Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco | **Spring 2025**

Christian Education

Metropolis of San Francisco

A Report for the Metropolis Council and Clergy Laity Assembly

The Ministry of Christian Formation & Religious Education in the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco serves as a hub for the dissemination of information and resources and a point of contact for parish religious educators. Since Christian formation is a lifelong process, the ministry strives to develop programs that support both adult and youth learners as well as classroom instructors and program directors. The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco currently provides resources for catechists in a variety of forms, including a robust website containing educational links, lessons, articles, lesson plans and activities for teachers and parents, regular online gatherings of catechists, and Christian Education webinars for adults. Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Paraskevè (Eve) Tibbs, Christian Education Ministry Lead
Contact: etibbs@sanfran.goarch.org

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL



Metropolis Festival - May 10, 2025
The Metropolis level Oratorical Festival will take place at Saint Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center on Saturday, May 20, 2025 at 9:00 am

National Festival - May 30 - June 1, 2025
The National level Oratorical Festival will take place from May 30 through June 1 at Saint Nicholas Cathedral in Pittsburgh, PA

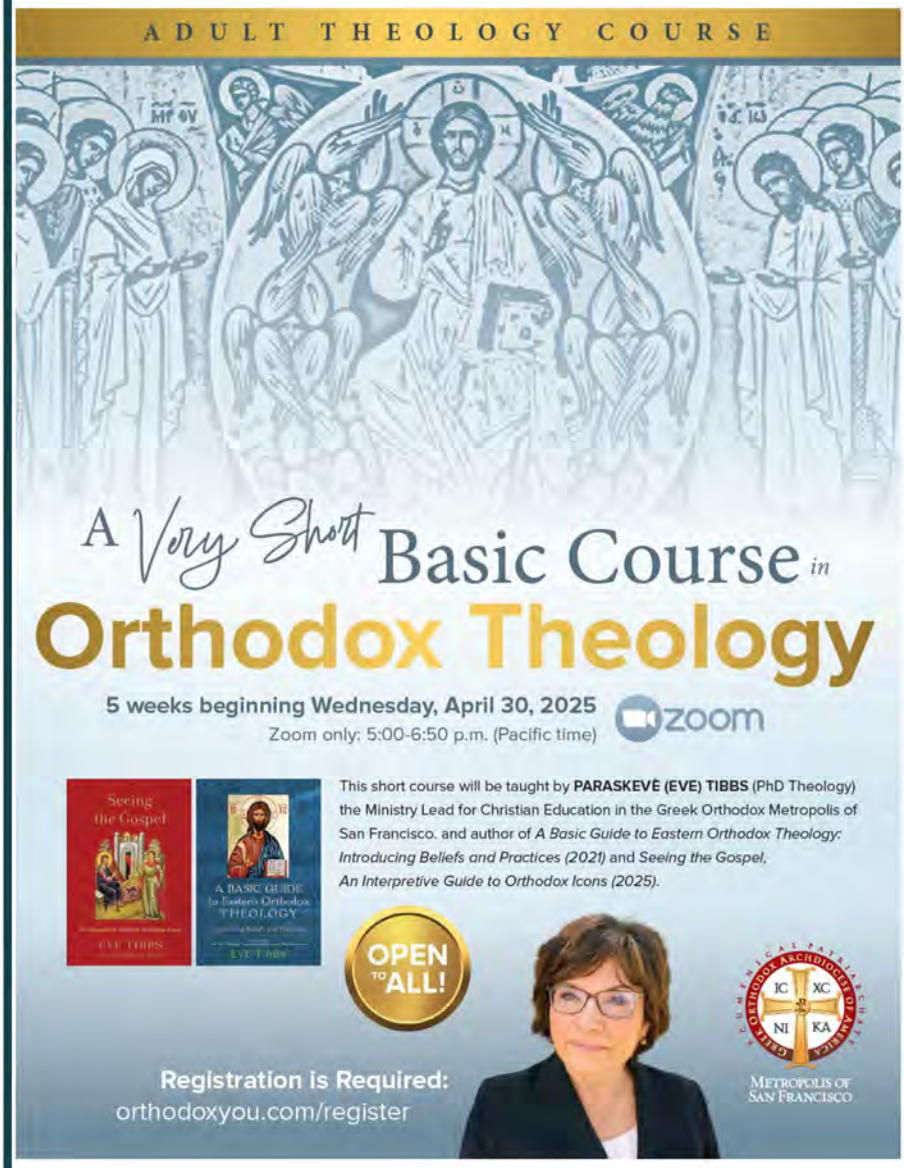
Oratorical Festival Leadership Team
Aristi Contos (aristiofoz@yahoo.com)
Johanna Duterte-Carter (jduterte@sanfran.goarch.org)
Eve Tibbs (etibbs@sanfran.goarch.org

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY WEBSITES

Catechetical Resources: for Parents and Teachers
https://religioused.sanfran.goarch.org

St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival:
https://SForatorical.org

ONLINE THEOLOGY COURSE IN APRIL & MAY



A "*Very Short* Basic Course in Orthodox Theology" will take place via Zoom on five Wednesdays beginning April 30 (May 7, 14, 21, 28) from 5:00-6:50 pm Pacific time. This fast moving introductory theology course is suitable for older teens and adults, with or without any previous theological background in the Orthodox Church.

Participation is free of charge, but registration is required to access the class through Zoom:

https://OrthodoxYou.com/register

April 30: The Orthodox Christian Worldview
May 7: Early Challenges and the Rule of Faith
May 14: Created for a purpose
May 21: The Holy Trinity
May 28: Orthodox Worship

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS & CATECHISTS

Teacher tested resources for home and Church School

- Take-home Lessons
- Activity Pages
- Videos
- Crafts
- Lesson Plans
- Tridion and Lenten Resources



Website: ReligiousEd.sanfran.goarch.org

Church Music Federation Ministry Report – 2025

Over the last year, we have been continuing to redevelop and grow our ministry to be a resource that parishes look for. Our small team has continued to reach out individually to parishes to see their needs, as well as reflect on what is working and what needs to change. This has allowed to support both individuals of all ages, and parish music programs. Some of the things that we have done:

Sustain Scholarships

- In 2024, we awarded eight more Desby scholarships to individuals: six were under the age of 30.

Promote Education

- We had a one-day seminar in November on vocal and rehearsal techniques entitled: "Singing with Joy."

- Started to develop a webinar around Holy Week structure and function (presented in 2025).

- Our Individual Parish Consultation Outreach has been continued by the Church Music Development Team to identify the specific music education needs of our Metropolis parishes. This enables us to create and plan workshops, seminars, and YouTube videos that serve not only individual parishes but to plan regional events as well.

Enhance Communication and Connection

- Our utilization of the Constant Contact communication platform has allowed us to send the lively monthly newsletter, The Grace Note, and other timely updates to our growing mailing list.

- It has also allowed us to streamline the communication and registration process for in-person and online workshops, assisting local parishes in easily setting up events.

- Our Zoom platform has allowed us to hold meetings in a format that allows full access and participation to every steward and interested church musician. Zoom also enables us to present our on-line programs as well.

- For the 2024 Clergy Laity Congress, in San Diego, we were a liaison between the National Forum Meeting for the Congress and Metropolis.

Finally, in August 2024 our stewards voted to change the Organizational Guide to be fully under the auspices of the Metropolis. This was approved by the Metropolis Council. Part of this

change was moving our bank account under the umbrella of the Metropolis. Our Ministry Coordinator is appointed by the Metropolitan: we will have a representative to the National Forum, and a communications coordinator, and more teams as seen fit, chosen from our Music Ministry Resource Group. Our ministry Leadership Circle had worked tirelessly in efficient, thoughtful, and prayerful discussion and planning meetings to make the most of our resources, and this organizational shift was the most logical conclusion. Our leadership seek support from each other, the resource group, as well as feedback from others to help keep our ministry growing in the right direction. If you would like to contact us with any questions or feedback, please reach out!

In Christ,
Christopher Hondros, Ministry Coordinator
GOMSF Music Ministry
Website: sfchurchmusic.org
Email: sfchurchmusic@sanfran.goarch.org

Clergy Continuing Education Ministry Report

March 21, 2025

Submitted by Fr. Jerry Markopoulos

frgerasimos@sntgrg.org***541.852.0143

The Clergy Continuing Education (CCE) Program is designed to provide on-going skill and knowledge development of our Clergy to assist in their personal growth and ministerial effectiveness.

Main Activities/Events completed in 2024

- Discussions with Holly Benton of Orthodox Christian Coaching about offering a coaching cohort for newly ordained clergy continued in 2024. The mission of Orthodox Christian Coaching is to work side by side with clergy and ministry leaders to foster health in the communities. One of the ways they do this is by offering cohorts that address specific needs. Newly ordained clergy face unique challenges as they step into the role. We wish to partner with Orthodox Christian Coaching to develop a cohort to address these challenges. A proposal has been sent to His Eminence, but there has been no action yet.
- Discussions continued in 2024 with representatives of HC/HC regarding clergy continuing education. It became clear that our Metropolis lacked the resources to provide CCE courses ourselves, so we pivoted and mooted various ways in which our Metropolis could support HC/HC's initiatives-e.g. subsidizing tuition of clergy, supporting the development of courses, etc. Recently, we have been informed that HC/HC will soon be launching their first continuing education course. They would like to restart the conversation to see what opportunities there are to further support their initiatives.
- Clergy Koinonia Groups: There are only a few groups that are still active in the Metropolis.

Our Focus

- Support HC/HC's initiatives.
- Reactivating Clergy Koinonia Groups.
- Offer Coaching Cohorts in partnership with Orthodox Christian Coaching.

Family Wellness ministry

GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO

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206 380-1862
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Our Team



Our Family Wellness Ministry Team:

- George Papageorge, L.M.F.T., *Director*
- Presv. Pat Tsagalakis, *Assistant Director*
- Fr. Tom Tsagalakis, M.Div., L.M.F.T.
- Fr. Jim Pappas, M. Div
- Presvytera Donna Pappas
- Fr. Vasili Hillhouse, M.Div.
- Fr. Timothy Pavlatos. M.Div., M.F.T.
- Presv. Victoria Pavlatos
- Presv. Michelle Triant
- Joe Borgonia, L.M.F.T.

2025 Family Wellness Initiative: "Ten for Ten"

Ten for Ten

Ten for Ten is our latest 2025 Family Wellness initiative designed for both small and large group ministries. Members of our Family Wellness Ministry team present on relevant topics through a concise 10-minute video. Each video is accompanied by supplementary handouts that include quotes from Orthodox Church Fathers and Mothers, pertinent scripture verses, and questions for personal reflection and group discussion. We're excited to explore a diverse array of subjects, including parenting, family life, marriage, recovery after divorce, caring for aging parents, nurturing clergy care, and spiritual insights, among others! It will launch May 2025.

Jesus says: "I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly!" John 10:10

IronMen Men's Ministry

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" *Proverbs 27:17*

Throughout 2024-25, our commitment to cultivating Men's Ministry has made significant progress across the Metropolis. We have organized retreats, workshops, and connected in parish meetings which have been instrumental in fostering community and connection among Orthodox men. Efforts to develop small group men's ministry continues to grow providing men the opportunity to grow spiritually, learn from one another, and experience meaningful fellowship, reinforcing a strong sense of brotherhood and community.



