

THE APOSTLE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2019

SAINT MARK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF IRVINE

A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian
Archdiocese of North America
Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of all North America
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Very Rev. Father Michael Laffoon, Pastor
Residence phone: (949) 559-6133
Rev Fr. Patrick Irish, Attached
Rev. Protodeacon George Moubayed
Rev. Deacon Nicholas Mamey
Sub-deacon: Athanasius Fakhouri
Choir Director: Barbara Scholl
**Chanters: Jacob Bahbah, Mark Ellis, Theresa
Joubran & Karim Youssef.**
Church Secretary: Lydia Wakileh
Teen's Advisors: Fatin Fakhouri

2018-2019 PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman Austin Turk {19} (949) 922-2350
Vice Chairman – Lew Malouf {21} (949) 307-2702
Secretary – Jerri Lynn Mamey {21} (949) 831-5776
Treasurer – Marwan Dabit {20} (626)665-1096
Assistant Treasurers- Melad Hanna {20} (949) 433-
1698 & **Richard Jirjis {20}** (714) 404-9002- **Michael
Khouri {21}** (714) 717 - 2349
Mark Ellis {19}(949) 458-1604
Lori Nour {19} (949) 370-6224
Dana Chade {19} (949) 939-8243

[Number in brackets is the member's last year of his or
her current term]

Church School Co-Directors: Tammy Qutami (714)
449-9680 and Kristin Chala (909) 217-2317

Men's Club President: Ghassan Awayjan (951) 454-
5429

Antiochian Women of St. Mark President: Denise
Nassiff (949)

Teen SOYO President: Nadim Youssef

Pastor's Corner

Shrimp and Homosexuality

By Fr John A. Peck

"The Bible says that homosexuality is an abomination (Leviticus 18:22), but it also says that eating shrimp is an abomination (Leviticus 11:9-12), so why do Christians eat shrimp, but oppose homosexuality?"

As these texts are translated by the King James Version, and in several other translations, you do find the same word ("abomination") is used, but in the Hebrew text you find two different words:

Leviticus 18:22 reads: "Thou shalt not lie with a man, as with a woman: it is abomination [tô'êbah]."

Leviticus 11:9-12 reads: "These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination [sheqets] unto you: they shall be even an abomination [sheqets] unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, but ye shall have their carcasses in abomination [shâqats (verbal form of sheqets)]. Whatsoever hath neither fins nor scales in the waters, that shall be an abomination [sheqets] unto you."

These two words, while they have some overlap in terms of their range of meaning, do not have the same range of meaning. The NRSV translates "sheqets" as "detestable," which at least alerts the reader to the fact that the words are not identical. According to the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, the word "sheqets" is used "mostly in reference to unclean and forbidden foods... Relegating certain animals to the category of "unclean" and "abominable" may in a number of

instances involve considerations of health. Yet the main consideration here must be that, whatever the reason, or however much or little it was understandable to the Israelites, certain foods were forbidden and regarded as detested. This was to be accepted on the simple basis of trust in, and obedience to God” (Vol. II, ed. R. Laird Harris, et al. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 955).

While “tô’êbah” can refer to that which is ritually offensive, it also includes matters that are morally repugnant, such as homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22), human sacrifice (Deuteronomy 12:31), ritual prostitution (1 Kings 14:23f), etc.

“Whereas tô’êbah includes that which is aesthetically and morally repulsive, its synonym sheqets denotes that which is cultically [i.e, ritually] unclean...” (Ibid., p. 977).

Even when one uses the very same word, this does not necessarily mean that they carry the same weight. I can say that I love Blue Bell Ice Cream, and I can say that I love my wife, but while I would die for my wife, I will generally only buy Blue Bell when it is on sale. Though the same word is used, it is used in two very different senses.

In the case of eating shrimp vs. homosexual sex, you can tell a lot about the degree to which these things were regarded as sinful by the punishments meted out to those who violated them. In the case of eating shrimp, there was no specified punishment at all. The person who ate shrimp would have certainly been considered unclean for some period of time, pending ritual purification. According to Jewish tradition, they might also have been subject to corporal punishment. The punishment for engaging in homosexual sex was death (Leviticus 20:13).

