Notes From The Top

Lent is quickly approaching and, believe me, I know how busy we all get right around now. But please, be sure to check out all the information in this edition of the “Choir Loft”. There is so much going on and so many opportunities for our choirs and our youth. Please be sure to check out the information on the Michael B. Petrovich Scholarship, St. John Chrysostom Oratorical and Arts Festival which includes vocal solo for the second year under the auspices of our Federation under the Metropolis Festival Committee, the upcoming Youth Conference and Lenten event, the progress on our Directors Training Manual, all the social media platforms we now offer, Flash Choirs, upcoming area rehearsals for the 2020 conference, ordering music for the conference, the conference packet and all the great entertainment South Bend has put together for our enjoyment. Be sure to check out the workshops and the bios of our workshop presenters for the conference….just super! You should have all received our annual stewardship request. I do want to make something very clear. We represent and work for ALL of you, whether you support our programs and efforts with your financial gifts or not. You are all members of our Federation and we represent and work for you all. We certainly appreciate any financial support our choirs and church musicians offer us. It can be $1 or $1000 (don’t I wish). But your support means SO much to us. So please, give what you can and know we are truly grateful for your support! Remember, first of all, our conference dates have changed to the last weekend in September, specifically, this year, Sept 25-27 (hospitality night on Thursday the 24th) As you know, we honor years of service for our dedicated choir members each year at the conference. By moving our conference to the weekend BEFORE National Church Musicians Sunday, we can recognize our members and, in turn, they can be recognized in their home parishes the following weekend on National Church Musicians Sunday. This has been something requested by many of our members and is finally coming to fruition. Continued on Page 2
Back to the conference. I am so excited, not because I have been given the great honor of directing the choir this year, but for the quality of the conference taking form. As you know by now, we are singing the Gallos Opus 2 Liturgy, primarily in English. This is music that is of moderate difficulty and can easily be introduced into your liturgical music repertoire. The INCORPORABLE Rose De Santo is accompanying us! The quality of the workshops is TOP NOTCH. Constantina Tsolainou, of Dallas, Texas, will be offering the workshop: “Sing Beautifully….Even in English”. This is a timely and practical workshop as our choirs sing more and more English in our liturgies. The New Music workshop is being offered by Nicholas Bodle and will be presenting his arrangement of the liturgy. Those of you that attended last year’s conference might remember the beautiful Trisagion we presented at the New Music Workshop at St. Basil. Many of you wanted to hear more so we are offering more. Our evenings will be packed with first rate entertainment. The internationally renowned Notre Dame Glee Club will be in concert Friday night. We will also be entertained and amazed by the magic and slight of hand of Kevin Wilson. Get your dancing shoes out because on Saturday we will be singing and dancing to the tunes of internationally renowned MOTOWN EXPRESS. I understand there will be a prime rib dinner waiting for us that night, too! And yet, our hosts have kept the registration fees the same as last year with the same senior and student discounts. Putting on an event of such magnitude is very expensive and we will need your help in supporting the event through your generous ads. Send your best wishes using the ad book form included in the conference packet.

Oh, in case you don’t know, South Bend, IN is not on another planet! Its only 1 ½ hours east of Chicago and has an airport, train and major highway access. So don’t let the notion of the conference being in “INDIANA” keep you from coming to what may be one of our finest ever conferences. I must also tell you what a beautiful facility and church St. Andrew’s is. The sanctuary is beautiful and filled with gorgeous iconography. You will not have to navigate any stairs! The church is on one level and the huge break area is right outside of the sanctuary. The hall is in the lower level but accessible via a gently sloping walkway from the outdoors.

Lastly, we will have a few items of business to discuss and vote upon at the General Assembly so start thinking about your choir delegate representatives. But most importantly, PLEASE CONSIDER HOSTING OUR 2021 CONFERENCE!!!!! We have simplified the hosting process and the board is more than willing to help you plan and execute the perfect conference. Please let me know if you are interested and we can discuss in detail.

I wish you all a peaceful, prayerful and spiritual Lenten journey and a glorious Easter!

I remain in His service

Nicholas Chimitris
President

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Next Area Rehearsal is Wednesday, March 18th at Holy Apostles Church in Westchester

Hope to see all you locals there...
The Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians - Metropolis of Chicago

Dear Choir Directors and Parishioners:

The Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians - Metropolis of Chicago is pleased to offer again this year the Michael B. Petrovich Memorial Scholarship. Among his many and varied accomplishments, Dr. Petrovich (1922-1989) served as a distinguished history professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and long-time choir director at Assumption Greek Orthodox Church of Madison, Wisconsin. To this day, many of our Orthodox choirs continue to sing the beautiful liturgical music he composed and graciously left as part of his legacy.

The Scholarship will be awarded to one parishioner of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago who is seeking a Bachelor of Arts degree or higher in Music Theory, Music Composition, Voice, Choral Music, Byzantine Chant, Choral Conducting, Piano, Organ, Music Education, or other related field of study deemed appropriate by the scholarship committee. The parishioner must be a graduating high school senior or currently-enrolled college student.

The Scholarship is made possible through the Michael B. Petrovich Memorial Scholarship Fund, which is administered by the Federation and recognizes the importance of educating and training its church musicians. It is expected that the Scholarship recipient will use this training, in part, in service to the Greek Orthodox Church and its ministries.

Included with this letter are the Guidelines and the Application for the Scholarship, along with a flyer to display at your parish. It is our hope that you will pass this information along to those who might be interested. The Scholarship recipient will receive a one-time award in the amount of $500.

The deadline for submitting the Application is April 1, 2020. The Scholarship award recipient will be notified on June 1, 2020.

Thank you for your assistance, and please do not hesitate to contact Audrey Polite ((219) 742-7679/lencovello@sbcglobal.net) if you should have any questions after reviewing the enclosed materials.

Sincerely,

Nick Chimitris, President
Federation Board of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians - Metropolis of Chicago
Do you know a high school senior or college student from our Metropolis who plans to study Music Theory, Music Composition, Voice, Choral Music, Byzantine Chant, Choral Conducting, Piano, Organ, Music Education, or another related field?

If so, help us spread the word that The Chicago Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians is pleased to offer the Michael B. Petrovich Memorial Scholarship again this year. The Scholarship Application and Guidelines are available @chicago.churchmusic.goarch.org/19/21. The deadline for submitting the Application is April 1, 2020.

The Scholarship recipient will receive a one-time award in the amount of $500.

The Scholarship is made possible through the Michael B. Petrovich Memorial Scholarship Fund, which is administered by the Federation and recognizes the importance of educating and training its church musicians. It is expected that the Scholarship recipient will use this training, in part, in service to the Greek Orthodox Church and its ministries.

