

**ST. MATTHEW THE EVANGELIST
ANTIOCHIAN
ORTHODOX CHURCH
JUNE, 2024, NEWSLETTER
10383 ALBION ROAD, N. ROYALTON, OH 44133
P.O. Box 33183, N. Royalton, OH 44133**

**Father Andrew's Contact Info: fatherharmon@outlook.com
cell: 440-539-1116 home: 440-826-0662 church: 440-582-5673
Website: www.stmattroyalton.org**

**SATURDAY VESPERS—5 p.m.
SUNDAY MATINS—8:50 a.m. SUNDAY LITURGY—10 a.m.
CONFESSION—after Vespers and during Sunday Matins & by
appointment.**

EXTRA SERVICES IN JUNE

ASCENSION DAY IS THURSDAY, JUNE 13. On this Great Feast, 40 days after Christ's Resurrection, we celebrate when He ascended to heaven.

OUR SCHEDULE-----Wednesday, June 12----Vespers with Artoklasia, 6:30 p.m.
-----Thursday, June 13----Matins, 9 a.m.; Liturgy, 10 a.m.;
Potluck feast, 11:30 a.m.

PENTECOST SOUL SATURDAY—June 22, the day before Pentecost. Just like the Soul Saturday services in Lent when we pray for our departed loved ones and all departed Christians throughout the ages. Matins, 8:50 a.m.; Liturgy, 10 a.m. You may give Father Andrew lists of departed to be prayed for either ahead of time or that morning.

PENTECOST IS SUNDAY, JUNE 23. On this day, one of the very greatest of the Great Feasts, we celebrate when the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles 10 days after Christ ascended---and the Church was born!

OUR SCHEDULE-----Saturday, June 22----Vespers with Artoklasia, 5 p.m.
-----Sunday, June 23----Matins, 8:50 a.m.; Liturgy with
Pentecost Kneeling Prayers, 10 a.m.

SAINTS PETER & PAUL DAY IS SATURDAY, JUNE 29TH. We will not be able to have liturgy as Father Andrew will be at the Diocese Conference in Chicago. Please check with other parishes in our area about their service time and attend there.

PARISH ORGANIZATIONS, STUDY GROUPS, MINISTRY TEAMS

WEST BIBLE STUDY—Saturday, June 15, 6 pm at the church. Studying Revelation.

WOMEN'S PRAYER GROUP—Tuesday, June 25, 10:30 a.m. All women welcome! The location is at Tara Reidy's, 274 Elmwood, Berea. For more info, call Sandy Tolbert, 440-773-9162. We're reading and discussing the book, "The Way of the Ascetics."

SOUTH BIBLE STUDY—Tuesdays, June 4 & 18, 6:30. At Craig & Cindy George's, 9451 Sherwood Trail, Brecksville. All are welcome.

YOUNG ADULT BIBLE STUDY—Saturday, June 22, 6 p.m., at the church. Bible, food, fellowship—Studying the Gospel of St. Mark.

TEEN CLUB—June activities ---Bible study on The Wisdom of Sirach, after liturgy on Sunday, June 9th. Movie Night, Sat. June 29th, after Vespers

MARTHA MINISTRIES IS NOW UNDERWAY—This is a ministry to provide meals for families in need of some help—new babies, illness, grieving, etc. If you can help, see/email/call Erin Musarra at 440-799-0838.

ST. HERMAN'S MINISTRY TEAM—Contact Deacon Basil, 440-665-3591 to help with our monthly meal serving at the shelter on Sunday, June 16.

MONTHLY DELIVERY OF FOOD, CLOTHING, ETC. TO HOMELESS ON STREETS OF DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND---Sunday, June 30. Alms box to help this outreach is near hall entrance.

HOMESCHOOL ENRICHMENT GROUP---Will resume in the fall. It meets every Friday from 9:30-1:30 at St. Matthew's. For more info, contact Olivia at oharmon15@gmail.com or call (440)220-2624,

CHESS CLUB—Meets after church on June 30.

PRISON MINISTRY

This new ministry will be in conjunction with the national Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry. It is possible to help with prison ministry even without ever going inside a prison. For more info, contact our local prison ministry leader, Vincent Defilippo at 330-352-6678, vdefilippo@neo.rr.com.

