

Issue 1

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Youth Music Network



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

To Our Greek Orthodox Youth, the Leaders of Youth and Youth Music programs, and Church Musicians in the parishes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America,

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As Greek Orthodox Christians we are blessed by God with a beautiful tradition of worship and a tremendous spiritual heritage of hymns that guide us in giving praise and adoration, glory and honor to Him, our Creator and Redeemer. For each day of the year, each service and every commemoration we have great resources to help us lift our voices in thanksgiving to the One who gives us abundant mercy and salvation.

From your experience and participation in the Divine Liturgy and other services of the Church, you know that we sing our faith. In addition to providing the words we offer to God, our hymns and singing are a witness of what we believe. We sing our theology. We sing the truth and love of the Gospel. We sing of Christ and the power of His Resurrection. We sing of our hope and assurance in the promises of God.

This is why it is so important that you are connected to the music of our faith and are encouraged to participate in the choirs and music programs in the local parish. By learning and singing the hymns, by bringing together voice, heart and mind, the truth of our faith is affirmed and the joy and power of our faith is experienced. In addition, when you are an active participant in singing to our Lord, you are offering a vibrant witness of Christ and the Gospel. You participate in the vital mission we have to lead others to Him. Finally, when your hearts and minds are filled with the hymns of our faith, you have strength and hope during the great challenges of life. In times of joy or sorrow, calm or turmoil, you affirm your faith in God and the fulfillment of all that He has promised for our salvation.

These aspects of our faith are essential to your spiritual growth and maturity, and the music programs of our parish can guide you to a deeper understanding and experience of Christ in your life and the power and beauty of our Orthodox faith. I encourage all of our Orthodox youth to participate fully in worship, and as led by God and your leaders, in your parish music programs. I also encourage our parish leaders to implement and support these programs for our youth and children. Through this offering for our youth, we will teach our Orthodox faith, share the truth and grace, and make a joyful, powerful and beautiful noise to the Lord our God, our King, and the rock of our salvation! (Psalms 98:6; 95:1)

With paternal love in Christ,

Archbishop Demetrios of America
†DEMETRIOS
Archbishop of America

**Guest Soloist: Maria Keritsis,
National Chairman**

National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians



I thank our Editor and Youth Initiatives Chair for the opportunity to share a few thoughts in this issue of the Youth Music Network. We all know and realize the importance of engaging our young people in the work of the church. I have been blessed to have traveled throughout our Archdiocese and have seen the wonderful programs and events that are hosted and planned for youth. Among the programs that teach the faith is the beautiful and rich tradition of our hymns. There have been youth conferences hosted through which our youth learn and chant the hymns of our church, there are others that meet and offer opportunities for our youth to engage with other parishes for fellowship and to experience the various hymns and services of our faith. Not only are there opportunities for the hymns and hymnology to be taught through these formal settings, but opportunities also exist in less thought-of venues, such as any meetings of the youth, camps, retreats, or any event at which our youth gather. Of course, religious education classes, youth choirs and hymnology classes are the optimum setting through which the hymns, their history and their place in divine worship should be taught, but we must and should avail ourselves of any opportunity to teach our youth our faith through its hymns. This publication will provide a forum through which communities can share ideas and programs that they have sponsored and which will in turn inspire others to action. It is incumbent upon us to continue this “paradosi” and to instill in our youth an appreciation for the beautiful music tradition of the Holy Orthodox Church. God bless you as you continue the work for the youth and the future of our faith through its beautiful and meaningful hymns.



Editor's Note

On behalf of the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians, it is my honor to “resurrect” the youth music newsletter. We have been working hard to create something that all those interested in youth music find beneficial. This newsletter is intended to be a network for all those interested and involved in Youth Music Programs in your parishes. The typical issue will be no longer than 2 pages. With this as our first issue, we are pleased to also include the inspiring letter from Archbishop Demetrios on our front page! Feel free to contact me to include any news you have, teaching tips, questions, answers to previously asked questions, news of your youth musicians, youth music directors and educators as well as any wonderful programs you have done.

In His Service,

Denise Karras,

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Students on Stage



Introducing Ryan Kiel

Ryan is a member of Holy Trinity, Westfield, New Jersey. He began singing in the Angel Choir at age 8. The Angel Choir is for children 7 - 12. Children from 13-18 continue singing with the adults as the Byzan "Teens". He continued to sing through his adolescent years as his voice was changing from a beautiful boy soprano through his alto-tenor range until the present as a full-fledged beautiful tenor at age 21. As his choir director, it was a pleasure and a privilege to see and hear him grow up as an extremely enthusiastic choir member. Besides adding a beautiful dimension to our choir, Ryan also plays piano and was attracted to learning the organ. Through the years, he has been able to substitute as organist. He attended Westminster Choir College for one year adding to his musical knowledge. During this time, he was not able to sing in the choir often as he had to live away from home. Luckily for our choir, he now lives at home as he changed his major and now attends Montclair University as a Chemistry major. This did not deter his interest in music and especially choir. So now he is able to participate in many musical activities. He is very involved in teaching music to the children in our Summer Bible School. He has provided piano accompaniment whenever called upon. Most recently, he is singing with our 25th annual "Spirit of Lent" concert which includes choir members from our New Jersey parishes. He first sang with this concert as a Youth singer and now as an adult singer. He is also very tech savvy and has "restored" some of our music that needed to be clarified.