Contact Audrey Polite @(219) 742-7679 for additional information.
• There will be one $500 Michael B. Petrovich Memorial Scholarship (the “Scholarship”) awarded each calendar year.
• The Scholarship will be awarded to one applicant parishioner of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago.
• The applicant, or at least one parent of the applicant, must be a member in good standing of a parish of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago.
• The applicant must be seeking a Bachelor of Arts degree or higher in Music Theory, Music Composition, Voice, Choral Music, Byzantine Chant, Choral Conducting, Piano, Organ, Music Education, or other related field of study deemed appropriate by the Scholarship Committee and must either be a graduating high school senior or a currently-enrolled college student.
• The Scholarship Committee will consist of 5 individuals duly appointed by the President of the Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians – Metropolis of Chicago Board (the “Federation Board”). At least 3 of the 5 individuals must be members of the Federation Board, while the remaining individuals, if any, may be such other individuals as the President of the Federation Board deems appropriate to review the applications. The Chairperson of the Scholarship Committee will be designated by the President of the Federation Board.
• Only applications meeting all of the requirements set forth in both the application and these Guidelines will be considered complete and available for review by the Scholarship Committee.
• All applications must be received by midnight April 1st (CST) of each calendar year, and the Scholarship recipient will be notified in writing by the Chairperson of the Scholarship Committee by June 1st of the same year.
• A check in the amount of $500 will be disbursed to the Scholarship recipient (the “Recipient”) by the Treasurer of the Federation Board, following the usual and customary procedure for checks disbursed by the Treasurer with all required signatures in place. The check and letter notification of the awarded Scholarship will be mailed to the Recipient as soon as is practicable after the decision is reached by the Scholarship Committee.
• The Scholarship Committee will report to the Federation Board the name of the Recipient at the first Federation Board meeting following the June 1st notification deadline.
• The notification letter also will include an invitation to the Recipient to the upcoming Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians - Metropolis of Chicago Conference Awards Luncheon (“Awards Luncheon”), at which time the Recipient will be recognized. The Recipient will attend the Conference Awards Luncheon as a guest of the Federation Board. Neither the Federation Board nor the Conference host parish will be responsible for any other costs associated with the Recipient attending the Awards Luncheon. A response from the Recipient will be expected by September 1st.
Background
Full Name: __________________________________________________ Birthday: ___/___/_____

Address: ______________________________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip Code: ______________________________________________________________________

Home Phone: ___________ Cell Phone: ___________ E-Mail: ________________________________

Parish
Parish Name: __________________________________________________________________________

Parish Address: __________________________________________________________________________

Parish City, State, Zip Code: ______________________________________________________________

Parish Priest: ___________________________________________________________________________

High School
High School Name: _______________________________________________________________________

High School Address: ______________________________________________________________________

High School City, State, Zip Code: __________________________________________________________

(Expected) Date of High School Graduation: ________________________________

(Current Cumulative) Unweighted High School G.P.A.: ________________________________

College/University where you will be enrolled during the 2020-2021 Academic Year

(Expected) Area(s) of Study: _____________________________________________________________
College/University Name: _______________________________________________________________________

College/University Address: ________________________________________________________________

College/University City, State, Zip Code: ______________________________________________________

(Expected) Date of College/University Graduation: ______________________________________________

(Current Cumulative) Unweighted College/University G.P.A.: _______________________________________

Awards/Activities that relate to academics and/or music

Activity/Award/Year: _______________________________________________________________________

Activity/Award/Year: _______________________________________________________________________

Activity/Award/Year: _______________________________________________________________________

Activity/Award/Year: _______________________________________________________________________

Activity/Award/Year: _______________________________________________________________________

Essay

On a separate sheet, please include an explanation of your future plans relating to music and how these plans might contribute to the Greek Orthodox Church and its ministries (no more than 300 words).

Certification

I certify that I have read and understand the accompanying Guidelines and that I meet all eligibility requirements for submitting this Application and Essay. I further certify that all of the information submitted in this Application and Essay are my own work and factually true, to the best of my knowledge, and that these documents will become the property of the Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians – Metropolis of Chicago. I understand that I will forfeit any award or consideration therefor should the information I have certified be false.

Signature: _________________________________________________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________________________________________________

THIS APPLICATION MUST BE TRANSMITTED ELECTRONICALLY TO AUDREY POLITE (LENOVELLO@SBCGLOBAL.NET), WITH A HARD COPY MAILED TO SAINT DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, 7021-33 HOHMAN AVENUE, HAMMOND, INDIANA, 46324, ATTENTION: AUDREY POLITE/PETROVICH SCHOLARSHIP.

THE ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION MUST BE RECEIVED BY MIDNIGHT APRIL 1, 2020 (CST).
Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians  
Chicago Metropolis  
63rd Annual Church Music Conference - Sep 25-27, 2020

WELCOME!

The parish of Saint Andrew is delighted to welcome the Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians for their 63rd annual Conference.

Saint Andrew has been serving Orthodox Christians of Michiana since September of 1926, offering worship, philanthropic diakonia, educational opportunities, national, metropolis and parish ministries and teaching the commandments of the New Life.

Our Priest, Father George Konstantopoulos, Parish Council President Chris Kurtis and Byzantine Choir Director Alexis Torrance are committed to hosting this conference in a way that offers a great venue for both professional and personal gratification for everyone in attendance.

We are busy planning a great event for each and every one of you, striving to showcase our beautiful church and some of the best features of South Bend, while offering a wonderful opportunity for your group to come together in song to praise our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are working to serve you great food, even better entertainment, and an opportunity to refine and showcase your craft amongst a new Orthodox family in South Bend. We will share conference information with you over the months prior to the event, giving you glimpses into what you should expect to see and experience during your stay with us. Please don’t let the distance from Chicago deter you from attending. It’s not that far, especially if you carpool and make it a fun road trip with your friends. Or you can travel on the South Shore Line - a quick train ride from Chicago to the South Bend Airport, and then Uber everywhere. And guess what?! You will have a minimal number of stairs to navigate at Saint Andrew. (Yay!!!!)

We are very grateful that you’ve chosen our parish for this event and will do our best to meet all your needs. We look forward to a great year of planning and the execution of the event in September. We are looking forward to your music filing our church and inspiring our parishioners with an unforgettable experience for the Saint Andrew family.

Sincerely,

Spyrithoula (Spyro) Sinis-Terezis  
Philoptochos President  
Conference Organizer
Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians
Chicago Metropolis
63rd Annual Church Music Conference - Sep 25-27, 2020

Conference Overview

LOCATION

Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church 52455 N. Ironwood Rd. South Bend, IN 46635
Church office: 574-277-4688
Conference Contact for all aspects: Spyro Terezis, 574-404-1184 (call or text) or email at corfu1000@gmail.com

REGISTRATION FEE

Standard: $120, Seniors 60 and over: $110, Students: $65 - After Aug 25, add $20 to each category
Deadline for all time-sensitive items is August 25, 2020 (registration, hotel room booking, delegate submission form, ad book submissions)

 LODGING

1) Hilton Garden Inn: 53995 IN-933, South Bend, IN 46637 (574) 232-7700. Request the “St. Andrew Church” group rate of $139 per night for double occupancy room.
2) The Inn at Saint Mary’s: 53993 State Road 933, South Bend, IN 46637 (574) 323-2184, 574-323-4000 or email reservations@innatsaintmarys.com. Request “St. Andrew Church” group rate of $139 per night for double occupancy room.
Deadline for block pricing is 8/25/2020. Price includes breakfast, shuttle within 10 mile radius of hotel, parking, wifi.

