nd: ~ Grades 7-12th. We will have our next meeting before Greek dance in Fr. Bill's office. We will plan activities and discuss our upcoming events. Contact Sandy sandyrains1@gmail.com or 951-972-0719

Tour LA w/ Fr. Bill ~ Thursday Dec. 27th, GOYA (7—12 grade) will be going on Tour w/ Fr. Bill. We will visit an Orthodox Church. After we will have lunch and visit landmarks in Los Angeles. Please RSVP because the van only holds 15 people. Contact Sandy sandyrains1@gmail.com (951) 972 - 0719.



Fr. Apostolos leads the procession with the icon of St. Basil during the Vespers on Nov. 3rd at the naming of our parish.

Christmas Liturgy

December 25th

Please join us for the Divine Liturgy on Christmas 9:30 am

We will have a Christmas Coffee Hour following the service.

2012 Stewardship Update

Annual Operating Budget	\$375,000
Amount Pledged	\$114,100.
% of budget pledged	30%
Amount Received	\$92,485.
% of budget received	24%
2012 Stewards	95

December 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<u>Greek School</u> 4:30 pm			1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Orthros: 9 am Liturgy: 10 am <u>GOYA Meeting</u> <u>Greek Dance</u>		<u>PrimeTimers'</u> Lunch 1:00 pm <u>Board meeting</u> 7:00 pm	<u>Greek School</u> <u>Vespers St. Nicholas</u> In Temecula 6:30 pm St. Nicholas Church Fr. Bill will attend	<u>Liturgy 9:30 am</u> Here in San Juan at St. Basil church St. Nicholas Feastday		<u>Bible Bowl 9:45 am</u> <u>JOY Christmas Party</u> 11 am - 3 pm Fr. Bill & Pres. Mia's home
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Orthros: 9 am Liturgy: 10 am <u>Cash for Gold</u> Food & Gold exchange		<u>Bible Study</u> 7:15 pm Christmas Theme	<u>Greek School</u>		<u>AHEPA Christmas</u> <u>Dinner</u> in Pasadena Fr. Bill Guest Speaker 6:30 pm	<u>Parish Christmas Party</u> 6:30 pm at Kaffen Home All families welcome !
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Orthros: 9 am Liturgy: 10 am <u>Sunday School</u> <u>Christmas Program</u>			<u>Greek School</u> 4:30 pm (Final Rehearsal)			
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Orthros: 9 am Liturgy: 10 am <u>Greek School</u> <u>Presentation</u>		<u>Liturgy: 9:30 am</u> <i>Nativity of Jesus</i> Christmas Coffee Hour following	<u>No Greek School</u>	<u>Tour LA w/Fr Bill</u> All day		
30	31	January 1	January 2	January 3	January 4	January 5
	<u>Vespers Artokasia</u> St. Basil Feastday 6:30 p.m.	<u>Liturgy 9:45 am</u> St. Basil Feastday <i>Vasilopita for all who attend</i>	<u>No Greek School</u>	<u>GOYA</u> BroomBall 9:00 pm		