NW Men's Retreat at Camp Angelos



Son's of Nativity Men's Fellowship – Novato, CA

Eight Dates Relationship Series

Since its inception in 2019 – over 800 couples throughout the country have participated in our EIGHT DATES online or "Parish Edition" program.

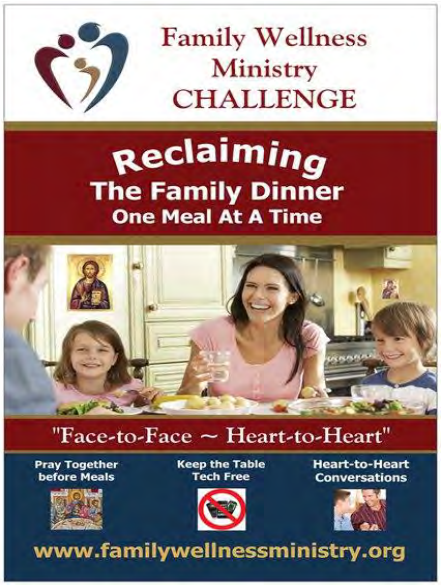


"Great experience and wonderful discussions! Thankful for the structure of the course and the way facilitators allowed for us to share experiences and challenges in a way that helps to grow in their relationships."

"8 Dates sessions were great! Here's my big why: Often marriage help begins from within the marriage when couples decide something isn't working and need to find help. (This is exhausting!) These sessions were offered – externally initiated, someone else organized the time with amazing orchestration and all we had to do was show up and accept support. (a sacrificial love I did nothing for which gave much energy to us) Thank you to the Family Wellness Ministry leaders who showed they are trustworthy, well-educated, Christ-centered, and extremely dedicated."

Family Dinner Project

We are committed to reinforcing the connections that unite families. The Family Dinner Project aims to bring families together by encouraging shared meals and connective conversations. Visit our website to download interactive questions that can spark engaging conversations



Grief Support



While everyone's response to loss is unique, people facing loss and grief will experience many of the same challenges. Grief Support Groups provides valuable connections, encouragement, and direction for those struggling with loss. Currently, Holy Apostles (Shoreline, WA) and St. George (Downey, CA) are providing Grief Support ministries. If you are interested in learning more about GriefShare and its powerful impact, resources are available. We also provide Grief ministry resources on our website.

familywellnessministry.org

Divorce Care

DivorceCare offers vital support to individuals navigating the challenges of divorce. This small group ministry provides a safe and understanding environment where people can find guidance and healing through practical tool and emotional support. Please contact Joe Borgonia, our Family Wellness Ministry's DivorceCare Coordinator, who can provide further information and assistance. 408. 209-1780





Retreats & Events

"Face to Face – Heart to Heart" our Family Wellness Ministry team continues to reach church communities sharing retreats and family camps throughout the country. Below, is a sample of a few of our 2025 workshops and retreats









“Real Life” - Parenting from the Heart



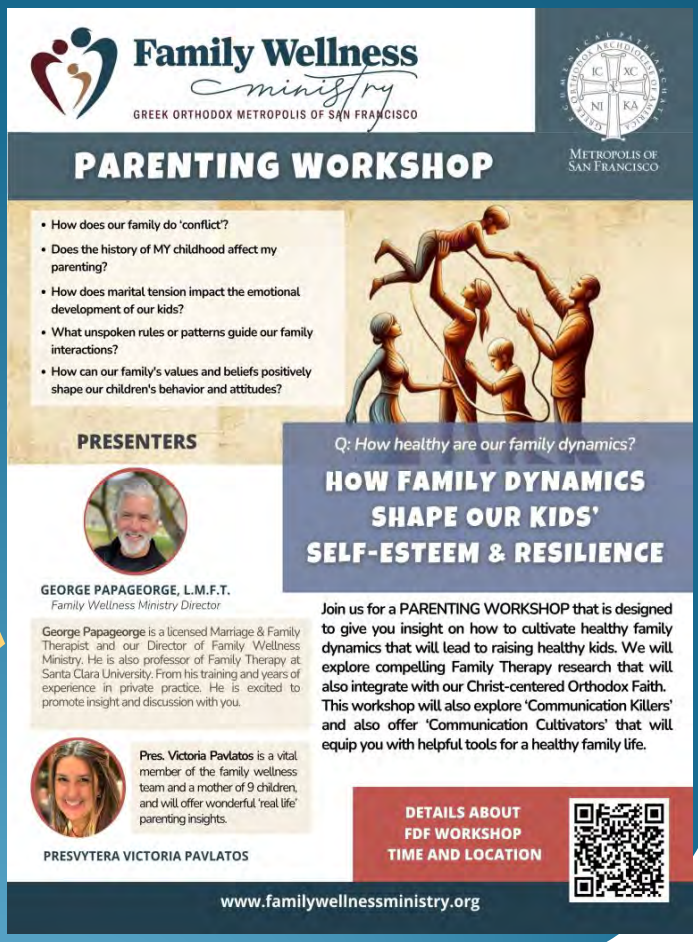
"Real Life" Parenting from the Heart combines psychological research with the wisdom of Orthodox Christian teachings, offering insightful and practical content along with opportunities for interactive discussions. This program focuses on cultivating stable emotional connections, enhancing communication skills, exploring different parenting styles, and integrating authentic faith in Christ. All videos and materials are available for free on our website - providing practical tools and helpful insights to support your journey in Christ-centered parenting.

“We can’t say enough good things about the programs that your ministry offers. We participated in “8 Dates” and now “Parenting from the Heart” and loved them both. Thank you to the whole team for all your time, effort and obvious love for this ministry. Can’t wait to see what is coming next!” - Georgia

"To truly connect with your children, you must be present in their lives - physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Listen to them, understand them, and let them feel your love and acceptance.” + St. Porphyrios

FDF PARENTING WORKSHOPS

“The FDF Parenting workshops have been so engaging, fun and interesting. We loved how George Papageorge combined psychology with faith which we don’t often hear. We appreciated hearing the practical tips from Pres Victoria Pavlatos’ personal family life and experiences. Awesome speakers and great talk. Thank you, Family Wellness Ministry.
- Olga Markou



Clergy Care



With the encouragement of His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos, our team continues to expand initiatives for Clergy Care.

Confidential Clergy Counseling Support: Our FWM licensed Marriage and Family counselors will provide immediate confidential counseling and support for any of our clergy facing crisis or needing support. Please contact Fr. Tom Tsagalakis, M.Div., M.F.T. 206 380-1865 if you would like to seek confidential counseling. Look out for upcoming information about our 2025 FALL Metropolis Clergy Couples Retreat.



Clergy / Presvyteres Support and Mentorship Programs
In our efforts to support priests and presvyteres, we continue to partner with the Archdiocese Center for Family Care providing support and fellowship through 'Peer Group Mentorship Programs' for both priests and presvyteres.

PREZ to PREZ – Presvyteres on our Family Wellness Ministry team distribute a monthly message via National Sisterhood of Presvyteres sharing scriptures, quotes, questions and thoughts to ponder relevant to lives of clergy wives.

"I look forward to reading "Prez to Prez" every month. Thank you for infusing spiritual insights along with real life practical wisdom. It is a gift for all." Pres. Sophia

Senior Outreach

Our commitment to the well-being of every generation includes dedicated resources for seniors. We offer a yearly retreat held at St. Nicholas Ranch under the direction of Fr. Jim Pappas who continues to lead our Senior outreach fostering a sense of belonging and purpose during their golden years.





OCAMPER

We continue to be a presence at **OCAMPER** (Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology & Religion) as Family Wellness representatives Fr. Vasili Hillhouse & George Papageorge engage in important dialogue and build relationships.
The upcoming OCAMPER Conference will be October 2-4, 2025 in Mundelein, Illinois

Outreach to Young Adults



Our Family Wellness Ministry is honored to engage with young adults across the country by delivering impactful workshops at Metropolis and National YAL conferences and retreats. Our influence extends further as keynote speakers at the CrossRoad Institute and CONNECT Conferences nationwide. By offering relevant and life-giving presentations, we meet young people where they are, fostering a deeper connection with Christ and the Church. This work enriches the spiritual journey of young adults strengthening their relationships with in the Orthodox Christian Faith.

The Family Wellness Ministry team is a highlight for YAL Conference attendees. They not only ask thought provoking questions and present on important topics but allow us to soul search internally and realize what we are truly looking for in a partner and what we need to do ourselves to get there. The Family Wellness team brings in real world examples, humor, and small breakout sessions to get us out of our comfort zone bringing us closer to Christ and one another.

- George Anagnostopoulos, YAL Chair, San Diego, CA







CrossRoad Institute 1.0 and 2.0



"George Papageorge brings all the wisdom, insight, and theological depth of the Family Wellness Ministry to inspire youth and young adults through the programs of CrossRoad Institute. This past year he taught at the Chicago and San Francisco sessions of the CrossRoad Summer Institute for high school juniors and seniors and at the new CrossRoad 2.0 for young adults - a five-day conference in Florida. At these programs, George not only presents a session, "Getting Love Right," but spends deliberate time hanging out with participants, fielding questions and encouraging their inner journey to Christ. Participants are profoundly thankful he sheds light on a map of their internal world, spends relaxed time with them processing life, and inspires them that to be Orthodox means you will self-reflect and lean in to get love right." - Ann Bezzerides, PhD, CrossRoad Executive Director

Family Wellness ministry
GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO

FAMILY WELLNESS IN ACTION

2024

Feb. 16-19 FDF WORKSHOPS **for parents and young adults** "BUILDING *RELATIONSHIPS with Authenticity and Healthy Attachment with Fr Vasili Hillhouse, Georg Papageorge, Pres. Victoria Pavlatos*
Family Wellness: FDF ARTS & CRAFTS *for kids with Fr. Jim and Pres. Donna Pappas*

Feb – March GIFT OF GRIEF (Bereavement Group (Holy Apostles, Shoreline) *with Fr. Tom Tsagalakis and Alyssa Meals*

March 22-24 FWM LENTEN FAMILY RETREAT (St. Spyridon / Loveland, CO) *with George Papageorge, Fr. Tom & Pres. Pat*

April 3 FWM LENTEN PRESENTATION (St. George-Fresno) "Cultivating Lifegiving Relationships" *Pres. Pat Tsagalakis*

April 4-7 CROSSROAD SPRING BREAK RETREAT (Palm Beach Florida) *with George Papageorge*

April 13 LENTEN FAMILY RETREAT (Annunciation -Sacramento, CA) *with George Papageorge*

July 1-4 NATIONAL CLERGY LAITY ASSEMBLY (San Diego) FWM Presentations "Creating Vibrant Family Ministries"

July 4-7 YAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE (San Diego) FWM Workshops for young adults *with the FWM Team*

Aug. 27 LIVE WITH THE LOUS **– Essential Tools for Healthy Families and Relationships** *with George Papageorge*

Sept – Jan 8 DATES (177 couples registered) – (Sept. 2024- Jan. 2025) presented twice a month *by our FWM team along with Johanna Carter, Director Youth and Young Adults*

Sept 29-31 OCAMPER (Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology & Religion) Fr. Vasili Hillhouse & George Papageorge

