



THE CHAMPION

WANT TO BE INCLUDED IN NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER?

email us: championnewsletter@gmail.com
by February 20, 2021

THE PASTOR'S MESSAGE:

What unites us is the common Orthodox Faith in Christ and our love for each other.

From the desk of Fr. George Dahdouh, Pastor

I greet you with Christ's Greetings: Peace be with you.

As we launch our first St. George Newsletter "The Champion", I am excited that we will be able to share news about our parish family in one place. All organizations and departments will be able to share events in the newsletter. Also, I am hoping in the future we can share birthdays, anniversaries, news of the birth, baptisms, weddings, and funerals here.

A church community consists of members of the same faith who are gathered by God to worship Him. St. George community has existed now for decades in Toronto and we have been witnesses to Christ's Gospel and the Orthodox Faith for a long time.

The past year of 2020 was a challenging year for our community. One thing we all missed is our gathering together around the altar of Christ and to celebrate the Eucharist. We also missed gathering together downstairs after Liturgy for coffee hour, and our many functions in our beautiful center that brought us together to share meals and happy hours.

This one shall pass. 2021 will be better, inshallah. Our forefathers endured a lot more challenges in the many countries of the world, but one thing they kept alive was their Orthodox Faith, their hope in God for a better future, and they never gave up.

I want to thank Marian Abdalla, Venise Kousaie, and all those who contributed to this newsletter.

May our Lord continue to bless our family of St. George.

In Christ, Fr. George Dahdouh, Pastor



THE PARISH COUNCIL CORNER:

Parish Council Chairperson, Samantha Nassar

I am both pleased and humbled to write to you as your Parish Council Chairperson. This last year and our current circumstances are arguably the most unique and perhaps challenging in modern history. Churches all around the world are empty and some have been that way since the onset of this global pandemic. Through the Grace of God, this church has persevered through lockdowns, illness, loss of employment, loss of loved ones and financial downswing; all to show that our faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ remains unwavering ensuring the continued protection of this church.

I am truly enriched by the devotion of our clergy, council members and many other parishioners who through this time have remained hardworking and dedicated with one goal in mind—to ensure this church remains steadfast to serve and comfort its people. Some of you know that I have been blessed to continue to attend church as a chanter since the onset of this pandemic. I cease to be amazed at the same eager parishioners who work tirelessly to protect and serve this church and its community. To you whose faces I see every week, you know who you are, we are truly grateful for you and know that God will reward you for your service and love for this community.

It is this time of year that the Parish Council and other organizations in the church would be reporting to you on the latest social and spiritual gatherings and other enriching and fundraising efforts. Hafehs, Luncheons, baking, Teen and Sunday School events and more! Sadly though, we cannot be together. But we can still unite and work hard to support this church both spiritually, socially and financially. Along with Abouna George, the Parish Council will be working on new initiatives to help keep us united in our faith and to also draw in the much-needed financial support that has been waning over the last several months. To those of you who continue to support this Church with your regular donations and or services, we are truly grateful for your support.

We are nearing the onset of Great Lent which will help us journey through to Pascha which in the Orthodox Church is the most wonderful time of the year! With all my heart I pray that we will be with each other again so that we can celebrate this great Feast as one body united in Christ.

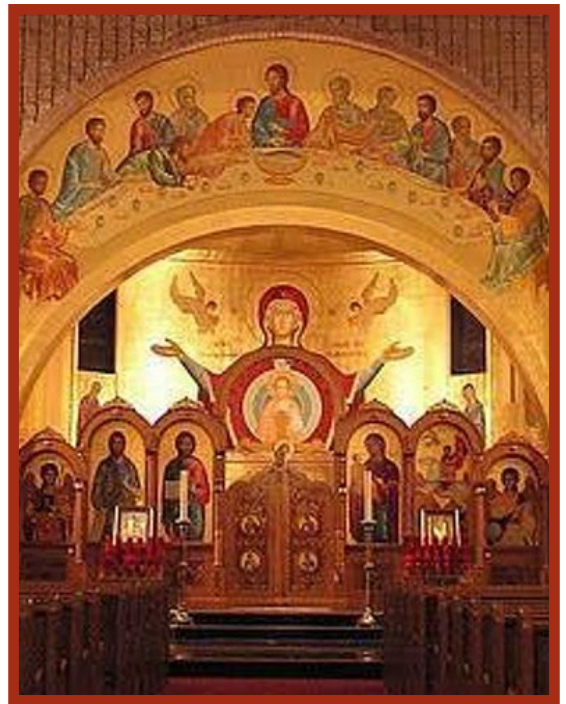
In the meantime, we will continue to pray for the good health and wellbeing of you and your loved ones and ask that we, too, remain in your prayers. Thank you all for your support and encouragement.

