



METROPOLIS OF
SAN FRANCISCO

Missions and Evangelism Ministry

*Educating, equipping and engaging clergy and faithful
in Evangelism and Mission in the Orthodox Christian Tradition.*

Equipping and Enriching Parish Life

A Monthly Metropolis Ministries Series
Missions & Evangelism (MEM)
Monday, August 22, 2022

August 22, 2022

This Evening's Featured Speakers



Rev. Fr. Jerry Markopoulos
St. George Greek Orthodox Church
Eugene, Oregon



Kenny Scott
St. George Orthodox Church
Prescott, Arizona

Missions & Evangelism Ministry (MEM)

www.groworthodoxy.org



- The Metropolis of San Francisco Missions & Evangelism Ministry was founded in 1991 by Metropolitan Anthony of blessed memory and a group of lay leaders. It was originally named the Commission for Orthodox Missions & Evangelism (C.O.M.E.) and led by founding board president Catherine Lingas.
- Guiding Scripture is the Great Commission:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

– Matthew 28:19-20

Missions & Evangelism Ministry (MEM)

www.groworthodoxy.org



- C.O.M.E. was founded to:
 - educate and engage the faithful in evangelism and mission;
 - fulfill the Great Commission;
 - assist in the establishment and growth of mission parishes to achieve self-sufficiency;
 - further the work and programs of OCMC; and
 - enhance inter-jurisdictional cooperation in the establishment of domestic mission parishes.
- New Chapter Planning Retreat in September 2017 established a new Ministry name, team, and mission statement:

**Educating, Equipping, and Engaging the clergy and faithful
in Evangelism and Mission, in the Orthodox Tradition**

MEM Leadership Team

- Metropolitan Gerasimos
- Cliff Argue | St. Demetrios, Seattle, Washington (Founding Member)
- Fr. Andrew Barakos | Assumption, Scottsdale, Arizona
- Lisa Buck | Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Mission, Roseburg, Oregon
- Connie Contes | Holy Trinity, Phoenix, Arizona
- Fr. Photios Dumont | St. Demetrios, Seattle, Washington (Founding Member)
- Fr. Gerasimos Markopoulos | St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Eugene, Oregon
- Fr. Aris Metrakos | Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, San Francisco, California
- Kenny Scott | St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Prescott, Arizona
- Paul Gikas | Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco

Mission, Vision, Goals

- Our goal is to aid and develop an Orthodox practice of Evangelism and Mission in our Priests, Parishes, and Parishioners.
- To that end, the scope of our ministry includes “Five Es”
 1. **Educate** our priests and parishes on the current reality of the American mission field
 2. **Equip** our priests and parishes with resources for evangelism and catechism
 3. **Engage** our priests and parishioners via workshops and conferences
 4. **Evolve** our current mission parishes into self-sustaining parishes
 5. **Establish** both the formation of new missions and new priests for those missions.

Start with “WHY?”

“For the Church of Christ, mission work is an existential necessity. It is not an optional task that we can put off until some future date when we believe we will be “ready”. No, the urgency to share the love and truth of Christ flows from the sacrament of Baptism itself, in which the Gospel reading commands us to “make disciples of all nations”. This baptismal Gospel reading demonstrates that the work of mission and evangelism is never in competition with other tasks in the Church; rather, it is the most fundamental expression of our life in Christ and our obedience to the Son of God.”

Archbishop Anastasios of Albania



Start with “WHY?”



