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The Cathedral Messenger

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Five Reasons to Celebrate the 2026 St. George Lebanese Dinner

by Jennifer Sebitts



What does it take to make our St. George Cathedral Annual Lebanese Big Dinner a success? Nearly 4,900 guests, a record number of volunteers, a drive through and dining room that ran like clockwork, a Country Kitchen that continues to sell the best baked good in the city—and a whole lot of love for St. George!

Our 91st Annual St. George Lebanese Dinner gave us plenty to celebrate this year. Here are five reasons to be proud of what we accomplished together—and excited about what comes next.

1. We welcomed 4,891 guests—and discovered room to grow.

One of our most encouraging successes was an 11% increase in tickets purchased at the door! That's 203 more guests than last year, a wonderful sign of our Dinner's continued appeal throughout the Wichita community. Although parishioner ticket sales dipped slightly (2%), we see an exciting opportunity for growth: Imagine what next year could bring if we pair strong door sales with renewed enthusiasm for selling tickets in advance!

2. More hands—and new faces—joined the tradition.

We had more volunteers than ever before, including

many new faces. Among them were new converts to Orthodoxy who jumped right in, learning to roll baklava and cabbage alongside legacy parishioners. The recipes may take practice, but the conversations, laughter, and friendships come naturally. Every new volunteer helps ensure that the traditions passed down by our sittis continue for another generation.

3. We invested in a better dinner experience.

This year, we made some smart investments that paid off! We purchased additional Apple Square devices to speed up checkout in our parking lot, two large food warmers to improve the drive-through carryout process, and Wi-Fi hotspots to keep everything running smoothly. Thanks in large part to Andrew Cogburn and John Mark Mosley, we experienced no technological glitches, and our parking lot operation ran more efficiently than ever. While these improvements required upfront spending, they reflect our commitment to reinvesting in the Dinner—improving the experience for our guests, making our volunteers' jobs easier, and building a stronger foundation for the future. Sometimes a small improvement behind the scenes makes a big difference to thousands of guests.

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

7515 East Thirteenth Street • Wichita, KS 67206-1223 • (316) 636-4676 • <http://www.stgeorgecathedral.net>

Bulletin Board



MEMORY ETERNAL

Donald Stephan, 10/19

2027 STEWARDSHIP

Please plan to make your 2027 Stewardship Commitment **by Sunday, November 29**, either online through Realm or by returning a signed pledge card to the Cathedral by that date.

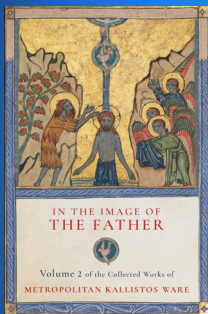


St. George Cathedral's Fall Festival & Costume Party

Sunday, November 1
5:00-7:00p
in the Fellowship Hall

\$5.00 Admission includes:
Chili Dog Dinner - Games & Prizes

A-Men Theology



Luke Moore will be leading
the discussion on the book:

*In The Image
of The Father*

December 3, 7:15p
at the Parish House

NOVEMBER FASTING

On Wednesdays and Fridays prior to November 15, the normal fasting traditions are observed: abstinence from meat, poultry, and dairy products. The Nativity Fast begins Sunday, November 15th. The usual fasting regime is kept everyday during the Fast in November, except we are dispensed from fasting on Thanksgiving Day, and wine and in some traditions, fish, are permitted on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and weekends.

MABROOK! BLESSINGS!

MANY YEARS!

Baptisms

Eva Magdelene Robinson, 10/4
daughter of Paul and Lacey

James Hubert Arpin, 10/18
son of Seth and Conlee

Fall 2026 Adult Education Series

Our Antiochian Heritage

A series exploring the history
and spirituality of the
Church of Antioch

November 4, **Excursus: The
Last Christian Town in Palestine**
—Fr Constantine Nasr

November 11:
The School of Antioch
— Fr Calinic Berger

November 18:
Antakya (Antioch) Today
— Prof Jens Kreinath



All presentations will take place on Wednesday
evenings following Vespers at 7:15.

