“Meet Me in St. Louis”: Our 92nd National Convention

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Visit Our Website: www.orthodoxfellowship.org
PRESIDENT’S COMMENTARY

Allison Steffaro
44th National FOCA President

I would like to thank the members of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America for having faith in me to serve as your new President. I feel that September is a time for new beginnings. It is the New Year of our Church, and a new academic year for students and teachers. It is also a new beginning for our organization. When we met in St. Louis this summer, we challenged ourselves with a few goals for the new year. It is up to the Board of Executives and me to see that we meet these goals. Rest assured that we will do everything we can to achieve those goals. As a new year begins, everyone talks about change.

In my interview, I was asked what has changed over the years with our organization. You can read about the changes I have seen in the past. What I am most excited about is the change that is coming. A change that focuses on the youth of our parishes; our goal will be to create an environment in their parishes, dioceses and nationally that brings them together in faith and fellowship. We need our youth to look to their future as active Orthodox Christians in their parishes. This will not be an easy task, nor will it happen overnight but I am confident that we can lay the ground work to see this happen. We will keep you updated as to our progress as we move forward to making this idea a reality.

I look forward to serving you as your new President.

Yours in Christ,
Allison Steffaro

FOCA CALENDAR 2018-2019

Saturday, Oct. 6: 50th Annual Orthodox Education Day, St. Vladimir’s Seminary, Yonkers/Crestwood, NY – www.svots.edu
Saturday, Oct. 6: Ohio District Convention sponsored by the Cleveland “R” Club, #4/6, Broadview Heights, OH
October 12-13: 80th Anniversary Celebration, St. Tikhon’s Seminary, South Canaan, PA – www.stots.edu
Saturday, Oct. 13: Colonial District Convention sponsored by the St. Vladimir’s “R” Club, Trenton, NJ
Sunday, Oct. 14: Pittsburgh District Convention sponsored by Weirton, #58, St. Nicholas Church, Weirton, WV
November 1 & 2: Fall Benefit & Theological Convocation, St. Vladimir’s Seminary, NY
Sunday, Nov. 4: New Jersey District Convention sponsored by the Garden State “R” Club, Saints Peter & Paul Cultural Center, Passaic, NJ
Sunday, Jan. 20: 82nd Novogodny Ball, Radisson Hotel, Trevose, PA

For updates and detailed info, visit www.orthodoxfellowship.org
**EDITOR’S NOTES**

Nicholas D. Ressetar
Editor, Orthodox Christian Journal

“Meet Me in St. Louis” was the theme – and you did! This is our yearly convention issue of the Journal, and making it extra special is that our 92nd was held in conjunction with the Orthodox Church in America's 19th All-American Council at the historic Union Station Hotel in St. Louis. We have comprehensive convention coverage: the joint program book, sessions, liturgical events (especially the Divine Liturgy concelebrated by Metropolitan Tikhon and 13 other bishops, 20 priests, deacons and servers), social activities, outgoing President Marge Kovach’s banquet address and plenty of photos (thanks Leon!). Also included are the very impressive Celebration of Faith honorees (in full color), the presentation of over $19,000 to IOCC, and “Meet the New President” featuring Allison Steffaro, our newly-elected 44th – congrats! (We’ll run the scholarship recipients next time).

In AAC news are stories on the youth program (over 100, including a group from Alaska) and the fund drive for a new youth director, “4 Pillars, 6 Forums,” and the award of a new pectoral cross for retired military chaplains coordinated by our own spiritual advisor Father Ted Boback (many years Dad!). Both St. Vladimir’s and St. Tikhon’s Seminaries have appointed new deans (whom we profile) and they are holding special events this fall — plan to attend.

The cover of the new OCA/DCE activity book appears in Kidz Corner, suitable for coloring and downloadable at http://dce.oca.org/page/activity-books/

And in sports, Cleveland #4/#6 sponsored this year’s summer golf tourney, and we have the results and photos. Rounding out the new issue are transitions (we lost 3 faithful members — memory eternal), Central PA District’s summer outings, the 82nd Novogodny Ball flyer, an updated calendar and more.

On a personal note, we want to thank Marge for all her help and support of the Journal during her 3 years as president and look forward to working with new president Allison, whose mother and husband were past presidents! Be sure to participate in the upcoming district conventions and other events, and we’ll return in late fall with more FOCA coverage. Until then... enjoy the Fellowship you find on these pages!

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**F.O.C.A. HIGHLIGHTS AND NEWS-IN-BRIEF**

Summer Outings Held by Central PA District

Members and friends of the Central Pennsylvania District enjoyed two outings this summer. On Sunday, July 15th, the annual Orthodox Family Day picnic was held at Knoebel’s Amusement Resort in Elysburg, PA, about a half hour from Mt. Carmel. A park with free parking & admission, Knoebel’s regularly wins national awards for its food, family atmosphere and roller coasters. We had an especially strong turnout of clergy: Father Ignatius & Mat. Seraphima Hunter (St. Michael’s), Father Dan & Mat. Myra Kovalak (recently retired – he was an FROC scholarship recipient some 40 years ago at St. Tikhon’s Seminary!), Father Steve & Mat. Anna Vernak, and Father Dan & Mat. Theodora Ressetar, all of Harrisburg. Greg & Dimitri Ressetar did the grilling with Joan & Bill Dupkanick coordinating the rest of the food. And the weather was spectacular!

On August 23rd we attended the Reading Fightin’ Phils minor league baseball game in the third-base picnic area. Fans included Nancy Kohudic, wife of the late past national president Peter, Paula & John Lahutsky, Father John & Mat. Stephanie Onofrey (St. Herman’s, Shillington) and the Ressetars. A great fireworks show concluded the enjoyable evening.

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**Please Help St. Maksym’s Granddaughter Receive Cancer Treatments!**

On September 6, 1914, the Carpatho-Rusyn Priest Maksym Sandowicz was executed by firing squad in the town of Gorlice, Poland primarily because he was an Orthodox Christian priest. Eighty years later, in 1994, he was glorified as hieromartyr by the Polish Orthodox Church during services led by Metropolitan Wassily of Warsaw, Metropolitan Nicholas (ACROD) and Archbishop Herman (OCA) among others. Also participating was Father Daniel Ressetar, the saint’s great nephew.

Today, St. Maksym’s granddaughter, Wiera Sandowicz-Bakowska, an Orthodox Christian in her 70s, has lymphoma and is in need of specialized treatments in Wroclaw, about 5 hours from her village. Making matters worse, she must also care for her adult disabled daughter, Margarita. Wiera lives on a very modest pension and simply can’t afford to pay for her cancer treatments (yes, she has to pay out-of-pocket for the oncologist, medicine and even food in the hospital) as well as the basic necessities of life. We’ve sent her over $2,000 recently. Please consider helping her and Margarita: www.gofundme.com/wiera039s-cancer-treatment-fund

May God bless you and may St. Maksym pray unto God for us!

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**2018 Articles Deadline for the OCJ:**

**FALL due November 15th**

Send all material to our Editor: Nicholas D. Ressetar
1510 Green Street Harrisburg, PA 17102-2511
Phone: 717-761-2121
E-mail: tsarnick3@aol.com or nressetar@costopoulos.com

Please send photos in jpg format and don’t embed them in the document; attach separately.

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Orthodox Christian Journal • Summer 2018
Youth “make their mark” at the All-American Council

SAINT LOUIS, MO [OCA]

As delegates were occupied with plenary sessions, forums, and other aspects of the 19th All-American Council [AAC] of the Orthodox Church in America, well over 100 children and teens enjoyed a week of “faith and fellowship” during the AAC’s youth program.

The impact made on—and by—the youth was especially evident after the presentation offered by Dimitrios Rentel and Miriam Sheehan at the closing plenary session on Friday, July 27, 2018 as a spontaneous drive to raise funds to engage a full-time Youth Director netted $87,000.00.

“Throughout the week, youth from across the United States and Canada gathered to discuss the AAC theme, “For the Life of the World,” while participating in fellowship and worship and pursue educational and service opportunities,” said Priest Benjamin Tucci, who coordinated the program. At the final plenary session, they gave a presentation to the Council body, during which they thanked the Church for giving them this special week together and expressed their desire for more opportunities to be together. The audio of Dimitrios’ and Miriam’s presentation ‘says it all’ as they asked the Church to help them achieve this goal.”

