

the Light



NOVEMBER 2022
NEWSLETTER



**ANNUAL AMEN
VIRTUAL RETREAT**

November 19, 2022

10:00 am - 1:30 pm EDT - Zoom

**DOMSE CLERGY &
WINTER RETREATS 2023**

January 24-29, 2023

Details to come!

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Parish Spotlight

**ST. PETER ANTIOCHIAN
ORTHODOX CHURCH**

CLERGY

Rev. Fr. Hans Jacobse

FEAST DAY

July 29, the feast day of Saints
Peter and Paul

WEBSITE: stpeterorthodoxchurch.com



St. Peter Antiochian Orthodox Church Fort Myers, FL

St. Peter's parish in Fort Myers Florida, started as a mission about twelve years ago with a group of people meeting in the home of a parishioner to sing the Paraklesis to the Theotokos during the Dormition Fast in August. That grew into bible studies and other activities. We worshiped on Sundays at St. Paul Orthodox Church in Naples, Florida, where we were graciously received by Fr. Joseph Shaheen, the presiding priest at the time.

Our first location was a meeting room in a Holiday Inn off the freeway nearby; sometimes meeting with only twelve people which we considered a good Sunday! We were there for about four years and grew, slowly at first but then increasing as the years went by.

When the time came to find a more secure location, we found a development of empty furniture show rooms (spacious with large ceilings) and rented one. It worked! We were able to build out the new site in a way that fostered an Orthodox ethos, and more people began to attend, including inquirers who eventually joined the fold.

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(St. Peter - continued from page 1)

As we grew, we rented out another bay that connected to ours. We installed a door between the bays and the new space became our social hall. A full cycle of services and social events started up and we were on our way.

After six years in the rental property, we began to outgrow it. Our expanding membership exceeded the space and we looked for a permanent location. A Presbyterian Church about four miles north of us went up for sale. It included a church building, social hall, and storage units. We bought it. We are now in a permanent location with five acres of buildable land. One day, God willing, we want to construct an Orthodox temple on the property.

Our journey is not without challenges and struggles. Most recently Hurricane Ian hit us. The church suffered wind damage but fortunately no water

damage. The grounds were a mess including downed trees and debris everywhere. Two parishioners lost their homes, others sustained severe damage, and some lost their cars in the flood. This was a call to support and help one another and we did (and are still doing) just that.

Currently we have about ten catechumens and inquirers. What started as eleven people has now reached about 130 members. Orthodoxy has a bright future in Southwest Florida! We celebrate our feast day with our sister parish of St. Paul in Naples, FL, on July 29, the feast day of Saints Peter and Paul. We alternate the location of the festal celebration every year. The collaborative work with our sister parish of St. Paul creates effects that reach well beyond our numbers. May God be glorified in all things.

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U.S. Hurricane Relief
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THANK YOU!





Mission Spotlight

St. Anna Orthodox Church Columbia, TN

CLERGY

Rev. Fr. Andrew Short

FEAST DAY

July 25 – The Dormition of St. Anna

WEBSITE: www.stannacolumbia.org

EMAIL: FrAndrewShort@gmail.com



STANNACOLUMBIA



STANNACOLUMBIA



On November 1, 2018, a group of former parishioners from St. Ignatius Orthodox Church in Franklin, TN, were given the blessing and name of St. Anna from His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH to officially begin meeting and offering Orthodox liturgical services as a mission in Columbia, TN. The Very Reverend Fr. Stephen Rogers, who had only one year earlier retired from St. Ignatius after serving as the senior Priest for over twenty years, was asked to serve as the Priest at St. Anna and Fr. Andrew Short was ordained as a Deacon and continued to assist Fr. Stephen in that capacity until he was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on May 30, 2021, replacing Fr. Stephen who retired for a second time.

In 2018, when this mission was officially chartered as St. Anna, we numbered about twenty-five men, women, and children. At this date, four years later, the mission has a membership of sixty-five and we are welcoming new visitors and inquirers nearly every week. Several are currently catechumens preparing for Baptism and Chrismation in 2023.

