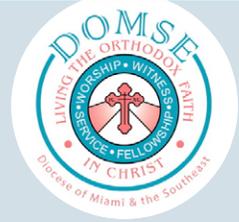


the Light



FEBRUARY/MARCH 2026 NEWSLETTER

VIRTUAL LENTEN RETREATS 2026

- AMEN** - March 21, 2026
- YAM** - March 21, 2026
- ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN** - March 28, 2026
- SOYO** - March 28, 2026

DOMSE 2026 PARISH LIFE

CONFERENCE (PLC) - In person
 June 10 - 13, 2026
 St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
 Springdale, AR - [REGISTER HERE!](#)

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DOMSE Winter Retreat 2026

ST. ELIAS ORTHODOX CHURCH | ATLANTA, GA

in this issue...

WINTER RETREAT RECAP	P. 2
CLERGY SPOTLIGHT	P. 3
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	P. 4



FEATURED EVENT

DOMSE Winter Retreat

Elias AbuGhazaleh | Holy Cross Orthodox Church, Ormond Beach, FL

The clergy and faithful of DOMSE traveled to Atlanta for our annual Clergy and Winter Retreat during January 28- 31, 2026. Unlike past winter retreats, this one really brought the "Winter!" Despite the cold and snow, many of our clergy and faithful gathered at St. Elias Church in Atlanta, GA.

Our time at the retreat was enriched with the presence of His Grace, Bishop NICHOLAS for his first Diocesan event since early 2025. His Grace shared his appreciation for the prayers and support during three major health complications. By God's miraculous hand His Grace is improving each day and asks that we continue to keep him in prayer on this road to full recovery.

This year's winter retreat theme came from the book of Tobit: "Better than Gold, Discovering True Riches." Fr. Gregory Rogers launched the winter retreat sessions, discussing the importance of praying with the Psalms and the role of music in liturgy and our lives. The afternoon session was titled "Beyond Hunger: The Sacred History of Fasting" by Fr. Anthony Perkins, who spoke of fasting from food as a practice to purify the mind, mouth, and motions. On Saturday, Fr. Hans Jacobse spoke about the riches given and received by Almsgiving. In the breakout sessions, our clergy and diocesan ministries continued their conversations on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Our breakout session leaders were Fr. Yuri Bruback (Holy Cross in Ormond Beach, FL), Fr. Herman Lasseter (St. Peter in Madison, MS), Fr. Paul Fuller (St. Nicholas in Springdale, AR), Fr. Stephen De Young (Archangel Gabriel in Lafayette, LA), and Fr. Hans Jacobse (St. Peter the Apostle in Bonita Springs, FL).

Later in the afternoon, the Antiochian Men, Antiochian Women, Young Adults, and Teen Soyo organizations held business meetings, with His Grace stepping in to visit each ministry during their meeting time.

On Friday evening during Vespers, we were able to witness Fr. Jeffrey Spencer (St. Michael in Dothan, AL) receive the

blessing from Bishop NICHOLAS to hear confessions. With the impending snowstorm, we gathered a little early to take our group picture in case we could not meet on Saturday.

DOMSE Jeopardy, always a great event for everyone in attendance, was hosted on Friday evening. Our contestants were: Fr. Nathaniel Trembley (St. Nicholas Church in St. Petersburg, FL), Fr. David Bleam (St. Andrew the Apostle Church in Pensacola, FL), and Fr. Jeffrey Spencer (St. Michael Church in Dothan, AL). Fr. Nathaniel took first place. Thanks to Nora Baca and Angela Rios Santana for acting as MCs for the Jeopardy game!

On Saturday, during Divine Liturgy, Subdeacon Christian Proaño (From St. Philip in Davie, FL) was ordained as a Deacon. Axios! May God grant him many years.

On Saturday afternoon we gave attendees time to go explore Atlanta, and the retreat concluded with Vespers in the evening.

We want to thank Fr. Gabriel Tannous and the volunteers at St. Elias in Atlanta for hosting the 2026 DOMSE Clergy & Winter Retreat!





