



THE ORTHODOX CHRONICLES

A Newsletter of the Atlanta Inter-Orthodox Parish Association
Vol. 1, No. 6, November 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)

Light up the Darkness

There are so many great hymns in our Church that speak to us about light, how light overcomes darkness.¹ These hymns are not just prevalent during Great Lent and Holy Week services; we use them on a daily basis. Christ Himself tells us in the Gospel of John “I am the Light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” (Jn. 8:12)

Christ spoke these words in the context of the great lamps being lit at the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles. Thus, He declares Himself to be the fulfillment and the divine object of all celebrations of light. In the Scriptures, God the Father Himself is light (Jn.

1:4-9; 1 Jn. 1:5), an attribute He bestows on his followers (Mt. 5:14; Php. 2:15). Our Lord confirms His claim by performing the great sign of opening the eyes of a man born blind. (Jn. 9:1-7) (*cont. on pg. 2*)



¹The hymn “We have seen the true Light...” from the Divine Liturgy, as well as the hymn “Come receive the light...” from the Easter Midnight service.

(cont. from pg. 1) The Church took this concept of light, especially the lighting of the lamps, and made it a central focus in the service of Vespers. This hymn, which should be familiar to Orthodox Christians, is called Phos Hilaron (Φῶς ἱλαρόν). It is an ancient Christian hymn originally written in Koine Greek. The hymn is known in English as 'Hail Gladdening Light,' or 'Gladsome Light'. It is the earliest known Christian hymn recorded outside of the Bible that is still being used today.

The origins of this hymn are first recorded by an unknown author in the *Constitutiones Apostolicae* which was written in the late third or early fourth century A.D. It is found in a collection of songs to be sung in the morning, in the evening, before meals, and at candle lighting. 'Gladsome Light' is to be sung at the lighting of candles in the evening and so is sometimes known as the 'Candle-light Hymn'. Despite some of the words in the other three songs in the collection being from Scripture or in one case dated to around 150 A.D., 'Gladsome Light' is the first to be considered an actual hymn in the modern sense. It is certainly the first complete example. It is far more rhythmic than the others and is divided into twelve verses varying between five, six, eight, nine, ten and eleven syllables a verse. Basil the Great (ca. 330—January 1, 379) spoke of the singing of 'Gladsome Light' as a cherished tradition of the Church, the hymn being already considered old in his day (though some attribute the composition of the song to Saint Basil himself).

At that time in Jerusalem a candle was kept perpetually burning in the empty tomb of Christ, its glow a symbol of the living light of Jesus. As Christians gathered to worship, the

hymn was sung and, in a tradition known as the lighting of the lamps, the candle was brought forth from the tomb, its bright, solitary flame calling the Church to celebrate their risen Lord.

Athenogenes, a saint who died around 305 A.D. and whose feast day is on July 16th, is believed by some to have composed this hymn on the way to being martyred. He is often depicted as an elderly bishop with the executioner's arm paralyzed until the saint had completed his song. The Roman Martyrology states: "In Pontus, the birthday of Saint Athenogenes is celebrated, he was an aged theologian, who, when about to consummate his martyrdom by fire, sang a hymn of joy, which he left in writing to his disciples."

Although Athenogenes would rather have been known for his pious work while alive, he is best remembered for his courageous tribute to the Lord in his final moments. The entire hymn bears quotation, even though it lacks the solemnity of the chant. Its words are: *"Gladsome Light of Holy Glory of the holy blessed heavenly immortal Father. O Jesus Christ, arriving at the hour of sunset and having seen the evening light, we praise the Father, Son and Holy Spirit God. It is worthy for You to be praised at all times with happy voices, O Son of God, the Giver of life, and therefore the world glorifies You."*

(cont. on pg 3)



(cont. from pg. 2)

Of Athenogenes, Saint Basil had this to say; "The people use these ancient words, and no one accuses them of blasphemy for singing 'We praise Father, Son and Holy Spirit God.' If you are familiar with the hymn of Athenogenes, which he left as a gift to his disciples as he went to his martyrdom by fire, then you know what the martyrs think concerning the Spirit" (Basil, On the Holy Spirit, Chapter 29).

Saint Sophronius of Jerusalem (634-638 A.D.), who was known for his poetry, is believed to have revised the hymn to what we read today.

Thanks to these great saints of our Orthodox Church, we have a hymn that we can sing every day that reminds us of the Light of Christ, and what we believe about Him!

As we enter into the month of November, where we begin our journey to the Nativity of Christ, we are reminded that "the light of knowledge [was giving] upon the earth."² This light, who is Jesus Christ, came to save us all. He left us with the tools that will help us work at salvation. As we continue to work together in AIOPA, with the tools that we have been given, may He shine His light upon us that it is "good and pleasant when brothers live together in unity!"³

²From the Apolytikion of the Nativity of Christ.

³Psalms 133:1.



AIOPA updates

The **monthly AIOPA meeting** will be held on the last Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM on Zoom. This was the time that worked best for everyone through a Google poll. Please plan on attending if you are in the workgroups!

AIOPA Presentation at the Orthodox Christian Laity's 35th annual conference

Fr. Christos Mars, Fr. Anthony Salzman, Toni Taggart and Florian Ion presented on October 15th 2022 the latest on the [plans and progress](#) made by the Atlanta Inter-Orthodox Parish Association since its inception on March 17th 2022.