We can also tell that these things are viewed very differently by the fact that only Israelites were expected to abstain from non-kosher food. On the other hand, the passage that the ban against homosexual sex is listed (in Leviticus 18) is in the context of a list of sexual sins for which God judges even the gentiles. This is stated before this list, and repeated again at the end of it:

“Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations [tô’êbah]; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (For all these abominations [tô’êbah] have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spew not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spewed out the nations that were before you. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations [tô’êbah], even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable [tô’êbah] customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 18:24-30).

There was no mention that non-kosher foods were forbidden before the Law of Moses. For example, God said to Noah: “Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things” (Genesis 9:3). And when Gentiles began entering the Church, the Apostles declared that the Gentiles were not bound by the kosher laws of the Mosaic Law:

“For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well” (Acts 15:28-29).

And it should be noted that the word translated as “fornication” is the Greek word “porneia,” which includes any kind of sexual immorality, including those listed in Leviticus 18.

The pro-homosexual argument regarding these passages also completely ignores the vision given to St. Peter which specifically ended the requirement for Christians to abstain from non-kosher food (Acts 10:9-16), and that there are several other New Testament passages that condemn homosexuality. So the argument that Christians are hypocritical in

their appeal to the ban on homosexual sex in in Leviticus 18:22, which still eat shrimp, lobster, clams, and crawfish is completely consistent with testimony of Scripture.

Some things are inherently sinful, and some things are sinful in specific contexts. For example, it is sinful for an Orthodox Christian to disregard the fasts for no compelling reason, and to eat a hamburger on a fast day, but there is nothing inherently sinful about hamburgers. Likewise, for Israelites, not eating certain kinds of foods had a symbolic meaning, and was a matter of obedience, but there was nothing inherently sinful about eating shrimp. However, it is inherently sinful for a man to have sex with another man, and the Bible is completely unambiguous about this.

This line of argument is really not just against the Church's position on homosexuality. It is also an argument against taking the Bible seriously at all. No one who considers himself a Christian should have any sympathy for such arguments. But we should know how to respond to them, and so let's look at the passages often referenced.

Exodus 21:7-11: This passage provides some special protections for female slaves, because they obviously were in a more vulnerable position...but suffice it to say here that this passage does not command that anyone own slaves, nor that anyone sell their children into slavery — it puts limits on how slaves could be treated. This was quite in contrast with Roman law, for example, in which a master could do whatever he wished to a slave, up to and including killing them, for any reason.

Slavery is no where in the Bible presented as a good thing. A Christian can certainly not own slaves and oppose most forms of slavery without violating any tenet of Scripture or Church Tradition (we still allow for involuntary servitude as a punishment for a crime, and in the form of the military draft). And so the comparison of this issue to the question of whether or not homosexual sex is a sin is a red herring.

Exodus 35:2: This passage calls for the death penalty for those who break the Sabbath. The Church still believes that the Ten Commandments, including the commandment to remember the

Sabbath day, apply to Christians, but we consider the Lord's day (Sunday) to have taken the place of the old Sabbath as the primary day of Christian rest and worship, though we also continue to observe Saturday the day of creation. The Church does not call for the death penalty for violating this, nor does it call for it in the case of homosexuality. ..

The Old Covenant was given to people who were at a very low level of spiritual understanding. The harsh penalties that are often found in the Old Testament law were due to this. St. John Chrysostom, commenting on the law which condemned Sabbath breakers to death, said that it was "Because if the laws were to be despised even at the beginning, of course they would scarcely be observed afterwards" (Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew 39:3). But while the harsh and immediate penalties for the violation of the law are relaxed in the New Testament, the strictness of the laws themselves are not only not relaxed, but are rather enhanced. Just as you spank younger children, but expect less of them, and expect more of older children, without spanking them, the Old Testament dealt with the Israelites where they were, but brought them gradually to a higher level of spiritual understanding.