MUSIC AND LEADERS

Liturgy: Gallos Opus 2 Revised Greek and Official English
Director: Nick Chimitris
Organist: Rosie DeSanto

AD BOOK - Helps underwrite conference expenses. Thank you in advance for submitting an ad to appear in the conference program book. The ad book entry form with details is attached to this packet.
Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians
Chicago Metropolis
63rd Annual Church Music Conference - Sep 25-27, 2020

Schedule

Friday
8:30-9:00 Registration and coffee
9:00-10:30 Welcome and Rehearsal #1
10:30-10:45 Break
10:45-12:15 Rehearsal #2
12:15-1:15 Lunch/Directors' Round Table
1:15-3:00 Rehearsal #3
3:00-3:15 Break
3:15-4:15 Workshop led by Constantina Tsolainou - “Sing Beautifully - Even in English”
4:15-4:30 Break
4:30-5:30 Rehearsal #4
5:30-6:30 General Assembly
6:30 - ?? Dinner and a Show - featuring performances by the world-renowned Notre Dame Glee Club (established in 1915) and Abracadabra Magic

Saturday
8:30-9:00 Registration and coffee
9:00-10:30 Rehearsal #1
10:30-10:45 Break
10:45-12:15 Rehearsal #2
12:15-1:15 Awards Luncheon
1:15-2:15 New Music Workshop - The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom arranged by Nicholas Bodle
2:15-2:30 Break
2:30-4:00 Rehearsal #3
4:00-4:15 Break
4:15-5:30 Rehearsal #4
5:30 Vespers
7:00 Prime Rib Dinner and live entertainment by South Bend’s own Motown Machine - founded by Billie “Stix” Nicks who was a member of Junior Walker and the Allstars

Sunday
8:30-9:15 Warm Up and Line Up
9:15-9:30 Proceed to Sanctuary
9:30-12:00 Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
12:00-12:30 Group Choir Picture
12:30 Farewell Lunch
Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians
Chicago Metropolis
63rd Annual Church Music Conference - Sep 25-27, 2020

Registration Form

First Name________________________________ Last Name______________________________________________

Address_____________________________________________________________________________________

City State Zip________________________________________________________________________________

Phone ______________________________________________________________________________________

Cell________________________________________________________________________________________

Email_______________________________________________________________________________________

Parish name and address_______________________________________________________________________

Parish Priest Name___________________________________________________________________________

Choir Director______________________________________________________________________________

Voice Part___________________________________________________________________________________

I will need transportation while in South Bend: Yes______ No______

I will have a car while in South Bend and can help others with transportation: Yes ______ No_______

I will be attending the following: check all which apply

Thursday hospitality social at the hotel ______
Friday Lunch ______
   Friday Dinner ______
Saturday Lunch ______
   Saturday Dinner ______
   Sunday Lunch ______

Any food allergies or dietary considerations? _______________________________________________________

Registration Fee by 8/25/20:
$120 Standard
$110 Seniors 60 and over
$65 Students

After 8/25/20: add $20 to each
Make checks payable to Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church and mail to:
Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church, 52455 N. Ironwood Rd. South Bend, IN 46635 Attn: Spyro Terezis
This form is required for participation in the general assembly. Only choirs of parishes in good standing can vote in the general assembly (all can attend). To confirm your membership status contact Joanne Volakakis at joannevolakakis@yahoo.com or (312) 371-6019

Bring 1 copy of this form to the general assembly and mail 2 others to the host parish along with your registration form.

Please Print

Parish Name:__________________________________________________________________________
Parish Address: _______________________________________________________________________
Delegate: ___________________________________ Alternate: ________________________________
Delegate: ___________________________________ Alternate: ________________________________
Delegate: ___________________________________ Alternate: ________________________________
Parish Priest Name and Signature: __________________________________________________________
Choir Director Name and Signature: ________________________________________________________
Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians
Chicago Metropolis
63rd Annual Church Music Conference - Sep 25-27, 2020

AD Book Contract

Name_________________________________________________________________________________
Address_______________________________________________________________________________
City_____________________________ State_______ Zip_______________________________________
Home Phone_________________________________________________________________________
Cell________________________________________________________________________________
Email_______________________________________________________________________________

Select ad size:
_____ Patron $25 - name will appear on list
_____ Quarter Page $50 4 1/2 x 2 1/2
_____ Half Page $75 4 1/2 x 5 1/2
_____ Full Page $125 8 1/2 x 5 1/2
_____ Inside Front Cover $200
_____ Back Cover $200

Print Ad copy Below:
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Send photo and copy for ad to corfu1000@gmail.com, but please know we cannot return these items. Make checks payable to Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church and mail the completed form and payment to:

Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church 52455 N. Ironwood Rd. South Bend, IN 46635 Attn: Spyro Terezis

Deadline is Aug 25, 2020
Guest Meal Request Form
(Please submit one form per guest)

Name of registered conference participant: _______________________________________________

Name of Guest: ________________________________________________________________________

Allergies or Dietary needs of guest:
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Check the meals guest will purchase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meal</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_____ Friday Lunch</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Friday Dinner and a Show</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Featuring performances by the Notre Dame Glee Club and Abracadabra Magic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Saturday Lunch</td>
<td>$12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Saturday Prime Rib Dinner Dance</td>
<td>$35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Featuring live music by the “Motown Machine”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Sunday Farewell Lunch</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proudly serving South Bend’s famous Nelson’s Port-A-Pit Chicken</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: __________

Please mail this form along with payment for meals to:

Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church
   Attn: Spyro Terezis
   52455 N. Ironwood Rd.
   South Bend, IN 46635
BIOGRAPHY

Constantina Tsolianou

Friday Workshop Presenter - “Sing Beautifully - Even in English”

Constantina Tsolianou, our workshop clinician, has roots in MEFGOX—the Mid-Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Choirs. She grew up in Cleveland, Ohio at Sts. Constantine & Helen Church, the daughter of church musicians John & Stephanie Tsolainos. In a career spanning 40 years, Constantina has been in demand nationally and internationally to serve church, community, and academic organizations as seminar leader, workshop clinician, master teacher, and conductor throughout the United States and in Australia, Canada, China, and Europe. In 2019, she was named Professor Emerita at Columbus State University in Georgia, having retired as Director of Choral Activities in the Schwob School of Music. Most recently Constantina retired from her position as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Arts District Chorale in Dallas, Texas.

