

# the Light



JANUARY 2022  
NEWSLETTER

## DOMSE CLERGY & WINTER RETREATS

St. Elias, Atlanta, GA | [REGISTER HERE!](#)

Clergy Retreat: January 26 - 27, 2022

Winter Retreat: January 28 - 29, 2022



February 18-21, 2022 | [REGISTER HERE!](#)

**CAMP ST. THEKLA  
WINTER CAMP 2022  
(WAMP)**

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## Parish Spotlight

### ARCHANGEL GABRIEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

#### CLERGY

V. Rev. Dr. Stephen De Young, Pastor

**FEAST DAY:** Synaxis of the Holy  
Archangels, November 8th

**EMAIL:** [info@stgabriellafayette.org](mailto:info@stgabriellafayette.org)

**WEBSITE:** [stgabriellafayette.org](http://stgabriellafayette.org)



## Archangel Gabriel Orthodox Church Lafayette, LA



Archangel Gabriel Orthodox Church is located in Lafayette, Louisiana, the heart of Acadiana. Founded 27 years ago as a mission of St. Michael parish in Beaumont, Texas, Archangel Gabriel is a thriving parish bringing the Orthodox Christian faith to Southwest Louisiana. In addition to weekend and festal services, Vespers is held weekly on Wednesdays, followed by Bible Study. This parish Bible Study is re-broadcast by Ancient Faith Ministries as the podcast: The Whole Counsel of God.

Archangel Gabriel has active Antiochian Men and Antiochian Women groups. Our women's group actively pursues works of mercy and help in the community. Our men's group works to maintain and improve our church facility. Both groups work toward growing spiritually together in Christ. The focus at Archangel Gabriel is on living, working, and worshipping together as a community and a family; loving each other and reaching out to the greater Lafayette community and the Acadiana region as a whole.





## FEATURED ORGANIZATION

# Christian Education

### DOMSE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COORDINATOR:

Anna-Sarah Farha | St. George Church, Jacksonville, FL

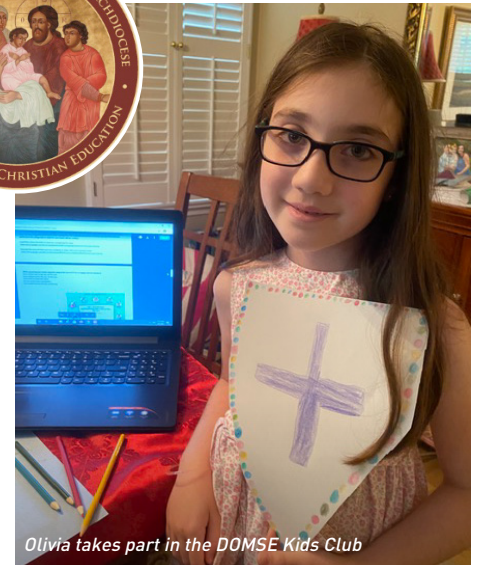


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DOMSE Christian Education is an active, vibrant ministry made up of more than 30 Sunday Church Schools across the diocese. With a shared goal of providing the best in Orthodox Christian education for students, our group of Sunday Church School directors, teachers, and the Christian Ed Coordinator come together throughout the year at the DOMSE fall retreat, Parish Life Conference, and virtual business meetings. For the past several months, all Christian Ed meetings and workshops have been virtual but that hasn't stopped us from sharing resources and programs. In fact, three DOMSE Sunday Church School directors recently contributed to a project from the Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education which benefitted all Sunday Church Schools across the

Archdiocese in preparing for the safe return of students to Sunday Church School classrooms after an extended break due to Pandemic closures. With the support of His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS, DOMSE Christian Ed has hosted four rounds of virtual Kids Club since the summer of 2020, bringing students together with their Orthodox Christian peers during a time when in-person learning and fellowship often weren't possible. And Sayidna NICHOLAS joined DOMSE's youngest members for multiple online sessions! A blessing for all! If you are not already involved with Christian Ed at the parish level, prayerfully consider approaching your priest and church school director about service opportunities. On behalf of all of the DOMSE Sunday Church

School students and their families, we offer an immense "thank you" to all of our dedicated educators for their enthusiasm and commitment to the highest standard of Orthodox Christian education for our diocese.



Olivia takes part in the DOMSE Kids Club



## Barbecue, Blues, and Beatitudes



Join us in **Memphis, June 15-18** for the **2022 Parish Life Conference**



**DIocese of MIAMI & THE SOUTHEAST**  
Host Parish: St. John Orthodox Church, Memphis, TN

the  
Light

AMEN  
ANTIOCHIANMEN.ORG

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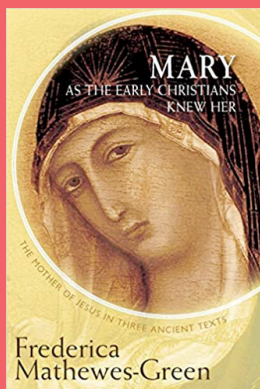
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION  
DOMSECHRISTIANED



## NAB Book Club

Each year, the North American Board of the Antiochian Women (NAB) chooses a book for all of the ladies of the Archdiocese to read together. This act of participating with each other from all over the continent brings a cohesiveness to our women and binds us together with another common thread. This year we are reading *Mary as the Early Christians Knew Her* by Frederica Mathewes-Green.

