

the Light



DECEMBER 2023
NEWSLETTER



CAMP ST. THEKLA
WINTER CAMP 2024 (WAMP)
February 16-19, 2024
Diakonia Retreat Center
[REGISTER HERE!](#)

WINTER SACRED
MUSIC INSTITUTE
February 22-25, 2024
St. George Cathedral, Coral Gables, FL
[MORE INFO HERE!](#)

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Parish Spotlight

ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT
ORTHODOX CHURCH

CLERGY

V. Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub

EMAIL: elia_shalhoub@yahoo.com

WEBSITE: stanthonorthodoxchurch.com



VISIT OUR PARISH LIVE STREAM



St. Anthony the Great Orthodox Church | Melbourne, FL

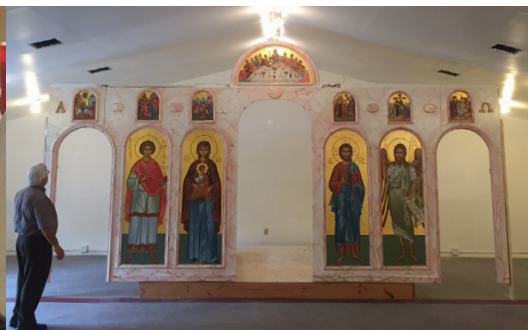
Pascha 2000. The world did not end on January 1 of that year, as many predicted. There was a new beginning instead. A faithful little group, led by Fr. Paul and Kh. Hilda Moses of Blessed Memory started a mission for the Orthodox Community in Melbourne, Florida. With the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP and of His Grace Bp. ANTOUN of Thrice Blessed memory, they decided on the name of St. Anthony The Great for the new mission.

By the Grace of God and with the help and encouragement of our beloved Bp. ANTOUN of Miami and the Southeast and our Dean, Very Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub of W. Palm Beach, we have been able to persevere through the many hardships associated with mission churches. With each challenge we have encountered, we have become stronger in our faith.

On June 25, 2015, Fr. Elia became our pastor. Less than a year later we

bought an existing church building with six acres from the Church of the Nazarene. It was a stretch of faith for many, but God is good! At the same time a local Orthodox family chapel named St. Panteleimon was being sold. Thanks to the generosity of their family, in Memory of Peter Karas (founder of St. Panteleimon), we have inherited our wonderful iconostasis, large icons that adorn our walls, altar table, baptismal font and the pews. We were

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(St. Anthony - continued from page 1)

blessed to have the support of Callie Karas and her family, and we will be forever grateful. With hard work the former Nazarene church was turned into a beautiful Orthodox church and consecrated right after Pascha on May 7, 2016.

The consecration was a most glorious event, highlighted by the elevation of Fr. Elia to the dignity of Great Ekonomos, and the ordination of Subdeacon Salim Adili (now Fr. Stephen) to the diaconate. Fr. Stephen is working on building the community of St. Barbara's mission in Orlando, Florida. We are also very blessed that a young member of our congregation, Ben Fernandez, has become a monk and was recently tonsured as Fr. Silouan at Holy Cross Monastery in Wayne, WV. May God guide him on his new journey.



Although we are still a small parish with no room for a food pantry, we do collect food and personal care items and clothes for local shelters. Each August we donate backpacks and school supplies to local elementary schools with a large population of underprivileged children. For Christmas we participate in the Salvation Army Angel Tree and Nana's House to support their efforts to provide gifts for underprivileged children and elders. Ten percent of our Annual Bake Sale goes to "Nana's House," home for at-risk children. This year we are giving gifts to the children. Some of our parishioners also give food and clothes to the homeless on the streets.

We are known as the community who gives hugs, so it was tough keeping a distance during the pandemic, but we grew closer together. We participated in the Diocesan virtual talent show, Virtual Parish Life Conference, spiritual zoom meetings, and supportive meetings with our beloved Bishop Nicholas. We started live-streaming on our Facebook page for the sick and shut-ins. Our community grew as well: from 2020 until now there have been twenty baptisms and twelve chrismations. The congregation is getting younger, and we finally have babies, and in fact, have begun researching the possibilities of expansion.

