

DIAKONIA



ST. XENIA — JANUARY 24

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ❖ WINTER 2019/20

THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S PRAYER

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER,
AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:
O CHRIST OUR GOD, WE ARE ALL PLEDGED TO
SERVE THEE WITH OUR WHOLE BEING.

HELP US TO CONTINUE TO WORK FOR THEE
THROUGH OUR CHURCH,
WITHOUT SEEKING PRAISE,
WITHOUT SEEKING PERSONAL GAIN,
WITHOUT JUDGING OTHERS,
WITHOUT A FEELING THAT
WE HAVE WORKED HARD ENOUGH
AND NOW CAN ALLOW OURSELVES TO REST.

GIVE US STRENGTH TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT
AND HELP US TO GO ON STRIVING
AND TO REMEMBER THAT ACTIVITIES ARE NOT THE MAIN THING IN LIFE.
THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO HAVE
OUR HEARTS DIRECTED AND ATTUNED TO THEE.
AMEN.



THE ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA

“A Sisterhood Serving Christ Through Serving Others”

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THE ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN is an Organization of the
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA
His Eminence, the Most Reverend JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York & Metropolitan of All North America
and Hierarchical Overseer for The Antiochian Women

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His Grace Bishop JOHN, Spiritual Advisor

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What is DIAKONIA?

In translation, the Greek word “*diakonia*” means “service” — usually pertaining to service in the Church. The purpose of our organization is to help the women of our Archdiocese increase our spiritual growth and involvement in the Church, thereby learning how to better serve our Lord Jesus Christ. Our love for God leads us to love for our neighbor, and to undertake acts of charitable and humanitarian service in the Name of Christ.

In the words of our Founder, Metropolitan PHILIP of thrice-blessed memory: “*Diakonia is theology in action.*”

To read the DIAKONIA online, or for general information regarding the Antiochian Women, please go to the Antiochian Women website at: <http://ww1.antiochian.org/women>

To read past issues of DIAKONIA, go to: <http://ww1.antiochian.org/women/diakonia>
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DIAKONIA is a newsletter of the North American Board of the Antiochian Women, an organization of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, and is published quarterly as an online journal in the months of September, December, March and June.

PUBLICATION GUIDELINES

Deadlines: Please submit your articles by the first of the month prior to the month of publication so we can be sure they are included.

To submit articles/photographs: e-mail your article as an MSWord attachment; send your photograph as a PDF, PNG, or JPEG to the Editor, Kh. Kelleylynn Barberg, at the following address: KhKelleylynn@gmail.com

Submission Details: Please include your name and a phone number where you can be contacted for questions/follow-up.

Content: All articles or photographs that you submit should be about events or activities of the North American Board, or about your local parish chapter, or about the Antiochian Women at the deanery or diocesan level. All submissions may be edited for length, clarity, or accuracy. If your article or photograph is chosen for inclusion in the DIAKONIA, you agree to give full copyright permissions to the Editor and her staff.

Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Saviour, save us!

DIAKONIA – WINTER 2019/2020

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THE ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

"A Sisterhood Serving Christ Through Serving Others"

"Diakonia"

is produced by the Public Relations Coordinator of the Antiochian Women's North American Board

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Dear Sisters in Christ,

I pray for you a Joyous Christmas & a happy New Year!

— (that is, the civil new year) — as we anticipate our Lord's Theophany:

I am so glad that we are able to highlight the activities of our parish chapters in the **Diocese of New York and Washington, D.C.**, and the **Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic**. They are very active dioceses and demonstrate the joy of being a Christian by their love of service to others in the name of our Lord.

Congratulations to **AWE President, Rula Osama Khoury**, and the other officers and appointed coordinators for encouraging their local chapters to be so active. It is also wonderful to see the good attendance at the PLCs and at the diocesan-sponsored retreats.

We all know that it is often difficult and inconvenient to find the time and energy to attend yet one more AW meeting, or to make that "hundredth cabbage roll" — but we need to remember to offer this fatigue to our Lady the Theotokos, who is our model of service and love. We can only imagine her fatigue as she drew close to the moment of giving birth to our Lord. But we know that **"love bears all things."** (1 Corinthians 13:7) And, so, she helps us bear our fatigue and sorrows with a love that has Divine origin in the very fruit of her womb, our beloved Lord, Jesus Christ.

"Be thou ready, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened unto all... behold, the Tree of Life hath blossomed forth in the cave from the holy Virgin." (Apolytikion, Tone 4)

Let us truly rejoice this Christmas season, for the source of Divine Love has been brought into our world, and into our lives, by God, Himself. God continually demonstrates His incredible love for us. And, *"He will not forget how hard you have worked for Him, and how you have shown your love to Him by caring for others."* (Hebrews 6:10)

I give you my love in this Christmas season, especially as I think of how dedicated all of you are to our beautiful and holy Church.

I am your sister and servant in Christ,

Kh. Suzanne Murphy

PRESIDENT OF THE NORTH AMERICAN BOARD



A Word from His Eminence

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

November, 2019

Beloved Sisters in Christ,

Greetings and blessings to you in the Name of Our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ!

We recently began celebrating the arrival of St. Raphael of Brooklyn to the shores of North America 125 years ago. During his ministry, he traversed the continent in search of the lost sheep, and he built the foundation of our God-protected Archdiocese. We rightly honor him for the instrumental role he played in bringing the Orthodox Faith of our Mother Church to this New World.

During this time of celebration, we must also remember the courageous women who nourished the seeds of faith that St. Raphael planted in American soil these past 125 years. We honor the memory of the women who traveled the length and breadth of this continent, creating homes in a new land for their families. Before St. Raphael arrived, it was the mothers and grandmothers who kept alive the Faith in the absence of ordained clergy, passing along the Holy Tradition to their children and grandchildren. Each parish in this Archdiocese owes a massive debt of gratitude to their ladies' societies for their care of immigrant families and fund-raising to build their churches. Since your founding as an organization, each major endeavor of our Archdiocese has been spearheaded by the Antiochian Women, and I have placed the building up of our Antiochian Village in your capable hands.

As we honor St. Raphael's contribution to our Archdiocese, we similarly honor our Antiochian Women for their courage, strength, and selfless service to Christ and His Church. We ask you to emulate these virtues of your foremothers as we all work to continue building on this sacred legacy.

With heartfelt thanks for your holy labors on behalf of our Archdiocese and prayers for you and your families, I remain,

Your Father in Christ,

+JOSEPH

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

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A Word from His Grace

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend
Bishop THOMAS



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

Diocese of Oakland, Charleston,
and the Mid-Atlantic

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

This month (November 24/25) in the Holy Orthodox Church we commemorate the Holy and Great Martyr Katherine of Alexandria. This young woman of exceptional beauty, education and nobility was greatly desired by the young men in Alexandria. She, however, would not settle for a bridegroom who was not worthy of her full devotion. Katherine's mother, a Christian, sent her to see an Elder for advice. The Elder told Katherine that he knew who would be worthy of her affection.

"His countenance is more radiant than the shining of the sun, and all of creation is governed by His wisdom. His riches are given to all the nations of the world, yet they never diminish. His compassion is unequalled."

St. Katherine's devotion to Christ would be put to the test many times through intellectual arguments, offers of fame and fortune, threats of torture on the Wheel, and finally beheading. However, Katherine's devotion and obedience to Christ, the Heavenly Bridegroom, never wavered. She knew that nothing in this life could compare to the Kingdom of God!

*"Holy Catherine, Christ's Virgin,
You despised the throne for eternal truth's sake;
And thus now reign in the Kingdom without end,
And sing with the angels, in the midst of sweet Paradise."*

*Excerpt from "Hymn of Praise: The Holy Great-martyr Catherine," The Prologue of Ohrid

May St. Katherine's example serve as an inspiration and guide for your life and ministry, and may you be found as living icons of devotion and obedience to Christ and His Church no matter the challenges you face. Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, St. Katherine and all the women saints, O Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on us and save us!

Yours in Christ,

Rt. Rev. Bishop THOMAS (Joseph)
Auxiliary Bishop, Diocese of Oakland, Charleston, and the Mid-Atlantic

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

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A Word from our Spiritual Advisor



SPIRITUAL ADVISOR

THE VERY REVEREND FR. DONALD SHADID

“The Time of Advent 2019”

Dear Antiochian Women:

Christ is in our Midst! Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Abba Poemen said that blessed Abba Anthony used to say, “The greatest thing a man can do is to throw his faults before the Lord and to expect temptation to his last breath.”

(The Desert Christian – The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, MacMillan Publ., New York, 1975, p. 185)

During our Advent Journey to the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, we know that we are called to prepare our hearts as a manger to receive Him. We know that we are called to do this through our worship of God, our fasting, and our giving of Alms. Yet, we also know that as soon as we freely decide to do this, the thoughts, the actions of others, the life that we live both in and out of the Church, these things & others seem to almost work against us, often under the guise of “busyness!” These things that seem to continuously stand in our way are no stranger to us and are called “Temptations.”

According to the late Fr. Thomas Hopko, of Blessed Memory, in his Ancient Faith podcast “The Temptation of Jesus” (Podcast Series – Speaking the Truth in Love), the word “temptation” comes from the Greek word, “peirasmon,” which means “to be tempted” and “to be tested, to be put to the test, to be tried.” Now, when one takes a test, or is tested, there is a right answer and a wrong answer. As Christians, the “right” answer is that which aligns with God’s Will. When we choose the “wrong” answer, we have sinned, we have “missed the mark,” or in Greek, “amartia.” It is this “missing the mark” that has plagued God’s Creation since the Adversary, Lucifer, turned away from God & sought to lead man away as well. Yet our God, the God “Who worketh wonders,” has acted to enable our return to Him, and this is through the Incarnation of the 2nd Person of the Holy Trinity, His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the gift of The Church. The Church guides us into a “synergy” with God, in which we seek to join our will with His. This journey is called Theosis. And as soon as we seek to pursue this journey, the Adversary attempts to divert us from this path through “temptation.”

Fr. Tom Hopko, in his podcast mentioned above, reminds us that God Himself has faced every temptation which we have. When He was tempted by the Adversary, the Prince of Lies (Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13 & Luke 4:1-15), he faced 3 types of temptation, the love of pleasure (temptation to turn stones into bread), the love of glory (temptation at pinnacle of temple) and the love of money, material, power & authority (temptation of the earthly kingdom). Yes, He was tempted, but He rejected each temptation, seeking only God’s Will! This is our story as well. In the remainder of this message, I wish to offer some guidance towards rejecting temptation & embracing God; as a supplement to the necessary Holy Mysteries of our Church (Worship, Bible, Sacraments, Fasting & Almsgiving).

(continued on next page)

Now, when we are tempted, when we are put to the test, let us remember that we can reject that temptation and choose the right answer. This we do through the Life of the Church and its ascetical disciplines, and this we do through our day to day turning towards God, which needs to be nurtured through giving attention to the life that God offers us “in Him!”

The Church has always reminded us that a bad thought need not be sinful ... if we reject it. It is when we entertain that thought that it can lead to our rationalizing it and then following through with it. Allow me to share what I strive to do on a daily basis. When I have a bad thought, or when I have sinned, I usually know it immediately or shortly thereafter. As soon as I am aware, I make the sign of the Cross, offer a short prayer (“Lord, have Mercy!” / “Father or Lord, Forgive Me for _____!” / Jesus Prayer) and then I look around or think for a moment of a “gift” that I have received from God that I am grateful for! Have you ever received a gift that you really, really wanted? If you did, what kind of day was it? It was a Grrrreat Day, wasn’t it? Why? Because you realized that the person(s) giving you the gift knew what you wanted, and loved you so much that they got it for you. God does this for us all the time. For example, the first time I remember using this discipline, I was driving downtown and running late of course; and there was this verrry slow driver in front of me. [It has been said that the hardest place to hold onto the Holy Spirit is behind the wheel of a car!] So, I was getting pretty frustrated. Then, I realized what was happening. I made the sign of the cross, prayed: “God Forgive Me! and then I looked up and saw green on the trees for the first time that year. That is a big deal here in Johnstown! What a Gift from God! Spring was here! Thanks be to God! Another time, I was in Church and just the way that the sunlight hit the gold-leaf in the beautiful Icon of the Platytera, wow, yet another glimpse into the Beauty of God’s Eternity! Please try this! You will see that the more you strive to see God’s Hand, the more “Gifts/Blessings” from God you will see. When we are thankful for a gift that we have received, we are humbled. And this humility allows us to turn away from the Devil, and turn back to God. This, I try to do, throughout my day. Some days, I use it a lot! Although it has taken me a whole paragraph to explain this, it can be done in mere seconds! (Please do not attempt this when you need to be focused on a particular task, such as driving a car, etc.)

Allow me to offer one other hint to remember in regards to our attaining Salvation through the Church. His Grace, Bishop NICHOLAS, at a Lenten Retreat for our Antiochian Women of the East, asked us a question: “What is your ultimate goal as a Christian?” There were many, seemingly obvious answers offered, to which His Grace, responded with “No.” The answer he revealed to us came from our beloved St. Paul: we must finish the race ... if we finish the race, we get the crown! ... i.e. if we fall, we must get up! (2 Timothy 4:7-8 & 1 Corinthians 9:24)

My dear “Sisters-in-Christ,” the Church has long taught that there is no salvation without temptation! It is through our temptations that we learn how to “struggle and to finish the race!” Lastly, when considering how we will face our temptations, let us remember this ... “Every depth has a surface, but not every surface has a depth!” God is with you!

“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:12-13) ❖



A Word of Greeting from your AWE Board



*On behalf of the
Antiochian Women of
the East, we wish all of
you a blessed Nativity!
We pray for strength,
joy, and peace in your
lives as you continue to
minister to the women
of this Archdiocese in
the New Year.*

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF THE EAST BOARD 2017-2019

(left to right) Angela Saliby (Vice President), Kh. Loukia Dixon (Recording Secretary), V. Rev'd Fr. Don Shadid (Spiritual Advisor), Metropolitan JOSEPH, Rula Osama Khoury (President), Kh. Rima Zafaran (Treasurer), Leslie Deeb Carter (Humanitarian Coordinator).





ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF THE EAST BOARD 2019-2021

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ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF THE EAST BOARD 2019-2021

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A Christmas letter from Eastern Region President (1982-1985), Dolores Albert (may her memory be Eternal). May all our lives be adorned with faith, hope and love, and the peace of the feast of the Nativity of our Lord!

AOCWNA
Eastern Region

A Christmas Letter

from

Dolores Albert, President
Eastern Region AOCWNA



I have tried hard to think of a Christmas gift I could send to all of you. This would be an impossibility in itself.

Instead, I send a wish to you. I wish for you a special Christmas tree this year. I hope for you that it will be a tall and straight tree with boughs outstretched to shelter you this coming year. Trim it with love. Surround it with faith.

The Christmas tree that I want for each of you has a bright and shining star at the very top. It will shine through the darkness around you and bring hope to the world as it did so many years ago in Bethlehem. May its radiance in the days ahead flood your heart.

Under this tree there shall be presents for each of you. One is a package filled with memories. These are not ordinary memories. These are of special people, of special times and of other Christmas seasons from the past. And while memories may call for you to weep, it is a time for holding the head a little higher and for making yourself go on when you'd rather not. In this way you acquire the ability to give thanks for faith in the future and for the courage you didn't think you had.

There is yet another package under this tree for you. It is filled with peace. Share that one with the world. For to settle with less is to make mockery of the words, "Peace on earth, good will toward men." And indeed, peace is the foundation upon which the tree I wish for you shall stand.

Included in my wish for you is that this tree will be a part of all the good times that will be yours this season, helping to make this Christmas the merriest of all.

And I wish for each of you a very happy Christmas Day.

Your Elected & Appointed Leadership Team

THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK & WASHINGTON D.C.,

&

THE DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON, OAKLAND AND THE MID-ATLANTIC



AWE PRESIDENT

RULA OSAMA KHOURY

I do not consider myself to be special. For that matter, no one in the Bible at their calling was special by any means. I call to mind our great Forefather Abraham, the father of all believers, how greatly non-special and insignificant his position was, especially before his calling. Abraham expected nothing, and was comfortable in his comfort zone, tending and shepherding in Haran, until his calling came, and here I quote:

"Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves.' So Abram went, as the Lord had told him" Genesis 12: 1-4

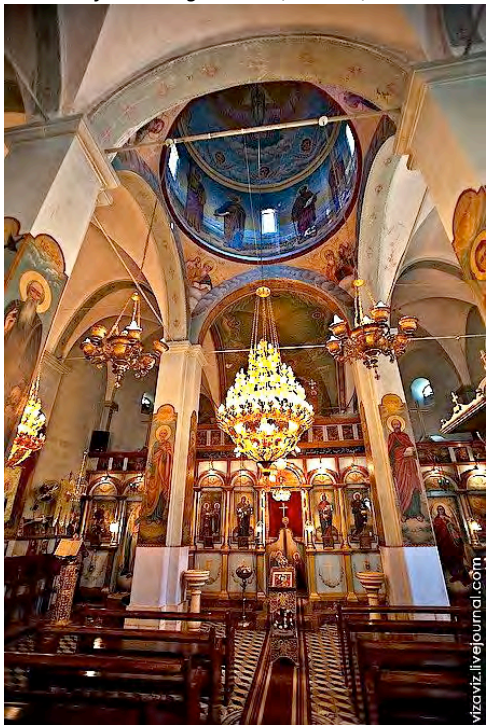
My second term as the President of the Antiochian Women of the East is an honor and a great responsibility. This honor allows me to meet amazing women that spend their life serving others through serving God and building Christian friendships that will last forever. I am humbled by the commitment, dedication, and energy of my sisters in Christ who are on the board of the Antiochian Women of the East. We would like to thank and offer our gratitude to all the past presidents for their devotion and hard work in establishing and planting the seeds for our Dioceses. May God grant them many more years to come!

Rula was born in Taybeh (biblical name: Ephraim), Palestine during the Intifada, Rula grew up in a time of war. As a result, she grew close to her faith like many other suffering Palestinians in her all-Christian village. She is very proud of her own village, it is mentioned in John 11:54. *"Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the people of Judea. Instead he withdrew to a region near the wilderness, to a village called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples."* (continued on next page)

She attended Birzeit University, majoring in Archeology. Soon after, she married her late husband, Osama Khoury and moved to New York. She found herself in a new country and went to college and received two separate Associates degrees: tourism management and bookkeeping. Rula has three children; Michael, a fourth-year student at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine; Gabriel, a second-year student at Georgetown Law; and Amal, a senior at George Mason University, studying Psychology.

Rula works full-time as an office manager at Hitachi STS in Herndon, Virginia. She owns her own travel agency, where she plans tours to the Holy Land. She is a member of Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Potomac, Maryland. Finally, she is an active member of National Arab American Women's Association in Washington, D.C. And she is also a member of the Arab American Heritage organization in the DC Metropolitan Area. Rula and her children live their father's legacy every day and continue to make him proud with each life accomplishment. During her time in New York, Rula and her family were very active in St. James Orthodox Church in Hyde Park, NY. Her husband, one of the founders of St. James, wanted to

Interior of St. George Church, Khadar, Palestine



St. George Church, Khadar (Taybeh) Palestine



complete his father's dream (late Fr. Michael Khoury) and open an Arabic speaking church. With help from God, the mission became a large church community. Rula and her husband have a special love for St. James Church, watching the church grow from its first baptism, to establishing a Sunday School, to opening a new hall in Osama's name. Osama's love for working in the church and for his friends has touched Rula's heart and inspired her to continue his path for

serving others through serving God. Rula's favorite Bible verse is "Greater love has no one than this, that one lays down his life for his friends." John 15:13.

Rula has many favorite Saints. She grew up hearing her mom and grandma always asking St. George (Mar Jeries) for help and blessings. In Taybeh, there is an archeological Byzantine church called St. George Church (Khadar). It is located in the middle of her village and across from her parent's house. She also loves the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, whom she named her first two sons after. ❖

The Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel





AWE VICE PRESIDENT & PROJECT COORDINATOR

ANGELA SALIBY

Christ is in our Midst!

