



THE ORTHODOX CHRONICLES

A Newsletter of the Atlanta Inter-Orthodox Parish Association
Vol. 1, No. 2, July 2022

The Atlanta Inter-Orthodox Parish Association (AIOPA) is a team of clergy and laity representatives from different canonical Orthodox parishes around the Atlanta area. The goal of AIOPA is to foster connections among different parishes and jurisdictions, to develop a strong sense of one local Orthodox Christian Family and, as such, to contribute to the unity of the Orthodox Church in the United States of America as defined by the Assembly of Bishops. AIOPA is a committee of the Atlanta Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood (AOCB), which seeks to bring people the knowledge of the Orthodox Church and to assist those throughout the city of Atlanta who are in need. Both AOCB and AIOPA use www.atlocb.org for communication.

Letter from Fr. Christos Mars, Chairman of AIOPA, Annunciation Greek Cathedral, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOA)

Welcome to another edition of the Orthodox Chronicles! I wanted to start by saying thank you to the entire AIOPA team. We are about four months into the process and have advanced so much. This is due to the hard work of all of you. Thank you!

Have you heard the saying, "An apple a day, keeps the doctor away?" I have always found that to be a favorite saying of mine, perhaps because it involves apples. Apples are some of the only fruits that can be found year-round. I can remember always having them in my home growing up. Little did I know that one of my beloved fruits would be associated with a saint that I learned to love — Saint Irene Chrysovalantou who celebrates her feast day on July 28th.

Saint Irene, who was from Cappadocia, flourished in the ninth century. Because of her great beauty and virtue, she was brought to Constantinople as a prospective bride for the young Emperor Michael (842-867); however, as Saint Joannicius the Great foretold, it was God's will that she assume the monastic habit instead. She shone forth in great ascetical labors and suffered many attacks from the demons; while yet a novice, she attained to the practice of Saint Arsenius the Great, of praying the whole night long with arms stretched out towards Heaven. God showed forth great signs and wonders in her, and she became the Abbess of the Convent of Chrysovalantou. She was granted the gift of clairvoyance and knew the thoughts of all that came to her. She appeared in a vision to the king and rebuked him for unjustly imprisoning a nobleman who had been falsely accused.

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Through a sailor from Patmos to whom he had appeared, Saint John the Evangelist sent her fragrant and wondrous apples from Paradise. She reposed at the age of 103, still retaining the youthful beauty of her countenance. After her repose, marvelous healings beyond number have been wrought by her to the present day.

I wanted to explain a little more about the apple and found a great explanation from this website (St. Irene and the Miracle of the Apples – Orthodoxkids.com). I offer an adapted version of the explanation of the sailor from Patmos who brought the apples.

The sailor bowed reverently to Abbess Irene, who looked at the apples in wonder. Never had she seen such beautiful fruit! The aroma coming from them was like the finest perfume! The only explanation could be that these apples were truly from Paradise!

After St. Irene had given thanks to the Lord for such a great gift, she fasted for a week. Then she ate the first apple, a bite a day, for the next forty days. During this time, she ate no other food, and the monastery was filled with the indescribably beautiful scent of the apple. On Great and Holy Thursday, after all the nuns had received Holy Communion, she took the second apple, and cut it, giving a piece to each of the nuns. Those who ate of it felt filled with light and joy in their souls. The third apple, she kept, taking it out when she felt sorrowful, to breathe the beautiful aroma of Paradise, and feel the comfort and joy in her soul that it brought.

One day, when Irene was an old, old lady, more than 100 years old, an angel appeared to her and told her that the next year at that time, she would stand before the very Throne of God. The next year

came, and Irene fasted and prayed all the week before the day the angel had told her. All she had to eat was the third apple that the beloved disciple of Christ, St. John, had sent her long ago. Blessing the nuns, Irene gave them some final words to guide their lives: "Don't do anything just because you want to do it, but rather do what God wants you to do, for He is your only help at the Hour of Judgment."

When she died, a beautiful fragrance came from her grave for many years. Her memory was celebrated each year as a saint, and many were healed when they called upon her name. In honor of her feast day and in commemoration of the miracles associated with the apples, the Church blesses apples and gives them to the faithful.

We, too, are blessed in our continuing efforts as we move closer to Christian fellowship and may we all, one day, taste the apples of paradise together.



AIOPA updates

Welcome Dennis Sparks and Joston Brown from the St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church to the AIOPA family!

On June 5, three **AIOPA representatives attended the Orthodox Christian Laity Mastermind Meeting**. They walked the audience through AIOPA's current process, plans and progress. The [presentation](#) was part of the Communications workgroup's mission to spread the word about AIOPA with other markets that can be interested in exchanging information about local area efforts towards Church Unity. Fr. Ian Pacurar, the co-lead for the Akron pilot market, provided an update on the Akron's efforts. The meeting was attended by 17 people from parishes in OH, UT, VA, NJ et. al.

During the **June 7 AIOPA monthly meeting**, the first one run in a combined in-person (at the Greek Cathedral) and virtual (Zoom) setting, each one of the five workgroups reviewed the status of their activities. The new status report, the relationship maps, and the survey summary were also part of the [presentation](#).

The **Hierarchs' blessings, guidance and support** are critical to maintaining the momentum for the AIOPA work. We have now received four letters of interest and support in this work, the last two being from His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa of ACROD and His Eminence Archbishop Alexander of OCA. We are looking forward to expanding and maintaining the direct dialog between parish representatives and their respective Hierarchs for all parishes participating in this effort.

