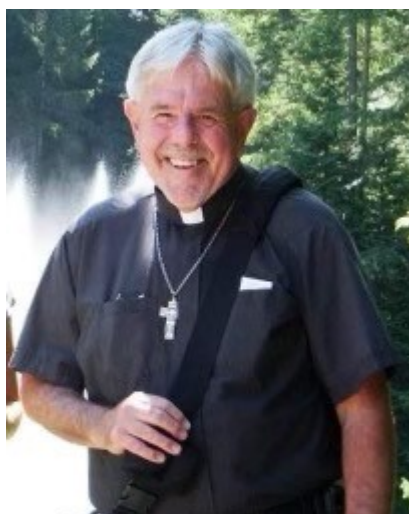


Orthodox Christian Funeral Service

Celebrated on March 4 & 5, 2021

V. Rev. Jon-Stephen Hedges

December 24, 1947 – February 25, 2021



Celebrants:

Fr. Nicholas Speier, Senior Pastor

Fr. Symeon Halsell, Assistant Pastor

Fr. John Carrillo, Retired, Fr. John Finley, Attached

Deacon Gary Braun, Deacon Scott Jacobs

Guest Clergy:

Fr. Christopher Dillon, Fr. David Sommer, Fr. Haralambos Fox

Pallbearers:

Benjamin Hedges, Ethan Keller, Cole Keller, Zach Brasel

Gianni Madrigal, Joshua Dillon, Dr. Jason Prystowsky, Michael Easbey



ST. ATHANASIUS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



The Orthodox Christian Funeral Service

God's mercy is infinite and His goodness is beyond measure. This is what our Holy Church has always maintained, and thus believes and hopes that the loving Lord will be merciful even to the deceased. For this reason the hymnographers of the Orthodox Church have composed a most moving Funeral Service that is virtually a treasure-house of profound spiritual thoughts.

From the earliest Christian times, psalms and hymns were sung to our life-giving God when a believer died. But the basic parts of the Funeral Service in use today can be traced mainly to the fifth century. With the passage of time the service has been enriched with psalms and hymns so that it has become one of the most versatile, dramatic and impassionate services of our Church.

The funeral service of the Orthodox Church is an example of how Orthodox theology influences the formation of a healthy understanding of the true nature of life and death. The service accomplishes the following: a) utilizes the occasion of death to help us develop a more profound understanding of the meaning and purpose of life; b) helps us to deal with the emotions we have at the time of death and as time passes after the death; c) emphasizes the fact that death for the Christian is not the end, and affirms our hope in salvation and eternal life; 3) recognizes the existence of the emotions of grief caused by the separation from a loved one, and encourages their expression.

In the readings, prayers and hymns of the funeral service a dramatic dialogue takes place between the faithful and God and the deceased and God. The service acknowledges the reality of human existence—the frailty of life and the vanity of worldly things—and directs our minds and hearts to contemplate the incomparable value of the eternal blessings of God's kingdom. At the same time with a contrite spirit, the priests and people invoke the infinite mercy of the Almighty God for the departed.

The service is not only an opportunity to express our love for our loved one who has fallen asleep; it is also a sacred time, a marvelous opportunity for reflection and inner meditation on our own relationship with God and on the orientation of our lives. When we reflect on the sublime thoughts of the funeral service our souls become contrite, our hearts are softened and we pray fervently for the forgiveness and the repose of the person who has been transferred to the life beyond the grave. Also, we who are still alive are beckoned to live the rest of our lives in repentance and in full dedication to Christ.



V. Rev. Jon-Stephen Hedges

December 24, 1947—February 25, 2021

Archpriest Jon-Stephen Hedges reposed in the Lord at Sarah House-Santa Barbara after a brief illness. Fr. Jon was the son of a naval officer, and as such spent his youth moving about. He was raised in Long Beach, California, considered Colorado "home" and came to Isla Vista in 1968. Fr. Jon graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) with a Bachelor of Arts degree in cultural anthropology, and also completed a Masters in Orthodox Theology from St. Athanasius Academy.

Father Jon-Stephen served as an Assistant Pastor at St. Athanasius for many years, in addition to serving widely within the Santa Barbara community. He served as volunteer Chaplain with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department, the Isla Vista Foot Patrol, and several other agencies. Father was a Board-Certified Crisis Chaplain with the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress; Certified Trauma Responder (CTR); and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT-B).