Many of our women's groups across DOMSE are hosting book clubs and joining in fellowship in their local parishes. But we also look forward to discussing the book and spending time together as the Antiochian Women of DOMSE in Memphis this June! If you have any questions about the book or would like to share book study ideas, you are welcome to contact Sh. Shell Keim at [shellkeim@gmail.com](mailto:shellkeim@gmail.com)



# Mission Spotlight

## Saint Paul Orthodox Church Tupelo, MS

### CLERGY

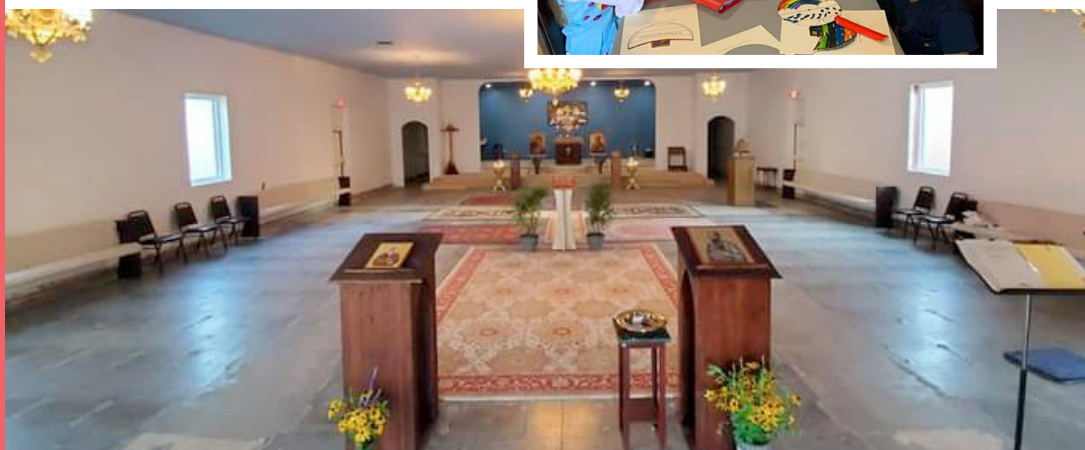
The Rev. Father David Bibeau, Pastor

**WEBSITE:** [orthodoxtupelo.com](http://orthodoxtupelo.com)

**EMAIL:** [frdavid@orthodoxtupelo.com](mailto:frdavid@orthodoxtupelo.com)



St. Paul is located in the small but bustling city of Tupelo, Mississippi. We have recently moved from an office building into a historic Church, and much of the last year has been occupied with renovating our new space. The pandemic has brought an influx of young men who are seeking deeper meaning and the fullness of the Christian faith. Catechism classes are taught after coffee hour on Sundays. Bible Study is done after Vespers on Wednesday where we are currently reading different versions of the Prophet Jeremiah side by side. Our dedicated Sunday school teachers are leading our youth to a clear understanding of the Church and her Scriptures. The goal of our high school program is to graduate students who can navigate the Bible and grasp the basic flow of salvation history. Our chapter of Antiochian Women are involved in the many outreach opportunities provided by our local Salvation Army such as Angel Tree – a program that helps give Christmas gifts to underprivileged children. In the past we have celebrated our patronal feast of Sts. Peter and Paul with a luncheon and a call to invite friends and family to Divine Liturgy.





# Words from Sayedna Nicholas



As we start a new year, we begin with a new hope for a successful period of time on many fronts, while being eager to leave behind undesired matters. Without hope, life may not seem to be worth the effort. Looking forward to a future occasion causes the soul to be open to new endeavors and gives rise to new optimism signaling the merit of life. Having a renewed appreciation for normal and easier life, while living under the duress of the pandemic, the new hope is that normalcy becomes prevalent again. Notwithstanding, many parishes have seen a silver lining to the uncertainty of the past two years in that they grew spiritually and in numbers. Such positive progress reminds me of the cocoon adage. A worm generates a cocoon around itself to prepare to become a butterfly. A person once witnessed the butterfly's struggle to leave the cocoon behind by exiting through a small hole. He decided to help it by cutting the cocoon with a pair of scissors. The butterfly was left buzzing in circles around itself on the ground without being able to fly. As it turned out, the struggle to leave the cocoon was crucial to force fluids out of the wings into the body, thus taking away the weight from the wings, and further enabling the butterfly to use its wings to fly. We too, as a diocese, have struggled throughout the last two years giving birth to a spiritual renewal, an increase in the faithful's numbers, and even a creation of a new mission in Concord, NC, Christ the Good Shepherd mission, and potential new missions.

December ushered in an elevation to the Archpriesthood of Fr. Stephen DeYoung on the 12th at his parish of the Archangel Gabriel church, Lafayette, LA, and the ordination to the Holy Diaconate of Franklin Tait on the 26th at St. Stephen Church, Hiram, GA. Both events were memorable and worth mentioning given the sizable contributions of Fr. Stephen to his parish and the diocese and the generous help extended by Franklin to his parish.

