

**ST. MATTHEW THE EVANGELIST
ANTIOCHIAN
ORTHODOX CHURCH
MAY, 2022, NEWSLETTER**

10383 ALBION ROAD, N. ROYALTON, OH 44133

P.O. Box 33183, N. Royalton, OH 44133

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SATURDAY VESPERS—5 p.m.

SUNDAY MATINS—8:50 a.m. SUNDAY LITURGY—10 a.m.

CONFESSION—after Vespers & during Sunday Matins & by appointment.

**PARISH ORGANIZATIONS, STUDY GROUPS, MINISTRY
TEAMS**

PATHWAYS TO PEACE—BOTH IN PERSON AT CHURCH AND BY ZOOM—Each Monday, 7:15 pm. “A gathering place for those who are broken from hurts, hang-ups, or habits. Join us as we renew our minds and encourage each other through the love of Christ.” Call Deacon Basil, 440-665-3591, for Zoom information.

NORTH BIBLE STUDY---Thursday, May 26, at Parker's, 1350 Elmwood Ct., Rocky River, 6:30. We are studying the book of Isaiah.

WOMEN'S PRAYER GROUP—Friday, May 6, 1 pm. All women welcome! The location is at Tara Reidy's, 274 Elmwood, Berea. For more info, call Sandy Tolbert, 440-773-9162.

WEST BIBLE STUDY—Saturday, May 14, 6 pm at the church. Studying I Corinthians.

SOUTH BIBLE STUDY—Tuesdays, May 3 & 17, 6:30 pm at Craig & Cindy George's, 9451 Sherwood Trail, Brecksville. All are welcome. The study will be on the book of Ephesians.

NEXT TEEN CLUB MEETING---To be announced. The teens are assisting with the campout at church May 28-29.

ST. HERMAN'S MINISTRY TEAM—Sunday, May 16, is our parish's next monthly turn to provide a meal to the poor at St. Herman Orthodox Homeless Shelter in Cleveland. If you can help with either the providing or cooking or serving of the meal, please contact Deacon Basil, 440-665-3591. Thank you to the Blazeks for serving the April meal.

OUR PARISH'S MINISTRY OF DELIVERY OF FOOD, CLOTHING, ETC. TO THE HOMELESS ON THE STREETS OF CLEVELAND WILL BE ON SUNDAY, MAY 16. Alms box to help fund is by hall entrance. Thanks to our Teen Club for making the lunches for the April distribution.

HOMESCHOOL SUPPORT GROUP---Friday, May 13, 9 a.m.

NEW PARISHIONERS IN APRIL

Shadi Zogheib
3606 Dover Center Road
Westlake, Ohio 44145
440-907-9309

Ophelia Kornea
6934 Parma Heights Blvd.
Parma Heights, OH 44130
216-212-7427

shadistitch@sbcglobal.net

Please welcome them and add them to your parish directory.

OUR CURRENT CATECHUMEN LIST We pray for them at each liturgy. Please pray for them during the week as well as they prepare to enter the Orthodox Church----

Mariya Butt

Michael Palmer

Jamie & Lucas Domonkos

Victoria Shaker

Lindsey Katsaros

ST. MATTHEW'S MESSAGE BOARD

Contact Bonnie Harmon if you wish to submit a message.

YOU'RE INVITED TO A WEDDING! Mark the date for the wedding of parishioners Veronica Scanlon and Colton Bose. SATURDAY, JULY 9th at 12 noon. The wedding and reception will both be held here at St Matthew's.

Please RSVP at <http://withjoy.com/colton-and-veronica> by June 19 so they can plan accordingly. For those who don't wish to use the Internet, please RSVP by texting or calling Veronica at 440-657-8904.

Also, LADIES are invited to a potluck Bridal Shower for Veronica, on Friday, JUNE 10th, 6pm at the home of Susan Blazek, 1498 Oak Tree Dr, Brunswick. Please RSVP at the following evite: <http://evite.me/9kB1CbfKQh> or email to :Susan.blazek@gmail.com.