Fr. John Oliver has been the priest of St Elizabeth Orthodox Christian Church, in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, since August of 2006. He is the author of numerous articles and essays, and of *Touching Heaven: Discovering Orthodox Christianity on the Island of Valaam*, published by Conciliar Press, and of *Giver of Life: The Holy Spirit in Orthodox Christian Tradition*, published by Paraclete Press, and of the upcoming *The Wilderness Few Dare to Tread: A Book About Men*, to be published in 2026 by Ancient Faith Publishing. A summa cum laude graduate of St Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, he joined the faculty as instructor in Old and New Testament and American Religious History. Fr John and his wife Lara have three daughters and two sons.

Clergy Spotlight

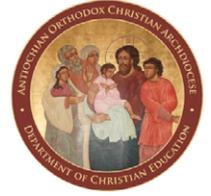
Fr. John Oliver





FEATURED ORGANIZATION

Christian Education



DOMSE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COORDINATOR:

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

The Annunciation: The Beginning of Our Salvation

Orthodox Christian Parenting WordPress site from the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Education Ministry

What is the Annunciation?

The Feast of the Annunciation commemorates Archangel Gabriel's announcement to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive and bear the Son of God. This Great Feast always falls during Great Lent, a period of preparation for Pascha. Because of this, to honor the Theotokos, the Lenten fast is relaxed – so oil, wine and fish is permitted, even if it falls on a Wednesday or Friday.

The story:

The biblical story of the Feast of the Annunciation is found in the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke (1:26-39). The Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, who was living in Nazareth, and said to her, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you." The angel told her not to be afraid, for she had found favor with God. He said, "You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father

David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary responded to the angel by asking how this could happen since she had no husband. The angel told her that the Holy Spirit and the power of God would come upon her, and that the child to be born of her would be called holy, the "Son of God." The angel then proceeded to tell the Virgin Mary that her cousin Elizabeth had conceived a son in her old age (John the Baptist), and affirmed that with God nothing is impossible. In faith and obedience to the will of God, Mary replied to the angel, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be according to your word." Upon her response, the angel departed.

It is on the Feast of the Annunciation, that we as Orthodox Christians commemorate both the divine initiative of God, where He took on flesh from the Virgin for our salvation, and the human response, where Mary freely accepted the vocation offered to her. He elected to become man, and He desired to do this with the willing agreement of her whom He chose as His mother. Mary could have refused, for she was not a passive instrument, but an active participant with a free and positive part to play in God's plan for our salvation. Thus, when on this and other feasts the Orthodox Church honors the Theotokos, the Mother of God, it is not just because God chose her but also because she herself chose to follow His will (from www.goarch.org/annunciation).



What services are celebrated?

Great Vespers is celebrated the evening before the Feast of the Annunciation (March 24), followed by Orthros and the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom the morning of the Feast day. On March 26, we celebrate the Apodosiis (also known as the Leavetaking) of the feast, as well as the Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel who is just as important to this feast day.

Today is the beginning of our salvation, and the manifestation of the mystery from the ages; for the Son of

(continued on page 5)

(Christian Education - continued from page 4)

God becometh the Son of the Virgin,
and Gabriel proclaimeth grace.
Wherefore, do we shout with him to
the Theotokos: Hail, O full of grace!
The Lord is with thee. (Troparion)

To thee, the Champion Leader, I thy
servant offer thanks of victory; O
Theotokos, thou who hast delivered
me from terror. But as thou that hast
that power invincible, O Theotokos,
thou alone can set me free; from
all forms of danger free me and
deliver me, that I may cry unto thee:
Hail, O Bride without bridegroom!
(Kontakion)

Take a look at a couple of activities/
resources below that we can do with
our children at home:

Lesson plan and crafts from [Orthodox
Pebbles](#).

Listen to this [podcast from Fr. Thomas
Hopko](#) on the Annunciation.

[Lesson plans](#) on the different Great
Feasts regarding the Theotokos;
lesson 3 is on the Annunciation.

Follow this activity idea to create a
["Mary Garden"](#) for the Annunciation.