The presentation was made possible by the invitation from Orthodox Christian Laity (www.ocl.org) a national, Pan-Orthodox, 501(c) 3 non-profit, educational association, incorporated in the State of Illinois on March 17, 1988, for the purpose of advancing the renewal of the Orthodox Christian Church in the United States, that held its 35th annual conference in Atlanta, GA.

Parish Council Presidents Round Table

On Monday, October 24, we held the second Parish Council Presidents Round Table meeting.

Discussion Topics:

- Report about the 6th Annual National Orthodox Advanced Leadership Conference <https://www.orthodoxservantleaders.com/leadership-conference.html>

- Additional resources for Parish Council Leadership Development <https://www.orthodoxservantleaders.com/peer-learning.html>

- Open discussion about any other topics.

The meeting was attended by representatives from St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church, Annunciation Greek Cathedral, and Sts. Constantine and Helen Church. The next meeting will be on January 23, 6PM.

The **Hierarchs' blessings, guidance and support** are critical to maintaining the momentum for the AIOPA work. His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel of ROEA/OCA, gave his blessing to send the following link (<https://bit.ly/declarationunity>) to "A Declaration for Orthodox Christian Unity in America". He was the first to sign the document and asks that you consider signing it and sharing it with your parish. We are looking forward to expanding and maintaining the direct dialog between parish representatives and their respective Hierarchs for all parishes participating in the AIOPA effort.

We have continued **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.

Visit

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

Highlights of Past Events Festival Time!



Above: Atlanta Greek Festival at Cathedral of the Annunciation



Above and Below: Romanian Festival at Sts. Constantine and Helen



Left: Central Georgia Greek Festival at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

Highlights of Past Events Festival Time! Continued



Above and Left: Serbian Festival at Sts. Peter and Paul



Above and Right: Cumming Greek Festival at Sts. Raphael, Nicholas and Irene



Charity Opportunities

November 1-30 | Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Click for Kids | AIOPA Online Charity Campaign

Your support has the power to make a difference.

Each year, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta treats hundreds of thousands of kids. As a not-for-profit, generous contributions from fundraisers help to ensure that CHOA can continue to provide the best possible care to kids now and in the future.

By fundraising through [Click for Kids](#), you can make a greater impact than ever before. It's simple and fast and gives you the chance to help CHOA by contributing via our [existing AIOPA campaign](#).

You can donate with this link:

<https://www.atlocb.org/events/2022/11/1/childrens-healthcare-of-atlanta-click-for-kids>

November 6 | Service Opportunity with Meals by Grace | Midway United Methodist Church 5025 Atlanta Highway, Alpharetta, GA, 30004 Sts. Raphael, Nicholas and Irene Orthodox Church GOYA will be volunteering from 1:00-3:00 pm, and invite any to join.

Meals by Grace is a no cost, meal program focused to help feed children and their families. Generally, these families have been identified as having a special need by School System Social Workers, Social Workers, and or Church or Community leaders. These families may have with limited or unreliable transportation, experience frequent food insecurity or are working to overcome with a major health or work loss event.

Greetings from St. John the Wonderworker and the Loaves and Fishes Program!

We are planning this year to host our annual Family Toy and Food Box Event on Saturday, December 17, from 9 am until noon (or thereabouts). Once again we will provide each family with a food box with Christmas dinner fixings, plus, we hope, enough extras to make a meaningful contribution to a week's worth of meals. We will have purchased gifts chosen by the parents for each child ahead of time, and those gifts will be ready and waiting to go home with the families on the 17th. Our website at saintjohnwonderworker.org will provide an easy way to donate to the program as well as to sign up to volunteer. Questions can be delivered to Mat. Rebecca Myers at rebeccamorrismyers@gmail.com or (404)693-4443.

We find we will be unable to host our Christmas Day Meal this year. Thanks to all of you who have made it such a wonderful event over the years. We hope to have the resources to resume this joyous tradition in 2023!

Upcoming Events Continued

November 11-13 | Holy Transfiguration Young Adult Retreat | Diakonia Retreat Center, 455 Quail Ridge Road, Salem, SC 29676. For young adults in their 20s and 30s, this retreat will focus on fellowship, service and worship at the beautiful Diakonia Retreat Center. All young adults are welcome but space will be limited, so you are encouraged to register soon.

HTGOC YA RETREAT
November
11-13

Where: Diakonia Retreat Center
Cost: \$25

Includes 2 nights lodging and 4 meals
(Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner on
Saturday- Brunch on Sunday after
Liturgy)

Friday Night: Wine and Cheese Tasting
and Boardgames

Saturday: Small service project, group
discussion, canoeing, hiking, free time to
explore, Vespers, bonfire with hot cocoa
and dancing

Sunday: Divine Liturgy and Brunch

Questions?
htgoclighthouse@gmail.com

Register here!

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE



*presented by the
Atlanta Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood
Sunday, December 18, 2022 at 5:00 pm*

*at the
Greek Orthodox Cathedral of
the Annunciation*

*2500 Clairmont Road, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30329*



*His Eminence Metropolitan
Alexios of Atlanta
will officiate at this
Pan-Orthodox Service*

*Christmas Concert following the Service featuring:
Choirs from the Annunciation Cathedral, St. John the Wonderworker,
SS Constantine and Helen, the Men's Choir and Chanters
from the Annunciation Cathedral, along with Choir Members from area parishes.*

Refreshments to follow

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).