The couple is registered at Target, in-store and at Target.com. <https://www.target.com/gift-registry>

They invite you all to join in their great joy!

A REPORT ON TWO LARGE PROJECTS TO HELP THE NEEDY

ANNUAL HOLY WEEK FOOD DELIVERY TO THE NEEDY---- 27 homes (about half in the parish, about half outside) were helped with hams, boxes of food, and grocery gift cards during Holy Week (a few just wanted hams and gift cards, not food boxes). It is a very big and complicated effort and thanks are due to all who helped in various ways--- to Rebecca Kubicek who was the over-all coordinator, to all who put together boxes of food, those who donated food, hams, and gift cards, those who assembled everything on Palm Sunday, and those who made deliveries. And a special thanks to Archdeacon Joseph Harb for his special help as always! God bless you all! Food pantry deliveries will be ongoing, of course, but the next giant project will be at Thanksgiving, and then again for Christmas. Grocery gift cards are always needed all year long!

SPECIAL MISSION TO THE POOR--- On Bright Saturday, April 30, our parish carried out a special Pascha season Mission to the Poor. An assembly line was formed in our kitchen on that day and 750 sack lunches were prepared. Then later that day all those lunches, plus some Food Pantry food and Bibles, were distributed to the homeless on the streets and at several homeless shelters. A rather intense day, indeed, as was the evening before when all the shopping was done, pretty well cleaning Walmart out of some items! A big thank you to all who helped by donating, in putting it all together, and with the actual delivery. And special thanks to Jon Scordos who put it all together. Jon says we can do it again before too long.....

GOD WILL BLESS YOU FOR HELPING THE POOR WHO ARE VERY SPECIAL TO HIM! AND WHAT BETTER TIME FOR YOU TO DO ALL YOU DID FOR THEM WITH THESE 2 PROJECTS IN THE LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS ----AS WE CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION OF THE ONE WHO TOLD US, "BLESSED ARE THE POOR". AND THOSE WHO HELP THEM ARE ALSO BLESSED!

THANK YOU! Two large traditional Orthodox items of church "furniture" were burned up in our 2017 church fire. Now that we are settled into our new temple (we've been in it for over a year and a half now) it was time to replace them. Our new Epitaphion (Christ's tomb that is decorated and used in Holy Week services) and our new bishop's throne both arrived separately from Greece very recently. They are beautiful and make our new building more like "home". Each item was given to the church by two families (four families all together). They wish to remain anonymous. Many deep thanks to them for what they did!

And an encouraging note in all this..... Parish Council, some months back, felt it was time to purchase both items (very expensive! About \$15,000 between the two items) but nothing was in the budget. So the Council asked me to send a parish email asking for donations. I did so, figuring it might take quite a while for enough money to come in, but eventually we would get there. But.....within half an hour of that email going out, we were all covered with the funding! I even had to "turn away" some gifts.....you folks always amaze me! God bless you!

----Father Andrew

ANOTHER THANK YOU FROM FATHER ANDREW----*As you know, Orthodox Holy Week is an intense and complex 9 day long week as we mystically participate in all our Lord went through that week and then celebrate His glorious Resurrection. It doesn't all just happen! So many helped in so many different ways that I don't think I should even try to list all the names. So, a big personal thank you to all who helped with a wonderful week: Father John; our deacons; our subdeacons; our reader; the chanters; the altar boys; the ushers; those that cleaned; those that decorated the epitaphion, those that helped with our several meals (especially the great Pascha middle of the night feast); those that worked on the Great Friday children's activities; those that donated so many things-----lilies, carnations, eggs, palms, candles, etc. and etc.!*

And a very heartfelt thank you to all who attended in greater numbers than ever before----nothing touches a priest's heart more than to see increasing numbers of people gather together as God's people to worship Him! And my heart got touched a lot in Holy Week! Attendance at Palm Sunday, Great Friday, and the Midnite Liturgy was great----but what I especially noticed was how many people came to all the other services (there are more than 20 services in Holy Week)! Attendance at many of them was greatly increased from earlier years, sometimes twice as much. Of course, we often say we shouldn't focus too much on numbers and there is certainly truth to that. But it is also true that each attendance number is another child of God who has come to his God's house to worship and praise the Lord. Each of those souls is beloved to God and so we rejoice when the number of souls worshipping goes up!