Youth program participants also enjoyed a variety of other activities throughout the week. They engaged in a stewardship project in conjunction with FOCUS North America’s Saint Louis site, enjoyed a brunch with members of the Holy Synod of Bishops, and attended their own youth banquet at Saint Louis’ Holy Trinity Serbian Hall. On the “lighter side,” the youth cruised the Mississippi and visited Saint Louis’ iconic Gateway Arch; enjoyed the Forest Park Zoo, Science Center and Imax Theater; and braved thrill rides at Six Flags amusement park.

But what will long be remembered above all else is the vitality the youth brought to the AAC, with the assurance that the youth are not the “future” of the Church, but a vital reality in the Church’s “present” life and witness.

“It is hard to put into words the power and life this opportunity brought for our youth,” Father Benjamin said. “The Union Station hotel was often alive with their joyful singing as they would walk back from their events or had free time to bust into song. Georgian Paschal hymns, songs in honor of the Theotokos, and many of our liturgical hymns were sung on the buses—and even in the amusement park!—as the week passed. Group hugs, joyful laughter, and a feeling ‘being the Church’ permeated the youth and helped to firm up what it means to be an Orthodox Christian ‘for the life of the world.’”

Parishes and individuals who would like to make a donation toward funding a full-time Youth Director may do so online.
Youth inspire spontaneous drive at AAC closing session to fund Youth Director

SAINT LOUIS, MO [OCA]

Those who have attended an All-American Council [AAC] in years past know that one of the gathering’s highlights is the youth presentation traditionally held during the closing plenary session. And this year was no exception as, on Friday, July 27, 2018, children and teens participating in 19th All-American Council’s youth program delighted the hierarchs and delegations by performing selections of liturgical music they had learned during the week and shared insights into their role in the Church—present and future. Priest Benjamin Tucci, who directed the youth program, spoke movingly of the importance of such activities in keeping young people connected to the Church.

What was exceptional this year, however, was the amazing response to their presentation, which led Archpriest John Jillions, Chancellor, to announce his intention to pledge $1,000.00, with the blessing of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, toward funding a full-time Youth Director for the Orthodox Church in America. Delegates were quick to seize the microphones to add their pledges and donations and, within a matter of ten minutes, commitments totalling $87,000.00 had been made by some 60 delegates and their parishes in the spontaneous floor drive. Many other delegates stated their intention to “spread the word” in this regard upon their return home. [Donations from those not present at the plenary session may be made online.]

1OCC Check Presentation

National FOCA President Marge Kovach presented a generous check for over $19,000 to Lou Zagami of International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) for 2017 hurricane relief which represented the proceeds of this year’s “Gifts of Love” charity drive. The check was delivered during her presentation to the All-American Council on Thursday, July 26th. The photo is by Nick Kasemeotes. Many thanks to all who contributed, especially Ed and Karen Visocky, who made a stock donation of $6,541, and to the New Jersey District which raised $3,000 from its Ireland-Iceland cruise!
Your Beatitude, Your Eminences, Your Graces, Reverend Fathers, Matushki, Members and Friends,

I would like to start by thanking our distinguished guests from across the OCA for your continued support and for your presence during this convention weekend and at this evening’s banquet. We are blessed to have several members of the OCA Chancery staff, seminary students, and of course, the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops, and our Spiritual Leader, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, together as we celebrate the second combined National FOCA Convention and OCA All-American Council here in St. Louis.

I was elected at the first such combined event in Atlanta in 2015 and have considered it an honor to serve as the 43rd President of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America. I will always feel privileged to represent this fine organization.

The following is a quote by an unknown author that strikes me as true for the FOCA. It reads:

“If you want to touch the past, touch a rock.
If you want to touch the present, touch a flower.
If you want to touch the future, touch a life.”

If you think about our history, the FOCA foundation is built on rocks such as:

- The Orthodox Christian JOURNAL, in existence since 1927
- Our service to the Church with initiatives, such as establishing Sunday School Programs and publishing English Church music, just to name a few
- Our philanthropic efforts, such as seminary support, the United Fund charitable efforts, and Gifts of Love
- Our Fellowship activities, such as Conventions, sporting events, and other gatherings

If you take a look at the present, you will see how the seeds we planted and nourished have grown and flourished into flowers in full bloom, such as:

- Seminarians who received assistance through the “Adopt a Seminarian” program and have gone on to serve the Church
- Over $445,000 in educational scholarships granted to those active in the FOCA and the Church - many of the recipients continuing to serve this organization and our Church in various capacities
- Campers who graduate and return as counselors, cooks, and Camp Directors, who as parents, encourage their children to attend, so they have the same experience
- Our relationship with the OCA since being recognized as an official organization of the Orthodox Church in America
- And Lifelong friendships that extend well beyond the boundaries of parishes and dioceses - many of these friendships resulting in marriages

A thought occurred to me during yesterday’s plenary session - our financial reports are incomplete. Sure, Mickey does a wonderful job of keeping track of the money and some may say that he watches it a little too closely. But no matter how good the accountant is, a financial report could never capture the true value of our most precious asset — the dedication of our membership to the programs and initiatives that touch lives. An account balance can’t reflect the number of hours devoted in service to others, or the number of vacation days used to volunteer at camp as a cook, or accurately reflect the effects our programs, or the impact our initiatives, have on those they are meant to help.

For more than 90 years The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America has been uniting Orthodox Christians in faith, fellowship, and service to others. Our past, our present, and our future are intertwined because our programs and initiatives continue to touch lives! But none of these things could happen without the dedicated people we are extremely fortunate to have in the FOCA.

Thank you!
Delegates to the 19th All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America were afforded the opportunity to explore a variety of themes presented in His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon’s document, Of What Life Do We Speak?: Four Pillars for the Fulfillment of the Apostolic Work of the Church, in a series of forums presented on Tuesday and Wednesday, July 24-25, 2018.

Each forum was facilitated by at least two hierarchs and a panel of four to five clergy and lay experts in an effort to consider specific themes rooted in the document to encourage an honest discussion with members of the Holy Synod of Bishops in their ongoing deliberations concerning the future of the Orthodox Church in America.

The themes of the six forums appear below, each accompanied by an excerpt from Of What Life Do We Speak.

**Forum 1:** Titled “Spiritual Life—How can we improve our personal relationship to Christ?”—the first forum was chaired by His Eminence, Archbishop Melchisedek and His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander.

“To help us along our path toward healing, the Church has given us many tools to use and examples to guide us. Chief among these are the ascetical and liturgical traditions within which we participate in the Holy Mysteries. The liturgical cycles and hymns of the Church are rich and complex. Yet, there are simple movements that flow within this complexity: ascent, descent, joy and sorrow, praise and repentance. These movements are not dependent on extremes of our external existence, but are provided to bring our hearts closer to Christ in the midst of those extremes” [Metropolitan Tikhon on Pillar 1: The Spiritual Life].

**Forum 2:** His Eminence, Archbishop Nikon and His Grace, Bishop Paul chaired this forum, titled “Spiritual Life – How can we better care for our clergy?”

“If the center of our lives as Christians is the holy altar of the Church, then the center of our responsibility as members of the Church should be to care for the health of those who stand and serve before that altar and impart to us the Holy Mysteries” [Metropolitan Tikhon on Pillar 1: The Spiritual Life].

**Forum 3:** “Stewardship – How do we properly steward what God has entrusted to us?” was the theme of this forum, facilitated by His Eminence, Archbishop Mark and His Grace, Bishop David.

“If our church attendance is simply a routine that we follow, if our receiving of the mysteries is simply an act, if our prayer does not lead to a change in our hearts, then we are failing to give value to our very life and existence and to become authentic human beings; if our life of prayer does not flow into care for God’s creation and the recognition that it as a window to the Creator, then we fail to give proper honor to God Himself; and if we do not guard the patrimony of the Church as reflected in her saints, their experience and their writings, her teachings and her holy mysteries, then we have failed in our sacramental stewardship of that which has been given to us” [Metropolitan Tikhon on Pillar 2: Stewardship].

**Forum 4:** Facilitating this forum—the theme of which was “Relation with Others—How can we more effectively communicate and interact with the world, North America, Non-Orthodox Groups and the community”—were His Eminence, Archbishop Irenee and His Grace, Bishop Daniel.

“The Church has always had an ambiguous relationship with the surrounding culture and the society within which she sojourns. Much has been written and recommended about the proper balance for this relationship, and much more will be written and recommended in the future. But we ought to consider the experience of Saint Mary of Egypt, who, though she left the world and, in fact, did not encounter any humans or even animals for 47 years, yet is compelled to ask Zosima about that very world and its inhabitants and leaders” [Metropolitan Tikhon on Pillar 3: Relations with Others].

