

"It is the day of the Resurrection. Let us shine brightly for the festival, and also embrace one another. Brethren, let us say even to those who hate us, "Let us forgive everything for the Resurrection." And thus let us cry aloud, "Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.""

- Sticheron from the Orthros of Pascha Sunday

Do you have an email address??

If you still receive a paper version of this newsletter but have an email address...help us protect the environment (and save costs). Email the office (office@agocwi.org) and let us know we can add you to the email list!

April 2019 Newsletter



Inside...

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Calendars

Lent and Paschal Donations 5K Run / Walk for Water Holy Land Pilgrimage

Looking for Information?

Flyers, announcements, advertisements are posted on bulletin boards in the Church Hall. If you see something you like? Make a copy!

Meeting minutes and budget reports are posted monthly following Parish Council meetings. Want more? Ask! Have a complaint? Be prepared to discuss solutions and volunteer to help!!

THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Tom Cameron, Parish Council President tscameron52@gmail.com

Parish Council Officers: Georgiana Wilton, Vice President; Bruce Hansen, Secretary, Scott Storck & Niko Papadopoulos, Treasurers. Members: Petros Anagnostopoulos, Christy Chappell Belkin, Conn Choles, Dori Hosek, Jim Katsihtis, Mike Smith, Nick Topitzes. Alternates: Maria Molzahn, Carol Griskavich.

Happy April to you all! What a wonder it was to watch so much snow disappear so fast. I hope all your basements have stayed dry.

This month's topic deals with our neighbors. In early March, Fr. Michael received a call from one of our neighbors on Mifflin Street, reporting that AGOC members have been parking illegally and impolitely. Two examples were blocking driveways and parking too close to cars on the street, making it difficult for residents to move their cars. According to this neighbor, this has been going on for months - not just a winter problem. She was respectful but said that the neighbors were not going to tolerate any more improper parking. The next step will be calling the police and having cars towed.

This may sound extreme to some of us, but we all need to be sensitive to our neighbors' positions. They live here, we don't. Year after year, they are incredibly tolerant and cooperative when we celebrate Easter and GreekFest, which involves major street inconveniences for them. Most important of all, it is never acceptable to block someone's driveway - never. This is a violation worthy of a ticket, a tow, or both no matter where it is done. Please understand, the neighbors are going to call the tow trucks if this continues.

There is an easy fix for this problem - pay attention to where you park on neighborhood streets. Keep reasonable distances away from all driveways. Leave adequate space between parked cars to allow them easy exits. This is all common courtesy and common sense, as well as legal parking habits. There is no defense for someone who parks carelessly, and they will be penalized if they continue. As mentioned above, this is an easy fix.

Sunday mornings are always busy, and many of us run late. Let's all be better Christian neighbors - respect driveways, sidewalks, parked cars and yards.

Wishing you all a blessed Lenten Season.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Patti Cameron, President pcameron@tds.net 608-219-1659

Lena Giakomopoulos, Vice President; Maria Heide, Treasurer; Sue Soloninka, Secretary; Jenny Glatch, Corresponding Secretary

<u>Greek Independence Day Dinner and Program:</u> Thank you to everyone who made this fundraiser a huge success! Especially the co-chairs Lena G and Maria M and to Faith Morledge and Kathie F for the donation and the handling of the raffle of the Green Lake Cottage. We raised over \$3,000 for those who are suffering in Greece.

National Obligations:

- Sisterhood of St. Basil's
- IOCC International Orthodox Christian Charities

Coffee Hour Update:

• We could always use some additional hosts for coffee hour. If you would like more information, contact Patti C at 608-219-1659 or email. Please consider this hospitality ministry of our church! This is a good way for new parishioners to connect with others in our congregation.

• Please remember to: Turn off the coffee pot, the gas lines to the ovens and the dishwasher along with wiping the tables and – a new task - take out the trash to the dumpsters in the parking lot – this is a good task to recruit a younger or stronger person to help out.

Local Activities:

Elections Committee: Patti Notes & Jane Schirmer will be asking members in good standing if they would like to be on the Philoptochos Board for the 2019-2021 term. The Board will be selected at the May 9th meeting at Patti Cameron's.

Nancy B, Kathie F, Gigi M, & Beth Fatsis helped serve the funeral meal for Donna Nahirniak on Friday, March 8th.