The January spiritual corner continues by presenting three further virtues to the nine offered in the last three months.

**Faith** is believing in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is believing that God is all good, in His ability to save us, and in His promises to mankind as outlined in Scripture and the Tradition. Nevertheless, faith is not blind as St. Paul said, "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21)"

**Faithfulness** is commonly confused with faith. They are, however, two distinctly different virtues. Faithfulness is to be totally loyal and unwavering to our commitments and vocations. It is to persist steadfastly and courageously, consistently with God's will, in our commitments and devotion no matter what the circumstances are, in humility, love, and truth. Such faithfulness is rewarded by our Lord as He stated, "Well done good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord" (Matthew 25:23)

**Kindness** is often confused with being nice. Kindness is a virtue. But being nice is not a virtue! Being nice can be dishonest! Therefore, we are to be kind but not nice! Kindness is looking out for the benefit of another person in a genuine way despite the possibility of being disliked. It is being truthful with love and gentleness, especially when correcting another person. God Himself is kind, "For His merciful kindness is great toward us, And the truth of the Lord endures forever." (Psalm 117:2)

Shifting gears to administrative matters, registration has opened on December 15 for the **in-person Clergy Annual Retreat**, which will be held on January 26th and 27th, and for the **in-person Winter Annual Retreat**, which will be held on January 28th and 29th. Both retreats are planned to be held at St. Elias Church, Atlanta, GA. In addition, registration has opened on December 15 for the **Winter Camp, AKA WAMP at Camp St. Thekla**, which is planned to take place on Feb 18th through the 20th. We need not forget the **in-person Parish Life Conference (PLC)** that is hosted by St. John Church Memphis, TN during the period of June 16 through June 18, inclusively. God bless you all!

Dec 15 - Jan 15  
**WINTER CAMP  
REGISTRATION  
IS OPEN!**  
domse.org/event/wintercamp2022/  
Camp Dates  
Feb. 18-21, 2022



## Editor's Corner

At the Feast of Theophany, we celebrate and remember our Lord Jesus Christ's baptism in the Jordan River by St. John the Forerunner. At first, St. John hesitates to baptize our Lord Jesus, because he says that he is not worthy. But our Lord encourages him, saying that it is fitting for Him to be baptized in order to fulfill all righteousness (Mat. 3:15).

For us, the waters of baptism purify us and cleanse us from all sin, and they are the beginning of our new life in Christ in His Holy Church. However, as the Son of God and God, our Lord Jesus does not need to be baptized in order to be purified from anything. Instead, St. Gregory of Nyssa teaches us that "Jesus enters the filthy, sinful waters of the world and when He comes out, brings up and purifies the entire world with Him" (The Orthodox Study Bible). In other words, He is baptized in order to bless, purify, cleanse, sanctify, and restore the waters, all of us, and the entire created world.

It is no accident then, that we bless and sanctify holy water every year at the Feast of Theophany so that it can be used to bless all of us, our homes, those in distress, icons, crosses, graves, and even our vehicles. And this helps us to see that the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ springs up from His Body the Church and extends to every corner of our lives – renewing us and allowing us to minister to the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

But the outdoor blessing of the waters shows us even more than this. For when we throw a cross into a local body of water, we see that the divine grace of our Lord spreads out in every direction from the Precious and Life-Giving Cross – carried along by every ripple of water from the place where it is submerged to the ends of the earth. And this blessing renews the whole creation which groans and waits for the revelation of the sons and daughters of God (Rom. 8:19); and it also extends to so many people who would never think to enter into an Orthodox church and are thus not yet ready to receive a blessing. Glory to God! For He shows His great love for us in this, that while we were still dirty and set on our own destruction, Christ was baptized for us and offers us new life (Rom. 5:8)! May we extend this blessing to everything and everyone!

## Upcoming Events

### JANUARY

#### DOMSE CLERGY & WINTER RETREATS

St. Elias, Atlanta, GA

Clergy Retreat: January 26-27, 2022

Winter Retreat: January 28-29, 2022

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)

[CLERGY RETREAT SCHEDULE](#)

[WINTER RETREAT SCHEDULE](#)

### FEBRUARY

#### CAMP ST. THEKLA WINTER CAMP (WAMP)

February 18-21, 2022

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)

### MARCH

#### AMEN LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL CHAPTER PRESIDENTS MEETING

March 1, 2022

8:00 pm - 9:00 pm EST

#### AMEN VIRTUAL LENTEN RETREAT

March 26, 2022

10:00 am - 1:30 pm EDT

### APRIL

#### TEEN SOYO CYBER RETREAT

April 2, 2022

Details to come!

#### ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT

April 9, 2022

Details to come!

### JUNE

#### 2022 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE

St. John Orthodox Church

Memphis, TN

June 15 - June 18, 2022



**IF YOU HAVE ARTICLES OR SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LIGHT NEWSLETTER, PLEASE EMAIL THEM TO [DOMSENEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DOMSENEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM)**

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