

# THE Message



SAINT  
MARK

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SEPT – OCT 2018



**Congrats Assimo for the  
AGAPE Award!** PAGE 3



## SAINT MARK GOYA GOES CAMPING



**First Fruits: Saint Mark &  
Project Mexico** PAGE 4



During the last week in June, the Saint Mark Family made its annual trip to Saint Stephen's Camp at the Diakonia Retreat Center in South Carolina. Nearly 30 GOYANs together with half a dozen adult staff members joined Fr. Mark and Fr. Steven in attending the first session of the metropolis camp program.

There they spent an unforgettable week making new friends and reconnecting with God. Without a doubt, these families are now returning to Saint Mark having been transformed by God's Grace, and this incredible camping ministry!

[More Summer Camp Coverage on the Back Page](#)

## HALL RENOVATIONS COMPLETED



During the end of July and early few weeks of August our Fellowship Hall underwent some much-needed renovations. These improvements were not only for cosmetic reasons, but also for critical improvements in the functionality of our hall and classroom spaces. We are so thankful for our amazing team who worked so hard in completing this project in such a quick turnaround, and for our Philoptochos Society for all their efforts in conducting Coffee Hour outside during those summer weekends!



The Message is an in-print outreach to the Orthodox Christian community of Boca Raton and the greater South Florida region. This publication aims to inform, edify and serve as a witness to its readers of the Truth of Jesus Christ as confirmed in the Holy Gospel.

The Message is a ministry of:



**Saint Mark**  
Greek Orthodox Church

**Clergy:**

Rev. Fr. Mark Leondis, Pastor  
Rev. Fr. Steven Klund, Associate  
Rev. Fr. Alexander Leondis,  
Protopresbyter  
Rev. Dn. John Christakis, MD  
Rev. Dn. Bryan Giusti

**Office Staff:**

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Kalle Andromidas

**Parish Council:** Girard Mitchell

**Philoptochos:** Niki Core

**Choir:** Virginia Barnes

**Chanters:** Art Poly, Ramona  
Bean, George Demopoulos

**Ushers:** Tim Sharp

**Acolytes:**

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& Constantine Mukasa

**Church School:**

Helen Lang & Julie Vagelos

**JOY:** Despina Hantzaridis, Vivian  
Lazaridis, Erin & Rick Kontos

**GOYA:** Dominique Cultrera, Elaine  
Cotronakis, Lynn & Costa Athan, An-  
gela & Girard Mitchell, Jim & Claudia  
Dovas, Nicole Pelekanos

**Seniors:** Diane Paterakis

**Syrtaki:**

Jenny Saiger & Tasia Christakis

**Greek School:** Anna Kaisar

**Bookstore:** Yvette Koutsoupis,  
Barbara Tasiounes, Stella Pores

**Welcome:** Elaine Zographus

**Readers:** Ted Vagelos

**The Message:** Fr. Steven Klund

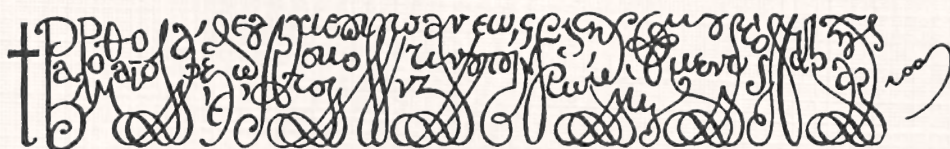
**Live Streaming:**

Ted Vagelos & Nick Csakany

**Audio:** Tom Spiliopoulos



**D**uring the week of July 1-5, 2018, The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America held the 44th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress in Boston, MA. It was at this national conference where our own Fr. Mark was elected to serve as President of the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council, a national brotherhood of Orthodox clergy who gather to promote spiritual growth, educational development and personal wellness through retreats, outreach and benevolence programs. This is truly a great honor, not only for Fr. Mark but our entire Saint Mark Family! As evidence of the significance of this high office, included below is a congratulatory letter from His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in light of this summer's election.



To the Rev. Protopresbyter Mark A. Leondis, President of the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, our beloved in the Lord: Grace be unto you and peace from God.

It is with sentiments of paternal joy that we communicate with you having learned of your recent unanimous election as President of the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council. We express to you our wholehearted commendation for realizing this significant honor in your priestly ministry—which, of course, is a result of the faithfulness and dedication with which you have served our beloved Eparchy in America—and we offer our heartfelt best wishes for a spiritually prosperous and fruitful tenure.