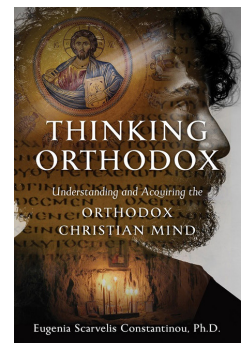
Women's Faith & Growth

Join us Thursday
October 22, 7:15p

at the Parish House
— 1328 N Tallyrand St —

for an evening of
fellowship & faith

Rebekah Sturgill
is leading the discussion
"Thinking Orthodox"
by Dr Jeannie Constantinou



DINNERS with SINNERS

by Zara Magdalena

What was Jesus' favorite way to spend an evening? While the Gospels do not offer a calendar of His social affairs, they do reveal a recurring quest: He was frequently at someone's dinner table.

Whether with sinners, tax collectors, Pharisees, fishermen, friends, or complete strangers, Jesus was willing to accept dinner invitations. And when He was not on the dining table, He was feeding a crowd. He turned water into wine at a wedding, multiplied loaves and fish for thousands, and shared a meal with His disciples as the first act of Love in His Resurrected body.

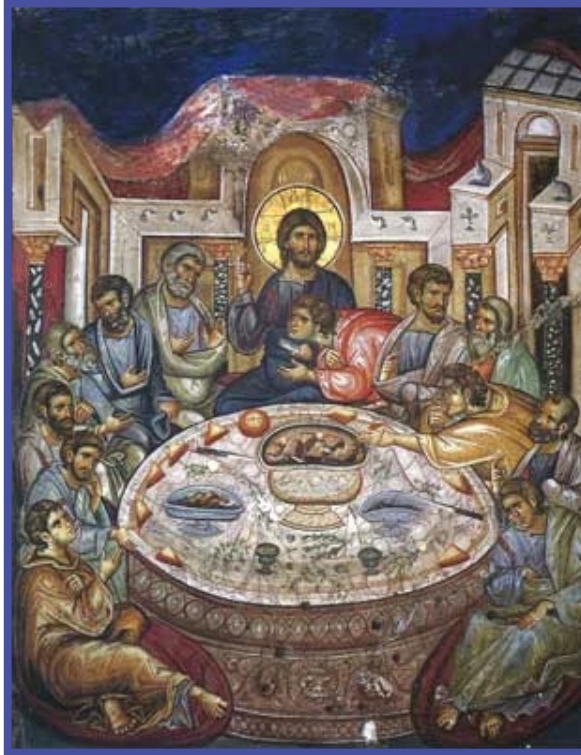
A question arises: Why does The Lord desire to share meals with us? At St. George Orthodox Cathedral, the annual Lebanese dinner offers the perfect opportunity to consider just that.

Of course, the Dinner has plenty of dishes to serve beyond theological analysis. There is Lebanese food, a celebration of cultural heritage, music that makes it hard to stay seated, and the effort of parishioners who work behind the scenes to bring everything together. It is a Christian virtue for a church to open its doors, prepare a feast, and welcome a crowd that is not of its own congregation.

And that is where the Gospels enter the picture.

A Seat at the Table

When Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners, the religious authorities were less than impressed. In Luke 5:29–32, Christ attends a feast at the home of Levi, a tax collector, and finds Himself criti-



cized: Why would a religious teacher choose to dine with tax collectors and sinners? Jesus' response was simple: "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick" (Luke 5:31).

For Jesus, the table was not a members-only club for the morally superior. It was an opportunity to meet people where they were. Sharing a meal with sinners did not mean encouraging sin; it meant recognizing that no one was beyond His invitation to the Kingdom, provided they were willing to accept it, or in Levi's case, to invite Him in.

The story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10) serves another memorable example of how Jesus used a dinner table to challenge social expectations. Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, a man wealthy enough to be comfortable but unpopular enough that his neighbors probably would not have saved him a seat at their dinner parties. Yet when Jesus saw him perched in a sycamore tree, He did not simply wave from below and continue on His way. He invited Himself to Zacchaeus's house, saying, "Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house" (Luke 19:5).

Imagine the neighborhood gossip: of all the people in town, Jesus had chosen to dine with that man! Again, the comment was heard: "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." But Jesus' willingness to share a meal with Zacchaeus was not an endorsement of his dishonest practices; it was an invitation to change. Moved by this encounter, Zacchaeus promised to give half his possessions to the poor and repay fourfold anyone he had defrauded. In other words, dinner with this sinner did more than fill a stomach; it changed his life.

[continued next pg](#)



A dinner table is one of the few places where people can set aside their usual roles for a while. Titles, backgrounds, and differences may still exist. In the meantime however, everyone on the table shares the same objective: to find a seat, enjoy the food, and each other's company.