**Forum 5:** “Evangelization—How can we more effectively establish missions and revitalize our churches” was the theme of this forum, chaired by His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin and His Eminence, Archbishop Michael.

“With realistic statistics, there are about 1,000,000 Orthodox in the United States, which is a very small fraction of the 325,000,000 people in that country. In North America, the population is 500,000,000. It is time for us, as the Orthodox Church in America, to develop a strategy that will enable us to expand the mission of the Church, to increase our spiritual life and to share the healing that we have received in Christ. All of the pillars are interrelated and interdependent. But there is one in particular, this one, which is impossible to implement or act upon without some effort in the other three pillars. There can be no missionary outreach, no way to reach those who are broken, without our having first entered into the arena to become a genuine person in the image of Christ, without exercising good stewardship and without serving as a good witness to the world. It is here that we fulfill most clearly our apostolic ministry” [Metropolitan Tikhon on Pillar 4: Outreach and Evangelism].

**Forum 6:** The final forum, “Evangelization—How can we more effectively reach our parishioners?” was facilitated by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon; His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel; and His Eminence, Archbishop Alejo.

“The unfortunate reality is that we have too often abandoned our young people and failed to provide them with the nourishment—intellectual, emotional, and spiritual—to help them face the world, let alone find life within the world. The more we ask ourselves: ‘why have our children left the Church?’, the more we confirm that we have failed, not merely to keep them in the Church, but to have meaningfully engaged with them as human persons in the image of Christ. I would suggest that this is because we have simultaneously failed to understand ourselves what it means to be a person in the image and likeness of Christ, what it means to be a Christian, and how to find healing and salvation in Christ” [Metropolitan Tikhon on Pillar 4: Outreach and Evangelism].

Finally, forum participants were encouraged to take all that they had “seen and heard” in the gatherings to return to their communities with a renewed commitment in the spirit of Philippians 4:9: “Those things, which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen… do, and the God of peace shall be with you!”

Saint Louis, MO [OCA]
“Meet the New President”

Allison M. Steffaro

To say the Fellowship’s new national president needs no introduction is truly an understatement for Allison M. Steffaro. After serving on the national board of executives as national recording secretary and then 3 years as vice-president, Allison was unanimously elected our 44th national president at the 92nd convention in St. Louis on July 23rd. She really came up through the ranks: as a junior, Allison was chapter secretary, trustee and then president, and she was both New Jersey District governor and lt. governor. As a senior, she has served as junior advisor to the well-known South River “R” Club in New Jersey for over 30 years (!) and as district lt. governor and secretary. And Allison is a life-long member of SS. Peter & Paul Russian Orthodox Church in South River.

Allison received her B.S. degree in biochemistry from Moravian College (Bethlehem, PA) and earned an MBA in international finance/marketing from Monmouth University. She is also a certified teacher in biological sciences (grades 1-12). Starting her career as global marketing manager (Europe and Far East) for Pharmacia Upjohn, Allison then launched a second career as a science teacher at South River Middle School. She is married to Michael Steffaro, past national president, and they are blessed with three children: Alexis, Andrew and Arianna. And Allison is the daughter of Past National President Carol Deerson (Walter) and daughter-in-law of Past National Spiritual Advisor V. Rev. John Steffaro (Matushka Carol), making her the only president whose mother and husband both served as Fellowship presidents previously!

We posed a series of questions to Allison as she embarks on her new position and graciously she provided this detailed response: “Thank you!” I am very excited for the opportunity to serve the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America. Those who attended our convention left St. Louis with a renewed enthusiasm for the initiatives that have been set in place for our organization. I stand committed, along with our Board of Trustees and committees, to tackle each goal step-by-step. St. Louis was our second convention in conjunction with the All-American Council, proof that our relationship with the OCA has never been stronger. The commitment of our members was clearly visible in our sessions which is to work with the Church today and into her future. The support from the Hierarchy was demonstrated in their attendance during our sessions coupled with their willingness to speak on behalf of our organization. Also quite apparent was their positive attitude when speaking to them about our future working relationship. I hope to cultivate this positive rapport further in the next two years.

As a senior member for over 25 years I have seen many positive changes to our organization. Our commitment to our seminaries is overwhelming. Our members see that we need to support the future leaders of our Church while they are studying. The Christmas wish list and the Adopt a Seminarian project have been a huge success because they are embraced by our chapters. I am proud to say that our membership raised $300,000 for married student housing, an amount which had never been raised before by the Fellowship. Students began moving into the new married student housing at St. Tikhon’s Seminary this past summer! Another change I have seen is the philanthropic nature of our organization. With the Gifts of Love program we are able to help Orthodox Christians in this country and across the world. Lastly, a change is coming again to our Fellowship."
“Meet Me in St. Louis”:
The Fellowship Celebrates its 92nd Annual National Convention in conjunction with the 19th All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America, Union Station Hotel, St. Louis, Missouri

From July 20-23, 2018, Fellowship members, friends and guests gathered at the historic Union Station Hotel in St. Louis, MO for the 92nd annual national convention. This was the 2nd convention held together with the Orthodox Church in America’s All-American Council which took place from July 23-27. It was sponsored by the national executive board with Carol Deerson as chair and Deacon Peter Ilchuk as CP&O director and AAC coordinator. National President Marge Kovach presided over the sessions and delivered the main banquet address.

A joint program book was published by Michael Schultz, Journal managing editor, and Dr. John Schultz, past national president (just as in Atlanta three years earlier), assisted by Donna Tesar, with the proceeds divided between the OCA and FOCA. Metropolitan Tikhon, FOCA spiritual leader and OCA primate, extended his greetings and noted the council’s theme “For the Life of the World.” “There is no more fitting theme for this annual convention, and for the Fellowship itself, than these words of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel of St. John and enshrined in the Divine Liturgy. ‘For the Life of the World’ is not simply the title of Father Alexander Schmemann’s influential book but expresses in concrete terms the raison d’être of our fellowship, as expressed in the following passage from that book: ‘If there are priests in the Church, if there is the priestly vocation in it, it is precisely in order to reveal to each vocation its priestly essence, to make the whole life of all the men the Liturgy of the Kingdom.’ (page 93) From its beginnings, FOCA has been a fellowship dedicated to keeping its members, young and old alike, connected to the fullness of the Church and her sacraments and to a vision that looks outward with a sense of mission.”

His Beatitude continued: “Through the work of the Fellowship ... hundreds and hundreds of people not only have remained connected to the Church but, more importantly, have found their own priestly vocations within the Church. Certainly, FOCA has encouraged scores of ordained vocations, but all the greater is the number of Orthodox faithful who have found the priestly essence in their own vocation and have dedicated themselves and their families to transforming every aspect of their lives into the ‘Liturgy of the Kingdom.’ This is the essential work of the Church and the essential work of our Fellowship. We are grateful for the transformational work FOCA accomplishes especially on behalf of our youth and our mission communities. As we gather for this 92nd convention, it is our prayer that each of us will come to an understanding, as Fr. Alexander so eloquently wrote, ‘... that the vocation of all vocations is to follow Christ in the fullness of His priesthood: in His love for man and the word, His love for their ultimate fulfillment in the abundant life of the Kingdom.’”

Bishop Paul of Chicago and the OCA Diocese of the Midwest likewise welcomed both Fellowship conventionees and council participants as host hierarch. He wrote: “It is my hope to attend the plenary sessions on Saturday July 21st. I look forward to participating in the Sunday activities of the convention, especially concelebrating the Divine Liturgy with the entire Holy Synod on Sunday, July 22nd. I pray that the events of the Convention will draw us all closer together in the bond of friendship, fellowship, and communion with one another founded on the love of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. The theme of this All-American Council is ‘For the Life of the World.’ The theme for the 2015 Council in Atlanta was ‘Expanding the Mission.’ I think both of these themes have great relevance to FOCA when it comes to discerning how to expand the work of FOCA throughout the lower 48 states. Think of new ways you can let other churches know of your work and invite them to get involved.”

