

December 2024

THE VINE

الكرمة

“I AM THE VINE AND YOU ARE THE BRANCHES” (JOHN 15:5)



1922-2024

انا هو الكرمة و انتم الاغصان

The Monthly Newsletter of

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Canton, Ohio

A parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America



Feast of the Nativity of our Lord. December 25, 2024

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Peace on Earth! Hark, the herald angels sing!

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’” (St. Luke 2:13-14)

With wars of combat raging all around the world and the invisible wars raging within our hearts, let us all come to silence and a place of quiet so that we can hear the angels singing. Let us glorify our God who is in the highest and let us receive His peace and goodwill. “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation.” (Ephesians 2:14) He has reconciled us to God and now we are one in Him as the body of Christ. We are at peace when we are in Him and believe in Him and in communion with Him.

Let us all celebrate the birth of our Savior with great joy! Let us commend ourselves to His peace!

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

I pray that this blessed season is ‘the best Christmas ever,’ as we hear from the pure hearts of our children. Let us make it ‘the best Christmas ever’ through living in His peace and for His peace in His Holy Church! ‘For the peace from above, and for the

salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord. For the peace of the whole world; for the good estate of the holy churches of God, and for the union of all men, let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mercy!

In Christ,
Fr. Michael

Thank you to all who supported and attended our first Pan-Orthodox endeavor to showcase Orthodox Films. A total of 129 attendees gathered November 17 to watch

St. Amphilochios: Saint of Patmos and Sacred Alaska at the Canton Palace Theatre. (Stark County Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood)



Basketball Tournament Personal Reflection by Elia Corbin (November 8th-10th, 2024)

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” - Psalm 133:1

The Midwest Basketball Tournament is a wonderful event that our church is blessed to host every year. As teens in our widespread diocese, we are often faced with a lack of in-person communication, and we are forced to rely on electronic means to talk with our friends which is simply not the same as being there with them. This is an opportunity where the basketball tournament can come in and bridge this gap, uniting friends who live far away and having fun over basketball games.

In my opinion, the Basketball Tournament has a three-fold purpose. The first purpose comes in the form of the actual sport of Basketball. As the name suggests, is an outlet to play Basketball together, compete with other churches and teams, and an opportunity to physically train up our skills in practices we host in the weeks leading into it. Many of us do not play basketball for our schools, but we recreationally find time to play and have fun together at each practice to prepare for the tournament. Finally, when the tournament comes, it is a competition that awards, but at its core, it's just for fun! It's important to remember that this is just church basketball, not some big competition that holds immense value. In the end, it doesn't matter who wins or loses, it's about having a good time with each other.

This takes me to what I believe is the second purpose of the Basketball Tournament, fellowship and meeting new people. It is not rare to have people come to the tournament solely to see their friends, meet new people, and engage in fellowship with our community during the tournament. Most of these reunions are from friendships formed at a summer camp like the Antiochian Village which is very popular among the teens. I met most of my friends who came to the tournament at camp, otherwise, I wouldn't be nearly as close with them or even know who they were. But reunions aren't the only thing going on, also meeting new people is a big purpose of the tournament. As nice as it is to see your friends, you also want to make new ones and make ties with other Orthodox Youth across the diocese which I saw a lot of this year.

The third and final purpose of the basketball tournament is to serve as a spiritual retreat. I credit this way of thinking to my friends in Flint, Michigan as it was not something that immediately popped out to me as a characteristic of the tournament. The basketball tournament functions as a short weekend getaway, not only to play basketball or meet people but to work together on a spiritual level. Prayer is an essential part of the tournament weekend, we pray the evening prayers before we go our separate ways, we pray before each game, and we pray together in the church for Vespers and the Divine Liturgy. Incorporating our faith into this weekend is essential, we need to remember who we are and why we are here. Teen SOYO is an Orthodox Youth Organization that seeks to integrate each young person fully into the total life of the church. In such a short, packed weekend, we can easily lose focus of this. I was very glad to see advisors talk to their groups about this, namely about keeping God in focus and making this a spiritually beneficial retreat.