Sept 30-Oct 2 FWM SENIOR RESORT CAMP @ St. Nicholas Ranch *with Fr. Jim Pappas and Johanna Carter*

Oct. 4-5 CONNECT YOUNG PROFESSIONALS CONFERENCE – Nashville, Tenn – *Keynote speaker: George Papageorge*

Oct. 18 MEN'S MINISTRY RETREAT **Novato (Sons of Nativity)** "Getting Love Right" *with George Papageorge*

Nov. 22-24 MEN'S MINISTRY RETREAT **Holy Trinity Portland, OR / Camp Angelos** "Getting Love Right" *with George Papageorge*

2025

Jan. 20-23 NATIONAL CLERGY COUPLES' RETREAT
Fr. Jim Pappas & Pres Donna / Fr. Tom & Pres Pat Tsagalakis

Feb – May Threshold Support Group (Holy Apostles, Shoreline) *with Fr. Tom Tsagalakis and Alyssa Meals*

Feb 6-8 FWM TEAM RETREAT (San Diego, CA) - *Family Wellness Team*

Feb. 14-16. FDF WORKSHOPS **for parents** *presented by George Papageorge and Pres. Victoria Pavlatos*

March 28-29 MEN'S RETREAT **(St. Katherine, Chandler, AZ)** *with George Papageorge and Fr. Timothy Pavlatos*

March 7-9 FWM LENTEN FAMILY RETREAT (Loveland, CO) *with George Papageorge, Fr. Tom & Pres. Pat* Tsagalakis

March 14 - 16 NW GOYA Retreat **– All Saint Camp, Gig Harbor** *with Fr. Tom Tsagalakis*

March 22-23 RELATIONSHIP RETREAT "Created for Connection" (St. John, Las Vegas) *with Fr. Tom & Pres. Pat Tsagalakis*

March 29-30 CROSSROAD 2.0 YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCE (Florida) *with George Papageorge*

May 2025 Ten and Ten Launch - *FWM Team*

June & July CROSSROAD SUMMER INSTITUTE **w/** *George Papageorge*

Aug. 29-Sept 1 YAL CONFERENCE 2025 Family Wellness Team

Sept 2025 Godparent Sunday Outreach

Sept 2025 8 DATES RELATIONSHIP PROGRAM *Family Wellness Team*

Oct 15-18 NSP NATIONAL RETREAT - San Antonio, TX
retreat leaders: Pres. Pat Tsagalakis & George Papageorge

Oct 2025 SENIOR RETREAT **–** *Fr. Jim Pappas & Johanna Carter*

Oct 2-5 OCAMPER (Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology & Religion) with Fr. Vasili Hillhouse & George Papageorge

FALL 2025 METROPOLIS CLERGY COUPLES RETREAT- TBA



Our Family Wellness Ministry is committed to providing resources, training, support and information through seminars and workshops to church communities, individuals, families, lay and clergy alike who want to create deeper connections "face-to-face and heart-to-heart."

FDF 2025 Report

Prepared For:

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco
Metropolis Council & Clergy Laity

May 2025









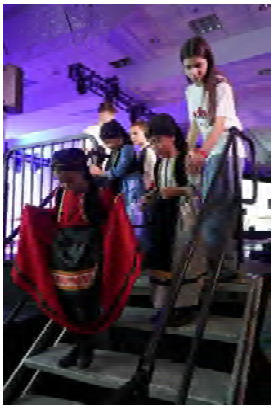
FDF 2025 Overview

Embrace, Empower, Elevate. This year's theme for FDF was a formula, needing all three parts to foster the true meaning of FDF. FDF's 2025 theme not only inspires our growth as Orthodox Christians, but also cultivates our next generation of dancers, directors, and community leaders. At this year's FDF, we "Embraced" our faith, we "empowered" through dance and song, and "Elevated" one another in fellowship.

In 2025, FDF again experienced a record attendance with over 5,000 people in attendance during the weekend event, provided $31,000 in scholarships, and raised & donated $20,000 for GOAA ministries.

Highlights

- **Registration:**
  - Participants came from **21** US states and **43** parishes (Including Greece, Canada & Australia)!
  - **5,000+** participants throughout the whole weekend!
  - **3,000+** pre-registered participants, including 425 who attended FDF for the first time!
    - **238** pre-registered participants under 8 years old
    - **961** pre-registered participants between 9-17 years old
    - **1,730** pre-registered participants over 18 years old



- **Competition:**
  - **110 Total Groups** from **9 States** (AZ, CA, HI, NV, IL, CO, OR, UT & WA) and **3 Countries** (Greece, USA, and Canada).
    – **78** Dance (Division I & II) – **19** Division III Exhibition
    – **10** Choral – **3** Division IV Non-Competing Exhibition
  - One of the non-competing groups ("Lyceum Hellinidon of Kavala") traveled from Kavala, Greece to enlighten the audience with song and dance prior to the start of Advanced Senior competition on Sunday afternoon. We continue to explore opportunities to highlight, partner with and host these types of groups and organizations from Greece and beyond.
  - The Choral competition continues to grow, with three more Choral groups participating this year, which allowed us to award two Choral Sweepstakes trophies. We continue to rebuild our Choral participation and are on track to exceed the levels prior to COVID-19.

- **Judge Panel:**
  - **18 Dance Judges** (5 from Greece – 2 more than last year) + **4 Costume Judges**
  - **2 Returning Choral Judges** with long & distinguished resumes.

- **Live Stream:**
  The FDF Live channel and viewership continues to grow year-over-year, broadcasting to and connecting those not able to physically attend FDF. Our target audience is everyone around the world who wants to experience our Greek Heritage and Culture through this ministry that we all know and love.
  - **FDF 2025:** 881,520 Minutes / 81,400 Views / 23 Events / 1,134 Awards Viewers ***(New Record!)***
  - **Since Inception in 2017:** 4,368 Subscribers / 95,600 Hours / 608,700 Views (***21% YOY Growth)***
  - **International Reach:** Greece, Canada, UK, Australia, Mexico & Japan ***(New Country in 2025)***

- **Ministry Collaboration:**
  FDF has continuously provided a platform for all ministries of our Metropolis and Archdiocese to advance their missions. This year, FDF organized a well-attended workshop session that allowed more ministries to reach a larger number of audiences.
    - **Scholars' Fair:** Exploring Educational & Cultural Enrichment Opportunities in the Greek Orthodox Church.
    - This workshop included presentations from three ministries in one session: Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Hellenic College Holy Cross, & Hellenic American University.
        - This session offered details and discussions about opportunities to study our faith and culture both at home and abroad, including the Hellenic College's campus in Boston and the Hellenic American University in Athens.
        - Our Metropolis of San Francisco Archons presented on The Pilgrimage of Discovery, which is an annual, 7-day, all-expense paid, religious and cultural journey to Constantinople awarded to young adults across the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, connecting them with their ancestral religious roots.
        - Combining all ministries into one workshop session was a success! Specifically, if someone was interested in one of these ministries, they would be present and learn about all others as well. Offering these wonderful ministries to more participants.

- **Opening Ceremony Performance:** Erini Tornesaki
    - Erini is a distinguished vocalist and educator dedicated to preserving Hellenic culture. Erini is also a returning FDF Choral Judge.
    - This year, Erini performed a musical presentation at the Opening Ceremony: *"Paradosi: A Journey Through Greece's Musical Traditions"*
    - This musical presentation was a medley featuring a series of emblematic songs of the Greek traditions from Asia Minor, Epirus, the Ionian & Aegean Islands, Halkidiki, Thrace, and Crete.
    - In 2025, Erini released a new album, "FOS."



- **Diakonia:**
    - The Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos and the FDF Management Team partnered with Outback Team Building & Training on a "school supply scramble" to fill backpacks for children affected by the LA fires.
    - This year's interactive on-site Diakonia project took place on Thursday prior to the Opening Ceremony. It encouraged teamwork, creativity, and collaboration amongst all our participants.
    - This year marked the 8th annual on-site Diakonia project (following the first one at FDF 2017). It continues to give great energy to kick off the weekend and is a highlight for all who participate.





- **Night Events:**
  - Friday: Glendi
    - The traditional Glendi took place featuring regional musicians from all over Greece, including live music from Pontos, Crete, and Thrace.
    - Participants enjoyed dancing and singing throughout the night to a variety of live music from various regions and musicians, plus DJ Gus Sverkos who played between bands.
  - Saturday: Concert & Glendi
    - **Malu**, with special guest Konstantinos Nazhs performed live Saturday night.
    - The event catered to participants of all ages with a very large turnout and positive feedback from both children and parents.



  - Sunday: Awards Ceremony & Glendi
    - With another successful year of record attendance, the Awards Ceremony took place in both ballrooms. Each room was set up with a live camera feed and synced audio on all four large projection screens. Our host, Aris Yortzidis, ventured between the two rooms as his co-host was unable to participate due to an unexpected illness.
    - All winning groups and awardees are listed online at www.yourfdf.org/event/fdf-2025/
    - Participants then danced the night away to traditional folk music performed by regional musicians from all over Greece.
- **Workshops:**
  - Several workshops continued from the prior year's success and evolved:
    - "Kalimera Kids Dance Party," for the Pre-Division III age group.
    - Two interactive workshops focused on utilizing both song and dance as tools for inspiring leadership in our church communities and throughout our participant's lives.
    - "Stories of our Faith as told through Iconography" offered FDF's older dance participants insight and a close look at the symbols depicted in icons and the stories of our faith they represent.
  - A new workshop was added this year and it was highly attended by all ages:
    - "A Journey Through Asia Minor's Songs, History & Vocal Traditions," an immersive workshop of Greek Song presented by Erini Tornesaki.
  - The complete Workshop lineup included 9 inspiring, interactive, and powerful workshops that took place throughout the weekend and focused on all ages including parents.

We thank everyone for the continued support and assistance in making FDF 2025 a huge success! Planning has already begun for another great event in 2026! We can't wait to see you there!

A Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco

OUR GREEK VILLAGE
ΤΟ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΧΩΡΙΟ

Metropolis Clergy Laity Assembly
May 2025

Greek Village 2025 is officially in motion — and the excitement is building fast!

We've laid out a dynamic annual schedule to drive our activities through June 2025, ensuring every milestone brings us closer to an unforgettable experience.

We're thrilled to announce the launch of our brand-new website, www.ourgreekvillage.com, our Instagram account (@our.greek.village), and the debut of our 2025 Greek Village trailer — all designed to spark curiosity and build excitement across our community. To match this momentum, we proudly introduced a fresh new logo, giving our ministry a bold, unified identity for the future.



Printed advertisement for Greek Village

Our efforts to shine a spotlight on Greek Village have already paid off with positive media coverage, including a press release in the *Orthodox Observer* and an article in *The National Herald*. Behind the scenes, we've assembled a powerhouse organizing committee filled with experts in language education, folk culture, and Metropolis ministry leadership, bringing fresh energy and experience to the program.

The momentum continues! Staff applications are officially open, offering incredible opportunities to be part of this inspiring ministry. Registration for Greek Village 2025 is also live, and excitement is already growing. We brought our updated branding to life at the Folk Dance Festival (FDF) with a vibrant booth that captured the imagination of families and dancers alike.