2020 CENSUS OF AMERICAN ORTHODOX CHURCHES

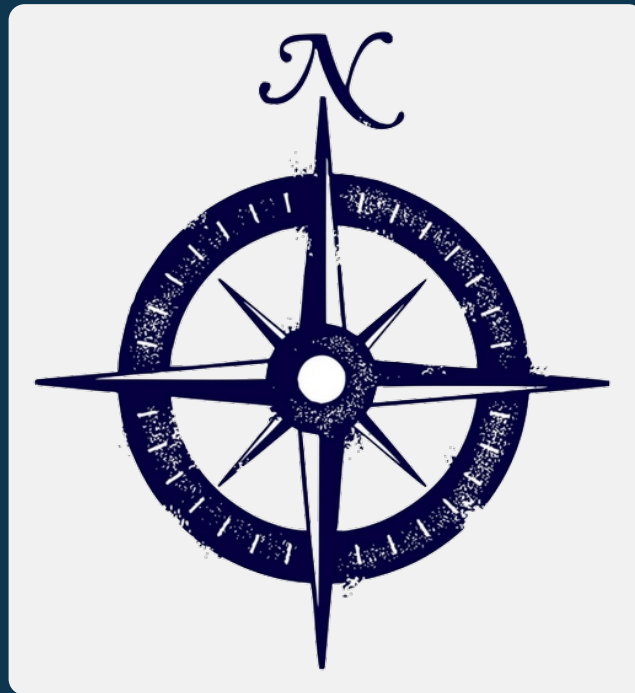
Alexei Krindatch's "Orthodox Reality"
<https://orthodoxreality.org>

Between 2010-2020, the GOA saw a

- 22% decline in the number of “adherents” (persons involved in the life of the parish);
- 21% decline in “regular attendees” (people who attend liturgy on a typical Sunday); and
- the establishment of 10 new parishes, and the closing of 7, for a net gain of 3 parishes

True North

The more closely aligned our work, i.e., our ministries, are to the purposes and mission God intends for the Church, the stronger our parishes will be.



Determining our “True North”



- ❑ Do we fully understand the mission and purposes God intends for the Church?
- ❑ Does our current church form reflect an authentic hearing of the gospel and a genuine sharing in its vision?
- ❑ Are our structures and assumptions about the Church's nature and purpose no longer suited to the time and place in which we currently live?
- ❑ Does our recent activity confirm the true understanding of mission as interpreted and practiced in the Church for centuries?
- ❑ Is the Church a body of people sent on a mission: a community of gathered people, brought together by a common calling and vocation to be a sent people?
- ❑ What does it mean that the Church is sent?
- ❑ Do we understand our call to be apostles?

From the start...

The characteristic of the new group that gathered around Jesus was the fact that from the first year of their discipleship, He sent them on a mission. (Mark 3:14-15)



Jesus did not found a static community that withdrew from the world, nor did He attach Himself to one particular place. He traveled from town to town, village to village, and was constantly on the move.

Apostolicity is an innate element of the Church. Mission is part of the Church's DNA. It is a gift of grace organically ordered in the Church, nourished by the eucharistic community which it constantly renews.

Are we God's fellow workers (1 Cor. 3:9)?



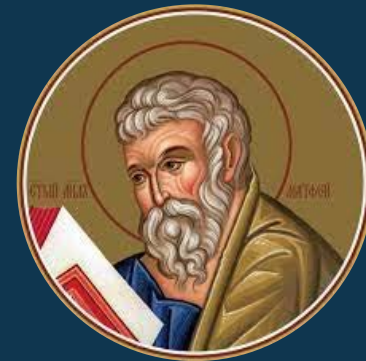
- God desires that all be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth (my emphasis) 1 Tim. 2:4
- Participation in God's mission is entering into partnership with God in history, because our knowledge of God compels us to affirm that God is still working out His purpose in the midst of the world and its historical processes. What else should the Church do but recognize and proclaim what God is doing in the world, and then partnering in that work.
- Church growth comes from God. Are we His fellow workers in this process?

“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them”... Matt.9:36



“The harvest is truly plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest.”

Matthew 9:37-38



The Bottom Line



Q: How might we recover and reinvigorate the Orthodox theology of mission that would lead to stronger parishes?



A: Understanding God's mission for the Church begets a vision for what the Church can and should be. Lack of understanding maintains the Church as it is. The mission and the vision must agree (be aligned). Once the mission is understood, then the proper vision naturally takes shape.