Book Study: Nearly Orthodox, by Angela Doll Carlson- March 31st after the Divine Liturgy

Easter Preparations:

Homebound Easter Baskets: Elene Patenaude will prepare them for Fr. Michael

Saturday of Lazarus: We are looking for women to make koulourakia dough and bake the cookies at church along with folding the palm crosses for Palm Sunday.

Palm Sunday Dinner and Lamb Dinner – the Parish Council will need help with set up and clean up for both dinners. They will do the cooking!

Upcoming Events:

Thursday, April 4th - 6:30 General Meeting at the home of Maria Heide

Tuesday, April 30th - Grace Episcopal Homeless Meal - Ilektra

Thursday, May 9th - Board elections- at Patti Cameron's

Thursday, June 6th - Spring Social – Elene P and Sue S

Membership:

All women of the church are invited to become members of our Philoptochos Chapter. The membership fee is \$21/yr. Please consider joining and becoming a part of a dynamic, creative, hard working group of women encompassing all generations. The membership form is attached to this newsletter or you can find copies on the round table at the church entrance. **Membership forms are due on April 1**st.

River Food Pantry: See their website - info@riverfoodpantry.org

FEED THE NEED: Sunday, April 7 from 3-6:00 p.m. at CUNA Mutual Group, 5810 Mineral Point Rd, Madison. Join the River Food Pantry for a culinary experience exclusively featuring Madison Originals restaurants and local breweries and wineries. Tickets \$50. See website for more details.

Church Women United:

April 5th - 12:45 pm Meet at Middleton Outreach Ministries (MOM), 3502 Parmenter Street, Middleton for a 'Tour and Talk'.

GRACE EPISCOPAL HOMELESS SHELTER

David Giffey, barnowl1941@gmail.com

Volunteers from Assumption are scheduled to provide and serve a meal at the homeless shelter for men at Grace Episcopal Church on Tuesday, April 30. That's two days after Pascha. Commitments to serve the meal have been received from Mike Smith, Scott Spevacek, Peter Cameron and Chris Schmidt. Ilektra Kolokouri also plans to head the volunteers who will prepare the meal in the kitchen at church. We are grateful to the faithful volunteers.

The names of other volunteers who may help with preparation of the meal, or work as servers will be printed in future bulletins. If you wish to volunteer please contact David Giffey or Ilektra Kolokouri.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Jenny Josheff, Director, agocssdirector@gmail.com, Fr. Michael, Spiritual Advisor, frmichael@agocwi.org

April is just about on us, which usually means Lent/Pascha and end of school year rapidly approaching. The next several weeks are going to go fast!

Here are some dates to watch for Sunday School:

April 21st - Teacher choice. Please check in with your teacher to see if they will be holding class.

April 28th - No Sunday School

May 12th - Last Day of Sunday School

Sunday School is still in need of teachers and a director/co-director for next school year. Contact Jenny or Fr. Michael if you are interested or want more details.

SPIRITUAL MEETINGS

Peli Galiti, pegaliti@gmail.com

Our hearts are made for God, St. Augustine has said, and we will be forever restless until we rest in Him. Our lives are made for God, and we will be unfulfilled and dissatisfied and frustrated until we go to Him. The Lenten season is the time for our conscious return to our true home. It is time to get up and go to the divine reality to which we truly belong. (Hopko, T., 1983, "The Lenten Spring").

Women's spiritual meeting will take place at Assumption church on Thursday April 11 at 7pm, following Great Compline and Canon of St. Andrew.

CHURCH WEBSITE

Lainey Skoumbouris, laney0220@yahoo.com

The church website is set-up for private login to access the monthly newsletters and are meant for Church members only, not the public. Church members can read the newsletter on the website, but you must create an account before you can view it. Log onto the website and click on "Newsletter" on the side-bar http://www.agocwi.org/registration-required/, or "login" on the main menu http://www.agocwi.org/login/; it will direct you to sign up. If you need help, have questions or something isn't working in the registration contact me.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

J and M Home Helpers

AGOC's handymen, John and Mike, will do minor home repairs and maintenance for \$25/hour, with the money for their work being donated to the church.



Call Mike at (608) 516-9188

and

John at (608) 575-1014 today!

