First Note... from the President

We are coming to the conclusion of another productive year in the life of our federation...so many roads have been traveled and hopefully many more will be traversed in new directions. Our team of officers has worked diligently together to make this a very successful year.

First of all, our membership has increased both in Connecticut and Long Island. Our expansion will give us the opportunity to serve our church musicians with more and better programs. This past summer, we participated in the Clergy-Laity Congress under the direction of Leah Pappas, who did a superb job. As a group we raised ourselves to another level of achievement. I'm sure those of you who have participated have seen an improvement in your individual choirs. To sing praises to the Lord is our mission, but to make the praises so much more beautiful can only make our participation in the Liturgy more gratifying. This year our focus has been on the Hellenic Concert series under the direction of Costa Gajdjis, which was met with great enthusiasm by those attending. Participation has been mainly from Long Island. Hopefully, in the future, we can get greater participation from the whole Federation.

We hope that this year’s District Conference will be much larger than last year’s because of the participation of junior choirs and psalti. If we are able to draw these additional participants, it will go a long way to completing our greater mission of working with all the musicians of our Church.

Let us all make a great effort to attend this year’s conference in Port Jefferson. So far all the plans being made by choir director Ted Kastrinos and his community are excellent.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to serve all of you. It has been very rewarding to me personally to have the opportunity to meet and interact with all of you for the betterment of our Church music.

Harry Pappas, President
The Archdiocesan District Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians

proudly presents

CONFERENCE 2005

CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION

430 Sheep Pasture Road
Port Jefferson, NY
Conference & Rehearsals: Saturday, June 4
Divine Liturgy: Sunday, June 5
Conductor: Ted Kastrinos, Director,
Church of the Assumption

Archdiocesan District Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians

50 - 50 RAFFLE for the Scholarship Fund
First Prize………………………….$700
30 More Prizes Sharing……….$300

Only 1000 tickets to be sold—All tickets to be called.
DRAWING: June 4, 2005—Donation: $2.00
Contact your Choir Director for ticket purchases.
Need not be present to win.
MULTIPLE WINNING NUMBERS!

THE FEDERATION FOCUS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED BY THE
ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT FEDERATION OF GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSICIANS

Editor: Anna Dounelis
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The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy held at the Marriott Hotel on Sunday, July 25, 2004 was the beginning of the 37th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress in New York City. “A flawless performance of the choir that comprised more than 80 members of the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians under the direction of Leah Pappas, director of the Holy Trinity Choir in Hicksville, N.Y.” (from the Orthodox Observer 7/26/04) The choir members represented 30 church choirs, with the majority coming from the Archdiocesan District and New Jersey Metropolis. It also included representatives from California, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Texas. Accompanying the choir was Holy Trinity’s organist, Stacy Svolos.

A youth choir comprised of approximately 25 youngsters from Archangel Michael Church in Roslyn, NY, and directed by Georgia Kaufman, sang the communion hymn during the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. Their participation inspired all of us, and their angelic voices brought tears to our eyes and joy to our hearts.

By Leah Pappas, Holy Trinity Choir Director

“I was deeply honored last July to be chosen by my fellow choir directors to lead an eighty-member choir consisting of choir members representing thirty different Greek-Orthodox parishes throughout the country. Such choir chanted during the Hierarchical Liturgy at the Clergy-Laity Congress held last summer at the Marriott Hotel in New York City.

In preparation for this event, I had the privilege of meeting and rehearsing with five church musicians who shared my love for church music. I was most proud to conduct music, which was composed by my father Demetrios C. Pappas, who has inspired and guided me all my life. I was especially thrilled when members of the clergy commented that the music we sang was completely synchronized with their perspective of how Greek Orthodox composers should write for our church, referring that is, to the tonal qualities of the arrangements of liturgical music. In fact, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios declared, “As clergy, we appreciate this type of music.”

As I had been involved with the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Musicians since a young adult, I appreciated and cherished the opportunity given to me to lead the choir at the Clergy-Laity Congress. It was a most memorable experience!”
Sharing Our Hellenic Musical Heritage

The Archdiocesan District Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians is sponsoring two in a series of three concerts entitled “Great Musical Hits of Greece.” On Saturday, March 12, 2005, the first in the series, sponsored by the Hellenic Music Foundation, was held at the Stathakion Greek Cultural Center in Astoria, NY. The 2nd was held on Friday, May 13, 2005 in the Community Center of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Hicksville, NY and the 3rd will be held at the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church’s Community Center in Port Jefferson, Long Island on Saturday, June 11, 2005.

