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The Cathedral Messenger

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The Secret Life of Altar Boys

He may be adorable, but that little boy in a gold robe, holding a candle, is actually participating in an ancient tradition. The acolyte or taper bearer appears in Byzantine iconography and once comprised an order of the minor clergy. In Old Testament times, young Levites learned their duties by assisting their fathers in the Temple.



Altar boys waiting to lead the funeral procession of Fr. George Cohlmia in 1947. Left: Kay Cohlmia & Farris S. Farha (cross). On right: Robert Bayouth, Norman Farha & Mike Castrisos (censer).

Since the 1930s, hundreds of boys have served in the altar at St. George. Some were later tonsured as readers or subdeacons, or even ordained as priests. Others later joined the choir or served on parish council. Most importantly, they entered manhood with a sense of responsibility and reverence for the holy Church.

Handley Street: The Fr. George Cohlmia Era (1933-1947)

Regular Sunday services only became the norm at St. George after ordination of Fr. George Cohlmia. There might be 50 people at liturgy, two chanters, and a handful of altar boys to assist with the candles, cen-

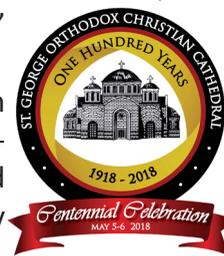
ser, and holy bread. Robert Bayouth started serving in 1939, at age ten. His team included the priest's son, Herb, Fred Farha, Farris S. Farha, and brother Lindy. Mike Castrisos was in charge of keeping order.

"I always assumed that I would serve," Bayouth recalled. "We took our responsibility very seriously.

"I was in awe of being in the holy of holies because the Spirit was with us. We knew never to walk [in front of] the altar table, because that was dangerous."

At that time the service was half in Arabic and half in English, so he wasn't always sure of what was going on. An altar boy might miss a cue, but Fr. George was "a mild-mannered man, very humble, not a disciplinarian."

The sudden death of Fr. George in 1947 stunned the parish. Bob Bayouth and others who had served under him honored his memory by leading his funeral procession.



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Dean, V. Rev. Paul O'Callaghan • St. George Orthodox Christian Cathedral

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Walnut Street: The Fr. John Matthiesen Era (1950-1963)

Ten years later Steve Cohlmiya, age 5, got his start as an altar boy. Unlike Steve's late grandfather, Fr. John Matthiesen was known as "a task master." Altar boy practices were held once or twice a month, on a Saturday.

"The altar boys may look like cherubs during the Great Entrance, but we were ornery," Cohlmiya recalled. When Fr. John went out to give the homily, the altar boys remained behind. While his back was turned, they amused themselves by tossing pieces of holy bread from one side of the altar to the other.

"The goal was to launch the bread high enough so that the top of the iconostasis hid it from view," said Cohlmiya. "An altar boy on the opposite side would catch it and pop it into his mouth" to destroy the evidence.

"Fr. John would pull your ear and twist it if he caught you. I remember Jerry David was always in trouble. Finally Fr. John told him, 'If you do not behave I will pull your ears off and fry them in butter!'"

Every year after Pascha, Fr. John loaded 15 or 16 altar boys into a station wagon. He took them to an all-you-can-eat buffet and then bought them tickets for a double feature at the Miller Theatre or the Orpheum.

Among the servers "there was a pecking order. Candle—you were an apprentice. The little cross was a promotion, then came the fan.

"When you got to carry the big cross, your parents noticed. And when you carried the censer, you were just one step below a priest!"

The Cathedral: The Fr. Paul O'Callaghan Era (1993 to present)



The future Subdeacon Alex Learned with mom Valerie at his first service in 1996. Courtesy Rod Learned.

In the altar older boys usually look after the younger ones. "I can still feel my brother's hand on the back of my neck, guiding me," recalled Sean Hatfield. He served at St. George during his own father's ordination in 1994.

"The way my brothers talked about it, the altar was a very theatrical and dramatic world," said Alex Wakim, who started serving in 2004. But it could also be intimidating. Older boys were good role models, and serving together created special bonds.

As the Cathedral's roster of altar boys expanded, so did the role of the head altar boy. If a new recruit is a Cub Scout, the head altar boy is the Eagle Scout. He spends years

mastering every detail of the service: pacing the Great Entrance, preparing the holy bread, anticipating clergy needs. Holy Week services are the ultimate test.

"My goal was to make each service seamless," Wakim said of his year as head altar boy. "Fr. Paul wants everything done right, with no distractions."

"I learned from Fr. Paul's and Bishop Basil's reverence," recalled former head altar boy Eddie Abdallah. "When you kiss the floor [inside the sanctuary] you can feel the holiness."

After experiencing daily services at Camp St. Raphael, Abdallah said he was inspired to start serving in the altar "every single week." He still serves at weekday liturgies.

"Being in the altar gives young people a taste of the life of the church," said Alex Wakim. "I learned more from it than anything else. While I was serving, I always wondered, how could anyone not want to be here?"

Parish Life Conference Creative Festival

Winners



2nd Place

Georgia Farha (3rd Grade) ART
Yianni Likiardopoulos (4th Grade) ART
Myrrah Awwad (6th Grade) ART



3rd Place

Jonathan Chehab (1st Grade) ART
Anastasia Likiardopoulos (10th Grade) ART

Bible Bowl Team

Our Bible Bowl team placed 2nd in the competition



2nd Place - Oratorical Chase Farha

MABROOK! BLESSINGS!

MARRIAGE

Andrew Bayless & Macrina Castrisos 6/23

BAPTISMS

Keith Kevin Burnett,
Saraia Alexandra Burnett,
Lydia Grace Burnett 6/17

MANY YEARS!