Feasts, Special Services and Events for October
Saturday October 5 – Church Yard Sale
Sunday October 6 – Breast Cancer Awareness (BCA) Lunch
Saturday October 12 – BCA Walk at Lake Mission Viejo
Sunday October 13 - Annual Parish Meeting
Sunday October 20 – Parish Picnic
October 25 to 27 –Annual Diocesan Fall Gathering, St. Peter & Paul Church, Ben Lomond, CA

November 2019 Advanced Calendar
November 2, Annual Wine and Food Tasting
November 8, Synaxis of the Archangels
November 9, St. Nectarios the wonder-worker
November 14, Holy Apostle Philip
November 15, Beginning of the Advent (Christmas) Fast
November 16, Holy Apostle Matthew
November 21, Feast of Nativity of the Theotokos
November 28, Thanksgiving Day
November 30, Holy Apostle Andrew

Metropolitan Joseph's Schedule

In October, His Eminence attends the Holy Synod Meeting in Lebanon

WEEKLY SERVICES

Saturday Vespers 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Orthros 8:45 a.m. Confessions heard from 9:00 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

Sunday Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday Vespers 7:00 p.m.

On Sunday October 13, we will hold our Parish Annual Meeting, All communing adult Orthodox Christians, pledged to St. Mark for the current year are eligible to vote. We need your participation in this meeting! Plan to be there. We will vote on a 2020 Budget, hear organization reports and elect three new Council Members. If you would like to run for a Council seat, or suggest another member for nomination, please see Fr. Michael or one of the out-going Council members: Austin Turk, Mark Ellis, or Lori Nour. The list of nominees will be printed in the October 6 bulletin. In accordance with our Parish Constitution, no nominations are allowed from the floor.

On Tuesday nights we are holding our **Weekly Adult Education meetings**. We will be reading and discussing "Liturgy and Life" by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, exploring Christian formation through worship. We will begin each evening with pot-luck dinner at 6:45 p.m.

Selected Saints of the Month

October 1

THE PROTECTION OF THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS

From time immemorial, the Church has celebrated the Most-holy Theotokos as the patroness and protectress of the Christian people, who, by her intercessory prayers, implores God's mercy for us sinners. The help of the Most-holy Mother of God has been clearly shown numerous times, to individuals and to nations, in peace and in war, in monastic deserts and in densely populated cities. The event that the Church commemorates and celebrates today confirms the Theotokos' consistent protection of Christian people. On October 1, 911, during the reign of Emperor Leo the Wise, there

was an All-night Vigil in the Blachernae Church of the Mother of God in Constantinople. The church was full of people. St. Andrew the Fool-for-Christ was standing in the rear of the church with his disciple Epiphanius. At four o'clock in the morning, the Most-holy Theotokos appeared above the people, holding her omophorion outstretched as a protective covering for the faithful. She was clothed in gold-encrusted purple, and shone with an ineffable radiance, surrounded by apostles, saints, martyrs and virgins. St. Andrew said to Blessed Epiphanius: "Do you see, brother, the Queen and Lady of all praying for the whole world?" Epiphanius replied: "I see, Father, and am struck with amazement!" The Feast of the Protection was instituted to commemorate this event, and to remind us that we can prayerfully receive the unceasing protection of the Most-holy Theotokos in any time of difficulty.

October 13

THE HOLY GREAT-MARTYR ZLATA OF MEGLIN

Zlata was born of poor peasant parents (who also had three other daughters) in the village of Slatina, in the province of Meglin. She was a meek and devout girl, wise in the wisdom of Christ and golden, not only in name but also in her God-fearing heart. Once when Zlata went out to get water, some shameless Turks seized her and took her to their home. When one of them urged her to become a Moslem and be his wife, Zlata fearlessly replied: "I believe in Christ and Him alone do I know as my Bridegroom. I will never deny Him, even though you subject me to a thousand tortures and cut me into pieces." When her parents and sisters found her, her parents said to her: "O daughter, have mercy on yourself and on us, your parents and sisters; deny Christ in words only, so that we can all be happy, for Christ is merciful. He would forgive such a sin, committed due to the necessities of life." Her poor parents, sisters and relatives wept bitterly. However, the noble soul of St. Zlata resisted such diabolical snares. She answered them: "When you counsel me to deny Christ the true God, you are no longer my parents or my sisters. I have the Lord Jesus Christ as my father, the Theotokos as my mother, and the saints as my brothers and sisters." The Turks then cast her into prison for three months, flogging her every day until her blood soaked the ground. Finally, they suspended her upside down and lit a