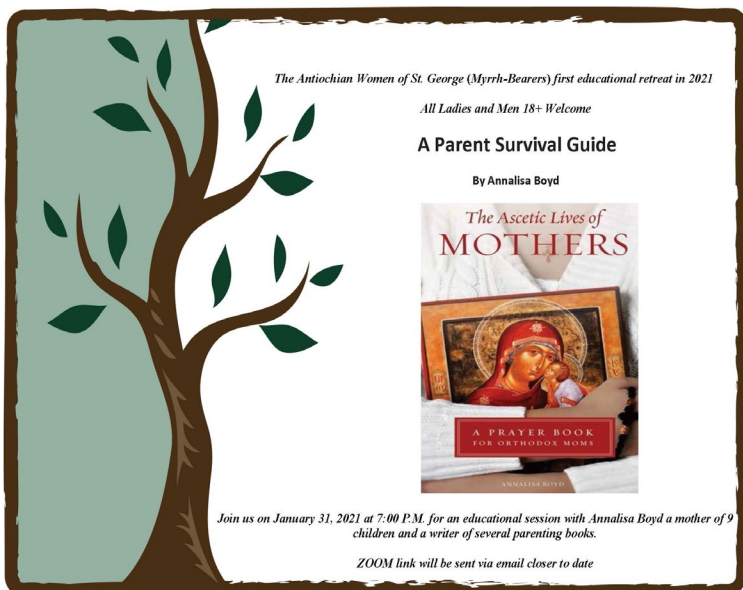
In His service,

Samantha Nassar

Chairperson, Parish Council

St. George Church, Richmond Hill





THE LADIES:

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America was founded in 1973 through the vision of His Eminence Metropolitan Philip Saliba as an organization of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. Its purpose is to develop a spirit of Christian leadership, awareness, and commitment; to foster a genuine expression of love and service through works of charity, and to instill a sense of fellowship and a deeper understanding of the heritage and traditions of the Orthodox Church.

Join them on **January 31, 2021, at 7:00 pm** for an educational session with Annalisa Boyd, a mother of 9 children and a writer of several parenting books. The ZOOM link will be sent via email closer to the date.

Click the image to view the full Event



THE YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY:

YAM represents the young adult cohort from the St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Richmond Hill, ON. The group was created to foster community involvement and individual growth by providing programs and services that facilitate and advance their professional development, spiritual enrichment, and health and wellness.


YAM's first Q&A session of the year was a success! We would like to thank Father George and Anita Novratidis for leading us in the discussion regarding the importance of family and remaining strong in our faith during these difficult times.

Join them every **second Tuesday** of the month at **7:00 pm** for their Q&A with Father George, featuring a different guest speaker every month!

The next event will take place on **February 9, 2021**, featuring Annalisa Boyd. Register on Eventbrite.

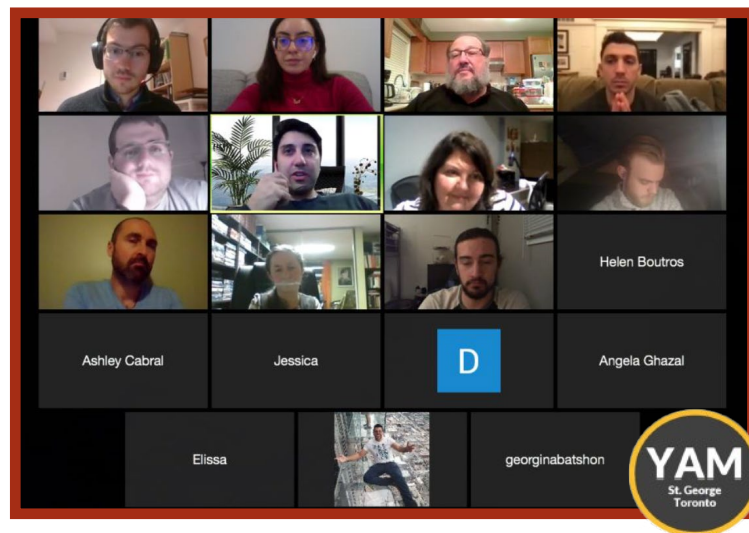
Join their Facebook and WhatsApp group for all the latest information.