SACRAMENTS DURING MARCH 2019

Weddings: 0 Chrismations: 0 Baptisms: 0 Funerals: 1

Funerals:

Donna Mae Nahirniak, age 85, passed away on March 4, 2019 and her funeral took place on March 8, 2019



April 2019

April 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
March 31 3rd Sunday in Great Lent Sunday of the Holy Cross Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am	1	Parish Council Meeting 7:00 pm	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 5:30 pm Choir Practice 7:00 pm	Philoptochos Meeting at Maria H's 6:30 pm	4 th Salutations Service 6:00 pm	6 Russian Orthodox Divine Liturgy 9:00 am
7 4rt Sunday in Great Lent St. John the Ladder Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am	8	9	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 5:15 pm Choir Practice 7:00 pm	Great Canon of Andrew of Crete 5:00 pm Women's Spiritual Meeting 7:00 pm	Akathist Hymn Service 6:00 pm	13
14 5th Sunday in Great Lent St. Mary of Egypt Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am	15	16	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 5:30 pm Choir Practice 7:00 pm	18	19	Saturday of Lazarus Divine Liturgy 9:00 am Sunday School Breakfast / Palm Cross Making
Palm Sunday Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am Palm Sunday Dinner Bridegroom Service 6:00 pm	Bridegroom Service 6:00 pm	Bridegroom Service - Hymn of Kassiani 6:00 pm	Holy Wednesday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 8:30 am Holy Unction 3:00 pm Bridegroom Service 6:00 pm	Holy Thursday Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 9:00 am Passion Service – 12 Gospels 6:00 pm	26 Holy Friday Royal Hours 8:30 am Service of the Un-nailing 3:00 pm Service of the Lamentations 7:00 pm	27 Holy Saturday Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 9:00 am Orthros of the Resurrection 11:00 pm Anastasi Service followed by Divine Liturgy 12- midnight LAMB DINNER
PASCHA Agape Vespers 11:00 am No Sunday School	Bright Monday St. George Divine Liturgy 9:00 am	Grace Episcopal Homeless Shelter Dinner	May 1 Choir Practice 7:00 pm	May 2	May 3	May 4 Great Vespers 5:00 pm

April - May 2019 Liturgies and Services

April 3

Pre-Sanctified Liturgy – 5:30 pm

Prosforo: Anna F

April 5

4th Salutations to the Theotokos 6:00 pm

April 7

4rd Sunday in Great Lent St. John Climacus

Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Prosforo: Anna F

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 **Gospel**: Mark 9:17-31

Coffee Hour: (Group 11) Kerry M,

Barb K, Dori H

April 10

Pre-Sanctified Liturgy – 5:15 pm

Prosforo: Elene P

April 11

Great Compline Service with Canon of St. Andrew the Great 4:00 pm

April 12

Akathist Hymn 6:00 pm

<u> April 13</u>

(?) Church Clean-Up 9:00 am

<u> April 14</u>

5th Sunday in Great Lent St. Mary of Egypt

Orthros 9:00 am
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am **Epistle**: Hebrews 9:11-14

Gospel: Mark 10:32-45

Prosforo: Elene P

Coffee Hour: (Group 12) Maria H,

Draga G, Gabriela C

<u> April 17</u>

Pre-Sanctified Liturgy – 5:30 pm

Prosforo: Korinna H

April 20

Saturday of Lazarus

Divine Liturgy 9:00 am

April 20, Con't.

Epistle: Hebrews 12:28-29; 13:1-8

Gospel: John 11:1-45 **Prosforo:** Korinna H

Sunday School Breakfast

Palm Cross Making

April 21

Palm Sunday

PALM SUNDAY DINNER

Orthros 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 **Gospel:** John 12:1-18 **Prosforo:** Katherine F

