

Official Publication of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit

The Shepherd's Staff

Issue 1 | Volume XIII | Pascha 2021



CHRIST IS RISEN!

Metropolitan's Message

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

Beloved Clergy and Faithful of the Metropolis of Detroit,

The last few weeks have seen changes in our worship and family life practices. At home and with our friends and family of the Orthodox faith we have been greeting everyone with that sacred truth that *Christ is Risen*! And in our worship services, we have continued to echo the refrain that *Christ is Risen* and that *Truly He is Risen*. This practice is so common that sometimes I think we forget that it is not simply a temporary change in our greetings and our church worship – but that it is a witness of a permanent truth that has changed the world.

And for this reason, it is good for us to consider that simple truth in our everyday lives. *Christ is Risen* is something we sing, shout out, and say with a sense of joy and happiness. But the real question that must be answered is how this statement affects us. How does the greeting that *Christ is Risen* change us?

Oftentimes we are tricked into thinking that this is simply

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Great and Holy Pascha 2021 Sts. Constantine and Helen

seasonal greeting – and we say this out of some kind of seasonal tradition. But the truth is that this greeting is not just a "seasonal truth" but rather the truth that has changed the world! Yes my friends, it is this simple statement of truth that has given to the entire world a universal hope in the glory and greatness of God.

As we have learned in church, Christ became like us so that we could become like Him. And indeed, it is this statement of truth that Christ has Risen which changes the reality of the universe and our own individual lives. Christ is Risen – and death has no final power over us! Christ is Risen – and power of forgiveness in His love becomes a universal reality. Christ is Risen – and even when we leave this life, we know that through His Resurrection we shall be raised up again to enter His Kingdom. Christ is Risen – and His Resurrection and divine grace prepare us to be like Him in our everyday lives on this earth and our future entry into His Kingdom.

Christ is Risen! And our lives are renewed!! Christ is Risen! And our sins are forgiven!! Christ is Risen! And we are called to change our everyday lives into the eternal reflection of Jesus's love for us and for all humanity. My friends – Christ is Risen! The world is not the same! Life is renewed! Christ is Risen – and we have been saved from all despair, hatred, and hurt! Christ is Risen – and the Love of Christ helps us to become more like Him and less like our past.

May the reality of Christ's resurrection be for all of us a time of renewal, change, hope, joy, and love! Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!!

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Youth News

BY EVA KONSTANTAKOS

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL GOES VIRTUAL



Earlier this year, the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival (SJCOF) National Committee made the decision to proceed with the Archdiocesan Oratorical Finals in a virtual format due to continued COVID-19 concerns. Therefore, the Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries decided to also offer Virtual District and Metropolis Oratorical Festivals for 2021.

Four virtual District Festivals were held in April, hosted by various parishes in the Metropolis of Detroit. We are grateful to the Clergy and Parish Lay Chairpersons who graciously accepted to host these festivals on behalf of the Metropolis.

Central District (IN, KY, and OH) – Hosted by Annunciation/Dayton, OH Michigan District (MI, plus Toledo, OH) Hosted by Assumption/Grand Blanc, MI Southern District (AR and TN) – Hosted by Annunciation/Memphis, TN Upstate NY District – Hosted by St. Sophia/Syracuse, NY

The Virtual Metropolis Finals were held on Saturday, May 15, 2021 by Holy Trinity Cathedral in Carmel, IN. The Metropolis is grateful to Father Gregory Hohnholt, Father Bryce Buffenbarger, and Kevin Perry for their leadership.

Fifteen speakers from throughout the Metropolis offered their speeches via Zoom. His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas was in attendance to witness the incredible presentations of our Metropolis youth.

Each of the speakers at the Metropolis level will receive a small token of appreciation, along with a Certificate of Participation for their efforts. The top Junior and top Senior speakers advancing to the Archdiocesan Finals will each receive a \$500 scholarship.