I am Angela Saliby, and I am blessed and privileged to serve a second term as the Vice President of Antiochian Women of the East. My home parish is St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church of Washington, DC, where my family and I have been members for the last 20 years.

I was born and raised in Buffalo NY. My parents are Wadia and Nanette Hanna (memory eternal), two hard working Lebanese immigrants, who came to the United States to build a better life for themselves and their children. I am one of three girls who grew up in a traditional family that aspired to raise their children in the traditional ways of the

Middle East. I attended the University New York at Buffalo, graduating with a degree in Business Management and Management and Accounting. While attending university, I managed my family's ice cream business and worked at USAirways as a ticket agent.

I married my husband, Walid, 24 years ago, and together we have been blessed with three amazing children. Sophia, 22, who graduated in May from James Madison University and started working in Arlington, VA; Maria, 21, who is attending NOVA and plans to transfer to Virginia Commonwealth University; and Nicholas, 19, who has just started as a freshman at James Madison University. All of my children have spent time at Antiochian Village as campers and counselors or Special Olympics coaches. After moving to Virginia, I decided to stay home and raise my children. I returned to work in 2009 as a school bus driver while at the same managing my business as a wellness advocate.

I grew up in the Maronite faith, but after marrying my husband I started learning about Orthodoxy, especially after visiting the Antiochian Village and talking to people from the various ministries. I was Chrismated five years ago, and I continue to grow stronger in my faith every day. In my free time I enjoy cooking, gardening, biking, yoga, travel, and theatre.

I am thankful and excited for the opportunity to work with the Antiochian Women of the East. I am honored to be a part of this group of dedicated women who love to serve others and serve the church.

Patron Saint: St Sophia [September 17]

Favorite Bible verse:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, on your own intelligence do not rely; In all your ways be mindful of him, and he will make straight your path." Proverbs 3:5-6

Favorite spiritual book:

Everyday Saints and other stories, by Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov); and the Book of Psalms. ❖



AWE RECORDING SECRETARY

NANCY ANN (RAFEEDIE) TENTZERAS

Nancy Ann (Rafeedie) Tentzeras is cradle Orthodox born and raised in the Washington, DC area and is an active member of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Washington DC since baptism to present day, where she had met her beloved husband of 23 blessed years, Sub Deacon Nicholas, who has gone with the Lord this past January. Nancy has been very active in her parish since her youth, from being involved in SOYO, a Sunday School teacher, Secretary of Ladies Myrrh Bearing Society (LMBS), and currently the Secretary of Parish Council. It gives her great pleasure, joy, and peace in doing the Lord's work, however He sees fit for her and is able to handle; which keeps her grounded in her faith.

Nancy is the youngest daughter of two faithful servants of God, who have served the St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church Community in Washington, DC upon arriving from Palestine over 59 years ago.

Nancy's spiritual faith grew from the teachings and foundation her parents, especially her late mother, provided for her and her two siblings.

Prior to the recent illnesses and passing of her husband, Nancy and Sub Deacon Nicholas enjoyed working side by side throughout their 23 blessed years. They worked together on many ministries including establishing the church web site, being members of the Orthodox Christian Network web development team, and proofreaders on the Orthodox Christian Study Bible. Nancy currently maintains the various Facebook Pages for the Church; she enjoys keeping everyone abreast of the happenings within the Church Community. Nancy has served as the Social Media Coordinator of the Antiochian Women of the East (AWE) for the past two years, communicating the activities of the parishes of AWE, along with spiritual readings and messages from the diocese. Nancy looks forward to continuing to serve AWE as the Secretary, promising to be timely in reporting and sharing any correspondence. She looks forward to continuing to serve the Lord in this wider capacity along her Sisters in Christ of the AWE.

During her downtime, Nancy enjoys spending time with her family and has always had the passion for reading, travel and pursuing higher education, where she has received two Master of Science degrees in Computer Systems Management, and Project Management. After working in the private sector in telecommunications for 15 years, Nancy is currently a PMP certified Project Manager for the Federal Government.

Patron Saint: St. Anna, the mother of the Theotokos, whose memory is celebrated on July 25th (also on September 9th for the commemoration of Joachim and Anna together)

Favorite Bible Verse: Over the years Nancy has cherished the following Bible verse, which reminds us always that in the end Love never fails (1 Corinthians 13 4 – 7): *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."* This past year, the following Bible verse has been defining her life: *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* (Philippians 4:13)

Favorite Spiritual/Inspirational Book:

Songs of Praise: A Psalter Devotional for Orthodox Women, by Sylvia Leontariti ❖



AWE TREASURER

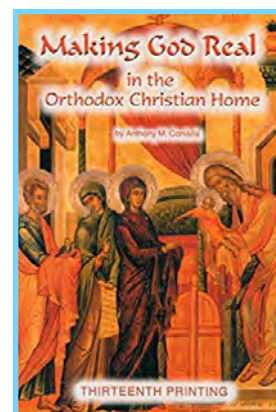
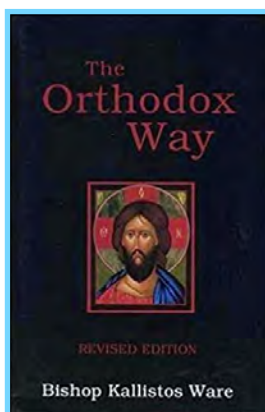
KH. KELLY PURDIE

I'd like to introduce myself, Kh. Kelly Purdie, as the new treasurer for the Antiochian Women of the East. I am honored to take on this role and pray that I adequately fulfill my duties as assigned. My lovely family consists of my husband, Fr. James Purdie, and three children: Jude (12), Lillia (11), and Dean (7). We serve at St. Basil Orthodox Church in Hampton, Virginia, where I am the Sunday School Director and have been active in our AWE chapter since our arrival. We live in Poquoson which is a small town on the east coast. We're south of Williamsburg but north of Virginia Beach.

In the secular world, I currently work as an Instructional Technology Teacher, but have also been an English middle school and high school math teacher. While my children were young I even worked part time at our local library for four years. I would describe myself as an avid reader who likes variety!

When we converted to the Holy Orthodox Faith I fell in love with the books: The Orthodox Way, by Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware); Lenten Spring: Readings for Great Lent, by Fr. Thomas Hopko; and Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home, by Anthony Coniaris. I find myself referring back to these books regularly and they are the first ones I recommend to people inquiring about the Faith. My patron saint is St Elizabeth, mother of John (even though we had our children at a young age!). I love learning about icons and the saints by exploring iconography when I'm able.

My conversion to Orthodoxy occurred 12 years ago while attending St. George Cathedral in Pittsburgh. Since then, my family has grown tremendously in the Faith and we are always looking for ways to further the Orthodox Christian Faith in both our small and larger communities. I have enjoyed seeing how the AWE organization has continued this perseverance in different capacities in the churches we have attended/visited. Wholly, our women are both dedicated to serving Christ and also one another. It is a rewarding and refreshing thing to bear witness to, and I am honored to partake in it. ❖





AWE PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR

COLLEEN MCAFEE

As many of you know, my name is Colleen McAfee and I am serving as the Public Relations Coordinator for Antiochian Women of the East. This is my second term, but like many of you, I am still learning so much about this wonderful organization and am excited to begin another term growing alongside each of you as we live out our Faith serving Christ while serving others! My goal this term is to learn more about the history of our organization and to be better enlightened about the variety of experiences among our members.

I live in Sabillasville, Maryland, with my husband, Daniel, and our three daughters: Elizabeth (6), Zoe (4), and Emilia (3). We attend St. John the Baptist, a western rite parish in Lewistown, Maryland. My father, Father James Hamrick, resides as our parish priest. With the majority of our congregation's youth being between the ages of infancy and preadolescence, I have been the children's ministry director for the past four years. With our days typically being very full with little ones, I rarely

get the opportunity to enjoy personal hobbies; however, I especially enjoy interruption-free cooking or baking and the rare occasions of date nights with my husband.

As a convert to Orthodoxy a little over ten years ago, I was able to choose my patron saint. I was drawn to the life of St. Felicity of Rome. At the time of my conversion, I was about to get married and always knew I wanted to be a mother, with a desire to raise saintly children. Therefore, I fell in love with St. Felicity's life, whose faith never wavered while her seven sons were martyred in front of her before being martyred for Christ herself. Her feastday is on the 23rd of November.

As parents desiring to raise our children in the Church, my husband and I love the book, Parenting Toward the Kingdom: Orthodox Christian Principles of Child-Rearing, by Dr. Philip Mamalakis. Another favorite book I've found has been, Steps of Transformation: An Orthodox Priest Explores the Twelve Steps, by Father Meletios Webber. This particular book has been insightful, regardless of ones specific journey in life. I highly recommend both books.



In closing, my favorite verse is Galatians 6:2, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." I believe our organization embodies this very truth, making it one of the strongest attractions I have for the Antiochian Women. May we be encouraged in our myrrh-bearing journeys! ❖



AWE SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR

RACHEL SZEWCZYK

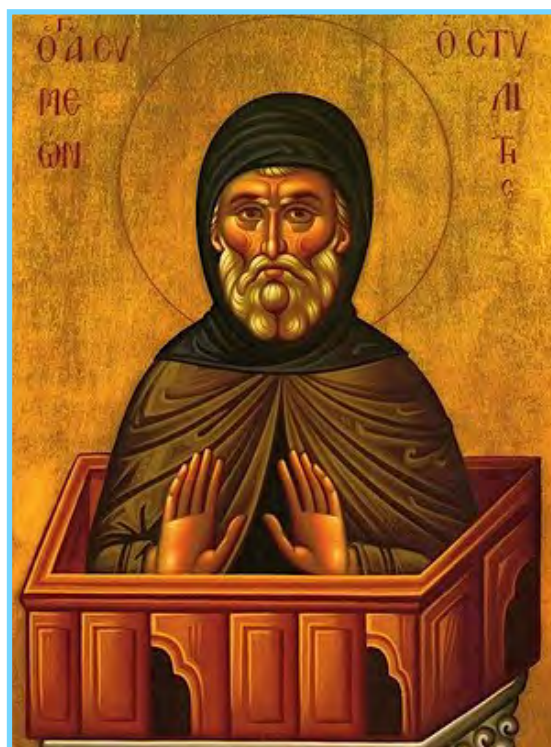
I would like to introduce myself as the new Social Media Coordinator for the Antiochian Women of the East. I am honored to take on this role and pray that I adequately fulfill my duties as assigned.

I am from the Washington, D.C. suburbs and was born and raised as Byzantine Catholic. I am blessed to have been born into a loving and devout family consisting of my parents, Deacon William and Christine, my brother, Jacob and his wife Tina, and my brothers Joseph and Paul. My family was and is very active in our church community. While I was growing up and

before my Chrismation into Orthodoxy I taught Sunday School to our church's preschoolers and routinely baked for and assisted with our church's annual food bazaar, among many other activities and responsibilities.

In the Fall of 2011 I moved to Pittsburgh, PA and have been a member of St. George Cathedral of Pittsburgh since the Summer of 2013. On August 20, 2016 I was Chrismated into Orthodoxy, taking the name Simone in honor of St. Simeon the Elder (commemorated on September 1st). I have continued with the spirit of devotion to my church family that I was raised with, and have been an active member of Saint George since my arrival. For four years I served as Secretary of our church's Antiochian Women organization. I feel blessed to have found such a welcoming and loving family as I have at St. George's!

As Social Media Coordinator, I promise to be timely in sharing devotional messages on social media and showcasing the events and activities of our women in our parishes across the region. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out and I will be happy to answer them. I look forward to serving in this wider capacity and pray that my work is found to be pleasing to the Lord and befitting of this organization. ❖





AWE MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

BARBARA FANIK

My name is Barbara Fanik, from St. Stephen the Protomartyr Antiochian Orthodox Church of South Plainfield, New Jersey. I am married to Hazim Fanik, who is an Actuary at Willis Towers Watson. Together we have four children. Dalia, who is a senior at Rutgers University majoring in Biomedical Engineering. She is the president of OCF at Rutgers and also a Sunday school teacher at St. Stephen. Nawal, a sophomore also at Rutgers, majoring in Genetics, and served as the vice president of Teen SOYO. Manal, a junior in high school and a varsity volleyball player. She is also the treasurer of Teen SOYO. And Ameer, grade 5, a travel team soccer player,

who was baptized at the baptism site of our Lord in the Jordan River. He regularly serves as an altar boy.

I am currently the president of the women's group at St. Stephen, where I have been serving since 2017. Prior to that, I was a parishioner at St. George of Little Falls, New Jersey. We moved to Jordan in 2011 and stayed there until late 2016. In Jordan, I was an English school teacher and my children were in international schools and they learned Arabic as well. Currently, I am a paraprofessional in Franklin Township, New Jersey.

In my current role as the women's group president, I work with the women and church community on many events such as organizing trips to the Holy Protection Monastery, international lunches, local town fairs and parades, bake sales, and support the church community in many activities and fund raisers.

It was a pleasure to meet with the women at the Parish Life Conference this year. I look forward to working with the Antiochian Women of the East group as a membership coordinator. I will work on devising and implementing programs that aim to grow membership by increasing individual women belonging to parish chapters and increasing the number of parish chapters participating in each dioceses.

My goal this term is to call one or two churches each week to get to know you more and help you to attract more members and bring back sister church concepts. I also plan on visiting sister churches in my area and coordinate joint events. With God's help and guidance, we will work together to praise God's work. ❖



AWE HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR LESLIE DEEB CARTER

A humanitarian advocate aiding causes for terminally ill children and foster care, Leslie Deeb Carter was born and raised in Tenafly and presently lives in Mahwah, New Jersey, with her husband, Mark, of 32 years. She has been blessed with three grown children, Steven, Jaclyn and Alexandra.

She has never moved far from the parish of St. Anthony's Orthodox Church, Bergenfield, NJ, the first Pan-Orthodox church in America, which her late father, Edward Deeb was one of the seven founding fathers of the parish and she was the first infant to

be baptized! She continues to live an active role as a Women's Guild Vice President and coordinator of many fundraising events which include calling for donations for the International Festival and baking an array of ethnic pastries, important to the life of the parish.

Outside of St. Anthony's, she is an educator in the Franklin Lakes School District, and an Acquisition Director and Gala Chairman for BergenCasa, providing advocacy services to children placed in foster care. It is her passion to be involved in these efforts both in church and her community, especially to those in need of our caregiving mission.

As the AWE Humanitarian Coordinator, continuing the "Common Acts of Mercy" program established by the North American Board of our Antiochian Women organization, to develop our "Sisterhood in Christ" is the common thread that binds us in our service to others. Feeding the homeless, collecting clothing, food, toiletries, backpacks for those in need, visiting the sick and dying are our ongoing humanitarian efforts. Take time to see the video she produced, "Sisterhood in Christ" on the AWE website compiled with photos of our Eastern Diocese women interacting in these humanitarian efforts across all our communities.

She encourages the parishes to contribute to the Khouria Stephanie Yagze Music Project, a focus for our Eastern Diocese to contribute donations towards this year and establishing the fundraising avenue in each of your parishes to do so. Along with those projects, the Jesse Brandow Missionary Project of the OCMC, is commissioned to proclaim the Orthodox Faith to all nations participating in bringing people to Christ. The missionary service is based in Guatemala, where a group of thousands of Guatemalans were received into the Orthodox faith. There is the FOCUS St. Nicholas Sacks program where a small fundraiser can go a long way to give back to the community, an \$8 tote filled with hygiene products can meet the needs of low income families. All parishes are encouraged to do a Christmas Fundraiser to benefit these causes.

As well as her commitment to humanitarian efforts, Leslie likes to read, cook, bake and spends hours in the garden at home sowing the seeds and planting perennials, that are a reminder of God's creation. When she is outside, the serenity finds her closer to God's strength in numbers for the good of humanity.

Patron Saint: Saint Anne even though Leslie's middle name is Ann, this blessed saint was extremely important in the histories of the modern world and produced Mary who later became the mother of Jesus.

Favorite Bible Verse: *"For what should it profit a man if he gains the world but loses his soul"* (Matt 16:26) ❖



AWE RELIGIOUS COORDINATOR

ANNA VENIAMIN

As the Religious Coordinator for the AWE, newly appointed by our President Rula Osama Khoury, I offer a few lines by way of introduction.

My name is Anna Veniamin and I am a convert to Orthodoxy. I was born and raised in the north of England and I graduated at the University of London, where I studied the history of art and architecture.

After I met my husband, Christopher, who introduced me to the Orthodox Monastery of St. John the Baptist in England (founded by Elder Sophrony Sakharov), I was received into the Orthodox Church, being baptized by Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos some 20 years ago. We have lived in the

United States since that time, where my husband is Professor of Patristic Theology at St. Tikhon's Seminary, and also, more recently, Dean at the Antiochian House of Studies.

We live in Waverly, Pennsylvania with our five dear children: Maria, a student at Penn State, majoring in Corporate Communication; Rachel, an English major at Penn State; Nicola, a high school senior who plans to study animation and film next year; Kyrill, who attends middle school; and Zacharina, our homeschooled elementary student.

Our two oldest daughters are both homeschool graduates and all of our children have been homeschooled at some point in their education. We have very much enjoyed being a part of the St. Emmelia Homeschool Conference as parents and speakers in past years.

We have a family business, our publishing house, Mount Thabor Publishing, producing quality books in Orthodox theology since 2005.

I also enjoy cooking and baking for my family and our guests, sewing, and gardening.

My favorite Bible verse is the words of Christ at the conclusion of the Gospel of St. Matthew (Matthew 28:20): *"and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."*

My favorite books are Wounded by Love: The Life and Wisdom of St. Porphyrios, and St. Silouan the Athonite, by Archimandrite Sophrony.

I welcome the opportunity to be involved in the work of the Antiochian Women of the East, and I look forward to getting to know and being inspired by the many women who contribute in so many ways to the life of the Church throughout our dioceses. ❖

**THE ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN
OF THE DIOCESES OF
NEW YORK & WASHINGTON, D.C.
AND
CHARLESTON, OAKLAND & THE
MID-ATLANTIC**

**ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE
AN EXCITING MUSIC PROJECT TO
HONOR THE MEMORY OF
KH. STEFANIE YOVA YAZGE:**

A 2-part liturgy in English, commissioned from
Nazo Zakkak,
who served as the Antiochian Archdiocese's
Composer-in-Residence in 2017 and 2018.

With the blessing of His Emimence, Met. JOSEPH,
this liturgy will be created with our smaller parishes
and smaller choirs in mind.

Kh. Stefanie devoted much of her life to the music of
the Church, and she was very fond of Nazo and the
music he has been composing for Orthodox worship.

We believe she will be rejoicing with us
as this project comes to fruition!

For more information, please contact:

Rula Khoury at

aweorthodox1973@gmail.com



PARISH REPORTS

NEW YORK & WASHINGTON D.C. — CHARLESTON, OAKLAND & THE MID-ATLANTIC

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ST GEORGE CHURCH IN ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

ACTIVITIES OF

The Antiochian Women of St. George Church:

1. Fundraisers held on March 10, April 6, May 19, Oct. 13, and Oct. 27th
2. Last Christmas the ladies held a lunch and did secret Santa and they presented gifts for the clergy
3. The month of March we collected the tray and read the Epistle
4. The ladies went to a retreat at the Holy Protection Monastery on October 12th
5. Upcoming fundraisers on Nov. 3
6. Heritage Festival, June 21-23
7. The ladies always take care of the Mercy meals
8. The treasure report - over \$19,000 this year, which does NOT include the festival money ❖



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2019



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June 21 - 23 • 5 pm - 12 am**

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ST. ANTHONY CHURCH, BERGENFIELD, NEW JERSEY

The Women of Saint Anthony's are off to another busy year. All our energy went into our very successful "Luck of Saint Anthony Tricky Tray" in March. The proceeds from this event enabled us to make a large contribution towards our church air conditioning replacement and a contribution to our church operating expenses. We shared our success by making \$500 contributions to each of the following groups: IOCC, "Warm the Children", Bergenfield Food Pantry, and the Walk-In Dinner Program for the less fortunate in our area.