We are truly delighted to see you follow in the exemplary and visionary footsteps of your dear and esteemed father, and it must certainly be a special honor to be the first father and son who have served the APC in the same capacity. We exhort you to continue the proud and sacred legacy that you have now inherited—one that your father and all your predecessors have each dynamically enriched during their respective Presidencies—and to faithfully undertake your newfound responsibilities with a vigorous spirit and great zeal for the spiritual enhancement, enlightenment and wellbeing of your clergy brothers. It is our fervent prayer that you may always remain steadfast in your service to the Lord and be a shining beacon of Truth, which, as the saintly golden-mouthed John writes, *blazes like a light and illumines the entire oikoumene.*

Beseeking our Heavenly Master to bestow upon you the necessary strength and illumination to fulfill your new duties, we convey to you our Patriarchal blessings and remain with much love and honor.

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the twenty-fourth of July, 2018

Your fervent supplicant before God,

✠ BARTHOLOMEW  
Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome  
and Ecumenical Patriarch

PASTORAL MESSAGE  
*Rev. Fr. Mark Leondis*



My dear Saint Mark Family,

What an outstanding few months at Saint Mark! We have been busy connecting our faithful to Christ on so many levels, and I am so proud of the great work and ministry offered to our faithful. The ministry, outreach and educational opportunities are profoundly imperative on our walk toward Salvation.

Following Easter, Saint Mark teamed up with Philoptochos, the AHEPA and DOP, and made over 20,000 meals for families in need in South Florida. In May, we graduated almost 20 young people from our Sunday Church School, and gave them a beautiful "send off."

In June, we sent a busload of our teenagers to the Diakonia Retreat Center in South Carolina for our Saint Stephen's Summer Camp, and focused on the theme of the "Fruit of the Spirit." A few days later, PC President Girard Mitchell, Archon John Koutsoupis, PC Member Ted Vagelos, along with Philoptochos President Niki Core, traveled to Boston for the Bi-Annual Clergy Laity and Philoptochos Conference. A highlight was our very own Assimo Kitsos receiving the AGAPE Award from our National Philoptochos.

In mid-July, Presbytera Anastasia and I led a group of GOYAns to Tijuana, Mexico, where we built a home for a family in need. And as we were celebrating the "15 days of August," we hosted a homeless family with Family Promise, and offered the love of Christ to those who are suffering.

This issue of the Message will offer you a glimpse into the past few months at Saint Mark. As our ministries and organizations are gearing up for another year of spiritual growth, let us look for ways that we can join in and become more active in our Faith.

Praying for a blessed Ecclesiastical Year,

Father Mark



## 2018 SAINT MARK MINISTRY REGISTRATION

The new ecclesiastical year is just around the corner, which means that soon all of our ministries will be in full force once again. We anticipate another loaded calendar with tons of exciting events. To prepare for it, we are holding registration for all of our ministries in the Fellowship Hall after Liturgy during the four Sundays between August 19 and September 9. In the Hall you will find tables set up with banners, information, and registration forms for the various ministries we offer.

Please be advised that our Saint Mark ministries are reserved for our families who are in good standing with their stewardship. For those who are not in good standing, there will be a table set up at the entrance to the Fellowship Hall where you will be able to renew your stewardship pledges for the upcoming year.

We are confident that 2018-2019 will be another incredible year filled with spiritual growth, service, fellowship and lots of fun. We invite you to join us, and experience all that the Saint Mark family has to offer!



# PROJECT

# MEXICO



In an early morning in July before sunrise, we gathered at Palm Beach International Airport with a group of young people ready to fully offer themselves in an intense week of missions with the organization Project Mexico.

The team members were: Eleni Gibson, Alex Leondis, Juliana Leondis, Stefanos Mitchell, Alexia Pelekanos, Jojo Pores, and Christo Skoundridakis, led by Father Mark and Presbyteria Anastasia.

We travelled 12 hours to our destination, the Saint Innocent Orphanage in Tijuana, Mexico. Upon arriving, many emotions were going through our minds. But our mission was clear: build a home for a family in need; grow closer to Christ; spend quality time with the other faithful (the largest group of the summer with 130 teenagers and advisors).

After setting up our tents and getting settled, we gathered in the outdoor chapel for evening prayers and orientation, led by the Project Mexico Staff. We were broken up into teams (Saint Mark and Saint Philip Church from Canada) and began a life-changing week. We learned about Saint Innocent, his life and mission in America, about the boys at the Orphanage, the family we would be building a home for and the “nuts and bolts” of building a home in one week. We went to bed early to begin our work before the sun would be up.

**DAY ONE:** We cleared rocks and debris and laid the foundation with concrete that we mixed by hand! By the time we left the worksite, smooth concrete was beginning to harden and by the next morning we would be ready to begin construction of the walls.