We wish the top Junior Finalist and the top Senior Finalist all the best as they advance to represent our Metropolis at the Archdiocesan Oratorical Finals. Watch the livestream broadcast on June 12, 2021 at https://www.goarch.org/oratorical.

JUNIOR DIVISION FINALIST

Stephanie Haviaras - St. John the Baptist Church/Sterling Heights, MI

SENIOR DIVISION FINALIST

Ana Dobrot - Holy Spirit Church/Rochester, NY

For a full listing of speakers, download the official 2021 Metropolis Virtual Oratorical Festival Program at www.detroit.goarch.org/MetropolisSJCOF.

We thank the *Friends of the Metropolis* and all donors for their generosity. Please consider making a contribution to the SJCOF Scholarship Fund. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please email the Metropolis Youth Office at youth@detroit.goarch.org.

SUMMER CAMP NEWS

Each one of our summer camp programs are working on program opportunities that bring the youth together while keeping health and safety at the forefront since we are still navigating issues surrounding COVID-19.



Metropolis of Detroit Summer Camp (MDSC) is currently accepting camper registrations at limited capacity. There are a few weeks still open for camper registration. There are also camp staff positions still available. Please visit www.gomdsc.org for more information or email gomdsc@gmail.com.



St. Timothy Summer Camp (STC) is pleased to announce that registration is now open. for the 2021 STC season. Staff applications are also available, Register or apply at www.sttimothycamp.org. If you'd like more information or you have any questions, feel free to email Father David Smith (frdavid@stsophias.org) or the Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries Office (youth@detroit.goarch.org).



St. Nicholas Summer Camp (SNC) will not be hosting a week-long overnight program. However, SNC hopes to hold at least one day-camp event over the summer to gather campers and staff together for a day of faith, fun and much needed fellowship. For more information, email Eva Konstantakos at snsc@detroit.goarch.org.

Philoptochos News

BY THEONE DICKOS

Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!

May the blessings of Our Resurrected Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with you always.

The Lenten Season was busy for our Philoptochos Chapters. God is good, and during this un-



usual time, the chapters have worked in different ways to serve and raise funds for those in need.

The St. Nicholas Philoptochos of Ann Arbor, Michigan hosted a carry out Lenten meal for the University students after a Presanctified Liturgy. The packaged meals were delivered to the University of Michigan by college students who are members of OCF, Orthodox Christian Fellowship. A big thank you goes to the ladies of Ann Arbor for their loving outreach to our young people and keeping them connected to our church and faith.

Saints Constantine and Helen Philoptochos of Westland, Michigan prepared a carry out Lenten Meal. The parishioners could stop by for a drive-thru or carry out after church services. The chapter's outreach to the community helped raise the much needed funds to continue the mission of serving those who are less fortunate.

On March 9 by a Zoom Conference Call, we were blessed to have a productive and enjoyable joint meeting with His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas, the Metropolis Board and all the Chapter Presidents. Many things were discussed from Membership, Social Services, ideas for Fundraisers during this unusual time, and the Elections to be held in May of Chapter Boards and Officers for the 2021-2023 Term.

The Stefanou Family along with the Metropolis of Detroit Philoptochos is once again honored to offer the Florence G. Stefanou Memorial Scholarship. High school Seniors, Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors in college as well as those students in Trade Schools are eligible. The scholarship applications must be postmarked by May 30, 2021 and sent to Margaret Yates. The hope of the Metropolis Board is to have many students taking advantage of this wonderful opportunity.

We are in the beginning stages of planning the Metropolis Clergy Laity/ Philoptohcos Virtual Conference which is hosted by the Annunciation Church, Memphis, Tennessee on September 23 and 24, 2021. Thursday evening, September 23, His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas will deliver his keynote address and present an educational event. On Friday, September 24, the Philoptochos Conference will be a one day program. More information will be forthcoming.