The Women's Guild Yard Sale was held after Mother's Day and proved to be another success. Spearheaded by the women, the help of parishioners was invaluable. This event was quite a group effort and promoted fellowship among parishioners.

Our priests, Father Joseph Allen and Father Michael Ibrahim, joined the women for an end-of-the-school-year dinner at a local Armenian restaurant for delicious food and conversation.

We kicked off the new liturgical year by inviting our entire parish to a delicious catered breakfast while celebrating the Elevation of the Cross. We honored Jenny Mandalakis, one of our members and a past president, who was retiring after many years as our church secretary. A lovely cake was shared in her honor.

The women helped make our "Bergen Street Food Truck Festival" a success. It gave exposure to the community of our Pan-Orthodox parish and raised funds to help our church operating budget. Many of our members support our efforts in feeding the less fortunate at a local Walk-In Dinner Program. Funding, planning and implementing this effort is doable as a joint effort of our parish. A few members were able to attend the retreat at the Holy Protection Monastery in October and found the monastery beautiful and the experience enlightening.

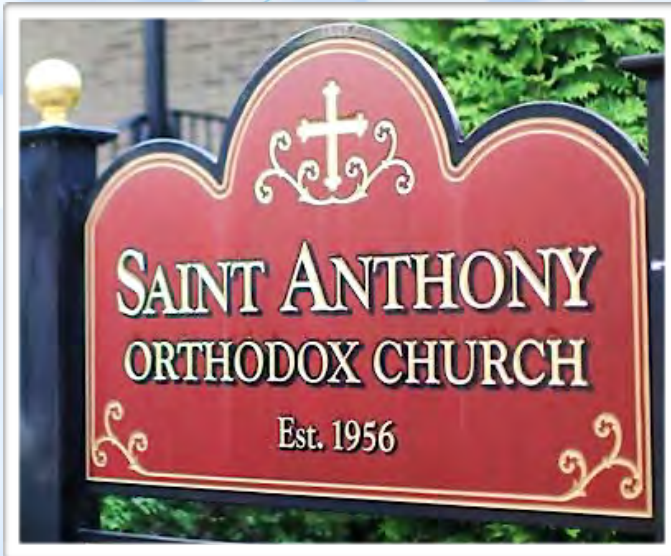
Our women read Something Beautiful Happened, by Yvette Manassis Corporan, and had a lively discussion and fruitful evening with wine and appetizers hosted at one of our members home in October.

Saint Anthony's hosted a Spirit of Orthodoxy Concert in October and our women served as greeters and hosts. It was lovely to open our church home to many other Orthodox from other jurisdictions in the tri-state area. Our annual Coat Drive will commence after our International Festival the first week in November. ❖



Yours in Christ,
Betty C. Gakos





ST MARY CHURCH IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

St. Mary's had its first Food Festival this Spring, with all Middle Eastern food prepared by ladies from our parish. It was hugely successful outdoor event enjoyed by neighbors and parish alike, with music, dancing, and wonderful food.

Several Ladies are in our Church choir and performed in a fund-raising concert for Brooklyn Outreach in June. This is the humanitarian organization we support with our Greek Orthodox neighbors.

Our Ladies sponsored a parish-wide humanitarian project this Fall to collect hygiene kits for the homeless for the monthly "Midnight Run". The Run is done jointly with Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church and the Greek Cathedral in NYC. Food, clothing, and hygiene supplies are donated and collected and distributed at specific sites in Manhattan. To date, St. Mary's parishioners have contributed about 75 kits and 100 is our goal!

The Ladies honored our beloved past President, Marie Tashji, departed this life, in the annual Golf Outing Journal in September. We will be dedicating a permanent Church item in her honor. Memory Eternal!

Our President, Sandra Arida, enjoyed the AWE Retreat at Holy Protection Monastery in October; it is always a pleasure to meet our sisters in Christ.

The Ladies are busy planning their annual Christmas Boutique, an event eagerly awaited by our Bay Ridge community. We will be decorating our beautiful Hall and selling home-made sweets, Christmas decorations, linens, books, CD's, toys, housewares, china, etc. Santa will be there for the children too! It is always a wonderful event and will be held on Dec. 7 and 8 this year.

The Ladies will be hosting our annual Epiphany Luncheon in the Church Hall on Jan. 5, 2020. His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH, will be our honored guest, celebrating the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy and the Blessing of the Water. ❖



ST NICHOLAS CATHEDRAL IN BROOKLYN, NY



- We celebrated 100 years of Hamelat El-Teeb with a beautiful luncheon and music. We honored our eldest members.
- We visit the sick and elderly.
- We celebrate Epiphany by going out having a lunch. Fr. Tom and family attend (everyone is invited) not for members only.
- In March, we sponsor a charity luncheon, with raffles & 50/50. All proceeds go to what is scheduled that year. We also read the Epistle every Sunday, one lady in English and one lady in Arabic. We also do the collection for the month. The ladies cook and serve for Orthodoxy Sunday.
- We serve for all memorials.
- We decorate with flowers the Tomb of Christ for Good Friday.
- In September we worked at the Mediterranean/St. Raphael festival and we all baked pastries and cakes.
- Our biggest event was a fundraiser for new altar boy robes, (our robes were over 30yrs old!). We cooked a chicken dinner with rice, salad, hummus and babaghanoush. We also did homemade pastries, cakes and cookies. We had raffles and 50/50. Well we met our goal and the boys now have their new robes! ❖



ST. GEORGE CHURCH IN DANBURY, CONNECTICUT



Our small Church makes incredible strides to do as much as we can to help our local communities, mother countries, our Church and archdiocese the best way we know how. For the most part, we cook and bake! We start the year with baking trays of kibbe and selling to our parishioners.

In February we collect items for a Valentines basket to raffle off at coffee hour. During lent we have hosted seminarians and their families from St. Vladimir, additionally we had a special Lenten luncheon and raffle to support Syrian refugees. We also host a breakfast for the children during St. Lazarus. Here the children gather and learn how to make palm crosses for Palm Sunday.

A few of us attend a special breakfast to honor volunteers from our parish who serve the hospice community. In early summer we promote a two-day community wide middle-eastern festival that brings people from near and far. Stations of saje, shawarma, falafel, grape leaves, and desserts are served under tents where people also enjoy sounds of our homeland and dance the day away!

Our church was in need of new banquet chairs and so we created a chair fund where we successfully were able to cover almost the entire cost. We donated our old chairs to other community churches and missions in need. We host two food drives per year, while the teens prepare food for Dorothy Day, which is a local soup kitchen for the homeless.

In October we invite all local communities for a successful Kibbe Dinner, served raw and cooked. Sold by the dozen, November is when we begin making kaak, otherwise known for our holiday bread for our parishioners. We plan to host a Thanksgiving coffee hour later this month which will include a raffle basket.

In December, St. Nicolas visits the children while they are in Sunday school and discreetly places goodies in their shoes that they left out. Just before Christmas Santa also visits the children for pictures. After Christmas, the church hosts a successful holiday party and raffle. Delicious food and dancing is our top priority! ❖



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Traditional Middle Eastern Food & Pastries ~
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FRIDAY, JUNE 28th • 4pm~11pm
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Nadim Bourjeili
(Friday night)

Elio Mitri
(Saturday night)



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Kibbee (Nayeh & Baked) ♦ Rice & Green Beans ♦ Garden Salad

♦ Coffee & Dessert ♦

Donation \$35 Per person

Kids under 10 FREE!

Cash Bar

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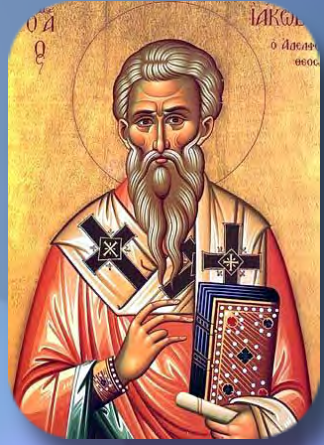


ST JAMES CHURCH IN HYDE PARK, NEW YORK

St. James' Church is in Hyde Park, which is a town in Dutchess County, New York, bordering the Hudson River north of Poughkeepsie, New York.

It has been an eventful year at St. James Church. Our events included an outdoor Family Fun Day. Families from the church were encouraged to come together and enjoy a barbecue, while the kids enjoyed bounce houses. The ladies have been organizing activities to encourage more socialization among families in the church and make the church a fun gathering place for all. Ping pong tables and air hockey tables were added for the teens and kids to enjoy. The Ladies Society hosted a Ladies Night "Paint and Sip Fundraiser" which was a great success that many enjoyed. During the holidays we have an annual Thanksgiving and Christmas Food Drive where we feed thirty-five families through the local food pantry. We welcomed our new parish priest and his family, and we look forward to all the events we will plan together. ❖

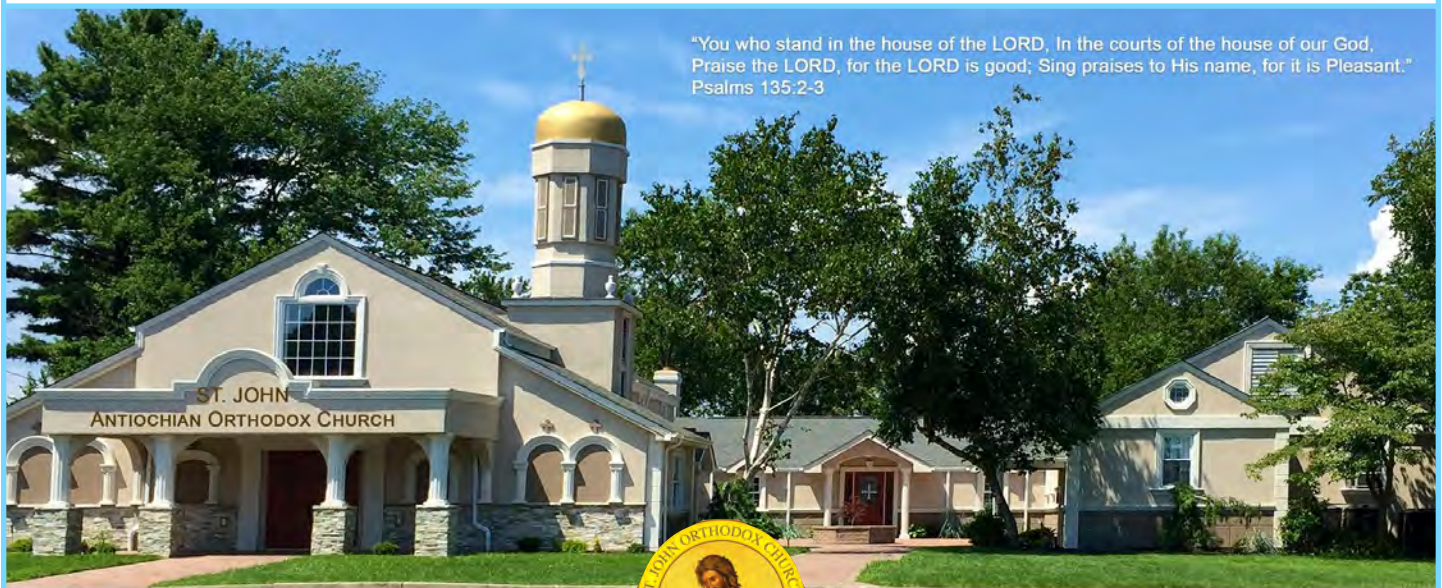


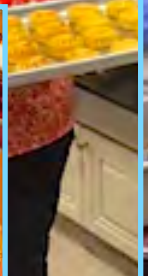


ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH

IN LEVITTOWN, NEW YORK

St. John the Baptist Church in Levittown, NY held a falafel breakfast during Great Lent, and an Easter/Pascha cookie sale this year! ❖





A Sisterhood Serving Christ Through Service

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women

of North America

The Month of MARCH is designated as WOMEN'S MONTH by our Archdiocese. During the Sundays of March, Women from our Ladies Society Minister to all of us during the Divine Liturgy through Tray Collections, Reading of the Epistle, & Saying a Sermonette (a short Sermon). In our Church, due to our rich diversity, the readings will be done either in English or Arabic, with good balance, so that both languages are attended to. Indeed, we all look forward to this month because without women, we cannot ontologically exist, none of us can, thanks to our mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, and so on. There are 5 Sundays in March this year, so the blessing is added by an extra Sunday: March 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, & 31st. With God as our Helper, we anticipate this female ministry, and we hope that as many women as possible, young and old, will participate in these services this month. May God bless All the Women of Saint John Orthodox Church!

Prayer of the Ladies Society

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, One God. Amen!

O Christ our God, we are all pledged to serve Thee with our whole being. Help us to continue to work for Thee through our Church without seeking praise, without seeking personal gain, without judging others, and without feeling that we have worked hard enough and now must allow ourselves to rest. Give us the strength to do what is right, and help us to go on striving for what is good, and to remember that activities are not the main thing in life. The most important thing is to have our hearts directed and attuned to Thee. Amen!

صلاة جمعية نساء الكنيسة

باسم الآب والابن والروح القدس الإله الواحد آمين!

أيها الرب يسوع المسيح، نحن نتعهد بأن نخدمك بكل كياننا، فساعدنا لكي نطيعك خدمتك لك من خلال الكنيسة المقدسة غير متمايلين مدح الآخرين، ولا زاجين المكسب الشخصي، بدون أن ندس الآخرين، ولا أن نشعر بأننا قد تعبنا لما فيه الكفاية حيث الآن قد حان وقت الراحة. إمنحنا القدرة للصبر ما هو صالح، وساعدنا لتستمر في الجهاد الحسن، ولتذكركم بأل النشاطات ليست هي الهدف الرئيسي في الحياة، إنما الأمر الأهم أن نكون قلوبنا موجهة ومقصودة إليك. آمين!



ST GEORGE CHURCH IN LITTLE FALLS, NJ

THE LADIES SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE LITTLE FALLS — ACTIVITIES OF 2018-2019

October: Book sale (“Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives”)

November: Made Thanksgiving pastries for sale

December: Ladies Christmas Lunch where many women attended and was overall a wonderful and joyous occasion. Ladies hosted New Years Party where there was a great attendance and a large success

March: Antiochian Women Month

Ladies ushered and read the Epistle in both Arabic and English

Held lectures throughout the Lenten period with different speakers

Hosted a Lenten dinner as we do every year where all women of the church cook and bring food

Made spinach pies and sold them to raise money towards building a new cathedral

Made and sold kenafi for Cheese Fare Sunday

Some of our women attended the retreat at the village

April: Had a communion breakfast for all women of the church

May: Held a lunch for St. George Day Feast, money raised will help offset the cost of the bus trip to the village for our children; Began cooking and preparing food for our upcoming annual festival

June: Annual festival of the church in which all women come together to help where needed. ❖





SS PETER & PAUL CHURCH IN POTOMAC, MD

The women of Ss. Peter and Paul Potomac, Maryland continue to serve the parish community through participation in numerous activities and projects during the year:



- The women worked with the men of Ss. Peter and Paul at the Memorial Golf Tournament on June 7 in honor of the founders of our church.

- The women of this parish bond in a sisterhood, dedicating their time and talents to make the annual Fall Festival a success. Chaired by Lorna Malooly and Thomaseena Cox, every detail was perfected, organizing this great occasion.

- The Parish women attended a Fall Retreat October 26 at the Orthodox Monastery of St. Nina, with a full schedule of Divine Liturgy, brunch with the nuns, and a presentation by Abbess Aemiliane.

- An invitation was sent to our Mother Church, St. George, to gather and continue our bonds in Christ, at the Christmas Luncheon on December 14.

- A Cookie Walk is planned with many other parish Christmas activities to celebrate the Birth of Christ on December 15.

- The Antiochian Women at Ss. Peter and Paul will assemble gifts and toiletries for dozens of backpacks for a local Maryland homeless outreach.

- Additionally, Christmas gift bags are prepared for our church members, who find it challenging to come to church services regularly, due either to illness or advanced age.

- Ss. Peter and Paul Antiochian Women annually sponsor two children through the Children's Relief Fund, which is a ministry initiated by Father George Rados+, and now administered by Father Isaac Crow, our priest.

- Through the efforts of the Antiochian Women at Ss. Peter and Paul, poinsettias and greens adorn the Church at the Nativity, similar to Holy Week and Pascha when the women prayerfully prepare the Naach with Spring flowers.

- The Ss. Peter and Paul Antiochian Women, with the assistance from parishioners, have an active ministry to quietly support those in our parish with meals, prayers, and cards.

- We look forward to spending quality time during Antiochian Women's Month in March with the women of St. George for an afternoon Tea.

- An initiative called the "Angel Fund," an outreach of the Antiochian Women established in 2014, supports parishioners in need by providing grocery gift cards to bridge the gap for their food needs. Done confidentially, the Clergy designate recipients who would benefit from it. Anyone can contribute money towards this fund. The Angel Fund is also partially funded through an elegant Mother's Day weekend fashion show/luncheon that is a consistent sell-out, being held this year at Westwood Country Club in Virginia.

- A Lenten service project in April supported by our Antiochian Women, will help purchase and pack over 25,000 meals for local food pantries in Virginia, Maryland, and the District. The entire parish participated in this joyful undertaking that was completed in less than two hours during Coffee Hour! ❖





SS. PETER & PAUL ANTIOCHIAN
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

كنيسة القديسين بطرس وپولس الأنطاكية الأرثوذكسية المسيحية



ST STEPHEN THE PROTOMARTYR CHURCH IN SOUTH PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY

The St. Stephen Women's group is a dedicated group of women that supports the church in many aspects such as spiritual, fundraising events and support in many church activities. Every year we supply turkey baskets for needy families in our area. We also provide new clothing and shoes for underprivileged children twice a year.

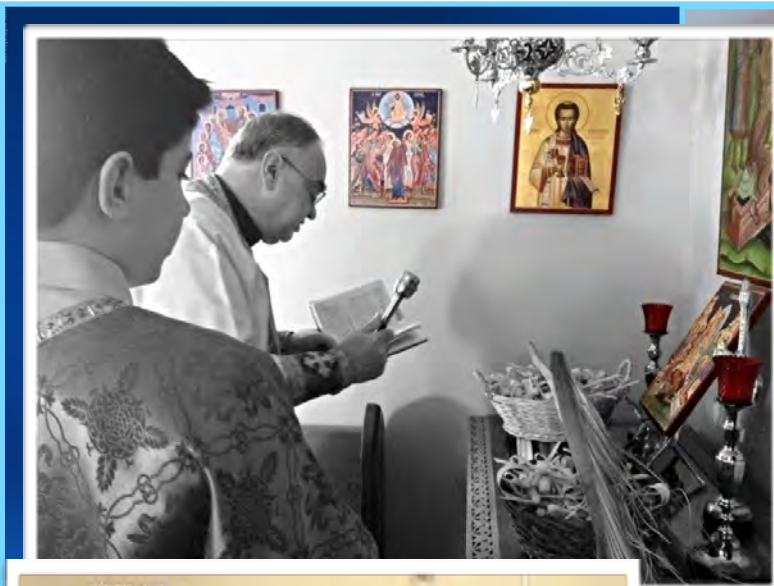
Additionally, we sponsor a child from the Children's Relief Fund in Lebanon. Last year, our "Act of Mercy" project was dedicated to Robert Wood Johnson Hospital's cancer patients. We made care packages which included a variety of items intended to comfort the patients. We also actively donate to the Church School and the local Rescue Squad.

During March, which is Antiochian Women Month, we encourage the women to participate during the Divine Liturgy, where we had our women read the Epistle and collect the donations. Additionally, together as a group we visited the Holy Protection Monastery in White Haven, PA.