If I had to define the 26th Annual Basketball Tournament in one word, I would call it a success. My reasoning behind this is multi-faceted, but it followed all the ideal purposes of a good tournament. The weekend started on Friday night when all the teens from around the Midwest started arriving at the hotel for the reception and registration period. Although some churches came significantly later, a good majority of the teens arrived and immediately started talking and bonding with the other teens. The next event of the night was when Tim Wires delivered an excellent presentation about the Armor of God and his life experience concerning it. This really kicked off the weekend to a great start and got the ball rolling for spiritual reflection during the tournament. Afterwards, more or less, is just the rest of Friday night left for socialization and engagement with teens from other churches. Many of us stayed late to welcome some of the churches who came from farther distances like St. Mary's in Palos Heights and St. Michael's in Louisville.



Saturday is by far the largest and most important day of the tournament, it is not only when the actual games are played, but also includes the evening Vespers service, Awards Presentation, Banquet, and Hafli in the evening. This year, we were able to utilize a new facility which we haven't used in the past. Instead of having games in different locations we were able to consolidate everything under a single roof at Swish 365. We had a bright and early start at 8 AM for the first game and continued energetic and exciting matches all the way until the final game started at 3:20 PM. After the games had finished everyone returned to their hotels and started preparing themselves for the evening which would have everyone attending Vespers which would immediately be followed by the banquet and awards presentation. The Vespers service really brings up the spiritual nature of the weekend, it is important to be continually prayerful and to end the evening giving thanks to God. Afterwards, Fr. Michael gave a short speech addressing the teens and dismissing them with the blessing cross to the banquet for a wonderful dinner. A wonderful group of volunteers prepared an amazing gourmet meal which received positive reviews from all the participants. Once everyone was served, Fr. Michael again addressed everyone and handed off the microphone to the current Teen SOYO President, Elia Corbin who gave a welcome speech and thanked all the participants and churches for attending, as well as the volunteers who made the weekend possible. When the food was finished, the awards were presented to the first, second, and third place winners among all three divisions with group photos being taken at each one. Finally, the banquet had concluded and the Hafli begun for a fun night of dancing and celebrating the weekend.

At last, Sunday had come along which was the last day of the basketball tournament weekend. It is an amazing experience being in the presence of a church full of young people who willingly came from both near and far to participate in this event. Fr. Michael encouraged everyone to feel as though they were at home, including inviting the boys to serve in the altar, and anyone to sing along with the choir during the Divine Liturgy. After the liturgy, we were dismissed to a farewell luncheon in which we had another great meal and said our goodbyes to everyone until next time! Glory to God for bringing us all together in fellowship this weekend, and a special thank you to all the volunteers and donors who made this weekend possible.

Basketball Tournament Winners

Division I

- 1. St. George, Cleveland, OH
- 2. St. Mary, Livonia, MI
- 3. St. George, Canton, OH

Division II

- 1. St. George, Akron, OH
- 2. St. Mary, Palos Hts., IL
- 3. St. George, Cleveland, OH

Division III

- 1. St. Mary, Palos Hts., IL
- 2. St. George, Akron, OH
- 3. St. George, Canton, OH

Teen Soyo thanks all who volunteered and donated toward this year's Basketball Tournament!
It was a huge success and we could not have done it without all of your support!



Congratulations to Nick Michael who was surprised with a Lifetime Achievement Award for Teen Soyo. Nick stepped down this year from chairing the tournament for many years but was still there to help in anyway possible. God bless you Nick!





Blessed Baptism

*Yara Rosalia Ataya
Baptized 11/9/2024.*

*Parents
Michael and Ameera Ataya.*

*Olivia Ann Oakerson
Baptized 11/16/2024*

*Parents
Adam and Laura Oakerson.*

Memory Eternal!

Prayers and condolences
to Rafik and Family on the recent passing
of Noreen Abou-Zakhim.



We would like to thank
the parishioners of St.
George for all the calls,
texts, visits and
all the love you showed to
our family during this diffi-
cult time.

Love,
Rafik Abou-Zakhim and Family



Thanks to the generosity of
our parishioners and the love
and respect for our Veterans,
we were able to donate
\$1000 to the Riders of Post
44 for their valuable work.

Thank you to Father Michael
for the blessing during the
service and to Sherry and Charlene for putting togeth-
er the pamphlet to highlight those who were remem-
bered.