Philoptochos News (continued) BY THEONE DICKOS

The Metropolis of Detroit Philoptochos continues to plan for the 18th Biennial National Philoptochos Children's Medical Fund Luncheon on November 6, 2021 in the city of Indianapolis. We are thrilled with the excitement and enthusiasm everyone has shown to attend this most worthy event. After adding an amendment of more rooms to the group block at the Conrad Hilton, we are excited that all the rooms have been booked and then some. Guests can still check out the Conrad, but will not receive the contracted price. A group block has now been added at the Embassy Suites Indianapolis. The Embassy Suites is connected to the Indiana Roof Ballroom, the site of the Children's Medical Fund Luncheon. By time you receive this publication, the booking information will be available.



The honor of hosting the Children's Medical Fund Luncheon gives us the opportunity to share our blessings with children who are in need of medical assistance. The greatest gift that God has given Philoptochos ladies is the ability to help those who are less fortunate.

How can you help? The Metropolis of Detroit Philoptochos Ladies are the most gracious and generous hosts. The Metropolis Board hopes that we have 100% participation of our chapters as sponsors. The sponsorship letter and form were sent to all Chapter Presidents in the January 2021 mailing packet. Also each chapter president received the sponsorship letter in February. The Sponsorship donation goes directly to the grants to the children's hospitals and research programs. Please send your sponsorship donation as soon as possible. A fabulous raffle will be held, and tickets will be sent to each chapter. Purchase raffle tickets and sell to others. Invitations to the event will be sent in the middle of July. Please attend and encourage others to attend this most worthy event.

Wishing you a beautiful and bright Spring Season!

METROPOLIS CONTRIBUTIONS

Benevolence through Partners in Philanthropy - \$1,118

Giving Tuesday - \$500

Paschal Greetings from the Church Musicians of MEFGOX!

"It is the day of Resurrection, let us be radiant, O ye peoples: Pascha, the Lord's Pascha; for Christ God hath brought us from death to life, and from earth unto Heaven as we sing the triumphal hymn." - First Ode of the Canon of Pascha (First Tone)



The choir members and chanters of our Metropolis's church music ministry bring you greetings as we all celebrate the joy of Pascha! Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!

From the Feast of the Resurrection until the Feast of the Ascension, here is a sampling of the beautiful Paschal hymns you will be hearing in Divine Liturgies and other services. May they add to your joy in the Resurrection and inspire you spiritually!

Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling on death by death, and to those in the tombs, He has granted life! —Χριστ**ὸς ἀνέ**στη ἐκ νεκρῶν ~ Paschal acclamation

Bless God in the churches, the Lord from the fountains of Israel. Save us, O Son of God, risen from the dead. — Ἐν ἐκκλησίαις ~ Small Entrance Hymn Though You went down into the tomb, O Immortal One, You brought down the dominion of Hades; and You rose as the victor, O Christ our God; and You called out "Rejoice" to the

> Myrrh-bearing women, and gave peace to Your Apostles, O Lord who to the fallen grant resurrection —Εἰ καὶ ἐν τάφῷ ~ Kontakion during the Paschal season

The angel cried out to her who was filled with grace, exclaiming, "Rejoice O Purest Virgin! Again, rejoice, I tell you, for your Son is risen from three days of entombment..." —Ὁ Ἀγγελος ἐβόα - Meghalinarion during the Paschal season

> Receive ye, the body of Christ, taste of the immortal fountain $-\Sigma \tilde{\omega} \mu \alpha X \rho_i \sigma_{\tau 0} \tilde{\upsilon} \sim Communion Hymn during the Paschal season$

Too Tired to Celebrate BY FATHER NIKO TZETZIS

Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!

Most Orthodox Christians are familiar with the practices of Great Lent. At some point in February or March, depending on the timing of Pascha, we begin our journey. We take a few weeks leading up to the beginning of Lent where first we stop fasting altogether in recognition of the futility of the Pharisee's approach, then we slowly begin the fast by dropping meat, and finally dairy. Once into Great Lent, we focus on the disciplines of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving to the best of our ability. The clergy make sure to preach about the importance of following these disciplines in our daily lives, and then, we start adding in disciplines as a community. We add worship services - typically Great Compline, Presanctified Liturgy, and the Akathist Hymn - and we often go one step further to add educational opportunities. We typically look to add Lent retreats to the schedule, and we make an effort to go, as a community, to support local charities. It is, quite frankly, exhausting. So, when we've finally completed the course of the fast...