This is just the beginning — and we can't wait to see where this journey takes us together! But we need your help getting the word out to potential campers and staff. After a six-year hiatus we are literally rebuilding Greek Village from the ground up.







Photos from Greek Village at FDF 2025

Missions and Evangelism Ministry Report



www.GrowOrthodoxy.org

Co-Directors

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MEM Team

- Fr. Andrew Barakos, Assumption, Scottsdale, Arizona
- Fr. Anthony Cornett, Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Tacoma, Washington
- Fr. Photios Dumont, Saint Demetrios, Seattle, Washington
- Fr. James Kumarelas, Saint Nicholas, San Jose, California
- Fr. Gerasimos Markopoulos, St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Eugene, Oregon
- Dn. John Nixon, Saint John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, Nevada
- Fr. Spyridon Rice, Saint Demetrios, Seattle, Washington
- Cliff Argue, St. Demetrios, Seattle, Washington
- Nolan Brown, Saint Spyridon Orthodox Church, Loveland, Colorado
- Connie Contes, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Phoenix, Arizona
- Kenny Scott, Saint George Orthodox Church, Prescott, Arizona

Our Mission

To aid in and develop an Orthodox practice of evangelism and mission by opening doors, preparing soil, and casting nets for our parishes and their parishioners.

Upcoming Events

2025 “Growing Orthodoxy” Evangelism Conference

Date: June 9-11, 2025 **Location:** St Paul, Irvine, CA **Cost: 125** ($100 - Early Registration)



This conference will feature inspiring speakers, interactive workshops, and meaningful discussions on evangelism. If you are someone passionate about spreading the Gospel or want to learn about evangelism in an Orthodox context, this event will provide valuable insights and actionable strategies to bring back to your community.

How to Create an Engaging and Evangelistic Church Website

Date: Monday, May 12, 2025 **Time:** 5:30 PM Pacific **Location:** Zoom



This practical presentation is designed for Orthodox clergy and laity who want their church website to do more than just serve as a business card. You will learn how to transform your site into a welcoming first impression specifically designed to engage new visitors and guide them toward becoming full members of the Orthodox faith.

Featured Resources

How to Start an Evangelism Team

How to Start an Evangelism Season

How to Start a Welcoming Ministry

AMERICA
IS A MISSION FIELD
WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Join the MEM Community!

The MEM (Missions and Evangelism Ministry) Community is made up of clergy and laity who have a desire to spread the faith in their local communities.

Members of the community gather over Zoom with other like-minded people a few times each year to discuss all things evangelism. We believe that the first step in having a focus on evangelism is for our people to come together and simply talk about it.

If you would like to be part of the discussion, please join today!

groworthodoxy.org/join

We need your help!

Our goal is to have at least two representatives from every parish in our Metropolis join the MEM community.

Below is the list of parishes in our Metropolis. Churches shown in **bold** have at least one active Community Members — though there is always room for more!

Alaska

Holy Transfiguration (Anchorage)

Arizona

Saint Katherine (Chandler)

Holy Cross (Flagstaff)

Mission of Coolidge and Florence (Florence)

Mission of Lake Havasu City (Lake Havasu City)

Saint Haralambos (Peoria)

Holy Trinity Cathedral (Phoenix)

Saint George (Prescott)

Assumption (Scottsdale)

Saint Demetrios (Tucson)

California

Saint John the Baptist (Anaheim)

Saint George (Bakersfield)

Holy Cross (Belmont)

Saint Demetrios (Camarillo)

Saints Constantine and Helen (Cardiff by-the-Sea)

Saint John the Baptist (Carmel-By-The-Sea)

Resurrection (Castro Valley)

Saint Demetrios (Concord)

Saint Nectarios (Covina)

Saint George (Downey)

Saint Gregory of Nyssa (El Cajon)

Saint Katherine (Elk Grove)

Saint Lawrence (Felton)

Saint George (Fresno)

Saints Constantine and Helen (Lancaster)

Saint Paul (Irvine)

Assumption (Long Beach)

Saint Sophia Cathedral (Los Angeles)

Annunciation (Modesto)

Saint Nicholas (Murrieta)

Cathedral of the Ascension (Oakland)

Saint Anthony (Pasadena)

Saint George (Palm Desert)

Prophet Elias (San Bernardino)

Saint Spyridon (San Diego)

Holy Trinity (San Francisco)

Annunciation Cathedral (San Francisco)

Saint Basil (San Juan Capistrano)

Saint Basil (San Jose)

Saint Nicholas (San Jose)

Saint Andrew (San Luis Obispo)

Saint Barbara (Santa Barbara)

Prophet Elias (Santa Cruz)

Saint Katherine (Redondo Beach)

Saint Anna (Roseville)

Annunciation (Sacramento)

Saint Basil (Stockton)

Saints Constantine and Helen (Vallejo)

Saint Spyridon (Upland)

Hawaii

Saints Constantine & Helen Cathedral (Honolulu)

Mission of Maui (Maui)

Nevada

Saint John the Baptist (Las Vegas)

Saint Anthony (Reno)

Oregon

Central Oregon Mission (Bend)

Saint John the Baptist (Beaverton)

Saint George (Eugene)

Holy Trinity Cathedral (Portland)

Holy Cross Mission (Roseburg)

Holy Resurrection Mission (Salem)

Washington

Saint Sophia (Bellingham)

Saint Nectarios Mission (Pasco)

Saint Demetrios (Seattle)

Assumption (Seattle)

Holy Apostles (Shoreline)

Holy Trinity (Spokane)

Saint Nicholas (Tacoma)



Orthodox
PARISH LEADERSHIP

A Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco

"Supporting Parish Health, Growth and Revitalization"

Ministry Recap
2024 & Q1 2025

April 2025

Metropolis of San Francisco

The Mission of OPL

Our Purpose

Support a parish's efforts in bringing people to Christ and fostering their connection with His Church.

How We Will Do This

Offer consulting support, materials, tools and best practices intended to enhance the parish's Health, Growth, and Revitalization.

Our Aim

"Easy-to-use tools in an-easy-to-get manner"

OPL Team



Steve Pappas
St. Anthony, Pasadena CA
Parish Health & Revitalization;
Metropolis Monthly Webinars



Dimi Sakelarios
St. Anthony, Reno NV
"2x2" Program;
Strategic Planning;



Melpomeni Murdakes
Director, GOA Ministry
Parish Planned Giving



Kristina Mehas
Assumption, Seattle WA
Stewardship & Generosity



Jim Eckstaedt
St. Paul, Irvine CA
Metropolis Finance Team
Parish Financial Health



Peter Panagis
St. St. George, Prescott AZ
"5P" Ministry
Effectiveness



George Ekizian
St. Paul, Irvine CA
Welcome Ministry



Steve Tibbs
St. Paul, Irvine CA
OPL Ministry Lead,
Strategic Planning;
Leadership Development;
Capital Campaigns

Summary

- The Orthodox Parish Leadership (OPL) Ministry is actively supporting Parishes and Orthodox Ministries at an unprecedented level.
- We are blessed to have the resources and commitment of the dedicated OPL team members to respond effectively to the growing number of requests.
- Inquires for support have now eclipsed the outline of our Metropolis and we have been able to "export" our offerings and insights to many other Metropolises and Orthodox jurisdictions. However, the Metropolis of San Francisco remains our primary focus for support.
- The inaugural "2x2" Leadership Development Pilot was successfully completed in 2024 with significant learnings and impacts. 2025's program is set to begin in June, 2025.

2024 & Q1 Highlights

Parish Support

33 Parishes in 2024 Supported by OPL Within the Metropolis of San Francisco

11 Ministries & Parishes Being Supported Outside the Metropolis of San Francisco

12 Parishes Completed Initial "2x2" Leadership Development pilot in 2024;
New Parishes will be participating in 2025 conduct of the Program

803 Parish Level Surveys Completed in 2024 Within the "2x2" Program

OPL Provided Support By Offering*

- Capital Campaign Support (7)
- Financial Health (4)
- Leadership Development (3)
- Ministry Effectiveness (3)
- Parish Health (4)
- Planned Giving (6)
- Revitalization (8)
- Stewardship & Generosity (12)
- Strategic Planning (9)
- Welcome Team Ministry (9)
- "2 x 2" Program (12)

* Some parishes are utilizing multiple offerings

2x2 LEADERSHIP Development

The "2 x 2" Program

Program Purpose

Improve Participant Skills. Equip parishes to achieve their purpose by increasing the skills and awareness of two parishioners from each of 12 pilot parishes within the Metropolis of San Francisco in all aspects of the OPL ministry.

Build Community. Help build a community amongst the participants who may be able to share and connect on parish and leadership issues well beyond the formal program.

Provide Guidance. Outputs of the program sessions will guide future offerings as the OPL learns what is important to our parishes, tests a number of parish-focused surveys, and encourages program participants to share their perspectives, needs and ideas.

2024 "2 x 2" Program Outcomes

Participation & Parish Initiatives

Content Creation & Delivery

13 Presentations Created and Delivered

- PowerPoint Decks
- Session Recordings
- Related Parish Assessments
- All to be posted in emerging OPL website

Best Practice Assessment Surveys

- 803 Parish Level Assessments conducted inclusive of 12 parishes
- Every parish was given a summary recap for each assessment conducted totaling 96 individual reports created and distributed

Participation

For the 8 Learning Sessions

- 24 participants from 12 parishes
- 86% attendance by parishes for all 12 sessions (at least 1 member from a parish)
- 67% attendance rate for all participants (over all 8 sessions)

Parish Impacts

Parish initiatives led by parish representatives as a result of their program participation:

- 1 participant sought blessing of his Priest to become Stewardship Chair
- 2 parishes launched participant-led Strategic Plans as a result of the program
- 1 parish created a comprehensive parish health plan based on survey outcomes
- Welcome Ministry was launched at one parish

2024 "2 x 2" Program Outcomes

Program Feedback

80% of participants rated the overall program "Excellent"

How the Participants Rated the Program (5 being highest)

"2 x 2" Program Elements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Weighted Average
The program was well-delivered.	10	5	0	0	0	4.7
I recommend that future sessions continue to record and distribute the presentations.	11	3	1	0	0	4.7
Because of the program, I know who to contact in the OPL Ministry for resource support.	11	2	2	0	0	4.6
It was beneficial to have 2 participants from our parish.	10	3	2	0	0	4.5
Overall, presentations were well-delivered.	9	5	1	0	0	4.5
I felt well-informed about the program, including upcoming sessions and survey recaps.	8	6	1	0	0	4.5
I would recommend this program.	10	2	3	0	0	4.5
The Learning Session Topics provided practical value.	9	4	1	1	0	4.4
The frequency of meeting once a month felt appropriate.	6	8	1	0	0	4.3
Expanding the 2025 program to include more than 12 parishes would not create any learning challenges.	6	7	2	0	0	4.3
The "homework" assignments to conduct parish surveys were manageable.	8	4	1	2	0	4.2
The program provided value to my parish.	7	5	2	1	0	4.2
The program helped me grow in my understanding of how to positively impact Parish Life.	7	4	3	1	0	4.1
The Parish Survey Reports created for my parish were useful.	5	7	1	2	0	4.0
The 6:30 PM Pacific Time meeting time worked well for me.	3	7	4	1	0	3.8
I did not grow "content fatigued" and was able to participate throughout the program.	4	4	4	2	1	3.5
For at least 50% of the sessions, I was able to review Learning Session content or Survey Results with my Priest.	1	1	8	3	2	2.7