December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
<p>1</p> <p>Matins 9 am Liturgy 10 am</p> <p>St. Nicholas visit after Sunday School</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Nativity Fast Compline 6:30 pm</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Catechism Class, 6-7:30 pm in the Library</p>	<p>4 Bible Study 11 am, Library</p> <p>St. Saba Matins 5:30 pm Liturgy 6:30 pm followed by blessing of St. Barbara Wheat</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Nativity Fast Compline 6:30 pm</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Great Vespers 5 pm</p>	
<p>8</p> <p>Matins 9 am Liturgy 10 am</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Nativity Fast Compline 6:30 pm</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Bible Study in the Library 11 am</p> <p>Nativity Fast Compline 6:30 pm</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Nativity Fast Compline 6:30 pm</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Great Vespers 5 pm</p>	
<p>15</p> <p>Matins 9 am Liturgy 10 am</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Nativity Fast Compline 6:30 pm</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Nativity Fast Compline 6:30 pm</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Catechism Class, 6-7:30 pm in the Library</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Nativity Forefast Vespers 6:30 pm</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Sunday School Dress Rehearsal 10am - 12 pm</p> <p>Great Vespers 5 pm</p>	
<p>22</p> <p>Matins 9 am Liturgy 10 am</p> <p>followed by the Christmas Pageant and Soyo Pasta Luncheon</p>	<p>23 Christmas Caroling 11am (Meet at Church)</p> <p>Nativity Forefast Vespers 6:30 pm</p>	<p>24 Royal Hours 10 am Nativity Festal Matins 5 pm Liturgy 6:30 pm Christmas Dinner (Covered Dish)</p>	<p>25 Christ is Born! Glorify Him!</p> 	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>College Student Dinner 6 pm at the Corbin's (RSVP to Fr. Michael or Kh. Mira)</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Great Vespers 5 pm</p>	
<p>29</p> <p>Matins 9 am Liturgy 10 am</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Circumcision of Christ/ St. Basil the Great: Matins 5:15 pm Liturgy 6:30 pm</p>	<p>Epiphany Services: Friday, January 3: Royal Hours 10 am Saturday, January 4: Vespers 5pm Sunday, January 5: Blessing of the water after Liturgy. (Eve of Feast) Great Vespers 6 pm Monday, January 6: Matins 9am; Liturgy 10am & Blessing of the water (Feast) Pan-Orthodox Outdoor Blessing of Water 12 pm Stadium Park Shelter #5</p> <p>Home Blessings will begin January 6 Contact Fr. Michael or the office to schedule your home blessing or by following Online Form: https://forms.gle/Sp7hLWrrccjDj2eV9</p>				



Congratulations to Dr. Najeeb Haddad who has just begun his work as the new Director of Translations at the OCMC (See article below). May God bless and direct Najeeb in this very important ministry!

Dr. Najeeb Haddad Named Director of Liturgical Translations Department

“One of the main priorities of the Liturgical Translations Department is the further development, future launch, and continued maintenance of the DOXA software platform,” declared new Liturgical Translations Department Director, Dr. Najeeb Haddad. “It is an invaluable tool for local liturgical translators.”



Dr. Haddad, who holds a Ph.D. in New Testament and Early Christianity from Loyola University Chicago, began his tenure at the Orthodox Christian Mission Center this past week. He is the author of several academic books as well numerous articles, and has a background in biblical languages (Classical/Koine Greek, Hebrew, and Coptic) and philological and exegetical methods. He has also served as Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Notre Dame of Maryland University, where he taught courses in Biblical studies, early Christianity, and Orthodox mystagogy.


“I’m deeply inspired by our mission and commitment to making the richness of the Orthodox faith accessible to communities around the world in their own native languages and building upon the work of my predecessor Dr. Michael Colburn, who journeyed from being a Wycliffe Bible translator to a Mission Specialist at the Mission Center, champion of this cause the past fourteen years, and the founder and developer of the DOXA software. We are well-positioned to become a leading resource in the field of liturgical translation-not only within the U.S. but, most importantly, internationally.”

Sunday School Outreach Project: Compassion Delivered.

Decorating delivery bags and creating notes... made with love!



CREATIVE ARTS 2025




Dear Sunday school teachers/ students and parents, it is that time again for the Creative Festivals! Mark your calendars - submissions are due: **SUN., MARCH 16, 2025.**

The theme for 2025 is:
**"Behold the maidservant of the Lord!
 Let it be to me according to your word."
 +Luke 1:38**

If you have any questions, please see Liz.

Thank you and God bless!