Father collaborated and consulted with several Santa Barbara County agencies on crisis, trauma, and disaster issues. He was frequently deployed by Red Cross and International Orthodox Christian Charities to serve as a chaplain and mental health worker for hurricanes, disasters, and other local and national tragedies. Fr. Jon helped develop the St. Brigid Fellowship of St. Athanasius Church which serves the unsheltered in our community and collaborated with Doctors Without Walls and many others to encourage his friends on the streets.

In his last few years, he worked for Santa Barbara Behavioral Wellness and Housing Authority of Santa Barbara County.

Fr. Jon-Stephen was known for his smile, his kindness and great love for all he encountered. His personal hobbies included hiking, camping, fishing, and playing folk music on the acoustic guitar, dulcimer and mandolin.

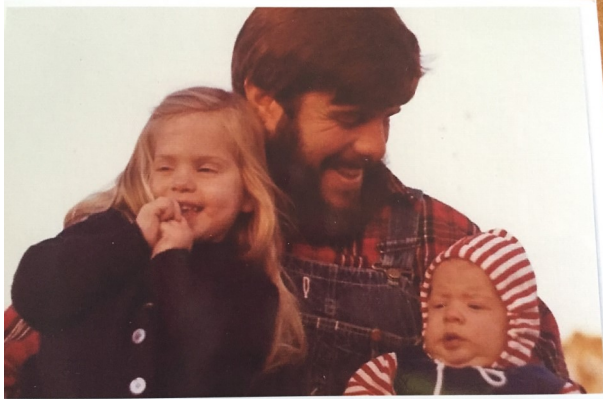
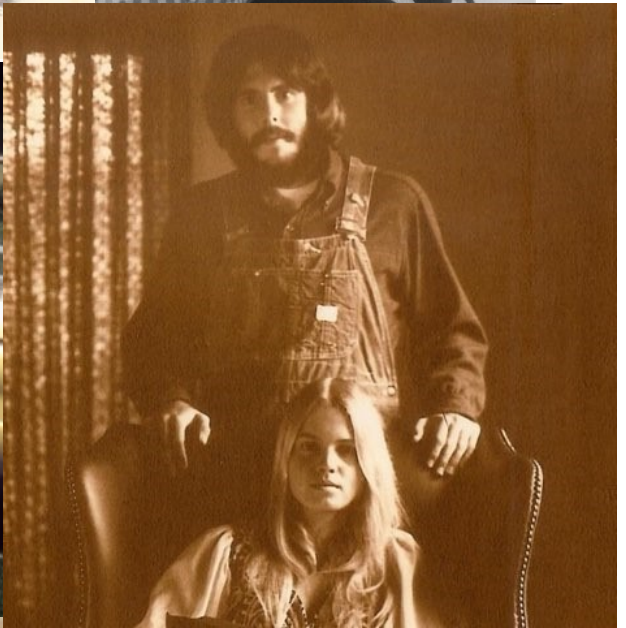
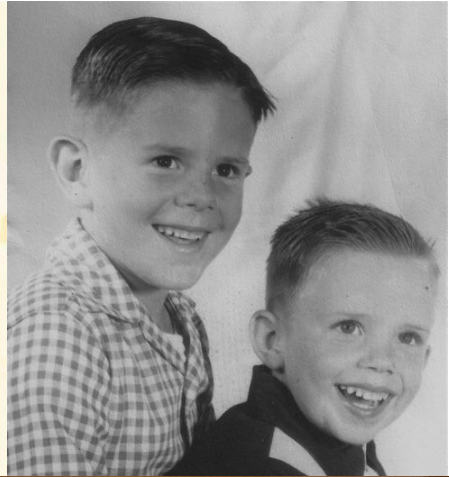
Father Jon-Stephen was preceded in death by his parents John Woodrow Hedges and Virginia Lee Hedges. He is survived by his wife of fifty years, Kh. Melissa Hedges, children Benjamin Hedges (Viktoria) and Sarah Brasel (Zach), grandchildren Sydney, Cole, Ethan, Noah, Luke and Elias, brother Keith Hedges (Jacque), and numerous nieces and nephews.