In his letter, National Spiritual Advisor Father Theodore Boback penned: “The FOCA is recognized as an integral organization within the OCA, and a vital synergistic and symbiotic relationship has existed between the FOCA and the OCA for many years. In the upcoming decade of our organization, we will observe the centennial celebration of its existence. It was in the year 1927 that Father Vladimir Prislopysky, with others, founded our organization. The FOCA possesses a rich history, legacy and a membership which promotes a vision, mission and motto (Pray, Study, Toil and Be Temperate). It has supported many aspects of Church Life such as religious education, liturgical music, publication of Orthodox literature in English, support of the Diocese of Alaska. Seventy-five years ago, the organization provided the first U.S. Armed Forces Orthodox priest (Fr. Vladimir Borichevsky) with an Orthodox Military Chaplain kit. This support continues today to our seminaries, the annual gifts of love program (currently IOCC disaster relief), scholarships to college/university students and seminarians. ... Metropolitan Tikhon in his letter to clergy in September 2017 wrote that: ‘... the FOCA has established itself as one of the most important fellowships of the OCA ... we invite every member of the OCA to inquire into the good works of the FOCA so that the works might be multiplied across the entirety of the OCA.’”

And National President Kovach stated: “For more than 9 decades, the Fellowship has been assisting in the work of the Church while providing practical means for Orthodox Christians to endure lasting friendships on a local and national level. As an official organization of the OCA, we strive to perpetuate a mutually beneficial relationship amongst our chapters, the national FOCA, parishes and the national Church. The FOCA remains steadfast in our commitment to continue to promote our mission of fellowship and the joining together of Orthodox Christians in service to members of our Orthodox faith as well as other charitable causes. It also affords us, as individuals, the opportunity to strive to be good stewards of the talents and resources with which we have been blessed. Membership in the FOCA provides the network, leadership and resources by which we can accomplish this on a large scale outside of our individual parishes.”

On Friday afternoon, July 20th, registration opened for conventionees outside the session rooms. The national board of trustees held its pre-convention meeting to finalize the agenda. And that evening’s open house, “Meet Me at the Fair,” featured games, trivia, activities, ice cream sundaes and more as Fellowship members got reacquainted.

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Saturday morning, July 21st, shortly after 9 a.m., the opening procession of the board took place led by Stephen Wasilewski with the American flag, Carol Deerson with the icon of St. Andrew, FOCA patron saint, and your Editor with the icon of North American saints. Father Ted and Deacon Peter then celebrated the molieben and annual panakhida (especially commemorating members who had reposed since the last convention) with responses conducted by
Basil Kozak. Clergy present included Archbishop Michael of New York and New Jersey, Bishop David of Alaska, Bishop Paul and Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa; OCA Chancellor Father John Jillions; Fathers Daniel Retsar and William Evansky, both past national spiritual advisors, and Father Emilut Hutnyan.

President Kovach gavalled open the plenary session and the assembly sang the national and Fellowship anthems. National Recording Secretary Danielle Ilchuk conducted the roll call. Past national presidents present were recognized: Michael Herzak, Dr. Alice Woog, Carol Deerson, John Kruchok, Polly Walker, Michael Steffaro and Dr. John Schultz. Mr. Herzak was appointed parliamentarian and Walter Alesevich was named credentials chair. Mrs. Deerson welcomed all to the convention and hoped everyone enjoyed last night’s fair event. Host Bishop Paul then addressed the group: “I want to welcome everyone to St. Louis which is part of our diocese. It is interesting to hear the FOCA hymn which we just sang. You should know that I grew up in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and Orthodoxy was not very well known in Kokomo, Indiana. My question to you is how do you grow this ministry, this fellowship? We can’t just limit it to our people anymore but we need to draw others, those outside, into it. That is the greatest challenge: attracting new members and chapters. I do recognize several people from St. Vladimir’s Camp which was held just recently. Again, welcome and my thanks to you all!” Dr. Schultz, nominating committee chair, asked members to meet with him for nominations to national office.

Attention turned to the convention report book compiled by Sandy Kapelan, national administrative secretary. Father Ted, after noting that both St. Tikhon’s and St. Vladimir’s Seminaries have new deans, stated that we must take “a hard look at our Fellowship and see where we are going.” He proposed a meeting with past national presidents and spiritual advisors in order to obtain their input. And he said that we must reexamine our relationship with the OCA. IPP Becky Tesar urged everyone to email information for the website and Facebook page: “the best way to reach our members is electronic communication.” Marge personally thanked Becky for all her help.

Ohio District Gov. Melissa Tesar reported on “a great 3 weeks of camp” at St. Vladimir’s. There were 51 campers. Vice President Allison Steffaro commented that Father John Kennerk, Holy Assumption Church, Canton, OH, was the priest for the 1st week and had received FOCA St. Nicholas gifts for 3 years while at St. Tikhon’s Seminary — he couldn’t thank us enough! “He is an amazing young priest.” Melissa said that Father John even returned in the 3rd week of camp as a substitute. “We are getting kids who do 1 week of camp and then Junior Olympics.” They hope to install the new pool in the fall. Junior Olympics next year is July 7-13. Marge remarked that “camp impacts lives forever.”

Your Editor gave a brief update on the Orthodox Christian Journal, especially thanking Michael Schultz for his hard work and the professional “look” of our membership magazine — his new digital printer enables us to have color front and back covers, too. Other reports were reviewed and commented on. Next, Dr. Schultz moved to examine our national conventions (dates, format, timing, venue, etc.) by way of a committee; he also suggested that the OCA explore the idea of having a Church-wide gathering together with the FOCA national convention in the years without an AAC. The motion passed with little discussion.

Subsequently, Michael Steffaro asked for clarification of the motion because he was not sure all understood the meaning of the motion or the actual vote. This led to considerable discussion. Mr. Herzak then moved that Father Ted’s motion regarding a meeting of past presidents/spiritual advisors be discussed on the floor later in the convention; motion approved.

Danielle Kovach reported that only three entries were received for the Celebration of Faith arts contest but that all were “awesome.” They will be on display for the rest of the week. [We’ve included them in this issue and indeed each is a striking piece of art!] Kenneth Kidd of FOCUS North America gave a presentation on that charity’s work. “I came into Orthodoxy at an Antiochian parish and am now a member of the OCA parish in Weirton, WV. We are told to remember that God has made all in His image and likeness. What if every person had the icon of Christ on his/her chest? How would we react? Sometimes it is hard to see that icon but we are called to clean and restore that icon in all who are around us, to be the Good Samaritan. FOCUS tries to reach needy people in urban, metropolitan cities and is based in Carnegie, PA, just outside Pittsburgh. We also have centers in Cleveland, Anaheim and elsewhere. We would love to partner with your parish in the city areas and, in rural areas, we can come to your parish and partner with families who need assistance. Please help us help others!” [The Holy Synod of Bishops visited FOCUS Gateway City Center at St. Michael’s Church (OCA) in St. Louis on Sunday and those in the youth program had a work day there on Thursday of the council week; over $6,000 was contributed to FOCUS from donations received during the services.]

The assembly then engaged in some parliamentary maneuvering not seen in recent years. Mr. Herzak moved to reconsider Dr. John’s motion because he felt it was not clear and “puts the cart before the horse.” Father Ted stated that we must have a plan for our future before we can discuss the convention format, etc. Some debate ensued before the motion carried. And Dr. John then moved to table his own motion which passed.

Mr. Herzak, as chair of St. Tikhon Seminary board of trustees, gave an update on the married student housing project to which the Fellowship contributed $300,000 in 2015. The seminary has finally taken possession of the former orphanage building and construction has started: at least 2 apartments will be ready for the fall semester, 1 is occupied now and will be remodeled after that student leaves, and another 2 apartments will be done later. The seminary is also looking to purchase 2 homes nearby which are adjacent to the property. Mrs. Steffaro stated that the South River (NJ) “R” Club will provide furnishings for those new apartments. Archbishop Michael, seminary rector, next spoke: “I want to thank the Fellowship again for your gift of $300,000 which jump-started this project. As you think about the future and as you re-envision the Fellowship, think about what you’ve done and can do in the future. I want to personally invite all of you to the seminary’s 80th anniversary — October 11-13. You will know what you’ve done. Father Kennerk [who was at camp] was so grateful. We studied just what to do with the orphanage building. You planted that seed and may that seed grow. Come and see! We will have a slide presentation at the council and you can hear the voices of those whom you’ve helped. Do not minimize your gift. Thank you!” Marge responded that she would love to have a young adults retreat at the seminary to spruce up the apartments.