The women of St. Stephen are always willing to lend a hand in helping out with the annual festival by cooking, baking and setting up. Annually, the women also help with the Tricky Tray multiple bake sales and promote our church by participating in in-town local fairs.

We also raise money for the annual special projects by the Archdiocese. God bless all the women of St. Stephen's Church for their hard work and dedication. ❖





ST GEORGE CHURCH IN WASHINGTON D. C.

The Ladies Myrrh Bearing Society of St. George, Washington DC, begins all meetings with the Antiochian Women's Prayer, which alerts us to keep our hearts focused and attuned to Christ. Our monthly meetings are full of laughter, loud energetic discussion, and a strong sense of sisterhood. Volunteering and giving of themselves is what the St. George Ladies do best.



Although the LMBS is valued for its fundraising efforts, we are very attentive to addressing the needs of the church as a whole. Our ultimate goal is to maintain the church traditions and support the next generation in maintaining the Church's Christ-like focus. During the Christmas season, the Ladies beautifully decorate the church, set up a nativity scene (Magharaa), and support all church activities. In addition to all the Christmas preparations and services, the Ladies gather for a Christmas dinner celebration exchanging ornaments, stories, and much Christmas cheer.

Epiphany is celebrated with tasty Awaamet prepared by the blessed hands of our Ladies. During Lent, the Ladies prepare Lenten meals, donate flowers for the Madayeh and fully participate in all church services. In anticipation of Christ's glorious entrance on Palm Sunday, the Ladies joyfully deep clean the church property and prepare the Palms for Sunday Service. During Holy Week, the Ladies host Lenten meals, adorn the Naash with flowers and prayers for the health of and in memory of loved ones, and color & polish the Pascha eggs, which at times end up being light pink instead of the intended deep red.

In 2019, the Ladies continued the annual tradition of hosting a gathering with the ladies of our sister parish, Ss. Peter and Paul in Maryland. In early spring, Ss. Peter and Paul hosted us with a stunning Tea Party, where the Ladies wore fancy hats, sipped on champagne/tea and enjoyed a day together. The festivities are reciprocated with a fall/winter event. This year, the St. George Ladies will host a Christmas gathering like no other. The Ladies play a lead role in coordinating and preparing for our annual Bazaar/Festival, an event that is full of fun, great food, music, beautiful smiles and lots and lots of laughter. In addition to the Falafel, Manaesh, and bake sales, the Festival continues to be the biggest parish fundraiser.

The LMBS takes great pride in celebrating our youth and setting them up for success. As parents and parishioners, the Ladies encourage the youth to be active Teen SOYO members, participants and leaders at the Antiochian Village Camp, and fully engaged volunteers and leaders at other Orthodox philanthropic venues. The LMBS was happy to assist our Teen SOYO with their efforts in a Thanksgiving Turkey meal drive which last year managed to make nearly 70 complete meal bags. In addition to supporting the Teen activities, we proudly acknowledge and honor our high school/college graduates in June of each year.

Contributing to our spiritual goals, the Ladies have participated in a spring and a fall retreat at St. Nina's Monastery, where we received spiritual nourishment, volunteered for tasks that supported the monastery, and spent precious time in church services which included listening to the nuns' beautifully chanted prayers.

The Ladies of St. George are delighted to have both the Vice-President and the Recording Secretary of the AWE as sisters and members of the St. George community. The strength of our sisterhood and the fellowship makes all our efforts worth it!

May Christ's blessings continue to embrace and protect all our Antiochian Sisters in Christ! ❖



ST GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

كنيسة القديس جاورجيوس الأنطاكية الأرثوذكسية المسيحية



VIRGIN MARY CHURCH IN YONKERS, NEW YORK

On September 22nd, His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH ordained to the rank of Priesthood, Deacon Nathaniel Trembley in the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church in Yonkers. The Antiochian Women's Organization, with the benediction of Father Christopher, sponsored the lunch and prepared a potluck where our families came together, with love and solidarity, donating home cooked



food and presenting a delicious and varied meal in honor of the Sacrament of Priesthood as well as hospitality to our guests from around the country, clergy, seminarians and friends.

We were happy to witness this Holy Sacrament take place for the first time in our church with Metropolitan JOSEPH. Our potluck was successful with the blessings of God and our Parishioner's generosity. We congratulate Father Nathanael, and pray that Christ leads him to be a wise and good shepherd.

On October 11th and 12th, our Antiochian Women Organization in Yonkers attended the first AWE Fall Retreat at Holy Protection Monastery. Five of our ladies experienced a beautiful adventure which is spiritual and nurturing. The following are their comments and feedback on the Fall Retreat:

"It was a sweet experience and commitment and shows the real meaning of humility and faith. Thank you to everyone who works to manage the monastery. It is a wonderful and clean place and I wish to repeat the visit." — Samira Marji

"My experience this weekend at the AWE Fall Retreat and Gathering was a wonderful one. Through prayer, spending time with the nuns, and listening to a speaker was a motivational and spiritually healing experience. I would definitely recommend this retreat to other women and would love to come back again." — Sana Dahdal

For the spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

(Timothy 1:7) "I can't express my feelings toward this visit! It's very rich and spiritual. It's a great sense of gratitude to God for having called me to this unique and unforgettable experience together with my sisters in Christ!" — Amale Sayegh

"The 2019 women's retreat was a beautiful and memorable experience. Thank you to the sisters of Holy Protection Monastery for opening your home to us and allowing us to join you in prayer, love and tranquility. Father Don Shadid, thank you for educating us on how to resist temptation in this world we live in. Thank you to Rula for all your hard work and putting this together, and to my sisters in Christ, it was a pleasure meeting and spending time with you all. God bless!" — Nadera Jabbour

Our Spiritual Retreat at Holy Protection Monastery was a nurturing opportunity to pull back from the world, balance our lives and experience the inner peace that is easily lost in the constant bombardment of thought in our contemporary lives. At this retreat, we received spiritual counseling, practiced silent prayer, and prayed with our sisters in Christ. We were fortunate to feel the joy and comfort which encourage us to repeat this wonderful experience, with the hope to be joined by more ladies inspired by the power of the Holy Spirit. We thank the president of AWE, Mrs. Rula Khoury, for her leadership and hard work. We thank our Spiritual Advisor, The Very Reverend Father Don Shadid, for his educational guidance. A special thanks is kept to the Mother Abbess and sisters at Holy Protection Monastery for their generous hospitality and their kindness.

“Let the message about Christ completely fill your lives, while you use all your wisdom to teach and instruct each other. With thankful hearts, sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.” — Colossians 3:16



As Antiochian Women, we believe the future of the Church belongs to the new generation. That is why we started a new tradition to present gifts to families churching their newborns. The gift consists of an Orthodox Icon, an explanation why a baby is churching, the Antiochian Women Prayer, and a nice card welcoming the baby. We do this to celebrate the special moment in the family's life and to share the special moment as one big family in Christ. ❖



ST. GEORGE CHURCH IN ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA

ST. MARY'S LADIES SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

October 19, 2019

DECEMBER: ST. NICHOLAS PARTY; CHRISTMAS FLOWERS; MIDDLE EASTERN PASTRIES

JANUARY: N/A

FEBRUARY: N/A

MARCH: ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN MONTH; PASCHA FLOWERS/BIER FLOWERS

APRIL: PALM SUNDAY COVERED DISH; PASCHA

MAY: MOTHER'S DAY

JUNE: GRADUATION GIFTS FOR SENIORS

JULY: N/A

AUGUST: N/A

SEPTEMBER: LADIES DINNER AT OLIVE GARDEN

OCTOBER: RENOVATIONS OF CHURCH RESTROOMS

NOVEMBER: THANKSGIVING DINNER EVERGREEN MANOR

OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT: REBECCA EDMISTON AND SUMMER RIFKAH

TREASURER: LINDA OFEISH

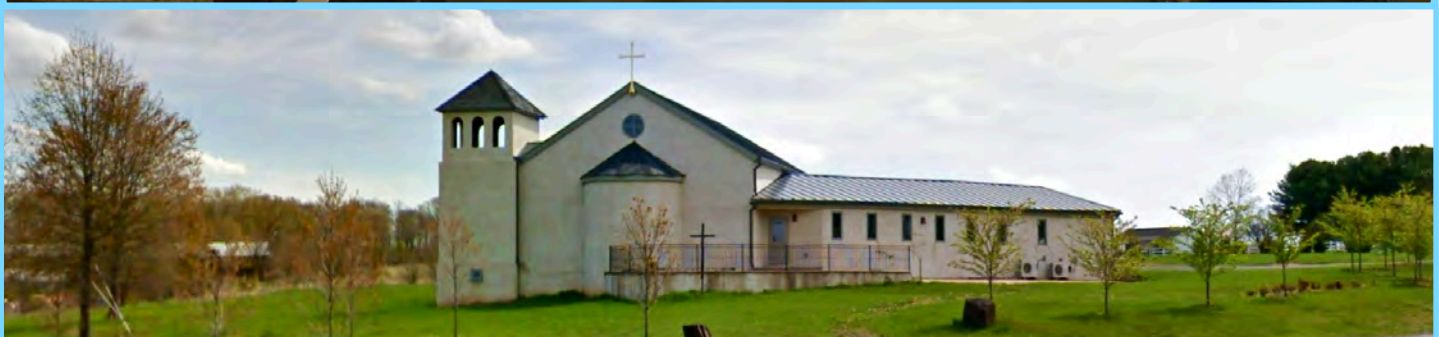
SECRETARY: STEPHANIE BATRUS

CORRESPONDANCE SECRETARY: JANICE SREMANAK ❖



ST. PATRICK CHURCH IN BEALETON, VIRGINIA

The Ladies of St. Patrick Orthodox Church in Bealeton, VA have had a full year. We organized and promoted our annual Advent food collection, more than doubling our total from last year. Some of our younger ladies organized and served the couples in our Parish with a Valentine's Banquet. Our annual Lenten Retreat was a success, with the ladies providing a delicious meal with tea. Our teen ladies have been helping a local ministry by chopping and stacking wood for those in need. We hosted a Georgian Wine Tasting fund-raiser where we raised money for the IOCC. We continue to provide meals to those in our Parish who are sick or grieving from the loss of a loved one. On August 11, 2019, our AWE president, Rula Osama Khoury, visited our parish and met with our ladies. On November 14-16, we will be hosting a Ladies Retreat at nearby Graves Mountain Lodge. Our topic will be "Putting Joy into Practice." ❖



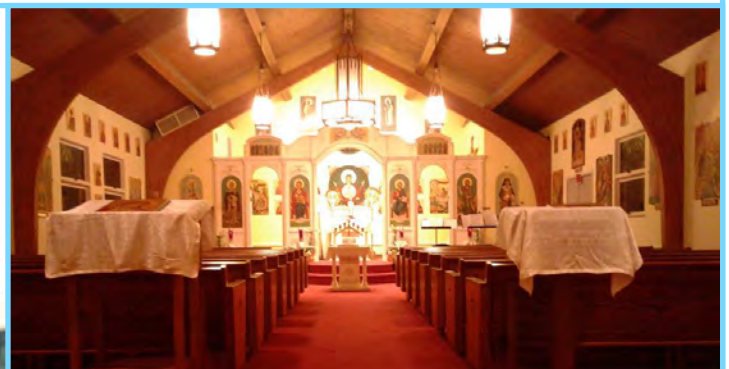
ST. ANTHONY CHURCH IN BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA

The past 2 years have been active and fruitful for St. Anthony's Parish. Four new families have joined the parish, either through baptism, chrismation, or moving to the area. Two catechumens are preparing for chrismation, and many visitors from the area have come to services to learn more about Orthodoxy.

The parish celebrated the ordination of Dn. Martin Johnson, who now serves with Fr. Bogdan Bucur. Wonderful home-made meals are prepared for coffee hour each week, and the parishioners enjoy eating and visiting together. Fr. Bogdan and Dn. Martin have begun teaching classes about Orthodoxy for the adults, and the mothers are coordinating a Sunday school program for the children. A "cry room" was set up in a converted office space to allow little children who need a break to remain present during the service in a quiet place.

Several rummage sales have been held to support the parish budget. In addition, the parish assembled hygiene kits for IOCC and donated gifts to needy children through the Toys for Tots program. This past December, there was a children's Christmas pageant, and the children are looking forward to repeating this special experience. Each year, one long-time parishioner prepares Christmas stockings and all parishioners contribute gifts to fill the stockings for each child.

On Holy Friday, the women and children gathered to decorate the bier with flowers, and the older girls served as myrrhbearers, wearing white dresses and holding candles they decorated themselves. The midnight Pascha service was well attended, and the parish enjoyed a wonderful feast. A long-time parishioner organized baskets for the children, and the parish contributed treats to fill them. This spring, the parish women also enjoyed a visit from AWE president Rula Osama Khoury, and they look forward to hearing about the activities of their sisters in Christ in other parishes. ❖





ST. MARY'S CHURCH IN CHAMBERSBURG, PA

St. Mary's in Chambersburg, PA is a small, rural parish in South Central Pennsylvania comprised of a melting pot of Arabs, Greeks, Serbians, Russians, Ethiopians, converts, and more, all worshipping together in the Glory of Christ. While we don't have an active AOW chapter, the women of our church are very vibrant! Our Parish holds an annual festival that takes months of preparation and includes all the delicious food from the aforementioned groups!

We run Sunday school, decorate for the holidays, organize coffee hour, sing in the choir, serve in our own church soup kitchen, attend bible study and more. We hold pirogue pinching parties sometimes making 160 dozen for sale for the public, we bake the prosforo, and make Greek delicacies. We also organize rides for home bound parishioners, make home visits and cards, and care for each other's spiritual and emotional needs.

In conclusion, while we may be small parish,
we are Mighty In the Name of the Lord. ❖





ST. GEORGE CATHEDRAL, CHARLESTON, WV

September and October were very busy months for our Antiochian Women's group, the Ladies Guild. We were preparing the Lebanese food for our annual church dinner along with organizing and hosting our annual Middle Eastern dinner that was held on Sunday, October 20, 2019.

St. George Eastern Orthodox Cathedral has been hosting this annual event for over 85 years. It started as a small group of ladies from the church coming together and preparing their favorite Lebanese/Middle Eastern dishes to share with fellow parishioners and (at that time) the small community of Charleston, WV. As the years progressed, the group of women got bigger and so did the community. The dinner became more involved and we began enlisting the help of the men and teens of the church. Today the dinner is a church-wide effort and we look forward to it year after year. The Ladies Guild organizes the dinner with many of the ladies of church chairing different committees to ensure that the dinner runs smoothly.

Guests had the option of enjoying mouth-watering Yabrho (Cabbage Rolls), delicious Kibbee (Ground Meat & Wheat), flavorful Loobia (Green Beans), scrumptious Baklava (Multi-layered phyllo dough & nuts), and much more, by dining in the upstairs ballroom of the conference center or by carrying-out to-go orders in the lower level of the conference center. Also located in the lower level was the ethnic grocery store where guests could buy all the ingredients to make their own delicious middle eastern dishes, or purchase prepared entrees and desserts. Guests also toured the beautiful sanctuary of St. George Cathedral and learned about the Orthodox Christian faith from our Father Joseph.

The church dinner began at Noon and ended at 6pm. This is the ladies guild biggest event of the year and most profitable for the church. All proceeds go directly to the church. This year we served 2,000 guests along with selling out all the items in our ethnic grocery store.

Our ladies work hard all year long to ensure that our biggest project benefits the community in the best way possible. This dinner is a true testament to a church community coming together to share their culture, religion and flavor with an entire community.

The Ladies Guild is diligently working on upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas charity events. One that we do every year is donating \$600 to area schools during Thanksgiving and Christmas to help families with food and warm coats. We also hold a book drive during December with the books being donated to a local children's shelter. We are looking into other ways to aid our community during the holiday season.

We also are organizing a trip to a monastery for our ladies and looking into having some guest speakers to challenge us spiritually. Lastly, we will be holding our 2020 Elections in December where we will elect new president, vice president, secretary and treasurer for the upcoming year. ❖





ST. MICHAEL CHURCH IN GREENSBURG, PA

“...giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”
(Ephesians 5:20)

Glory to Jesus Christ! We at St. Michael's in Greensburg have been trying our best to reach out to the community and to our own parishioners. The Gratitude Graffiti Wall for the month of November is a project we are doing again this year.

A tree is painted (washable paint) on the window at the entrance to the church and washable markers are provided to all that enter so that they might express their thoughts on what they are grateful for. It is a wonderful way for all to experience how others interpret gratitude as well as thinking about their own feelings. What the children write is especially beautiful to read — they say what they feel. This community project helps us to remember that each day should begin with a prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving for all that we have been given.

We have scheduled a speaker from the Blackburn Center to attend our monthly meeting to bring our attention to Human Trafficking that takes place in our world today. Gift cards and



other supplies will be given to take back to the shelter. School kit bags were again filled and taken to the IOCC to be distributed where there is a need. This has been an ongoing project for the Antiochian Women.

We are also excited about our annual mini-retreat in December that we have done now for several years. Scheduled speakers are the 3 Shadids: Archpriest Donald, Kh. Janet & Priest Christopher. We have invited the deanery and all to attend (men, too).

We also continue to cook for 2 yearly bake sales, our fundraiser in the fall, Holy Bread for parishioners who want to offer but cannot bake, helping serve lunch at a local Lutheran church every other month, organizing cleaning of the church in the spring, and helping Father with whatever the ladies can do for him.

Hopefully, by listing some of the projects that we do, maybe it will be a help for others to get ideas as to what they may be able to help with. We look forward to reading what the other churches accomplish so that we may get some ideas for ourselves, as well.

We continue to encourage the younger groups in our parish to come and help with different events so they will be able carry on some of the traditions that everyone loves.

A special thanks to all the Antiochian women for their continued support and constant love for their Orthodox Faith, by spreading God's word through all that they do. May God's blessings be with all of us.

Yours in Christ, Antiochian Women of St. Michael Orthodox Church, Greensburg, PA ❖



ST. BASIL THE GREAT CHURCH IN HAMPTON, VA

2019 was a good and active year for us, and continues to be as we drive into our busiest season. We hosted two “Diapers Sprinkles”, and two new-mama baby showers, and participated in a wedding shower. For weddings, we give the couple a lovely icon of the Wedding at Cana, and for baptisms we gift a board book for baby to get exposed more and more to church pictures through their everyday life as they grow.

We have also helped provide meals for several members of our community as they have been in need through illness, new babies, or other life changes.

In the spring we were blessed to provide the lilies for the altar decorations at Pascha, and helped decorate the bier.

Going into fall and winter: we have begun our annual Secret Sister event, during which we are given the name and information for one person to surprise with small gifts and to pray for during the week. We'll finalize this event in February at a shared meal where we will reveal who we were blessing throughout the event.

As our annual Holiday outreach event, we will take up donations of hats, gloves, scarves, and socks in November to pair with our ministries and outreach group's coat drive. Those items will all be given to homeless members of our community in early December.

Also in November, we'll welcome Bishop Thomas with a shared meal after Liturgy.

On December 7, we will host our annual St Nicholas Day party for the children. This event has grown bigger every year. This year we expect St Nicholas will put bags of goodies in the shoes of 25 children during Vespers at the end of our party. Our Teen SOYO Group will be enlisted to help fill the bags.

On December 13/14, we will be providing dinner and a bagged breakfast to approximately 100 homeless community members through a local organization called PORT, and in partnership with the local Greek Orthodox Church, Ss. Constantine & Helen.

Finally, we will be providing the poinsettias for the altar for Christmas service. ❖





SAINT BASIL THE GREAT
ORTHODOX CHURCH
invites you to

**SACRED ARTS
FESTIVAL**

APRIL 20 & 21, 2018
1520 TODDS LANE, HAMPTON, VA 23666

*Come and discover the beauty of icons,
architecture and music
See details on the back*

ST. MARY CHURCH IN HUNT VALLEY, MARYLAND

“Rejoice in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayers”

Romans 12:12.