**DAY TWO:** We framed the walls and connected them together. The house was beginning to take form. We put chicken wire around the entire home and placed plywood on the roof with screws.

**DAY THREE:** We placed 2 coats of stucco on the entire home and continued to finalize the roofing.

**DAY FOUR:** We rested with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in Spanish, played basketball and board games, and spent a few hours at the beach.

**DAY FIVE:** We arrived early, laid shingles on the roof and painted the entire house (two coats). After cleaning the entire area, we prepared for the highlight of the week.

Fr. Nicholas Andruchow, the Director of the Orphanage and Project Mexico, together with Fr. Mark, did a “Blessing of the Waters” Service with the family. We blessed the home, presented them with gifts and the Saint Mark of Boca Icon, which now hangs in their home.

While it was a difficult week for our “worldly cares” (sleeping in tents, sharing a bathhouse with 130 others, cold showers, frijoles [beans] at every meal, etc.), it was truly one of the most moving and rewarding experiences of our lives. Now, as we look to the icon of Saint Innocent in our beautiful Saint Mark sanctuary (directly to the right of the Icon screen), we will have the opportunity to be reminded of the great work being done in Mexico in Christ’s name, and ask Saint Innocent to intercede to Christ for us all.

It was truly amazing to see these young people offer their best to God, put aside their earthly cares, and spend a week doing something for someone else. Truly a gift from God!

We thank the Saint Mark Family for their generous donations to make this trip possible. We also thank our Saint Mark Philotochos who sponsored our transportation and for the DOP who made a generous donation.



## QUOTES FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLE:

### ELENI GIBSON

"I think that it was really amazing to be able to see how excited and overjoyed the family was during and after the construction of their house."

### ALEX LEONDIS

"It was awesome to build a home for this family. It was a great opportunity to see God in all people, regardless of their nationality, social class or economic status."

### JULIANA LEONDIS

"This was a truly inspiring and powerful experience; giving of ourselves for those less fortunate. One week given affects them forever!"

### STEFANOS MITCHELL

"I feel good about helping a family have a home for the first time."

### ALEXIA PELEKANOS

"A truly amazing experience. It made me so incredibly thankful for all that I have and for my life. I will always have a special place in my heart for the beautiful family we built a home for."

### JOJO PORES

"The camaraderie of all the churches coming together to complete a house that will change someone's life forever is something I will never forget."

### CHRISTO SKOUNDRIDAKIS

"As I just arrived, I was rethinking my decision to leave my home and comfort, travel miles away to another country. When the week was coming to an end, I was actually hoping it could've lasted longer because it turned out to be the greatest experience of my life."

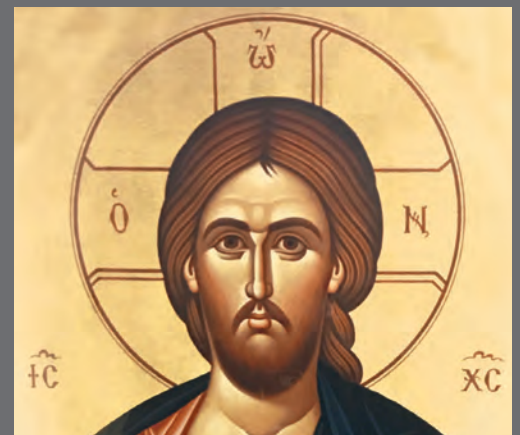


## "YOU IN ME"

There is a story about a certain monk who knocked on the door of heaven seeking entrance. A voice asked "Who are you?" The monk replied "It is I." The door did not open. After many years, he tried again. As he knocked, the same voice asked "Who are you?" "It is I" replied the monk. Again, the door remained shut. Finally, he went back. This time he was much older and far wiser as a Christian. When the voice asked "Who are you?" the monk replied, "You in me," whereupon the voice replied "Enter my Son."

What is a Christian? Many answers can be given. He is a person who acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God. He patterns his life after the teachings of Jesus. He has been baptized. He belongs to the Church. He loves his enemies and prays for those who persecute him. He receives the sacraments. He worships every Sunday. He has committed his life to Jesus as God and many more answers.

All these definitions are good, but they are not complete because they have left out the single most important thing about the true Christian: he is one in whom Christ lives. You in me. Saint Paul expressed this when he said, "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me." The Lord Jesus expressed it when He said, "I am the Vine. You are the branches. He who lives in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood lives in Me and I in him." (John 6:56)



# CONGRATS TO

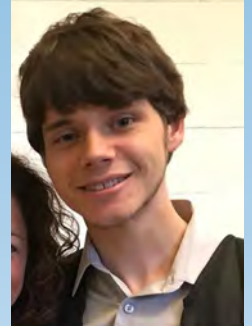
## VICTORIA ABRAMS

Victoria graduated from Boca High School and is attending NYU in New York City this fall. She is majoring in Liberal Studies. At school, Victoria was the Founder/President of the feminist club, Webmaster of the Key Club and she was the Vice President of Geo-Political Club and Psychology Honors Society. Her favorite memory of Saint Mark is going with the GOYANS to the beach and having a bonfire while eating s'mores and watching the stars.