Our Teens at PLC



Wichita Crew at Parish Life Conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico

Fr. Joshua Farewell and Grace Appreciation Sunday



Join us for Divine Liturgy and Special Coffee Hour
July 8

As we express our appreciation to
Fr. Joshua, Kh. Meredith, and Grace Saad Humsi
for their ministries



CHURCH SECURITY

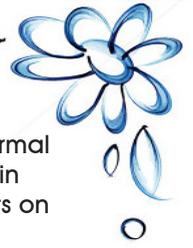
WHY IS CHURCH SECURITY IMPORTANT?

2017 was most violent year for faith-based organizations in the United States.

The number of violent incidents and resulting deaths that took place on the properties of churches and faith-based organizations nationwide increased dramatically last year. In fact, 2017 was by far the most violent year for faith-based organizations in American history. This was true well before the November 2017 attack on a church in Sutherland Springs, Texas. Without including Sutherland Springs, 2017 had 92 violent deaths. When you include Sutherland Springs that number jumps to 118.

According to the Deadly Force Incident (DFI) study on violence in faith-based organizations across the United States, from January 1999 through December 2017, there were at least 1,705 violent incidents with deadly force potential.

JULY FASTING



July Fasting During this period, the normal fasting traditions are observed: abstain from meat, poultry and dairy products on Wednesdays and Fridays.

AUGUST FASTING



August Fasting The Dormition Fast takes place August 1-14. We fast from meat, and dairy products, fish, and wine except on Saturdays and Sundays when there is an allowance for wine, and on the feast of Transfiguration, Monday, August 6th, when there is an allowance for fish and wine. A fast day always occurs on August 29 for the Beheading of John the Baptist in which we abstain from meat and dairy products.

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There is also a free mobile app available for download at the Apple App store in iTunes, Google Play store and the Amazon Fire App Store. Simply search for "Instant Church Directory" to get the download.

You will need to use your email address as listed in our directory to create a log-in the first time you use the directory online and via the mobile app.

Need help or have questions?

Please contact:

Gina - 636.4676 or email at gina@stgeorgecathedral.net



Alzheimer's Prevention Research Study through Via Christi Research:

Must be between 60-75 years of age and NOT diagnosed with any memory impairment. Testing for the APOE-4 gene, which can increase your chances of Alzheimer's, is included. Voluntary participation. For more information see Toni Sandler (316-641-8163) or phone 316-291-4673 for more information.

Community Support by Traci Spencer

we'd love to have you join us!

"for I was hungry and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me" — Matthew 25: 35-36

Completed Projects

SENIOR SERVICES

On Thursday, June 7th, Senior Services hosted a private tour for our parishioners of the expansion of 200 S. Walnut-transformation from being a Historic Church and Parish of St. George to a modern Senior Services. All of the Senior Services Board members were present and George Laham catered a lovely meal. Susan Peters and Dawson Grimsley gave a presentation of what the expansion will do for seniors in our community. Please see the Community Support Bulletin Board for further information from the wonderful tour and event. Thank you for your support and financial donations to this worthy cause!

LORD'S DINER

On Sunday, June 17th, St. George volunteers served the homeless in our community at the Broadway location. St. George serves at the Lord's Diner the 3rd Sunday of every month. Please let Pat Milburn know if you can help serve at 265-1380 or sign up on the Community Support Bulletin Board.

CENTER FOR COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Community Support team celebrated with six survivors on Wednesday, June 27th, on their accomplishments in completing college classes and investing in themselves. We ate dinner together at Cheddars and gave them each a visa gift card to celebrate. It was a blessing honoring these survivors of Human Trafficking. We wanted to them feel support from their community. They were so grateful for our support.

What's Coming Up ?

FOCUS BACKPACK PROJECT

Once again, Teen Soyo and Community Support will partner with FOCUS of North America by providing \$1,000 toward backpacks filled with school supplies for middle school children in need in the Wichita Community. The done in a day project will be completed at the end of July or first of August. The date to be announced after camp is over.

Next Two Meetings

12:00 noon in the Conference Room.

We would love to have you join us!!

Our next two meetings will be Tuesday, July 10th and Tuesday, August 14th. We meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month at noon. Please consider sharing your gifts and talents with our community. Please contact Traci Spencer at 371-5599 if you would like to be involved.

LORD'S DINER

On Sundays, July 15th and August 19th, St. George volunteers will be serving the homeless in our community at the Broadway location. Please let Pat Milburn know if you can help serve at 265-1380 or sign up on the Community Support Bulletin Board.

CHRISTMAS IN JULY

The Community Support committee is once again sponsoring a food basket distribution to benefit 25 families in need. Along with the food, we would like to provide a book for each child in every family to enjoy. If you would like to adopt a family to purchase books for their children, please see Cindy Abdallah at the sign up table during coffee hour beginning July 1st and each Sunday after through July 15th. Books will need to be at the church no later than Sunday, July 22nd. See Cindy Abdallah to sign up to drive for the food basket/ book delivery. We will meet at St. George at 10:00 a.m. on July 28th to deliver the food and books and should be done by 12:00 at the latest. Hope to see you there!

CHILDREN FIRST

The Community Support Committee will be providing toiletries and personal hygiene kits for Children First in August. Children First is an organization that supports and provides for underprivileged children in the Wichita Community. These kits will help stock their Basic Needs Pantry and will be distributed to students beginning with the 2018/2019 school year in August. Our done in a day project will take place at the beginning of August- date to be announced in next month.

YOUNG AT HEART

We will have good food, BINGO, prizes, and fellowship again in August. The date to be announced next month! We look forward to serving our beloved seniors!

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO FR. JOSHUA FOR MENTORING THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUP AND SERVING ALONGSIDE US WITH HIS FAMILY FOR SO MANY PROJECTS. You will be greatly missed!!

*The Cathedral
Messenger*

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