We believe that fellowship is a big part of building a church family, so we always have a lively coffee hour which is sponsored by AWO, Amen, and parishioners. We have regular family nights, with volleyball and games, movies, bonfires, and a meal together after Vespers on Saturday night. Our



teens especially enjoy this time, and we value it as well, remembering the hard times when we had no children in church. The children get a chance to go bowling with Abouna or meet him. This year we finally have a functioning SOYO group, and for the first time we were able to field a teen team for the Bible Bowl at the Parish Life Conference. The children worked very hard, having extra meetings to study the Bible and raise money for their trip. We also were blessed to be able to send some children to St. Thekla summer camp.

Our AMEN group is relatively new. They work together to help beautify our church property and get together once a month for the spiritual meetings. Our handy Subdeacon Michael built and installed six shrines on the outside walls of our church: St. Anthony the Great shrine, in honor of our patron saint and in memory of our beloved Bishop ANTOUN was printed from the icon written by iconographer Erin Kimmett. Other shrines are of St. Panteleimon (In Memory of Fr. Peter Karas), St. Elias (In Honor of our beloved Fr. Elia), St. Mary (In Memory of one of our founders Mary Robinson), St. Philip (In Memory of our beloved Metropolitan Philip) and St. Peter and Paul (In loving Memory of Fr. Paul Moses - founder of our Church). We all work together to build, grow, and beautify our Church.

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FEATURED ORGANIZATION

Christian Education

DOMSE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COORDINATOR:

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



DOMSECHRISTIANED

Learning About the Saints: St. Nicholas, December 6

The beloved saint's feast day is a highly anticipated event for families. Cherished traditions like reading the life story of St. Nicholas and setting out children's shoes on the evening before December 6th/19th can provide comfort and joy. In addition to the resources mentioned in the article, visit the Department of Christian Education Pinterest page to view pins and activities on the [St. Nicholas Day board](#). Regardless of which one(s) we use, let us purpose together to do something to help our children learn more about the life of Saint Nicholas, and to become a bit more like him during this nativity season.

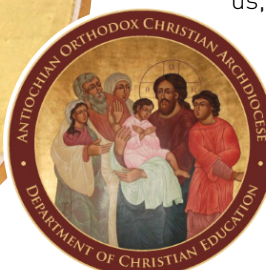
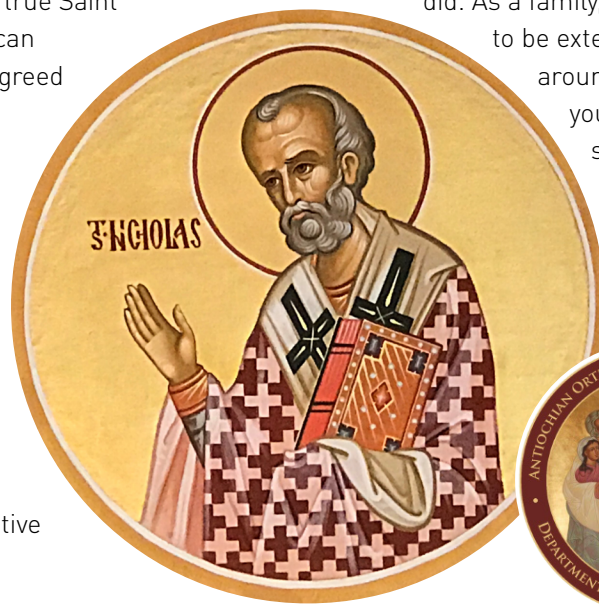
St. Nicholas lived only about three hundred years after Christ's resurrection, but he is still remembered the world over by people of many nations for his good deeds and kindness to others. As Orthodox Christian parents, it is important that we help our children to learn about this wonderful saint who not only was a blessing during his earthly life, but who continues to intercede on behalf of those who need God's intervention in their lives. St. Nicholas is commemorated on December 6 (new calendar), right in the midst of the American "Christmas Season." It is especially important for us as American Orthodox parents to help our children learn about the true Saint Nicholas, in a time when the American culture is promoting consumerism/greed and pairing that with Santa Claus.

