

*St. Barbara Monastery – 15799 Ojai Road – Santa Paula, CA 93060  
(805) 921-1563 – [www.stbarbaramonastery.org](http://www.stbarbaramonastery.org)*



*July Gathering of the Friends  
of St. Barbara Monastery*

*Sunday, July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016*

*4:00 pm Presentation:*

***ST. NIKOLAI ON THE  
HEALING OF THE SOUL***

*Speaker: V. Rev. John Finley*

*Department of Missions and Evangelism  
of the Antiochian Orthodox Church*

*5:00 pm: Vespers*

*6:00 pm: Potluck*

**DIRECTIONS TO THE MONASTERY**

**From Highway 101 – Exit Hwy 126 East at Ventura.**

Travel 11 miles east along Hwy 126 and exit 10th St/Hwy 150 at Santa Paula.

Turn left from the exit ramp and follow 10th St/Hwy 150 through Santa Paula.

Bear right at the fork in the road. This is Ojai Rd/Hwy 150.

Travel about five miles (1/4 mile past Thomas Aquinas College) to 15799 Ojai Road.

The monastery driveway is on the right just past our mailbox at Highway Marker 2830.

Drive across the bridge and follow the signs to the parking area.

**From Highway 5 – Exit Hwy 126 West at Santa Clarita.**

Travel 27 miles to Santa Paula, and exit at 10th St/Hwy 150.

Turn right from the exit ramp and follow 10th St/Hwy 150 through Santa Paula.

Bear right at the fork in the road. This is Ojai Rd/Hwy 150.

Continue as directed above.



Dear Friends of St. Barbara Monastery,

Construction of our new chapel continues with a special crew presently working to complete the plastering of the interior, a job requiring particular attention to allow for future iconography directly on the walls. The gaping trenches that seemed to be everywhere—and caused us to cancel last month’s Friend’s gathering—are thankfully all covered up now.

Meanwhile, the rest of monastery life here is by no means on hold! While maintaining the daily round of services, throughout July we have hosted numerous pilgrims, and now we are, of course, in the midst of preparations for the upcoming Friends’ Gathering in just a few days. We are also deep into the planning stage of a fund raising dinner scheduled for September 4<sup>th</sup> to benefit our chapel building project. (Save the date and see information about this event at the end of this Newsletter.) As if this were not enough to keep us busy, the lavender harvest is at its height, with the flowers at the best stage for distillation of essential oil—and calling the sisters to be in the field with their scythes by the break of dawn.

The essential life of the monastery, however, proceeds at quite another level from all this aforementioned activity. In this regard, we have an important piece of news to share with you: A great and new venture—and nothing less than a spiritual *adventure!*—has quietly begun here: the establishment of an associate group of “lay sisters.” Do read the account by Jill Wallerstedt later in this Newsletter about how this began. These sisters will not make monastic vows as such, but will live at the monastery and take part in much of the daily round of services and other activity, while devoting themselves particularly to works of mercy in the surrounding area.

This venture takes as its inspiration and model the lay sisterhoods that have sprung up in association with a number of women’s monasteries abroad--notably in Kiev, Moscow and Minsk. *The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.*(Mt. 9:37.) We ask your prayers for this new venture. May it develop as God wills and bear much fruit to the glory of God!

Abbess Victoria  
and the community of  
St. Barbara Monastery

## ***ST. ATHANASIUS ANNUAL SUMMER SCHOOL VISIT***

On Tuesday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, the monastery once again hosted the Summer School students and teachers from St. Athanasius Orthodox Church in Goleta. This year's program featured animals from "Wildlife Experiences" of Oak View, CA. Everyone was able to get acquainted with a python, a kinkajou, a great horned owl, a skunk and a prairie dog.



Following the wildlife program, everyone attended the Sixth Hour in the chapel, before enjoying an outdoor pizza luncheon and—especially appreciated on this exceedingly hot summer afternoon—a water pistol fight. Everyone is already looking forward to next year's program (and honing their water pistol skills)!

*Fr. Nicholas Speier with the summer school students*



## ***A NEW VENTURE AT ST. BARBARA MONASTERY***

*By Jill Wallerstedt*

Two years ago, I sat on a garden bench with Mother Victoria here at St. Barbara Monastery. I told her about a ministry I was drawn to at St. Elisabeth Convent in Minsk, Belarus.

The Sisterhood there, in honor of Holy Martyr Grand Duchess Elisabeth, devotes itself to prayer and works of mercy. Lay sisters join the nuns in these activities. I wanted that kind of lifestyle for myself and asked Mother Victoria if she knew of any Orthodox monasteries in the United States that had lay sisters (No, she didn't.) and then asked if she knew of any monasteries that might want to do that. She said, "Yes, I would consider that." And I almost fell off the garden bench with surprise and delight. After that, we approached His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin and received his blessing to proceed.

Over the past two years, I have moved through the process of ending one life and beginning another. By God's blessing, I have been able to transition to part time employment, rent my house after living and raising my family there for 26 years, and





move to the monastery property (with Mother's blessing). Moreover, God opened a door for me to buy a "tiny house." It is temporarily settled on the lower parking lot, after an adventurous road trip behind a UHaul that Mitch Denny drove to the monastery all the way from El Cajon in San Diego County.

Blessing on blessing, Asia (Athanasia) Ballew decided to spend her first post-highschool year with me at the monastery to help develop the ministry. We have started to meet the people in Santa Paula by going to an outreach dinner for the poor on Wednesday nights. We will seek a way to serve God and the poor without duplicating anyone else's efforts. We return to the monastery at night and join in prayer, strengthening ourselves and seeking His will. During the day, we offer our service to the sisters also. It is amazing how much they do to keep the monastery going and to serve the many guests who come here for spiritual respite. Anything we can do to help is such a blessing for us.

Asia and I covet your prayers. We hope that other single women will want to join us, for a few months, a year, or a lifetime. If you feel moved to support our work, all proceeds will go directly to the ministry, as we are supporting ourselves at the monastery.

***A FUNDRAISING DINNER  
TO BENEFIT OUR CHAPEL CONSTRUCTION  
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>  
Speaker: ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN  
At Holy Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Cathedral  
650 Micheltorena St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90026  
Donation: \$50/person***