This is what you read when you enter our church lobby. This is what our ladies society strives for.

St. Mary's Antiochian Orthodox Church is a fast-growing community which makes our ladies well equipped with the ability to welcome new members and involve them in our church life. The ladies society is busy throughout the year with all kind of activities. Our biggest fundraiser is the Lenten food sale usually In March and 2 weeks into our fasting. Our ladies prepare and sell food during lent.

Also, we have our Easter Cookie sale on Palm Sunday. In addition to that, the Christmas cookie sale in December is one of our successful events which attracts the outside community to enjoy homemade delicious ethnic cookies. In September our three-day long festival takes place. Our ladies stay involved in the festival from preparing food ,cooking , handling the sales and welcoming visitors. The month of March is the Antiochian ladies month where we usher, read the epistle and collect the baskets.

We help the community by donating Thanksgiving baskets to schools with families in need. This year we will deliver 12 baskets with needed food items as well as sweat shirts and sweat pants for those in need. In March we visited a senior living and it was a blessing. We spent the afternoon talking to 7 ladies and playing games. The caregivers were able to take a break, as well. We stay in touch with our Antiochian women of the East by attending retreats, like the Fall retreat and the visit to the Holy Protection Monastery which allow us to stay current and encouraged.

Working hard doesn't stop us from having fun. We enjoy having dinner out twice a year, we eat, play and laugh. This helps us stay committed while bring us closer to each other and to our faith. ❖





MEDITERRANEAN FOOD FESTIVAL

3 FUN FILLED DAYS!
 Fri, Sept 20th • 6pm-11pm, Sat., Sept 21st • 11am-Midnight Sun. Sept. 22nd • Noon-6pm

DELICIOUS BAKED FOODS & DESSERTS

LIVE DJ-MUSIC

COMMUNITY YARD SALE
 Saturday and Sunday

CHILDRENS ENTERTAINMENT

TRADITIONAL DANCING

St. Mary Orthodox Church
 909 Shawan Rd • Hunt Valley, MD 21030
www.nativityofthetheotokos.org

HOLY SPIRIT CHURCH IN HUNTINGTON, W. V.

Fall 2019 PLC Meeting Ladies Report
Women of Holy Spirit Orthodox Church, Huntington, WV 25701
Father John Dixon, Priest

The year 2019: The Ladies of Holy Spirit Orthodox Church met once a month from June to October 2019. The meetings usually take place at the church social hall beginning at 1:00 p.m and ending by 2:30 or 3:00 pm. The meeting consists of refreshments, social time and Father John discussing a topic the ladies had asked Father to discuss.

Our Book Club is reading the SWEETNESS OF GRACE. Father John has been leading us in discussing this wonderful book. The Ladies visit the parishioners living in assisted living communities, nursing homes and those confined to their homes. We take the bulletins from the church and other news about the church. We also take an icon for their rooms or homes and a copy of the *Dynamis* for the current month. We have a weekly Bible Study about the daily reading of the *Dynamis* led by our Priest, Father John Dixon.

We are supporting a local school's drive for children who do not always have food to eat on the weekend. We donate food items the children can prepare themselves. Their backpacks are filled with food on Thursdays so they may take it home with them for the weekend on Friday. There are about 50 children attending the school that is signed up for the program and another 50 on the waiting list. We continue to collect can goods for The Cridlin Food and Clothing Pantry. They are delivered to the pantry each week.

Ladies began cooking and preparing food the first of September to be served for our Annual Mid – Eastern Dinner fund raiser we had Sunday October 20, 2019. 10% of the profit is donated to a charitable project in our local community.

We will be raffling a Heavenly Ham or Turkey dinner for Thanksgiving and having our annual Christmas Cookie Bake Sale. The money from the projects will be used to pay our annual dues to the Archdiocese and the Metropolitan Joseph's Cathedral project. ❖



ST. MARY CHURCH IN JOHNSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

The Antiochian Women of our St. Mary Parish Family are very active in all aspects of our Parish Life. The Women serve in our Choir, on our Parish Council, in our Church School, at our 3 Annual Middle-Eastern Food Sales and in our Ministry at our Local Family Kitchen. We participate 4 times a year at this Kitchen, cooking & preparing a Meal for about 125 people. We then transport it to the Kitchen & distribute it ... 2 times a year on a Saturday and 2 times a year on a Sunday. ❖



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH IN LEWES, DELAWARE

St. Andrew's parish in Lewes, Delaware has experienced continuous growth in our membership since moving into our new church in 2012 and expanding the structure in 2017.

We at St. Andrew's believe it is our purpose to work together to support our community in any way that we can. We have established several outreach programs to this end. Some of our projects are collection of non-perishable food items to be sent to the local food bank for the holidays, an Angel Tree to benefit elderly patients at a local healthcare facility who have no loved ones to visit, and support of a local pregnancy care center.

To be able to fund these and other projects, St. Andrew's organizes several fund raisers throughout the year. In the spring, we host a Yard Sale with items donated by our parishioners. The first weekend of November we have our Fall Fest, which is our largest fundraiser of the year, including a basket auction and bake sale held in the Great Hall. Ethnic foods are provided for sale as well. This is a very popular event both among our church members and the local community. They come back year after year, and it also serves as a valuable outreach to our non-Orthodox neighbors. Thanks to the generous support of friends and local businesses in our community we are also able to publish an ad booklet, which helps to generate additional monies. These funds help support our many charities and additional projects for our facility.

The Antiochian Women of St. Andrew's are planning more events for the coming year. The women of St. Andrews are blessed to have our church community that supports and encourages all the outreach and friendship thriving here! Yours in Christ, Kh. Vera Acker ❖





ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH IN LEWISTOWN, MARYLAND



This past year, St. John the Baptist has actively participated in the Adams County Orthodox Fellowship, where our priest, Father James Hamrick, has led a book study on the book Know the Faith by Rev Fr. Michael Shanbour. We also witnessed our first wedding held at our parish this past July, since becoming an Orthodox church over ten years ago. As a parish, we also make a point to always throw a baby shower for each of our expecting mothers within our church; and therefore, we hosted a baby shower for our catechumen family at the beginning of October to help welcome their third child, and first son!

At the end of October, we helped support and celebrate with our sister parish, St. James the Apostle, in Taneytown, MD, as they hosted their new church building dedication. His Grace, Bishop THOMAS was in attendance. During the weekend dedication, Father James Hamrick also gave a presentation on Celtic Saints of the Orthodox Church.

As an ongoing ministry, we contribute monthly to our local food bank. We have also continued our Family Care Ministry, which coordinates needed care for families within our congregation. This care includes coordinating and providing meals for families postpartum or following illness or surgery. In previous years, this ministry has even provided Christmas gifts and grocery support for a family with young children who did not have the means to provide Christmas presents or purchase holiday groceries.

As a Western Rite parish, we pray Stations of the Cross every Friday evening during Great Lent. Additionally, on the third Sunday of every month, Father James designates his homily as a “children’s homily,” in which the children are invited to the front with a message delivered directly to them. With the growing number of young children within our parish, we are also looking to expand our children’s church ministry and are currently developing those plans. ❖





HOLY CROSS CHURCH IN LINTHICUM, MARYLAND



The Sisterhood of Saint Nina

Prepared by: Elaine M. Papp, Chair, Sisterhood of Saint Nina

The Sisterhood of Saint Nina, of the Holy Cross Church in Linthicum, Maryland, meets every September to plan the events for the upcoming liturgical year. Our events are designed to fall into one or more of the four main goals of the Antiochian Women:

- Express love and service through charity
- Enhance fellowship
- Develop deeper understanding of our Holy Orthodox Faith
- Develop a spirit of Christian leadership, awareness and commitment

In 2019, we began a new program for deepening our understanding of Orthodox Spirituality --the monthly Sisterhood breakfasts. Held on the first Saturday of each month, our Sisterhood breakfasts provide fellowship and spiritual sustenance to our members. We begin the breakfast with either an Akathist or Hours prayers. Followed by time to eat, socialize and listen to various speakers on spiritual topics of interest.

In addition to this spiritual program, we also continued to deepen our fellowship. We held one bridal shower and three baby showers, giving each new mother a diaper sculpture. And, just for fun, we had wine making classes! We made Sangiovese wine. Each participant got to take home two bottles of our special wine, made and bottled in Linthicum, Maryland!

Our charitable programs continued in 2019. Through the Christmas Giving Tree we collected three items each of 20 children in our community. In addition, the Guild of Blessed Olga knitted winter hats for each child. Our Sisterhood also helped the parish with its ministry to Arundel House of Hope, a mission for homeless people. In honor of our patron saint, Saint Nina, we made our annual visit to Saint Nina's monastery to help the sisters with various tasks around to monastery.

Lastly, we held a Spring Tea, entitled the Naomi and Ruth Tea, to enhance relationship between the young women and the older women in our parish. Our own Kh. Meredith Burnet was the speaker, discussing growing into a woman in our current culture. The tea was well attended and received many accolades. As we move into 2020 liturgical year, we will continue to offer new ways for the women of our parish to grow in spirituality, deepen their bonds of fellowship and to demonstrate our love through acts of charity both within our own parish and the larger surrounding community. ❖





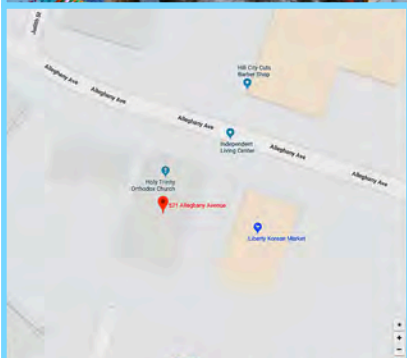
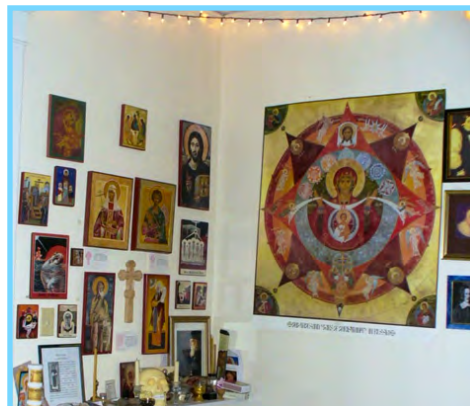
HOLY TRINITY CHURCH IN LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

The Antiochian Women Chapter of Holy Trinity Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, is named for Saint Sophia and her Daughters: Faith, Hope, and Love. We have started having regular monthly meetings. Each meeting includes one of the women sharing the story of her chosen saint, as well as a prayer practice whether the rosary, one of the many akathist hymns, or one of the many litanies from the Western Rite.

Our first priority is to provide a St. Nicholas party for the parish, especially the children. We will be making paper bag puppets, decorating cookies, and learning a simple song about this glorious saint. Before the party ends each child will find the traditional gold coin candy and orange in his or her shoes.

We are also beginning to design cloth "quiet" books for each little child in the parish. They will include some of the regular interactive pages, but also ones applicable to our Church and love of Jesus. We hope to keep some on hand as each new baby is welcomed to our larger family. We continue hostessing baby and bridal showers. We also provide a couple weeks of meals for new mothers and encourage a restful 40 day observance. We welcomed two new babies in 2019 and we look forward to a wedding in spring 2020.

Sadly we said goodbye to one of our beloved original members. Our women were generous in their gifts of food for her mercy meal. We continue to remember her husband with gifts of food and invitations to our homes. ❖



ST. GEORGE CHURCH IN NEW KENSINGTON, PA

The Myrrh Bearing Women of St. George Church assist in cooking and provide support for our annual food festival and Lenten lunches. We had three kibbee bake sales and plan on two more before the end of the year.

The Myrrh Bearing women sponsor Coffee Hour the last Sunday of each month. The Myrrh Bearing Women organized a Winter Women's gathering where we asked other Myrrh Bearing women from other Orthodox Churches near by to join us. We also organized a Saturday Social Gathering for all women of our Church.



The Myrrh Bearing Women attended the Parish Life Conference AOCWNA Meeting and luncheon. We also visited the weeping icon at St. Peter and St. Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Carnegie, PA. The Myrrh Bearers of St. George visit our shut-ins monthly and at Christmas. Our Myrrh Bearers put together either personal care kits or school kits for the IOCC annually.

Our Myrrh Bearers support all parish projects to include choir, church school, parish council, food bank and fresh express. ❖



ST. ELIAS CHURCH IN NEW CASTLE, PENNSYLVANIA

Our Lady Theotokos Society is grateful to serve God, church and community, which is our main purpose. We are very thankful for the beautiful and talented women of our church, who devote their time, prayers, and fellowship in every project or activity we sponsor.

Every year we raise money thru fundraisers for a worthy cause. This past year, the women sponsored numerous Syrian food sales, such as spinach and meat pies, kibbe and baklava fingers. We are blessed to have the support of our Parish Council and parishioners. Our parishioners are very generous. With donations and food sales, we are able to support our local community. We were also able to purchase a few necessary items for the church. One of the items we purchased was a new freezer., which was greatly needed in preparation for our yearly food festival. The men of our church always help with our baking. It always turns out to be a great day of fun and fellowship.

The majority of our time spent this year was dedicated to our yearly church food festival. The women of our church spend hours preparing for our one-day festival. The Theotokos Society was in charge of the dessert table this year. All of the desserts we sold at the food festival were donated by our members. We completely sold out of every single item we had for sale at our table! Nothing was left over!

We also support humanitarian and acts of mercy. Every year we donate to Feeding the Hungry, the IOCC, and our local monastery, the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania. Many women of our parish have special relationships with the nuns there, and our retreats to the monastery are filled with prayer and thanksgiving.

This past September, we were able to spend a day in fellowship with the Nuns at the monastery during the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos. We attended Vespers and we all received a special blessing and anointing from Father Paisius, followed by dinner at a local restaurant. It was a wonderful day. One that truly touched our hearts and spirit.

The women of our church are very active in our parish. They organize ushers for communion, coffee hour after liturgy, our yearly Mardi Gras Dinner Dance, the annual Father's Day breakfast, and our annual food festival. We spend weeks preparing and getting ready for our food festival. We serve as readers, church schoolteachers, and Choir and Parish Council members. Our women are mothers, sisters, aunts, cousins, friends, and are truly a light for our church family. Anytime we are called upon to help or assist, we are willing.

We also intend to plan fall and spring activities for the women as well as a yearly Christmas dinner. This fall we are planning a show and dinner night out. We are a small group, and I am honored and blessed to be part of this amazing group of women who have a passion and love for God, their church, each other and community at large! ❖





ST. GEORGE CATHEDRAL IN PITTSBURGH, PA

The Antiochian Women in our parish have developed many services and activities into traditions over the years. During Antiochian Women's Month, we sponsor the coffee hour on Sundays, read the Epistle in English and Arabic and serve as ushers. Following the Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays during March, the Antiochian Women prepare the meals for the parish. These activities have become traditions for us and any donations received help with the Parish Life Conference expenses and in organizing activities for the women.



During Lent, we assist in decorating the church and the bier for Holy Week. The Lenten retreat is always well attended, and we all look forward to the prayers, the communication with our sisters, and to attend the great lectures. In the summer we try to organize functions to celebrate other events such as Independence Day, etc. Our women usually contribute or donate a prize for the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery fundraiser and other monasteries.

Our Calendar Party is the highlight of our fundraising efforts for the Antiochian Women Project as determined by the Metropolitan each year. All our women and their friends look forward to this event, and this year was another great success thanks to the experience we have gained over previous years, and to the combined efforts of all our women. A Christmas party is being planned for later this year and we expect to have a fun, social gathering for all our members and other guests.

The Antiochian Women will be participating in the organization of the Antiochian Orthodox National Convention being hosted by our parish in Pittsburgh in 2021 and we are looking forward to welcoming all of you then. ❖





ST. PHILIP CHURCH IN SOUDERTON, PENNSYLVANIA

The AWE group at St. Philip Orthodox Church in Souderton, Pennsylvania, has undergone a change in leadership, mission, and formal organization this past year! We are delighted to now call our AWE group “The Women of St. Mariamne”. St. Mariamne was the sister of St. Philip, and devoted herself to caring for the poor and underprivileged.



As a change in our formal organization, the Women of St. Mariamne (WoSM) now hold business meetings every other month, with informal fellowship gatherings held on the months with no business meeting. This has enabled us to involve and get to know more women as a part of our group. In August we met for a “Picnic in the Park” and enjoyed food and fellowship, along with a beautiful lake walk. In September, we hosted our Annual Bazaar as a part of the International Food Festival of St. Philip. Many handmade and gently used items were provided by the WoSM and a very generous amount was raised for our AWE ministries and a local crisis pregnancy center.

One ongoing ministry is our St. Olga Sewing Group which meets on Tuesdays to sew and do crafts together. Many quilts have been made and sold at our Annual Bazaar, draw-string bags are made and sold to raise funds for our children to attend camp at Antiochian Village, and pillow cases, dog blankets, and baby blankets are made and given to local charities. This group has drawn in women who are not Orthodox and serves as an outreach to those women.

October was a very busy month! On October 5th, the WoSM hosted a “Women’s Heart Health” event, featuring our parish priest Fr. Noah Bushelli and Dr. Kaitlyn Ibrahim, an area cardiologist and devout Orthodox woman. Over 30 women from around the Lehigh Valley were able to attend and learn about taking good care of our spiritual and physical hearts!

On the evening of October 12th, we provided food and served with “Twelve Baskets Full”, a ministry based in Philadelphia that serves lunches to the homeless in the downtown area. We provided sandwiches, fruit, drinks, and snacks, along with toiletries and socks, to approximately 35 people. After opening with the Lord’s Prayer, we were able to provide food, dignity, and fellowship. We look forward to serving God in many more ways as a parish chapter of the AWE in 2020! ❖





ALL LADIES ARE INVITED!

TO A PRESENTATION ON

WOMEN'S HEART HEALTH

FEATURING DR. KAITLYN IBRAHIM, CARDIOLOGIST
AND
FR. NOAH BUSHELLI

HOSTED BY THE WOMEN OF ST. MARIAMNE


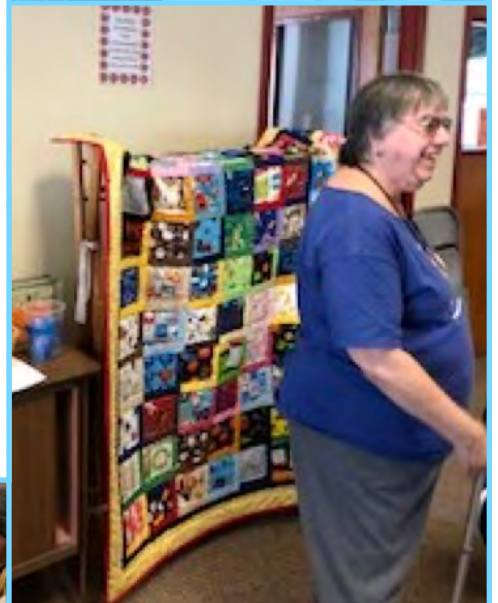
Saturday, October 5, 2019
2:00 PM

St. Philip Orthodox Church
1970 Clearview Road / Souderton, PA 18964

All women are invited to this **FREE** event!
Bring your friends to this life-saving presentation by Dr. Kaitlyn Ibrahim.

Enjoy refreshments, fellowship, and education on healthy heart habits!

Please RSVP or address questions to
hyatt38ba@gmail.com

ST. GEORGE CHURCH IN UPPER DARBY, PA

St. Katherine's Group of St. George in Upper Darby, PA, is an active group. It has been a busy year! Last fall, we were blessed by a visit and brunch with Bishop THOMAS. That same fall, we learned how to make prosphora (communion bread).

During the months of November and December, we collect and donate gifts for the families of People's Emergency Center (PEC) of Philadelphia. PEC offers emergency shelter, transitional housing, housing for teen mothers, and over 50 programs including literacy, financial skills, and computer training.