Clergy Thoughts…

"This program has unlocked the potential of our 2 participants to effectively lead new programs and initiatives within our parish" Fr. Seraphim Majmudar

"All of the concepts, topics and information was laid out on a platter for us - we did not have invent the materials for our parish" Fr. Michael State

"Because of this program, we are ready to do a parish strategic plan" Fr. Michael Pallad

"The program opened the eyes of our participants as to the intricacies of parish administration" Fr. Chris Retelas

"This was definitely a 'value-add' for our parish" Fr. Matthew Swehla

"An exceptional program providing great benefit to our parish" Fr. Dean Kouldukis

2x2 LEADERSHIP Development

2025 "2x2" Sessions

Program Development Sessions

Date	Leadership Development	Presenter
February 11	2024 Capstone Session	Steve Tibbs
TBD mid-May	Program Orientation - 2 Sessions	Steve Tibbs & OPL Team
June 10	Parish WHY & Health	Steve Tibbs & Steve Pappas
July 8	Stewardship & Culture of Generosity	Kristina Mehas
August 12	Parish Leadership	Steve Tibbs
September 9	Parish Financial Health	Jim Eckstaedt
October 14	"5 P" Ministry Effectiveness & Welcome Ministry	Peter Panagis & George Ekizian
November 11	Parish Planning & Alignment	Steve Tibbs & Dimi Sakelarios
December 9	Planned Giving	Melpo Mudakes

Completed Pending

2x2 LEADERSHIP Development

2025 Metropolis Webinars

The following topics are scheduled for 2025

	Monthly Webinar	Presenter
April 28	"Enhancing Leadership Capacity: Developing Current Leaders and Planning for Succession"	Steve Pappas
May 19	"Building a Theology of Leadership Rooted in Faithful Worship"	Steve Tibbs
June 16	"Becoming a Dynamic Parish Ministry: Approaches for Building, Engaging and Serving."	Peter Panagis
July 21	"Nurturing a Healthy Parish: 12 Core Attributes"	Steve Pappas
August 18	"Expanding Your Volunteer Network: Connecting the Other 80%"	Kristina Mehas
September 15	"Enhancing Parishioner Engagement Utilizing an Intergenerational Approach"	George Ekizian
October 20	"Creating the Vision: A Practical Approach to Building an Effective Parish Plan"	Melpo Murdakes
November 17	"Fostering Unity: Strategies for Aligning Goals and Managing Disagreements"	Steve Tibbs
December 15	"Synergy: Strengthening Collaboration Between the Priest, Parish Council, and Parish Ministries"	Dimi Sakelarios

2x2 LEADERSHIP Development

Parish Assessment Surveys



On-line parish "best practice" assessments currently available for use:

1. 5Ps of Ministry Effectiveness
2. Capital Campaign Readiness
3. Clergy Development Needs
4. Change Readiness
5. Leadership Attributes
6. Leadership Development 18 Month Projection
7. Ministry Leader Coordination and Effectiveness
8. Parish Council Effectiveness
9. Parish Council Development Needs (Self-Assessment)
10. Parish Financial Health
11. Parish Health
12. Parish Operating Focus
13. Parish Operating Effectiveness
14. Parish Planned Giving
15. Parish - Wide Survey Template, Process and Tools
16. Parish WHY
17. Strategic Plan Readiness
18. Stewardship & Generosity
19. Welcome Ministry Best Practices

PHILOPTOCHOS

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco

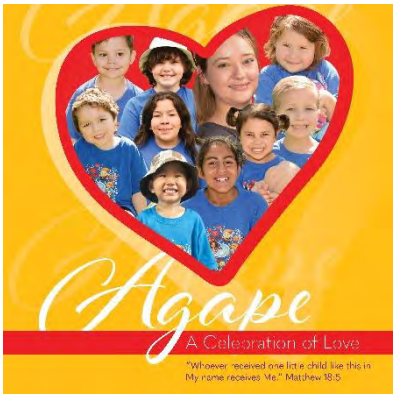
Metropolis Clergy-Laity Assembly
Our Faith Can Move Mountains

May 5-6, 2025
Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos President's Report

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."
Galatians 6:9–10

Your Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, Your Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos, Your Grace Bishop Ioannis, Metropolis Council Vice-Chair Isidoros Garifalakis, Metropolis Council, Rev. Fathers and Presvyteras, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is my honor to greet you on behalf of the Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos Board today as we gather for the 2025 Metropolis Clergy-Laity Assembly. Our mission, deeply rooted in the principles of love, compassion, and service, remains steadfast and unwavering. I remain grateful to His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos for his spiritual guidance and blessing in support of our many endeavors to make a difference in the lives of others.



A Kids 'N' Cancer Ministry, Camp Agape. The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos Kids 'n' Cancer – Camp Agape Ministry is dedicated to providing support for children afflicted with cancer and their families. This beloved ministry offers a compassionate and caring environment, exemplary of Christ's unconditional love, along with an opportunity to shape meaningful friendships and create precious memories. Camp Agape navigates the journey for these families with courage, compassion and unwavering support. The Metropolis Philoptochos oversees four Camp Agape programs throughout the Metropolis - San Diego, Dunlap (St. Nicholas Ranch), Arizona, and Portland. We are looking forward to the summer of 2025.

This year, we hosted our Kids 'n' Cancer Agape – A Celebration of Love on Sunday, April 27, 2025 at the Newport Beach Country Club. The Agape-Celebration of Love that was hosted on Sunday, April 27th at the Newport Beach Country Club was an overwhelming success, raising $400,000.

Greek Heritage Night at the Los Angeles Kings Hockey Night, hosted by Greek Consul General of Los Angeles. The Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos participated with the Honorable Christina Valassopoulou, Greek General Consult to offer a spirited evening of fellowship, cultural pride, and excitement on March 25th. Over 500 people attended were entertained with an exciting hockey game and half-time entertainment that included youth Greek dancing on the ice to "Zorba the Greek." The Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos' Kids 'n' Cancer ministry was a primary recipient of the proceeds from this inaugural annual event.



The ***48th Annual Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco Folk Dance and Choral Festival*** was held February 13-16, 2025 in Anaheim, California. FDF and the Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos Diakonia Project completed in fun challenges and filled backpacks with school supplies, personal necessities and gift cards to be donated to students affected by the tragic January Los Angeles Fires.

In January 2025, following the devasting fires in the Los Angeles area, the Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos assisted with the emergency response efforts coordinated by three Los Angeles area Greek Orthodox communities. Chapters and members were encouraged to provide donations and items to the three Philoptochos chapters to provide immediate assistance. Chapters then initiated fundraising efforts for the long-term recovery efforts to be managed by the Archdiocese. The Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos donated $10,000 to the Fire Relief Fund.

Our Camp Agape Ministry hosted 2 reunion events. On January 25th the Arizona chapters hosted a Camp Agape Reunion celebration. Philoptochos members entertained our Camp Agape families along with Camp Agape volunteers and donors. On December 16th Saint Spyridon Philoptochos of San Diego and the Metropolis Philoptochos hosted a Christmas party for the cancer children and their families. A delicious dinner was served, we sang Christmas Carols and there was a visit from Santa.



The ***Bishop Anthony Philoptochos Student Aid Endowment Fund*** has been a vital source of support for our seminarians and students. In the past 17 years we have offered over $1.5 million in financial assistance. Each year, our Light the Path Christmas Luncheon brings together our clergy and faithful for an afternoon of Christmas cheer – complete with beautiful decorations and the sights and sounds of Christmas. Light the Path was held on Sunday, November 17, 2024 at the Los Coyotes Country Club in Buena Park, California. We raised over $220,000 to support the seminarians and students of the Metropolis of San Francisco at Hellenic College and Holy Cross School of Theology.

We are excited to celebrate this year's graduation, which includes 38 seminarians and students from our Metropolis, with seven of them graduating this May.



2024 Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress and National Philoptochos Convention - We were delighted and honored to have hosted the 2024 Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress and National Philoptochos Convention in San Diego, California, from June 30 – July 4, 2024. It was a blessing to share our West Coast hospitality with all who attended, and we were grateful for the enthusiastic participation that made the gathering so meaningful. A special highlight was our collaboration with YAL on a Diakonia project, reflecting our shared commitment to service and community.

In May 2024, five members of the Metropolis Philoptochos Board traveled to Brookline, Massachusetts to participate in the ***Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology*** commencement festivities for our students. During our time on campus, we presented a check for over $157,000 to support the seminarians and students from our Metropolis. It is always uplifting to visit "The Holy Hill" and to share in fellowship with these wonderful men and women who are pursuing higher education at Hellenic College Holy Cross and encourage them as they pursue service to our Church.





The ***Social Services Ministry*** embodies the spirit of Philoptochos by assisting those in need of caring, kindness and compassion. The need for such a ministry is paramount to our mission as Philoptochos women touch others both financially and spiritually in a manner which provides hope and preserves dignity. Our mission is to assist those locally, throughout our Metropolis, and on a National level, who are encountering crisis or in a position that is less fortunate. The continuation of such a ministry is essential to achieving our goal. This need was pronounced during the COVID pandemic and we remain vigilant in helping now more than ever in touching hearts…. and changing lives.

In response to the devastating fires in the Attica region in 2024, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America announced the launch of the Greek Fire Relief Fund to aid the affected communities. The Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos Society contributed $5,000 toward this effort.

We eagerly anticipate our 2025 Spiritual Fall Conference, where Philoptochos sisters from across our Metropolis will come together to gather, reflect, and renew our shared commitment to the mission of Philoptochos.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve this beloved Metropolis of San Francisco. I, and the thousands of women represented through our Philoptochos Chapters are thankful for your support and love, and most of all, your prayers as we continue our good works in Christ.

"In the spirit of unwavering commitment and boundless compassion, may the good works of Philoptochos continue to illuminate the path of service, embodying the profound truth in giving, we receive, and in serving others through faith, hope and love."

With Love in Christ,

Jeannie Ranglas, President
Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos

St. Nicholas
RANCH AND RETREAT CENTER

2024 Ministry Report

Submitted by Stefan Metrakos
stefan@stnicholasranch.org

Overview

St. Nicholas Ranch experienced many changes and challenges in 2024, but several new developments have set us up for a brighter future. We navigated the immense loss of our previous Executive Director and a change in leadership during a very busy year. 2024 saw us make financial progress, put on our first self-programmed event in years, and implement new systems. Our board approved a new staffing plan and we set the groundwork for a Strategic Planning effort to be developed and revealed in H1-2025.

Finances

For the first time, we were able to provide a transparent accounting of the Ranch's current finances, as well as develop a 2025 budget which was one of the most accurate in our history. We uploaded hundreds of historical financial documents, providing our bookkeeper with a full financial view from the past several years.

Operationally, we implemented a new system for uploading accurate and timely financial reporting which has dramatically improved our (and our bookkeeper's) ability to provide real-time transparency to our Board.

