



FIRST MODE



THE EASTERN FEDERATION OF GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSICIANS NEWSLETTER • WINTER 2015

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I hope you enjoy the latest issue of the First Mode. Thanks to Drucie for taking on the task of producing a "First" rate publication that will keep us informed, entertained, connected, and most of all - continuing in the appropriate "Mode".

-Paul Mavromihalis, President

St. George Christmas Concert Evokes True Spirit of Christmas Giving

Over 225 music-lovers attended the Fourth Annual Christmas Concert on December 13th, 2014 at St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Bethesda, MD. The event featured Concert



Artists of Baltimore, with its reduced holiday chorus of 24 members conducted by the internationally acclaimed artistic director, Edward Polochik.

The Christmas Concert was held in the Presvytera Maria Papaioannou Hall of St. George which was beautifully decorated that evening by Mahy Polymeropoulos in a Winter Mountain Village theme. A short reception was offered during intermission with a light buffet and beverages donated by CAVA and the Urban Winery.

As guests arrived, they were greeted by a pre-concert recital performed by the St. George Holiday Choir and organized by Patty Apostolides. The six member choir, accompanied by violin players Patty Apostolides, Anthony Apostolides II, and Maria Flanders, performed traditional Christmas Carols. The choir included Nick Lagakos, Stella Lagakos, Calliopi Toufidou, Eleni Anagnostiadis, Helen Most, and Alexa Kempel. Stella Lagakos sang a lovely solo of 'O Holy Night' accompanied by Patty Apostolides and Maria Flanders on the violin. The short segment ended with Handel's violin duet, "Fugue," performed by Maria Flanders and Patty Apostolides. The main program opened with the Concert Artists performing the "Hymn of Saint George" and continued with moving renditions of Christmas Day Propers from the Divine Liturgy including "I Yennisis Sou Christe", "The Birth, O Christ", and "I Parthenos Simeron", all arranged by Presbyteria Anna Gerotheou Gallos. Other pieces included a fine performance of two variations of "Ave Maria" from soprano, Sarah Berger, and traditional carols, such as "Silent Night." The Concert-goers were also treated to music by Bach, Lauridsen, Biebl, Schubert, and festive songs by Mel Torme and other American composers.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

The 2015 EFGOCM Conference will be hosted by the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Norfolk, Virginia

October 1-4, 2015

The Liturgy of Hope
Composed & Directed by Christopher Kypros



The parish of Norfolk, Virginia is getting ready for your visit! Plans are underway and can be found on the EFGOCM Website at <http://www.newjersey.churchmusic.goarch.org/> Once hotels and registration are finalized, we will sent a notice out through the EFGOCM ListServe.

Not on? Go to www.newjersey.churchmusic.goarch.org/ to register

True Spirit of Christmas Giving continued...

The second half of the program begin with a rousing rendition of Happy Birthday to ong time Saint George choir member a nd institution Victor Panagos, who just happened to be celebrating his 87th birthday that evening and sang the Divine Liturgy with the choir the next morning.



In addition, two instrumental soloists electrified the crowd. Clinton Adams performed the "Rhapsody in E-Flat Major" by Brahms on the piano, but the night was stolen by young Caleb Park - an eighth grade honor roll student and child prodigy who started playing cello at the age of 4 ½ and is currently studying at the Peabody Institute. Caleb performed a brilliant interpretation of Tschaikovsky's "Rococo Variations" on a 7/8th Peter Staszcel cello and later accompanied Alayna Roby as she performed her solo of 'O Holy Night' during the grand finale.

St. George wishes to thank Monument Bank, Phil Rinaldi, Patty Apostolides, The Charuhas Family, and Marylou and Brian Relle for their major financial support. Gratitude is also extended to our choir director, Paul Mavromihalis, for his artistic guidance and hard work in coordinating one of St. George's premier events.

The committee is proud to announce that the financial goal of raising a net amount of \$10,000 was met and all of the proceeds will be donated to the rebuilding of the St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Shrine at Ground Zero in Lower Manhattan, NY.

SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

Thank you to all of those who made generous donations during the conference to our scholarship fund. The recipient of the Gallos Scholarship for this year is Nikitas Conrad. Nikitas is from Fredericksburg, VA and is a senior at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond studying music. Nikitas is a faithful member of the choir at Saints Constantine and Helen in Richmond.