This program of popular songs and rebetika featured a choir of over 50 members from Greek Orthodox churches throughout Queens, Nassau and Suffolk counties on Long Island, with special performances by Grigoris Maninakis and vocalists Alexandra Skendrou, Katia Zallas and Constantine Gajdjis, who also conducted the choir. Costa is on the board of the Hellenic Music Foundation and is choir director at Saint Catherine Church in Astoria, NY. The concerts would not have been possible without Costa’s dedication, love and enthusiasm. He spent countless hours researching, preparing, arranging and harmonizing the music in part “for the enjoyment of choirs who love to sing and who are dedicated to promoting and perpetuating our Hellenic Musical Heritage.”

During the many months of rehearsals Costa was an inspiration to the choir members, and they appreciated his professionalism, humor and patience. The choir members are also to be congratulated for their cooperation and consistent attendance at rehearsals, and we thank Jerry Monias who brought the portable keyboard to each session. The concert in Hicksville was met with tremendous enthusiasm and many attendees stated that the concert brought back beautiful memories and that they had experienced “a trip down memory lane” hearing the beautiful songs they have loved to sing and dance to for so many years.

Clergy-Laity 2004: “In Their Own Words…”

“One Saturday we had a rehearsal in a giant ballroom that was being changed into a church. While we were practicing the hymns for the Divine Liturgy, big icons were being placed in the front where the altar was getting set up. There were hundreds and hundreds of chairs lined up everywhere. A very special thing happened when Archbishop Demetrios came in to the ballroom with his deacon and another priest. Archbishop Demetrios came over to talk to us!

The next day when we walked into the ballroom church, I was so excited to sing the liturgy with Archbishop Demetrios. When we started singing, I felt so proud of myself for being picked out of many choirs. I also felt proud when everyone looked at us in amazement. It was an honor to meet Archbishop Demetrios. I hope I get other opportunities like this to represent the Archangel Michael Church.”

By Crystal Anagnostopoulos, Byzantine Youth Choir, Archangel Michael

“It was an honor to be part of the liturgy on Sunday. When I first walked in, I was amazed about how many people were there. When I heard and saw the adult choir sing I thought we would never be able to rise to their standards. Since there were so many of them, their beautiful voices echoed in the large room. When we started singing, I felt so proud of myself for being picked out of many choirs. I also felt proud when everyone looked at us in amazement. It was an honor to meet Archbishop Demetrios. I hope I get other opportunities like this to represent the Archangel Michael Church.”

By Ioanna Baktidy, Byzantine Youth Choir, Archangel Michael

“Last summer, my sister and I were privileged in that we could participate in the Clergy-Laity Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with our church’s Byzantine Youth Choir. It was an awesome experience which began long before the actual liturgy as our choir met for practices every Wednesday under the kind and nurturing leadership of Mrs. Georgia Kaufman. On the 25th of July, we were excited as we arrived in New York City for the greatly anticipated service. The liturgy was held in the Grand Ballroom of the Marriott Marquis. The room and acoustics were magnificent; the voices of the choirs sounded as if they were heaven-sent.

The experience was additionally special because my sister was chosen to read the Communion Prayer for the congregation. We were honored to be a part of the liturgy in the presence of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios. It was truly uplifting, and we will always remember the experience.”

By Maryann Vlahos Byzanteen Choir Archangel Michael
Promoting the Choirs of the Future

by Georgia Kaufman

At the Archdiocesan District Federation Conference in June 2004, Georgia Kaufman (Youth Choir Director, Archangel Michael, Roslyn, NY) and Phoebe Leask (Choir Director, Holy Trinity, Bridgeport, CT) presented an interesting seminar entitled “Promoting the Choirs of the Future.” An informative presentation was delivered; followed by a stimulating dialogue between our Federation choir directors, choir members and psalti.

