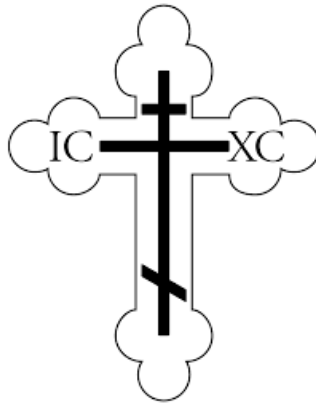


2023 General Parish Meeting
Youth and Outreach and General Ministries Report
Antiochian Orthodox Basilica of St. Mary





2023 General Parish Assembly Report
Youth and Pastoral Outreach and General Ministries
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Altar Servers

The Altar boy ministry works weekly with boys ages 9 and up. We are always looking for more boys to join and help. We will hold several training sessions this year to build fellowship among the Altar boys.

Contact: Haitham Fakhouri • Email: Haitham@pickbold.com



Arabic School *(report prepared by director of St. Mary Arabic School, Lina Nunu Matta)*

St. Mary Arabic School prides itself on the quality of its educational programs, the professionalism of the staff, the enthusiasm of the students to learn another language, and the high level of support provided by parents and volunteers. This program's goal focuses on teaching our students how to read and write the Arabic language in a high moral and faith-based environment. Additionally, there is emphasis on learning and understanding the complexity of Arabic grammar. We accomplish these goals by continuously updating the two books we supply our students. We also encourage our students to practice proper and respectful attitudes while incorporating good morals.

With the help of our hard working teachers and assistant volunteers, Lina has been directing and teaching at St. Mary's Arabic School since 2007. St. Mary's Arabic School currently serves almost 100 students (ages 4 and up) and continues to grow in size. This program includes 20 sessions starting in October and ending in March. We meet every Sunday after Church School, from 12:30-1:30.

Contact: Lina Nunu Matta • Email: linanunu@hotmail.com



Daughters of St. Mary/ St. Paisios Arabic Bible Study Group

Bible studies in Arabic are held every week on Thursday at 7 pm. This Arabic Bible study program has been active in our Church for several years. This group has already covered many books in the New Testament, lives of saints and various topics related to Orthodox faith. Post pandemic, it is mainly being conducted on Zoom by Dr. (Subdeacon) Osama Nunu and Nahla Shaheen. Both hold masters in applied Theology from Balamand.

The group is also active in organizing many outings and events including the Bonfire event held last year and trips to local Orthodox monasteries.

Contacts: Osama Nunu, osamanunu@yahoo.com or Nahla Imseeh, nala.msee@gmail.com

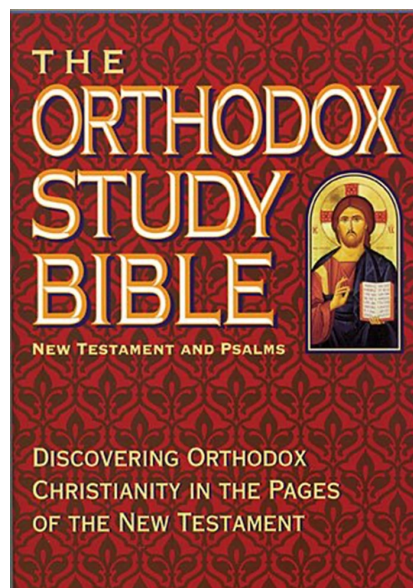
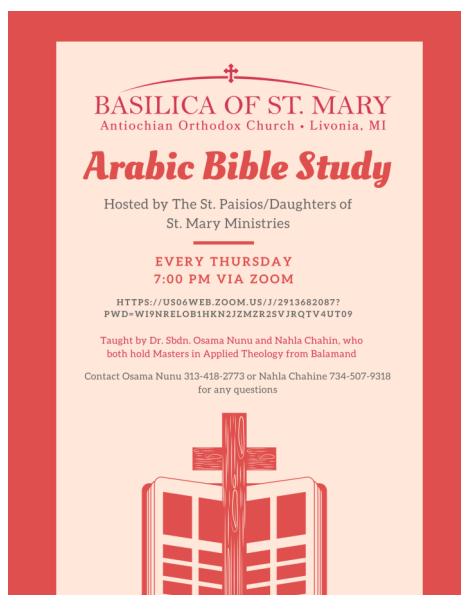
Journey Through the Bible (English Bible Study)