St. Anna has active monthly men's, women's, and youth ministries as well as a weekly church school for children ages 3-12 using the Catechesis of the

Good Shepherd program. The men have been taking turns giving brief reports about their patronal saints at the monthly "Men's Night Out" at a local restaurant. They also meet one Saturday morning each quarter to go to the homes of the older single women and widows to do "odd jobs" for them as a part of the Job 29:13 Ministry, "And I made the widow's heart sing for joy." Fr. Andrew recently led a weekend pilgrimage for the men of St. Anna to the Sacred Monastery of St. Iakovos near Oklahoma City.



The women of St. Anna meet every other month for a Sunday luncheon and are currently preparing for their first craft sale in November where the proceeds will benefit the local crisis pregnancy center. The women have worked together to provide meals for

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(St. Anna - continued from page 2)

those who have been sick in the parish as well as beautifying the temple with flowers and special preparations for feasts, including the Patronal Feast of St. Anna on July 25.

Our teens have just completed a 12-month study from Faithtree.org called The Relationship Project and are about to begin a year-long study of the book of Genesis. Several of our teens attended camp this summer at Camp St. Thekla, enjoyed our annual Labor Day canoe trip down the Duck River, serve as acolytes and readers at the chanter's stand and help with childcare when needed during the Wednesday evening discussions and teachings.

One of the historic milestones of our young mission during the past twelve months was the purchase of 5.3 acres of land on a major road entering the city of Columbia for our future permanent church building. His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS came to St. Anna in December 2021, to officially bless our land and to plant a cross on it to dedicate the space for God's glory. Our building committee is currently collaborating with an Orthodox architect to plan and design the future building to be built on this land, God willing.

Please pray for our mission, visit us when you have reason to be in middle Tennessee and send any friends or family members who may want to join



us in the fastest growing county in Tennessee. We agree that Columbia, TN, is a wonderful place to live and to raise our families!



NAB Book Club

Each year the NAB (North American Board of the Antiochian Women of the Archdiocese) selects a book for all the ladies of the Archdiocese to read together. There is just something "connecting" about reading a book together. It is like saying the same prayers, serving the same feasts, singing the same hymns – there is a connectedness to our lives that brings us into communion with each other, even across the miles.

Our diocese covers many miles but the things we do that are in common give us a special bond that strengthens our faith in God and our love for each other.

This year the NAB has chosen the book *Welcoming Gifts – Sacrifice in the Bible and Christian Life* by the Rt. Rev. Archimandrite Jeremy Davis. At first glance, this book is a little longer than our ladies may have been used to in the past. I would encourage you to not let that stop you from gathering, reading, and discussing this challenging and uplifting text.

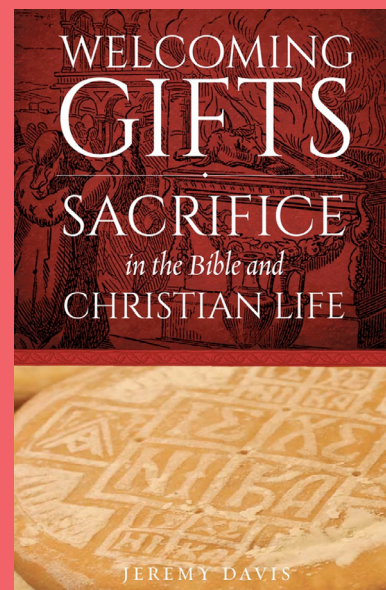
I know many of our parishes have book clubs that meet during the year and enjoy fellowship with breakfast in the morning, or tea in the evening. I would encourage you to figure out a way to have your ladies meet in person and discuss this book. If you have a large group, then meeting is easy but if you are working with just a few ladies it can be challenging. I suggest inviting a few ladies to a home one evening a month, or even two or three could gather at a coffee shop for fellowship and discuss the book. I know that if we give this book a chance and read it as a diocese we will grow together in Christ. Sayedna NICHOLAS encourages us to become like God and this is one way we can work toward that goal.