1. Youth and Teen Choirs preserve the rich musical heritage of the Orthodox faith.
2. Youth and Teen Choirs encourage the young people of our parishes to understand, appreciate and love the music of our beloved Orthodox Church.
3. Participation in Youth and Teen Choir fosters a strong bond to the Church.
4. Young people who experience the fullness of the Faith through participation in choir very often become future clergy and lay leaders.
5. The ethereal sounds of young voices enhance the spiritual atmosphere of the Divine Liturgy.
6. Membership in Youth and Teen Choir gives deeper meaning to their church membership.
7. Youth and Teen Choir teach unity, cooperation, and personal responsibility and encourage Christian character.
8. Youth and Teen members will replace our retiring choir members, psalti and conductors.

Christ Has Risen!

A Poem by Vassos Petrikis, Holy Trinity Choir, Hicksville, NY

“Christ has Risen!” said the angel to the myrrh bearing women. The tomb was empty. “He has risen!” the myrrh bearing women whisper with fear. Christ has Risen! The message came to His disciples. Truly He has Risen! All the fears were gone… No more darkness. Great joy in all the hearts. Christ has Risen! Thousands of years have passed The message travels again… To the living and the dead, To the seas and the mainland, To the fields and the mountains, To the wild flowers of the earth. Happy to celebrate The great joy of His Resurrection. Christ has Risen! Sings the sweet sound of the bells in every church. In the cities and in the country Thousands of lips proclaim Christ has Risen! One Sunday in spring and with joy they embrace on another. Christ has Risen! Today again… The joy of His Resurrection is in our hearts. Let this joy stay with us. Let us hold it close to our hearts. Let this joy be the inexhaustible fountain that will fill our lives With love and beauty.
CHOIR KEY NOTES

HOLY TRINITY, HICKSVILLE, NY
LEAH PAPPAS, CHOIR DIRECTOR

Christos Anesti to all, and warm greetings from Holy Trinity Hicksville! Our choir members just finished a busy Easter holiday season and are looking forward to upcoming services and events, including the Archdiocesan District Federation Conference in June. We anticipate good attendance from our members.

This year our choir has been actively involved in a number of projects. We were especially pleased that our choir director was chosen to direct the choir during the Hierarchical Liturgy at the Clergy-Laity Conference in NYC. Many of our choir members participated, and it was a deeply moving experience for us all.

Our choir enjoys getting together to socialize. During the Christmas season, our choir members, some with spouses, celebrated the holiday with a dinner at a local Mediterranean restaurant. After a delicious dinner, Leah played Christmas and Greek songs on the keyboard to the accompaniment of guitars and accordion, and we all sang along. On Sunday, April 3rd, a number of us, with our families, attended a wonderful performance of the musical, “Footloose” at Tony Georgian’s theatre “The Stage” in Merrick, and everyone had a great time!

In recent months, members of our choir, along with representatives from choirs throughout Queens and Long Island have spent many months rehearsing for a series of concerts, “Great Musical Hits of Greece.” We were excited to have the second successful concert in the series on Friday, May 13 in Hicksville.

During this year, our choir has had much for which they are thankful… Choir member Emanuel Papadakis recently celebrated his 80th birthday. Organist and junior choir director Stacy Svolos and choir member Niki Kalaitzis each gave birth to a son; Niki also moved into a beautiful new home. Some choir members became yiayias for the 1st, 2nd and 4th time: Terri Macris has a new grandson, William Christopher Balitsos; Anna Dounelis has a new grandson, Jason Anthony Bartolomeo; and Elizabeth Zannikos had a granddaughter, Elizabeth Zannikos (no, it’s not a typo). Congratulations to Leah Pappas’ son Constantine for his acceptance to The Bronx High School of Science and to Jerry Monias’ daughter Cindy upon her successful graduation from Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY. Two choir members will soon be married: Despina Zannikos in June and Christina Kapareliotis in July. Christina, who served as assistant choir director and junior choir director for 4 years, has been away in Greece for a year, and we all look forward to welcoming her back home this summer. Submitted by Anna Dounelis

ST. PARASKEVI, GREENLAWN, NY
MICHAEL PAPANTONIOU, CHOIR DIRECTOR

Haroumeni Aniksi! Happy Spring from all of us at St. Paraskevi to all of you! The happy sounds of spring are back, echoing the happy sounds of Hellenic voices heard joyously around the world from the church choirs here to the chorus of voices past echoing the success of the Olympics.