Reenact the story of the Annunciation
and make Gabriel appear to the
Theotokos with [this craft](#).

Here is a [lesson plan](#) on the
Annunciation intended for use with
older children (13+).

Annunciation falls during Great Lent,
so speaking of Great Lent this is a [list
of gentle and realistic suggestions](#)
for families with special needs as
they walk through the Lenten season
together.

SAVE THE DATES 2026 Organization Lenten Retreats



AMEN

3.21.26
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM EDT
DETAILS TO COME!



SOYO

3.28.26
8:00 PM - 9:00 PM EDT
DETAILS TO COME!



YAM

YAM RETREAT

FEATURING FATHER STEPHEN DE YOUNG

DATE: MARCH 21, 2026 | TIME: AT 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM EST.

REGISTER NOW

RISE to the occasion and join us to move toward the Kingdom of Heaven and grow closer to Christ.

JOIN US!
EMAIL: DOMSEYAM@GMAIL.COM WITH QUESTIONS




AW

SAVE THE DATE!

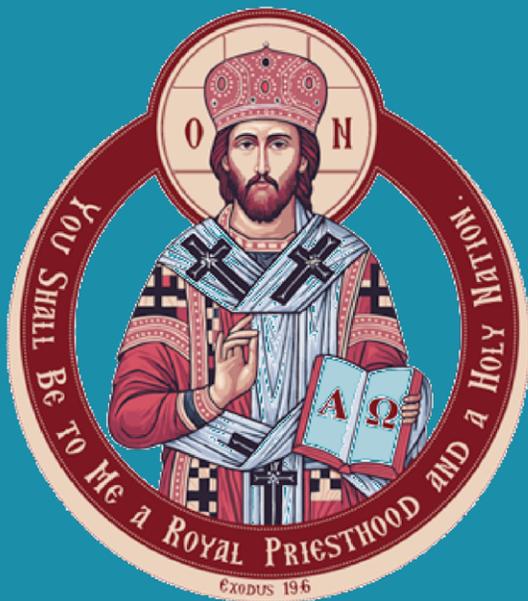
DOMSE 2026 Antiochian Women Virtual Lenten Retreat



*She Spoke Few Words—
and Changed the World:
The Theotokos as Teacher, Model, and Mother*
with Dr. Matthew Bianco

MARCH 28, 2026 • 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ONLINE)

Join us for an inspiring Lenten retreat online!
Details Coming Soon!