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO MADE OFFERINGS IN MEMORY OF OUR DEPARTED

SISTER IN CHRIST, MARGARET SABREY---Anna Norris, John & Linda Fadel, Father Andrew & Khourie Bonnie

NEW PARISH MEMBERS---

Charles & Christine Bossart

37652 Stoney Lake Drive
North Ridgeville, Ohio 44039
Home—440-412-7605
Christine—440-429-7072
Charles—lakestgermain2001@yahoo.com
Christine—christhesticher@yahoo.com

Adam & Stevi James

Liv (all 3 entered by Holy Baptism)
6870 Olde 8 Road
Peninsula, Ohio 44264
Adam—580-519-1976
Stevi—580-519-1441
adam.james7784@outlook.com
stevibird@gmail.com

Dr. George & Elizabeth Matta

1453 Woodward Avenue
Lakewood, Ohio 44107
George---248-912-8148
Elizabeth---202-917-7384

Please add them to your parish directory and welcome them to our church family!

RETIREMENT dinner party

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A RETIREMENT DINNER
to celebrate thirty-four years with our beloved

V. REV. FR. ANDREW HARMON

SUNDAY • AUGUST 18TH • 5:00PM
ST. SAVA SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
2151 W. WALLINGS RD.
BROADVIEW HEIGHTS, OH 44147

ADULTS & CHILDREN OVER 5 YEARS: \$30.00 PER PERSON
CHILDREN 5 YEARS AND UNDER: \$15.00 PER PERSON

Ticket prices include dinner, dessert, coffee or tea, soft drinks, or beer. Bring your own wine if you choose. Gluten free & vegan meals available by request only.

TICKETS AVAILABLE JUNE 1 - JULY 21

To purchase, please contact
Leigh Frank (330) 685-1764 / loberlinfrank@gmail.com or
Peggy Latina (216) 401-1062 / peggyschmidt1@hotmail.com



May 28, 2024

Dear Members and Friends of St. Matthew's:

By now, most, if not all of you, know that Fr. Andrew will be retiring on August 1, 2024, and that the church is planning a two-part retirement celebration for him. The first installment will be a very special tribute coffee hour after his final Sunday liturgy as our official pastor. The church school's youth choirs are planning a special concert for him that day. Stay tuned for more developments about that coffee hour.

Secondly, we are having a retirement dinner party on August 18th, details of which are explained on the flyer which we hope everyone has received. If you haven't, please contact us so that we can send one to you. Our committee worked very hard to keep the price per ticket as reasonable as possible by eliminating certain items from the cost. For those, we are coming to you for assistance. Together, the Parish Council has allocated \$1,000 and the Sisterhood has donated \$500 to this endeavor; yet, we still have areas of needed support in the form of donations, including:

Ticket donations for special, invited guests
Ticket assistance for parishioners in need
Chair covers @ \$2 per chair
Printing costs for program
Simple appetizers @ \$2 per person

If you would like to contribute to our "wish list", please see one of us. For ticket assistance, please see Lisa, confidentially.

Remember, tickets will be available to purchase on Sunday, June 2, 2024, from Peggy Latina or Leigh Frank. Reference the flyer that you have already received for other information about the dinner.

Christ Is Risen,

Lisa Palivoda Camille Patrick
Banquet Celebration Co-chairs

Dr. Craig George
Parish Council President

SUNDAY SCHOOL IS OUT FOR THE SUMMER—WILL RESUME IN THE FALL.

CHILDREN'S SUMMER DAY CAMP---"ORTHODOXY AROUND THE WORLD" Now under way, Monday, June 3 through Friday, June 7

OUR CONDOLENCES---

- to the family of parishioner Eleanor Katzbach who fell asleep in Christ on May
 - to the family of parishioner Margaret Sabrey who fell asleep in Christ on May
 - to the family of parishioner Dolores Kaleal who fell asleep in Christ on May
 - to Beth Snyder on the falling asleep in Christ of her brother, Rocky Farage.
- Christ is risen! May their memories be eternal!

OUR CHURCH FAMILY MEET-UP

Richard Esper, Jr., was born on September 4, 1971, in Pittsburgh, PA. He and his parents spent his first years living with his paternal Syrian grandmother who only spoke in Arabic. He was able to speak Arabic fluently as a result, but forgot most of it after his family moved into their new home in Forest Hills, a suburb of Pittsburgh, and he stopped speaking it regularly. Rick's father's parents emigrated from Syria. His dad was an engineer. Rick's mother was born in Syria and emigrated to the U.S. when she was 15. Rick has two younger brothers.