St. Paraskevi choir members have definitely been seen or heard, continuously exchanging greetings, catching up, participating in conferences and concerts, and always anticipating future events. We were very proud of the fact that our choir had one of the best representations at last June’s Federation Conference in Danbury, Connecticut, for which our Director, Mike Papantoniou, went on to serve as one of the delegates from our district to the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians.

Our very busy summer continued with a special rehearsal in preparation for Sunday, August 1st, 2004, the day when our parish welcomed our new parish priest to our community. Many thanks to visiting choir members Demetrios and Nick Pappas, Leah Pappas, Marcelle Wheeler, Kon Kontos, Jerry Monias, and Costa and Helga Gajdjis, who lent us their beautiful voices so that our participation in the Divine Liturgy was truly inspirational and an especially memorable welcome to Fr. Dimitrios Moraitis, Presbytera, and their family.

Saturday, November 6th, 2004 found us at St. Paraskevi bright and early, preparing to host the Archdiocesan District Federation meeting, where everyone was welcomed by Fr. Dimitrios and given his blessings and prayers, for a day which turned out to be interesting and productive.

December continued to be busy and productive with choir rehearsals preparing for Christmas services, our annual caroling at Huntington Hospital and an area nursing home, and the secular concert to be held jointly with the Hellenic Music Foundation.

Sunday, February 13th, turned out to be extra-special for our choir. Much to our surprise, Director Mike Papantoniou and former parish president Chris Theodorakis, were unexpectedly honored for their hard work and support. Fr. Dimitrios and new parish president Terri Addamo extended their thanks and appreciation on behalf of our community. Of course, the entire choir was delighted and proud!

March brought the unexpected visit of former parishioner Fr. Philip Zymaris. Fr. Philip, formerly known to us as Ray, remembered his years as a St. Paraskevi choir member. Fr. Philip fondly recounted his memories of his years in the
CHOIR KEY NOTES

choir and credited that experience as being “good training” for his future endeavors. We wished him the best in his new path as a professor of Liturgics at the Holy Cross Seminary starting in September.

We were saddened to since learn of the deaths of Presbytera Eliades, Fr. Philip’s mother, Angelique, and Archbishop Iakovos. May their memories be eternal!

We are now busily preparing for Easter and looking forward to June when the annual Federation Conference will be held in Pt. Jefferson, L.I. We hope that the harmonious melodies of the psalms and hymns bring you peace. Christos Anesti! Stay well and see you soon!

Submitted by Fay Pavlidis

ASSUMPTION CHURCH IN DANBURY, CT
Anne Ktorides, Choir Director

Greetings from Assumption Church in Danbury! On behalf of the whole Assumption Church ‘Family’, I want to thank everyone who participated in the 2004 Conference at Assumption in Danbury for making it such an enjoyable and memorable event. Meeting so many new friends and discussing aspects of education and growth for the future of the Orthodox Church and its youth provided a sense of foundation and purpose to all. And the Liturgy on Sunday morning was the culmination of many hours devoted to a common goal. The sharing of Faith and Community as we sang together in God’s name was truly a wonderful experience.

Many of the choir members from Assumption shared that feeling again as we participated in the Clergy-Laity Conference in New York City. Traveling to the Big Apple and seeing the accommodations was very exciting, but meeting so many other Orthodox musicians from around the country and cooperating together to make such a joyful noise praising our Lord was the highlight of our choir year...But it was not the last time we would use all the music and knowledge that we had gained during the hours of practices that we had attended in preparation for this event.

In December, the choir sponsored a Christmas concert by a group from Boston. Our choir sang an opening hymn, Christ is Born, and closed with Silent Night and O Holy Night.

During winter the choir began rehearsing for Great Lent. During Lent we sang the Akathastis Service every Friday. Then, during Holy Week, we sang the service on Holy Tuesday. Many people attend just to hear us sing the Troparion of Kassiani.

This year we introduced a new Cherubic Hymn on Palm Sunday by Chris Zervos which uses a great mix of Greek and English followed by a new arrangement of Defte Lavete Fos by Father John Paul at our Easter Service.

As a final note, our membership increased by ten percent this year. All this plus wonderful reviews by those who watch and listen to us on the World Wide Web.

CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION, PORT JEFFERSON, NY
Ted Kastrinos, Choir Director

Choir Director Ted Kastrinos, organist Karen Spanos and members of the Assumption Church Choir are all pleased to announce that they will be hosting the 2005 Annual Archdiocesan District Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians Conference here in our parish on the weekend of June 4th and 5th. An annual event since its inception in 1984, the Conference will include choirs from all over Long Island and Connecticut.

The Conference will begin on Saturday, June 4th with registration and breakfast, followed by a rigorous morning of rehearsals. Lunch in our Community Center will be followed by a special workshop featuring a guest musical facilitator and more rehearsals. The day will culminate in a Vesper Service and Artoeasia, followed by a social for all of the conference members.

On Sunday, June 5th, all of the participating choirs (numbering somewhere between 60 to 90 members) will raise their voices in song and praise as they all partake in the Divine Liturgy here in the Church of the Assumption. Dressed in the choir robes of their own parishes, all of the participants will be singing some of the most beautiful Byzantine hymns ever composed. A Mnemosino for deceased choir members will end the Liturgy.

Please put Sunday, June 5th on your calendar and join us for the Divine Liturgy. It will be an experience you will not soon forget. And then after the service, come and meet the participating choirs in the Community Center for a very special coffee hour.

ST. BARBARA, ORANGE, CT
Harry Pappas, Choir Director

This past year our choir has been very active. On Labor Day weekend, as is done annually, the choir participated in the Church Festival by giving concerts on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. As usual, the public response was enthusiastic.

In December, the choir sponsored a Christmas concert by a group from Boston. Our choir sang an opening hymn, Christ is Born, and closed with Silent Night and O Holy Night.

During winter the choir began rehearsing for Great Lent. During Lent we sang the Akathastis Service every Friday. Then, during Holy Week, we sang the service on Holy Tuesday. Many people attend just to hear us sing the Troparion of Kassiani.

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YOUTH CHOIRS

HOLY TRINITY, HICKSVILLE, NY
Stacey Svolos, Junior Choir Director

Holy Trinity’s junior choir had a successful holiday season, practicing for and performing in the Christmas 2004 play, “In the Manger at Bethlehem.” In addition, in January the children sang the Kalandra ton Foton and chanted the Divine Liturgy for the celebration of the Greek Letters and the three hierarchs. Since then, the children have been practicing and preparing for the liturgy of Saturday of Lazarus and the afternoon service of Good Friday, in which we will be chanting “Η Ζωή Εν Ταφώ.”

Several children have performed “Aspíle” during the Heretismi services. After celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord, the children will then focus on their performance for graduation, which will be in June.

Reflecting on this year, the junior choir has exceeded expectations. They have learned new songs, performed beautifully during services, and continue to illustrate passion for the Greek Orthodox religion. It’s hard to believe the year is coming to an end, but I look forward to their continued growth over the next few months.

ASSUMPTION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, DANBURY, CT
Therese Papadopoulos, Youth Choir Director

The Youth Choir is completing its second successful year this summer with 13 girls and growing! We practice and sing at least twice a month, and we sang after Easter on Mother’s Day May 8th as we traditionally do for our dear mothers. On May 15 we sang at the end of the year pizza party for all members, and we will resume once again in the Fall. For Christmas Eve Vespers we will sing traditional Christmas songs as we have for the past 2 years. We plan on recruiting more students next year as well as some male voices!

ARCHANGEL MICHAEL, ROSLYN, NY
Georgia Kaufman, Youth Choir Director

Byzantine Youth Choir & ByzantTeen Choir 2005

During a recent choir rehearsal a young choir member made this gratifying request: “Oh, please, please can we sing Eis Agios before we go home?” Unquestionably, when our youth experience the fullness of our faith through participation in choir they grow to love the hymns, which in turn fosters the preservation of the music of our beloved Orthodox church. It is truly a blessing to hear the angelic voices of our children singing the “ancient treasures of our faith.”

The Archangel Michael Byzantine Youth Choir would like to welcome three new and enthusiastic members: Elpida Despotis, Jennifer Schild and Yelena Zangas. We now have 24 Byzantine Youth Choir members (ages 9-12) and 27 ByzantTeen Choir members (ages 13-18). They are an amazing group of 51 devoted singers!