Beginning with Fr. Barnabas, we have started **featuring our clergy** in [The Clergy Spotlights](#), sharing a little bit about where they came from, their journey in becoming a priest, hobbies and family. The email inviting the clergy to participate was sent on May 28 and the deadline was July 1.

Visit

<https://www.atlocb.org>
for up-to-date information
about the AOCB and AIOPA
and a calendar of events.

Past Events

June started off with a **Divine Liturgy at Chattahoochee Bend National Park** hosted by St. Christopher Greek Orthodox Church of Peachtree City.

The event was attended by laity from St. Christopher Church (Peachtree City), St. John the Wonderworker Church (Atlanta), St. Stephen's Church (Hiram), St. Elias Church (Decatur), and Saints Constantine & Helen Church (Lilburn).

The host parish also brought Clergy, Parish Council, Philoptochos, parishioners, and non-Orthodox friends of parishioners (Catholics, Baptists, etc.).



Past Events Continued

On June 18, young adults from The Annunciation Cathedral (Atlanta), St. Elias Church (Atlanta), St. John the Wonderworker Church (Atlanta) and Saints Constantine and Helen Church (Lilburn) met to participate in a **Young Adult League (YAL) day of service** cleaning up invasive kudzu in Cascade Springs Nature Preserve.



And on June 24, young adults from St. Elias, St. John the Wonderworker, Saints Constantine and Helen, and Holy Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church (Marietta) met for a screening and discussion of the documentary *Parallel Love: the Story of a Band Called Luxury*.



Last but not least, the **AHEPA Centennial Celebration** was June 23-26 at the Annunciation Greek Cathedral in Atlanta. This event commemorated the founding of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association in Atlanta in 1922.

The four days of festivities included dinner and dance, basketball tournaments, and a Divine Liturgy, Artoclasia, and Memorial Service. The highlight of the weekend was the dedication of a monument commemorating AHEPA's origins in Atlanta.

The event was attended by clergy and parishioners from the Annunciation Cathedral (Atlanta), Sts. Raphael, Nicholas and Irene (Cumming), Holy Transfiguration (Marietta), and St. Christopher (Peachtree City). In attendance were also Metropolitan Alexios, Bishop Sevastianos and Rev. Fr. George Psahakis (Chancellor), all representing the Metropolis of Atlanta.



Upcoming events

July 2 | St. John the Wonderworker Patronal Feast Day Concert | 4:30 PM
St. John the Wonderworker Orthodox Church 543 Cherokee Ave SE
Atlanta, GA 30312. Join us to celebrate our patronal feast day with some lovely music featuring St. John's own choir, as well as several selections from our guest quartet and interspersed with stories from the life of our beloved St. John. Vespers and light refreshments to follow!

July 21-27 | Project Mexico Mission Trip | Rosarito, Mexico. Since 1988, Project Mexico has been building safe, secure and weather-tight homes for some of the most impoverished families in Northern Mexico. This year, a group of parishioners from St. John the Wonderworker will be participating and are asking for the prayers and support of the Orthodox faithful of Atlanta. Donations for the trip can be made here:
https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/168128

August 20-21 | St. Elias Centennial Celebration | 2045 Ponce de Leon Ave, Northeast Atlanta, GA 30307. St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church is celebrating its Centennial with a series of events on the weekend of August 20-21. On Saturday, Metropolitan Joseph will preside and Bishop Nicholas will be present to bless the altar and icons and vespers will be held, followed by a cocktail hour, banquet and dance at Georgia Tech Conference Center. On Sunday, a hierarchical Divine Liturgy will be held with Metropolitan Joseph presiding and Bishop Nicholas present, followed by a luncheon and special presentation. Reservations are required for the banquet Saturday. Reservations can be made here: <http://stelias.church/>

August 21-27 | Liturgical Arts Academy | Diakonia Retreat Center, 455 Quail Ridge Road, Salem, SC 29676. The Liturgical Arts Academy teaches church leaders and artists the traditional skills and knowledge of Byzantine chant, iconography and other liturgical arts amidst a new culture, a new language and to a new generation of Orthodox Christians in the United States. The Academy strives to revitalize the Orthodox tradition of the liturgical arts in order to restore the proper power and transformative nature of worship of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the salvation of all.

Tuition Includes: 7 Days and 6 Nights of lodging and meals, plus workshop instruction and materials for 5 days (Mon-Fri), use of facilities and amenities at the Diakonia Retreat Center. Registration:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSerxMbmXZhTfkPcbNI25VM1Ix-2LJGzfcL-8CDHQsCiWKXibg/viewform>

Upcoming Events Continued



Benefiting:



FOLDS of HONOR



Saint Christopher
Outreach Ministry



The Joseph Sams School
Serving Children With Special Needs

August 23, 2022
Eagles Landing Country Club
Tee-Off at 9AM

Saint Christopher Outreach Ministry is a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) whose mission provides Christian based charitable giving with educational, cultural and spiritual enrichment to Orthodox Parishes, to those in need and for the youth in the communities we serve in South Metro Atlanta and beyond.

Helicopter Ball Drop
\$1,000 to ball closest to the marker

SouthAtlantaGolfClassBallDrop

Confirm your registration or corporate sponsorship
TODAY online at: SouthAtlantaGolfClassic.com



Eagle's Landing
Country Club

In His High Priestly Prayer to His Father, Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ prayed for His disciples, the members of the Church that He established ... "that they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me" (John 17:21).