DIocese of MIAMI AND THE SOUTHEAST

Parish Life Conference

June 10-13, 2026

HOSTED BY
ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH
(SPRINGDALE, AR)
HOLIDAY INN SPRINGDALE

General Schedule

Time			Room Location
Wednesday, June 10, 2026			
3:00PM	8:00 PM	Registration	Convention Center Lobby
4:30PM	5:30PM	Choir Rehearsal	Seraphim Chapel
5:30PM	7:00PM	Vespers and Welcoming Remarks	Seraphim Chapel
7:00PM	9:00PM	Kids' Club (Clergy Kids Only)	Angels Kids' Club Room
7:00PM	10:00PM	Meet & Greet Social with Light Fare	Archangels Lecture Hall
7:00PM	9:00PM	Clergy/Clergy Wives Dinner with Bishop NICHOLAS	Cherubim Meal Hall
8:00PM	9:30PM	Teen SOYO Hospitality & Meeting with Bishop NICHOLAS	Virtues Lecture Hall
10:00PM	11:00PM	Compline / Ask Abouna	Seraphim Chapel
Thursday, June 11, 2026			
8:30AM	10:00AM	Orthros & Homily	Seraphim Chapel
10:00AM	8:00 PM	Registration	Convention Center Lobby
10:00AM	11:30AM	Brunch (Buffet Style)	Cherubim Meal Hall
11:30AM	1:00PM	Antiochian Women Meeting and Spiritual Talk (includes Young Adult Women)	Archangels Lecture Hall
11:30AM	1:00PM	Antiochian Men Meeting and Spiritual Talk (includes Young Adult Men)	Virtues Lecture Hall
11:30AM	1:00PM	Teen SOYO Meeting and Spiritual Talk	Seraphim Chapel
11:30AM	4:30PM	Kids' Club	Angels Kids' Club Room
1:00PM	3:00PM	The Order of St. Ignatius Meeting	Cherubim Meal Hall
1:00PM	3:00PM	Christian Education Workshop - Anna-Sarah Farha	Archangels Lecture Hall
3:00PM	5:00PM	Panel Discussion (Part 1): Living an Orthodox Life; Speakers: Frs. Andrew Stephen Damick & Stephen De Young	Virtues Lecture Hall
4:00 PM	5:00PM	Choir Rehearsal	Seraphim Chapel
5:00PM	6:00PM	Vespers	Seraphim Chapel
6:00PM	7:30PM	Dinner (Buffet Style)	Cherubim Meal Hall
7:00PM	7:30PM	Bible Bowl Team Check-in	Virtues Lecture Hall
7:30PM	9:30PM	Bible Bowl	Virtues Lecture Hall
9:30PM	11:00PM	AMEN Fellowship Event	Archangels Lecture Hall
10:00PM	11:00PM	Compline / Ask Sayidna	Seraphim Chapel
Friday, June 12, 2026			
8:30AM	10:00AM	Orthros & Homily	Seraphim Chapel
10:00AM	5:00PM	Registration	Convention Center Lobby
10:00AM	11:30AM	Brunch (Buffet Style)	Cherubim Meal Hall
11:30AM	1:30PM	Creative Arts Festival Awards & Oratorical Contest	Seraphim Chapel
12:30 PM	4:30PM	Kids' Club	Angels Kids' Club Room
1:30PM	3:00PM	DOMSE General Assembly	Cherubim Meal Hall
1:30 PM	5:00 PM	Teen SOYO Gathering (TBD)	Archangels Lecture Hall (TBD)
3:00PM	5:00PM	Panel Discussion (Part 2): Living an Orthodox Life; Speakers: Frs. Andrew Stephen Damick & Stephen De Young	Virtues Lecture Hall
4:00 PM	5:00PM	Choir Rehearsal	Seraphim Chapel
5:00PM	6:00PM	Great Vespers	Seraphim Chapel
6:00PM	10:00PM	Dinner Buffet & Live Music featuring Axios Band	Cherubim Meal Hall
10:00PM	11:00PM	Compline / Ask Abouna	Seraphim Chapel
Saturday, June 13, 2026			
8:30AM	11:00AM	Orthros and Hierarchal Liturgy	Seraphim Chapel
11:00 AM	12:00 PM	Grab & Go Lunch	Hospitality Room by Registration
11:30AM	12:00PM	Check-out & Departure	Hotel

Important Deadlines

4.11.26
VENDOR DEADLINE

4.15.26
CREATIVE FESTIVALS

5.20.26
HOTEL RESERVATION

5.25.26
PLC EXTENDED REGISTRATION

6.1.26
BIBLE BOWL REGISTRATION

6.1.26
ORATORICAL REGISTRATION

6.2.26
SPONSORSHIPS

**REGISTER
HERE!**



AMEN
ANTIOCHIANMEN.ORG

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN
DOMSEWOMEN
ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF DOMSE

YOUNG ADULT
DOMSE YAM

SOYO
DOMSESOYO
DOMSESOYO

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
DOMSECHRISTIANED

Upcoming Events

MARCH

AMEN LENTEN RETREAT 2026 - Virtual
March 21, 2026; 9:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT
Details to come!

YAM LENTEN RETREAT 2026 - Virtual
March 21, 2026; 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm EDT
[REGISTER HERE!](#)

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT 2026 - Virtual
March 28, 2026; 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm EDT
Details to come!

SOYO LENTEN RETREAT 2026 - Virtual
March 28, 2026; 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm EDT
Details to come!