Every Sunday, the Youth and Teen Choirs alternate singing the Divine Liturgy at the first service. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the support of the parents of our youth and teen choir members. Today our young people participate in numerous extracurricular activities; therefore, parental guidance plays an important role in instilling the importance of commitment to Choir.

Thank you parents for faithfully bringing your children to our weekly Wednesday rehearsals and to the early session on Sunday mornings to sing the Divine Liturgy.

At the Archangel Michael Church, it has become a tradition for the Byzantine Youth Choir and ByzantTeen Choir to sing the Heretismi Service on the fourth Friday of Lent. We studied and reviewed the treasured music of the Akathist Hymn during rehearsals with our dedicated organists Kris and Eleni Rodopoulos Kaufman. On Friday evening April 8, 2005, we sang the poetic passages in praise of our Most Holy Theotokos at the Heretismi.

Service with our spiritual leaders Father Dennis Strouzas and Father Sean Govostes and our gifted Psalti Andreas Modinos. A special thank you to my dear friends Maria Felix, Eleni Makris, Irene Mallis and Yianna Manikas for their help. Three outstanding teen choir members, Katerina Skiadas, Ariadne Tzoumas and Maryann Vlahos melodiously chanted the Aspíle. The ethereal sounds of the voices of the choir singing the poignant melodies of Τη Περμακο and Τη Ορεοτίτα created a spiritually uplifting mood.

After liturgy on March 6, 2005 we boarded the bus to go on our Annual Choir Musical Theatre Trip. Fortunately, the weather was bright and sunny for our cheery group of sixty-four - choir members, parent chaperones and friends. We all had an exciting lunch at Mars 2112 Restaurant on Broadway and 51st and then walked to 52nd and Broadway to see an astonishing production of “Little Women,” based on the Louisa May Alcott classic novel about the four March Family sisters. Simultaneously, the Teen Choir was across the street watching an uproarious production of “Hair Spray,” which they thoroughly enjoyed. Getting the autographs of the starring actors and actresses at the Stage Doors was the culmination of a wonderful day together.

Our annual Choir Pool Party is set for Saturday, June 18th at the home of our choir director, Miss Georgia. Everyone is looking forward to an afternoon filled with friendship and fun!

We are honored that His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios will be joining our community in celebration of the Divine Liturgy and Ground Breaking Ceremony on September 25th, 2005. The new home for the Archangel Michael Church family will be in Port Washington, a short distance from our current Roslyn location. For this momentous occasion, our Youth and Teen Choirs are already practicing the hymns for the Hierarchical Liturgy.

In the Fall, we will once again be visiting St. Michael’s Home for the Aged in Yonkers and singing the Divine Liturgy with His Grace Bishop Andoniou. In addition, on October 16, 2005, we have been invited to sing the liturgy with Father Jim Kordaris, Director of the Department of Outreach & Evangelism at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and Presbyter at St. George Tropeoforos on West 54th Street in New York City.

MAY GOD BLESS OUR ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT YOUTH CHOIRS WHO HOLD THE KEY TO THE FUTURE OF OUR MAGNIFICENT HYMNODY.
CONGRATULATIONS Roslyn Youth Choirs... For fourteen years Archangel Michael Greek Orthodox Church in Roslyn, NY has sponsored a monthly Challenge Liturgy Program that brings spiritual fulfillment to challenged individuals and their families. During the 2004 Christmas season Roslyn’s Byzantine Teen and Byzantine Youth Choirs participated in the Challenge Liturgy group’s annual holiday festivities. The choirs sang at the Divine Liturgy and performed a variety of carols at the Christmas party. The following is a quote from a grateful and appreciative family: “The angelic voices of your choir enhanced the solemnity of the Divine Liturgy and your wonderful Christmas caroling at the party created and promoted the festive spirit of the occasion. The fun-filled and loving afternoon that your participation helped make possible will long be remembered by our members and their families.”

CONGRATULATIONS 2004 ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT FEDERATION SCHOLARSHIP AWARD WINNERS...