The first session of this blossoming ministry started on Tuesday January 4th, 2022 with "Ask Abouna" with Fr. George about the Gospel of Matthew. Fr. George reminded us that any study of scripture requires our participation in the life and teaching of the Church as well as attention to scriptural sources. Therefore we will continue to shift each session into two parts: The first part will be a chapter and verse reading and discussion of the New King James Version Bible. The second session will be about the life of the Church. We will be meeting live every other Tuesday starting January 10th 2023 from 7:00- 8:30pm in the Activity Center of the church. We now have live stream service which means we can stream to Facebook, YouTube and three other social media pages. All sessions will continue to be recorded.

Last year we were blessed to have lectures and instruction from Subdeacon Adam Murphy, Deacon Zach, Subdeacon Michael Pagani, and Dr. (Subdeacon) Osama on the Gospel of Matthew. Christopher Holwey continuously provided thought provoking discussion on the life of the Church, bringing understanding on the feast and fasts and Old testament texts related to worship.

We are very blessed at St. Mary's to have so many degreed theologians and are going to be hearing this year from Eric Medvich, Dr. Osama and Subdeacon Michael Pagani on the Gospel of John who was known as the "Theologian". Check our website for a listing of meeting days and times. Please come and join our journey through the Bible.

Contact: Subdeacon Michael Pagani A.P.,MTh • Email: michaelpagani50@gmail.com



Camp St. Mary *(This report was prepared by 2022 CSM Director, Luke Shaheen)*

Camp St. Mary 2022 was an absolute blast, and marked the 20th Anniversary of this special ministry! We had six camp days spread throughout the summer, with a variety of excursions. The kids had the unique chance to fellowship with one another at events and locations such as the Detroit Zoo, Water Warrior Island, Color Wars, Hafli night, and Kalahari. We were blessed with an average of thirty campers at each event, and a loving, dedicated group of counselors to make each and every moment unforgettable for the campers. Our theme for this summer was John 14:6, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." We had a different guest speaker for each Christian Education session, including Fr. Jim King, Dn. Samer Hanna, Seminarian Nicholas Nunu, Seminarian Mark Sultani, and Parishioner Michael Ansara. We are more than grateful for the guest speakers' impact on the kids, as this camp gives us the opportunity to directly enrich the campers' faith. Along with Christian Education, we had the chance to visit the Holy Dormition Monastery. As a result of the Covid pandemic, this was the first time in three years that we had the opportunity to visit the monastery. The nuns were elated to see all the children finally back at the monastery, growing together in their faith. The campers also participated in a service project for teens with autism and young adults for the *Living and Learning Enrichment Center*, and learned the value of service and that we can serve Christ by serving others. A special thanks to Sonya and Fr. Jim King for their time, energy, and valuable mentorship throughout the program, It would not have been such a success without them. We are also grateful for all the generous donors this year, in their selfless support of our summer ministry.

Contact: Sonya Kassis • Email: skassis@tbosm.com



Choir *(report prepared by Choir Director, Chris Holwey)*

St. Mary's Choir has always sung at the Divine Liturgy on Sunday mornings, at the Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays during Lent, during the last few days of Holy Week, at our yearly Christmas Pageants at the church, and at the Pan-Orthodox Christmas Concerts in December. During 2022, we increased our participation at the major Feast Days during the year, while continuing with all the other services as well. We are also learning new music, so as not to sing the same thing every service. Sadly, George Samra started planning his retirement by moving away, and our dear Bill Lawson fell asleep in the Lord this past December, both of whom we miss very much, as well as Bill's wife, Linda Lawson, our former choir director. We invite any other church members who sing and read music to come and join us. Our goal this year is to increase our rehearsal time, not only to learn new music, but also to prepare for presentations of our Faith through the music of the Orthodox Church at concerts. Please keep us in your prayers.