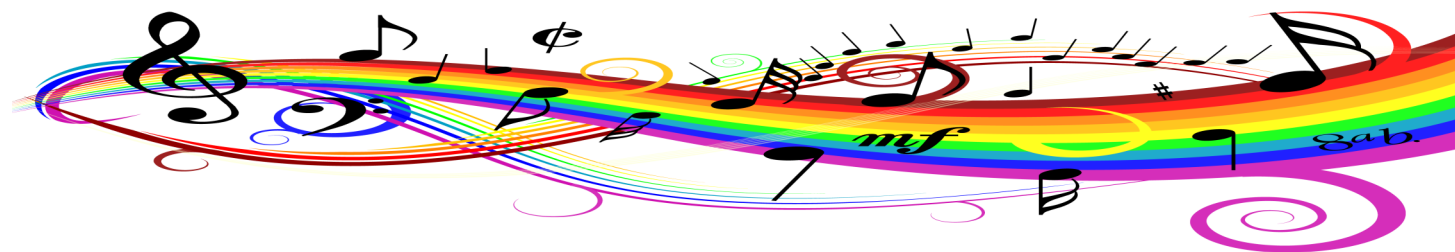
Ryan is a real treasure and we are very lucky to have him in our midst, not only providing us with his musical talent but his warm and loving personality. This will carry him way into the future.



Politimi Lambrakis has been a youth choir member at St. Spyridon Church in Palos Heights since a young age. As a grammar school student, she would willingly come up to the choir loft and participate in the Divine Liturgy with the youth choir. Most recently, though, as a high school student, Politimi has taken it upon herself to come up to the choir loft on the Sundays that the Senior Choir is participating in the Divine Liturgy. Also, Politimi continues to help with the youth choir as she has become a mentor to some of the younger members and helps them follow along with the hymns during liturgy. We are hoping that Politimi continues in her path of becoming a church musician in the future.

Submitted by: Nicky Glikis, Adult Choir Director and Youth Choir Director at St. Spyridon in Palos Heights, Illinois

Teaching Tips



As in all matters involving teaching, and especially when teaching music to young people, two very important things to create the mindset are instrumental to a successful program:

RELATIONSHIPS COUNT! One of the most important steps in establishing a great youth music program is fostering a rapport between the director, clergy, adult choir director and chanters, parish council members, Philoptochos and other parish leaders.

GET ORGANIZED! Our time is precious. Since many youth music programs run on a very limited rehearsal schedule, ensure the most efficient use of time and energy by having a clear rehearsal plan, with all materials ready to hand out *before* your students arrive. It's always better to have planned too much for the lesson than to plan too little.