fire, to suffocate her with the smoke; but God was with Zlata, and gave her strength in suffering. At last they hanged her from a tree and cut her into small pieces. Thus, this brave virgin gave her soul up to God, and went to dwell in Paradise in the year 1796. Pieces of her relics were taken by Christians to their homes for a blessing.

October 19

THE HOLY PROPHET JOEL

Joel is second in the line of the minor prophets. St. Joel was the son of Phanuel, from the tribe of Reuben. He lived eight hundred years before Christ. Joel prophesied the misfortunes of the people of Israel, and the Babylonian Captivity because of the sins they had committed in the sight of God. He called the people to fasting and the priests to tearful penitential prayer, that God would have mercy on them: Sanctify ye a fast ... and cry unto the Lord (Joel 1:14); Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar (Joel 2:17). Joel also foretold the Descent of the Spirit of God upon the apostles and the pouring out of the grace of the Spirit of God upon all Christians: Then afterward I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28). He prophesied and described the Dread Judgment of God, and also prophesied the glory of God's Holy Church.

October 30

THE HIEROMARTYR ZENOBIUS AND HIS SISTER ZENOBIA

They were from the town of Aegea in Cilicia. They inherited the true Faith and great material wealth from their parents. Working zealously for the Faith and with great love, they distributed all their wealth to the poor. Because their hands were so generous, the hand of God shielded them from every evil intent of men and demons. The generous hands of Zenobius, which gave to the poor, were endowed by God with the gift of miracle-working, and Zenobius healed the sick of every kind of infirmity merely by touching them. Zenobius was appointed Bishop of Aegea. During a persecution, the Prefect Lysias arrested him and said: "I offer you two choices: life or death; life if you worship the gods, or death if you do not." St. Zenobius replied: "Life without Christ is not life but death, whereas death for the sake of Christ is not death but life." When Zenobius was subjected to cruel tortures, Zenobia came to the judge and said: "I also want to drink from this cup of suffering, and be crowned with that wreath."

After being tortured in fire and in boiling pitch, both were beheaded with the sword in about the year 285. Thus this brother and sister took up their habitation in the Kingdom of the Immortal Christ the King.

Parish & Organization News

Antiochian Women of St. Mark

The Ladies had their beginning of the Year meeting on Sunday September 15, 2019 with the Annual Friendship Tea. 45 women attended the meeting.

At this meeting our officers for 2019-2020 were selected:

President Denise Nassif

Secretary Lana Nino & Vera Bahbah

Treasurer: Kristin Chala & Afifa Artoul

Up coming Activities:

During October, Breakfast will be served to all of the parish on October 6, 2019, which precedes the Ladies walk in support of this month on the 12th.

All proceeds to "Living Beyond Breast Cancer".

Next meeting will take place on November 3, 2019

Prepared by Vera Bahbah

Men's Club

No report submitted

Teen SOYO

There was one event for Teen SOYO this month; we had our election for the New Year. Nadim Youssef is our new president, Merolla Youssef is the new vice president, Diana Aldada is still the treasurer, Alexandra Chala is the new secretary, and Jillian Goson is the social media coordinator.

We are having a luncheon on October 27 for youth month. Additionally, we are planning to go back to St. Barbara's monastery in November.

CHALLENGES FOR THIS ORGANIZATION we are still having trouble reaching out to all of the teens in our parish.

