

SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

ΕΝΟΡΙΑ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ

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Parish Council

August 31, 2017

Nicholas Minton,
President

Dear Parents,

John Kontos, *Vice President*

Your child age 12-18 is, or is welcome to be, a member of the St. George GOYA, a ministry for Greek Orthodox young people. This letter outlines what GOYA is, what it does, and how it operates.

Michael Liakos,
2nd Vice President

GOYA is the official youth ministry program of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. It takes a different form in each parish community. In some parishes, a full or part time youth minister is employed to actively prepare and administer GOYA activities on behalf of the young people. In our parish, however, GOYA is a voluntary association of young people, overseen by their parents, and actively advised and assisted by four advisors: Sam Kiouisis, Dina Gargasoulas, Julie Georvassilis, and Alexi Kakaris Porter, under the oversight of Fr. Anthony.

Lou Kircos,
Treasurer

Bobby Kollias,
Asst. Treasurer

Chris Kontos,
Secretary

Bill Colovos

John Diamantis

Stavros

Dionyssopoulos

Pete Georvassilis

George Kaltsas

Sam Kiouisis

George Kotronis

Pete Makarounas

Kim Moody

Christian Tougas

Peter Vougiouklakis

The GOYA itself has traditionally elected four officers: a president, a vice-president, a secretary, and a treasurer. For a number of years, these officers had taken on a more symbolic role, with minimal responsibilities, so in 2014 Fr. Anthony abolished the old model and replaced it with a new system, in which there is a President and four vice-presidents, each responsible for one of the four priorities of GOYA: FELLOWSHIP, WORSHIP, SERVICE, AND WITNESS. The four vice-presidents are volunteer positions, but the President is appointed each year by the Priest. This year, Fr. Anthony has appointed me, Vasiliki Gargasoulas, as president to lead the GOYA. We need volunteers for the four vice-presidents, each with the responsibility to come up with an activity to advance one of the four priorities of GOYA listed above. Seniors and Juniors in high school will take precedence in this, but if there are none that can shoulder the responsibility, younger GOYAs will be welcome to fill these roles. If you would like to fill one of these slots, please speak with Fr. Anthony and with me, Vasiliki, as soon as possible.

FELLOWSHIP simply refers to social activities together. It can be as simple as an afternoon gathering at the Church to play Apples to Apples, or as involved as an outing to Cedar Point, to which other GOYAs are invited.

Office Staff

Susan Solo,
Administrative Assistant

Lisa Campbell,
Bookkeeper

WORSHIP refers, of course, to a more active participation in the worship of our Church. It would most simply involve attending Vespers together Saturday evening (the service is always in English), and might involve some fellowship afterward. It could also take the form of a Paraklesis service in a time of tragedy, or a candlelit Midnight Office service to explore what the worship of ancient (or modern) Christians in times of persecution is like.

SERVICE refers to acts of care and service for those in need. The December activities benefitting the Penrickton Center and the Deaconess residents fall into this category, but there are frequent requests for more activities like this; perhaps we

might volunteer at a food pantry, or do yard work for a needy family in the parish or community, or help out at a local soup kitchen.

WITNESS refers to actively bearing witness to the joy of Christ our Lord and the truth of the Orthodox Faith to those around us. For most young people, Witness has to begin with study and preparation, so an activity focused on witness might be as simple as scheduling a Q&A session with Fr. Anthony, or as involved as forming a book club to read and discuss a book relating to the Faith, or a movie night to view and discuss the movie in light of the Orthodox Faith. It could also extend to active evangelism of some sort, if an appropriate venue could be identified.

In addition to the (at least) four activities that we hope will be born of this organizational system, the St. George GOYA has traditionally had certain regular activities in the course of the year. We always begin in the fall with a Wallyball outing at a local racquetball court, and participate actively in the St. George Festival in September. We often have a bonfire in the fall. As we approach Christmas, we collect and deliver gifts for the Penrickton Center for Blind Children, and hold a BINGO night for the Deaconess residents. We usually go ice skating together over winter break. We generally attend (and sometimes host) the Michigan GOYA Lenten Retreat. GOYA participates heavily in the monthly game night at the Church sponsored by several GOYA graduates. The GOYA takes an active part in the preparations of the palm crosses and bay leaves, and the preparation of the Church, on the Saturday of Lazarus prior to Holy Week – in addition, last year, they held vigil throughout the night of Holy Thursday before the Cross of the Lord, reading Psalms until the morning services of Holy Friday. In the summer, we try to have a canoe trip. For all of these, we depend on parents to drive and chaperone.

In addition, we participate in various events sponsored by other organizations and other GOYA groups. We are often invited to join the GOYA groups from Holy Trinity in Toledo, St. Nicholas in Ann Arbor, and Annunciation Cathedral in Detroit, for various other events. We try to attend the Dodgeball Tournament at Saint Clair Shores Assumption in October, the Camp Reunion Dance at St. Nicholas in Troy, and Holiday Hoops at St. John in Sterling Heights in November. On occasion we invite them to join us as well, and the young people have consistently requested that we do so more often. When we participate in these events, however, the responsibility to respond, and to drive and chaperone, rests with the parents.

The advisors have taken on themselves the responsibility to organize and attend the normal, regular events: Wallyball, Penrickton, Deaconess BINGO, Ice Skating, the Lenten Retreat, and the Lazarus Saturday palm/bay leaf preparation. The initiative for any other events will come from the GOYA President or the four vice-presidents and the GOYAnS working with them, or directly from the young people and their families.

Any GOYAn who would like to see a particular event happen should bring it first to Fr. Anthony, the president, or one of the advisors, to confirm that it is appropriate, and to determine who might be best to help out with the project, who else is interested, which vice-president they should work with, and which advisor is available to lend their support with the practical aspects of the event, including date, place, cost, etc. Parental assistance and support is essential to the success of any such event and to the GOYA in general.

If you have questions please do not hesitate to address them to me, to Fr. Anthony, or to an advisor. Thank you for your dedication to the Church, and for your careful parenting of your young people. We pray the Lord may grant us wisdom, patience, and success as we work together for their grounding in the Faith and in their heritage, for the greater glory of Christ and His Church.

With love in Christ,

Vasiliki Gargasoulas
St. George GOYA President 2017