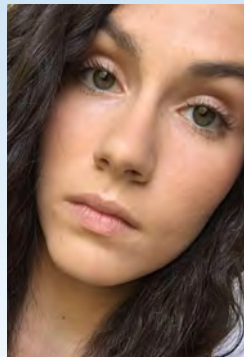
## MATTHEW BARNES

Matthew graduated from Palm Beach Virtual School and is attending Florida International this fall. He is majoring in Violin Performance. Matthew has been playing violin for almost his entire life and he has played for numerous benefit concerts including many Saint Mark Ladies Philoptochos Society benefits. Matthew has served at the Caring Kitchen and has served in the Altar as an Acolyte here at Saint Mark for nine years. He will always remember being tonsured by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios.



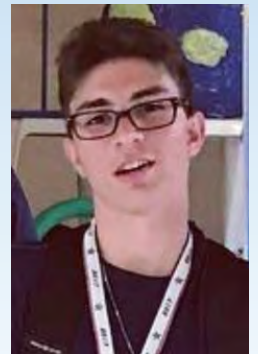
## BAYLEE BROCHU

Baylee graduated from Park Vista and is attending the University of Miami this fall. She is majoring in Pre-Med. At her high school, Baylee was the VP of the Drama Club, President of the Thespian Honor Society and had the lead role in the Odd Couple. At Saint Mark, Baylee has been a GOYA Member since 7th Grade. She will always remember the trip to Orlando to volunteer at Give Kids The World Village, which is a nonprofit resort for children with life-threatening illnesses and their families.



## NICHOLAS CASSAS

Nick graduated from Boca High and is attending Florida Gulf Coast University this fall. He is majoring in Marketing. Nick lettered in track and cross country and has logged over 200 hours of community service working on mission trips to Costa Rica and Miami. Nick has been involved in Saint Mark from an early age, participating in Syrtaki, Greek school, JOY, GOYA and as an Acolyte. Nick plans to join the U.S. Air Force after graduating from college.



## ZAC COTRONAKIS

Zachary graduated from The Benjamin School and is attending George Washington University. He plans to major in Economics, Public Policy, and Communication. Zac was an active participant in GOYA, Acolyte Captain, Metropolis WYR basketball Champion, Metropolis runner-up in the SJCOF, two-time Metropolis HDF Champion and an Archangel Michael Award Recipient. He was a letterman in swimming and soccer and is a national award winning author and published playwright and poet.



## APOLLO DAILEY

Apollo graduated from Boca High and is attending the University of the South Swannee Tennessee. In high school, Apollo was involved in wrestling and played rugby. Since the age of seven, he has played basketball with both Boca Hoops and Upward Christian Basketball and has coached for the last two years. At Saint Mark, Apollo participated in GOYA and really shined consistently in the Oratorical festival as a three-time Southeast District SJCOF winner.



# OUR GRADS!

## ATHENA DAILEY

After graduating from Boca High, Athena is now attending Florida State University. In high school, Athena was a member of the school dance club for four years. Since the age of seven, she has played basketball with both Boca Hoops and Upward Christian Basketball and has coached for the last two years. At Saint Mark, Athena was an active GOYAN, Sunday Church School student and volunteer at the Greek Festival every year.

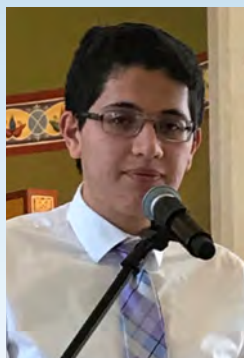


## MARY DENNY

Mary graduated from Boca Raton High School from the STEM program with an AICE Diploma and, this fall, is a student at Florida State University. During high school, she was a member of the National Honor Society, the Key Club, played volleyball and was a Florida Bright Futures Academic Scholars Award Recipient. She has many, many volunteer hours at races, Boca Helping Hands, Boca Hospital and the Boca Raton summer Art Camp. Mary's favorite memory of Saint Mark are the weeks spent in our parish Summer Camp.