Contact: Chris Holwey • Email: caholwey@gmail.com



Church School

The church school is the foundation of all our youth programs at the Basilica. Our weekly attendance is strong, and nearly at pre-pandemic levels. We have over 100 students in five classrooms. There are 36 weeks in the Church School year, with a few Sundays off during holiday breaks. We encourage all our families to take advantage of the many online resources available to them, as well as sending your children to church school.

It is only through the support of dedicated people that we are able to teach your children some of the most valuable things they will ever learn. A foundation built on our Holy Orthodox Faith, grounded in Jesus Christ will never crumble. Thanks to all our dedicated, faithful teachers and to Father George and Father Jim for their constant guidance and love. Glory to God for all things!

Contact: Sonya Kassis, Parish Ministries Coordinator • Email: skassis@tbosm.com

2022-2023 Church School

Teachers:

Kindergarten: Mrs. Katrine Said

1st and 2nd Grade: Mrs. Abeer Mallouhi

3rd and 4th Grade: Mrs. Maria Ashkar and Mrs. Rozanna Ansara

5th and 6th Grade: Sbn. Michael Pagani

7th and 8th grade: Sbn. Osama Nunu, Mrs. Sabrina Hanna-Saras

High School (9th-12th grades): Mr. John Shaheen

Frequent Sub: Lisa Maroun



Holy Land Trip

About 22 parishioners were blessed to take a Holy Land Pilgrimage in September, led by Father Jim, and arranged by Good Shepherd Travel. During the ten day trip, pilgrims visited biblical sites all around the Holy Land, including major attractions like the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, as well as Jacob's Well, the Sea of Galilee, the Apostles Church, and many, many more. The group met with other Orthodox groups, led by Fr. Constantine Naser, of Oklahoma City, a frequent visitor to the Holy Land, Fr. Nicholas Dahdal of Chicago, and Fr. David Lewis of Texas. This allowed them to experience the Holy Land with fellow Orthodox brothers and sisters, in true fellowship as they watched the gospel come to life. Good Shepherd is arranging another tour to Greece in July so that we may, "Follow in the Footsteps of St. Paul." Glory to God for this amazing opportunity!



Ladies Society

The Basilica of St. Mary Ladies Society held several events including a Bingo Night in October, which was a fellowship event that raised \$2,000 from raffle ticket sales. They also held their annual Christmas Potluck and Bazaar in December, which raised \$2,100 in Kroger and Meijer gift cards for the needy. They worked with the Men's Fellowship and FOCUS Detroit to sponsor Christmas gifts for 75 children from underserved communities, which was highly successful. All the children were sponsored within one day! They also chaired the Time Capsule project, which is still in progress. The Ladies Society will contribute a photograph of all the Ladies Society presidents of the past 20 years, taken with Fr. George and Kh. Nouhad Shalhoub. The photo includes an icon of the Theotokos and the Antiochian Women's Prayer. They decorated the Christmas trees in December and planned to bring back the Wine Tasting for 2023. They will present the Parish Council with \$5,000, which leaves them with an end of year balance of \$2,380.

In 2022 the Ladies Society held the following events:

- March 1- Tea Party with a raffle that netted \$513; volunteered as ushers and epistle readers throughout March for Antiochian Women's Month
- April 3- Hosted their annual Lenten Lunch, with donated food, which raised \$2142
- April 10- Prepared and sold Easter Cookies (Maa'moul) which raised \$1108
- August- Volunteered during the Dormition Festival

Donations and Dues Paid in 2022

- \$1,000 for the NAB project
- \$200 in dues to the Midwest Antiochian Women
- \$500 to the Lebanon Medical Supply collection

Contact: Rula Abuaita, 2023 President

Email: abuaitarula@gmail.com>



Men's Fellowship

The 2022 calendar year saw great growth and participation for the St. Mary men's fellowship. The men's group, under the coordination of Haitham Fakhouri, continued to meet monthly during 2022. There was a variety of venues for men to meet and discuss their Christian lives and issues. The group grew from a strong 25-30 participates to 85-100 men communicating and supporting this new ministry. We had our second annual baseball game at Comerica Park in August and several meetings hosted by local businesses in downtown Detroit. The men's fellowship also provided a dinner at St. Mary to hear Fr. George speak on the generation that built the present day church and what the next generation can do to keep and grow the body of Christ.