Thanks be to God and my personal thanks to each of you....

OUR CHURCH FAMILY MEET-UP

Rim Alsifi was born in Damascus, Syria, on December 18, 1977. Her name "Rim" means a small white deer. Her father Ibrahim was an accountant. Her mother Miladeh was an elementary school teacher. Rim has two sisters—Christine Zogheib and Hanan Saada—and two brothers—Housam and Wesam. We were privileged to have all seven in our church at one time and some of you will remember them all.

When Rim was 18-years-old, she entered the College of Medicine in Damascus. After six years of school, she graduated and was now a general doctor. After working for a year, she went back to school to get a specialized degree in public health and infection control. Rim had a clinic in her suburban town of Katana. She also worked as the director of pulmonary disease in Damascus. She says that being a doctor in Syria is quite a bit different to doctors here in the United States. In Syria, the doctors do everything—from manning the office to all nursing duties to actual doctoring.

When Rim was 20, she married Haitham Yared, an English teacher. People in Syria do not change their last names when they marry; therefore, Rim's last name is still Alsifi, while her children have their father's last name.

Rim and Haitham had three children. Manar was born in 1998, Nawar in 2004, and Nawal in 2008. But before Nawal was born, tragedy struck the family. On Christmas Eve of 2007, Haitham suffered a heart attack and died immediately. He was only 42.

Life went on with Rim working in her clinic and the girls going to school. Then in 2011 war broke out between Syria and ISIS, the Islamic terrorist group. Rim describes the frightening situation. There were guns everywhere. They'd hear bombs go off, shouting, and gun shots. Rim closed her clinic at the start of the war. People were afraid to go to church because ISIS liked to target the Christians. They liked to shoot at buses. Rim's uncle and two cousins were shot to death. She said that during a typical day at home, they would suddenly hear shouting. Quickly they would turn off the lights, the stove, the t.v., and run to the back of their house. They would sit there and wait until they knew it was safe. Rim said that the first year of the war, you are very scared most of the time. By the second year, you're pretty much used to it.

Before the war, in 2002, Rim applied for immigration to the U.S. Christine Zogheib was there already and would sponsor her sister and family. However, it took 14 years for the U.S. to accept their immigration request. It was in 2016 when Rim and her three daughters arrived in Cleveland. They were able to rent a house in Lakewood where they presently reside.

The U.S. medical profession does not accept the medical degrees from Syria; therefore, Rim had to look for other work. She now works part-time at Tri-C in the ASPIRE program, doing data entry. She is also going to school in the medical billing program and will graduate in May.

Rim grew up in the Church. In fact, in her town of Katana she lived right next to it. Her grandparents had built St. Elias Orthodox Church. She estimates that it is 3-4 times bigger than our present-day St. Matthew's.

Rim does not know of a time when she did not believe and trust in God. When times are hard and scary as they were in the war she lived through, she became closer to God. She is thankful for Him keeping her family safe.

Rim's goal in life is to give her daughters a chance to build their future. Manar is studying to be a pharmacist; Nawar wants to be an optometrist; and Nawal is only 14 and will start high school in the fall.