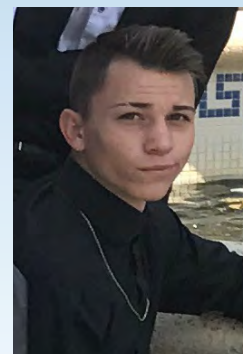
## JOHN DOUGLAS

John graduated from Saint John Paul II Academy and is attending the University of Mississippi this fall. He plans to major in Computer Science. At school, John had the lead role of the Beast in the school's recent performance of Beauty and the Beast. Within the Church, John has been an active member of GOYA and Syrtaki Dance. John has served in the Altar as an Acolyte here at Saint Mark. At Winter Youth Rally, John was a member of the Metropolis WYR Championship basketball team and was a Metropolis HDF Champion.



## KRIS ELY

Kris graduated from Boca Community High School this spring. He has been an active member of ROTC. Kris has plans to pursue service in the US Coast Guard. Kris' accomplishments as an Eagle Scout benefited us at Saint Mark in the form of a beautiful garden just at the entrance to our Fellowship Hall. Here at Saint Mark, he has been an active member of GOYA and has served as an Acolyte for eight years. Kris has volunteered at our Festival and Summer Camp numerous times, feeding hundreds if not thousands of people!



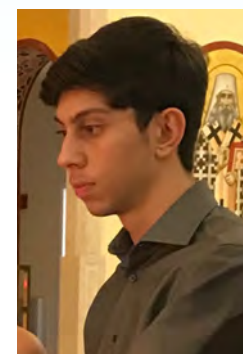
## ANASTASIA GAVRILOS

After receiving her diploma from Boca Raton Christian High School, Anastasia enrolled at the University of Florida. She is majoring in Literature and Philosophy. At school she led worship in her praise band, was a National Honor Society member, editor of the school's literary magazine, as well as participated in all four musicals at her high school. At Saint Mark, Anastasia was a GOYAN, Syrtaki dance member and a Metropolis HDF Champion, Bible Bowl team member, and Lenten Chant Group member.



## CHRISTOS GIAKOUMATOS

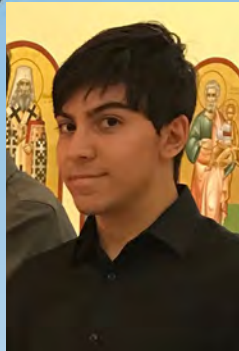
Christos graduated from Spanish River High School and is Attending Florida Atlantic University in the Fall. Christos was active in GOYA at Saint Mark and will look forward to staying involved in the parish during his college years close to home.





## STEFANOS GIAKOUMATOS

Stefanos graduated from Spanish River High School and is attending Florida State University this Fall. Stefanos was an active member of the Saint Mark GOYA ministry and will look forward to connecting with many of our Saint Mark students who are studying at FSU.



## ZOE GIBSON

Zoe graduated from the Dreyfoos School for the Arts and is attending the University of Florida this fall. She is majoring in Biology. At her school, Zoe was the captain of the varsity soccer team, blood drive coordinator, a member of the National Honor Society and the event coordinator for the Saint Baldrick's club. At Saint Mark, Zoe has been an active GOYA member, Syrtaki member and a two-time Metropolis HDF Syrtaki Dance Champion. Zoe will always remember how the Saint Mark family welcomed her with open arms here nine years ago.



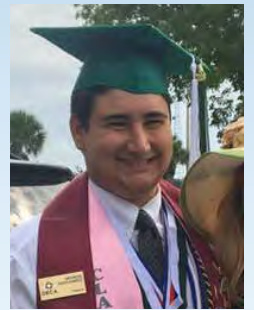
## MARINA KAISAR

Marina graduated from West Boca Raton Community High School and is attending Florida Atlantic University where she is majoring in Health Science/Pre-Med. At school, Marina was a member of the National Honor Society, competed with HOSA, started the Greek Club and participated in volleyball and flag football. At Saint Mark, Marina has been an active member of GOYA, a seasoned Greek School teacher, a Syrtaki member and a three-time Metropolis HDF Champion.



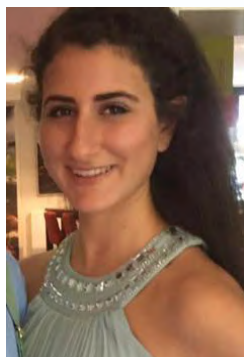
## GEORGE KAPLANIDIS

After graduating from Jupiter High School, George is attending the University of Florida, where he is double majoring in Political Science and Business Administration. At JHS, George was the Founder/President of the Fishing and the Teenage Republican Clubs of Palm Beach; the Treasurer of DECA and National Technical Honor Society, President of the Class of 2018, National Honor Society, and a member of the varsity debate and lacrosse teams. At Saint Mark, George was an acolyte, Syrtaki Dance member, and a two-time Metropolis HDF Champion.