Contributions to the Scholarship Fund can be made at any time and are always appreciated. If you can please help support our scholarship, please send your contributions to:

Maria Keritsis, Scholarship Chair
9030 Kings Crown Rd
Richmond, VA 23236

DISTRICT NEWS

NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA

It is with great sadness that on December 4, one of our faithful choir members fell asleep in the Lord. Sonja Eaton was a member for over 14 years and was a committed and faithful member of our "choir family" even during her illness. We will miss her friendship, kindness, and smile. May her memory be eternal.

Our choir is still looking for a part-time choir director. Please contact Father George at (757) 596-6151. Four members continue taking turns directing during the Liturgy, weddings, funerals and special services. We have several new members and are always encouraging others to join.

We enjoyed wonderful fellowship on December 14 with a Christmas pot luck dinner in our AHEPA family center.

MEDIA, PA

On behalf of the St George Choir of Media, Pennsylvania, warm wishes for a Joyous New Year!

This past summer two members sang with the choir at the Clergy Laity Convention at the St. George Cathedral in Philadelphia. In the Fall, they also attended the EFGOCM annual conference in Holmdel, New Jersey, and the MBFGOCM in Weston, Massachusetts.

Our Youth Choir was invited to sing hymns at the *Metropolis of New Jersey Ambassador Awards* Program. The GOYA Youth Choir of 12 young ladies won first place in the Sights and Sound competition this past year.

The Sunday before Christmas our Adult and Youth Choirs with the Sunday school children presented a Christmas Pageant. The program, *O Holy Night*, included solos by the Youth Choir and accompaniment by our Youth String Quartet. Following the pageant, the choirs presented Orthodox Hymns and well-known Christmas Carols and invited the congregation to join in the singing.

BROOMALL, PA

Senior Choir, Dena Papadopoulos, Director
Saint Luke Senior Choir members participated in the EF-GOCM Conference at the Kimisis Tis Theotokos Church in Holmdel, N.J. The conference was held Oct. 2 through Oct. 5.

The Patriarch Athenagoras Award For Distinguished Metropolis Service was presented to Virginia Botsis during the EF-GOCM Choir Conference, at the Hierarchical Liturgy with his Eminence Archbishop Evangelos officiating. Virginia Botsis has served as both the District Supervisor and Secretary of the EFGOCM, as Choir Director at St. Luke, and Chairperson of the 2009 EFGOCM Choir Conference at St. Luke, to name a few of her many contributions. Congratulations to Virginia (Ginny) for this award and her service to our St. Luke Parish and the EFGOCM. AXIA

The St. Luke Senior Choir performed in the annual Christmas Pageant. Guest soprano soloist, Serena Pantazopoulos performed "O Holy Night" and complimented the Senior Choir with descant singing. Kathryn Corbino, music student at West Chester University and Youth Choir member Evan Palmieri were also featured as soloists with the Pageant Singer Choir.

Sunday Youth Choir offers students in grades 4 through 12 the opportunity to sing with the Senior Choir during Divine Liturgy service every Sunday. (There are no rehearsals for this group.)

GOYA Liturgical Choir is offered to St. Luke GOYA members (grades 7 through 12). GOYA Liturgical Choir rehearses after church during the months of January, February and March. The choir performs at the Second Salutation of the Theotokos Service during Lent and performs liturgical hymns at the annual Delaware Valley Sights and Sounds event. In addition, the GOYA Liturgical Choir participates in Divine Liturgy by singing the hymns they have prepared for the annual Delaware Valley Sights and Sounds.

Christmas Pageant Singers Choir is open to students in grades 3 through 12. Pageant Singers rehearse Christmas Carols during the month of November to perform in the Christmas Pageant.

NEWS FROM NJ DISTRICT #3

- On Oct. 17, 2014 Holy Trinity, Westfield choir sponsored a Kafenion Karaoke Night. Everyone had a great time and look forward to repeating it next year. Those who missed it can't wait.
- On Nov. 22, 2014 our New Jersey District was invited to attend a "Sing a long" of English settings from the Slavic/Antiochian/Greek traditions. It was sponsored by the Russian choir "The Spirit of Orthodoxy". A number of our District attended and really enjoyed this lovely event hosted at the St. Andrew Ukrainian Memorial Church Hall in Somerset, NJ. All music was sung a Capella. This was an outreach to all Orthodox jurisdictions.

Upcoming events

On March 21, 2015 the Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians (EFGOCM) is sponsoring a Church Music Institute (CMI) at St. George Greek Orthodox Church, 1200 Klockner Rd, Hamilton, NJ, on Saturday, March 21, 2015. CMI workshops are held throughout the United States to encourage church musicians to grow, develop, and fine tune their instrument, the voice, and their mind. This year the CMI has two purposes, one to learn the meaning behind what we sing and the other to use the voice as a proper instrument.