A good place for us to start is by teaching our children about St. Nicholas' life. [We can begin by reading about it.](#) Next, [we can listen to a podcast](#) about the difference between St. Nicholas and Santa Claus, (the podcast also includes stories from St. Nicholas' life as well as ideas for celebrating St. Nicholas Day), from the perspective of an 8-year old.

[A series of icons featuring St. Nicholas](#) can be found online at The St. Nicholas Center. Print a double set of the pictures to make a memory match game for the family to play with. Or print a single set and challenge your family to order them on a timeline. This will require some research, as the icons represent events over a period of around 1600 years!

There are so many cultural traditions that include St. Nicholas! Read about [customs, festivals, and 50 names in 32 languages for the Saint](#). One Orthodox mom [writes about her family's traditions](#), and an Orthodox-mom-and-Khourieh (Kh. Destinie Winn, All Saints Church, Raleigh, NC) provides a [variety of ideas for celebrating the feast](#), based on her family's traditions. Bishop JOHN (Diocese of Worcester and New England) reflects on Christmas traditions [in this article](#) that teens and young adults in the family might benefit from reading.

There are several ways to interact with St. Nicholas, as a family. [Sing together about St. Nicholas](#) by learning/singing a traditional Slavic hymn. [Pray the Troparion and Kontakion](#), and ask him for help. Then, purpose to act as he did. As a family, brainstorm together ideas of how to be extensions of St. Nicholas to the needy around you. Who needs help? What can you do to help them? How can you do it so that they will not know who did it?



Through the prayers of our Holy Father Nicholas, Oh Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us, and save us. And a most Blessed Namesday to our beloved Sayidna NICHOLAS. Many years, Master!

Icon from Antiochian Archdiocese online album for Church of the Redeemer, California



Teen SOYO

OFFICER

INTRODUCTION:
SECRETARY

Sophia Griffith

All Saints Orthodox Church
Raleigh, NC

Hello, DOMSE! I'm Sophia Griffith and I am absolutely thrilled to be serving as your Teen SOYO secretary this year! This is my first appearance in the newsletter's Teen Corner so let me tell you a little bit about me. I am sixteen, and my home parish is All Saints in Raleigh, NC. When I'm not working on the seemingly endless homework that has come with my junior year, you'll find me listening to music, playing guitar, going on walks, catching up with friends, or reading. I am also both an avid hummus enthusiast and Taylor Swift lover. I am so excited to be a part of this amazing ministry and to see what more this year has in store! Teens, make sure that you sign up for CST Winter Camp, and follow us on Instagram (@domsesoyo) to keep up to date with our Lives of the Saints series and important announcements!

Yours in Christ,
Sophia



REGISTER FOR CAMP ST. THEKLA

WINTER CAMP

FEB 16 - 19, 2024 | DIAKONIA RETREAT CENTER

\$235 PER CAMPER

REGISTRATION CLOSES JAN 5



T.R.U.S.T PROJECT

APPLICATIONS OPEN!

Are the teens in your parish interested in receiving a grant to fund a service project?

The Archdiocese is offering four \$1000 grants and two \$500 grants to local SOYO chapters. Applications are due January 31st, 2024. Find more info at the link below!

SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO

teensoyo.org/trust



the Light

AMEN

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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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FEATURED ORGANIZATION

Antiochian Men

ANTIOCHIAN MEN PRESIDENT: Michael Baclic
St. Nicholas Orthodox Church | Springdale, AR



The Antiochian Men of DOMSE will soon be hosting their first-ever in-person AMEN Conference and Retreat! It will take place at the Woodland Christian Camp and Retreat Center in Temple, GA. The men who participate will be staying at Woodland's "Junction Camp" area, which has twelve boxcars that have been converted into cabins and bathhouses. The central building is a two-level structure that houses the dining facility upstairs and a large meeting room downstairs. The meeting room downstairs will be used for guest speaker events and Liturgical services, which will include morning prayers and Daily Vespers.

Junction Camp has a total of eighteen lodging rooms with eight bunks each. All areas are climate-controlled with HVAC units. This venue will provide the ultimate camping and retreat environment for the men in our diocese! All men attending this event will be bunking in rooms together, eight men to a room, with one man assigned to each bunk bed. The facility is very clean and well-maintained by the staff. All clergy and men ages 18+ are welcome to participate, including any catechumens or inquirers to the Orthodox faith.