However you choose to do it, just take it a chapter at a time and allow God to work in and through the Antiochian Women of your parish. Keep me posted on how this is going – I love to hear from our ladies around the diocese.



You can find the book on Amazon and other [Orthodox book distributors](#). Happy reading!

Sh. Shell Keim
DOMSE Antiochian Women President



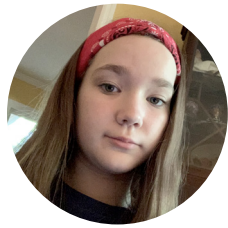


Support Your Diocese

DONATE TO:

Camp St. Thekla
DOMSE Scholarship
Antiochian Men
Antiochian Women
Young Adult Fellowship
Teen SOYO
or a General Donation

Thank You!



Teen SOYO

OFFICER INTRODUCTION:

DOMSE SOYO VICE PRESIDENT

Susannah Bandy | St. Elias Orthodox Church, Atlanta, GA

My name is Susannah Bandy, and I am excited to say that I am your new DOMSE Teen SOYO vice president!

I'm a homeschooled 16-year-old from Atlanta, Georgia, and the youngest of five children. Right now, I'm the only child at home, as all my siblings just went off to college this year. I'm a dancer of eleven years, I love to play guitar, sing, talk with friends, and cook. I love to make chocolate chip cookies, Swedish meatballs, caramels, and lots of desserts and dinners. I love to help in the kitchen at church when I can as well.

The friends I've made at the DOMSE retreats, Camp Saint Thekla, and through mutual friends have been the best ones yet, and I've found having those friends beneficial to my relationship with God. One of our goals this year is to strengthen Teen SOYO, since a lot of parishes don't have much of an active group anymore. It's especially important for youth to have good connections with other Orthodox youth, since it is easy to be drawn away from God when you don't have many Orthodox peers.

I hope to meet a lot of new teens this year and stay connected with them throughout the years!



SAVE THE DATE!

Winter Camp

Feb. 17-20, 2023





Words from Sayedna Nicholas

Usually, I use the monthly newsletter address of The Light as a further spiritual formation article to discuss a spiritual concept from the Scriptures, the Tradition, or the lives of the Saints. However, today we have an issue at hand that is supremely important. It has the potential to shape our future (spiritual) lives for years and possibly decades to come. This issue at hand is the election of a new metropolitan after the Holy Synod accepted Metropolitan Joseph's retirement request on October 18, 2022.

Patriarch JOHN X has appointed Metropolitan ANTONIOS Al-Souri as the Patriarchal Vicar. His Eminence is the Metropolitan of Zahle, and Baalbek, and Dependencies, Lebanon. When His Eminence arrives in our Archdiocese, he will lead the process of nominating candidates for the office of Metropolitan. The process is involved and has multiple steps in accordance with the Archdiocese Constitution:

1. The Patriarchal Vicar has sixty days to call for a Nominating Convention and name a specific location, date, and time.
2. In his call for this convention, he will mention how the voting process will take place
3. In the same call, he will mention the qualified candidates' names and where to find their resumes.

The candidates' qualifications are listed in two sources:

1. The Archdiocese Constitution.

The Archdiocese Constitution lists the following requirements in Article I, Section 4, Part A (the qualifications are listed verbatim):

- a) He must be one of the canonical clergy who is qualified in all respects, including the possession of an earned degree in Orthodox theology and be a man of piety and good character.
- b) He must be fluent in the English language and have a good working knowledge of the Arabic language.

- c) He must be at least thirty-three (33) years of age.
- d) He must be physically and mentally sound.
- e) He must have been in accordance with the statutes of the Patriarchate of Antioch, a member of the clergy of the Patriarchate for five years, and have served some time, as clergyman in the Archdiocese.