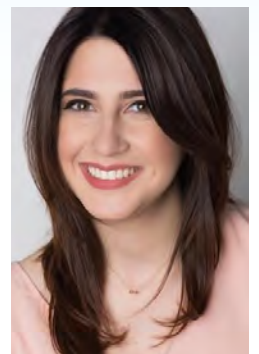
## DARLA KHOURI

Darla graduated from FAU High School and is attending the University of Florida. She is studying Public Health and Economics. At her school, Darla was the President of the Pre-Business Society, VP of the Pre-Pharmacy Club, she played both tennis and basketball and was an Owl to Owl Economics tutor. Darla's favorite memory at Saint Mark is Winter Youth Rally where she met so many people from across the Southeast, learned about our faith and became part of one big GOYA family!



## ELAINA KOKINAKOS

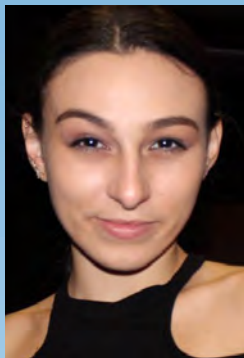
Elaina received her diploma from Pine Crest and is enrolled at The Pratt Institute School of Art in Brooklyn, New York, where she received the Presidential Scholarship. She is majoring in Animation. At Pine Crest, Elaina was involved in robotics, helped out with school musicals, and was a member of the Junior Classical League. In addition, she took art classes outside of school. At Saint Mark, she was a Syrtaki dancer and one of our volunteers in the Arts and Crafts room in our Summer Camp Program. She is very proud to always belong to Saint Mark!





## ALEXIA PORES

Alexia graduated from Dreyfoos and is now attending Juilliard in New York, where she is getting her BFA in Acting. Saint Mark was pivotal in Alexia's audition and application process. The memories made and lessons learned within this community set a precedent for showing passion in her craft. She looks forward to sharing her faith and culture in New York and beyond. Alexia was a Metropolis HDF Champion. Alexia has been a wonderful part of our choir here at Saint Mark for many years.



## ZACH SKOUNDRIDAKIS

Zachary graduated from Boca High, where he was in the top 10% of his class and a STEM graduate, and is attending the University of Florida. He is majoring in Accounting & Finance. He was a member of the National Honor Society, Greek Club President, Key Club, DECA and played basketball for four years. He amassed almost 500 hours of volunteer community service. At Saint Mark, Zachary has been an Acolyte Captain, active GOYA Member, a three-time Metropolis HDF Champion, and Metropolis WYR Basketball Champion.



## EVANTHIA SPYREDES

Evanthia graduated from Pine Crest Preparatory School with Honor and is attending Cornell University. She plans to major in Finance and Investment Banking, and will be taking the field in the fall to play Division I soccer for the university. Eva was selected as an International Conference Representative for Round Square. She was called up to the US National Soccer Training Center and was part of the Olympic Development Program and the Florida State Team. At her school, she was an Honor Roll Student, Honor Council Member and a Member of National Beta Honors Society. At Saint Mark, she participated in Syrtaki, HDF, Church School and Summer Camp. No matter how far away the future takes her, Saint Mark will always be her home!



## ARIANNA STANTON

Arianna graduated from Spanish River High School and is attending Northwestern University. She plans to major in Theater. In school, Arianna was president of her school's theater department and also organized a fundraiser walk for the National Eating Disorders Association. At Saint Mark, Arianna was involved in Syrtaki Dancing for the festival as well as being a Metropolis HDF Champion. Arianna's favorite memory of Saint Mark was the Hellenic Dance Festival last winter and advancing to the Southeast District SJCOF Finals.



## PHILOPTOCHOS - NIKI CORE

The 2018 National Philoptochos Society Biennial Convention was held in Boston during the first week of July with more than 360 members of our dedicated sisterhood in attendance. The Convention theme, "All things are possible to the one who believes in Christ" (Mark 9:23), challenges us to harness the power that our faith in the Lord gives us to expand the work we do to serve the most fragile among us. Philoptochos stewards excel in their unending mission to assist people in need throughout the world, perpetuate our Holy Orthodox faith and preserve the Orthodox family.

The National Philoptochos treasurer reported that for the two-year period from January 1, 2016, through December 31, 2017, a grand total of \$3,795,501 was distributed to our ministries, programs and special appeals. This figure surpasses our January 2014 through December 2015 donations by over \$583,504.