Her professional career includes conducting positions at Southern Methodist University, Westminster Choir College, New England Conservatory, McGill University (Montreal, Quebec), Oregon State University, and Oklahoma City University. Constantina has also served as Artistic Director of the Canterbury Choral Society (Oklahoma City), Director of Music at Lovers Lane United Methodist Church (Dallas), and Artistic Director of the Aria Chamber Chorus (Dallas). During her tenure at SMU, she established the SMU/Dallas Vocal Arts Ensemble; while in Montreal she was the Artistic Director and Conductor of Anima Musica. At Columbus State University, Constantina held the Paul S. and Jean R. Amos Distinguished Chair in Music.

Trained first as a singer, Constantina has appeared in opera and musical theatre productions in addition to numerous performances on the concert stage. She has prepared choruses for operatic productions and other collaborative performances presented by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Columbus Symphony Orchestra (Ohio), Fort Worth Dallas Ballet, Ballet Oklahoma, Opera Columbus, Opera Festival of New Jersey, Tulsa Opera, and Voices of Change, SMU’s resident contemporary music ensemble. Conductors with whom she has worked include Leonard Bernstein, Charles Dutoit, Eric Ericson, Joseph Flummerfelt, Carlo Maria Giulini, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti and Robert Shaw.

Constantina currently lives in Dallas with her husband, Gary Wortley and their Chihuahua Cessa. They have four grandchildren ranging in age from 6 to 12.
About the Arranger

Nicholas C. Bodle is an IT professional of suburban Cleveland, Ohio. In the world of church music, he is a cantor, director, organist, youth director, and arranger. He has been singing in choirs since the age of 8, when he was a member of the Annunciation Church Choir in Tremont (Cleveland). As of this publication, Nicholas is the head cantor of St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church in North Royalton, where he was also the organist for five years and remains an active choir member in the tenor section. In both choirs, he typeset sheet music and applied English translations for many hymns. Additionally, he has been singing with the Holy Trinity Orthodox Church Choir of Parma, Ohio since 2013 and occasionally directs there for Vespers and other services. He continues to play the organ for weddings and other services and is an independent accompanist for church choir rehearsals and regional music workshops.

Nicholas is an Executive Board member of the Mid-Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians (MEFGOX), serving as webmaster since 2010, State Representative for Northeast Ohio (2014-2018), and Vice President since 2018. In July 2016, he served as the organist for MEFGOX’s 69th Annual Convention in Nashville, TN, where the choir sang at the Divine Liturgy that kicked off the 43rd Bi-Annual National Clergy-Laity Congress. He received the Ernest A. Villas Youth Music Award in 2008. Since 2013, he has sung in the Inter-Orthodox Male Chorus of Greater Cleveland (stage name “Cuyahoga Cossacks”) for weddings, concerts, and other events.

Church music has greatly influenced Nicholas’ life from a young age. Nicholas’ Yiayia, Photia Boukis, was the choir director at Annunciation Church in Cleveland for several years, as well as a life-long choir member; his mother, Georgiann, has also been a choir member, and is a professional pianist and musical director for local community theatre productions. His father, Christian, plays trumpet, and his younger brother, Alexander, plays alto saxophone. Music certainly runs in the family!

At his church of St. Paul, Nicholas was a member of GOYA in his “younger years,” and has been a devoted volunteer of their annual Grecian Festival (the third weekend in July), co-chairing the Drive-Thru since 2012. He has been an assistant teacher at Vacation Church School and has helped in the church office from time to time.

Nicholas graduated with honors from Independence High School in 2013, and cum laude from Baldwin Wallace University in 2016, with a major in Computer Information Systems and a minor in Spanish. Currently, his full-time occupation is a Systems Support Specialist for First Mutual Holding Company, the parent of various mutual banks across Ohio and West Virginia, including First Federal Lakewood. He serves as webmaster and social media administrator for various small businesses and non-profit organizations. He is an Executive Board member, food program volunteer, and the office manager of St. Mary of Egypt Orthodox Mission & Chapel in Cleveland.

Learn more at www.nbodle.weebly.com
Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians
Chicago Metropolis
63rd Annual Church Music Conference - Sep 25-27, 2020

Featured Entertainment

Notre Dame Glee Club

A university tradition established in 1915, the Notre Dame Glee Club is a 60-man, all-male chorus world-renowned for their rich, full sound. The group boasts a wide repertoire of music, ranging from Renaissance polyphony to American barbershop to Indian ragas. Basically it sings everything from Beethoven to Billy Joel. It performs five regular concerts a year at Notre Dame (Fall, Christmas [x2], Spring, and Commencement) to packed audiences in the Leighton Concert Hall of the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center. The Glee Club tours twice each year across the United States, and once every other year internationally. Last year alone, it visited 9 states and 9 countries on tours. The Notre Dame Glee Club will perform during the Friday Dinner at Saint Andrew.

www.ndgleeclub.com

Kevin Wilson and Abracadabra Magic

Kevin’s fascination with magic began with his first visit a magic shop at age 11. Easily mastering the magic tricks readily paid the nickel admission to see his amazing feats of magic. Over 30 years later, his audiences larger, his magic more sophisticated, (and his price tag a bit higher) Kevin still performs to captivated audiences throughout the area. As the number of Kevin’s performances have grown, so has his enthusiasm. He frequently attends lectures, seminars and conferences around the country and is a member of the Society of American Magicians, the oldest and most prestigious magical society in the world. Kevin will amaze us with his magic during our Friday dinner at Saint Andrew.

www.abracadabramagic.com

Kevin Wilson Magician...

From birthdays and anniversaries to company picnics and conventions, Kevin has mystified and entertained audiences of all ages with his sophisticated sorcery.

One telephone call can magically set the stage for a performance by Kevin at your next engagement.

Call 574-234-8978 or email today!
**Motown Machine**

The Motown Machine featured the drumming of Billy "Stix" Nicks up until his passing in 2017. Billy was a former Motown musician and an original member of Jr. Walker and the Allstars. Billy played on many of the group's hits. He grew up in South Bend, Indiana with Autry DeWalt Mixon aka Jr. Walker. He shared the stage and backstage with just about every notable original Motown label artist.

The group features the singing of Chandra Williams and Terry Austin with Bob Cottrell on keyboards, Jason Quick on guitar, Jim Paczesy on bass and Jeff Harrell on percussion. The Motown Machine replaced Mr. Nicks with one of his former students, Mr. Kirk Wright.

The Motown Machine will perform during the Saturday dinner at Saint Andrew.
The chorus is just one of many community choirs around the city that exist for the sheer joy of singing. Membership has risen lately to about 100 singers ranging in age from recent college graduates to retirees in their 80s. Some have sung professionally, but most are amateurs. They come from all over the area and from various political backgrounds.