Under the shepherding of Fr. Jim, the men's fellowship has elected a new board for the 2023. They will communicate with the Church council and provide leadership for the direction of the Fellowship. Sal Afnan is the new President, Tiberius Daniel Neda is the Vice-President and Yarob Fakhouri is the new Secretary/Treasurer. The four pillars that they have set for this ministry are:

1. Personal growth as Christian men
1. Building strong relationship with other Christian men
2. Cultivation of our role as fathers and husbands
3. To commune together as men in worship with God

The new board with the entire men's fellowship is sponsoring this year's Valentine Social on February 11th and is looking forward to greater growth this year.

In Christ,

Sal Afnan

Danny Neda

Yarob Fakhouri

Contact: Haitham Fakhouri • Email: Haitham@pickbold.com



Media and Communications

Website

The website is updated regularly with news and events as they happen. For 2022, we continued to explore options to improve on the e-commerce portion as well as push event sales through the website. We've seen higher growth in activity compared to the previous year.

Social Media

Our Facebook page currently has 5,196 people liking the page with 6,503 followers. Instagram has 1,237 followers. The YouTube channel has also seen increased usage for those watching the monthly Family Church School Videos, as well as regular gospel and epistle readings and sermons. We have just begin livestreaming the biweekly Bible studies as well.

Contact: Haitham Fakhouri • Email: Haitham@pickbold.com

Senior Heritage Fellowship

The members of the Senior Heritage Fellowship resumed their monthly luncheons, prepared and donated blankets to those in need during the winter, as well as socks during the winter collection. They held a gift raffle and luncheon for Christmas. Many members of the heritage group are also regular weekly volunteers who prepare our bulletin for mailing. Their hard work and dedication is much appreciated by the church.

Contact: Ayda Mughannem or Aida Kakish



Basilica of St. Mary Montessori Academy (BOSMMA)



Director: Abeer Samaan (*report prepared by Abeer Samaan*)

Board Members: Father James King, Suhail Abueita, Kathy Chalhoub, George Darraj, Kim Freij, Salem Samaan, Suzan Samaan, Fab Snage, Sam Sakla.

Joy, feeling one's own value, being appreciated, and loved by others, feeling useful and capable of production are all factors of enormous value for the human soul. ~ Maria Montessori.

At the Basilica of Saint Mary Montessori Academy (BOSMMA), we strive to provide an education that nurtures the whole child - mind, body, and soul. Our Montessori method emphasizes a child-centered approach, hands-on learning, multi-age classrooms, and an emphasis on independence, self-motivation, and social skills.

We currently have an enrollment of 65 students and are actively involved in community engagement through activities such as food drives (November), sock drives (December), blessing bags (February), and St. Jude Trike-a-Thon (May). Our summer camp programs include fun themes for children ages 3-12 and a one-week nationally certified STEM program (Science/Technology/Engineering/Math) for grades K-6th. All of this is done in a culturally diverse, nurturing, and engaging environment that is infused with an Orthodox faith-based approach.

Our recent achievement includes the completion of the kitchen remodel project. This project has greatly improved our ability to provide nutritious meals for our students and staff, as well as creating a more welcoming and functional space for our staff and the church parishioners. We wish to extend our gratitude to all those who donated to this project. Without your support, this would not have been possible.

We are also grateful for the support and dedication of our current board members and are always looking for new members and fresh ideas to improve our program. If you are interested in joining the school board, please reach out to the school office for more information.

We also want to express our gratitude to our hardworking and committed staff. Their tireless efforts have helped BOSMMA grow and attract many new students. With our current enrollment at capacity and a waiting list of prospective families, we have a strong reputation built on our unique program and word-of-mouth referrals.

As we enter the second semester of the school year, we would like to remind parents that enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year will begin in February.