This event will include guest speakers, outdoor activities, sports competitions, workshops, fellowship around a campfire, and much more! For those who are unable or unwilling to participate in the sports competitions, there will be alternative activities

planned indoors that will occur simultaneously. This will provide options for those attending who may have any physical restrictions. We are working on finalizing the schedule for this event and plan to post it in the coming weeks.

This event will be different from any other Orthodox Christian event that has happened to date and will incorporate the best aspects of camping, conferences, and retreats into a first-of-its-kind experience for Orthodox Christian men! The theme of this event is "The Audacity of Manhood: Strength Through Virtuous Work." Guest Speakers will include (but are not limited to): His Grace, Bishop NICHOLAS, Fr. Stephen De Young, Fr. Hans Jacobse, and Fr. Jacob Andoun.

There will be a very full schedule from start to finish but time will be planned for fellowship between and after the

scheduled sessions. AMEN is keeping things simple for this event to keep the costs low and to maximize the benefits of camping together in close quarters, which will allow for the building of a strong brotherhood. Temple, GA is also a very central location in our diocese, and it is within a day's drive for all of the men in the Southeast. The men in our diocese are being encouraged to carpool together where possible, but the venue is also conveniently located about 1 hour west of the Atlanta airport if anyone would rather fly in.

Don't miss this opportunity to deepen your spiritual life surrounded by other men who also take their faith seriously! You can register [here](#). A short promotional video for this event was recently posted on the AMEN YouTube Channel which shows what the venue looks like and includes a virtual tour of the property. [You can watch that video using this link.](#)





Words from Sayedna Nicholas

Addressing the virtue of Gratitude during the period of celebrating Thanksgiving in November, extending to December, would be appropriate. However, we all have mastered, on a daily basis, thanking God for all His numerous and free gifts to us that it does not warrant a reminder at this point! Maybe in the future when the remembrance of such abundant and free gifts begins to fade, a quick call to recollection may be useful! For this reason, I will not make such an effort to remind us all, the DOMSE family, to be thankful for what we recognize as gifts and what we think are our own accomplishments.

The Gospel according to St Luke (12:16-21) expresses a parable that Jesus had articulated to a crowd and the Disciples regarding a man whose land had yielded plentifully to the extent that his existing barns would not be sufficiently large to store the copious crop. At no point in the parable does the man attempt to try to think to thank God for the plentiful harvest or to attempt to try to think of his fellow man who is less fortunate than him! His line of thinking was to hoard the overflowing return of his land in newly built, but larger, barns so that he may take his ease, eat, drink, and be merry (Ref: Luke 12:19) This is not model behavior for us at all! Rather, we all can adjust and include others in our abundance as an attempt to try to thank God and think of others. This is my third effort to try to think to use a grammatically offensive construct to make a point and attract attention! I ask for your grammatical forgiveness!

This is a call, once again in a successive Light edition, for self-scrutiny! Making the point twice in two months might be over-bearing and intolerable to some! Nevertheless, I sometimes use this method to make a point profusely clear! I attempt to try to make this point as we are embarking on the reason for the season of giving since "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) I ask for your forbearance!

Self-scrutiny should result in one of two conclusions: I have an intellectual faith that may not lead to salvation due to the fact that I don't apply it as actions in my life or I have a true faith that is a work in progress, and I apply it as actions in my life so that I may progress on my journey to become God-like, which can take place by working on acquiring God's attributes, the Virtues. It is better that I am the judge of that now and on a continual basis so that I may correct my path rather than postpone such verdict until Judgment Day where I will not be able to change course!

**May God bless you and may
the Holy Trinity protect you all!**

+BISHOP NICHOLAS

The Fasting Kitchen

With the hustle and bustle of the Nativity Season, you may find you need a one pot, quick supper, or a nice dinner with friends. Either way, this fasting soup might hit the spot!