Submitted by: Joanne Kambouris,

Youth Choir Director of the Tampa Bay Florida Youth Choir

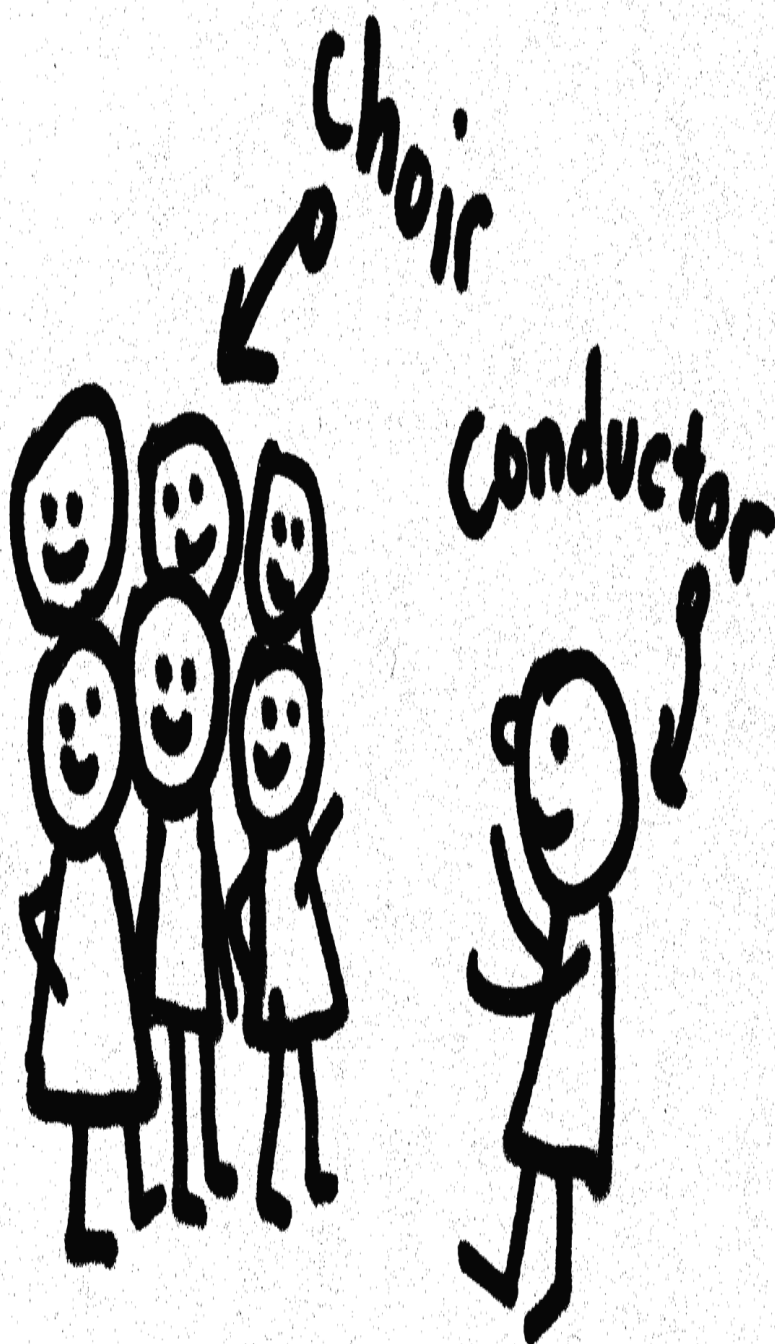
Please submit any tips or ideas that have been successfully used with your youth choirs, youth chant choirs, and Church School music / Hymnology classes to:

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Spotlight on Dr. Vicki Pappas

Dr. Vicki Pappas has devoted her time to the hymnology of the Orthodox Church. She is currently the president of the Mideastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians and for 30 years before that, was National Chairman of the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians.

She began teaching music to the Sunday School of Holy Trinity parish in Indianapolis, IN. The music program is coordinated each year with the Church School Program. Vicki, as Hymnology Teacher, is part of the Sunday School teaching staff and regularly attends their meetings.

Vicki writes brief 1 page lessons for the students and also sends them home for the parents to review with their children at home. These lessons are based on the liturgical year and also on the topics that are being taught. She has successfully integrated the importance of teaching our hymns to the youth during Church School by stressing that the children are not just learning hymns, but learning theology and liturgics as well.

This year, Vicki began the year with a 45 minute lesson for each grade level, attended by the Sunday School teachers and the children. This way, the Church School teachers were able to see for themselves what Vicki wasn't just teaching a "music" class, but integrating themes and ideas that the Church School teachers were also teaching in their curriculum! Some lesson themes have included: WE PRAISE GOD; hymns taught were: Holy God/Aghios O Theos, Se Imnoumen/We Praise You, and Enite/Praise the Lord. Another theme was; HOW WE PRAY. The children were taught the acronym, PTA; P= Praise, T= Thank, and A= Ask. The children learned Se Imnoumen as an example of "How We Pray" and also drew pictures about what they praise and thank God for, and what they ask God for.

Vicki and Holy Trinity Church School were also instrumental in developing the Holy Friday Retreat Handbook which is now published by the National Forum and is used across the country. Vicki and Mary Jo Cally of Chicago were also the developers of the Hymns of the Orthodox Church series which has also been published by the Forum. Holy Trinity children used the Hymn Series as the curriculum for a Summer Church School Program which was filmed by Go-Telecom and titled "Choirs of the Future" and is still available.



Questions & Answers



Question: If you have a Youth Choir in your parish or are planning on starting one, when is the best time or day to rehearse with the youth?

Answers: Please submit your suggestions and answers to this question to:

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Make a Joyful Noise to the Lord

Youth of Holy Trinity in Carmel, IN

The young people of Holy Trinity Church in Carmel, IN have several opportunities to use what they've learned in their Hymnology classes during Great Lent and Holy Week. First through sixth graders sing during communion on the Sunday of Orthodoxy and Sunday of the Holy Cross-Anna Gallos's Receive Me Today O Son of God, Enite/Praise the Lord in Greek and English, Holy God/Aghios O Theos in Greek and English, and the Arabic melody for the verses and refrains of O Give Thanks Unto the Lord. On Holy Saturday, at the First Resurrection Service, they sing the refrains of the Hymn of the Three Youths with their chanter and then as Father Bill Bartz strews bay leaves and rose petals throughout the church, they sing Arise O God and ring hand bells in a joyful service that has become a beloved tradition at Holy Trinity! Later in the service, they again sing hymns during communion.

Submitted by: Dr. Vicki Pappas, Holy Trinity Youth Music Coordinator