Jillian Goson

Teen's president

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

James Bahbah 10/15
Ibtisam Betar 10/13
Lana Chami 10/23
George Chala 10/24
Sue Dabbah 10/29
Sara Fortuna 10/27
Trevor Fortuna 10/13
Jillian Goson 10/7
Ehab Hanna 10/24
Lylac Joellson 10/18
Kathrina Khamis 10/27
Jabra Khamis 10/12
Elyas Khury 10/7
Lewis Malouf 10/7
Elizabeth Mamey 10/3
Joseph Munayyer 10/16
Joanna Novac 10/5
Joseph Richards 10/19
Souad Saadeh 10/10
Sylvia Saba 10/10
Angelika Schorr 10/14
Kathy Skaff 10/9
Mireille Moubayed 10/26
Maria Toubbeh 10/1
Anthony Turk 10/3
Courtney Wilde 10/29

The Apostle is a monthly newsletter of St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church. Parish Organizations are to submit articles by the 15th of the month to the Church office (949-851-8933)

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Saad & Samar Elsayegh 10/13
Spiro & Samira Fasheh 10/10
Paul & Susan Qaqundah 10/29
Robert & Kimla Ranney 10/13
Manuel & Georgette Salameh 10/8
Theodore & Kathy Skaff 10/16

*BUY SCRIP! Our Ladies Guild buys scrip from many and various stores and restaurants (see list included in this bulletin) at a 3 to 10% discount. When you buy the scrip, which is accepted just like cash at the issuing store, the parish benefits. You pay no more for these goods and services and are making a **donation** to our parish. You can purchase this scrip from Saeda Turk at the coffee hour.*

**SAINT MARK ANTIOCHIAN
ORTHODOX CHURCH
17840 SKY PARK CIRCLE
IRVINE, CA 92614
OCTOBER 2019
NEWSLETTER**

October 2019

September '19							November '19						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7						1	2
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
29	30						24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	1	2 Fasting Day Vespers 7:00 p.m.	3	4 Fasting Day	5 St. Mark Church Yard Sale Vespers 4:00 p.m.
6 BCA Brunch	7	8 Parish Education 6:45 p.m.	9 Fasting Day Vespers 7:00 p.m.	10	11 Fasting Day	12 BCA Walk Vespers 4:00 p.m.
13 Annual Parish Meeting	14 Parish Council Meeting 6:30 p.m.	15 Parish Education 6:45 p.m.	16 Fasting Day Vespers 7:00 p.m.	17	18 Fasting Day	19 Vespers 4:00 p.m.
20 Parish Picnic	21	22 Parish Education 6:45 p.m.	23 Fasting Day Vespers 7:00 p.m.	24	25 Fasting Day	26 Vespers 4:00 p.m.
27 SOYO Luncheon	28	29 Parish Education 6:45 p.m.	30 Fasting Day Vespers 7:00 p.m.	31	1	2
3	4	Notes St. Mark Orthodox Church, Irvine CA				

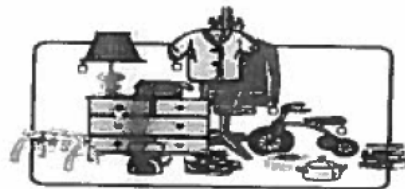
Clean Your Garage and Send Your Donations

Saint Mark Orthodox Church

17840 Sky Park Circle, Irvine, CA. 92614

Church 1st YaRD sALe FUNdRaiSER

Saturday
October 5th, 2019
8 AM – 1 PM



Suggested Donations

Donations can be dropped
By appointment at church
on Oct 3rd or Oct 4th

Please call/Text 714-721-7031
For more information

Kids/Baby clothing, Toys,
Women & Men clothing, shoes, household
items, Knick knacks, small kitchen
appliances, collectibles, antiques,
Holiday Décor, Halloween customs,
Sports equipment, Camping & Outdoor
Gear, Office Décor, Framed Art,
Paintings, games, small electronics, and
Books

We cannot accept computers, mattresses, or large appliances

*All Items should be clean and in good working condition
Unsold items will be donated after the Sale*

* How can you help?

Donate Items

Donate \$\$ for coffee and cookies

Volunteer your time & have fun selling

Hope to see you there!!