Longtime national treasurer Michael Bowan presented next year’s budget which was approved. Becky Tesar stated that the OCA has asked the FOCA to sponsor a leadership conference based on Deacon Danilchuk’s book and plans are underway. Dr. Woog lamented that “we don’t have our mission statement (‘To witness our Faith by charitable works through Fellowship’) prominently printed and displayed. I’m not sure what our intention is anymore. Our chapter [in Minneapolis] is still healthy, though smaller. I would invite suggestions.” Your Editor noted that the mission statement appears on page 3 of every
Danielle Kovach, coordinator of the contest, announced this year’s Celebration of Faith contest honorees at the St. Louis national convention and their works of art are depicted here:

**Matthew Ortiz**  
Age 17 and an 11th grader in Hamilton, NJ, Matthew submitted an “honorary portrait” (as he described it) of Archbishop Michael, Orthodox Church in America bishop of New York and New Jersey, done with graphite and pastel. “My inspiration for this work is my love and respect for His Eminence.” He is a member of Mother of God (Joy of All Who Sorrow) parish in Princeton. What an extraordinary resemblance of Vladyka Michael! Keep up the wonderful artwork Matthew!

**Noah Meng**  
Noah, who is 13 years of age and in the 7th grade, lives in Lombard, IL and attends St. Joseph Orthodox Church in Wheaton. He submitted an icon of Righteous Noah (of the Ark) done with acrylic and gold leaf on wood. Noah said: “I had decided to paint an icon of my patron, Noah, for the icon painting class I take with my grandfather, Father John Matusiak. When I saw the AAC theme ‘For the Life of the World,’ it hit me that Noah was important in the salvation from the flood just as Jesus brought salvation to mankind by His death and resurrection.” When asked what inspired him to paint this icon, Noah replied: “My whole life I watched grandpa painting icons, including our church’s iconostasis. About 2 years ago, when I was 11, he started teaching me to paint and let me help with some of his projects. Now I am painting icons with his help and classes. I like all forms of artwork, and while I have much to learn, I am so thankful for grandpa’s guidance.” Well, Noah, you certainly have made your family, especially Grandpa Father John, very proud — and we pray that you continue painting holy icons!

Congratulations and our best to this year’s Celebration of Faith contest honorees, and we encourage more youth to enter next year’s contest. Watch for the upcoming announcement of the theme which will be posted on www.orthodoxfellowship.org and distributed via the Fellowship’s social media. And thanks to Danielle Kovach for serving again as contest coordinator!
because many of the original faithful came from that Church such as St. Alexis the other clergy and congregants (numbering well over 300). His Beatitude in concluded, "my knees are sometimes knocking. Are we ready for His Second to His Holy Cup with fear and trembling. When I approach the cup, " His Grace let us partake of His One Body and Blood, and let us be filled with the joy of the lose our focus on Christ and His Kingdom and His righteousness. The Internet were satisfied and there was more than enough. "We become divided when we to this world. St. Jerome taught that the law was broken up in parts but Christ the loaves are the 5 books of the Law. Their fragmentation, he said, was unified the Church Fathers see the fish as the Apostles and John the Baptist whereas transformed them in his miracle and they became more than fish and loaves. Christ choir in the responses. In his homily on the Gospel reading of the 2 fish(es) and Deacons Ilchuk and Joseph Shaluha. Prof. Drillock again directed the mixed choir comprised of FOCA members and others. At the end, His Beatitude spoke briefly about the Fellowship and welcomed everyone to the 92nd national convention as well as the 19th AAC. In the evening, "Dining under the Stars" took place at the St. Louis Science Center's planetarium with a buffet meal served right on the floor of the planetarium. During the cocktail hour, guests explored exhibits on the ground floor and then took a spaceship-style elevator to the planetarium itself. After dinner we were treated to a 45-minute private show of stars, planets and galaxies on the dome-shaped projection screen. Archbishop Michael and Bishop David were among those at dinner.

Divine Liturgy was concelebrated on Sunday morning, July 22nd, by Metropolitan Tikhon, the Holy Synod and guest hierarchs, Archbishop Seraphim of Zimbabwe and Archbishop Michael of Prague (14 bishops); some 20 priests, including Fathers Boback, Ressetar, Evansky, Hutnyan and Nicholas Wyslutsky (FOCA); and several deacons including Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak and Deacons Ilchuk and Joseph Shaluha. Prof. Drillock again directed the mixed choir in the responses. In his homily on the Gospel reading of the 2 fish(es) and 5 loaves, Bishop Paul stressed that we must deal with the very difficult issues of today just as the Apostles were faced with feeding the multitudes. Christ transformed them in his miracle and they became more than fish and loaves. The Church Fathers see the fish as the Apostles and John the Baptist whereas the loaves are the 5 books of the Law. Their fragmentation, he said, was unified by Christ in this miracle. "We need to hear about the Cross, which is foolishness to this world. St. Jerome taught that the law was broken up in parts but Christ fulfilled the law in His person and this food became for eternal life." The crowds were satisfied and there was more than enough. "We become divided when we lose our focus on Christ and His Kingdom and His righteousness. The Internet creates much turmoil these days — people scream online but don't talk face-to-face. As the Orthodox Church we have the wonderful unifying presence of Christ to offer this world, and we must share Christ with others. For His Word is Truth and defines what is right and wrong. Let us celebrate our unity in Christ, let us partake of His One Body and Blood, and let us be filled with the joy of the Risen Lord through the scandal of the Cross — He died for all. And let us come to His Holy Cup with fear and trembling. When I approach the cup," His Grace concluded, "my knees are sometimes knocking. Are we ready for His Second Coming?"

At the end of liturgy, Bishop Paul welcomed Metropolitan Tikhon and the other clergy and congregants (numbering well over 300). His Beatitude in turn greeted all present for the council, especially the local faithful and those attending the FOCA convention. He also introduced the guest bishops, noting in particular the OCA's ties to the Orthodox Church of Slovakia and the Czech Lands because many of the original faithful came from that Church such as St. Alexis (Toth). Vladyka Tikhon then awarded the first newly reinstated military cross for retired chaplains to Father Daniel Ressetar (Lt.Col. AF ret.), age 91. Father Boback, dean and executive director of Orthodox military and VA chaplains, had the original cross reproduced in Canada using an original version which was funded by an anonymous donor. [Other chaplains received theirs later in the council and others will be awarded by diocesan bishops]. Many years was then intoned for all.

“Baba’s Auction” concluded in the afternoon with the awarding of prizes. Others continued to tour the sites in St. Louis or simply relaxed at the hotel pool or lobby. That evening featured the “Gateway Banquet and Dance” with a bishop and seminarian at each table once more. After the procession, opening prayer and anthems, Carol Deerson introduced her son-in-law, Michael Steffaro, as toastmaster. After the performulary “jokes" and introduction of guests, he called upon Metropolitan Tikhon for his primatial message: “Greetings at this 92nd national convention here in St. Louis — ‘For the Life of the World’ is the theme of this All-American Council and It is a blessing to be here with the Holy Synod at this banquet. I am pleased to be here with the strong leadership of your president, Marge, Father Ted and Becky as past president at this 2nd joint event with the AAC. I also welcome Metropolitan Seraphim and Archbishop Paul who represent churches who are our friends — the FOCA can play a part in solidifying our Faith with them and others. As we gather here, there will be discussions and plans we hope to implement for the future. A useful role can be played by the FOCA — you have always connected with the life of the Church. The work of the FOCA has been dedicated to the life of the Church." He then quoted from Father Alexander Schmemann on the "priestly vocation." “For over 9 decades, the Fellowship has provided a venue to hear the call of the Lord. The FOCA has provided a place for priests but all have a ‘priestly vocation.’ This is the essential work of the Church and the Fellowship. Father Alexander challenged us to consider all in the Gospel of Christ. FOCA offers such a transformational work, and we hope for new ways and models to further the work of the Fellowship.”

As Father Alexander wrote in For The Life of The World: 'The meaning, the essence and the end of all vocation is the mystery of Christ and the Church.' May God bless all of you and may the work of the convention be fruitful and the work of the Council be blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

President Marge Kovach then delivered an inspiring speech, summing up her dedicated 3 years as national president (her words are reproduced elsewhere in this issue.) “Now is my favorite job as president at the convention banquet: awarding the national scholarships!” She then awarded $8,000 to deserving students, several of whom were in attendance at the banquet (they will be profiled in the next issue). Bishop David took the podium next and, on behalf of the Alaskan Church, after thanking the FOCA again for the coloring books (which are still being distributed) and the donations for the St. Nicholas Chapel, presented Marge with a framed drawing of the chapel. As the banquet ended, the dancing began. A surprise was the appearance of about 25 Alaskan youth and their chaperones who had just arrived in St. Louis, many of whom had never left their home state before. Though somewhat shy at first, they soon joined in the dancing and made quick friends with the other youth and young adults.