In 2017, the National Philoptochos Society distributed on behalf of its 400+ Chapters and more than 25,000 members a total of \$1,737,511 to its Ministry Commitments, Programs and Special Collections, including:

- St. Basil Academy
- The Ecumenical Patriarchate
- \$109,372 relief to flood victims (Houston, Florida, Puerto Rico)
- Assistance to individuals through the Social Services Fund
- Aid to Greece and Cyprus; over \$250,000 from the 2017 Children's Medical Funds
- Support for our Clergy families (including retirees and widows)
- HCHC
- OCM
- IOCC
- OCF

During the Convention, the Commitments listed above, in addition to several other organizations, received donations from Philoptochos totaling \$341,668. This included a \$35,000 grant to the THRIVE Clinic for Human Trafficking Survivors, and the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, Miami, FL.

The inspiring keynote address (A Presentation on Servant Leadership) was given by Tim Tassopoulos, President and COO of Chick-fil-A. He began his career at the restaurant chain when he was a teenager and has been with them for over 40 years. His takeaway message was the following lesson: "How well you lead is how well you serve. If serving is beneath you, leadership is beyond you!" The delegates were engaged to think about the qualities that define good leadership both in Philoptochos and in life.

Delegates enjoyed the unique opportunity to visit the Hellenic College Holy Cross School of Theology where they were hosted by school officials for a first-hand look at the campus. Participants divided into groups to attend presentations by faculty members, administrators, and alumni on the importance of the School to the Church and its programs.

The Awards Program recognized Chapters who have fulfilled 100% of their National Philoptochos Commitments for the years 2016 and 2017, and our Saint Mark Chapter was one of the those who received this honor. In addition, there were speakers who addressed the following initiatives: The Opioid Crisis, Stop Bullying in Your Community, Using Technology Safely, Women's Heart Health, and Inclusion Ministries. The interactive discussion groups featured the following topics: IOCC, OCF, Saint Basil Academy, Preparing a Budget, Fundraising Activities, Ways to Increase Membership, Grant Application 101, and Working Cooperatively with Your Priest and Parish Community.

There were eight Chapters recognized for their unique Challenge programs designed to raise funds for special outreach projects that serve a specific need of the community. These Chapter Challenge programs can be reviewed by going to the National Philoptochos Web site at [www.philoptochos.org](http://www.philoptochos.org) and accessing the sidebar information (Ministry, Outreach, Philoptochos Projects).

Our highlight of the week was the AGAPE Award Breakfast where our own Assimo Kitsos was recognized as one of nine honorees (one from each Metropolis) who best represent AGAPE - All Generations Accomplishing Philanthropic Endeavors. We were thrilled to see Assimo receive this special award for her devotion to our Chapter and her love of the Saint Mark Community, as well as her philoxenia, philanthropia and philotimo. Axia!

We anticipate an exciting year ahead with new initiatives as well as increased participation in our activities. Please mark your calendars for the following fall events:

- Monday, October 8 - Opening Dinner Meeting - 6:00 PM
- Sunday, November 4 - Philoptochos Sunday
- Saturday, November 10 - Men's Culinary Delights - 6:00 PM
- Monday, November 12 - General Meeting - 7:00 PM
- Monday, December 3 - Christmas Dinner Meeting - 6:00 PM

Please remember when you pick up your coffee and pastries during Coffee Hour that all proceeds from your voluntary donations go to fulfill our worthy philanthropic commitments throughout the year. We hope you will join our many dedicated members who spend countless hours supporting Saint Mark and promoting our Orthodox Faith through good works. Everyone is welcome!

## FLORENCE FULLER BACKPACK DONATION & BLESSING



This Summer we completed an outreach project to benefit underprivileged children. Under the leadership of Julie Vagelos and Juliana Leondis, the Saint Mark

family was able to donate 25 backpacks plus supplies for Florence Fuller students in time for the beginning of the school year. We thank them both for organizing our efforts, as well as Niki Core and Philoptochos for donating the Publix gift cards, Katerina Spiliopoulos for helping deliver the finished bags, for all the faithful who donated these bags!

## BIBLE STUDY - TUES @ 7PM & SYNAXIS - THURS @ 11AM



ST. MARK  
BIBLE STUDY

This September Saint Mark will resume its Bible Study, and Orthodox Discussion group "Synaxis." This

Fall, we will be examining Saint Paul's earliest writings: Galatians, and First and Second Thessalonians (*letters he wrote during the early years of his ministry*) in our Bible Study every Tuesday at 7 pm (*after vespers at 6:30 pm*). Also, every Thursday at 11 am (*after Paraklesis at 10 am*) we will be gathering for our Synaxis discussions. This year the group will studying the lives of the saints.