The entire day will be dovetailed between theology and the actual singing of these lovely hymns, bringing us to a better understanding of what we sing during the Divine Liturgy and other important services, especially during the Lenten period.

Marina Alexander, Music Director of various chorale groups, will be acquainting the group with vocal production and techniques; skills in singing and what the conductor expects from singers; and how to keep your voice healthy during the singing process. Valerie Karras, Th.D., Ph.D. will take us through the journey of hymnology by explaining the structure and theology of the meaning of what the choir, psalti and priest sing. This will be a way to see how each participant works together to enhance the liturgy. During her session we will get a view and the feeling of the content, tonality, characteristics, the use of English and basic hymns of our church. The last part will be total singing having Marina help us in fine-tuning these hymns. We will be using some of the hymns from the Lenten Program and the Divine Liturgy with singing in Greek and English.

We welcome all singers or just anyone who would like to take this journey and learn about the faith through our beautiful hymns.

See attached flyer for more information or contact Hope Demitry, EHopeD@verizon.net or (609)695-4033

On April 3, the NJ District of EFGOCM will be sponsoring our 25th Anniversary "The Spirit of Lent" Concert hosted at Holy Trinity, Westfield, NJ

Every year the Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians (EFGOCM) gathers singers from the various parishes in New Jersey and produces a program of hymns during the Lenten season. This year will be the 25th Anniversary of "The Spirit of Lent" which is a choral offering of Ancient and Modern Works in English and Greek. On the Friday before Palm Sunday, April 3, 2015 at 8:00 p.m., "The Spirit of Lent" will be performed at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Westfield. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the St Nicholas National Shrine at Ground Zero. Please join us as a preparation for Holy Week and Pascha.

Rehearsals will be in Westfield at 7:15 p.m. on Mondays: March 9, 16, 23, and 30, 2015.

A Note to former singers that have performed in the past: will you please join us this year and sing for this 25th Anniversary. The youth choir is also invited to sing. If anyone is interested in performing in this program please contact Kathryn Athanasoulas, kathanasoulas@hotmail.com as space is at a premium, therefore your response is needed.

A TTN: Priests, Church Secretaries, and Choir Directors

In addition to all choir members in the Metropolis of New Jersey, we are asking that you subscribe to the EFGOCM ListServ. The ListServ is an Archdiocese-sponsored service to keep you informed of the Church-Music arm of the Metropolis including activities and dates. You will receive an email about once a month with announcements. Among other things, this will help to avoid scheduling conflicts with conferences and workshops. Please go to the EFGOCM webpage (<http://newjersey.churchmusic.goarch.org/>) and click on the link at the top to enter your email address and subscribe.



**Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
250 Gallows Hill Rd
Westfield, New Jersey 07090**

is pleased to host

**The Eastern Federation of
Greek Orthodox Church Musicians
District of New Jersey's**

25th Anniversary

The Spirit of Lent

**A Choral Offering of
Ancient and Modern Works in
English and Greek**

**Kathryn Athanasoulas, Director
E. Hope Demitry, Organist**

**Friday, April 3, 2015
8:00 p.m.**

**Donation \$10.00
Children under 12 free**

**A portion of the proceeds will go to the
St. Nicholas National Shrine at Ground Zero**

Refreshments following program





The National Forum and
The Eastern Federation of
Greek Orthodox Church Musicians
District of New Jersey

Invites and encourages all Church Choir Members, Priests, Choir and Youth Choir
Directors, Organists and Psalti to attend this year's

Church Music Institute

*Come learn the theology behind what we sing in the liturgy and its hymnology
Also learn to produce a healthy vocal sound and sharpen your vocal techniques*

Featuring

Marina Alexander, Music Director -- Metropolitan Greek Chorale (NYC), Arcadian Chorale (NJ),
& Richmond Choral Society (NYC); Adj. Asst. Prof.--College of Staten Island/CUNY

Valerie A. Karras, Th.D., Ph.D., Research Associate, International Studies and
Programs University of Missouri-St. Louis; Graduate of Holy Cross

Host Church

St. George Greek Orthodox Church
1200 Klockner Road
Hamilton, New Jersey 08619

Saturday, March 21, 2015
9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Pre-Registration: \$25.00 (Lunch included) registration at the door: \$30.00
RSVP by March 14, 2015

Make checks payable to: EFGOCM District III

Mail to: Hope Demity
95 Beechwood Ave., Trenton, NJ 08618
609-695-4033 EHopeD@verizon.net

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone number _____ E-mail _____

Church/Choral Group/City _____



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