Zoom Mtg ID: **816 4891 8026**
 Passcode: stgeorge
7pm Tuesday Feb. 9



Established Author and Podcaster
Annalisa Boyd
 On

- Politics
- Racism + Diversity
- Lockdowns



THE SUNDAY SCHOOL'S SAINT OF THE MONTH:

Synaxis of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John

On the day following the Theophany of the Lord, the Church honours the one who participated directly in the Baptism of Christ, placing his own hand upon the head of the Savior.

Saint John, the holy Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, whom the Lord called the greatest of the prophets, concludes the history of the Old Testament and opens the era of the New Testament. The holy Prophet John bore witness to the Only-Begotten Son of God, incarnate in the flesh. Saint John was accounted worthy to baptize Him in the waters of the Jordan, and he was a witness of the Theophany of the Most Holy Trinity on the day of the Savior's Baptism. Saint John prepared himself in the wilds of the desert for his great service by a strict life, by fasting, prayer and sympathy for the fate of God's people.

Saint John died a martyr's death, beheaded by the sword on orders of King Herod at the request of his daughter Salome.

To view their full Newsletter click [here](#).

Online Sunday School has begun and is in full swing. You may still register your children at any time. For further assistance contact: **Amanda Qaqish** at orthodoxchristianeducation@gmail.com.



THE HOME SCHOOL MINISTRY:

The St. Innocent Orthodox Homeschool Group began at St. George with the blessing of God over 20 years ago. Kh. Debbie Younes was homeschooling her daughters, and other families who were also interested in homeschooling began meeting at St. George. After all these years, the group has been blessed to continue to grow and flourish. The homeschool families meet at St. George throughout the school year, and these meetings provided valuable fellowship and friendships. Although we currently cannot gather, we continue to "get together" outside and online to ensure this ministry is kept active for years to come!

In 2015, St. Emmelia Ministries Department of Homeschooling was created, and we are very blessed to be a part of that organization. Its primary goal is to promote, support, and unite homeschooling families throughout the Archdiocese and to remind all parents that their children's education is their responsibility, whether they outsource this task or homeschool. St. Emmelia Ministries' mission is to provide inspiring and informative resources and experiences that help equip homeschooling families to educate the next generation of Orthodox faithful in North America.

In 2019, we held the first St. Emmelia Ministries North Homeschool conference at St. George. It was a very blessed event. Unfortunately, Covid19 forced us to cancel 2020, but God willing, we will have the conference once again in 2021. For more information, you can visit, www.saintemmelia.com.



Saint Emmelia
MINISTRIES
Orthodox Christian Homeschooling

THE CHARITY SPOTLIGHT:

Blessings for All By Michelle Alexopoulos

It is truly amazing what a difference a community can make when it is united together with a mission to help others. In November, we called out to our parish community to help give “Bags of Blessings” to adults and children in need. Many from St. George came forward to support this effort and, in the end, volunteers, old and young, together in multiple shifts, wearing masks (and smiling beneath them – see picture), met to fill these bags in our Church basement. It was a blessing for all of us. The fruits of the labour resulted in 150 bags for men, 75 bags for women and 80 bags for the children (See picture). All of the Blessing Bags were picked up by St. John the Compassionate Mission and were distributed in time for the Nativity Feast to those in need who have been using their services. (See pictures of the van packed)

The need this year has been greater than usual at the Mission, and we were told that when volunteers at the Mission discovered the bags would be coming again this year, it was a bit of happy news that they were delighted to be able to share. Each package contained essential toiletries, such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo and conditioner, soap, deodorant, combs, shaving cream and razors (for adults only), as well as socks, hats, and gloves to help keep the recipients warm during the winter months. Candies, pens, Kleenex, sewing kits, and lip balm also were lovingly bundled by our parishioners to be included along with corporate donations of packages of dried fruit and Ferrero Rocher chocolates for the adults and KinderSantas for the children. With generous support, we were also able to help with the new challenges created by Covid 19, through the inclusion of a facemask and a bottle of hand sanitizer, and blessed to be able to include a Christmas craft and a toy (a Barbie, Basketball, toy cars or puzzles) for each child. We are proud to report that our community was able to help spread some Christmas cheer — something needed even more during these trying times.



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