It’s no secret that America’s social fabric is unraveling. Participation in churches and religious institutions is down. Fraternal organizations are shrinking. Marriage rates continue to decline. Voting is up, but volunteering is down. The differences dividing us seem greater than the similarities.

Yet group singing is gaining popularity. While participation in church choirs is declining, more than 17% of adults in the U.S. participate in a choir of some sort, up from 14% in 2008. That’s about 1 in 6 adults, according to a recent study by the service organization Chorus America.

The study identifies numerous reasons: Singing in groups has been linked to better mental and physical health, a sense of belonging and feeling connected to others, better social skills, increased civic engagement and volunteering, developing leadership skills and much more.

**On the risers**

“Increasingly, people are thinking about constructive ways to bridge some of the gaps between people, and they’re looking at issues that exist in societies today,” said Liza Beth, vice president of communications and membership at Chorus America.

“How can this art form that we love contribute to healthy vibrant aging? The people who love this also see this as a really important tool to address things they see in society.”

She said choirs are springing up around the country dedicated to serving specific areas such as hospice facilities, aging adults or homeless people.

Locally, choral groups ranging from community to professional have reported increased attendance or applications, and new choirs are forming all the time.

The Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh is preparing to launch a new initiative to create grassroots choirs in senior centers. Then there’s the Bach Choir of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Camerata, Renaissance City Choir, the Voice Givers Choir, Greater Harmony Chorus, Belle Voci, Pittsburgh Threshold Choir, Sounds of Pittsburgh, Vocal Confluence and others.

“There’s a real sense of family there, a real sense of community,” said Matthew Mehaffey, music director of the Mendelssohn, which has a core group of 20 paid singers and about 100 others. The choir regularly performs with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

“There’s always a group that heads for a happy hour after rehearsals on Wednesday, and everybody is incredibly welcoming to new members,” he said.
At the Pittsburgh Concert Chorale’s weekly rehearsal, Ms. Medley mixed disciplined practice (“Let’s check that chord!”), aerobic exercise (“Stand up … now sit down! … Stand again!”) and lighthearted banter to keep things moving (“If you’re absolutely terrified of singing that high B, please email me later”).

“They’re a great group. If I asked them to sing on their head they would,” said Ms. Medley, also director of choral activities at Washington & Jefferson College in Washington, Pa. “Choir singing is this unique tradition that gives people a place to belong. You don’t need training. It’s just about making something positive and beautiful with friends.”

Most of the amateur organizations rehearse just once a week in the evening. Many members started singing in grade school or high school or a church choir, but singing in a community choir doesn’t require formal training. Just a low-pressure audition with the director and a willingness to be a team player.

“People run the gamut politically, but we leave that at the door,” Ms. Medley said. “We’re here to make music.”

**Breathing together**

The Chorus America study found that older choral singers reported a better quality of life and better overall health than non-singers they knew. Nearly three-quarters of choir members said singing helps them feel less alone or lonely.

“One of the most striking findings in our study was that choral singers are more likely to volunteer and serve in leadership positions. It’s a hugely civically engaged population,” Ms. Beth said.

Bernie Heisey has sung with the Mendelssohn and Bach choirs and is currently a member of the Pittsburgh Concert Chorale.

“I can have a terrible day, but coming to choir practice just makes it better,” she said. “Being around these people is the highlight of my week.”

The singers in the Concert Chorale and the Mendelssohn Choir represent a diverse array of occupations, including doctors, lawyers and engineers. Some join for a brief period; others make it a lifelong passion. A few have met significant others or spouses in choirs. Some members tour overseas; the Concert Chorale plans to visit Leipzig, Salzburg and Vienna in 2021.

“I think people are looking for meaning in the world,” Mr. Mehaffey said. “To have the chance if you’re not in a creative field to come and make something beautiful that you couldn’t make by yourself — there’s something immediate and visceral about choirs. The breathing becomes synchronized. It’s almost spiritual.”

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**Youth Choir News**

Greetings everyone, the Youth branch of the Federation, is working harder than ever to attract as many beautiful young voices as possible. First, an event is currently being planned for young choir members. The details of this event will be advertised shortly and will likely be in Late March-Early April. Make sure to be on the lookout and share the information with your choir members! Secondly, the 30th Anniversary Youth Conference will be at St. Nicholas in Oak Lawn, Illinois, on October 24 and 25. Please make sure to tell the youth in your choirs now, so that they can “save the date.” I can assure you, it will be loads of fun! See you all very soon!

John Vranas
Preaching to the Choir by Fr. Nicholas J. Greanias

How's that for a title for a regular contribution from me for The Choir Loft? I am privileged to serve as your spiritual adviser, and hope I can be of some use. Certainly I feel that any service I can offer is worth doing.

I wonder if you know how truly wonderful and important your own service is to our Orthodox Faith in North America? That is true on so many levels.

And let me be clear: what I am talking about is a mixed choir, singing in parts, with often western harmonies to our Orthodox melodies.

I am not exaggerating when I say that, just as jazz, blues, and the Broadway musical were America's unique gifts to world culture, drawing on African and European and Yiddish elements, and adding them to our own American setting and energies and characteristics, to create things new and wonderful; so too, the body of Greek Orthodox liturgical music that has taken form on these shores has been an extraordinary contribution to world Orthodoxy, representing that special truth of Orthodoxy that set it apart from Catholicism. That is, as the Church expanded into new lands, it took the language and the cultural identity of the local people to adapt Orthodoxy for their own use. Nothing of theology or belief or substance changed as the Church crossed ethnic boundaries, but elements of form - like language - definitely did. This was one of the glories of Orthodoxy, and something that made it appeal to the fiercely independent people of eastern Europe. A special uniqueness took form in America too.

Nowhere was this more true that in liturgical music. Even today, in a single day, you can travel from Greece, through Bulgaria, and into Romania, and hear our Orthodox services sung very differently in all three - from the Byzantine chant and single melody line in Greece, to the deeply sonorous Slavic choral music of Bulgaria, to the much brighter Latin character of Romanian people and their music. This is not just difference in language: this is deeply-rooted local difference in music and, correspondingly, worship. It is all wonderful, and it is all Orthodox.

And then our ancestors to these shores created their own American reality. At first - and too often in some places still - the private club of Greek male chanters held sway, as the first churches were established. But then conditions changed and things correspondingly happened. Existing churches were bought from other denominations, sometimes with choir lofts and - perish the thought - organs already set up. Immigrant men married, and families started populating the churches, full of vibrant children, eager to become as American as the children they went to high school with. Many parents forbade school activities, fearing to let their children change their traditional ways too much, but anything held at church was deemed safe and OK. So church choirs were born and prospered, as the children - our parents and grandparents - flocked to them.