At St. George's annual Lebanese dinner, the presence of guests from outside the parish gives this ordinary act of hospitality a wider significance. The church is not simply hosting its own members. It is sharing its traditions with the surrounding community, welcoming people who may have little familiarity with Orthodox Christianity beyond the dinner itself. A guest does not need to know the hymns, recognize the icons, or understand the Divine Liturgy to be welcomed through the door.

Sometimes, the introduction simply begins with a plate of food.

The Literature of a Good Meal

In *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, Thomas C. Foster explores the significance of shared meals in his chapter "Nice to Eat with You." He argues that when characters eat together, the meal often represents something beyond the food itself. It becomes a way of expressing relationships, establishing trust, and creating a sense of community.

A meal, in other words, tells a story about the people sitting around the table.

Consider how much a dinner can reveal. Who is invited? Who is excluded? Who sits beside whom? Is the conversation warm, cold, or non-existent? The dining table can bring people closer, expose divisions (how many of us have witnessed our families crumble during Thanksgiving dinner?), or mark the beginning of a relationship. In the Gospels, the table is not always a place of peace. At the Last Supper, Jesus reveals that one of His own disciples will betray

Him, turning a meal shared among friends into a moment of grief and revelation. Literature offers similar examples: in Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, the Cratchit family's Christmas dinner reveals the warmth and generosity that wealth alone cannot buy, while Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* turns shared meals into tense gatherings dressed by suspicion. Where a dinner scene might appear to be little more than a description of food, something important is often happening between each bite. A meal gives people a reason to sit together long enough for something more than eating to take place.

When food is chewed, connection is being served.

Thankfully, the annual Lebanese dinner at St. George seemed to avoid such dramatic revelations. No betrayals were announced over the kibbeh, no relationships were known to crumble alongside the baklava, and if any dinner-table disputes did occur, the music was loud enough for any of us to hear any of it. Instead, the evening brought together parishioners and guests who might otherwise have had little reason to meet, giving them a chance to share food, conversation, and a little of the church's Lebanese heritage.

Perhaps dinner is not always just dinner after all...

Thank You

Dear Fr. Paul and St George Cathedral,

Thank you for the generous honorarium and for the great hospitality and the wonderful privilege to speak to your beautiful community on the Burial Ministry. It is my prayer and hope that it flourishes in your Holy community.
All our prayers and pleas pray for us@

In XC,
Fr. John Reimann

Teens Helping at Annual Dinner



Dinner article - continued:



4. God renewed our spirit of service.

Perhaps one of the most meaningful successes of this year's Dinner wasn't something we could measure in numbers. It was a renewed spirit of joy, cooperation, and service among our volunteers. There was a noticeable difference in the atmosphere this year—a greater sense of enthusiasm, teamwork, and shared purpose. Rather than focusing on the work involved, our volunteers embraced the opportunity to serve one another, serve our church, and carry forward a tradition that has united generations of St. George parishioners. That joyful spirit is what makes the Big Dinner so special, and it may be our greatest accomplishment of all.

5. We are building a stronger Dinner for the next 100 years.

We have ambitious plans for next year. We want to streamline planning, improve efficiency, and create a formal Dinner budget for the first time so we can better manage expenses. We also hope to develop an App-powered assistant that captures the knowledge needed to chair the Dinner, making it easier for future generations of parishioners to lead. Eventually, we envision an app that brings together our historic recipes, budget, supply lists, and supply requests in one place, making communication and coordination easier for everyone.

But the most important measure of the Lebanese Dinner has never been whether we serve a record number of meals—or how much money we make. (Final numbers will be announced at coffee hour on November 8.) It is the community and unity we build while working side by side. It is remembering our nearly 100-year history and honoring the Lebanese and Syrian roots that have shaped St. George. It is welcoming new people into that story and sharing the hospitality and love of Christ with everyone who comes through our doors.

By those measures, the 2026 Lebanese Dinner was a tremendous success. Thank you to every parishioner, volunteer, and guest who helped make it so. We have much to celebrate—and even more to look forward to next year!

With gratitude,

Ashley Mullinix and Jennifer Sebts
Big Dinner Chairs

2026 ST. GEORGE

WOMEN'S RETREAT

NOVEMBER 13 - 14

Returning Key Note Speaker:

HEIDI WHITE

THE MYSTICAL REALITY OF

WOMANHOOD:

Spirituality, Feminity, and Salvation

A spiritual vision of the feminine and the
salvation of the world through the
Theotokos and the lives of the saints.