It's up to us...

“It is the parish, it is the local community which has been, is, and will forever be the central, indispensable agent for offering our Orthodox Faith to contemporary America.”

“As the presence of the Universal Church, the parish is called to witness to those within and those outside the community of believers. If we believe that in Orthodoxy we have the fullness of the Truth, then we have the great responsibility-the Great Commission-to share it with all people. All aspects of the parish may be seen as apostolic, and the Orthodox faithful are called to incorporate Christian mission in all aspects of life. When Christ said, ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...’ He commissioned us to transform the parish into an agency of Christian outreach.”



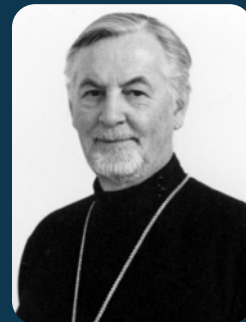
Archbishop Demetrios

To grow from church with mission to a missional church

- The Apostolic Mission was not merely the saving of souls and their collecting into communities of the saved. The apostolic strategy, whose message was the event of salvation accomplished in Christ, and whose method was defined by the earthly ministry of Jesus, was the formation of witnessing communities whose purpose was to continue the witness that brought them into existence.
- Missional churches are those that understand the church as fundamentally and comprehensively defined by its calling and sending; its purpose to serve God's healing purposes for all the world as God's witnessing people to all the world.
- Missional church is a community of God's people that defines itself, and organizes its life around, its real purpose for being an agent of God's mission to the world. In other words, the church's true and authentic organizing principle is mission. When the Church is in mission, it's the true Church.

The greatest imperative...

“To recover the missionary dimension of the Church is today’s greatest imperative. We have to recover a very basic truth: that the Church is essentially Mission; that the very roots of her life are in the commandment of Christ: “Go Ye therefore and teach all nations” (Matt 28:19)



Fr. Alexander Schmemmann+

Our purpose (MEM) is the church’s missional renewal.
We are deeply conscious of the necessary ambivalence
that surrounds such an undertaking.

Are we defined by mission?



- Either we are defined by mission, or we reduce the scope of the gospel and the mandate of the Church. We must move from church with mission to missional church.
- Church without mission is a contradiction in terms. If the Church is indifferent to the Apostolic work with which she has been entrusted, she denies and contradicts herself, and her essence.
- The work of mission and evangelism is not something we do, but an expression of who we are.

What now?

Q: What are the necessary steps for a local congregation to redefine themselves as missionary by their very nature?

A: Theological reorientation that leads to actual practice-creatively and faithfully. The need for a theological revolution in missional thinking that centers the parish on God's mission rather than concern for institutional maintenance.

Is your parish focused on mission or maintenance?



Five Marks of a Mission-Minded Church

1. Focused on people.
2. Lives at the edge of all its resources.
3. The world is their parish
4. People find fulfillment in their foundational life searches
5. Leadership focus is external and missionary

Five Marks of a Maintenance-Minded Church

1. Focused on facilities and structures
2. Conserves and guards its resources
3. The parish is their world
4. Programs and activities keeping the calendar full
5. Leadership focus is internal and institutional.

Recommended reading...

- ❖ Make Disciples of All Nations: 101 Tried & Tested Outreach Practices you can implement in your parish | Fr. Charles Joanides
- ❖ Commissioned to be Apostles | Fr. Stavros N. Akrotirianakis
- ❖ Go and Make Disciples: Evangelism and Outreach in US Orthodox Parishes (2017)
- ❖ Orthodox Alaska: A Theology of Mission | Fr. Michael Oleska
- ❖ Into All The World: An Orthodox Theology of Mission | Fr. Edward Rommen
- ❖ Mission In Christ's Way | Archbishop Anastasios
- ❖ Come and See: An Eastern Orthodox Perspective on Contextualization | Fr. Edward Rommen
- ❖ Alaskan Missionary Spirituality | Edited by Fr. Michael Oleska
- ❖ The Evangelical Theology of the Orthodox Church | Bradley Nassif
- ❖ The Rise of Christianity: How the obscure, marginal Jesus movement became the dominant religious force in the Western world in a few centuries | Rodney Stark