And these choirs were glorious! I remember well the wonder of the Annunciation Decatur Choir when I was growing up in the 1950s. I never heard better church singing. That little choir sent Maria Karelas to an international opera career and Uncle John Balamos to a lifetime of composing and teaching in New York City, including songs our choirs still sing in concerts ("In the Shelter of Thy Wings", "Out of the Depths," et al), as well as many musical comedy and movie scores. The Haikalis brothers went to college and then lived on the coasts, but when they visited their parents at home, you could hear the best bass singing on Sunday mornings this side of Moscow. And I always thought Christine Kareotes had the very best voice of them all - a crystal, pure soprano that floated above us with the saints and angels - but she was content to stay home and teach at Decatur High and direct the choir and put on shows with us kids for over 60 years. The first time I ever wore a beard was when Chrysavgi painted spirit gum on my eight-year old chin and I sang the verse of one of the three Wise Men.

I could tell stories of such remarkable people for paragraphs and paragraphs. So could all of you. They are ever-vivid in our minds' eyes, and in our ears, and will remain so for as long as we remember and reminisce about them, and so long as we keep alive their example and keep our choirs going.

It is weighty responsibility. But it is of seminal importance. I wonder if we forget how important we are to normal Sunday worship. I could name many people who won't go to Sunday liturgy to a church that doesn't have a choir, or when they know the choir is on hiatus.

At my own little church of Annunciation Kankakee, virtually the whole congregation is composed of converts to Orthodoxy. Most of them grew up singing in church. So we quickly formed the Annunciation Archangels - a children's choir of seven girls, led by one of the moms - that leads the whole congregation in singing the whole Divine Liturgy, using the green liturgy book from the Archdiocese. That hymnal uses the familiar melodies that all of us grew up with in the Anastasiou hymnal. So this singing worship lives on, vibrantly and enthusiastically. Meanwhile, in a sister downstate Illinois church, when the choir director died, all this died too, maybeforever. This is a tragedy. We all know too many of these tragedies, where the church choir is gone, maybe forever. Continued on Page 23
There is also the transcendent nature of what you give. A few years ago, when I often served at Saint Nicholas Church in Oak Lawn, that wonderful choir - much smaller than it had been even a few years before - was able to transport me to a higher spiritual place just by its singing of some of our God-inspired hymns. I preach about this spiritual phenomenon all the time - especially around the great holidays - transcendent moments. One of the things we need to do in order to maximize the elevating potential of our lives as Christians, is to seek out transcendent moments. Such moments can be found throughout God's creation - in beautiful sunsets; in clear, crisp mornings punctuated by the songs of birds; in a child's delight at Christmas; when singing Handel's Messiah with 2000 people in a downtown theatre; at midnight on Easter when the light emerges and we sing with absolute conviction and exaltation "Defte Lavete Fos" and "Tin Anastasi."

At Saint Nicholas Church, as I served in the altar, I listened for and waited for such transcendent moments from the choir, and these moments always came and I tingled all over as I knew I would. I thanked God and the choir, and then went on with the liturgy. The Saint Nicholas Choir does this every Sunday still, for anyone there to listen. That is a tremendous gift. In the very same way, you are all givers of it. You cannot give it alone. You must be parts of a choir.

So if you ever need a pep talk, there it is.

I know that I have rambled on, and that not everyone will agree with everything I have said. But I believe in it wholeheartedly, and I believe in you. There are some things in life that are just plain worth doing. Singing in church is one of those. Helping others worship through that singing is the great by-product. It is all wonderful and fun and transcendent. May God continue to inspire us to do it. Amen.

Yours faithfully, in Christ's infinite love for us,

+Fr. Nick Greanias

From Denise Karras

The Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians-Metropolis of Chicago has undertaken a program for the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians. The program is called "The Conductors' Training Academy". The program is to teach choir directors & youth choir directors how to direct an Orthodox choir. This program was originally done by Tikey Zes and his committee from the San Francisco.

Our purpose is to make this program user friendly, helpful, and instructional. It will be used for directors workshops at all levels of ability.

Adding a section for youth directors is something that is going to be a new addition.

The Federation is excited to be working on this project and will be presenting this to the National Forum at its annual meeting in July.
Westchester, IL - The Holy Apostles Church celebrated the 60th Anniversary of their parish with a variety of planned events throughout 2019.

On November 2, 2019 they hosted a choir concert to commemorate their long history of musical excellence. But they didn't want to just have their choir perform a liturgical concert. They wanted to celebrate Music Ministry in different and more memorable way.

Invitations to various church choirs were sent out to have these guest choirs perform hymns of their choosing to create an expression of Christian Faith, Prayer and to exchange Hymnology. In all, members from 9 choirs performed in the Westchester church that Saturday afternoon. Father Nicholas Georgiou offered an opening prayer to the participating choir members and a congregation of over 250 people. Dr. Jim Maragos, Parish Council Secretary and long time member of the Holy Apostles Choir was the Master of Ceremonies. The Holy Apostles Choir opened the concert with selections arranged by Zes, Manzarou and Daley. The guest choirs included the Immanuel Lutheran Church of Hillside, IL directed by Donn Hemple plus the following Greek Orthodox Senior Choirs:

SS Peter & Paul of Glenview, IL directed by Therese Spiropoulos; Assumption of Chicago directed by Marika Panton; St. Demetrios of Hammond, IN directed by Nick Chimitris; St. Basil of Chicago directed by George Panagopoulos; All Saints of Joliet Rena Meintanis, director; St. Nicholas of Oak Lawn, IL Rosie DeSanto, director and St. Athanasios of Aurora, IL Peter Condos, director. Nick Paloumpis, director of the host choir, envisioned a grand finale to close the concert.

All the Orthodox Choirs joined together on the Solea, 84 voices in all, and sang Tikey Zes' arrangement of "Soma Christou" under the direction of Choir Federation President Nick Chimitris.

Then, Paloumpis invited all choir members from the congregation to come to the Solea to sing the "Hallelujah Chorus" by G.F. Handel. The spontaneous choir swelled to over 100 voices.

Wow! What a finish.

There was a free will offering given at the concert's conclusion, then everyone was invited into the Fellowship Hall for refreshments.

Nick Kumis aka AVMan Nick professionally recorded the 90 minute concert. CD recordings are available for purchase through most of the participating Church Bookstores.
Years-of-Service Awards

Each year, at our annual conference, our Federation honors church musicians who have served their churches for many years. The presentations are made at our Awards Luncheon.

We have several levels of recognition beginning with a certificate for 10 years of service. This little token of appreciation will hopefully encourage someone to "keep on singing." After that we really get serious!! We present a certificate icon of St. Romanos for 25 years and a beautiful wooden icon of St. Kassiani for 35 years. Those who make it to 50 years receive a mother-of-pearl cross which can be worn on a chain or pinned to the choir robe. Our 60 year members receive a lovely pin of the Federation Logo which looks very impressive on the choir robe. And five years ago we added another level of recognition for those who reach 70 years. They receive a gold honor stole (also to wear with the choir robe) which has the Federation Logo printed on it. And, yes, we have already given out several of them.