We also hold an annual Palm Sunday bake sale and bake traditional pastries for our parish Food Festival in May. Our parish holds weekly Sunday school for our children and weekly Wednesday night study groups in the church hall. We are currently working our way through, "On the Incarnation" by St. Athanasius. ❖



 **St George Orthodox Church**

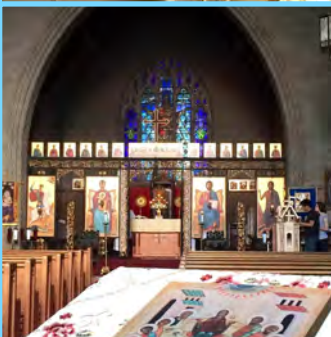
FOOD FESTIVAL

Join us for an afternoon of delicious food, activities for kids, church tours, and more!

SAT, MAY 18, 2019
12pm - 8pm

8210 W. Chester Pike
Upper Darby, PA 19082

Visit
www.StGeorgeUpperDarby.org
for more information



ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM CHURCH

IN YORK, PENNSYLVANIA

Glory to God for All Things!

The St John's AOW works to provide structure and organization for various ministries within St. John's. The women meet routinely to identify and choose various ministry opportunities. After several years of leadership, Barbara Bleam has stepped down as president of the AOW. We thank her for her leadership, insights and good work.



A new leadership team was elected this year.

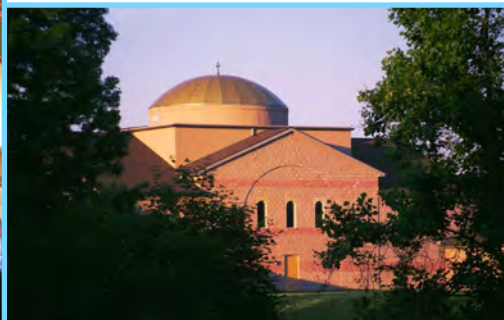
President: Kh. Pam Pier

Vice President: Sh. Leslie Atherholt

Secretary: Heather Bender

Treasurer: Marjorie Barrett

The following is a list of various ministries organized and supported by the AOW of St. John's: Metropolitan Joseph's Annual AWONA Project, Mercy Meals, Hospitality for Bishop THOMAS, Paschal Flowers, FOCUS Back Pack Project, Bridge of Hope Ministry, Project Linus, Support Seminarian Families, Annual Parish Christmas Card, Kitchen/Pantry Organization ❖



ST. MARY CHURCH IN WILKES BARRE, PA

Greetings from St. Mary, Wilkes Barre!

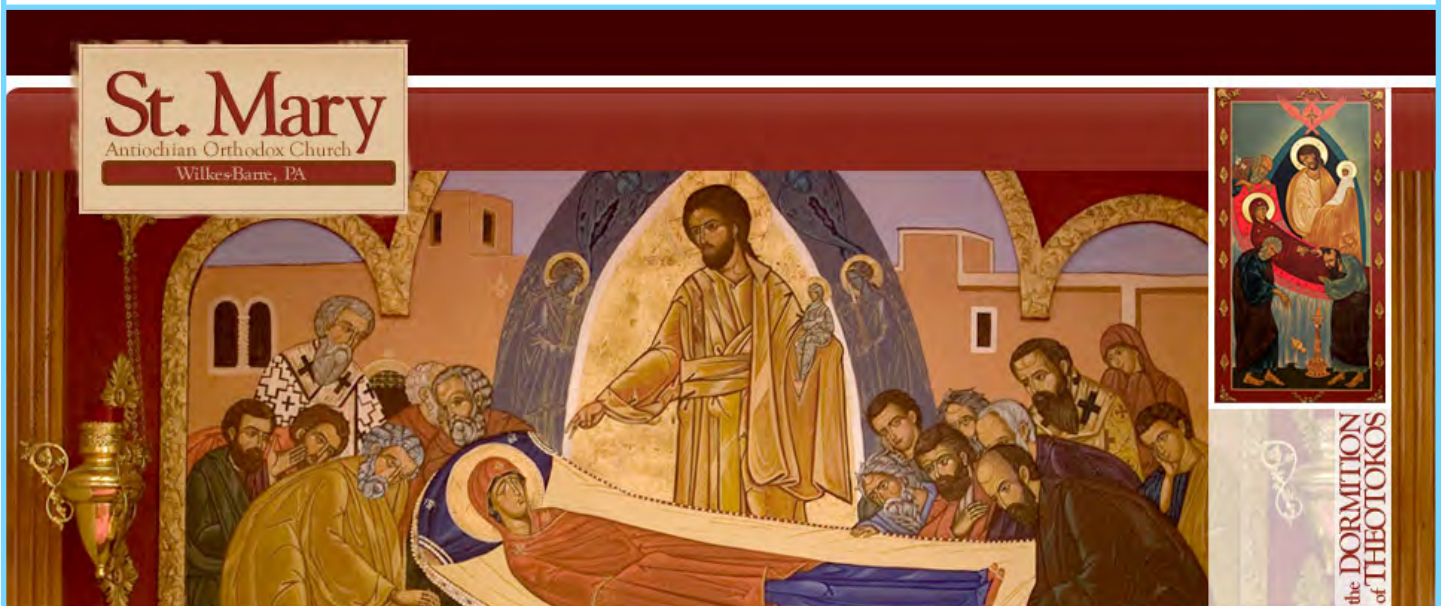
We have had a busy year working together at fundraising events, community service, and baking altar bread. This year we prepared kibbe and stuffed grape leaves, baked cookies and more for our first annual parish festival, "A Day in Damascus." Our fundraising has paid parish utility bills, seminarian stipends, and contributed towards our parish Christmas party. We have also raised funds for the designated annual charitable project by our popular rummage sales. As part of St. Mary's dedicated Spaghetti Dinner Team, we also support our parish community service project, a bimonthly spaghetti dinner, which provides an affordable home-cooked meal in a welcoming, sociable environment for residents of the local community.

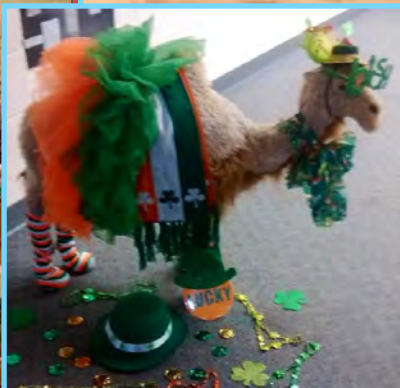


Several of us recently attended the first AWE Fall Retreat at Holy Protection Monastery in White Haven. It was a time of renewal and fellowship, as we enjoyed the beautiful monastery setting, the warm hospitality of the sisters, and the wisdom and encouragement of Fr. Don Shadid, our AWE Spiritual Advisor, who gave an engaging presentation on the topic of "Resisting Temptation in the Modern World."

AWE President, Rula Osama Khoury, made a parish visit to St. Mary's in October, and gave an inspiring introduction to the history and purpose of the AWE. It was our joy to welcome Rula, and we wish her every success as she serves her second term as President of the Antiochian Women of the East.

The Antiochian Women of St. Mary Church, Wilkes Barre, wish you and your families a blessed Advent and a joyous Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord. ❖





FIRST ANNUAL AWE FALL RETREAT

OCTOBER 12, 2019

HOLY PROTECTION MONASTERY, WHITE HAVEN, PA



Our first annual AWE Fall Retreat, which took place Saturday, October 12 at Holy Protection Monastery in White Haven, Pennsylvania, was a great success, which will certainly become a highlight to look forward to each year. Thanks to our President, Rula Osama Khoury, and AWE Officers, who organized the retreat, thanks to our Spiritual Advisor, Fr. Don Shadid, who spoke at the retreat, and thanks to the warm hospitality of the sisters at Holy Protection Monastery, this was a special day of fellowship and growth.

Early that morning we were blessed to take part in a beautiful Liturgy in the monastery church, which is dedicated to the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. The chanting of the nuns in the quiet, candlelit church turned our busy minds to the depth of the prayers of the Liturgy.

Following breakfast and registration, Fr. Don Shadid, AWE Spiritual Advisor, gave an edifying presentation on the subject of the retreat: "Resisting Temptation in the Modern World."

Antiochian Women of the East- *join us*
for a *One day Fall Retreat and Gathering* near you at
Holy Protection Monastery on October 12, 2019

Resisting Temptation in the Modern World

Come meet your Sisters in Christ from other parishes for a day full of meditating in the beauty of the monastery and a spiritual discussion with **Fr. Don Shadid** as our Keynote Speaker.

Holy Protection Monastery includes the main building with the monastic cells; the main church dedicated to the Holy Apostles Peter & Paul; and two chapels dedicated to St. Nektarios and St. Paraskevi. Other buildings include: a bakery, a workshop with an icon-painting studio, a woodworking shop, a candle making shop and a guesthouse. The Sisters maintain their own gardens, greenhouse and fruit orchards.



For Registration email us at AWEOthodox1973@gmail.com by October 2, 2019 or call Angela Saliby at 703-582-4232

Liturgy: 7:30 am - 9:30 am Retreat : 10 am - 4 pm Vespers at 4pm

Donations to the monastery of a minimum of \$10 from each lady which will cover breakfast and lunch. (to be paid at the door)



1 ½ hours from Little Falls, NJ
2 hours from Brooklyn, NY
2 hours from Levittown, NY
2 hours from Yonkers, NY
2 hours from Danbury, CT
2 hours from Altoona, PA
3 hours from Pittsburgh, PA
3 hours from Washington, DC

Fr. Don explained how temptation doesn't necessarily lead to sin - it can be ignored and rejected. However, if we don't turn away from the temptation, then next we find ourselves rationalizing the suggestion, and we will soon have a list of seemingly good reasons why we should go right ahead and act on it.

As Fr. Don reminded us, our Lord himself was tempted three times by the devil in the wilderness — and therefore one sure line of defense, when we face temptation, is to turn to Christ in prayer.

Fr. Don also reminded us that there is no salvation without temptation. For if we do not have cause to struggle,

how will we make progress? And how will we learn to be humble and turn for help to the Lord if we do not recognize our weakness?

Father Don's presentation was accompanied by lively discussion, a delightful lunch with more time for fellowship, and introductions by the AWE President and Officers.

Later that afternoon we were given a tour of the Monastery. Our gracious guide, Sister Marina, began the tour by explaining the origins of the Monastery's patronal feast: the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos. This feast celebrates an episode which occurred during the tenth century, when the great city of Constantinople, capital of the Christian Roman Empire, was miraculously saved from an overwhelming enemy fleet. At this time the Fool for Christ, St. Andrew, and his disciple Epiphanius, saw, during an all-night vigil in the Blachernae Church in Constantinople, our most Holy Lady Theotokos surrounded by an assembly of saints, praying to her Son and spreading her protecting veil over the faithful in the crowded church.

The Monastery's mountainside location was even more beautiful that afternoon, with Pennsylvania's fall foliage at its peak, and the monastery gardens beckoned us to a quiet stroll. Aside from the main building with the monastic cells and the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul, the Monastery also has a bakery, an icon painting studio, woodworking and candle making shops, and a guesthouse, as well as the garden, fruit orchards, and a greenhouse.

At the close of an edifying and inspiring day we attended Vespers before saying our goodbyes. It was a much-needed break, a true retreat from our busy lives, and we returned to our families and parishes encouraged and renewed. ❖

— submitted by Anna Veniamin,
AWE Religious Coordinator

The Antiochian Women of the East Board

Welcomes all of our sisters-in-Christ for
the first time ever in AWE history to a
Fall Retreat and Gathering 2019

Holy Protection Monastery

Resisting Temptation in the Modern World

We are so thrilled to announce 74 ladies from
17 churches participate in our Fall Retreat
for a day full of meditating in the beauty of the
monastery and a spiritual discussion with **Fr.
Don Shadid** as our Keynote Speaker.

St. Mary Church, Johnstown PA (1)
St. Paul Church, Emmaus PA (1)
St. George Cathedral, Pittsburgh, PA (1)
St. Peter and Paul Church, Potomac MD (2)
St. George Church, Little Falls, NJ (2)
St. George Church Washington, DC (1)
St. John the Baptist, Lewistown MD (2)
St. Anthony Church, Bergenfield NJ (2)
St. Mary Church, Brooklyn, NY (3)
St. Stephen the Protomartyr, Plainfield NJ (4)
St. Philip Church, Souderton, PA (5)
St. James Church, Poughkeepsie NY (4)
Virgin Mary, Yonkers, NY (5)
St. Mary Church, Hunt Valley MD (6)
Holy Cross Church, Linthicum, MD (7)
St. Mary Church, Wilkes Barre, PA (10)
St. George Church, Allentown PA (16)



"Sisterhood Serving Christ
Through Serving Others."







"In you O, Mother of God, all my hope I set, guard me under your protection."

Lenten Retreat 2018

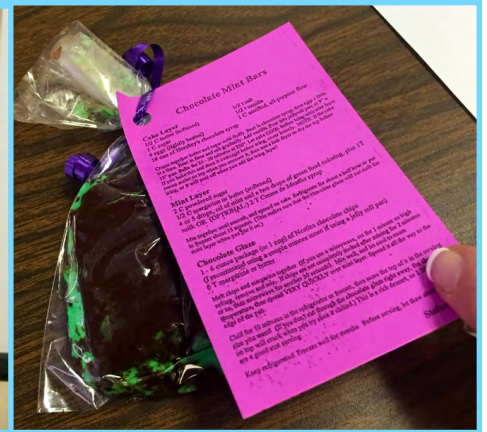
March 23-25, 2018 at Antiochian Village

Dedicated to the memory of Khouria Stefanie Yazge

Guest speaker: Fr. Paul Matar ❖ Topic: "Life after Death"

Khouria Janet Shadid and Miriam Yazge, spoke fondly of Khouria Stefanie as they paid tribute to her life and accomplishments during the introduction to the retreat. Father Paul Matar provided though provoking and edifying talks on the Orthodox view of life after our departure from this world. We began the retreat with the fifth Akathist Hymn, where chanters sang in English, Arabic, and Greek to honor our Most Holy Theotokos. In memory of Khouria Stefanie, attendees received chocolate mint brownies (Khouria Stefanie's signature recipe) and an Icon card of Christ with Khouria's favorite Bible verse, "*But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, because He is holy.*" (Joshua 24:15) It was a beautiful weekend with 87 in attendance. The efforts of AWE President, Rula Osama Khoury, AWE spiritual adviser, Father Don Shadid, AV Event Coordinator, Allison Taylor, and the other AWE officers, helped make this weekend a relaxing and spiritually uplifting event for all who attended. ❖





Lenten Retreat 2019

March 29 – 31, 2019 at Antiochian Village

Guest speaker: Fr. Charles Baz ❖ Topic: “Pray, Fast, Give”

The topic for the retreat was “Pray, Fast, Give”, taught by Father Charles Baz. It was a magnificent time of refreshment through attending Liturgies, praying the Akathist, Vespers, Orthros, and learning from Father Charles’ teaching.

The teachings of Father Charles brought about a deeper, spiritual understanding of the beautiful Disciplines of our Holy Orthodox faith, as he brought together the meaning and the reason why Mother Church gives us these disciplines. They are put there for the health of our souls so that we may know how to prepare in anticipation for the joyous moment when we meet the Lord in the ultimate, eternal Pascha in the Heavenly Kingdom.

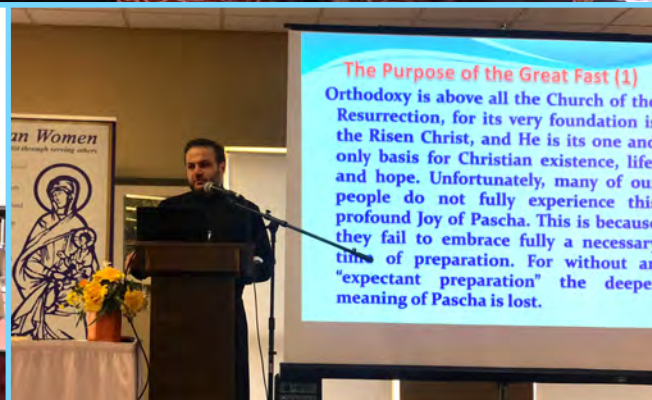
Ladies gathered in the lobby and Rula Khoury (our AWE President) demonstrated how to make the Koliva for Saturday’s Memorial service. It was a unique experience for many of us new to the Orthodox faith. Koliva is made for memorials for the departed. “Koliva” is boiled wheat with (depending on the recipe) a combination of some or all of the following ingredients: powdered sugar, almonds, ground walnuts, sesame seeds, cinnamon, pomegranate seeds, raisins, anise, parsley and more.

As Orthodox Christians we are awaiting the 2nd Coming and the General Resurrection of the dead, Through Christ we have Life! But, remembering the memory of our deceased beloved ones is an opportunity to pray for the souls of the departed as well as a way to help us heal from the death.

Sunday morning started with Orthros Service, Divine Liturgy (Third Sunday of Lent) and was followed by the Procession of the Holy Cross. A beautiful reverent service for the veneration of the Holy Cross of our Lord. ❖

submitted by AWE Religious Coordinator — Maria Koropsak





"Koliva is boiled wheat with (depending on the recipe) a combination of some or all of the following ingredients: powdered sugar, almonds, ground walnuts, sesame seeds, cinnamon, pomegranate seeds, raisins, anise, parsley and more.

As Orthodox Christians we are awaiting the 2nd Coming and the General Resurrection of the dead, through Christ we have Life! But, remembering the memory of our deceased beloved ones is an opportunity to pray for the souls of the departed as well as a way to help us heal from the death.

Koliva is an important part for the beginning of Lent. The first Saturday of Lent and the previous two Saturdays leading up to it are called the Saturdays of the Souls. Saturday, year round, is a remembrance of the dead, but these particular Saturdays the remembrance is intensified. According to tradition, Koliva is connected to Lent because of a miracle from St. Theodore the Tyro. In the 4th Century AD, Emperor Julian the Apostate knew that Christians would be hungry after the first week of strict fasting, which would make them go to the markets in Constantinople to buy food. Emperor Julian ordered blood from pagan sacrifices to be sprinkled on the food that was sold there, trying to force the Christians to paganism. St. Theodore the Tyro, who had died in the early 300's, appeared to the Patriarch of Constantinople, Eudoxios, in a dream, telling him that Christians should just boil wheat from their homes and sweeten it with honey, to avoid the polluted foods at the market."

by Andrew Athanasiou, via Maria Koropsak — AWE website: <http://ww1.antiochian.org/awe>





Antiochian Women of the East

2018 & 2019

Parish Life Conferences



Annual Antiochian Women Luncheon & Meeting

Thursday June 28th, 2018

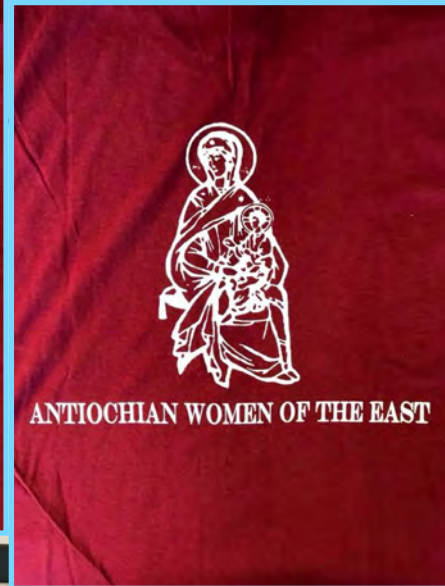
67th Annual
Parish Life Conference
Dioceses of New York & Washington, D.C.
And Oakland, Charleston & the Mid-Atlantic



The Antiochian Women Luncheon and Meeting was blessed by having His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH offer prayers and a blessing for our gathering. He offered the AWE warm greetings in this, his first visit to our PLC. He noted that the Antiochian Women Organization is one of the 37 departments in our Archdiocese, and is the most active department. The Metropolitan's message called us to make this PLC an opportunity for growth in our Faith. He said that, as we go about our activities this weekend, we should "... think of our salvation and that of others around us in everything that we do, otherwise it is merely 'a social thing' " — and he called us to remember that "nothing is worth the loss of our salvation"... that we must be "good examples"... and that we must "do everything we can to bring every soul, every lost sheep, back to Christ's Holy Church." He finished by saying: "I pray for you... let us do this together — you (the Antiochian Women), with the clergy, and with the bishops — one together, one team."