Registration
at the link below
[https://tinyurl.
com/a2dpf2nz](https://tinyurl.com/a2dpf2nz)



2026 Nativity Lent Psalter Group

Nativity Lent is almost here and it is time to sign up for the Nativity Lent Psalter Reading group. The deadline for sign-up is Saturday, November 14th. Please contact Vas Oldziey via email, 20kathismas@gmail.com, to sign-up. Please be sure to send your **full name** and your **baptismal name** in the email. The reading assignment list will be sent out via email Saturday evening, November 14th, so everyone can begin reading Sunday, November 15th.

In the Orthodox Church, the Book of Psalms, which has 150 Psalms, is divided into 20 sections each called a "Kathisma" (literally, a "sitting", since the Psalms may be read sitting down). A "Psalter Group" is therefore comprised of a minimum of 20 people who commit to reading one Kathisma of the Psalter each day. Each person is assigned a starting Kathisma for November 15th and then moves on to the next kathisma the next day until all 20 Kathismas have been read through twice during the 40 days of the lenten season and the whole Psalter is read each day by the group.

Please note: We do not come together as a group to do the readings. We read anywhere and at any time of the day that is convenient for us. If you miss a day, you simply move on to the next Kathisma.

The order of the reading is as follows:

- Begin with the Trisagion Prayers.
- Next, read your Kathisma for the day.
- At the end, say a *Lord have mercy* for each person in your group, and one for the entire parish community. In this way, the reading of the Psalter by our group, becomes a blessing for our entire St George community.

If you have any questions, please email Vas Oldziey at 20kathismas@gmail.com

Community Corner

St. George

community

support

Submitted by Traci Spencer

Past Volunteer Events:

The Lord's Diner On Sunday, October 18th, from 5:00-7:30 p.m., St. George and St. Mary parishioners served hot meals to people in need in our community.

Atischwin Institute Thank you for the donations made to Atischwin's sober living home. Two sofas, one loveseat, two chairs, and two pieces of décor were donated to a wonderful ministry in our community. Jane Vineyard very much appreciated the generosity!

Family Promise October 4-10th. St. Mary's Orthodox Church provided housing, meals, etc. for homeless families in the Family Promise program. St. George volunteers partnered with them. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of homeless families in our community.



HopeNet On October 19th, volunteers prepared a meal for one of HopeNet's Getting Ahead program. The Getting Ahead Program is a free 16-week course designed to help under resourced individuals or families investigate the barriers of poverty and build long term stability.

Bingo

On October 20th, our seniors enjoyed a wonderful meal, played BINGO, won prizes, and had wonderful fellowship!



Pando The Pando Initia-

Next Meeting
Tuesday, November 10th
12:00 noon at the Parish House.

We would love to have you join us!!

Please consider sharing your gifts and talents with our community. Contact Carrie Camden at camden9492@gmail.com for more information

tive provides Reality U; which is a 75 minute interactive simulation that students in USD 259 "step into life at 26 where they learn to work through a personalized monthly budget, and see how their everyday decisions shape their future". Volunteers from St. George helped with Mead Middle School, Coleman Middle School and North High School in the month of October.

Cash for Classrooms St. George was able to generously provide \$1,000 to four schools in our community: Anders Elementary, Anderson Elementary, Enterprise Elementary, and Wichita High School North. We were able to provide an increased amount due to the generosity of our parishioners' donations for 2025 Christmas Food Baskets. The annual support that we have continued to provide these schools has allowed St. George to partner with them in providing more support for the educational and social needs of the students in the Wichita community.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities:

The Lord's Diner Sunday, November 15th, 5:00-7:30 p.m. St. George and St. Mary parishioners will serve hot meals to people in need in our community. To volunteer, please contact Pat Milburn at patmilburn74@gmail.com.

DUI Red Ribbon Project In November, St. George volunteers will write the names of the victims of DUI on red ribbons to be placed on patrol cars during the holiday season; when drunk driving is more prevalent.

Christmas Food Baskets Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 19th, at 10:00 am in the St. George gym to participate in the 42nd year that our church community has served 100 families with food and presents for their children. Watch the bulletin for when you can adopt families to buy gifts for their children!

Juniper Arts Community support has made a contribution toward their 2026 Rooted and Rising Campaign. This campaign has several levels and will fund a full year of trauma-informed arts programming and instruction for youth in foster care, art supplies, and musical instruments, teaching art to youth in the juvenile justice system; as well as provide snacks for classrooms for a semester. To learn more, go to: www.juniperartsacademy.org

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Return Service Requested