Rick went to public school and did not take studying seriously, although he wanted to be a doctor. He says he was the class clown. Finally, after a warning from his father at the last part of high school, Rick started to get serious about school. He ended up getting his undergraduate degree from the University of Pittsburgh. He then went to medical school at Temple University in Philadelphia. It was the first time he left home. He was nervous about the move, but it turned out to be the best time of his life, with him making lots of good friends whom he still has to this day.

Rick began his residency training in 1997 in Internal Medicine, a branch of medical practice that treats adults with medical problems who do not need surgery. After three years of residency training, he decided to specialize in cardiology, a branch of Internal Medicine. He got a cardiology fellowship at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit from 2000 to 2004. After finishing that fellowship, he spent a year practicing Cardiology in Lafayette, Indiana, but did not like it there. He then was hired to work in Youngstown, Ohio, where he still works to this day.

Meanwhile, he had met his future wife, Dema Halasa, in the summer of 1994. She was from Akron and was driving to the Antiochian Village to her job as a counselor that summer. She had met Rick's brother, Greg, before at camp. They were camp counselors together, so she decided to stop and see him on the way back and maybe get a home cooked dinner from Mrs. Esper. Rick was interested immediately in Dema, but it took her a little longer. He saw her again 3 years later at the college conference at the Village. They started to get to know each other better and in 2000, they were married. Their daughter, Catherine, was born in 2004, and their son Anthony in 2007.

Then on April 24, 2007, everything changed for Rick. He had earlier developed a very painful kidney stone which he got removed at the hospital. During his recovery, he developed a blood clot in his leg which he says is usually normal. However, what he did not know is that he was born with a heart defect. He was born with a hole in his heart that was abnormally large. The small blood clot traveled from his leg vein into his heart, which is normal. However, once it entered his heart, instead of getting transported to the lungs, it went the wrong way through the hole in his heart and got pumped into his brain. This is called a paradoxical embolism.

Rick woke up that morning and when he was nearly ready for work, he became dizzy and collapsed at 6:30 a.m. and was taken to the local hospital where he worked. His cardiology partner saw him there and had him flown to the Cleveland Clinic. There, doctors called interventional neurologists were able to thread a catheter from his groin artery backward through the main blood vessel in his body and into his brain artery, and were able to pluck out the clot from his brain. At 11:30 a.m., his blood clot problem was fixed, but he was completely paralyzed on his left side. The doctors wanted to see how everything looked in his brain so they prepared him for an MRI. Rick, maybe because he was a bit claustrophobic, ended up rolling off the table and hitting his head on the floor, causing a large bleed in his brain.

After becoming stabilized, he was transferred to a hospital in Youngstown. Eventually therapy began and his function gradually started to come back, although his left hand remains paralyzed to this day and he has persistent stiffness in his left leg and shoulder. Rick credits Dema with his recovery. At first, he did not want to do any therapy, but the "fear of Dema" pushed him to exercise. Even Rick's doctors and therapists had great respect for Dema. In spite of her having a 3 year old daughter and a 3 month old infant son, Dema was a strong force to be reckoned with when it came to making Rick and his therapists do all they could to help Rick recover.

Before the stroke, Rick had worked hard getting to where he was. He had put in 12 years of school and training to become a cardiologist. His cardiology fellowship was very difficult. He regularly worked 36 hour shifts with 2 hours of sleep and took a lot of verbal abuse from his medical superiors. When he reached his goals, his thoughts were, "Now, I'm going to get mine. I'm going to make lots of money, drive fancy cars, wear designer clothes, buy a big home, travel, and have fun." He became very arrogant and felt like he was better than the patients who needed his help. One patient told him that he was the most arrogant doctor she had ever seen. What a blow to Rick's ego when beginning his recovery, he found that he could not do even the simplest of things for himself, such as using the bathroom, getting dressed, feeding himself, etc., without help from someone else.

Rick grew up in the Orthodox Church. He was baptized at St. George's in Pittsburgh. His father was the head chanter and he taught all three of his sons how to chant. Their home life always included their faith in Christ. Rick read the Bible and memorized verses, but he said he did not often practice what the Bible said, especially as he got older.

Rick says that his turning to Christ during his affliction was a gradual process. He never had a spiritual experience where a "brilliant white light" appeared to him. He was angry with God for about the first year or so, but he gradually came to accept this cross he was given. He has come to see that the path he was given to draw closer to Christ is "pain and suffering."