Staffing

We navigated several staffing changes by bringing on new team members, and giving responsibility to our senior staff. By establishing a new staffing structure and more formal protocols among our hospitality staff (who execute cooking and interior cleaning duties), we operate more streamlined than ever. We also hired a part-time Office Assistant who has greatly improved our administrative capabilities.

2024 Fundraising Campaign

Our annual year-end fundraising campaign generated ~$44k in donations. We are grateful for the results and diligent efforts to execute this campaign, but have taken the performance and learnings to inform a year-round effort in the future.

Facilities Improvements

The Philoptochos Lodge received new siding and major plumbing work which were both very needed. We look forward to re-siding the Apostle Lodge as possible in the near future. Repairs from flood damage were completed at the Heritage Center.

Operational and Commercial Improvements

We prioritized improved service through operational changes and profitability in 2024. An online booking system, introduced last year, has transformed the guest experience. Those wishing to book a stay or small retreat can now instantly reserve rooms online. This system also allows for transparency and cross-functional communication as all staff understand our reservation schedule in real time.

Our pricing and contracting approach have improved to match current costs and higher professional standards. Our pricing, though still below market rate, has increased for the first time since 2019.

We identified and engaged a food delivery vendor to fulfill our grocery and housekeeping supply needs for a lower cost, without sending staff on repeated, manual shopping trips. This has saved us money, reduced liability, and given us back countless headcount hours.

Our phone system architecture was re-done to ensure that callers receive more information before speaking with a staff member and get in touch with the appropriate party more quickly than ever.

We have also prioritized continued maintenance to encourage proactivity and avoid further pile-up of deferred maintenance.

Strategic Plan

A Strategic Plan outlining the mission, goals, and healthy future of St. Nicholas Ranch will be presented at this year's Clergy Laity Assembly. This will provide more details about our current status and bright future.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support of this beloved ministry.

With Hope in the Risen Christ,

Stefan Metrakos
Executive Director

Ministry Update

Metropolis of San Francisco Clergy-Laity Assembly
March 5-6, 2025

Ministry: Metropolis of San Francisco Young Adult League (YAL) Conference Ministry
Leader: Eva-Marie Kailas & Joseph Dumont, 2025 YAL Conference Co-Chairs
E-mail: evamariek@sfyalconference.org , josephd@sfyalconference.org
Cell: Eva-Marie Kailas: 858-353-5737 Joseph Dumont: 206-992-0467

Main Activities / Events Completed in 2024

2024 National YAL Conference – July 3-7, San Diego, CA

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries (Y2AM) is overjoyed to announce the triumphant conclusion of the 2024 National Young Adult League (YAL) Conference, held July 3-7, 2024 at The Westin Gaslamp Quarter in beautiful San Diego, California. With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America and the gracious hosting by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos and the Metropolis of San Francisco, the Conference successfully united young adults from across the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America under the inspiring theme "***UNIFY***."

The 2024 YAL Conference coincided with the 47th Biennial Clergy Laity Congress and National Philoptochos Biennial Convention, embraced the theme "***In Christ, We Are One" (Romans 12:4-5)***. The event aimed to fortify young adults' connections with the Church and with each other as unified members of the Body of Christ through worship, witness, fellowship, and service. Over 300 + attendees from 38 states across the U.S. and Canada gathered in San Diego for a truly memorable weekend.

In addition to the attendance of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, the Conference was blessed with the presence of several hierarchs, including His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh, His Grace Bishop Ioannis of Phocaea, His Grace Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos, and His Grace Bishop Nektarios of Diokleia.

Key partnerships with Leadership 100, the National Philoptochos Society, and Hellenic College Holy Cross School of Theology were vital to the Conference's impact and overall success. Along with the generous financial support of Leadership 100, the Conference was also supported by several private donors whose generosity ensured a transformative experience for all attendees and laid a strong foundation for future National YAL initiatives as an essential ministry of the Archdiocese. In addition, the Conference was honored to have several organizations present as Ministry Pavilion sponsors, including Premium Sponsors Hellenic College Holy Cross and the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation, as well as the National Y2AM Department, Ionian Village, and Orthodox Christian Network (OCN).

George T. Anagnostopoulos, appointed by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros as the 2024 National YAL Conference Chair, led a dynamic Planning Committee comprised of Vice Chairs Joseph Dumont and Eva-Marie Kailas, and phenomenal group of young adult representatives from the various Metropolises of the Archdiocese: Aaron Papagalos, Caroline Basdakis, Cassiani Kateyiannis, Christine Scolinos, Christos Schwarz, Elena Guillen, George G. Papadeas, Grace Paris, Jenna Cardaras, Julia Pappas, Past Conference Chair Kostas Ouranitsas, Kostas Prevas, Lenie Tsakonas, Lucas Postolos, Stephania Veziris, and Yianna Papadeas.

Archbishop Elpidophoros enthusiastically stated that: ***"In the realm of this year's YAL conference, the exceptional leadership of the chairman, George Anagnostopoulos, and the two co-chairs, Eva-Marie Kailas, and Joseph Dumont, has been nothing short of transformative. Their tireless dedication, strategic vision, and unwavering commitment to engaging their peers in our Faith have set the stage for a conference that not only met but exceeded all expectations. Through their collaborative efforts and innovative planning, they created an environment that fostered vibrant discussions, meaningful connections, a renewed commitment to our Orthodox Faith, and true sense of purpose among all the young adults who attended. Their exemplary service is a testament to what can be achieved when young leaders who are guided by a genuine passion for community and growth are given the space to thrive and shine. The future of the Young Adult movement throughout our Sacred Archdiocese is certainly brighter because of faithful individuals like George, Eva-Marie, and Joseph, I extend to them my paternal gratitude and blessing!"***

Under the guidance of the National Chancellor and Ministry Spiritual Advisor His Grace Bishop Nektarios of Diokleia, Archdiocese Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries (Y2AM) Eva Konstantakos, and Conference Advisors Archon Hon. Steven and Stacia Counelis, the Conference offered numerous opportunities for attendees to forge lasting and meaningful connections.

The Archbishop noted that ***"There is so much that one can say about Archon Steven and Stacia Counelis, they and their beautiful family are products of the YAL movement, and it is largely through them that I have come to understand the importance of making this ministry a priority for our Archdiocese once again. In their persons we see the embodiment of servant leadership, a model for others to follow. Their contributions to YAL and the Archdiocese at large cannot be overstated. Through their efforts, we are reminded of the power of dedicated, compassionate service and the profound impact it can have on the lives of others. Their passion and love for this ministry are inspiring, making them guiding lights for the young adults who have assumed leadership positions in YAL."***

Announced at this year's National YAL Conference was the establishment of the newly-formed National YAL Board. This Board, comprised of two young adults appointed by their respective Metropolis Hierarchs, will serve for a two-year term to assist the National Y2AM Department with improving communication and support amongst existing Metropolis YAL Ministry efforts, the planning an execution of the National YAL Conference every two years, and the creation of new National YAL initiatives. This Board will be under the guidance of the National Y2AM Director, Eva Konstantakos.

Archbishop Elpidophoros commented that ***"Since taking on the directorship of the National Youth and Young Adult Office, Eva has worked tirelessly to expand the YAL ministry. I offer her my deepest gratitude, paternal blessing, and ongoing support. Under her leadership, and that of the newly established National YAL Board, composed of members from throughout our Sacred Archdiocese, this ministry is on an upward trajectory to reach new horizons for the glory of God and His Holy Church!"***

Key elements included:

- Thematic sessions aligned with the Clergy-Laity Congress theme: *"In Christ, We Are One*"
- Keynote address by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros
- Convo Sessions on topics such as "*The Power of Obedience*", "*How Christ Heals and Calls Us Back After Falling Away*", "*Dating for the Kingdom*", "*Living in the Moment: How we can be in Communion with Christ everyday*", "*Fasting: Worthless or Life Changing*?", and "*Windows to Paradise: Living a Life with the Saints*"
- Convo Sessions were led by Fr. Nicholas Metrakos, Fr. Patrick O'Rourke, Fr. Photios Dumont, Fr. Vasileios Flegas, Fr. Theodore Dorrance, featuring a panel discussion moderated by George Papageorge with Fr. Tom & Presv. Pat Tsagalakis, Fr. Athanasios & Presv. Nicole Minetos, and George & Chloe Miller
- A large-scale Diakonia project in partnership with the National Philoptochos Society assembling 1,500 care packages benefitting *Your Safe Place and San Diego Rescue Mission*.
- Enjoyed the San Diego Big Bay Boom July 4th Fireworks show, an exciting YAL Jungle-themed Dinner Cruise, and a joyful "Christmas in July" themed Grand Banquet and Glendi. The conference concluded with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy celebrated by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos and other hierarchs attending the Conference.

National YAL Board Appointments

With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, the National Youth and Young Adult Ministries (Y2AM) Department of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOA) announced the establishment of a National Young Adult League (YAL) Board at the 47th Biennial Clergy Laity Congress and the 2024 National YAL Conference, this essential Board has been formed to address and assist with the rapid growth of young adult ministries across the Archdiocese.

The newly-established Board consists of 19 members, including two representatives from each District/Metropolis appointed by their respective Hierarch, as well as the Past National YAL Conference Chair. This Board will serve a two-year term and will work under the guidance of National Y2AM Director, Eva Konstantakos, along with the support of the His Grace Bishop Nektarios of Diokleia (National Chancellor), and Mrs. Stacia Counelis (Archdiocesan Council Youth Committee Chair).

The main objectives of the Board include:

1. **Improving and increasing communication** and collaboration among existing local and regional YAL ministries and initiatives.
2. **Developing and providing support** for new and emerging parish and regional young adult ministries.
3. **Planning and executing a National YAL Conference** every two years.
4. **Creating new and exciting national initiatives** that engage young adults more deeply in their faith and community.

Joseph Dumont and Eva-Marie Kailas were appointed by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos as the Metropolis of San Francisco YAL Representatives to the National YAL Board for a two-year term. George Anagnostopoulos serves as Past Conference Chairman to the National YAL Board.

YAL In Your Backyard (YALIYB):

The year-round grassroots initiative continued to thrive with local events across the Metropolis including:

- Social outings like the Greek Independence Day Bonfire.
- Liturgical gatherings during major feast days.
- Service projects partnering with FOCUS to assemble care packages to serve different communities in need.

Most notably, YALIYB is now being integrated into the National YAL Board's strategic ministry efforts—expanding its impact throughout the Archdiocese.

Key Updates for 2025:

Metropolis of San Francisco 2025 YAL Conference will be held Labor Day Weekend: August 28 – September 1, 2025. The theme of the Conference is "***RENEW***!" based on Revelation 21:5: *"Behold, I make all things new."*
Convo Sessions will be uniquely designed around life stages - college and young professional, helping young adults explore faith, vocation, and purpose specific to where they are on their journey. Our Diakonia effort will continue in partnership with the Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos Society. We are honored to have received support from ***Leadership 100*** for the upcoming conference.

Registration for the Metropolis of San Francisco YAL Conference is set to launch in early June 2025. Follow **@yalconference** on Facebook and Instagram.

Additional Comments:
The Metropolis of San Francisco YAL Conference has grown into one of the largest young adult events in our Archdiocese over the past few years. Want to support the Conference ministry? Your generous gift supports the current young adult leaders of the church, who will also serve as the future leaders, clergy, and support system of our beloved church. Scan the Paypal link here to give a gift today!