JUNE

2026 DOMSE SCHOLARSHIPS!
June 1 - July 1, 2026 - Details to come!

DOMSE 2026 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE (PLC) - In person
June 10 - 13, 2026
St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
Springdale, AR - [REGISTER HERE!](#)

CAMP ST. THEKLA 2026 - SESSION 1
June 21 - 27, 2026

CAMP ST. THEKLA 2026 - SESSION 2
June 28 - July 4, 2026

ART • PHOTOGRAPHY • POETRY • WRITING

CREATIVE ARTS 2026 FESTIVAL



THEME

"You Shall Be to Me a Royal Priesthood and a Holy Nation"
- Exodus 19:6

Submission Deadline 4/15/2026
Visit antiochianevents.com to learn more!

Orthodoxy in the Ozarks

GUEST SPEAKERS

PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE

DOMSE 2026



Fr. Stephen De Young and Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick, hosts of the *Lord of Spirits* podcast, will be leading a two-part panel discussion on *Living an Orthodox Life*.

Orthodoxy in the Ozarks

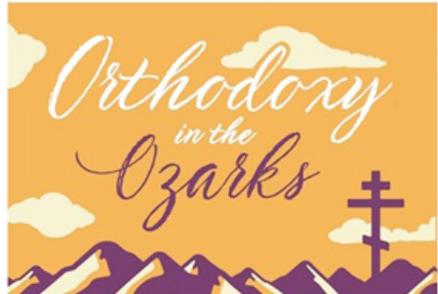
DIOCESE OF MIAMI & THE SOUTHEAST 2026 DOMSE PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

<https://miamiplc.org>

June 10 - 13, 2026

"You Shall Be To Me A Royal Priesthood And A Holy Nation"
Exodus 19:6



hosted by St. Nicholas Church
Springdale, Arkansas

Bishop NICHOLAS says



“I WANT YOU FOR CST STAFF”

*Serve with
a purpose*

*Make unforgettable
memories*



**Apply by Thursday March 5th, 2026
at CampSaintThekla.org**

Save the Dates! 2026 & 2027 Event List

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
2026		
March 21, 2026	AMEN Lenten Retreat	Virtual
March 21, 2026	YAM Lenten Retreat	Virtual
March 28, 2026	Antiochian Women Lenten Retreat	Virtual
March 28, 2026	SOYO Lenten Retreat	Virtual
June 1 – July 1, 2026	2025 DOMSE Scholarship	Virtual
June 10 – June 13, 2026	Parish Life Conference 2026	St. Nicholas Church (Springdale, AR)
June 21 – June 27, 2026	Camp St. Thekla Summer Camp Session 1	Asbury Hills in Cleveland, SC
June 28 - July 4, 2026	Camp St. Thekla Summer Camp Session 2	
September 18 – 19, 2026	Fall Retreat 2026	St. Ignatius (Franklin, TN)
November TBD, 2026	AMEN Conference & Retreat 2026	TBD
2027		
January 27 – January 30, 2027	Clergy & Winter Retreats 2027	St. Elias (Atlanta, GA)
February 12 – 15, 2027	Camp St. Thekla Winter Camp 2027	Asbury Hills in Cleveland, SC
TBD, 2027	AMEN Lenten Retreat	Virtual
TBD, 2027	Antiochian Women Lenten Retreat	Virtual
TBD, 2027	SOYO Lenten Retreat	Virtual
TBD, 2027	YAM Lenten Retreat	Virtual
June 1 – July 1, 2027	2025 DOMSE Scholarship	Virtual
June 9 – June 12, 2027	Parish Life Conference 2027	TBD
June 21 – June 27, 2027	Camp St. Thekla Summer Camp Session 1	Asbury Hills in Cleveland, SC
June 28 - July 4, 2027	Camp St. Thekla Summer Camp Session 2	
September 17 – 18, 2027	Fall Retreat 2027	St. Ignatius (Franklin, TN)
November TBD, 2027	AMEN Conference & Retreat 2027	TBD



Clergy & Winter Retreats = Always the last weekend of January
 Camp St. Thekla Winter Camp = Always President's Day weekend
 Parish Life Conference = Always the 2nd weekend of June
 Camp St. Thekla Summer Camp = Always the last 2 weekends of June
 Fall Retreat = Always the 3rd weekend of September

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



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!