Christina Lipinski and Chrisovalantou Makris

Music Scholarship award winners are chosen on the basis of test scores, academic records, leadership, dedication to church ideals and significant church music accomplishments or promise. The 2004 Scholarship recipients, Christina Lipinski and Chrisovalantou (Chrissy) Makris, both of Archangel Michael parish in Roslyn, NY were recognized for their exceptional love and commitment to the Orthodox faith and its music. Each is a valued member of their parish, an excellent student and dedicated musician. Christina serves as an organist and Chrissy as a choir member.

Our congratulations and best wishes to Christina and Chrissy!

Christina Lipinski has studied piano for nine years and attended NYSSMA twice where she received Outstanding and Excellent Scores. A 2004 graduate of New Hyde Park Memorial High School where she was a member of her school’s Concert Choir as well as the Chamber Singers, Christina is currently attending New York University in Manhattan studying philosophy with a music minor. Her devotion to choir is outstanding, and she has often played two liturgies each Sunday as well as for the Challenge Liturgy. Her Roslyn choir director, Georgia Kaufman stated that Christina is “the embodiment of everything we hope to find in our youth today - an excellent and committed student, a talented musician and a caring human being with impeccable values. Her dedication and devotion to the musical aspect of our community’s worship services is highly commendable. She is punctual, attentive and considerate in her responsibilities and always willing to unselfishly share her time and talent.”

Chrissy Makris stated that she has “loved to sing and has been a part of some musical ensemble since the first grade.” She has taken voice lessons, and plays the piano, trumpet and guitar. While a student at Oyster Bay High School, she received the highest ratings at NYSSMA and performed for All-County. Chrissy is completing her freshman year at Stony Brook University where she is a psychology major with a minor in music. She has been an active member of Archangel Michael’s Byzantine Youth Choir for over four years, and Georgia Kaufman, her choir director, commented that Chrissy is “a reliable and conscientious choir member who extends herself above and beyond all expectations. She has consistently displayed leadership qualities within the Archangel Michael community, has attentively studied Byzantine hymnology, is fluent in Greek and possesses a beautiful alto voice. The hymns of the Greek Orthodox faith are an important part of Chrissy’s life; and, it is evident she will strengthen the future of the Byzantine Choir.”
MusIC ed Corner

Byzantine Music

By John Saragias, Protopsaltis, Holy Trinity, Hicksville, NY

The music of the Orthodox Church is called Byzantine due to the fact that it was cultivated and developed in the city of Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire. Byzantine Music is a continuation of the ancient Greek music, thus inheriting all the technical and rhythmic elements of the ancient music such as scales, rhythm, genders, system, sounds, etc.

For a century, under the sacred domes of St. Sophia, Emperors, Patriarchs, and talented and gifted cantors who excelled in harmony chanted Byzantine music. It was after Constantine the Great had recognized Christianity as the official religion of Byzantium that Byzantine Music began to evolve.

The initial formulation of music theory was laid out by the great Greek philosophers, mathematicians and musicians, including Pythagoras (500 BC), Plato (347 BC), Aristotle (321 BC), the theoretical Aristoxenos Tarandinos (300 BC), Eucleidis the mathematician (270 BC). The developmental journey of Byzantine music is divided into three periods: The Ancient Period (1-700 AD), the Medieval Period (700-1453), and the newest period (1453-1730). That means from the fall of Constantinople until the time of Petros Labdariou, and the new musical writing of Chrysanthou Hourmouziou and Gregorios Protoptsalou (1730-1814).

Byzantine music is the rich garment of the superb poetic texts of our church. It was Byzantine music that inspired religious poets such as Romanos, Damaskynos, Kosmas Anatolios, Kassiani and Stoudite to write literary masterpieces.

Our goal is to teach the Byzantine Music to the best of our ability to the next generation; so our parishes will be blessed with educated cantors that will frame the bookstands of our churches. I wish and hope that God will enlighten and guide us so we can perpetuate our Byzantine Music to the next generation.

John Saragias teaches Byzantine chant to young men free of charge and currently has four students. At the Pan-Orthodox Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers Service on Sunday, March 20, 2005 at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Merrick, NY, the Byzantine Hymns of the service were chanted by members of the Byzantine Choir under the direction of John Saragias. Joining him and the other psaltis was James Tsimis, one of his students, also of Holy Trinity.

FYI...