Vegan Creamy Italian Gnocchi Soup

Ingredients

2 TBS Oil
2 Medium Carrots, peeled and chopped
2 Stalks Celery, chopped
1 Yellow Onion, chopped
4 Cloves Garlic, minced or pressed
1/4 Cup Flour
4 Cups Vegetable Broth
2 tsp Italian Seasoning
3/4 tsp Salt
1/4 tsp Black Pepper
1 (1-lb) Package Prepared Gnocchi
2 Cups Unsweetened Coconut Milk
4 Cups Fresh Spinach

Instructions

- In large pot over medium high heat, warm oil, add celery, carrots, onion, garlic, and sauté for about 5 minutes.
- Sprinkle in flour and continue to cook while stirring.
- Pour broth into pot and stir vigorously.
- Add seasoning, salt, and pepper and bring to simmer.
- Gently stir in gnocchi and continue to cook for 3-5 minutes until gnocchi are tender.
- Add milk and spinach and cook for another 2 minutes, until heated through and spinach is wilted.
- Serve hot and blessed fast!

(St. Anthony - continued from page 2)

Our AWO holds an Annual Holiday Food and Bake Sale in December, with sweet and savory ethnic offerings. In March, the ladies organize a luncheon to raise money for the yearly project. This year we are buying socks and blankets for the homeless. Holy Friday we spend all day at the Church: praying and decorating the Lord's tomb. Then all night on Holy Friday we hold vigil, taking turns reading the Gospel book. We participate in several farmers markets and festivals locally as an outreach to the community.

Our Sunday School meets after Holy Communion. During the year we have several camp days for children, where they get to talk with Abouna, learn about our faith, break bread together and do arts and crafts. Every Christmas our Sunday School director, with parents' support, puts together a play or a talent show to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, followed by a luncheon fundraiser for the Order of St. Ignatius. We now have a children's corner at the back of our Church where they can socialize, have a quiet time and worship together. We are in the process of researching homeschooling co-op possibilities. Our Annual Trunk or Treat event is open to the public as an outreach to the community. Offered are hayrides, safe trunk treats (we decorate our trunks), mummy contest and cookie decorating.

One interesting fact about our church is that we have relics of St. Raphael of Brooklyn and St. Elizabeth sealed in our altar, and relics of the healer St. Panteleimon on display. The relic of St. Panteleimon is from his hand, which is resting in the wax print of the hand of his son, Dr. Steven Karas, a local cardiologist. We are truly blessed and thankful!

We are a loving and caring family of St. Anthony the Great Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church! If you are visiting Melbourne, Florida, do stop and worship with us. You will receive a warm welcome, a cup of coffee and a big hug. Please visit our website and follow us on Facebook and Instagram!





Sacred Music Notes

DOMSE MUSIC CHAIR: Kh. Nora Bleam
St. Andrew Orthodox Church, Pensacola, FL

The Nativity fast is here, and it is a great time to sing. Wonderful musical things are happening in our diocese.

Last month, I was blessed to visit St. Peter's in Madison, MS. I collaborated with their priest, Father Herman, and their chanter/choir directors to craft a Friday afternoon and all-day Saturday Workshop to meet their specific needs. Everyone worked very hard! We learned some new repertoire to facilitate their best sound. We worked on vocal techniques to aid in blending our voices and singing in tune. Their music leaders were able to receive conducting lessons, and then be coached in action. Perhaps most valuable was the opportunity to talk and problem-solve together. They received support and encouragement in their work, which is intrinsic to the worship of the church.

Would you like some music education and support? We have a special opportunity! Make plans now to attend the Winter Sacred Music Institute. In past years, this intensive development opportunity was offered on the West Coast, to balance the Sacred Music Institute offered each summer at the Antiochian Village. This February it is in MIAMI! We are planning to offer private voice and conducting lessons, as well as sessions on repertoire. I am planning to offer ideas and tools on building children's sacred music education programs.

Remember - your church likely needs more singers. Ask your priest, and don't assume someone else will give their voice and worship for you. Make an investment in your spiritual life. As our beloved Metropolitan SABA reminds us, "He who sings, prays twice." Come to rehearsals and commit to being a few minutes early for "work" during the services. I promise you will receive more than you give. Immeasurably more.

Need musical support?