Coffee Hour: Palm Sunday Dinner

April 21

Palm Sunday Evening

Service of the Bridegroom

6:00 pm

April 22

Holy Monday Evening

Service of the Bridegroom 6:00 pm

April 23

Holy Tuesday Evening

Service of the Bridegroom/ Hymn of Kassiani 6:00 pm

April 24

Holy Wednesday Morning

Pre-Sanctified Liturgy – 8:30 am

Prosforo for 9:00 am: Katherine F

Holy Unction – 3:00 pm

April 24

Holy Wednesday Evening

Service of the Bridegroom 6:00 pm

April 25

Holy Thursday Morning

Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

9:00 am

Prosforo for 9:00 am: Nia C

April 25

Holy Thursday Evening

Passion Service / Reading of the 12 Gospels - 6:00 pm

April 26

Holy Friday Morning

Royal Hours - 8:30 am

April 26

Holy Friday Afternoon

Service of the Un-nailing – 3:00 pm

April 26

Holy Friday Evening

Service of the Lamentations

7:00 pm

April 27

Holy Saturday Morning

Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

9:00 am

Prosforo for 9:00 am: Nia C

April 27-28

Holy Saturday Evening

Orthros of the Resurrection 11:00 pm

Anastasis Service – 12 midnight

Divine Liturgy Following

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8
Gospel: John 1:1-17
Prosforo: Jane S

Coffee Hour: LAMB DINNER

April 28

Great and Holy Pascha

Agape Vespers 10:00 am

April 29

Bright Monday / St. George

Divine Liturgy 9:00 am

Epistle: Acts 12:1-11 **Gospel**: John 1:18-28

Prosforo: Jane S

May 5

2nd Sunday after Pascha Sunday of St. Thomas

Orthros 9:00 am

Divine Liturgy 10:00 am **Epistle**: Acts 5:12-20

Gospel: John 20:19-31 **Prosforo:** Ilektra A

Help us cover our Holy Week 2019 costs! We cannot have any one of these items as part of our Holy Week 2019 celebration without your help! Sign up for an item(s) that you would like to donate and leave your donation(s) with Fr Michael or the church treasurers. He / They will then mark you ask paid. We need your help!

Thank you! +Fr. Michael and the Parish Council

IMPORTANT!

IMPORTANT!

ASSUMPTION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, MADISON, WI

Holy Week and Paschal Donations 2019

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Palm Sunday April 21 10:00 am	HOLY WEEK AND I	aschal Donations 2019	
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April 21 10:00 om	Palm Sunday	Holy Unction Service, con't.	1 2 2
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	spers and Lamentations 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm	Holy Saturday Vespers April 27 9:00 am
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(\$50.00)		Resurrection Service
Mini-Carnations(\$70.00)		
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(\$50.00)_		
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Irises(\$60.00)		Altar Flowers(\$50.00)
Caspia(\$45.00)		
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Salal(\$20.00)		
	7.1	Agape Vespers
Accessories		April 28 10:00 am
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Green Pipe Cleaners (\$36 Flower Cross atop I	Kouvouklion(\$25.00) DONATED	Readers of the Gospel in Different Languages Including, but not limited to:
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Flowers Petals for Myrrh-Bearers(\$50.00)		Greek
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(1)	(11)	German
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(9)	1.00	
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Please Help Us by Donating Towards Items for Holy Week and Pascha

Please Help Us with Readings During Holy Week!

Sign-up on the Sign-Up Sheets in the Church Hall Today!

(Contact Fr. Michael with Questions or Further Assistance)

2019

5K RUN/WALK FOR WATER

Millions of people endure life without access to water. When you sign up to run or walk in the 5K Run/Walk for Water, you transform communities with the gift of clean water. Join us this year in funding a safe water well for a small community in El Salvador.

Register now at: www.signmeup.com/5krunwalkforwater



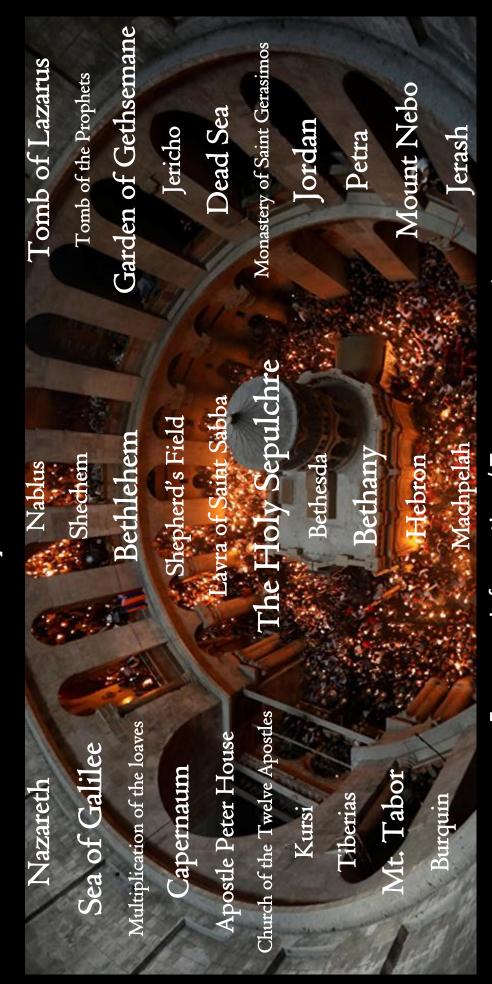
SATURDAY, MAY 4, 10 A.M.