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

Please join the Antiochian Women of St. Mark

In a fundraising walk for BCA

On

Saturday October 12, 2019

9:00 am to 11:00 am

We will meet at Bagels and Brew

23052 Alicia Parkway , Mission Viejo

We will walk around Mission Viejo Lake

“Boat rides after the walk are available at the Lake”

WE WILL START THE WALK IMMEDIATELY

Dress Comfortably

In order to participate in the walk , we ask that each members raises
\$20.00

SUNDAY October 6, we will be serving

Breakfast in the Church Hall

If you like to join the Antiochian women of St. Mark

in this great cause, Please respond to

Afifa Artoul (949) 600-3876

Email : artoulafifa@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE

Church Picnic! Sunday, October 20, here at St. Mark

Food

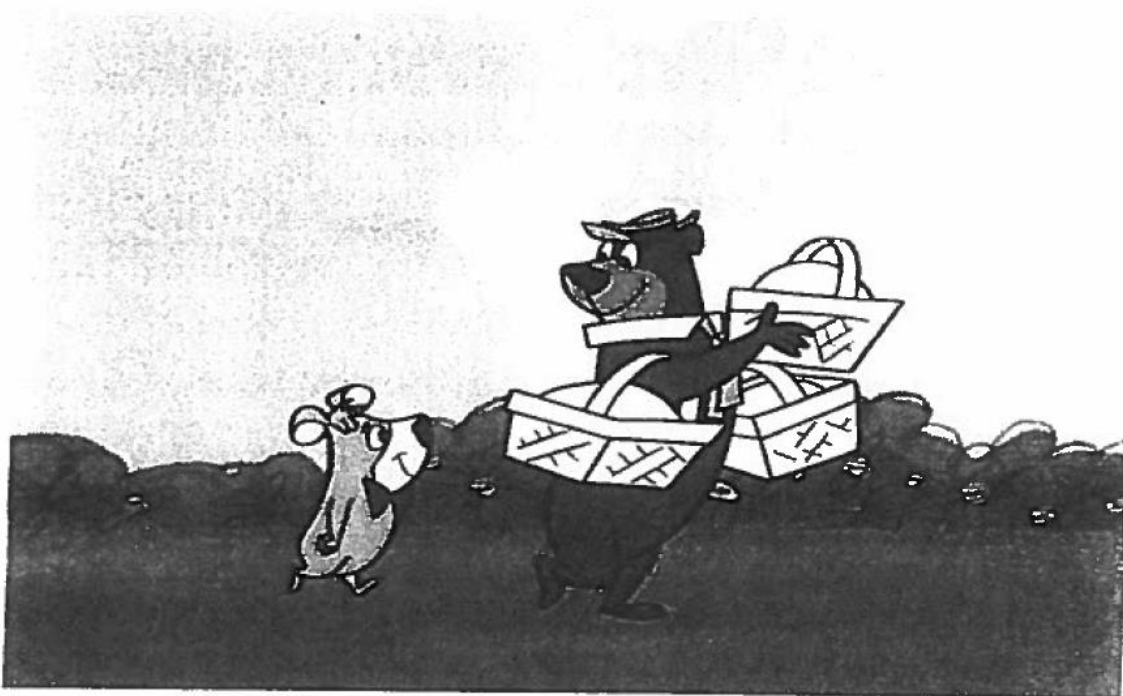
Games

Fellowship

Fun

If you would like to assist in planning and executing a great event,
please contact Mark Ellis at 949 290 9965 (talk or text) or
mestudio56@gmail.com

Thank you!





ST. MARK CHURCH

ANNUAL DINNER & WINE TASTING

PRESENTED BY: FR. JOHN & JANNIE FINLEY

WHEN : SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2ND @ 7:00PM

WHERE: ST. MARK'S CHURCH HALL

(17840 SKY PARK CIRCLE, IRVINE, CA 92614 (949)851-8933

\$ 80.00 PER PERSON, IF TICKETS PURCHASED BEFORE
OCTOBER 27 TH. , AND \$ 90.00 AFTER THAT DATE!

COST INCLUDES: ELEGANT DINNER, WINE,
AND ENTERTAINMENT WITH THE SENSATIONAL SINGER STEEVE JUSTICE
FOR YOUR EARLY RESERVATIONS CONTACT GISELE AWAYJAN@ (951) 454-4177