“Every heart with Christ
is a missionary;
every heart without
Christ is a mission field”

Nicolaus Zinzendorf

The Evangelism Season at St George Orthodox Church

August 22, 2022



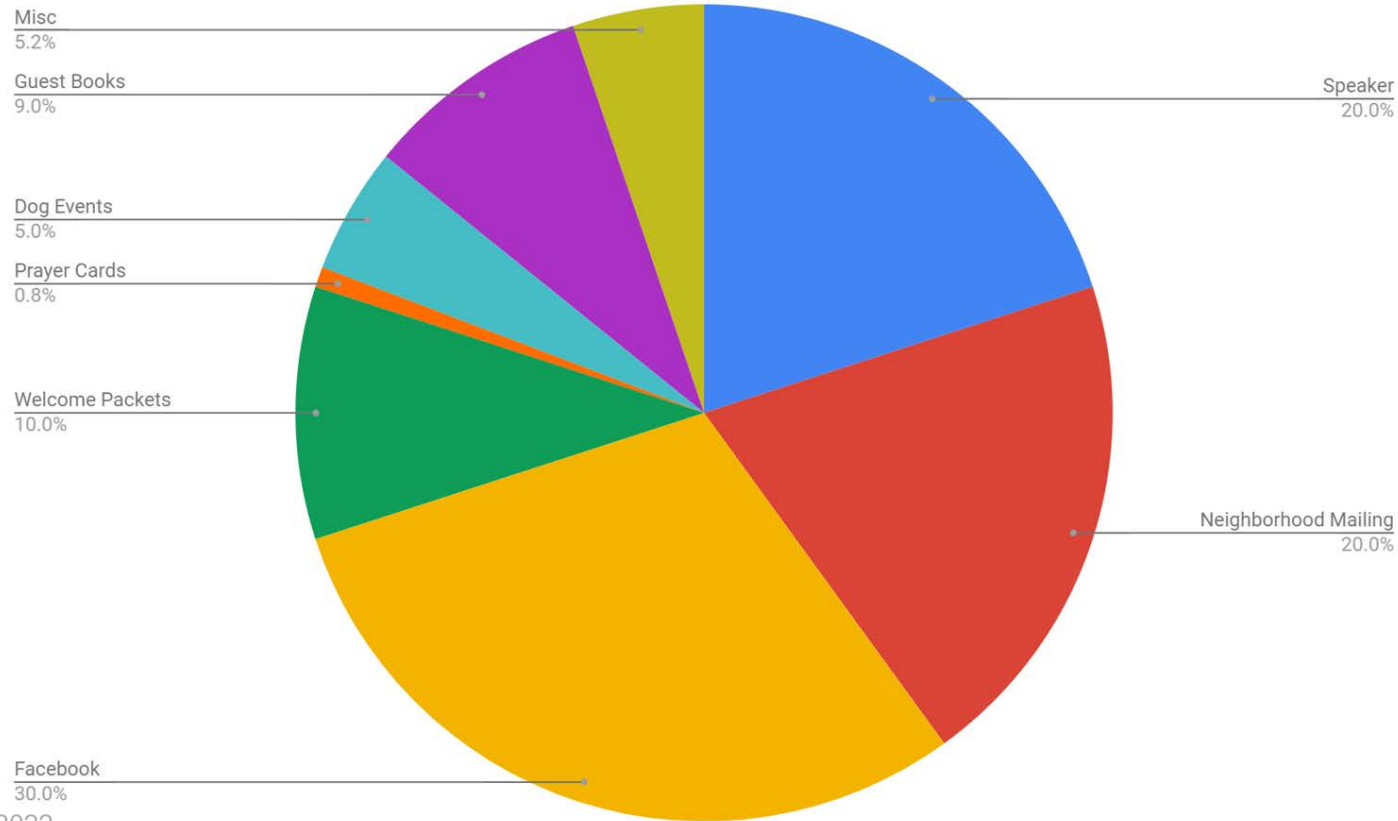


August 22, 2022



Population: 40,000 plus
Stewards: Around 60
Sunday Attendance: 80
Catechumens: 15-25
Evangelism Budget: \$5000