GRUNDAHL PARK, 401 BLUE MOUND ST. MT. HOREB, WI \$30, SHIRT INCLUDED THRU APRIL 21

Sponsored by Living Water International & Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mt. Horeb

HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE

May 6-18, 2019



For more information / To save your spot:

holylandpilgrimage 2019@gmail.com

Price: \$2650 + Airfare

Additional AGOC Announcements for April 2019

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Patti Cameron, President pcameron@tds.net 608-219-1659

For those of you who are interested -

Philoptochos will once again be taking orders for loaves of Easter Tsoureki Bread. The Order Forms are now available and placed in various locations in the church such as the entry table and the tables in the fellowship hall. The bread has been taste tested, and it is delicious!

The round loaves come with the traditional red dyed egg in the top center of the bread, as well as they have shaved almonds on top for garnish. There are two sizes available, a 1 pound loaf for \$10, and a 2 pound loaf for \$20. All proceeds go to Philoptochos.

All loaves must be pre-ordered & pre-paid for no later than Sunday, April 21st. Philoptochos will not have any extra loaves for sale, so if you would like some, please be sure to place your order by filling out an order form and submitting your payment as soon as possible.

The Easter Breads will be labeled with the purchaser's name on them and available for pick-up downstairs in the church Fellowship Hall starting Holy Wednesday evening and afterwards.

On behalf of Philoptochos, thank you!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Jenny Josheff, Director, agocssdirector@gmail.com, Fr. Michael, Spiritual Advisor, frmichael@agocwi.org

On April 20 the church will celebrate Lazarus Saturday. As in years past, the Sunday School provides a pancake/lenten breakfast following the service. We are asking for some help... Sunday School parents, please talk with your Sunday School teacher if you would like to contribute anything to the meal. Since this is a Sunday School function, it would be nice to have some student helpers. Everyone is encouraged to attend and to stay afterwards to fold palm cross for Palm Sunday. No experience necessary - will train onsite! We have to make over 300 palm crosses, so the more helpers...

Thank you,

Chris and Jenny Josheff

Sunday School Directors Assumption Greek Orthodox Church Madison, WI 53704 (608) 244-1001 agocssdirector@gmail.com



ALL BREADS WILL BE LABELED WITH
THE NAME OF THE PURCHASER
AND MAY BE PICKED UP DOWNSTAIRS IN
THE CHURCH FELLOWSHIP HALL IN
CONNECTION WITH ANY OF THE HOLY WEEK
SERVICES BEGINNING HOLY WEDNESDAY
EVENING AND AFTERWARDS.

ORDER YOUR GREEK EASTER BREAD TODAY!

1 POUND TSOUREKI LOAVES...\$10 EACH 2 POUND TSOUREKI LOAVES...\$20 EACH

All Orders Forms are due by Sunday, April21st.

• By Mail send order form & check to:

Maria Heide, 5751 Ballina Pkwy, Fitchburg, WI 53711 If questions, call Maria (608)274-2974

• After Sunday Services give order form & payment to: Nikki Storck, Kathie Fafalios or Maria Heide Please make checks out to: Philoptochos

**********	*********
Your Name:	
Phone Number	
Quantity:	<u>Total</u> :
of 1 pound loaves (\$10 each	ch) \$
of 2 pound Loaves (\$20 ea	nch)\$
TOTAL PURCHASE	\$



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ORDER YOUR GREEK EASTER BREAD TODAY!

1 POUND TSOUREKI LOAVES...\$10 EACH 2 POUND TSOUREKI LOAVES...\$20 EACH

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Church Women United in Madison, WI

Encouraging women to come together in a visible community to witness to their faith in Jesus Christ and, enabled by the Holy Spirit, to go out into every neighborhood and nation as instruments of reconciling love.