2. The Patriarchate of Antioch Constitution.

The Patriarchate Constitution lists the following requirements in Section 5 (the qualifications are translated into English from Arabic):

- a) He is a son of the Antiochian See.
- b) He is knowledgeable of the Arabic language and the language of the Archdiocese he is a candidate for.
- c) He is at least thirty-three (33) years old and younger than sixty-five (65) years old.
- d) He holds a theology degree from St. John of Damascus Theology institute or from another Orthodox seminary.
- f) He is listed on the Synodal List of qualifications to the Episcopacy.

We all need to pray to our Lord Jesus Christ and ask Him to guide His Eminence Metropolitan ANTONIOS to direct the process of nomination, and guide the clergy, and the laity to vote for the suitable candidates.

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(Sayedna - continued from page 6)

As we nominate candidates during the Nominating Convention, His Eminence Metropolitan ANTONIOS will send the top three vote-getters' names to our Father in Christ Patriarch JOHN X and the Holy Synod. His Beatitude can call for a special Holy Synod meeting to elect a new metropolitan for our God-protected Archdiocese soon after the nominees' names have been identified.

Despite the hardship that our God-protected archdiocese has been going through, we need to persevere and be laser-focused on our personal spirituality and our diocesan spirituality for this is the only way not to be swept into anxiety, unfocused spiritual life, and gossip. For this reason, I urge all to continue efforts to concentrate on the diocesan matters and personal spiritual concerns that we can affect rather than worrying about issues that we have no control over.

At this point in time, we have started to shift gears to begin planning for the **2023 Clergy and Winter Retreats** which will be held at St. Elias Church, Atlanta, GA. The Clergy Retreat will be on the 25th and 26th of January and the Winter Retreat will take place on January 27th and 28th of January. All are welcome to stay for the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Sunday the 29th of January. I look forward to seeing you all at St. Elias Church. Further information will be forthcoming.

For further information regarding the rest of the Fall, 2022 schedule and the 2023 winter, spring, and summer schedules, please point your cursor to DOMSE.org and scroll down to the listed events.

May God bless you and may the Holy Trinity protect you all.

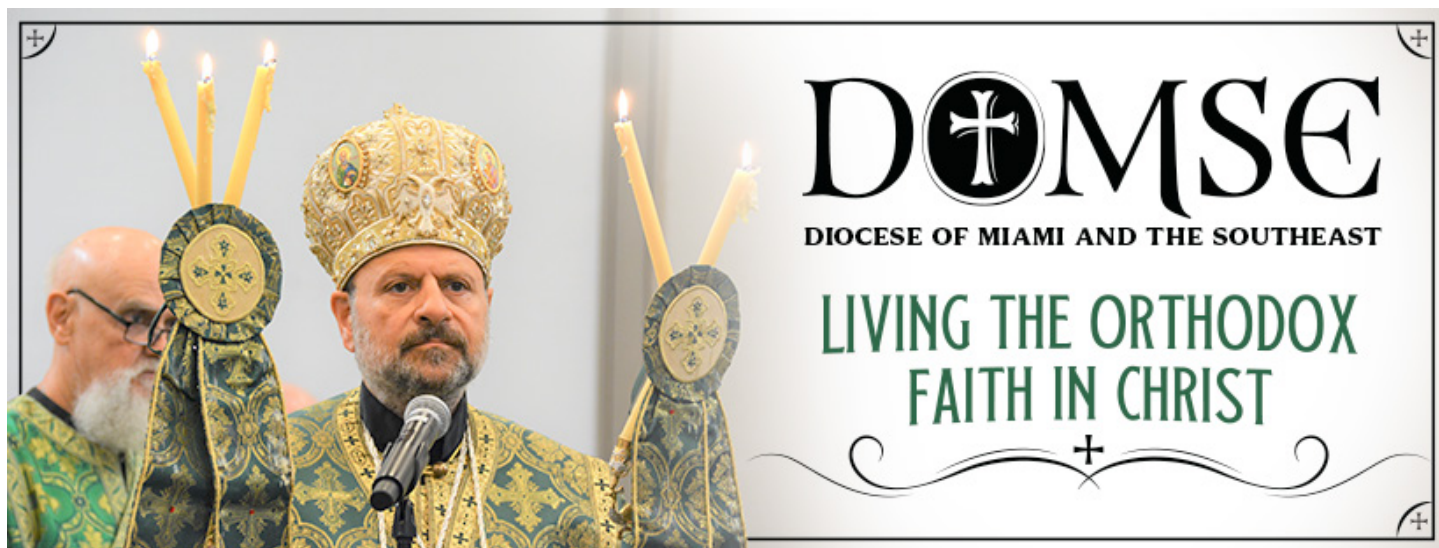
A banner for the 2023 Clergy and Winter Retreats. The background is a photograph of a church steeple with a cross on top, set against a blue sky. The text is in yellow and white. It includes the dates for the Clergy Retreat (January 25-26, 2023) and the Winter Retreat (January 27-28, 2023), the location (St. Elias Orthodox Church, Atlanta, GA), and the website DOMSE.org. A 'Save the Date' graphic is in the top right corner.