Budget Chart



The Cornerstone of our Evangelism Ministry is the “Evangelism Season”

From Pentecost to the start of the Nativity fast

The focus is outward towards the local community



Kick-Off Event

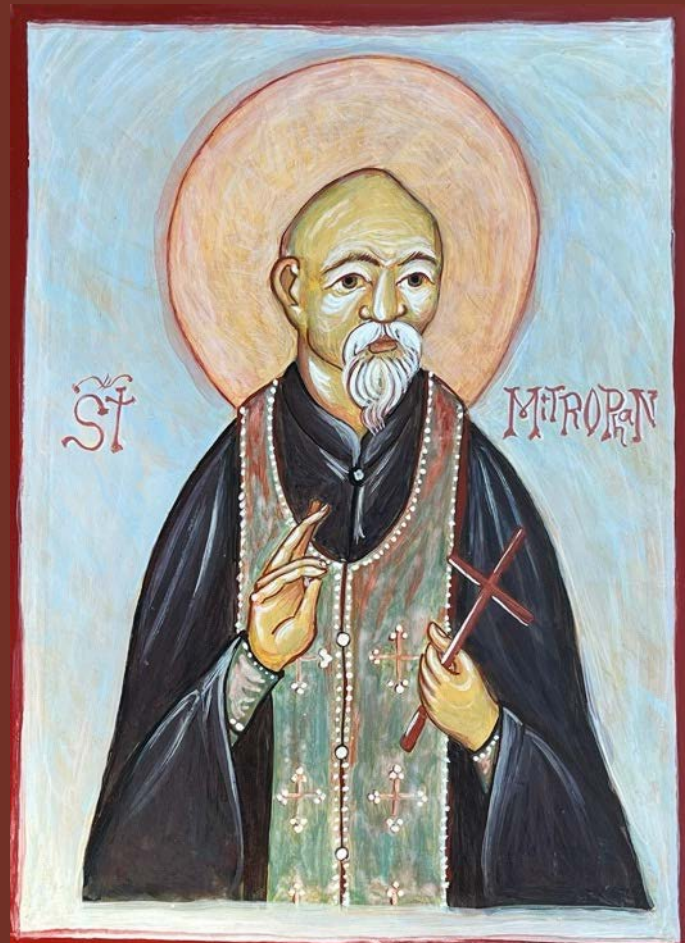


New Evangelism Season Missionary Saint St. Mitrophan

Previous Saints

Sts Peter and Paul
St Herman of Alaska
St Nicholas of Japan

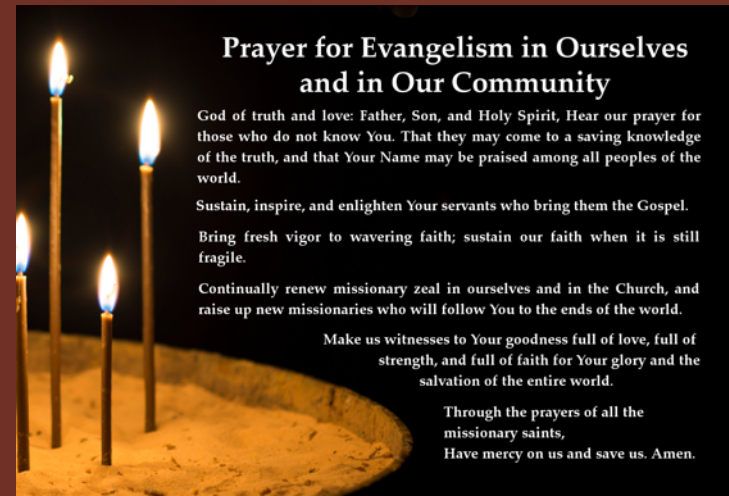
August 22, 2022



Prayer Cards

- Fill out cards in service
- Collect them at the final blessing
- Placed on altar
- After kneeling vespers, we pray for those names
- Give back the cards