The only way we can make these presentations, however, is if we have updated information each year from our choir directors. So, to all choir directors out there, when you received a request for updated information about your choir, please take the time to respond. We need names, e-mail addresses, and years of service - at the very least. If you can provide home addresses and phone numbers, that would be even better. Your choir members will thank you.

Rena Meintanis, Awards Chairman

Metropolis Oratorical Festival 2020!

The Metropolis Oratorical Committee is busily preparing for this year’s Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical and Fine Arts Festival, which will be held on **Bright Saturday, April 25, 2020** at Saints Peter & Paul Greek Orthodox Church, 1401 Wagner Road, Glenview, Illinois, 60025.

We hope you are encouraging all of your parish youth to participate in one or more of the following categories: *Speech, Essay, Poetry, Iconography,* and *Vocal Solo.* Vocal Solo was added as a category in 2019, so we are especially excited about this new avenue for our youth to express their faith.

For additional information about the Festival, please visit the Metropolis website at [http://www.chicago.goarch.org/oratorical-festival](http://www.chicago.goarch.org/oratorical-festival) or contact the Festival e-mail at oratoricalfestival@gmail.com.
All Saints Choir is pleased to announce that Helen Chioles has been selected as the Servant Leadership Award recipient from All Saints Church in Joliet. Helen has been active in the choir for many years and has also served our church in a variety of capacities. She volunteers at a Joliet area shelter, she is active in Philoptohos and is one of the group who visits shut-ins, and is the official coffee prep lady every Sunday morning. We congratulate Helen for her dedicated service to our church and our community.
MaryJo Cally was born to Marie and John Cally on May 23rd 1947 in Chicago, Illinois. A Chicagoan at heart, MaryJo lived her 72 years of life within the greater Chicago area. MaryJo was living in her Chicago suburb residence of 47 years until the time of her death on February 13th, 2020. MaryJo is survived by her brother John Cally of Okemos, her nephew John Cally of Key West, her niece Charlotte Cally of Ann Arbor, and her nephew and niece-in-law Landon Cally (Kelsey) of Los Angeles. Additionally, MaryJo was a loving cousin to many. MaryJo was preceded in death by her father John Cally and her mother Marie Cally.

After graduating with a teaching degree from the National College of Education, MaryJo began her career as an elementary school teacher. She had a talent for making children feel safe and encouraging them to explore their creativity. Until the time of her death, she maintained close relationships with former students from over 40 years prior.

MaryJo’s life passion, evoked in childhood with the help of her mother Marie, was the celebration of music. Her wide range of musical taste included the classical and church genres, as well as artists ranging from Ian and Sylvia, to Joni Mitchell, to Nana Mouskouri. MaryJo learned to play the piano from her mother Marie when she was just 4, and taught others in piano for 35 years of her adult life too. In addition to the piano, MaryJo had a passion for singing. Starting in the Greek Orthodox Church choir during her adolescence, MaryJo found her way to the Chicago Symphony Chorus. In her 25-year career as part of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, MaryJo was part of three Grammy winning performances. Her talent and skill allowed her to travel the world meeting artists, composers, and friends that filled her soul’s desire to fill her life with music, meaning and passion.

Amidst her adventures, MaryJo met and became good friends with writer Madeleine L’Engle. MaryJo collaborated with L’Engle to produce the audio recording of the classic A Wrinkle in Time. The process of making this recording to share with the world was one of the most meaningful and profound experiences of her life. Among all of her unique traits, the part of MaryJo’s character that shown out the most was her love and appreciation for the people in her life. In the last years of her life, MaryJo had dear friends that went to great lengths to show her care and love. As the end of her life neared, MaryJo spoke of these moments and these people often. Thank you to all the people who showed her the love she deserved.

Memorial donations can be made to the American Cancer Society and the Chicago Symphony. As per MaryJo’s wishes, a private ceremony was held graveside at Elmwood Cemetery for family, arranged by PISHOS FUNERAL DIRECTORS, LTD.

May her memory be ever eternal...

Eulogy by Landon Cally:

It is with great sadness that I am announcing the passing of my biggest fan, one of the greatest influences, and the best aunt anyone could ever dream of having; MaryJo Cally, or to many Jojo Cally. After battling cancer for three years she was finally laid to rest this past Monday.

Eulogy:

When I think of my aunt Jojo, I immediately recall her love for the sunrise. Every year for her birthday she would wake up at the crack of dawn, and go down to Lake Michigan before the sun would cross the horizon. She would watch the sun slowly birth from the water. I always wondered WHY the sunrise and not the sunset? (like any normal person.)
However, it was not in her nature to be “normal.” She was about being as true to herself as possible. This is something I always loved, but I didn’t appreciate until later in my life. This optimistic love, which she would constantly exude, was the purist quality of her character. This quality made me understand what her outlook on life was. She viewed life as “having a glass half full” not “half empty.” She believed that maybe instead of dreading the sun setting on all of us, we could enjoy the sun rising every new day. That we have the ability to enjoy the light and love of life shining over us. Not to dwell on how the light will eventually leave us all, but celebrate every morning in which we experience new light guiding our vision forward. Not tread as the destined elder waiting for death, but to live fully as the eternal child never growing old. We can continue to love, inspire hope, offer kindness to every day in which the sun soars. We all get the opportunity to see a new dawn and experience the magic of what life offers. The magic of ART, the magic of MUSIC, and the magic of LOVE. She would always quote my Yiayia saying, “What would life be without music?” What a wonderful question to impose on us all. It brings up the reality of what we can graciously experience through life. That living humble and enjoying every moment presently will give us ultimate fulfillment. We will miss her terribly and although her sun has set, all of our Suns will rise again tomorrow. And with this notion we don’t have to ask ourselves, “What will life be like without her?” But “What life is like because of her?” I love you so much Jojo. Your sun will always shine on all of us.

From Vicki Pappas National Forum Chairperson:

Dear Reverend Clergy and Church Musicians,

It is with much sadness that we convey news of the falling asleep of Mary Jo Cally of Skokie, IL.

Mary Jo was a very active church musician in the Metropolis of Chicago Church Music Federation in the 70’s and 80’s, always focused on the need to involve young children in church music. She also served as Guest Conductor of Federation choirs and very often provided workshops for children’s music.

She was also one of the early members of the National Forum, and her major contribution was in the development of the Hymns of the Orthodox Faith instructional series with Vicki Pappas. Together, they conceived the product, developed and field tested it, and published it as the Forum’s first major church music resource for children in the Sunday Church Schools. Even today, the revised series remains a best seller! Mary Jo also conceived and organized the Archdiocese’s GOTELECOM video, “Hymns of the Orthodox Church,” which demonstrated a 4-day Vacation Church School integrating hymn singing, iconography, liturgy, and theology with children.

In recent years, Mary Jo was mostly active with the Children’s Symphony of Chicago and the Chicago Symphony Chorus, as her attached obituary indicates, but maintained her personal connections to church musicians across the country.