At first when he refused to let others help him, one doctor told him, "You have to practice humility. You are a sick man who needs help from others." [As you know, fellow sojourners in Christ, according to the elders and saints, humility is what we all are supposed to strive for.]

Bishop John Abdalah visited Rick regularly in the hospital as he was recovering. He told Rick that he was not being punished by God. In fact, Rick eventually learned that this was the way for God to bring him closer to Himself. At that time Rick did not want to hear that, but he realizes that what Bishop John said was true, because now Rick's constant pain and discomfort keeps his mind focused on God.

Dr. Rick is back to working as a cardiologist, but he is a different one this time around. His great desire is to help his patients by taking the time to empathize with their suffering, explain everything so that they can understand it, and then to try to treat them as Jesus Christ would treat them. Accumulating wealth, prestige, and material possessions have lost their great appeal to him. He wants to help and serve others and do God's will.

One group that has helped him greatly the last two years is Overeaters Anonymous. He is working their 12 Step Program which has helped him in his walk with Christ. For instance, the 12 Steps have taught him that if he feels angry with someone, he knows it is because there is something wrong with him. During all problems he has with others, he directs his thoughts to discovering in what way he was the one at fault. Rick says, "Who am I to tell God what He should do in my or anyone else's life? God has a plan. I don't need one. I do what I can and leave the rest to Him."

At this time, Rick's goals in life are: 1) to find a spiritual father, 2) to know the will of God and submit to it, and 3) to help the people in front of him whom he encounters every day.

His advice to young adults is "Don't think too much. Ask yourself if a thought you have is coming from God or the other one. Fear and doubt are not thoughts from God. If it's from the devil, ignore it and say the Jesus prayer."

Dr. Rick Esper is very thankful that God brought him to St. Matthew's. He says that he and all of us are so blessed to have this church. We thank God for Rick and his example of showing us that suffering is a blessing when it brings us closer to God.



ST. MATTHEW'S MESSAGE BOARD

SINGER SEWING MACHINE—Like- new for anyone who needs it. Call Cindy George at (330)309-9491.

**SAVE THE DATE
FOR A WEEKEND RETREAT
WITH**

**FATHER JOSIAH
TRENHAM, PH.D.**

**DATE: SEPTEMBER 20 – 22, 2024
TIME AND SCHEDULE: TBA**

**LOCATION:
St. Matthew the Evangelist
Orthodox Church
10383 Albion Road
North Royalton, OH 44133**

New to the Orthodox Faith or want to learn more? This is a great opportunity to learn what the Orthodox Church teaches.

Come with your questions and learn what our ancient Church Fathers have taught us. Father Josiah will inspire with his wealth of knowledge and understanding of our church teachings.

For more information or to get the latest schedule with Father Josiah, contact Cindy George at cindygeorge127@gmail.com



A native Southern Californian, Father Josiah attended Westminster Seminary California, receiving his M.Div. in 1992 while studying under some of the most influential teachers in the Reformed tradition.

In 1993, he was ordained to the Holy Priesthood of the Orthodox Church and in 2004 he was awarded a Ph.D. in Theology from the University of Durham, England.

Father Josiah has published numerous articles and two books and is also the founder of Patristic Nectar Publication, a non-profit ministry. His weekly homilies are entitled "The Arena Podcasts", and are available on Patristic Nectar Publications, Apple Podcasts, Spotify and Google Podcast.

You can find links to his homilies at <https://www.saintandrew.net/arenapodcast>. His video reflections are available on YouTube under Patristic Nectar Films.



Theotokos of Vladimir

**EASTERN ORTHODOX WOMEN'S GUILD
OF GREATER CLEVELAND
SENDS AN OPEN INVITATION
TO MEMBERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS**



**Annual
Pan-Orthodox
Luncheon**

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

**Date: Saturday, June 8, 2024
Time: Doors open @ 12:00 AM
Luncheon @ 12:30 PM**

**Reservations required
No tickets sold at the door
Tickets: Adults - \$15.00
Children 6 to 12 - 7.50
Children under 6 - FREE**

Program to include:

- A delicious luncheon
- with heavenly homemade appetizers and desserts
- **Auction Gift Baskets / Door Prizes**
- Socialize and relax with family and friends!



- For tickets, see Parish Representative Gloria Zabala
- Reservations deadline is **Monday, June 3, 2024**

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

St. Matthew Orthodox Church

10383 Albion Road

North Royalton, OH 44133