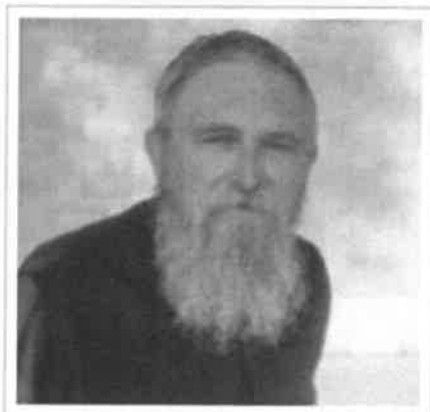
It is not easy for Rim. She is in a new country where she has had to learn the language and the way of life different from where she was born. She has had to give up a good career in medicine and find work way beneath her capabilities in order to take care of her family. All of her friends and other relatives are still in Syria and she misses them. She has had to start over without the help of a husband, although she doesn't complain. Can you imagine, any of you parents who have had to navigate getting your kids into a college and applying for aid and scholarships, how almost impossible it is for Rim to do that. If any of you could offer some help to her in this area, I know she would appreciate it.

Rim and her children have been faithful members of St. Matthew's since the time they arrived in America. She loves our church and is a valued part of our church family.



RETREAT

at St. Matthew the Evangelist
Antiochian Orthodox Church

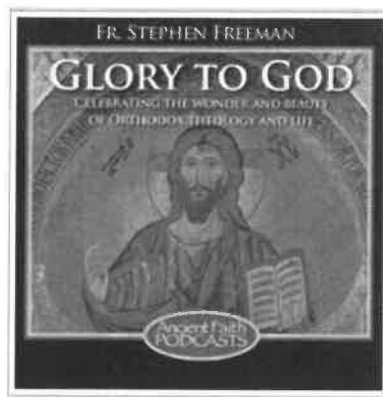
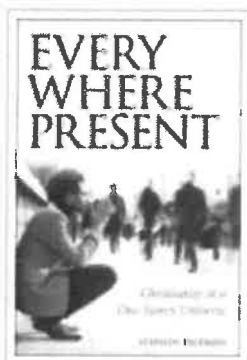


Guest Speaker, **Fr. Stephen Freeman**

Author, *Everywhere Present, Christianity
in a One-Story Universe*

Podcast (Ancient Faith Ministries) and
Weblog Host, *Glory to God for All Things*

Sponsored by:



RETREAT DETAILS

Friday & Saturday, May 6-7, 2022

10383 Albion Rd, North Royalton 44133

Friday, 6 pm to 8 pm

Saturday - Doors Open, 9 am; 9:30 am to 11:30 am

Lunch provided between sessions

Saturday, 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Vespers to follow at 5:00 pm

Admission - Free Will Offering

Please RSVP by April 30th: Contact Cindy George – (330) 309-9491, cindygeorge127@gmail.com,
or Gloria Zabala— (440) 897-5052, gzabala104@gmail.com.

LENTEN HOME ALMS BOXES

If you haven't already returned your Lenten Home Alms Box to the church, please do as soon as possible... Then the monies can be counted up and sent off to the Archdiocese for distribution to the needy all over the world.

FAMILY CAMP OUT, SATURDAY, MAY 28-SUNDAY, MAY 29

All are welcome! You can either come and go, or you can bring a tent and camp out overnight on the church property.

Sack races, softball, egg toss, water balloons and more, combined with Orthodox talks and services. Ends with pizza after Sunday lityurgy.

NO CHARGE----there will be a free will offering if you feel led by God to give.

HOWEVER, SOME MONEY GIFTS, EVEN FROM NON-CAMPERS, WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL----SEE FR. ANDREW IF YOU CAN HELP IN THIS WAY.

More details soon.....

MOTHERS DAY BRUNCH---SUNDAY, MAY 8TH

OUR PARISH BROTHERHOOD IS SERVING A

MOTHERS DAY BRUNCH RIGHT AFTER LITURGY

ON MAY 8TH TO HONOR ALL THE MOTHERS,

GRANDMOTHERS, & GOD MOTHERS OF OUR

PARISH—ALL ARE WELCOME! NO CHARGE!