Our AWE President, Rula Osama Khoury, would like to reinstate the "Sister Church" concept and will work with Fr. Don on a new Sister Church list. Anastasia Nicoloudakis and Cynthia Long discussed the items on the table (candles and honey sticks) — the proceeds from the sale will go to support the Humanitarian Effort of our diocese of helping Human Trafficking victims. Linda Mirelli, from St. Philip's Church in Souderton, discussed the "Teacup Gift" fund-raising event. Fadia Juzdan discussed the gift from the NAB for each Diocese: a set of Orthodox Children's books to be raffled off.

In his presentation, our Keynote Speaker, Dr. Albert Rossi (Director of Counseling and Psychological Services at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary) told us that a goal for our prayer life is: "to learn how to be still." Quoting Psalm 46, "Be still and know that I am God," Dr. Rossi also noted, "the converse is implied if we are not still — we may not know God." Dr. Rossi asked us to sit still for 5 minutes. Stillness is "the key to coming to know Christ, Who in us." In practicing stillness "we can learn to be relieved from the temptations that come to us from our senses; temptation from sight, hearing, etc..." ❖



Annual Antiochian Women Luncheon & Meeting

Thursday June 27th, 2019

68th Annual
Parish Life Conference
Dioceses of New York & Washington, D.C.
And Oakland, Charleston & the Mid-Atlantic



The AWE updated and customized its By-Laws, which were approved by Metropolitan JOSEPH in May 2019. We included a copy of the AWE By-Laws in each PLC packet, provided at the AWE luncheon meeting, for women to take home to the AW groups within their parishes. We also gave each priest a packet to take home with him and share with the Antiochian Women in his parish. We made sure all the 45 churches have a copy of the PLC packet to use as a guide.

Mother Christophora, Abbess of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania, was the Keynote Speaker for our luncheon on June 27, 2019. Khouria Loukia and Khouria Rima completed their terms this summer. Khouria Loukia was my second hand and brain; without her help I could not have survived the past two years. Khouria Rima had the most experience as an AWE officer. She offered wisdom during our discussions and remained patient and helpful at all times. We love you and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your hard work, commitment, and devotion to the AWE. May God grant you both many years! AWE honored them with a pendant of the Icon of Virgin Mary on a Tree of Life so they can remember the time they spent with us. ❖



ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF THE EAST
 A SISTERHOOD SERVING CHRIST THROUGH SERVING OTHERS
 DIOCESE OF NEW YORK & WASHINGTON DC and
 DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON, OAKLAND & THE MID-ATLANTIC
The 68th Annual Parish Life Conference



It is our Honor to invite you all to join us for our
 Annual Antiochian Women Luncheon and Meeting, Thursday June 27th at 9:45 AM
 Come and be fed spiritually by our Beloved

Mother Christophora

Abbess of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City, PA



"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

All attendees must register for the Antiochian Women Luncheon at
<https://antiochianevents.com/nv3.html>



GUIDELINES FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN BOARD
TO THE DIOCESAN ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN LEADERSHIP TEAM

❖ **DIOCESAN PRESIDENTS: TOP 10 THINGS TO DO** ❖

(#5) *Remember the “THREE T’s”:* **TRAVEL — TALK — TIME**

Don’t be a passive President – make the time to reach out to your chapters by telephone or in person (ask them about the activities in their chapters; what YOU can do for THEM on a diocesan level; take notes so you can share with other presidents in the dioceses throughout the NAB). E-mails should only be used when you want to communicate with a large group; remember, the “personal touch” is very important as it shows that you really care. As the President, you should make Antiochian Women business a priority in your daily/weekly schedule. Speak frequently with your Vice-President by phone (at least two or three times a month). Always ask yourself: “What can I do to encourage a sense of community throughout my diocese?”

Try to visit as many parishes in your diocese as possible.

Show you care! ❖

AWE DIOCESAN PRESIDENT
RULA OSAMA KHOURY

*“My Travels to the
Churches
Around
Our
Dioceses”*



As President of the AWE it has been my privilege to meet many, many wonderful people during my visits to churches throughout our two dioceses. One of my goals is to get to know as many of the clergy and women from our parishes as possible during my term in office. I would like to share with you some of my fond memories with these pictures . . .

*I visited St. Nicholas' Cathedral in Brooklyn to celebrate the historic
event of the 100th Anniversary of the
Hamelat El-taab in
2017.*



*I attended the 100th Anniversary celebration of St. Ellien's Church
in Brownsville, Pennsylvania.*



*St. James Church in
Hyde Park, New York*





*St. George Church
in Washington, D.C.*



St. George Church in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania

St. Nicholas Church in Bridgeport, Connecticut



Akathist Service at St. John the Evangelist in Beaver Falls, PA



St. George in New Kensington, Pennsylvania



St. George in Danbury, Connecticut



St. George Cathedral in Oakland (Pittsburgh), Pennsylvania



At a Mini-Retreat for St. Michael Church in Greensburg, PA



St. John the Baptist Church (Western Rite) in Lewistown, Maryland





*St. Patrick Church (Western Rite) in
Bealton, Virginia*



Sts. Peter & Paul Church in Potomac, Maryland



Virgin Mary Church in Yonkers, New York



St. Mary Church in Hunt Valley, Maryland



St. Anthony Church in Butler, Pennsylvania



St. Anthony's Women's Guild 1974

Front row: Helen Isaac, Georgia Hillo, Mae Deep, Fr. James Deep, Madeline Esper, Ann Melnick
 Back row: Ann Claypoole, Laimie Deep, Georgette Mazar, Mary Wyatt, Sadie Johns, Jessie Asa, Jo Asa, Juanita Diamond, Elie Dubyak, Josie Monisour, Sue Somariva, Norma Pelligrini, Fran Cystzer, Kay Thomas
 Not pictured: Nancy Abraham, Effie Cirillo, Nancy Dunkle, Linda Fabrizio, Josephine Hanna, Bea Johns, Clara Joseph, Freda Mahood, Louise Michaels, Mitzi Michaels, Marian Raimondi, Diane Rohrman, Donna Schwartz, Dollic Sipos, Anna Thomas, Ann Thomas, Nora Thompson, Maribeth Wolfe



Bake Sale 1974

Helen Isaac, Mae Deep, Tamecmy Thomas, Mary Deeb, Kay Thomas, Ann Claypoole, Juanita Diamond, Sadie Johns, Madeline Esper, Nancy Abraham, Jo Asa
 Not present when photo was taken: Joe Sipos



Holy Cross Church in Linthicum, Maryland



*St. Stephen the Protomartyr Church
in South Plainfield, New Jersey*



St. Mary Church in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania



St. Elias Church in New Castle, Pennsylvania



St. James Church in Taneytown, Maryland



*This is the end of my journeys so far. . . However, I
extend my promise to you all to visit more churches
and spread our mission in our dioceses during the rest
of my term in office. Thank you!*

Rula Osama Khoury

AWE President





At the biennial Antiochian Archdiocesan Convention in Los Angeles in 1972, His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP (*of thrice-blessed memory*) made the following motion:

“I propose, therefore, that a National Sisterhood of Charity be organized in the Archdiocese. The structure and goals of this organization will be defined in the future. I also propose that the President of this Sisterhood, by virtue of her office, should become a member of the Board of Trustees of our Archdiocese, and should report annually to this General Assembly.”

On August 21st, 1974, at the next Antiochian Archdiocesan Convention, which was held in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, the organization envisioned by His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP was

formally established. This “Sisterhood of Charity” was called **The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America (AOCWNA)**. Its Constitution and By-Laws were enacted, and the governing officers, the North American Board (NAB), were elected and appointed by the assembly. The President of the NAB became a full-member of the Board of Trustees of our Archdiocese. She particularly advocates for the issues that face the women of our parishes and missions, and for charitable projects undertaken by the AOCWNA. She also relays the decisions of the Board and of our Metropolitan Archbishop to our membership across all of North America. She is supported in her work of advocacy and charitable outreach by the officers and coordinators of the North American Board, and by the diocesan officers.

In preparation for the assembly of the Archdiocesan Convention in August 1974, each Region of our Archdiocese created a Governing Board that mirrored the organization of the NAB. At the Annual Eastern Region Parish Life Conference, held in Seven Springs, PA, in July of 1974, the **Eastern Region Delegates** of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America elected their first Regional Officers: **Mrs. Evelyn Koury**, *President*; **Mrs. Norma Elias**, *Vice-President*; **Mrs. Samira Khoury**, *Recording Secretary*; **Miss. Mary Samen**, *Treasurer*; **Mrs. Bonnie Khoury**, *Corresponding Secretary*; and **Mrs. Darlene Esper**, *Public Relations Director*. His Eminence, Metropolitan PHILIP appointed The Rt. Rev'd **Fr. Paul Saliba** (*of thrice-blessed memory* [✠ July 1st, 2017], *who was later to be elected as Metropolitan of Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines*) as the first *Spiritual Advisor* of the Eastern Region.

What follows is a record of the **Presidents & Spiritual Advisors of the Eastern Region** (an area which now comprises the Diocese of New York & Washington, D.C., and the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic). We are offering this Historical Timeline so that the leaders of our “region” will not be lost to memory. They were tireless in their dedication and leadership. May God bless them — and for those who have reposed: Memory Eternal! ❖

Historical Timeline of the A. W. E.



1974-1975: **Evelyn Koury**, St. Michael Church, Greensburg, PA

Spiritual Advisor: **The Rt. Rev'd Archimandrite Paul Saliba** (✝ July 1, 2017), St. George Church, New Kensington, PA

1975-1976: **Evelyn Koury**, St. Michael Church, Greensburg, PA

Spiritual Advisor: **The V. Rev'd Fr. John Chromiak** (✝ Oct 31, 1992), St. Nicholas Church, Bridgeport, CT

1976-1978: **Shamseh M. Dalack** (✝ February 3, 2001), St. Mary Church, Brooklyn, NY

Spiritual Advisor: **The V. Rev'd Fr. John Chromiak** (✝ Oct 31, 1992), St. Nicholas Church, Bridgeport, CT

1978-1980: **Yvonne Sajem** (✝ October 30, 2015), St. Elias Church, Atlanta, GA

Spiritual Advisor: **The V. Rev'd Fr. John Chromiak** (✝ Oct 31, 1992), St. Nicholas Church, Bridgeport, CT

1980-1982: **Pauline Maloof** (✝ November 25, 2007), St. Anthony Church, Bergenfield, NJ

Spiritual Advisor: **The Rt. Rev'd Archimandrite Antoun Khoury** (✝ Oct 2, 2017), St. Nicholas Cathedral, Brooklyn, NY

1982-1984: **Dolores Albert** (✝ June 21, 2006), St. Michael Church, Greensburg, PA

Spiritual Advisor: **The V. Rev'd Fr. Samuel David** (✝), St. George Cathedral, Pittsburgh, PA

1984-1985: Dolores Albert (✝ June 21, 2006), St. Michael Church, Greensburg, PA
Spiritual Advisor: The Rt. Rev'd Archimandrite George M. Corry (✝), St. Michael Church, Greensburg, PA

1985-1986: Jeannette A. Younes (✝ April 18, 2018), Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Bethesda, MD
Spiritual Advisor: The V. Rev'd Fr. George Rados (✝ October 15, 2017), Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Bethesda, MD

1986-1987: Leona Obeid, St. Mary Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA
Spiritual Advisor: The V. Rev'd Fr. Edward Hughes, St. Mary Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA

1988-1989: Leona Obeid, St. Mary Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA
Spiritual Advisor: The V. Rev'd Fr. Timothy Baclic, St. George Church, Upper Darby, PA

1989-1990: Kh. Joanne Abdallah (✝ May 27, 2008), St. George Church, New Kensington, PA
Spiritual Advisor: The V. Rev'd Fr. George Rados (✝ October 15, 2017), Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Bethesda, MD

1990-1993: Anne Glynn Mackoul, St. Anthony Church, Bergenfield, NJ
Spiritual Advisor: The V. Rev'd Fr. Antoun Aaraj, St. George Church, Upper Darby, PA

1993-1995: Susan E. Fannoney, Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Bethesda, MD
Spiritual Advisor: The V. Rev'd Fr. Antoun Aaraj, St. George Church, Upper Darby, PA

1995-1997: Wendy Staley, St. Elias Church, Sylvania, OH
Spiritual Advisor: The V. Rev'd Fr. John Nosal, St. Michael Church, Greensburg, PA

1997-1999: Dianne Anton, St. Michael Church, Greensburg, PA
Spiritual Advisor: The V. Rev'd Fr. John Nosal, St. Michael Church, Greensburg, PA

1999-2001: Olena Basarab, St. John Church, York, PA
Spiritual Advisor: The V. Rev'd Fr. John Nosal, St. Michael Church, Greensburg, PA

2001-2003: Kh. Joann Bitar (✝ Dec 30, 2012), St. George Church, Little Falls, NJ
Spiritual Advisor: The Rt. Rev. Archimandrite. Rafeek Mufarrij (who is now: His Grace, Bishop ALEXANDER, Auxiliary Bishop of Ottawa, Eastern Canada, and Upstate New York), St. Mary Church, Hunt Valley, MD

IN 2004-2005 THE EASTERN REGION WAS DIVIDED INTO 3 DIOCESES.
THE FOLLOWING IS THE LIST FOR
THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK & WASHINGTON, D.C.
— AND —
THE DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON, OAKLAND, AND THE MID-ATLANTIC.
THE AOCWNA OF BOTH DIOCESES ARE KNOWN AS
“THE ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF THE EAST” (AWE)



2003- 2007: **Ina O'Dell**, Holy Cross Church, Linthicum, MD

Spiritual Advisor: **The V. Rev'd Fr. Donald Shadid**, St. Mary Church, Johnstown, PA

2007-2010: **Kh. Joann Bitar** († Dec 30, 2012), St. George Church, Little Falls, NJ

Spiritual Advisor: **The V. Rev'd Fr. Donald Shadid**, St. Mary Church, Johnstown, PA

2010-2011: Co-presidents **Kh. Pamela Pier**, St John Chrysostom Orthodox Church, York, PA
and **Kh. Helen Waggener**, Holy Trinity Church, Lynchburg, VA

Spiritual Advisor: **The V. Rev'd Fr. Donald Shadid**, St. Mary Church, Johnstown, PA

2011-2015: **Fadia Juzdan**, St. George Church, Little Falls, NJ

Spiritual Advisor: **The V. Rev'd Fr. Donald Shadid**, St. Mary Church, Johnstown, PA

2015-2017: **Marlene Ayoub**, St. George Church, Little Falls, NJ

Spiritual Advisor: **The V. Rev'd Fr. Donald Shadid**, St. Mary Church, Johnstown, PA

2017-2019: **Rula Osama Khoury**, St. George Cathedral, Pittsburgh, PA

Spiritual Advisor: **The V. Rev. Fr. Donald Shadid**, St. Mary Church, Johnstown, PA

2019-2021: **Rula Osama Khoury**, Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Potomac, MD

Spiritual Advisor: **The V. Rev'd Fr. Donald Shadid**, St. Mary Church, Johnstown, PA

— GLORY TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS —



Presidential Portraits — A.W.E.

We are nothing without our past, for the past must continue with us into the present and the future. “The Tree of Jesse” icon is dedicated on July 24, 2019 to Mrs. Evelyn Koury for her tireless work with the Antiochian Women of the East. Being the first president of our Eastern Region Antiochian Women (1974-1976). Evelyn gave much of her life to the women on a local, diocesan, and Archdiocesan level. Just as the Theotokos is nurturing and life-giving to the world, we recognize Mrs. Evelyn Koury for her devotion and hard work in establishing and planting the seeds of our many chapters of the Antiochian Women of the Eastern Dioceses. She was, and still is, dedicated and self-sacrificing to the AWE and subsequently to all of us. We are eternally grateful for her service. Before being divided into dioceses, the Eastern Region was very large, beginning from New York and down the east coast of the US to Florida, and included Pennsylvania and Georgia. Imagine a time with no internet or cell phone. Communication at that time involved postal mail, typewriters, and rotary dial telephones with extra charges for long distance calls. Evelyn also created the first letterhead for the Antiochian Women of the Eastern Region since at that time there was not an official letterhead for the North American Board. In light of all of this wonderful history, we would like to recognize, thank, and offer our gratitude to all past-presidents for their devotion and hard work in establishing and planting the seeds for our Antiochian Women of the East. May God grant them many more years to come; and for the ones who have left us and have joined the Church Triumphant, “May Their Memory Be Eternal!”

Rula Osama Khoury,
Diocesan President of the Antiochian Women of the East



Evelyn Koury (1974-1976)

EVELYN A. KOURY



Evelyn A. Koury of Irwin, Pennsylvania was elected the first President of The Antiochian Women for the Eastern Region in 1974, a time when the officers of the North American Board of the organization were just completing their organizational year. The officers of the Regions, particularly the presidents, under

took to travel from parish to parish throughout their Region organizing chapters. This tremendous organizational effort included working with women across the Archdiocese to help to realize "the dream our Most Rev. Metropolitan PHILIP had when he organized AOCWNA." Evelyn was President of the Eastern Region of the Antiochian Women from 1974 - 1976. She also served her parish, St. Michael's - Greensburg, PA as President of the Ladies Guild and as Superintendent of the Sunday School. Evelyn Koury owns and operates the George Koury Agency (Insurance, Real Estate, Travel) in Irwin, PA and also holds a B.S. in Nursing. She has been nominated for Who's Who in American Business Women and received the "Woman of the Year Award" from the American Lebanese Association. Evelyn is the widow of George S. Koury, deceased member of the Board of Trustees of the Antiochian Archdiocese, the mother of three children and the grandmother of two. Evelyn states: "We have met many goals in 20 years—which proves we are not only wives, mothers and grandmothers, but we are EDUCATED, EXPERIENCED AND ORGANIZED, and we are finally RECOGNIZED."

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America

IRWIN REGION

ant: George (Evelyn) Koury
Pennsylvania Avenue
Penna. 15042

resident: George (Norma) Elias
herman Street
Washington, Penna. 15068

ing Secretary: George (Ramira) Khoury
Main Circle
P. Hills

ending Secretary: vid (Bonnie) Koury
Insignia Avenue
Penna. 15042

2: Samer
th Street
New York 11220

stations Director: ard (Darlene) Kaper
Iran Drive
Linstead, Penna. 15120

Advisor: Paul Saliba
Iman Avenue
ington, Penna. 15068

Jan. 22, 1975

Dear Madam President:

"NEWS ABOUT AOCWNA"

We are sincerely grateful to those active chapters who have joined to date. We hope those who haven't yet become members will do so and assist us to attain the goals expected of our Orthodox Christian Women. As there is unity in strength, we need everyone!

Since March has been designated CHARITY MONTH, we would like all the women of our Archdiocese to participate in a corporate Communion, Sunday, March 9, 1975. All the Clergy have been notified accordingly and have been humbly asked to emphasize the importance of AOCWNA that particular Sunday. Please notify all women of your parish to participate.

Also enclosed is a form which should be completed and returned to me as soon as possible.

I am grateful to each of you for your love, patience and understanding and most of all your cooperation.

Good luck on YOUR project for AOCWNA whatever it may be. Please keep me informed of your progress.

May God give us His guidance and grace in the leadership your Chapter so rightfully deserves. God bless each of you.