Words cannot express the gratitude we feel for all those who have supported BOSMMA over the years. Your support is what allows this community to continue to grow and I feel fortunate to be part of such a supportive and loving community.



Basilica of St. Mary Montessori Academy (BOSMMA), continued



Mother Toddler Ministry

The Mother Toddler Ministry is one of the longest running ministries of the Basilica. Fr. Jim meets regularly with the children and their mothers (or fathers, grandparents and more) every Wednesday morning to practice the ritual of lighting candles, as well as reading Bible stories, doing crafts, and singing. This year we were able to have our holiday potlucks and field trips visiting the farm, cider mill, and water splash pads. The ministry is always welcoming new members, and includes children of all ages.

Contact: Emily Ansara and Grace Qaqish • Email: stmarymtg@gmail.com



Teen SOYO (report prepared by SOYO co-director, Juliana Said)

The Teen SOYO at the Basilica of St. Mary continues to be one of its most thriving ministries, despite a change in leadership and routine. There has been a new wave of teens participating in our events, and our events themselves have changed a bit. The new program set up incorporates retreats devoted to lessons that aid teens in spiritual growth and guide them through being an Orthodox Christian. We hold events three times a month, which incorporate the following pillars: fellowship, worship, witness, and service—in all that we do throughout the year. Our events range from talks on “What does it mean to be an Orthodox teen?” to fostering fellowship with fun outings like Airtime, or hafliis. We have held two service project retreats for 2022 and we are planning to hold our third in March. We also had a special visit this year from the teens of the SOYO of St. George in Florida. The teens of our Basilica cultivated strong relationships with the Florida visitors. Our hope for the rest of the year is that the program continues to flourish and the teens of our church witness the beauty of Christ through their interactions with each other and through what we learn.

Contact: Sonya Kassis • Email: skassis@tbosm.com



Vacation Church School

Vacation Church School returned to our regular format in 2022. For one week in June, 60 campers and 15 volunteers shared important lessons, enjoyed fellowship, and learned about the Greatness of God with the theme, “Monumental, Celebrating God’s Greatness.” Our Bible



verse for the week, which was practiced and memorized by the children was, “Who is so great a God as our God? Thou art the God who works wonders!” (Psalm 76:14-15). We are so grateful for the love and dedication of our volunteers, including teens, young adults, parents, and of course our clergy, and more who help make this such an enjoyable and worthwhile program for our children. **Contact: Sonya Kassis • Email: skassis@tbosm.com**



Village Up North

Village Up North is an overnight Orthodox Christian summer camp in Michigan modeled after the Antiochian Village program designed to teach Orthodox values and Tradition, build strong fellowship among campers, and bring kids out of the comforts of home and screens and into the beautiful world that surrounds us. Nearly 50 campers and 30 staff and volunteers spent a week at the lake in 2022. The program includes Christian education, prayer services twice per day in the outdoor chapel, afternoon sports, swimming and tubing, fishing, songs at the campfire, arts and crafts, and friendships and memories to last all year long. The program will continue August 14-19, 2023. Register your child to be a camper or apply to be on staff at www.villageupnorth.com.



Our camp program is licensed by Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Affairs and we are seeking full accreditation from the American Camp Association in 2023. Our vision is to one day purchase land to build a year-round Orthodox retreat center and summer camp in Michigan.

Contact: Tom Saba, Camp Director • Email: tom.saba@gmail.com



Celebrating 50 years!

The Basilica spent all of 2022 celebrating 50 years as a church community. We also celebrated the 50th anniversary of Fr. George's ordination to the priesthood, as well as his wedding anniversary to Kh. Nouhad. We are beyond blessed for the many people who dedicated months of time, love and energy to this anniversary celebration. We also thank the many sponsors who helped support the events and programs of the anniversary weekend, and those whose generosity extends throughout the years. Special congratulations go out to Fr. Jim who was elevated to Archpriest, and Dn. Dennis who was elevated to Archdeacon, Axios! As we reflect on these 50 years, we look forward to the future, toward the building of the Miriam Center, and all that it may bring; and the continued growth of our church family. Glory to God for all things!