Invitation to the Assembly:

We invite all Assembly participants to join us over Labor Day Weekend 2025 and take part in the Ministry Pavilion for meaningful peer-to-peer connection and Christian witness. Help us empower young Orthodox Christians to **RENEW** their lives in Christ, grounded in the four foundational pillars of YAL Ministry: **Worship, Witness, Fellowship, and Service**.

Ministry Pavilion Opportunities:

The Ministry Pavilion offers a unique opportunity for ministries, organizations, and parishes to engage directly with young adult attendees throughout the YAL Conference weekend. Options are available as part of our sponsorship packages, and include the following benefits:

- Informational Table (6 ft), with priority placement for premium sponsors.
- Brochure/Info Card inclusion in registration bags
- Digital Support:
    - Shared or dedicated power access for digital displays
    - Dedicated Instagram story feature (for premium sponsors)
- Branding Opportunities:
    - Logo placement in the YAL Conference banquet program
    - Banner display space (up to 3 banners for premium tiers)
    - Promotional slide inclusion in digital materials

Participation in the Ministry Pavilion is available to sponsors starting at the $500+ level and expands into our Premium Sponsorship level starting at the $2,500+ level.







HOSTED BY THE METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO

@YALCONFERENCE

For Young Adults, By Young Adults!

LABOR DAY WEEKEND

SAVE THE DATES!

AUGUST 28 – SEPTEMBER 1, 2025

NATIONAL YAL CONFERENCE REWIND

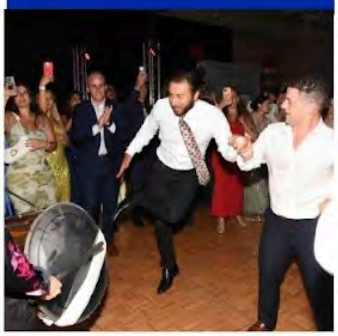
HOSTED BY THE METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO

2024

















Youth & Young Adult OFFICE

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES

Clergy Laity Report 2024-2025



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A MESSAGE FROM THE YOUTH OFFICE

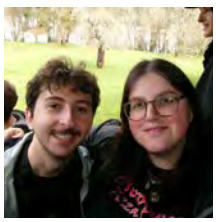
As we reflect on this past year of Youth & Young Adult Ministry, we're filled with deep gratitude for the many moments of growth, joy, and connection across our Metropolis. From our Metropolis Summer Camp to meaningful retreats, family gatherings, and youth safety initiatives, it's been a year of building momentum and planting seeds for the future.

We've seen firsthand the impact that intentional ministry can have on young people and their families, and we're constantly inspired by the dedication of our clergy, lay leaders, and volunteers who make this work possible. While there are still challenges ahead, we're energized by the progress we've made and the relationships we've strengthened.

This report shares more than just numbers and events, it tells the story of a faithful community working together to nurture and inspire the next generation. Through the many ministries of the Youth Office, young people encounter Christ in meaningful ways, while young adults are empowered to use their gifts in service, growing as leaders and role models within the Orthodox Christian Church. We're excited to continue building this ministry with you in the year ahead!

Metropolis Ministry	Regional Ministry	Parish Ministry	Youth Survey









Metropolis Youth Ministry

METROPOLIS ORATORICAL FESTIVAL 2024





The 2024 Metropolis St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival took place the weekend of May 11–12, 2024, at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Belmont, CA. The weekend was filled with enriching opportunities to grow in our faith, build community, and celebrate the voices of our young Orthodox faithful.

The Metropolis Finalists in each category were:

JUNIOR CATEGORY:

1st Place: Nektarios Delis, Holy Cross, Belmont, CA

2nd Place: Maria Paraskevopoulos, St. Spyridon, San Diego, CA

3rd Place: Stephen Young, St. Lawrence, Felton, CA

SENIOR CATEGORY:

1st Place: Johnny Cumbelich, Ascension, Oakland, CA

2nd Place: Anna Virsik, Holy Cross, Belmont, CA

3rd Place: Magnolia Rush, St. John the Baptist, Beaverton, OR

"The Oratorical Festival weekend was incredible. Not only was it inspiring to hear the speeches, but the pilgrimage to the St. John Maximovich sites gave the weekend a deeper spiritual meaning. It was a perfect mix of learning, faith, and fun!"
— **Metropolis Festival Parent**

METROPOLIS SUMMER CAMP 2024





Post-COVID Camp Seasons: 2022 & 2023

After two summers without in-person programming due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, we relaunched the Metropolis Summer Camp in 2022. That season brought several challenges, including navigating COVID protocols, addressing deferred facility maintenance, and reestablishing our camp community after two years away.

In 2023, we faced new hurdles—most notably staffing shortages and ongoing facility and storage limitations. Despite these issues, both summers helped us lay the groundwork for long-term growth and improvement.

Summer Camp 2024

Summer 2024 marked a real turning point for both the camp program and our facilities. While a few challenges remained, the overall experience was incredibly positive—especially in terms of our camp staff and our growing partnership with the Ranch team.

To support the continued success of the program and ensure long-term sustainability, we see a vital next step in developing a paid Camp Leadership Team Internship Program. This initiative will empower young adults to take on more leadership and operational responsibilities throughout the year.

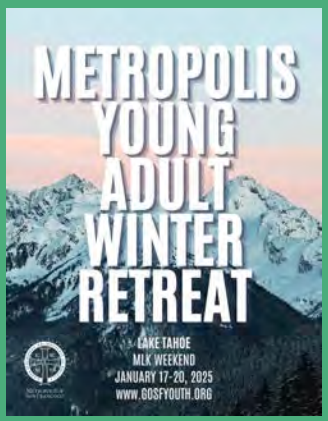
Metropolis Young Adult Retreats



METROPOLIS YOUNG ADULT FALL RETREAT

OCTOBER 4-6, 2024 AT ST. NICHOLAS RANCH

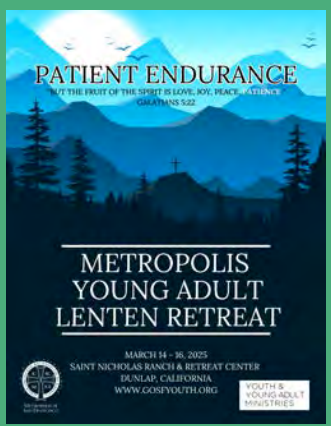
This year's Young Adult Fall Retreat featured a new "Adventure Day" with a stunning hike in Kings Canyon National Park, offering participants a chance to connect with God's creation before diving into a weekend of spiritual growth. Centered on the theme "The Power of Forgiveness," the retreat included thoughtful discussions led by guest speaker Fr. Nebojsa Pantic, meaningful prayer services, and time spent in service at the Monastery of the Theotokos the Life-Giving Spring. The weekend wrapped up with Great Vespers, a lakeside campfire and talent show, and Divine Liturgy on Sunday, leaving participants inspired, renewed, and united in faith.



METROPOLIS YOUNG ADULT WINTER RETREAT 2025

JANUARY 17 - 20, 2025 AT GALILEE IN LAKE TAHOE, NV

The 2025 Metropolis Young Adult Winter Retreat brought together 50 young adults—the largest group since 2019—at Galilee Episcopal Camp & Retreat Center in Lake Tahoe, NV. Centered on the theme *"Be Still and Know: Listening for God's Still Small Voice,"* the weekend featured meaningful discussions, beautiful worship services led by Rev. James Kumarelas and Rev. Gabriel Cupsa, and a prayerful atmosphere enriched by fellowship. Highlights included the Blessing of the Waters, Paraklesis, the Akathist of Thanksgiving, and Divine Liturgy, along with hiking, sledding, and a lakeside campfire with s'mores.



METROPOLIS YOUNG ADULT LENTEN RETREAT 2025

MARCH 14-16, 2025 AT ST. NICHOLAS RANCH

Approximately 40 young adults gathered for the 2025 Lenten Retreat at Saint Nicholas Ranch for a weekend of prayer, service, and fellowship. Guest speaker Fr. Demetrios Swanson led engaging discussions on the retreat theme, complemented by services including the Salutations to the Theotokos, Orthros, and Divine Liturgy. Participants also visited the Monastery of the Theotokos the Life-Giving Spring, where they toured the grounds, assisted with a service project, and joined in Great Vespers. The weekend featured meaningful reflection, joyful connection, and creative fellowship, including an Open Mic night, games, and time in nature.

Metropolis Family Winter Camp









METROPOLIS FAMILY WINTER CAMP 2024

DECEMBER 27-30, 2024 AT ST. NICHOLAS RANCH

This past year, we hosted the second annual Metropolis Family Winter Camp at our beloved Saint Nicholas Ranch & Retreat Center. It was a joyful and meaningful opportunity for families to come together, grow in faith, and be ministered to as a family unit—taking home not just memories, but also prayers, laughter, and spiritual nourishment to cherish throughout the year.

The retreat began with family introductions and a series of bonding activities to set a warm and welcoming tone for the weekend.

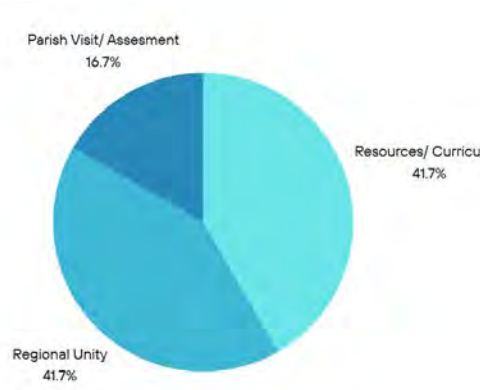
On Saturday morning, families hiked along the Prayer Trail for the Akathist of Thanksgiving: "Glory to God for All Things," followed by a delicious breakfast. The group then headed into Kings Canyon National Park for a fun-filled time of snow play and a snowman-building contest. The rest of the afternoon was open for relaxed family time, followed by dinner and a cozy campfire and talent show in the Cretan Plaza, complete with s'mores.

Sunday began with Divine Liturgy at the Monastery, followed by a family arts and crafts session, where participants created Christmas ornaments together. That evening included a beautiful Family Paraklesis Service in the Heritage Center, followed by Christmas sing-alongs led by Doc and Ruth Duterte, potholder making, and the awarding of our Snowman Contest winners.

On our final day, families gathered for a morning prayer service in the Heritage Center, followed by breakfast and one last visit to the Monastery to assist with a work project—raking leaves in the fruit orchard. After lunch, we came together one last time to share goodbyes and express hopes of reuniting again during this special time of year.

"It was so special to attend a retreat where our whole family could grow together. From snow play to Paraklesis to just being together by the fire, it brought us closer in our faith and in our bond as a family. We can't wait to come back!"
— **Family Winter Camp Parent**

What are our needs?



Clergy across the Metropolis were asked what they would find helpful in supporting their parish youth ministries. Below are the summarized answers. Most responded with resources/ curriculum as a guide, as well as regional events and gatherings to encourage more unity amongst parishes. Others would like support in building their parish ministries.

Regional Youth Ministry





SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

In an effort to provide more regional opportunities for our youth and young adults, three events in Southern California took place for all parishes in the region this year.