Your sister in Christ,

Evelyn Koury

(Mrs.) Evelyn Koury, Pres.
AOCWNA, Eastern Region



Shamseh M. Dalack + (1976-1978)



Yvonne Sajem + (1978-1980)



Pauline Maloof + (1980-1982)



Dolores Albert + (1982-1984)



Jeannette A. Younes + (1985-1986)



Leona Obeid (1986-1989)



Kh. Joanne Abdallah + (1989-1990)



Anne Glynn Mackoul (1990-1993)



Susan E. Fannoney (1993-1995)



Wendy Staley (1995-1997)



Dianne Anton (1997-1999)



Olena Basarab (1999-2001)



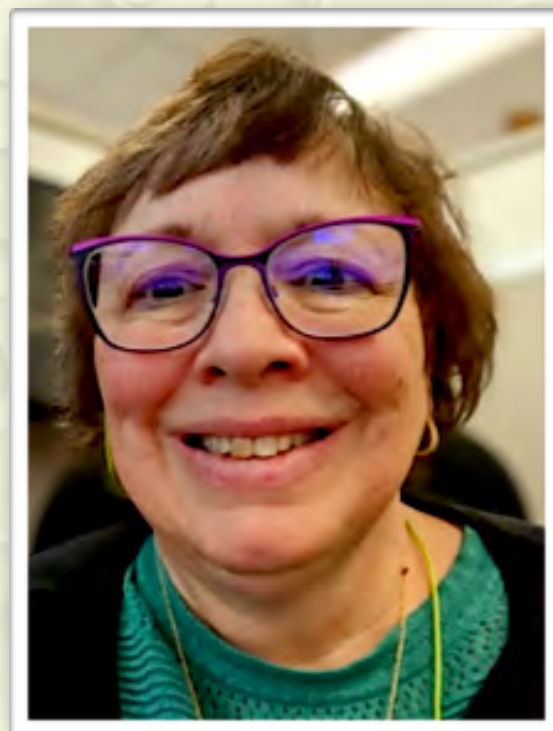
**Kh. Joann Bitar + (2001-2003) &
(2007-2010)**



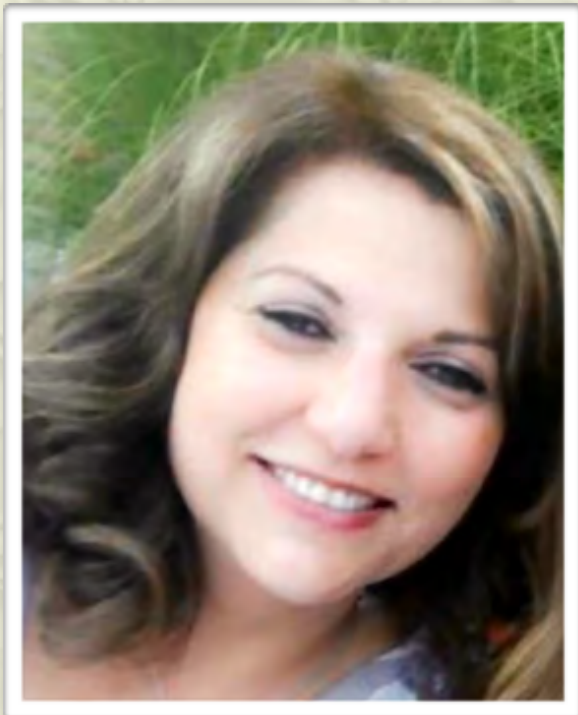
Sh. Ina O'Dell (2003-2007)



Kh. Helen Waggener (2010-2011)



Kh. Pamela Pier (2010-2011)



Fadia Juzdan (2011-2015)



Marlene Ayoub (2015-2017)



Rula Osama Khoury (2017-2021)



LOSS & HOPE FOR THE GRIEVING



By Nancy Tentzeras
St. George, Washington, DC
AWE Recording Secretary



As I sit here and write this I can't believe that it is almost 10 months that my beloved husband, Subdeacon Nicholas, has gone to be with the Lord in the midst of preparing for my mother's one-year memorial service. Many had asked how were you able to handle so much loss in such a short period of

time, while still coping with my own health issues and now a caregiver for my father.

I remember people being surprised when I showed up for church on Sunday, while still making funeral arrangements; but I said where else would I be, I always find peace when I am in Church embracing the beauty of the Divine Liturgy with the beautiful chanting and choir singing. I still hear Fr. Joe's voice announcing the passing of my beloved Nicholas following Divine Liturgy and expressing how I was still mourning the passing of Mom.

Nothing can ever prepare you for loss, whether it is expected or in a lot of cases unexpected; a loss is a loss and hurts deeply through and through. It is how one handles the loss of a loved one, or anything for that matter, that gives **Hope** to those who are grieving to overcome the sorrow. So to answer those who asked how I have been able to overcome my loss, well I don't think I will ever be able to truly overcome the loss of two very precious and important people in my life. However, having the following facets in my life is helping lessen the impact of their loss: **Hope, Faith, Strength, and Love.**

Hope: Having Hope in the Resurrection comforts us Orthodox Christians in knowing that death has been defeated, even though the sorrow is real. Our faith does not separate the living from the dead; rather we are united in prayer.

“And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

FAITH: Many who grieve often lose Faith. Loss and grieving can cause us to question our faith, as we struggle to make sense of one’s death. It is important to remember that grieving is not a loss of faith, rather it is part of the healing process. I have faith that my loved ones are at a better place and I will see them again. Truly my Faith Community has been the foundation that has been comforting and supporting during my time of loss. Additionally, I find comfort in reading the Scriptures to reaffirm my Faith and Belief in the Resurrection.

“May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace by means of your faith in him, so that your hope will continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

STRENGTH: I came upon this image and Bible verse and found myself drawn to it like no other at the beginning of Nicholas’ hospitalization that lasted for four months prior to his passing. Little did I know that this Bible Verse would be my guiding light defining my life this past year, as all things that I was able to do and achieve this year, especially dealing with the loss and grief, was only possible through Christ who strengthened me each and every day, especially the lengthy days and nights spent at the hospital by Nicholas’s side. I am truly thankful, grateful, and blessed that I have been given this Strength as many times this past year I had been feeling survivor guilt, while feeling alone and isolated. Having Christ’s Love in my heart has been my guiding strength.



LOVE: Let them support you. The comfort and love of family and friends, especially my church family, and most importantly, Christ's Love, has been very instrumental in lessening the impact of losing Mom and Nicholas. Let them help you when they offer, whether to just hold your hand, give a big hug, a shoulder to cry on, say a prayer, or just the time to talk and share a meal. God has placed these wonderful people in your path for a reason, to guide you and let you know that you are loved and they're there for you, that you are never alone.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble" (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4)

With the upcoming holidays, I know I will feel the full impact of their loss. But I have realized that I need to be strong, true to myself and honor their memory and continue to live life to the fullest, completing the goals and dreams shared, as they both would want me to do as they continue to watch over me. I will Give Thanks for my many Blessings while gathering with family and Friends. I will sing Praises and Rejoice in Christ's Birth! Glorify Him!

By no means am I a written scholar or a counselor but wanted to share my personal experience in the hope of helping others who may be grieving like I have been. For those that are mourning the loss of a loved one or any kind of loss, have **Hope, Faith, Strength, and Love**, and know that they are forever in your hearts not far away as you keep them in your prayers. Focusing on the positive things that we are surrounded with helps us to overcome the grief we are experiencing, filling us with joy, happiness, and love. Share your precious memories of the past with your present day to feel the presence of your loved one with you always.

May the Light of the Resurrection continue to guide you on your journey to healing.

+ Memory Eternal to Our Dearly Departed +



AWE LENTEN RETREAT 2020

the

Life of the Theotokos

With Mother Gabriella, Abbess of Holy Dormition Monastery

March 13th – 15th 2020
Antiochian Village, Bolivar PA

*How do we live and walk towards our
goal in life as Christian women?*

*In the setting of our busy lives, how
do we become saints?*



Highlights include:

Book Discussion:

*"Our Thoughts Determine our Lives: The
Life and Teachings of Elder Thaddeus of
Vitovnica".*

Visit to the Shrine of St. Thekla:

With Procession and Supplication.



Keynote Speaker

Mother Gabriella,
Abbess of the
Dormition of the
Mother of God
Orthodox
Monastery in
Rives Junction,
Michigan.

Register online at:

http://registration.antiochianvillage.org/AWE_LENTEN2020

AW-NAB MID-WINTER MEETING DATE

Mark your calendar and plan to join us at the Antiochian Village
for the Mid-Winter Meetings:

FEBRUARY 14-16, 2020

*This meeting is for all members of the North American Board,
all Diocesan Presidents and officers, and for Diocesan Delegates.*

Please join us!

*Merry
Christmas*

*The Officers & Coordinators of the NAB
pray that you and your loved ones have a
blessed Christmas...*

...and a joyous Theophany!



“Fulfilling the Vision”

“Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.” [Isaiah 56:7]

NAB PROJECT 2020 — *Fulfilling the Vision*

Metropolitan JOSEPH has tasked the Antiochian Women with continuing to raise funds in support of his vision for the Antiochian Village. The 40-year old vision of Metropolitan PHILIP, of thrice-blessed memory, for the Antiochian Village has been enhanced by the vision set forth by Metropolitan JOSEPH at our Archdiocesan Convention. There is still much that needs to be done at the Antiochian Village and the new cathedral is only the beginning.

We would like to thank the Antiochian Women throughout North America for their generous support of the 2019 NAB PROJECT, which totaled more than \$125,000 and which was presented to Metropolitan JOSEPH during the Antiochian Women Luncheon at this summer's Archdiocesan Convention in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In His Eminence's address to the women, he presented his enhanced vision for the Antiochian Village, building on Metropolitan PHILIP's original vision.

His Eminence envisions a new cathedral large enough to host all the campers, clergy, and other large gatherings; a monastery; a place for our Bishops to retire so they can spend their final years in prayer for the faithful of the Archdiocese; and finally, a crypt, a place of repose beneath the cathedral for our Hierarchs, including St. Raphael.

This is our NAB PROJECT 2020: to raise funds “Fulfilling the Vision” begun with Metropolitan PHILIP and continuing with Metropolitan JOSEPH for our “holy mountain”, our beloved Antiochian Village.

Thank you for your generous support for the 2020 NAB PROJECT.



Sheryl VanderWagen

NAB Vice-President & Project Coordinator

Fulfilling the Vision



ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN 2020 PROJECT
NORTH AMERICAN BOARD - ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA

Background © Shutterstock - Simon Blazek Cathedral Design Sketch & Architecture for St Luke Orthodox Christian Church of Erie Colorado by CJK DESIGN - Christ J Kamagus FAIA architect Poster design, graphic elements, photo modif. © Gregory-Lazarus Murphy

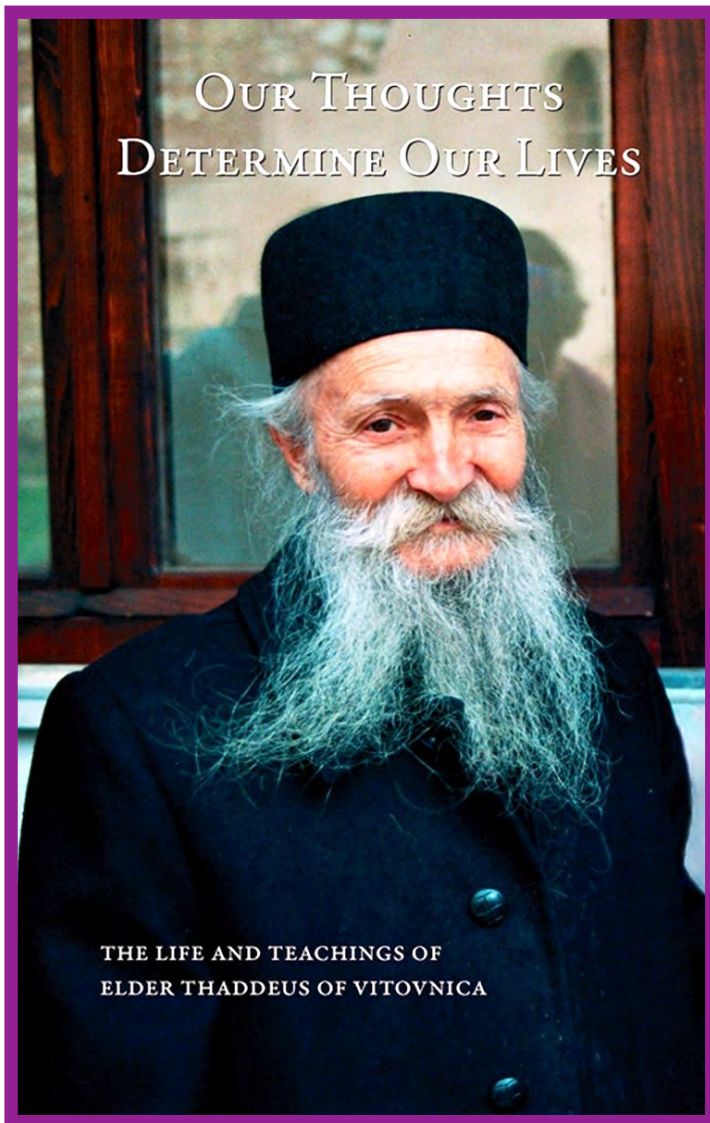
WITH THE BLESSING OF BISHOP JOHN, WE ARE RECOMMENDING THE FOLLOWING
FOR OUR ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN BOOK CLUB SELECTION:



OUR THOUGHTS DETERMINE OUR LIVES, by Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica

"Love little things, and strive for that which is modest and simple. The Lord watches over us, and He is pleased that you long for His peace. Until the soul is ready, He will only sometimes allow us to see that He is present everywhere and fills all things. At these moments the soul feels such joy!... But then the Lord conceals Himself from us again, in order that we might long for Him and seek Him with our hearts!"

— Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica



THE ELDER THADDEUS OF VITOVNICA was one of the most renowned spiritual guides of Serbia in the twentieth century. As a novice he lived in obedience to Elder Ambrose of Miljkovo Monastery, a disciple of the Optina Elders. From him Fr. Thaddeus learned the Prayer of the Heart and the selfless love that came to characterize his whole ministry to the suffering Serbian people.

Born in 1914, Elder Thaddeus lived through all the suffering endured by Serbia in the twentieth century. Over the course of two World Wars, during the Communist takeover, and through the NATO bombings of 1999, he co-suffered with his people. He taught, counseled, and prayed for all who came to him in pain and sorrow. His words

of love and hope provided spiritual balm for people from all classes of society.

In 2002 Elder Thaddeus reposed, leaving behind a large collection of his teachings, preserved by his faithful spiritual children. His life, teachings, and spiritual conversations are here presented for the first time in English. ❖

DIAKONIA PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

Diocese of New York and the Archdiocese District (His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH)
Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and Mid-Atlantic (His Grace Bishop THOMAS)
due November 1, 2019

Diocese of Los Angeles and the West (His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH)
due February 1, 2020

Diocese of Miami and the Southeast (His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS)
due May 1, 2020

Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate NY (His Grace Bishop ALEXANDER)
due August 1, 2020

Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest (His Grace Bishop ANTHONY)
due November 1, 2020

Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America (His Grace Bishop BASIL)
due February 1, 2021

Diocese of Worcester and New England (His Grace Bishop JOHN)
due May 1, 2021



PLEASE KEEP IN MIND that Social Media can be used for the good or can be abusive; that, like in all things, we are to be mindful and intentional with what goes in and out of our mouths, in this case, on our social media pages. May we encourage one another to represent ourselves as Handmaidens of the Lord and in everything to be Christ-like by the very example given to us in the Theotokos. Take a pause when posting anything; and ask: *Is it True? Is it Kind? Is it Necessary?*

*"Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth;
Keep watch over the door of my lips."
Psalm 141:3*

Thank you for this opportunity to further unite our Antiochian Orthodox Sisterhood into future generations via social media and the Diakonia newsletters. Please pray for the officers on the NAB, in your Diocesan levels, and in your local parish chapters; and especially for all women in the church.

Your sister in ICXC ~



**Please keep in mind that all content is published under the discretion of the Public Relations Coordinator, with the NAB President, and NAB Spiritual Advisor. Their editorial decisions are final. Submissions must not advocate for secular political policies, must not contain gossip or speculation, must uphold the traditional canons and practice of the Holy Orthodox Faith, and must support the policies of our Metropolitan Archbishop and the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North American and the AOCWNA. We have the right to report any wrong use to the respective Social Media platform, and to delete from Facebook and/or Instagram. Submissions (print, photo, illustrations, media) may be edited for accuracy, content, or space considerations. All submissions become property of the Antiochian Women. Thank you; God bless!*

ST. XENIA OF ST. PETERSBURG

Commemorated on January 24

St.. Xenia lived during the eighteenth century and passed most of her life in St. Petersburg during the reigns of Empresses Elizabeth and Catherine II. Xenia Grigorievna Petrova was the wife of an army officer, Major Andrew Petrov. She became a widow at the age of twenty-six when her husband suddenly died at a social event. She grieved for the loss, especially because he died without Confession or Holy Communion. Once her earthly happiness ended, she did not look for it again. From that time forward, Xenia lost interest in the things of this world, and followed the difficult path of foolishness for the sake of Christ. The basis for this way of life is to be found in the first Epistle to the Corinthians. The Lord strengthened her and helped her to bear sorrow and misfortune patiently for the next forty-five years.

She began to wear her husband's clothing, and insisted that she be addressed as Andrew Feodorovich. She told people that it was she, and not her husband, who had died. In a certain sense, this was perfectly true. She abandoned her former way of life and experienced a spiritual rebirth. When she gave away her house and possessions to the poor, her relatives complained to the authorities. After speaking to Xenia, the officials were convinced that she was in her right mind and was entitled to dispose of her property as she saw fit. Soon she had nothing left, so she wandered through the poor sections of the city. She refused all assistance from her relatives, and was happy to be free of worldly attachments.

Xenia left the city of St. Petersburg for eight years. It is believed that she visited the holy elders and ascetics throughout Russia, seeking instruction in the spiritual life. Xenia eventually returned to St. Petersburg, where she was mocked and insulted because of her strange behavior. When she did accept money from people, it was only small amounts, which she used to help the poor. She spent her nights praying without sleep in a field outside the city. Prayer strengthened her, and in her heart's conversation with the Lord, she found the support she needed on her difficult path.

Soon her great virtue and spiritual gifts began to be noticed. She prophesied future events affecting the citizens of St. Petersburg. She became known as someone pleasing to God, and everyone loved her. They said, "Xenia does not belong to this world, she belongs to God." People regarded her visits to their homes as a great blessing. St. Xenia loved children, and mothers rejoiced when she would stand and pray over a baby's crib or kiss a child. They believed that her kiss would bring that child good fortune.

St. Xenia lived about forty-five years after the death of her husband, and departed to the Lord at the age of seventy-one. The exact date and circumstances of her death are not known, but it probably took place at the end of the eighteenth century. She was buried in the Smolensk Cemetery. People flocked to her grave to pray for her soul, and to ask her to intercede with God for them. So many visitors took earth from her grave that it had to be replaced every year. Later, a chapel was built over her grave.

Those who turn to St. Xenia in prayer receive healing from illness, and deliverance from their afflictions.

TROPARION (Tone 8) –

*In thee, O wandering Strange, Christ the Lord hath given us an ardent intercessor for our kind.
For having received in they life suffering and grief and served God and men with life,
Thou didst acquire great boldness.
Wherefore, we fervently hasten to thee in temptations and grief,
Crying out from the depths of our hearts:
Put not our hope to shame, O Blessed Xenia.*

This text is from "Holy Women of the Orthodox Christian Church" (compiled and edited by Dianne O'Regan):

<http://ww1.antiochian.org/women/orthodox-women-saints>

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A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ❖ WINTER 2019/2020

DIAKONIA

THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA

This Issue: *Dioceses of N.Y. & D.C. AND Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic*

NEXT ISSUE: The Diocese of Los Angeles and the West (His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH)
— **DUE: February 1st, 2020 — send to Kh. Kelleylynn ASAP. Thank you —**

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Return Service Requested

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