We spend a week fasting more intensely with even more services. At the very least, 15 services in 8 days during Holy Week.

Please don't misunderstand me. The marathon of the Triodion period is as rewarding as it is exhausting, but it is designed to tap our energy and leave us weakened. Speaking as a priest, I can tell you honestly that, on Pascha, my feet hurt, my voice is shot (chanting at midnight is hardly kind to an already tired voice), and the Agape Vespers service always feels a bit like waking up in the middle of a dream. My spirit is eager to celebrate the Resurrection. Just like my eyes are ready to eat more than my stomach can handle, my voice is eager to chant Christ is Risen far louder and higher than my body is able.

This year, at Holy Trinity - St. Nicholas in Cincinnati, we celebrated two Divine Liturgies during bright week. We celebrated St. George on Monday, and we celebrated the feast of Theotokos of the Life-Giving Spring on Friday, and I realized that I was dragging. All of the celebratory hymns were way down in the bass range of my voice, and my desire to put on a bright, celebratory smile looked more like I was smirking. I just didn't have the physical fortitude to celebrate well. I noticed that the parishioners were fatigued, too. By the next Sunday, our numbers had dwindled.

This might be where you'd expect the priest to challenge you. Pick it up! Come on, people! Is it that hard to celebrate the Resurrection? Are we so weak that we can't even keep the party going for 40 days until Ascension?

But, I don't think that's the answer. I think we are learning an important lesson in our weakness. We are learning the humility we all need in the face of the Resurrection.

When I was a kid, we were always taught that the Divine Liturgy was the "work of the people" - that we were the ones responsible for doing that hard work. I have come to realize, though, that this definition isn't accurate. The Divine Liturgy is the work of our Great Benefactor, our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ on our behalf.

We are responsible for responding. We turn to God and receive His blessings. We aren't responsible for producing the joy of the Resurrection. We are responsible for receiving it.

So, for those of us who have tired, weak bodies and open hearts, receive the joy of the Resurrection of Christ.

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

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Thank Mou!

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Metropolis of Detroit



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Dear Friends of the Metropolis,

You made a tremendous impact in our Metropolis of Detroit for the year 2019. Because of your love and support for the Friends of the Metropolis program, we have been able to fully fund the continued operation and ministries of our Metropolis. Please know that the Metropolis of Detroit has always had an open financial accounting of our income and expenses.

Every gift to our Metropolis has been spent in accordance with the needs, work, and ministry of our Office for the benefit of our Parishes, our Clergy, our Faithful, and all of our individual ministries

If you are getting ready to give a donation for the 2020 Friends of the Metropolis program, please remember how your donations are used:

- YOU have helped us to pay all the normative operational expenses of the Metropolis Office including: building maintenance and repair; heat; lights; postage; technology; and supplies;
- YOU have made it possible to cover the travel expenses incurred during our pastoral visitations to the Metropolis parishes;
- YOU helped make certain that we are able to contribute to student loan payments for our

clergy and church workers who graduated from the Hellenic College/Holy Cross and serve in our Metropolis parishes;

- YOU have assured that there is support for creating virtual summer youth camp opportunities to all of our young people;
- YOU helped support monthly continuing education webinars for clergy, Sunday School Teachers, and Parish Youth Workers.
- YOU have been the helping hands who gave through our office to those in need of shelter, clothing, food, and medical supplies;
- YOU helped Metropolitan Nicholas assist people in emergency situations in need of financial support;
- YOU have allowed the Metropolis to help people and parishes that are most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your great stewardship!

God be praised!

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