May her memory be eternal.
On January 20th, Father Michael “Rick” Vanderhoef fell asleep in the Lord, unexpectedly. Active and schooled in music and especially church music, almost all his life, he was currently serving as the Presiding Priest at Assumption Greek Orthodox Church in Madison, Wisconsin, the church he grew up in.

Father Michael was interested in all aspects of church music – he studied and played the organ, he studied and taught Byzantine chant, and he loved and sang in choirs. His obituary below shows the breadth of all his music activities as well as what else he was involved in in other aspects of his life. He attended many National Forum meetings, always sharing his enthusiasm and good ideas. He was a great supporter of church music and church choirs.

Most recently, one of his interests that he was pursuing was to participate in the Executive Education Program in Strategic Leadership and Transformative Action at Tuft’s University in Boston, just this month. He had identified an Impact Project he was going to develop as part of that program. It was to create an Archdiocesan-wide “Organ University” for Greek Orthodox Church organists. He had hoped to enlist the support and involvement of the National Forum in this much-needed training program. In his memory, and as a tribute to his prolific and far-reaching ideas, I share his proposal in hopes that it may provide food-for-thought to organists and other church musicians, and hopefully stimulate some serious thought about how we might foster such an activity in Father Michael’s memory at the National Forum level.

Funeral services for Father Michael’s were Sunday and Monday at Assumption Church in Madison, including an All Night Vigil following the Trisagion service on Sunday evening. His obituary can be read here:


Our profound sympathies go out to his wife Patricia, his parents Richard and Anna, and his sister Andrea. May his memory be eternal!
Impact Project of the SLTA Program
Rev. Fr. Richard “Michael” Vanderhoef

During the Executive Education Program in Strategic Leadership and Transformative Action program at Tuft’s University, I wish to develop an Archdiocesan-wide Organ University for Greek Orthodox Church organists. I am looking at making this primarily an online, webinar-type program that would bring together Greek Orthodox Church organists and allow for discussion, sharing ideas and discovering ways to best serve Greek Orthodox Church choirs and congregations as organ accompanists.

We are taught by the early church fathers that the only musical instrument to be used in our liturgical services is the human voice, the God-made instrument. All other musical instruments should not be used, including the organ. However, as the Greek Orthodox Church began to establish itself in the United States, it assimilated such Western Church characteristics as stained-glass windows and pews. Today, in this country, we even have stained-glass window companies that specialize in the production of stained-glass windows specifically suited for Greek Orthodox churches. Such stained-glass windows have “Byzantine” liturgical elements incorporated into them, ie, various church symbolisms and Byzantine iconography. Pew makers have even included Byzantine-style wood carvings into the pews they make specifically for Greek Orthodox churches.

The organ is a musical instrument that has been incorporated into many of our Greek Orthodox churches in the USA. The organ has been used primarily to support the voices of the church choirs. Before going any further here, it is important to note that the Greek Orthodox, mixed-voice, male and female combined choir is also an element adopted from the West. Nonetheless, these types of choirs have been accepted, along with organ accompaniment, as part of our Greek Orthodox worship services.

The Greek Orthodox Church choir has the privilege of looking to its brother and sister choirs of the Russian Orthodox Church in learning how to best apply the best choral singing practices into the Orthodox church service. Russian Orthodox choirs are a cappella choirs, meaning they sing without instrumental accompaniment of any kind. The majority of our Greek Orthodox church choirs sing with organ accompaniment. As is the case in many churches that use the organ, many organists are not appropriately trained in specifically playing the organ, rather, many are pianists. The organ and the piano incorporate the same musical keyboard as part of their function but playing the piano and playing the organ are completely different and require mostly very different techniques in producing appropriate sound. What results then is an organ sound that is not very appealing and at many times not providing adequate support for the choir. The organ sound may even be too loud and overpowering.

It is my feeling that the organ will be around and used in our Greek Orthodox churches in the United States for a while yet to come. Unlike stained-glass windows and pews, were Byzantine Orthodox liturgical elements have been incorporated into them to make them better fit into our Greek Orthodox churches and style of worship, the organ has had very little, if actually, NO adequate study into how to be used properly in our churches in a way that helps to better enhance our worship experience. I believe appropriate training as an organism, NOT merely a pianist who plays the organ like a piano, is the most important place to start. With a knowledge of good organ technique and practice, a strong knowledge of our Orthodox worship and music styles and traditions, a long way can be made in how we use the organ in our churches for the betterment of our worship, not its detriment.

There is no time like the present to “pull out all the stops” so to say, on discussing, sharing, learning and growing together on how to best use the organ in the Greek Orthodox liturgical service, pun intended! With use of today’s technologies, we may easily connect simultaneously with many Greek Orthodox Church organists throughout the county to share ideas and together develop the most proper use of the organ in our churches. Discussions and classes may also be recorded and viewed at times that would best work for the musician’s schedule. Social media platforms and / or perhaps a tailor-made platform could be used to post ideas, show live and recorded feeds and ask questions. Greek Orthodox Church musicians of all sorts, not just organists, man be part of the discussion and the implementation of new discoveries. The Greek Orthodox Organist University could operate in conjunction with / or under the umbrella of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians, for most effective reach to those who could benefit.
The Greek Orthodox Organists University could originate anywhere and be broadcast to a wide and diverse audience. However, I am specifically looking to begin this University within the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago. The Metropolis includes Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church in Glenview, IL, which has a pipe organ. With the blessings of His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael and the blessing of the clergy and parishioners of Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church, I believe our organ program would profoundly benefit by the study of the mechanics and sound production of an actual pipe organ. Most importantly, this pipe organ is in a Greek Orthodox church and would make our study of the organ here most relevant to our mission of impacting how we use the organ in the Greek Orthodox Church.

Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church live streams their Divine Liturgy and other liturgical services over the Internet regularly. As a result, they already have much in the way of equipment and technologies for live streaming. It is my hope that the live streaming technicians and engineers at the church may be willing to work with us and educate us on beginning to live stream our activities of the Greek Orthodox Organists University. Furthermore, Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church could accommodate open houses and live, in-person activities within the church and right at the organ itself, when actual field trips are an opportunity. There is much more that could be discussed here for this project, but I hope what I have shared here will be adequate enough for the requirements necessary for my impact project within the Executive Education Program in Strategic Leadership and Transformative Action program at Tuft’s University in January 2020. I have received the blessing of Rev. Fr. Richard Demetrios Andrews, the Proistamenos at Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church, to submit this concept as part of my application process to the SLTA program should this become an actual impact project, which I hope and pray it will.

Rev. Fr. Richard “Michael” Vanderhoef plays the 30-Rank pipe organ, Schantz Organ Co. Opus 1887 (1988), at Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church, Glenview IL.

More information can be found along with the organ specifications at: https://pipeorgandatabase.org/OrganDetails.php?OrganID=48174.
www.chicago.churchmusic.goarch.org

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