

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

The July Gathering of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery

Sunday, July 30th, 2017

4:00 pm Presentation:

FIGHTING FOR BEAUTY IN A FALLEN WORLD

Speaker: Jane Meyer

Children's Author

and Children's Book Editor for Ancient Faith Radio

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,

We love our new chapel! We are overwhelmed by the beauty of the architectural space—the way it ‘feels’! Even more, we are overwhelmed by the beauty of the icons (the glorious, dedicated, painstaking work of Heather MacKean).

We recently had a surprise visit from three monks from Mount Athos (an elder and two disciples), who happened to be touring the L.A. area. They joined us for our usual reader’s Vespers, and afterwards we showed them around our new chapel and spoke with them about our adventures building it. Finally, we asked them what they thought of it. There was a long pause, while they searched for words. Then the elder said: “It is a very humble chapel.”

“Humble! They must be joking!” we thought. Four years under construction, not to mention the years of rigmarole before that with architects and County Departments of Planning, Building and Safety, Fire, etc., etc.—and the ongoing, laborious fundraising! And what we have is “a humble chapel”?

In our consternation, we contacted Archbishop Benjamin. He comforted us by patiently reminding us that our chapel has not enjoyed a thousand years of patronage from emperors and pious noble families. No chapel on Mount Athos has bare plaster walls and ceilings surrounding an expanse of mostly empty space. (“Okay, Your Eminence! We will do our best to return in a few hundred years and take a look then.”)

Meanwhile, the question hovering in the background—“Was it worth it?”—demands serious spiritual consideration. Had we known at the outset what the chapel would cost, not just financially, but in terms of effort, time, and focus, we might well have decided not even to begin. After all, despite the inconvenience, we sisters could have continued just as we were with simply our house chapel. It’s difficult to describe, but construction meant for us not merely months and months of noise and workmen milling about. It meant mountains of office work, numerous meetings, and seemingly endless errands outside the monastery, as we held events, directed volunteers, etc., etc. All through this, maintaining the monastic structure of our days, especially the daily round of services, was a struggle. Was the sacrifice worth it?

Challenging as the building process was, we undoubtedly want to say, “Yes, it was worth any sacrifice!” And we think the many, many people who contributed, volunteered their expertise, time and labor, and otherwise helped to build this new chapel for our monastery would say the same: “Yes, it was worth any sacrifice.”

Abbess Victoria
and the sisters of
St. Barbara Monastery

JANE G. MEYER: OUR SPEAKER THIS MONTH



Jane G. Meyer is known to most of us as the author of delightful Orthodox children's picture books published by both Ancient Faith Publishing and St. Vladimir's Seminary Press. Familiar titles include *The Man and the Vine* and *When God Made You*.

Last Fall, when Jane's parish church, St. Athanasius Orthodox Church in Goleta, CA, held their Liturgical Arts Festival, Jane was invited to speak. She presented a notable talk entitled *Fighting for Beauty in a Fallen World*. A number of our Friends, who heard her speak then, urged us to invite her to give her talk again here at St. Barbara Monastery at a gathering of the "Friends." We are grateful that she has accepted to be our speaker at our forthcoming gathering on July 30th.

ANNUAL ST. ATHANASIUS CHURCH SUMMER SCHOOL VISIT

On Tuesday, June 20th, Father Nicholas Speier of St. Athanasius Church in Goleta once again brought his Summer School students and teachers for a day at the monastery. This year's program featured animals from "Wildlife Experiences" of Oak View, CA. Everyone learned about—and was able to get acquainted with!—a kinkajou, a hedgehog, a skunk, and a turkey vulture—and even pet a python.

Following the wildlife program, everyone attended the Sixth Hour in the chapel before enjoying an outdoor Mexican luncheon and time to play in the creek—now recovered from the drought of the last few years. Everyone is already looking forward to next year's school day at the monastery.



TEENS VISIT FROM ST. ANDREW CHURCH, RIVERSIDE



Once again, we were favored with a visit from the teens of St. Andrew Church on their annual summer trip/pilgrimage. During this year's visit, while camping at nearby Steckel Park, the teens and their chaperones attended Matins at the monastery on Monday, July 10th. Following an enjoyable breakfast with the sisters, they then got down to serious work. Some helped harvest our lavender field, planted some six years ago by the teens on that year's trip/pilgrimage from St. Andrew's. Others moved brick from the strip of land along the south side of Sisar Creek over the bridge to what we formerly called "the lower parking lot." This was hard work especially on the particularly hot day of their visit, but essential to making space on that strip of land for much needed visitor parking. A change in their subsequent itinerary—due to a fire at Lake Cachuma in Santa Barbara County, where they were headed next—made it possible to complete a huge portion of the brick project, which, much to their credit, the teens accomplished with enthusiasm. Beside all this hard labor, time was found for a talk with Father Josiah and the sisters before heading for refreshment and supper at the Ventura beach.

... NOW, TO EXPLAIN OUR PARKING SITUATION. ...

Back in 2013, the Ventura County Fire Dept. came up with a solution to the dilemma that was preventing approval of our building plans for the new chapel. The dilemma resulted from our narrow driveway and bridge, which allowed for only one lane of traffic, thus preventing simultaneous access and egress for both service vehicles and regular vehicles. The solution was 1) to allow public parking only on the south side of the bridge (i.e., the side closest to Highway 150) except for residents and handicapped persons and 2) to allow for turnouts large enough to accommodate a fire truck on opposite sides of the driveway, one on each side of the bridge. So, this is why we are removing the brick stored on the strip of land bordering the south side of the creek and making it available for parking. In case of fire, all but a very few vehicles will not have to cross the bridge to exit the monastery property. And those that do need to cross will have access to turnouts where they can wait.