CWU - Madison, WI FIELD TRIP: Middleton Outreach Ministries (MOM)

Friday, April 5, 2019

Middleton Outreach Ministries (MOM) 3502 Parmenter Street, Middleton

12:45 Meet at MOM

1:00 pm: Program: Middleton Outreach Ministries Tour and Talk



OUR MISSION

MOM brings our community together to create food and housing security through action and advocacy.

OUR VISION

A community where everyone has the stability to thrive.

OUR VALUES

Organizational Values

Dignity –We respect the inherent worth and agency of every individual and work to treat everyone fairly, consistently and confidentially, without condition. Our shared humanity makes us responsible for doing this work.

Social Justice- Stable housing and food security are human rights. What we eat, where we live and our connection to our community are key determinants of overall well-being and health, so we focus on providing ample access to these resources.

Racial Equity - Racial inequities affect access to food and housing security. We strive to reduce these inequities through our work and through community collaborations.

Hope – We foster a sense of optimism for the future by providing compassionate support today and the stability needed to thrive tomorrow.

Operational Values

Creativity – We seek innovative solutions to immediate needs, looking beyond the traditional models of our food and housing security systems.

Advocacy - We advocate for the needs of those we serve as well as seek opportunities to create transformative solutions to systems that prevent food and housing equality. We honor the experiences of those we serve and seek to amplify their voices.

Inclusion – We are strongest when we invite in all and break down barriers for participation. We desire our entire community to be a part of our mission.

Collaboration - We cannot create change alone. We must work together and collaborate in order to make the greatest impact.

Accountability - Everything we do is honest and trustworthy. We are committed to the highest level of accountability and transparency and use the gifts of our community to make the greatest impact. We utilize data and research to inform best practices in our work.

OUR HISTORY

Middleton Outreach Ministry (MOM) was established in 1980 by a local church in the community to care for the basic needs of some of the area's residents. Over time, multiple faith congregations joined forces to meet the growing demand, and expanding to a service area that includes West Madison, Middleton and Cross Plains.

In 2007, with demand continuing to increase, MOM transitioned into a business-based organization both at the Board and leadership levels. Faith-based congregations, as well as individuals, businesses and community groups, provide the key resources and volunteers needed to meet the demand.

In 2013, we began our <u>Building Hope, Strengthening Communities Capital Campaign</u>. Soon afterwards, we moved to a new, larger, more conveniently located building. We completed the parking lot, the final phase of our construction, in the fall of 2017.

Middleton Outreach Ministry, Inc., is a registered 501(c)3 organization.

OUR SERVICE AREA

MOM serves all of the Middleton Cross Plains School District, and the part of the west side of Madison (west of Midvale Blvd and north of the beltline.)

OVER 40% OF THOSE SERVED AT MOM ARE CHILDREN

March 24, 2019

To the Reverend Fathers, Monastics and Laity of the Holy Metropolis of Chicago—to the beloved children of Christ: Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

A year ago today, I was enthroned as your spiritual father and Metropolitan of the Holy Metropolis of Chicago, and over that time you have welcomed me, counseled me and prayed for me. I will forever cherish my time visiting all corners of our Metropolis and hearing you share what is in your hearts and minds. After a year as your spiritual father, I'd like to share with you what is in mine.

To be here in the Metropolis of Chicago is more meaningful to me than you may realize. During my years at seminary, few days would pass where stories about the Metropolis of Chicago could not be heard. Schoolmates from the Midwest would share incredible memories of growing up in the Church. Often, they would tell stories of visionary clergy, including Fr. Bill Chiganos, Fr. Anthony Coniaris, Fr. George Nicozisin, Fr. Byron Papanikolaou, Fr. George Scoulas and Fr. Demetrios Treantafeles—who inspired them to serve Christ and His Church. Weeks before Holy Pascha, the students from the Holy Metropolis of Chicago eagerly prepared to visit their home parishes. At the center of their visit was time spent with their father, Metropolitan Iakovos of blessed memory. The students prepared to follow their shepherd from parish to parish, listening to his sermons and receiving his paternal counsel. As I listened to them, I longed for similar experiences and prayed that I may one day be part of such a dynamic Church family.

Two decades later, God has answered my prayers. What was once only imagined through stories heard in seminary, the Holy Metropolis of Chicago has now become my home. For this, I am grateful to God. With each passing day, I not only notice the current beauty of our house, but I await fullness that lies ahead of us with great anticipation. While some communities rest on laurels of past achievements, our Metropolis takes to heart the advice of Saint Gregory the Theologian, *always look forward*.

