

September 2024

THE VINE

الكرمة

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



1922-2024

انا هو الكرمة و انتم الاتصان

The Monthly Newsletter of

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Canton, Ohio

A parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

The Recovery and Translation of the Relics of St. Raphael of Brooklyn

by Elia Corbin

“God is wondrous in His saints.” - Psalm 67:36

The disinterment and exhuming of a saint's relics is something that you commonly only experience once in your lifetime. In the days leading up to this holy event, our counselors made multiple things clear to us; one was that this was most likely the only time something like this would happen for a very long time, that it was the creation of a feast day, and that we were going to witness history on Thursday, July 18th, 2024 - the day that was selected for this event to take place. As such, we (the campers) were cautioned on a few things; notably, they had no idea what they would find, if the saint was incorrupt, or the state of the actual grave.

When the day came, there was a mystical feel in the air, it didn't feel real to us that we were about to see the actual relics of the holy Saint Raphael whom we had prayed to and sung hymns to for so many years. To allow for an environment of reverence, the entire day preceding the exhuming of the saint was kept under strict silence. At the Antiochian Village, the first thing we do after we leave our cabins is a morning prayer service. On this particular day, it was a supplication service to St. Raphael for the approaching disinterment. The hymns for St. Raphael were sung with such strength and enthusiasm, as every single camper sang the praises of the soon-to-be physically present saint.

After the supplication service, we were dismissed to breakfast as usual, but due to the silent atmosphere of the camp that day, it resulted in the usually loud and bustling dining hall being completely silent at breakfast, a stark contrast to the other meals. During breakfast, a staff member was tasked with reading the entire life of St. Raphael of Brooklyn, this is akin to how monastics eat in silence and listen to the lives of the saints and other spiritually edifying books.

After breakfast had concluded, we were all dismissed to the grave site of the camp where multiple clergy were buried, of which St. Raphael was included. What happened past this point was something that we took in with pure awe. Hundreds of campers with their counselors surrounded the grave area looking quietly and reverently at the events taking place. We were met with the sight of hierarchs, priests, deacons, and doctors all around the grave site undergoing its final digging to uncover the remains of whatever lay beneath. His Eminence Metropolitan SABA presided over the translation, joined by Their Graces, Bishop THOMAS, Bishop JOHN, and Bishop NICHOLAS. At this point in the day, the exhuming had begun, a process that would take around two hours. During the whole event, a beautiful choir was assembled of great Byzantine chanters from around the country who sang hymns in English and Arabic for the saint. An issue that came up was the amount of deterioration and debris that had accumulated in the grave. Water had found its way down to this vault containing the wooden casket of the saint, ruining it and only requiring yet more caution. After taking many turns draining the vault, five skulls, dozens of bones, vestments, hair, nerves, and even some actual skin and flesh were recovered. Due to the harsh environment of the remains, the relics had somewhat corrupted in some areas (only bones were left), however, portions of the saint's relics did remain incorrupt and in the same condition they were when he reposed.

The next challenge that was presented to the clergy was identifying which remains belonged to the saint. This solution came quickly, as they identified his casket and three signature identifiers that were unique to St. Raphael when he was buried. One is his golden cross which remained like new, almost shiny, which was inscribed in Arabic with his name “ARH Raphael Hawaweeny”. Once this was found, Metropolitan SABA held up the cross for all to see and read it aloud. The second finding was a purple mandiya, a long mantle/cape which is attached at the top and bottom and worn by a bishop. The third was his distinct golden mitre (crown) which identified him as a third piece of evidence.

After all of these findings, Metropolitan SABA was satisfied with the findings and had the medical examiners arrange the bones in a human form and wash them if required. Once the clergy had washed the St. Raphael's skulls and bones were placed on a special plate, and the Metropolitan led us in a procession into the church to finish the service. Once inside, they were censed and all sang hymns to the Holy Saint, now physically present right in front of us. I have never heard such fervent and loud singing in my experience at services, I'm convinced not a single person kept silent in singing the hymns dedicated to this saint. Once the service ended, every camper, staff member, and clergyman was able to kiss the skull, bones, golden cross, and icon of the saint. This event was a very blessed one where a saint was translated and was physically present with us in the church. The saints are not a thing of the past! They are with us here and now.

BLESSED FIRST DAY OF SUNDAY SCHOOL - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8



Dear St. George parents and families,

Welcome to a new year of Sunday school. We are eager to get back to teaching and passing on the faith to the youth. Our classes will be focusing on "Salvation to the Ends of the Earth" lessons from the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.

Our teachers this year are as follows;

Preschool: Heather Panopoulos, Nour Kelly

Grades K-2: Monica Griffin, Nejla Shaheen

Grades 3-5: Kh. Mira Corbin, Faiz Simone

Grades 6-8: Walid Bardawil, Beth Starkey

Grades 9-12: Michelle Wires

Adult Class: Andy Alleman, Najeeb Haddad and Steven Starkey



*anyone able/willing to be on our roster as a substitute when needed please contact Sarah Joseph

In Christ, Sarah Joseph



Congratulations to the newly elected Teen Soyo officers!