Reach out to me at
norableam@gmail.com

Helpful Link: [Archdiocesan Sacred Music Website and Sacred Music Library](#)



the
Pentecostarion
from Pascha to Pentecost

*With the blessing of Metropolitan SABA,
the Department of Sacred Music
invites you to join us for the annual*

Winter Sacred Music Institute
February 22-25, 2024
SAVE THE DATE

Hosted by
St. George Cathedral
Coral Gables, Florida



Upcoming Events

DECEMBER

ANNUAL AMEN VIRTUAL RETREAT

December 9, 2023
10:00 am - 1:00 pm EST - Zoom
[MORE INFO HERE!](#)

AMEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

December 21, 2023
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm EDT - Zoom

2024 FEBRUARY

CAMP ST. THEKLA WINTER CAMP 2024 (WAMP)

February 16-19, 2024
Diakonia Retreat Center
[REGISTER HERE!](#)

WINTER SACRED MUSIC INSTITUTE

February 22-25, 2024
St. George Cathedral, Coral Gables, FL
[MORE INFO HERE!](#)

MARCH

AMEN CONFERENCE & RETREAT

March 7 - 9, 2024
Woodland Christian Camp & Retreat Center, Temple, GA
In person. [REGISTER HERE!](#)

SOYO LENTEN VIRTUAL RETREAT 2024

March 30, 2024
8:00 am - 5:00 pm EDT - Zoom
Details to come!

APRIL

AMEN LENTEN VIRTUAL RETREAT 2024

April 6, 2024
8:00 am - 5:00 pm EDT - Zoom
Details to come!

YAF LENTEN RETREAT 2024

April 13, 2024
8:00 am - 5:00 pm EDT - Zoom
Details to come!

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT 2024

April 20, 2024
8:00 am - 5:00 pm EDT - Zoom
Details to come!



Theology Editor's Corner

As Orthodox Christians, we greet one another with the joyful exclamation: "Christ is in our midst!" "He is and ever shall be!" But these words are more than just a greeting, since they affirm the promise that our Lord Jesus Christ made to all His disciples just before His Ascension into Heaven, when He said, "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matthew 28:20). Here, St. Nicholas Cabasilas gives us further insight into how our Lord Jesus is present with us, for he says,

"The Lord was not satisfied with sending the Holy Spirit to abide with us; He has Himself promised to be with us, even unto the end of the world. The Paraclete [or Spirit] is present unseen because He has not taken a human form, but... the Lord submits Himself to our sight and touch through the dread and holy mysteries [of His Body and Blood], because He has taken our nature upon Him and bears it eternally.

Such is the power of the priesthood; such is the Priest. For after once offering Himself and being made a sacrifice, He did not end His priesthood, but is continually offering the sacrifice for us, by virtue of which He is our advocate before God forever. And therefore, it was said of Him: 'Thou art a priest forever' [Hebrews 7:17]" (*A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, § 28, pg. 71).

This is a great encouragement! For whenever we come together to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, our Lord Jesus Christ is present with us as the One who offers and is offered, who accepts and is distributed, as the priest quietly prays just before the Great Entrance. The bread and the wine that are offered up are the precious Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus— the sacrifice that He offered to God the Father once and for all and that He continually offers up on our behalf even now; indeed, they are the same sacrifice that He distributes to us every Sunday so that we can share in the fullness of His divine life here and now.

During the season of the Nativity, we prepare for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we remember His coming in the flesh. But given that He is physically present at every Divine Liturgy, we can hasten to church every week or more, just as the shepherds hurried to the manger "to see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." Christ is in our midst! He is and ever shall be!

Upcoming Events (cont.)

JUNE

2024 DOMSE SCHOLARSHIPS!

June 1 - July 1, 2024

[CLICK HERE FOR INFO!](#)

DOMSE 2024 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE (PLC)

June 12 - 15, 2024

St. Stephen Orthodox Church

Hiram, GA - Details to come!

CAMP ST. THEKLA 2024 - SESSION 1

June 23 - 29, 2024

Details to come!

CAMP ST. THEKLA 2024 - SESSION 2

June 30 - July 6, 2024

Details to come!



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

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