The final sessions on Monday, July 23rd, started nearly on time at 9:10 a.m. as President Kovach opened the meeting. Archbishop Michael, Bishop David and Bishop Paul were present together with OCA Chancellor Jillions and other clergy, including Father Jason Vansuch. Future national conventions were promoted (Minneapolis in July 2020) and sports toursneys awarded. Marge will present a gift of over $19,000 to IOCC during the council from this year's Gift of Love project! Father Nick Wyslutsky discussed a national youth rally which is in the idea stage; he is puting together a committee. He asked OCF kids what would bring you to a national conference? speaker, venue, invite a patriot? It would be sort of a world youth day. Basil Kozak stated they have had problems planning a music conference. He spoke to Prof. Drillock and some at St. Tikhoni's; he is open to ideas. Metropolitan Tikhon then entered the convention room to
the singing of “Eis polla eti despota!”

Under new business, Tabitha House – a Kenyan orphanage for some 26 – was proposed as next year’s “Gift of Love” project. Allison Steffaro said that the kids at St. Vladimir’s Camp developed a relationship with a Kenyan school through Skype – they raised funds, learned some Swahili, and a bishop explained what they need: food, clothing, shelter, scholarships. Barbara Freimann of St. Mark, Bethesda, remarked that they have helped a Kenyan diocese with Orthodox study bibles and even a car for a missionary: “Kenyans will know who we are if we support this project!” The project was approved.

Discussion returned to Father Ted’s meeting proposal for past presidents and spiritual advisors. Mr. Herzak stated that the past presidents met on Saturday and have a separate proposal to make. Dr. Woog said that they came up with a statement re: FOCA & OCA on the need for a full-time youth coordinator. “The youth need us more than ever – this will be a collaborative effort with the OCA.”

“The FOCA will develop and focus its current and future human and fiscal investments in a partnership with the OCA to create, promote, communicate and implement positive direct experiences for youth and seminarian growth and development” read the proposal’s introduction. The youth coordinator would be responsible for all activities of the youth department, be a direct liaison with each diocese and diocesan youth coordinator, and be a direct liaison with the seminaries to provide seminarian assistance. A lengthy discussion ensued. Melanie Clark, national sports director, said that her children sat with Archbishop Michael at the banquet and all thought that a youth director was much needed. “This could carry us to the year 100 of the FOCA!” Bishop Paul stated that it was a great idea but had a concern as to coordination at the local diocesan level; the relationship has to be well-defined. “To whom is the youth coordinator accountable?” Metropolitan Tikhon commented: “I was with the youth at the council this morning. There is a sense of being alive with their neon orange shirts. This is a great idea that Alice has proposed. There is strength with the FOCA chapters and districts but you are not present through the entire church. There is a ‘tension’ between various levels. I will address this issue tonight. FOCA is great at coordination but how will it work at the practical level?” he asked.

Marge pointed to the Western PA dioecese which has a single youth department for the diocese and the Pittsburgh District. George Clark, an Ohio State student, expressed the fear that the Fellowship experience won’t be here for us and our children in the future. We need a step-by-step schedule to grow chapters or start new ones. Establish small, makeable goals, say 3 new chapters by the next convention. There was a great youth presence at the Ohio camp. Others noted that we must seek ways to get young families to the convention – cost is a concern. We need a “Journey to 100” – a committee to get us to our centennial anniversary. Todd Walker, St. Mary’s, commented that we both need a long-range plan and to work with the church. He and his family lived all over the country and helped start chapters. He remembered well Father Michael Anderson who served as youth director for both the OCA and FOCA. Becky Tesar asked how do we get the 30- to 45-year olds back with their children? She can sell the idea of a YC to her parish and others: do this in order to see that your kids stay in the church. The same goes for those with grandchildren, too. This is a very interesting meeting. Polly Walker said, but how many will be here at conventions in the future? Adults with children can’t afford and don’t really want to come to a business meeting. Carol Deenon stated we have bright people in our Fellowship – look at what George Clark came up with together with 5 and 6 other young people. “We can do these things now! Let’s get our membership department going again!” Father Ressetar stated that the YC should be an active member of the FOCA. Deacon Shaluha, Capitol City, Columbus, noted that they created their chapter when they started there – we want our kids to see a bigger group at next year’s national convention in our city. “Natalia” asked who is considered a youth? I’m 26, not young. Where is the transition? “If I don’t know anyone there at camp or a convention, why should I go? Let’s think about young adults.” Mr. Kruchok: we completed the married student housing project successfully. “Let’s challenge the Church” since there is no fulltime YC in the OCA. This would not affect the diocesan level as he doesn’t see the position as being the same that Father Anderson used to hold. Bishop David, responding to an earlier comment, stated that “no one on the Holy Synod doesn’t like the FOCA – some don’t like the way you do things, however.” Our youth department is very underfunded and we’ve had trouble finding the right person. The good news is that there are more youth than ever here in St. Louis, including about 25 from Alaska! The biggest problem is that we must invest in someone to lead the youth – it’s finances.

Concluding the debate, Metropolitan Tikhon stated: “I’m grateful for this conversation. In the OCA we are ‘refreshing’ the chancery and the departments in the process. We need breathing room for new ideas, new initiatives. This also applies to the youth department. I’d be delighted to have FOCA knock on the door and make us an offer – this is our plan and idea to fund it!” Dr. Woog then moved to authorize the executive board to explore the idea of a youth coordinator in collaboration with the FOCA and OCA and report back at next year’s Columbus convention which was approved unanimously. Mr. Herzak stressed that it was imperative to implement this plan. Becky Tesar moved that a task force be empowered to establish a plan; Father Ted asked that spiritual advisors be included. This too passed. A question arose as to our archives which are currently in storage at $75 monthly. Archbishop Michael said St. Tikhon’s Seminary is willing to provide storage at no charge and this would be a good way to showcase the FOCA and its history – this would be a tribute and resource available to others. Your Editor suggested that OCA archivist Alexis Liberovsky be consulted on what items to keep.

Bishop David then introduced Father Vasily Fisher of St. James Church, Napaskiaq, AK who said: “I wanted to show our love for the Church. So we decided to start a youth conference and raise funds in order to give the youth ownership of their parishes. There is a big struggle with alcohol & drug abuse and suicide in Alaska. We want to give life and hope for our youth. I pledge to try and establish a new FOCA chapter in my parish!” (Sustained applause). Mr. Herzak urged the executive board to give more time for discussion in our sessions: “We’ve gone from one extreme to the other. We need to add a couple of hours to Saturday’s session.” Laura Johnson suggested that we bring back “break out sessions” (the former committees) where a lot of good ideas get generated. Archbishop Michael proposed that Rebecca make a video about the school in Kenya, the Ohio camp, the Alaskan chapter as a promo for the FOCA – something to show parishes and the AAC. Allison Steffaro said that the theme for Celebration of Faith would be announced earlier; Barbara Freimann asked that we invite a group of students to participate as a church school class in addition to individuals. “Christopher Columbus,” bearing a striking resemblance to George Clark, promoted next year’s 93rd in Ohio! Mrs. Deerson noted that $3,000 was raised for Gifts of Love from the 2018 Ireland cruise – next year we go to the western Mediterranean.

Father Jillions then addressed the assembly, his last convention.
as chancellor. “How grateful I am to have been introduced to the Fellowship 7 years ago. You still have enthusiasm for your history and the future, especially your focus on youth. The average size of the 700 OCA parishes is only 50! We need to connect the youth and the FOCA is great at that. Keep trying! I’ll be at the Bridgeport, CT parish where I understand that there are 8 independent members. I hope to restart the chapter!” (Much applause). Melissa Tesar announced the stock awards with the grand prize of $300 going to North Pittsburgh, #1. Becky Tesar assumed temporary chair for nominations and the following slate of national officers was approved unanimously: President — Allison Stefaro; VP — Todd Walker; Recording Secretary — Danielle Ilichuk; Treasurer — Michael Bowan; and Marge Kovach is IPP. As is customary, Becky was “carried off” the stage by the past presidents as she leaves the board! Father Ted led the installation of officers ceremony and each had the opportunity to say a few words with Allison simply saying “Thank you for the privilege to serve the Fellowship as the new national president.” George Clark moved to adjourn the 92nd and Deacon Shaluha seconded. President Stefaro closed the convention at 12:04 p.m. and then led the closing ceremony with the big circle of hands (right over left), recitation of the motto, the “squeeze” and the singing of “Faith of Our Fathers.” And so this national convention goes into the history books and we look forward to our 93rd in Columbus, OH over Labor Day weekend 2019. See you there!