President; Elia Corbin,
Vice President; Noah Shaheen
Secretary; Peter Cazantzes,
Treasurer; Michael Wires,
Historian; Grace Michael.



On Monday, August 19, we held a Holy Bread Making demonstration for our Catechism Class.



On the Blessed Feast of the Holy Transfiguration of our Lord, we were blessed to receive the Aguirre Family (Rafael, Jennifer, Cecilia, Marcos and Adrian) into the Holy Orthodox Church through Holy Chrismation, Holy Confession and Holy Communion.



May God bless the Aguirres on this blessed Feast! Welcome Home!



St. George Volunteer Day at the Food Bank



Looking Ahead

Next Volunteer Day at the Food Bank 10/21 (9-11:30am)

✦ ST GEORGE BOOKSTORE

NEW IN STOCK

Embroidered cotton bag (two designs) \$8.00 for holding Holy bread/ Qurban/Prosphora and other religious items. Measures 5.25" wide x 7.50" tall.

Limited quantity!



Memory Eternal!

Our prayers and condolences are with Najeeb and Marie Haddad on the recent passing of Najeeb's grandmother Leyouni Haddad in Chicago.

The icon of St. Raphael was donated by Leila Andrews for the health of her family and in memory of her loved ones.



The cross was donated by Shafeeka Shaheen for the health of her family and in memory of her loved ones.



On August 4, we were blessed to receive Jordan Saylor as a new Catechumen. Welcome Home!

September

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 Beginning of Ecclesiastical Year</p> <p>Matins 9 am Liturgy 10 am</p>	2	3	<p>4 Basketball Practice 6:30 pm</p>	5	6	<p>7 Great Vespers 5 pm</p>
<p>8 First day of Sunday School</p> <p>Matins 9 am Liturgy 10 am Mini Picnic</p>	<p>9 Catechism Class, 6-7:30 pm in the Library</p>	<p>10 Parish Council Meeting 6 pm</p>	11	12	<p>13 Elevation of the Cross Matins 5 pm; Procession with the Holy Cross 6:15 pm; Liturgy 6:30 pm followed by bonfire</p>	<p>14 Fast Day</p> <p>Great Vespers 5 pm</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Matins 9 am Liturgy 10 am</p>	16	17	<p>18 Bible Study in the Library 11 am</p> <p>Basketball Practice 6:30 pm</p>	19	<p>20 Paraklesis Service 6:30 pm</p>	<p>21 Great Vespers 5 pm</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Matins 9 am Liturgy 10 am</p>	<p>23 St. Thekla Matins 5:30 pm Divine Liturgy 6:30 pm</p>	24	<p>25 Bible Study in the Library 11 am</p>	<p>26 Food Ministry 9 am</p>	<p>27 Paraklesis Service 6:30 pm</p>	<p>28 Great Vespers 5 pm</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Matins 9 am Liturgy 10 am</p>	<p>30 Catechism Class, 6-7:30 pm in the Library</p>	<div style="border: 2px solid purple; padding: 10px;">  <p style="text-align: center;">Basketball Tournament November 8-10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Basketball Practices, Every Other Wednesday, (9/18, 10/2, 10/16) 6:30-8 pm. Welcome boys and girls ages 12 + as we prepare for the basketball tournament.</p>  </div>				

CHURCH PICNIC

August 18, 2024

St. George parishioners and their friends attended the annual picnic. In spite of the weather it was a beautiful day with great fellowship. We had 70 volunteers working to make this another successful picnic. The food sales netted around \$ 3,000.00.. Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers & supporters of our Annual Church Picnic.



Dan Albaugh was our DJ.

The Ladies of St. George Church Picnic Bake Sale last month was a huge success! Thank you to everyone who worked the sale, baked delicious desserts & supported us by purchasing baked goods at the sale. We made just under \$900 which will be used by the Ladies to support charitable causes in our Canton community. Thank you & God Bless you all, Marilyn Shaheen (President, Ladies of St. George)





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

• Upcoming • events

MIDWEST DIOCESE FAMILY FALL GATHERING
ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH, GRAND RAPIDS, MI
OCTOBER 18-20, 2024 (stnicholasgr.com/fall-gathering/)

Basketball Tournament - November 8-10, 2024

SUNDAY SCHOOL FALL OUTING RAMSEYER FARMS

4000 Ramseyer Lane, Wooster, OH 44691

October 6, 2-7 pm
(Sunday hours at the farm, 1-7 pm)

Tickets are preordered so RSVP
to Maiy Carneal by Tuesday, October 1st.
Group picture at 4 p.m. Campfire snacks

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).

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