The Greek Sacred & Secular Music Society announced the release on compact disc of “Treasure of Byzantine Music.” The Byzantine Chorale, under the direction of the late Frank Desby, first recorded this album in 1953. The CD booklet contains historical information on the music as well as translations of the hymn texts. Price of this new CD is $15.00 + $4.00 Shipping & Handling = $19.00. To order, send check to: The Greek Sacred & Secular Music Society, 2020 South Western Avenue #6, San Pedro, Ca 90732

28th Annual Meeting of the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians

The 28th Annual Meeting of the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians was held in New York City in July 2004. Delegates, Forum members, and visitors from each of the eight Metropolises participated in a productive and information-packed meeting. Led by Dr. Vicki Pappas, National Chairman of the Forum, the delegates reviewed a host of Forum projects and set directions for the coming year. The delegates from our federation were Konstantin Kontos, Catherine Zarbis, Georgia Kaufman and Harry Pappas.

National Forum members also joined the members of the choir of the Archdiocesan District to sing at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. At the Opening Ceremony of the Congress, National Forum members sang the Doxology and presented the national anthems under the direction of Harry Pappas, Archdiocesan District Federation President and choir director at St. Barbara in Orange, CT.

A CHILD’S VOICE A mother took her three-year-old daughter to the midnight Easter service for the first time. The church lights were lowered, and then the choir came down the aisle, carrying lighted candles. All was quiet until the little girl started to sing in a loud voice, “Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you…”

Musician’s Prayer

Divine Composer,
I start this day on a joyful note, thanking You for all the blessings You have orchestrated in my life. Help me to live in harmony with others throughout the day. May I be Your instrument, in concert with Your will and in tune with Your way… Trusting I always have You as my accompaniment. And at day’s end, may I know that I have played my part to put a song in every heart. Amen

Church Music E-Mail List

Attention Church Musicians: You may wish to be part of the National Forum’s CHURCH MUSIC email list! Receive news about church music and other Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan news that may be of interest to you as a church musician.

This list is a broadcast only distribution list, so it doesn’t overload you with messages! You’ll only receive about 1-2 messages a week. Nearly 600 church musicians and clergy from across the Archdiocese are already part of the list.

If you would like to be added to the list, simply email Vicki Pappas at pappas@indiana.edu. Include your name, preferred email address, church, and any other contact information you’d like.

ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS

We acknowledge with deep sadness the passing of Archbishop Iakovos, the spiritual leader of Greek Orthodox Christians in the Western Hemisphere from 1959 to 1996. May his memory be eternal!
You must every one of you join in a choir...so you may sing in harmony...with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father, so that He may hear you and through your good deeds recognize that you are parts of His Son.

St. Ignatius

Those who chant in the churches should refrain from forcing their nature to yell, but also from saying anything else that is unsuitable for the church.

Canon LXXV of the Sixth Ecumenical Synod

Psalmody—bringing about choral singing, a bond, as it were, toward unity, and joining people into a harmonious union of one choir—produces also the greatest of blessings: love.

St. Basil

When you worship God with hymns, you should be worshipping Him with your entire being; your voice should sing, your heart should also sing; and your life should also sing. Everything should sing!

Augustine Enarrat

A religious hymn is a great blessing for everyone. It constitutes praise to the Most High, honor for His holy people, worldwide harmony, an eloquent proof of the Church’s unity. It expresses the voice of the Church, its confession. It brings about a complete spiritual uplifting and absolute peace and joy in redeemed hearts, with the triumphal hymn and song of happiness. It drives away hardness of heart. It chases away disturbance. It dissolves and dissipates despondency...The voice sings the soul’s joy, while the spirit delves into the mysteries of the faith.

St. Ambrose of Milan

And even if you do not understand the meaning of the words, for the time being teach your mouth to say them, for the tongue is sanctified by the words alone whenever it says them with good will.

St. John Chrysostom

Bis orat qui cantat. He who chants prays twice.

Ancient Proverb
GREAT MUSICAL HITS OF GREECE
a program of popular songs & rebetika

Saturday, June 11, 2005
7:30 pm
Greek Orthodox Church of the Assumption,
Community Center
430 Sheep Pasture Road
Port Jefferson, NY

Join us for a trip down memory lane!

http://archdistrict.churchmusic.goarch.org/