ODDS AND ENDS

The hotel featured a stunning, high-domed, grand lobby from the former train station with hourly light shows and the longest bar imaginable. It was a sprawling complex with the meeting rooms under the “train yards” which made for lots of walking… adjacent was a large manmade pond surrounded by restaurants and a fire & light show periodically… be careful following your GPS to the planetarium! … there was plenty of exhibit space for the council which ranged from vestments to books to incense to caskets… the Fellowship has its own booth for the council… enjoyed meeting monks from Holy Cross Hermitage in WV (ROCOR)… choir members sang under the steady direction of Dave Drillock, professor of music emeritus from St. Vlad’s who was told he hasn’t lost his fastball! … outgoing president Marge Kovach (many thanks for your service and help with the Journall) presented to the council on Thursday with a slide-show prepared by Rebecca Kozak … a number of Juniors participated in activities during the convention and many stayed for the council’s youth program … a special surprise was the 25 or so Alaskan youth and chaperones who appeared at the dance Sunday evening, having just flown in … good to see Fr. Mike & Mat. Val Hatrak, now retired and living in the Pittsburgh area … heard that St. Tikhon’s alumni had a special dinner at Lombardo’s nearby followed by an impromptu concert of Russian music… and we missed seeing some regulars such as John & Pat Inhat, Donna Tesar, Nick & Monica Vansuch, Sonia Kraftsian, Linda Livosky, Olga & Joe Baldowski, Maryann & Wally Bacskik and others.

OCA SEMINARIES APPOINT NEW DEANS

Both St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in Yonkers, NY and St. Tikhon’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in South Canaan, PA have appointed new deans over the summer. Dr. Ionut-Alexandra Tudorie, a native of Romania, was named academic dean of St. Vladimir’s Seminary by the board of trustees. “There is no doubt that Dr. Tudorie brings with him extraordinary gifts and achievements that will benefit the seminary greatly,” said Father Chad Hatfield, seminary president. “Coming from Europe, he follows in a long-standing SVOTS tradition of importation of ‘rising stars’ from abroad.” Dr. Tudorie has most recently served as professor of Byzantine history and medieval church history at the University of Bucharest. He brings expertise in church history, Byzantine studies and patristics in addition to proficiency in multiple languages. “The great history of 80 years of St. Vladimir’s Seminary with its plethora of outstanding professors from Fathers George Florovsky to John Meyendorff and Alexander Schmemann, who shaped the theological research in their respective fields of study, would compel anyone to want to follow their footsteps,” said Dr. Tudorie. “That is why I am feeling so blessed and thankful to be given the opportunity to join this renowned institution of Orthodox learning and formation.” He holds doctorates in both theology and history from the University of Bucharest, has been supported in research from prestigious institutions such as the Woodrow Wilson International Center and Dumbarton Oaks, and is the author of many publications and scholarly works. And he is the first academic dean under the seminary’s new governance model, supervising the faculty and reporting directly to the president.

Father John Parker, D. Min., has been named St. Tikhon’s Seminary’s new dean by the board of trustees in an announcement by Archbishop Michael, seminary rector and OCA bishop of New York and New Jersey. Currently the rector of Holy Ascension Church (OCA) in Mount Pleasant, SC, he succeeds Father Stephen Voytovich who served as dean for the past 5 years. He earned his bachelor’s degree in Spanish language and literature at the College of William and Mary where he met his wife Jeanette in 1993. He then taught Spanish and was a full-time youth minister at an Episcopal church in suburban Philadelphia before earning his master of divinity degree at Trinity Episcopal School in Ambridge, PA. They discovered the Orthodox Faith in 2001 and their family, with 2 sons, was received into the Church at Holy Ascension Mission in South Carolina. Father John then studied at St. Vladimir’s Seminary, was ordained deacon and priest, and earned his master of theology degree in 2004 and doctor of ministry degree in 2017. Since 2003 he has served as pastor of the very mission into which he and his family were received into the Church. There, fueled by the remarkable gifts, talents and generosity of the local faithful, they built a parish family well known for its warm Southern hospitality and a commitment to excellence in sacred music and arts. The flock built a striking Byzantine temple to honor the Lord’s Ascension, which has become a center for music and arts festivals, workshops and symposiums, including an annual iconography workshop led by world-renowned iconographers. Father John has served as chair of the OCA’s department of evangelization since 2011. He stated: “Saint Tikhon’s has a remarkable and rich history; I am beyond humbled to be invited to serve where the saints have walked, and where our new saints are being formed. I hope that my experience of a vision for heavenly beauty and the warmth of Christian hospitality at Holy Ascension, in love for and imitation of Jesus Christ, will encourage and inspire those near and far to see, encourage and support such a vision in the mission and efforts of the seminary.” SOURCES: oca.org, svots.edu & stots.edu
The 2018 National Summer Sports Tournament
hosted by Cleveland 4/6
St. Michael’s Orthodox Church, Broadview Heights, Ohio

The 2018 National Summer Sports Tournament was hosted by Cleveland 4/6 on August 17 and 18. The event drew participants from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Michigan, Arizona, Florida, West Virginia, as well as Ohio. The Ironwood Golf Course was quite moist even before a one-hour rain delay on Friday, but enthusiasm was not dampened in the least. After golf on Friday, everyone gathered at the St. Michael’s Shanty for pizza and drinks. Saturday golfers saw much better weather conditions and, after golf and vespers all gathered at the Shanty again for the banquet and awards. Thanks to John Mindala and Cleveland 4/6 for hosting the event. The tourney was coordinated by Anthony Schultz of the FOCA sports department. Thanks to Leon “O’Duffer” Sheean for the photos.

2018 Summer Sports Tournament Results

ONE DAY EVENT

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<th>Actual</th>
<th>Callaway HDCP</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. David Stockman Canonsburg PA 75</td>
<td>1. Nick Pishko Shelby Twp. MI. 72</td>
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<td>2. Dan Herzak Cleveland OH 83</td>
<td>1. Michael Herzak Jr. Cleveland OH 72</td>
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TWO DAY EVENT 54 and Under

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<tr>
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<td>1. Anthony Schultz Columbus OH 150</td>
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<td>2. Greg Mindala Cleveland OH 185</td>
<td>2. Alex Schenken Canonsburg PA 153</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Kevin Rudolph Canonsburg PA 194</td>
<td>2. Bob Schenken Canonsburg PA 153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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TWO DAY EVENT 55 and Over

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Callaway HDCP</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Marty Uhrina Cleveland OH 172</td>
<td>1. Mark Marton Sun City West AZ 149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kip Yarosh Canonsburg PA 200</td>
<td>2. Leon Sheean Cleveland Hts. OH 154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Friday
- #2 Closest to Pin Marty Uhrina
- #6 Closest to Pin Bob Lucak
- #11 Closest to Pin Mike Molchan
- #17 Closest to Pin Greg Mindala
- #8 Long Putt Bob Schenken

Saturday
- #2 Closest to Pin John Mindala
- #6 Closest to Pin David Schenken
- #11 Closest to Pin Alex Schenken
- #17 Closest to Pin Marty Uhrina
- #8 Long Putt Marty Uhrina
The 2018 National Summer Sports Tournament Photo Gallery
DEPARTED: Paul M. Semanco, 78, fell asleep in the Lord on August 4, 2018 at ManorCare Health in Pottsville, PA. After graduating from Saint Clair High School, he served in the U.S. Marine Corps for 7 years. Paul worked as a machine operator for multiple companies and in various other positions before retiring. He was a member of St. Michael’s Orthodox Church (Carpatho-Russian Diocese) in St. Clair where he had been parish president, trustee and member of the Citizens Club. Paul was a long-time member of the Fellowship and served as governor of the Central PA District for multiple terms, chaired several national bowling tournaments, and assisted for years with the printing of the Journal. He and his wife Jean (Torick) of 50 years, attended numerous FOCA/FROC events, most recently the Gettysburg national convention, and co-hosted many district conventions. A life member of the PA Marine Corps League (Coal Cracker detachment), Paul served as state commandant from 1997-1999. In addition to his wife, he is survived by two sons Gregory (Jennifer) and Michael (Melissa Ray), a daughter Denise (Jody), a brother Joseph (Ann Marie) and five grandchildren. Bishop Matthias (Moriak), who was pastor of St. Michael’s, attended the parastas as did several other priests. Funeral services were conducted by Father Jeff Zias at his church followed by burial with military honors in the parish cemetery. Condolences may be sent to Jean and family at 6 S. Nichols Street, St. Clair, PA 17970-1238. May Harold’s memory be ever eternal!