SoCal Beach Day (LA) GOYAns from St. Katherine, St. Paul and St. George attended day at Redondo Beach!

SoCal Beach Day (San Diego) GOYAns from St. Spyridon, St. Constantine & Helen & St. Gregory attended

GOYA Lenten Retreat

Fr. Chris Retelas, Fr. Tom Felactu and Fr. Matthew Jouthas along with Anna Teodosiadis, Stacia Counelis and SoCal GOYA organized a Lenten Retreat. 38 GOYAns from 7 different parishes attended a memorable weekend.

Enjoyed in the mountains of San Bernadino, GOYAns from all over southern California began with an Akathist together at St. John the Baptism in Anaheim and caravaned up to the retreat center together. It was a full weekend of outdoor activities, services, arts & crafts and time to meet one another all centered on the topic of "Take Up Your Cross".

Young Adult Leadership

A GOYA Retreat allows for youth to meet one another from different parishes while also allowing an opportunity for Young Adult involvement and leadership. This retreat also brought 7 Young Adult Counselors from 5 different parishes an opportunity to serve their community and the youth.



PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Clergy in the PNW had voiced they wanted regional unity and family retreats. After meeting with the Clergy from the PNW, it was decided to install a Youth Council. Each participating parish chose 2-3 high schoolers from their parish to be involved in a leadership council.



Pacific Northwest Youth Council 2024-2025

9 members were chosen to represent participating parishes. Every month the Council met to discuss organizing and leading a Lenten Retreat. This was all done under the guidance and support of Fr. Paul Paris, Fr. Spyridon Rice and Anna Teodosiadis.



St. Demetrios, Seattle- Stephen Kassab, Rena Veleoras, Georgia Veleoras

Holy Apostles, Shoreline- Lucia Bury, Anthony Sitaris

Assumption, Seattle- Maximos Mehas

St. John, Beaverton- Magnolia Rush, Kaleia Rush

Holy Trinity, Portland- Iliana Geranios

Pacific Northwest Lenten Retreat

The Pacific Northwest hosted their first High School Lenten Retreat in over ten years. Guided by the new PNW Youth Council, Fr. Spyridon Rice and Fr. Paul Paris, the Lenten Retreat was home to 40 high schoolers at All Saints Camp in Raft Island, WA. High Schoolers from 7 parishes across the Northwest attended. Fr. Tom Tsagalakis led a fruitful discussion about connection – the 30 cm journey between our heart and our brain, and how important it is we connect with others. The Pacific Northwest Youth Council, made up of high schoolers from parishes across the PNW led activities like Orthodox Family Feud and Jeopardy and all participated in All Saints Camp Clean up day as a service project.



Young Adult Leadership

This retreat brought 10 Young Adult Counselors and Nurse from 4 different parishes in the Pacific Northwest an opportunity to serve their community and the youth. Their commitment, service and love was admirable and contagious.



BAY AREA





Bay Area GOYA Lock In

Resurrection in Castro Valley and Ascension in Oakland worked together to host a GOYA Lock In. GOYAns from the Bay area attended an evening of service, activiites and discussion.

Bay Area Lenten Retreat

Holy Cross in Belmont hosted another year of the Bay Area GOYA Lenten Retreat. Under the direction and leadership of Fr. Manoli Aspiotis, this retreat took place at the Marin Headlands. Middle schoolers and high schoolers from all over the Bay Area attended a beautiful weekend with the topic "Trust in the Lord", as the center. With a special visit from His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos, GOYAns enjoyed services, discussions, great food, and great views of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Orthodox Youth Ministry Retreat

Orthodox Youth Ministry, a Pan- Orthodox Ministry under the Assembly of Bishops, hosted an Inter-generational retreat for all Orthodox parishes in the Bay Area. Hosted by Resurrection in Castro Valley, many attended a fruitful Saturday of service and discussion. What is our ministry? Who are we in the context of the larger Church?

Parish Ministry

Who are our Youth Workers?

25 Parishes have identified dedicated youth workers to the Metropolis. They are a mix of volunteers, assigned clergy, and paid youth workers.



Youth Worker & Parish Support

Many Parishes have reached out hoping to receive support from the Metropolis Youth Office to strengthen their parish youth and young adult ministries.

This has resulted in:

- One on one Zoom calls to discuss the youth ministry situation at the parish and next steps
- Youth Worker Zoom Calls
- Parish Visits
- Check ins
- Suggestion of what resources to use
- Website Updates

Website Updates

Take a look at the new Parish Youth Ministry tab on www.gosfyouth.org!

Templates on framework for your ministry, an event checklist, different calendar options, a Youth Ministry Registration form template and more are all provided.



Youth Worker Meetings

Learning from each other

Youth workers from each parish are invited to our monthly meetings. Meetings have grown and are meant to build community amongst parish youth workers, discuss challenges and solutions that youth workers encounter as well as provide updates and opportunities from the region and the Metropolis that parishes can receive from. Youth workers have really enjoyed joining the calls and share that it has been really helpful! The topics below have been some that have been already discussed.

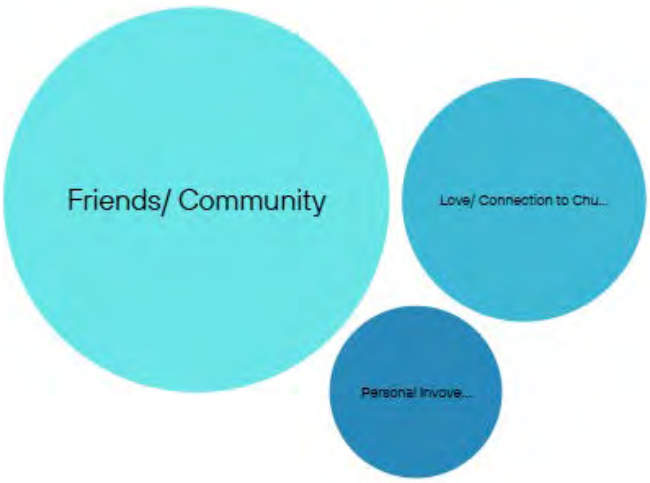
Communication		Lent and Holy Week Curriculum		Jr. and Sr. GOYA? Or just GOYA? How do you decide?		Parent Involvement & Volunteers

Highlight: Guest speakers

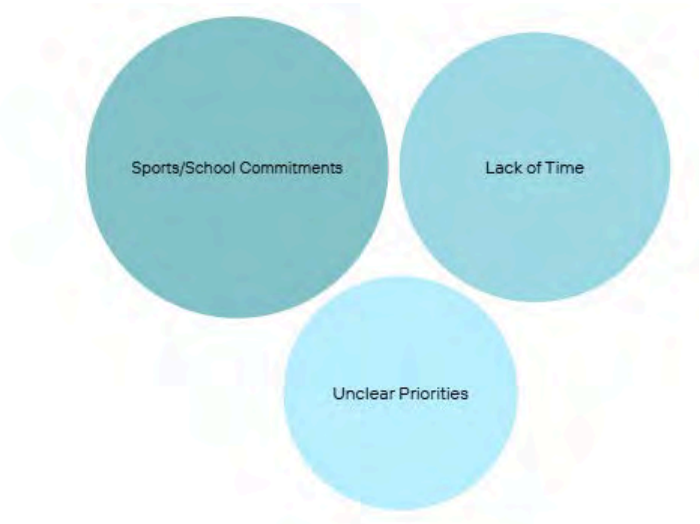
Youth Director Julie Dennis (St. Spyridon, San Diego) and Youth Director Presvytera Maria Burkhard (St. George, Fresno) spoke on a Youth Worker call about how they organize their GOYAns, their purpose behind decisions, what they spend their time doing and what has come of it!

What are our youth saying?

A survey was taken at FDF during Middle School and High School Workshops to understand the youth's perspective of their engagement in their Church. 26 6th-12th graders chose to answer the survey. Below are a few highlights with some key takeaways to the survey.



What Youth Love about the Church



Biggest Hurdles of Involvement

100 % of participants responded *they have someone at their parish they trust to talk to about faith, life, and their relationship with Christ.*

Key Takeaways:

1. Youth Highly Value Community – Friendship and relationships play a major role in what young people love about church.

2. Time Conflicts Are a Major Hurdle – School and sports create barriers to greater involvement, so flexible scheduling may help.

3. Strong Trust in Parish Leaders – Every respondent reported having someone they trust at their parish, a positive sign for spiritual mentorship.

Connecting with other Ministries

The Youth & Young Adult Office has made efforts to keep up to date with other ministries throughout the Archdiocese.

Orthodox Youth Ministries hosts Pan- Orthodox intergenerational retreats across the country. Our Metropolis has hosted and supported 3 retreats so far and hoping to host more in more regions.

Assumption, Seattle, WA

Resurrection, Castro Valley, CA

Assumption, Scottsdale AZ

Hellenic College Holy Cross, our beloved Orthodox School of Theology has many opportunities for our youth and young adults. Below is where the Metropolis has worked with HCHC to present their opportunities to our youth this past year.

Living Orthodox Young Adult Retreat, Phoenix AZ

Metropolis of SF Summer Camp, St. Nicholas Ranch

Ascension Summer Camp ,Oakland

Philoptochos Light the Path Luncheon

Young Adult Winter Retreat, Lake Tahoe, NV

Family Winter Camp, St. Nicholas Ranch





The Metropolis Youth & Young Adult Office is up to date with what the Archdiocese Youth Office has to offer and is in communication with Archdiocese Youth Director, Eva Konstantakos.

Effective Christian Ministry, courses to guide and encourage parishes to work toward formational youth ministry is a program through the Archdiocese that we also support and guide appropriate parishes to consider.

Project Mexico and St. Innocent Orphanage in Tijuana, Mexico provides a summer homebuilding program for Orthodox parishes and an Orthodox parish and home for orphans.

Fr. Demetrios Swanson, the presiding priest at St. Innocent was the Guest Speaker at our Lenten Young Adult Retreat. He also brought a few missionaries to the retreat to connect with our Metropolis.

We have also connected with the FORCE program, a scholarship program for those attending Project Mexico to present the opportunities the Metropolis has to offer in youth ministry and service.

Office of Youth Safety

Our primary goal for Youth Safety in 2024 was to ensure that all youth workers, parish council members, and parish employees were fully compliant by September 2024, at the start of the new ministry year. This required individuals to renew early to meet the deadline. Another major objective was for all California parishes to complete the Live Scan background checks, in accordance with state requirements.

While the Youth Safety Platform may indicate a parish is 100% compliant—for example, showing 20 out of 20 people are current—it does not account for individuals who have not yet registered in the system. Therefore, we still need to follow up with each parish individually to confirm that every altar server, sports coach, Sunday School teacher, Greek School teacher, youth event volunteer, driver, etc. is registered and fully compliant.

Looking ahead, an ongoing goal for the coming year is to continue offering regular trainings and open office hours for PYSAs (Parish Youth Safety Administrators). As this role often changes annually or biannually at the parish level, it's essential to equip PYSAs with the tools and confidence to navigate the system efficiently.

As of April 15, 2025, we currently have 1,913 out of 2,933 individuals—approximately 65%—fully registered, trained, and screened across our Metropolis. Please note: this does not include compliance data related to the California Live Scan fingerprinting requirement.