SYNAXIS  
Orthodox Discussion Group

## YOUTH MINISTRIES - REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

We had a fantastic conclusion to our 2017-2018 ministry year these last couple of months. Most notably, our annual participation in the Metropolis of Atlanta's Saint Stephen's Camp program highlighted our summer schedule for our youth. Please see the last page of this issue to read more about the amazing week.

Coming back now from the summer break, our youth ministry calendars for 2018-2019 are shaping up to quite an exciting year. From JOY events like bowling, caroling, game nights, and olympics; to GOYA favorites like Panthers games, hangouts, movie nights, and the District retreats, every month there will be something to help keep our youth engaged in the faith and having fun while doing so!



## SAINT MARK Mommy + Me TUESDAYS @ 10AM (BI-WEEKLY)

Beginning Tuesday, September 11 at 10 am, we will be resuming our Mommy + Me ministry. Now in our fourth year, we look forward to more worship, sing-a-longs, crafts, story-time, and games!

"Mommy + Me" is for all children 4 years old and younger. If you are interested in joining "Mommy + Me," please contact us by email at [office@saintmarkboca.net](mailto:office@saintmarkboca.net) or by phone at 561-994-4822 for more details about our classes.



## SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL - HELEN LANG & JULIE VAGELOS



The Church School Ministry teachers, substitutes, and volunteers, are enjoying a restful summer, as we plan for the 2018-2019 school year! Our preparations took another step on Sunday August 12, when we offered a special prayer and backpack blessing (pictured above) for dozens of our students and faculty. The Church School Ministry invites all of the Saint Mark children, beginning with the age of four years old, through our graduating high school seniors, to a weekly lesson on the faith, traditions, and practices of our Orthodox faith. Under the direction of Fr. Mark and Fr. Steven, who frequent the classroom to guest lecture as their Sunday schedules permit, our volunteer teachers prepare weekly lessons to provide our children with the fundamental teachings of our faith.

With a full schedule of Church School Ministry classes, lessons, including activities, crafts, and hymns, register your children, in the Church School Ministry, at no charge, and join us as a classroom volunteer!

We will see you at registration, beginning on August 19th, and please note, classes begin on Sunday, September, 9th, with the Blessing of the Classrooms, meeting and greeting your child's new teacher, and student orientation in their respective classroom. Church school classes commence immediately after the students receive the sacrament of Holy Communion, and end at noon each Sunday.

We are always looking for parents, grandparents, Godparents, and stewards to volunteer in the classroom, and with the Church School Ministry. Please see Julie or Helen, for additional information.

If your family is interested in any of our youth offerings please contact the Church office, or stop by our JOY (*elementary school children*) and GOYA (*middle and high school students*) tables during Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall during our four ministry registration Sundays from August 19-September 9. Everyone buckle up, it's going to be another amazing year! For more information please email the following:

FOR JOY, EMAIL: [ERINKONTOS@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:ERINKONTOS@HOTMAIL.COM)

FOR GOYA, EMAIL: [DOMINIQUECULTRERAGOYA@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DOMINIQUECULTRERAGOYA@GMAIL.COM)



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**SAINT STEPHEN'S CAMP 2018 - "FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT"**

This year marked the fifth consecutive year that Saint Mark has participated in the annual Saint Stephen's Summer Camp with the Metropolis of Atlanta. With each passing year, more and more young people are exposed to the joys of this phenomenal camping ministry, and in doing so, return to Boca Raton having been deeply impacted by the Grace of God.

This year's theme was "The Fruit of the Spirit," and focused the campers' attention on more closely examining the nine virtues of the Christian life as seen in Galatians 5:22-23. This theme was directly discussed in the campers' daily "Orthodox Life" and "Hangtime" sessions, but was also quietly filling most of the other activities during the week (though in an unspoken manner). Whether the campers were learning "self-control" while playing on the athletic fields, or develop-

ing "patience" working as a cabin in the Ropes Course; each camper showed tremendous spiritual growth as the week went on.

We are extremely grateful for our families who trusted us with their children for a week. Without commitment from the parents, camp programs like Saint Stephen's are impossible. We also appreciate the great sacrifices made by our adult staff members, many of whom took time off from work and their families to serve this week. From Dominique Cultrera and Pres. Anastasia Leondis in the Art Barn, to Jim Dovas and Girard Mitchell as our logistics coordinators, to Dr. Tom Copulos as our Camp Medic and Vasi Christakis who worked as a cabin counselor, we are so impressed by the hands-on involvement of our adults.

Just because the Summer is ending soon, doesn't mean that the camp spirit is over. Fantastic and exciting ministry like this happens all year-round at Saint Mark. Please register your family in the upcoming weeks, and join us as we all hope to grow closer to Christ this year!