January 25 – 26, 2023
Clergy Retreat
Clergy arrive on Jan. 24

January 27 – 28, 2023
Winter Retreat
DOMSE Faithful arrive on Jan. 26

Hosted at
St. Elias Orthodox Church
Atlanta, GA

Save the Date

A banner for the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast (DOMSE). The left side features a photograph of a bishop in ornate vestments and a mitre, with two lit candles. The right side has the DOMSE logo and text. The text reads 'DOMSE', 'DIOCESE OF MIAMI AND THE SOUTHEAST', and 'LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH IN CHRIST'. There are small cross icons in the corners.

DOMSE
DIOCESE OF MIAMI AND THE SOUTHEAST

**LIVING THE ORTHODOX
FAITH IN CHRIST**



Theology Editor's Corner

Before I became a priest, I studied Jewish philosophy and focused on the 20th century religious philosopher Martin Buber. A quote from the second volume of his Tales of the Hasidim has always stood out to me. He says,

Rabbi Bunam once said: "On a sabbath, when my room is full of people, it is difficult for me to 'say Torah.' For each person requires his own Torah, and each wishes to find his own perfection. And so, what I give to all I withhold from each" (pg. 248).

This short quote illustrates one of the reasons why it is so important for each one of us to have a father confessor who knows us and can give us guidance and direction whenever things are especially difficult for us. Every priest tries to offer homilies and a general message that encourages, blesses, and builds up all the faithful (including the priest himself!), but at the end of the day, each individual person has their own struggles, and thus requires their own particular message or word. Here, the father confessor can function as a spiritual coach, offering a second set of eyes to help us understand our situation better, and perhaps even suggesting a discipline, practice, or exercise that might give us a little more control over our sinful impulses.

The Church is a spiritual hospital and we all come to Her with various forms of illness. But when we receive regular check ups from a trusted priest through confession, our Lord Jesus, the physician of our souls and bodies, can restore us to spiritual health and wholeness.



IF YOU HAVE ARTICLES OR SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LIGHT NEWSLETTER, PLEASE EMAIL THEM TO
DOMSENEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM

Fr. Nathaniel Trembley, Theology Editor
Deborah Abdo, Editor and Manager
Chelsea Beazley, Graphic Designer
Sh. Shell Keim
Bishop Nicholas

Upcoming Events

NOVEMBER

AMEN LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL CHAPTER PRESIDENTS MEETING

November 15, 2022
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm EST

AMEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

November 17, 2022
7:00 pm EST - Zoom

ANNUAL AMEN VIRTUAL RETREAT

November 19, 2022
10:00 am - 1:30 pm EST
Details to come!

2023

JANUARY

DOMSE CLERGY & WINTER RETREATS 2023

January 24 - 29, 2023 (Tentative)
Clergy Retreat: January 24 - 26
Winter Retreat: January 27 - 29
Details to come!

FEBRUARY

CAMP ST. THEKLA WINTER CAMP 2023 (WAMP)

February 17-20, 2023
Details to come!

JUNE

DOMSE 2023 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE (PLC)

June 14 - 17, 2023 (Tentative)
St. George Cathedral, Miami, FL
Details to come!