Over the last 12 months, I've pondered the awesome responsibility presented to me and regularly experienced the natural excitement and inevitable apprehension that accompanies such a responsibility. Time and time again, I have found that the words of John the Evangelist put my heart at ease: "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:18).

This timeless truth—love drives away fear—has served as my spiritual compass when making life decisions. With every major challenge encountered this past year, I have sought counsel from lay and ordained advisors, and have chosen the path that, in my judgment, best manifested love. I continue to believe that this path will help us realize greater accountability, integrity, transparency and inclusivity, which the faithful of the Church have called for and deserve. I also believe that fulfilling such governing principles will help cultivate an ecclesial environment that promotes hard work, cooperation, and excellence, creating deeper bonds among ourselves and with Christ. In the end, I believe walking on a path toward perfect love will help us cultivate an ecclesial ethos that is as whole as the Body of Christ.

Much of my past year can be summed up by one word: listening. It was very important to me – and still is – to invest the time to engage our clergy and laypeople from throughout the Metropolis, listening to what they said, and what they did not say, before accepting opinions of others or forming my own prematurely. Having closed my first year as Metropolitan of Chicago, I intend to openly share with you the challenges and opportunities facing our Metropolis in short order, including the financial state of the Metropolis and the condition of our parishes and sacred institutions, so that you can have a better understanding of the

decisions that need to be made. Many will agree with some decisions, believing them long overdue; other decisions will be difficult and painful and will require continued discernment and prayer. Above all, I will speak the truth in love, hopeful that our open dialogue will help us establish our home on bedrock and not on sand (Matthew 7: 24-27).

At the time of my enthronement, I encouraged you to trust in God's will. I recounted the passage in the Gospel according to Matthew (14:22-33) wherein Jesus sees His disciples cowering in a boat that was being tossed about by the raging sea. Christ proclaims to them: *Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.* My beloved, I believe these words more passionately today than when I first uttered them.

Though our challenges are great, I see myself with you on that boat. I take courage and comfort in Christ's example, and, as your spiritual father, I ask you to do the same. In so many ways, the act of taking courage is not new or unknown to us. I've witnessed incredible faith throughout the Metropolis. Dedicated and selfless priests and presvyteres serve the needs of our parishes to the best of their abilities; lay leaders invest invaluable time, talent and treasure as they minister to their neighbor. Together, you do God's work with unconditional love through amazing ministries.

As I write this letter, it is altogether fitting that Great and Holy Lent is upon us, a blessed season that reminds us what it means to be Orthodox Christians. Lent is a time when God speaks to us with firmness and urgency; this period of repentance, reconciliation and reunification also represents the way forward for the Metropolis of Chicago. And while I intend to walk with you throughout this journey, the future of the Church depends on you—the men, women, young adults and youth of the Metropolis of Chicago who are called to serve the *least of God's brethren* (Matthew 25:40). I am truly grateful to those who have already stepped forward to help build and guide the future of our Metropolis. But, as members of the Body of Christ, we need to do more.

And so I invite you to become an active participant in the sacramental life of the Church; to join one of our Metropolis' many ministries; to become a steward of your parish; to join one of the <u>Strategic Planning task force teams</u>; to attend our Metropolis' upcoming <u>Clergy-Laity Assembly</u> (September 25-29, 2019) in the Twin Cities; to offer your time, talent and treasure to help us fulfill our Metropolis' mission.

I have confidence that the possibilities for this great Metropolis are limitless and look forward to our shared future with great anticipation. I will continue to pray fervently for God's help to remain on the path toward perfect love. And on that path, I lovingly and humbly repeat the request I made one year ago at my enthronement: walk with me.

With paternal love in Christ,

† Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago

Metrosolitan Nathanael



SUMMER 2019 CHRISTIAN AGAPE

SESSION ONE

SESSION TWO

SESSION THREE

SESSION FOUR

JUNE 16th-JUNE 22nd

JUNE 23rd - JUNE 29th

JULY 7th - JULY 13th

JULY 14th - JULY 20th

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For further information contact the Metropolis Youth Office at (847) 264-8360 or Email Fanari.Camp@gmail.com.