DEPARTED: Harold Homyak, 90, fell asleep in our Lord on July 23, 2018 in Phoenix, AZ. Born in Mayfield, PA, his family moved to a farm in Colorado when he was very young. They later moved to Binghamton, NY where he spent his teen years. Harold served in the U.S. Navy from 1945-1948, mostly in the Pacific, and then obtained a bachelor’s degree in business using the GI Bill. He met his wife, Mary (Popovich), at St. Mary’s Eastern Orthodox Church in Binghamton; they were married in 1951 and built their first home together. Harold was employed by the General Electric Company as an accountant for many years and was later transferred to Phoenix in 1961 where he worked until he retired. He was active in the Boy Scouts with his son, David H., as an advisor and merit badge counselor, and was very proud when his son achieved the Eagle Scout rank. Harold was very active with Saints Peter & Paul Eastern Orthodox Church in Phoenix, serving as president and in other offices; his fondest contribution was serving as building chairman for both the church sanctuary and cultural center. He served on the OCA Diocese of the West council and was a longtime, active member of the FOCA/FROC, participating in many national conventions and other events. Predeceased by his wife, Harold is survived by his son David, past governor of the former Pacific District, daughter-in-law Stephanie A. and grandson Alexander D. Homyak. Funeral services were celebrated at his church with interment at Saints Peter & Paul Cemetery in Endwell, NY. Condolences may be sent to David and family at 744 E. Braeburn Drive, Phoenix, AZ 85022-3767. May Harold’s memory be eternal!

DEPARTED: Paul “Pat” Schultz, 87 of Weirton, WV, passed away Sunday, August 26, 2018 in the Heritage Valley Hospital, Sewickley, PA. He was born June 15, 1931 in Stratton, OH, a son of the late Michael and Julia Molchan Schultz. He was also preceded in death by his wife Mary Ann Moskal Schultz who died January 7, 1993, brother Eli Schultz; and sisters, Ann Rosak and Mary Schultz. With over 25 years of service, Pat retired in 1996 from Weirton Steel where he worked as a pipefitter. He was a member of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Weirton; WSX 25-Year Club, Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America and the St. Nicholas Choir. He was the co-founder and co-director of the Nikolia Folk Dancers. He played semi-pro baseball and was offered a position in the Boston Red Sox minor league system. He loved woodworking and was an avid Chicago Cubs and Pittsburgh Steelers fan. Pat served aboard the USS Sperry with the US Navy during the Korean War.

He will be remembered with love by his sons John (Sonia) Schultz, MD, past national FOCA president and current Pittsburgh District governor; Michael (Airry) Schultz, Journal managing editor and publisher, all of Weirton, and Anthony (Tammy) Schultz, past national FOCA sports director and department member, of Groveport, OH; daughters, Paula (James) Exler of Moon Township, PA and Patricia Schultz of Weirton; and grandchildren Natasha, Alexandra and Samantha Exler, Sarah and John Schultz, Jr., Joshua, Kendell and Alexis Schultz and several nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were conducted at his church by Father Andrew Nelko. Interment followed at the parish cemetery with military honors by the US Navy and American Legion honor guards. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Nicholas Memorial Fund, 604 Colliers Way, Weirton, WV 26062. Condolences may be sent to the family in care of Dr. John Schultz, 11 Ralston Lane, Weirton, WV 26062-5535. May Pat’s memory be eternal!
Several retired Orthodox Church in America chaplains were awarded the Military Pectoral Cross during the 19th All-American Council (AAC) in Saint Louis, MO July 23–27, 2018.

“The Primatial Award is presented to Orthodox clergy who have served in the United States Armed Forces as military chaplains in the Active Duty, Reserve Component or National Guard Chaplaincy per specified criteria in the protocols in recognition of exemplary and honorable service,” explained Archpriest Theodore Boback, Dean and Executive Director of Orthodox Military and Veterans Administration Chaplains.

At the conclusion of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy celebrated at the Saint Louis Union Station Hotel on Sunday, July 22 marking the 92nd annual national Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America Convention and the beginning of the 19th AAC, the cross was presented to Archpriest Daniel Ressetar, a retired US Air Force Reserve Chaplain, by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon. Receiving crosses from Metropolitan Tikhon at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy celebrated on Thursday, July 26, were Archpriest Peter Baktis, US Army; Archpriest Andrew Harrison, US Air Force Reserve; Archpriest Mark Koczak, US Navy; and Archpriest Andrew Nelko, US Navy. Retired chaplains who were unable to attend the AAC will receive their crosses from their respective diocesan bishops, on behalf of Metropolitan Tikhon and the Holy Synod of Bishops.

“Commencing with World War II, when Father Vladimir Borichevsky was commissioned as the first US Orthodox chaplain, we have had priests of the OCA serving in the US Armed Forces,” said Father Theodore. “Our military chaplains have served during the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Global War on Terrorism, and in the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Middle East, Bosnia, the Balkans, and elsewhere. Our priests volunteer to serve our Church and our nation in a viable and dynamic ministry to the men and women in the US Armed Forces, authorized civilians families and sometimes coalition forces.”

The cross initially was designed and awarded to senior military chaplains in the 1970s. The original design was the work of the late Walter Palchik, an Orthodox Christian jeweler. “Through an anonymous earmarked donation to the OCA, it was possible for a new mold of the cross to be made and subsequently recast,” Father Theodore explained. “Those involved in this process included His Grace, Bishop Daniel, Episcopal Liaison; Archpriest Eric Tosi, OCA Secretary; and Office of the Military Chaplaincy personnel.”

“After contacting various jewelers, Archpriest Nazari Polataiko of Los Angeles, CA was consulted and through discussions with him, Archpriest Nikolay Melnik was identified as an individual who could make the mold and recast the cross,” Father Theodore added. “Father Nikolay’s work was so precise as to include the inscription on the reverse side of each cross, which reads, ‘For no greater love is there than to give one’s life for a friend [John 13:15]’—a reminder that chaplains share unconditionally in the life of the service members and that their faith, trust, and hope operate through their love of God and their love of those to whom they minister.”

During the 19th AAC, current and retired military chaplains also met with Metropolitan Tikhon, Bishop Daniel, Father Theodore and recruiters after Thursday’s plenary session.

“The Office of the OCA Military Chaplaincy is grateful to the anonymous donor who made this award possible and thanks all who helped in the endeavor,” Father Theodore said. “Above all, we need to ensure that the continued Orthodox leadership role in all aspects of chaplaincy are provided and performed. Therefore, our office and the chaplains continue on the journey into the 21st century with faith, hope and love in all aspects of ministry and endeavors ‘for the life of the world’ and for the glory of God.”

Seminaries to Host Special Events

St. Tikhon’s Seminary will celebrate its 80th anniversary with a series of events on Friday & Saturday, October 12 & 13, including a reception for the new dean, symposium, grand banquet and Divine Liturgy. Visit www.stots.edu for detailed information.

In addition to celebrating the 50th Orthodox Education Day (as well as the 50th anniversary of St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press) on Saturday, October 6th, St. Vladimir’s Seminary will hold a Fall Benefit & Theological Convocation on Thursday & Friday, November 1 & 2 with Divine Liturgy, a gala dinner and series of speakers. Visit www.svots.edu for more information.
SAINTS
Who Were Physicians & Healers

The Mothers of Modern Medicine
First Unmercenary Physicians, Holy Martyrs & Wonderworkers

St. Philonilla  St. Hermione  St. Zenaida

An Activity for Orthodox Children and Parents
Department of Christian Education • Orthodox Church in America
82nd Novogodny Ball

Sponsored by

St. Stephen’s OCF - Chapter 82
Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America

Sunday, January 20, 2019

Radisson Hotel – Philadelphia Northeast
Trevose, PA

A Semi-Formal Event for the benefit of deserving charities

Dinner (Optional), Dancing & Treats by Reservation Only
Optional Dinner: 5:00 PM    Dancing & Treats: 7:30 – 11:30 PM

For detailed information regarding reservations,
call Andre Cox at (215) 290-4542 or
e-mail: novogodnyball@gmail.com