Creative Festivals 2025

Saint George Antiochian Orthodox Church

Dear Beloved Parishioner,

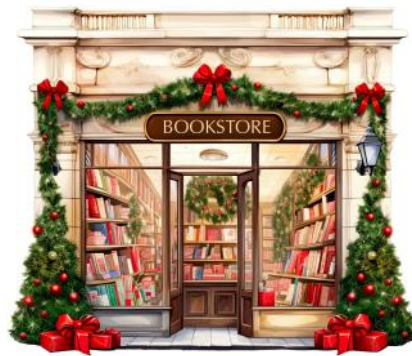
Your attendance is requested at our annual parish meeting on Sunday, January 12, 2025 following the Divine Liturgy. This meeting will include pastoral, financial and organizational reports, along with the election of new members to the Parish Council.

If you would like to be nominated for the Parish Council, we would like to know by January 5 (no nominations will be taken at the meeting itself). A Parish Council member should be exemplary in church attendance, a regular participant in the Holy Sacraments (Holy Communion and Holy Confession), a good steward and an active volunteer at church functions. Each member should also be able to frequently attend meetings. Nominations can be given to Fr. Michael.

Voting members of St. George Church are 18 years of age or older, an active participant in the life of the church-Divine Services and the Holy Sacraments, along with annually fulfilling their financial obligation (stewardship pledge and Archdiocese assessment).

We look forward to your participation at this upcoming meeting and appreciate your continued faithful dedication to your church.

In Christ,
Fr. Michael Corbin, Pastor
Greg Shaheen, Parish Council Chairman



Thank you so much, Nahi Abo Ghannam, for donating your time, talent and effort in making these beautiful Snuggly Saint Dolls for our church bookstore. May God bless and protect you always, *يسلم يدك*.



Thank you so much, Dan and Sherry Albaugh, for always being there to help with a smile on your face. Dan most recently for picking up our newest (very heavy) and beautiful bookshelf and accommodating the old coat rack so that it fits perfectly! We appreciate you!

Also, thank you to Barb O'Connor for donating the beautiful poinsettias and for helping setup for our Open House, Katia Melhem, for baking the delicious, vegan, ghreybeh cookies and Maiy Carneal for making your wonderful coffee and special drinks throughout the year at our every request.

Thank you to EVERYONE for supporting the bookstore throughout the year. It's because of your continued love and support that our St. George bookstore has been able to grow.

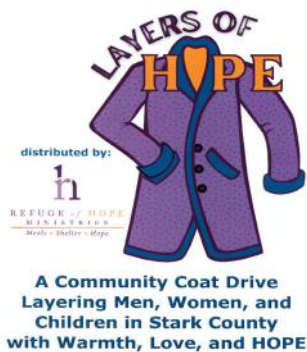
Merry Christmas and blessings for a New Year filled with peace, love and good health!

A man from a sister parish said at checkout during our Christmas Open House, "God has truly blessed this bookstore". HE TRULY HAS!

May God continue to bless you and your loved ones!



The St. George Antiochian Orthodox
Church of Canton, Ohio
1118 Cherry Avenue NE



Donation box
located
at the
social hall.
Last day to
bring coats is
12/12/24.



**Assessment Luncheon & Talent Show
Sunday, February 23, 2025**

Antiochian Women of Toledo and the Midwest Zoom Bible Study.
December 13 and December 29. Below is the link. Everyone is Welcome. Zoom Meeting Information:
Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8707006102...>
Meeting ID: 870 700 6102 Passcode: way

Live Streaming of Services on our Facebook page.
(You don't need a Facebook account to access the page and view the videos)
St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church of Canton, Ohio
<https://www.facebook.com/st.georgeantiochiancanton/>

Online Word magazine:
www.antiochian.org/theword
Subscription to Word Magazine:
<https://forms.gle/ZcYq1HD1tPp7SXHT9>

Online Giving Option

St. George Church has an online giving/stewardship option on our website.
God bless you for your support and we sincerely thank you for your contribution.

Online Stewardship Option:
<http://www.stgeorgecanton.com/stewardship.html>

You can also set up a bill pay through your bank and an automated check will come to the church (a free service).

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
A parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
1118-1122 Cherry Ave. N.E. Canton, Ohio 44704 - 1036

Office hours are 9:00 am - 1:00 pm
Phone: 330 455 8482
Email: stgeorgecanton@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.stgeorgecanton.com
Like our St. George facebook site.
<https://www.facebook.com/st.georgeantiochiancanton>