VISITORS TO ST. MATTHEW'S

Worship service attendance continues to be very high and it is a rare Sunday when there is not someone "new" at church----often quite a few! Please continue the St. Matthew's Church tradition of warm friendliness to visitors---introduce yourself to them, get in a conversation if possible! A really great thing is to invite them to Coffeetime, and even accompany them to the hall. ***And also please remember two*** things: 1. If you don't know someone but aren't sure if they are a visitor, just go say "hi"-----that is often a great way to meet some person isn't "brand new" but newer than you! 2. A first-time visitor feeling that St. Matthew's friendliness and love is extremely important, but it also important that we show that same friendliness when they attend for their second time, third time, etc. That is needed so that they start to feel at home here and, if non-Orthodox, by casual chatting with you start to find out more about our Faith and our parish.



Theotokos of Vladimir

**EASTERN ORTHODOX WOMEN'S GUILD
OF GREATER CLEVELAND
SENDS AN OPEN INVITATION**

**Annual
Pan-Orthodox
Luncheon**



Holy Trinity Orthodox Church Hall
6822 Broadview Road
Parma, OH 44134

Date: Saturday, May 14, 2022
Time: Doors open @ 12:00 AM
Luncheon @ 12:30 PM

Enjoy the afternoon with good homemade appetizers / desserts along with a delicious luncheon menu

**Reservations required
by Monday, May 9, 2022
No tickets sold at the door**
Tickets: Adults - \$15.00
Children 6 to 12 - 7.50
Children under 6 - FREE

• For tickets, see Parish Representative Gloria Zabala



Program to include:
• Auction Gift Baskets / Door Prizes

All proceeds to benefit Orthodox organizations and charities
see list compiled by EOWG -- <https://www.eowgcle.org/charities>

NEW MINISTRY BEGINNING AT ST. MATTHEW'S

St. Matthew's is now officially affiliated with OCLife, a "non-profit organization dedicated to equipping the Orthodox Christian community to strengthen its commitment to the sacredness of human life from conception to death, illuminating the Church's teaching on life issues through education and engagement." If you would like to get involved in this new ministry, please contact Lisa Palivoda at ldpal1703@outlook.com or Cindy George at cindygeorge127@gmail.com.

AN INTERESTING COMMENT ON THE DIVINE LITURGY----

I invited a friend of mine in Berea, a serious Protestant Christian, to attend one of our liturgies. He attended the St. Thomas Sunday liturgy on May 1. The next day I saw him for just a few minutes somewhere. He was quite amazed and impressed by the liturgy and said he was glad he attended. He had thought that being it was the first Sunday after our Orthodox Holy Week that things would be rather mild and low-energy! He said he was surprised by the intensity and power of our worship (especially the chanting and singing)---and called it "religion with a fire hose!". He meant it positively, thank God! So if you invite someone to a liturgy and they say something to the effect that they expect it will be dull and dead-----tell them the fire hose will be on full blast!

---Father Andrew

Creative Arts Festival- Shout out to the following students who participated in the Creative Arts Festival:

Grade 1

Gabriel Amer- Art
Brooke Musarra-Art
Phillip Roach- Art and Creative Writing

Grade 2

Anastasia Blazek- Art and Photography
Elanor Hunter- Art
Gianna Musarra- Art

Grade 6

Marina Amer- Art
Sebastian Blazek- Poetry

Grade 7

Gregory Blazek- Photography and Poetry

Grade 8

Xavier Blazek- Photography and Poetry

Grade 9

Samir Amer-Poetry

Winners will be announced at the Parish Life Conference in June. All students who participated from our church received a ticket for each entry for a drawing. The winner was Phillip Roach. He won a gift card. Congratulations to Phillip!

CHRIST IS RISEN!

TRULY HE IS RISEN!

St. Matthew Orthodox Church

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North Royalton, OH 44133