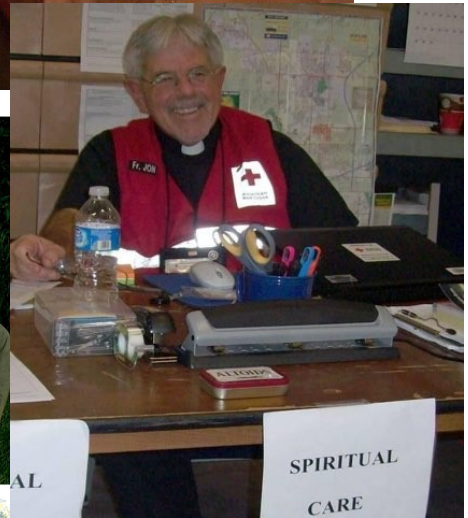
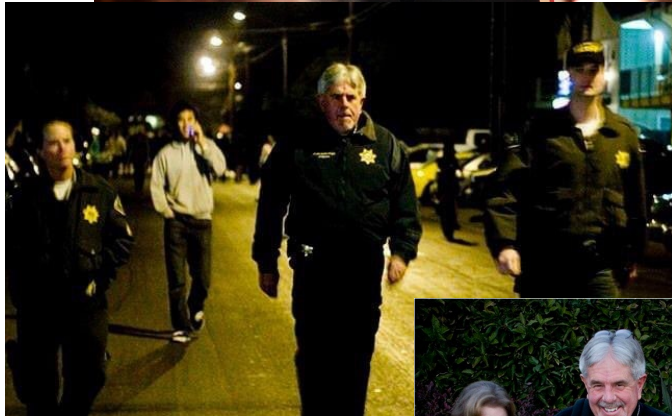
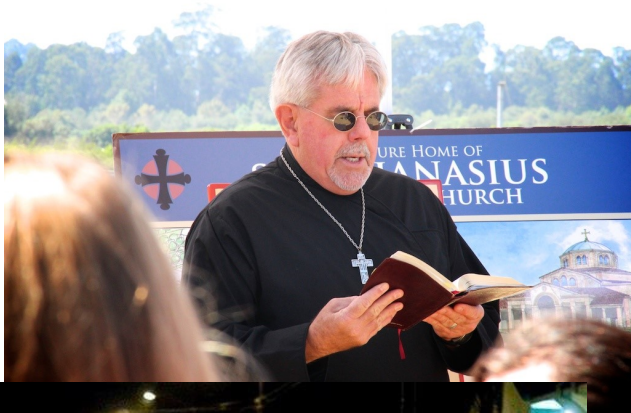
Donations may be made in Father's memory to St. Athanasius Orthodox Church Chaplain's Fund. Per his wishes, distributions will be made from this fund to Sarah House, Doctors Without Walls, International Orthodox Christian Charities, and other charitable organizations dear to his heart.

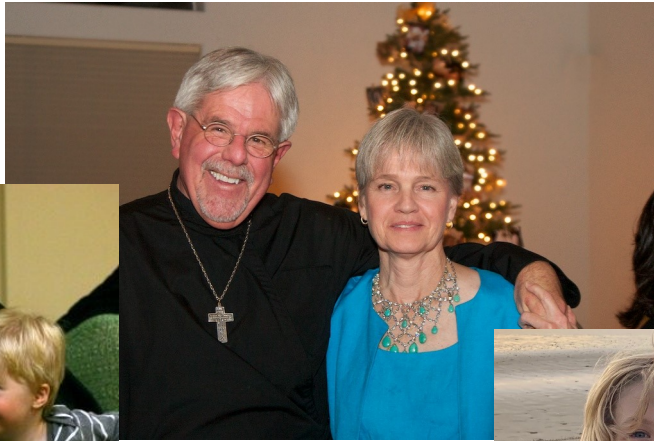
May his memory be eternal!

"In the worst moments, there is infinite capacity for good."
- Fr. Jon Stephen Hedges









**The Hedges Family thanks you for your presence today.
They also extend their gratitude to all who gave their time to
make the services of this week possible.**

**Gifts in Fr. Jon-Stephen's memory may be
donated to:
St. Athanasius Orthodox Church: Chaplain's Fund
300 Sumida Gardens Ln.
Santa Barbara, CA 93111**

**Donations will be distributed from the Chaplain's Fund to:
Sarah House, Doctors Without Walls, International Orthodox Christian Charities,
and other charities close to Fr. Jon's heart.**

*"When we truly see the Lord, we will act in the world energized
by what we receive at the Altar.
We shall go forth in peace in the similitude of the Incarnation,
acting as He would toward all people suffering in need.
When we are there, it will be the intersection of Heaven and Earth.
We will meet the Lord there on our own streets."
- Fr. Jon-Stephen Hedges*