August 22, 2022



Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on...

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

This card belongs to _____

Prayer Cards – Front

A photograph of four lit candles in a shallow, light-colored dish. The candles are of varying heights and are lit, with bright yellow flames. The background is dark, making the light from the candles stand out. The dish appears to be made of a natural material like sand or a textured ceramic.

Prayer for Evangelism in Ourselves and in Our Community

God of truth and love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Hear our prayer for those who do not know You. That they may come to a saving knowledge of the truth, and that Your Name may be praised among all peoples of the world.

Sustain, inspire, and enlighten Your servants who bring them the Gospel.

Bring fresh vigor to wavering faith; sustain our faith when it is still fragile.

Continually renew missionary zeal in ourselves and in the Church, and raise up new missionaries who will follow You to the ends of the world.

Make us witnesses to Your goodness full of love, full of strength, and full of faith for Your glory and the salvation of the entire world.

Through the prayers of all the
missionary saints,
Have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

Prayer Cards – Back

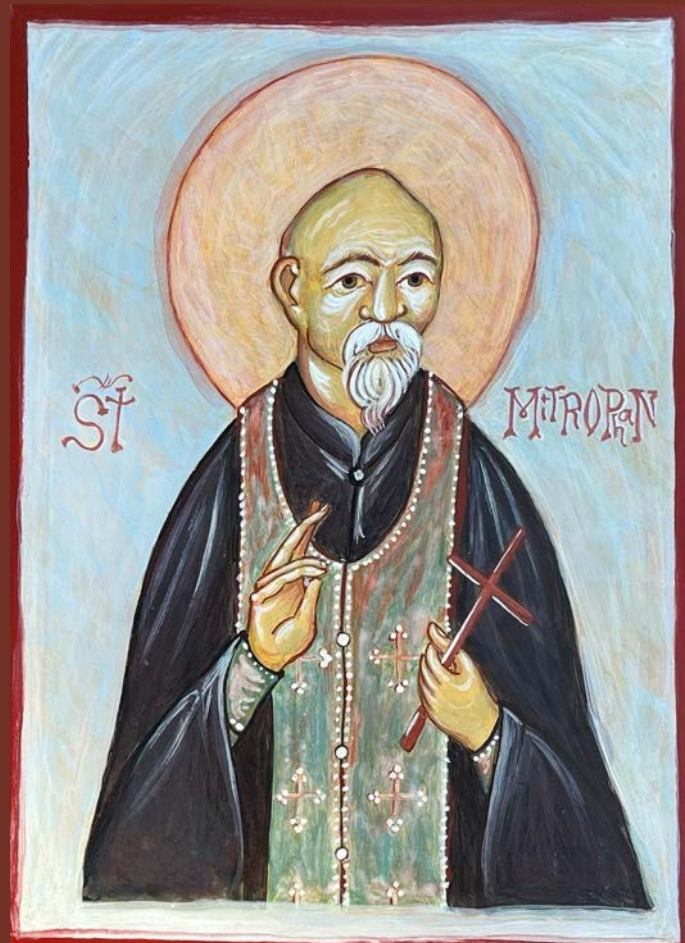
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on...

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

This card belongs to _____

Evangelism Akathist

- Three times during the season
- Previously Sts. Peter and Paul
- This year, St Mitrophan
- End with praying for the names on the prayer cards



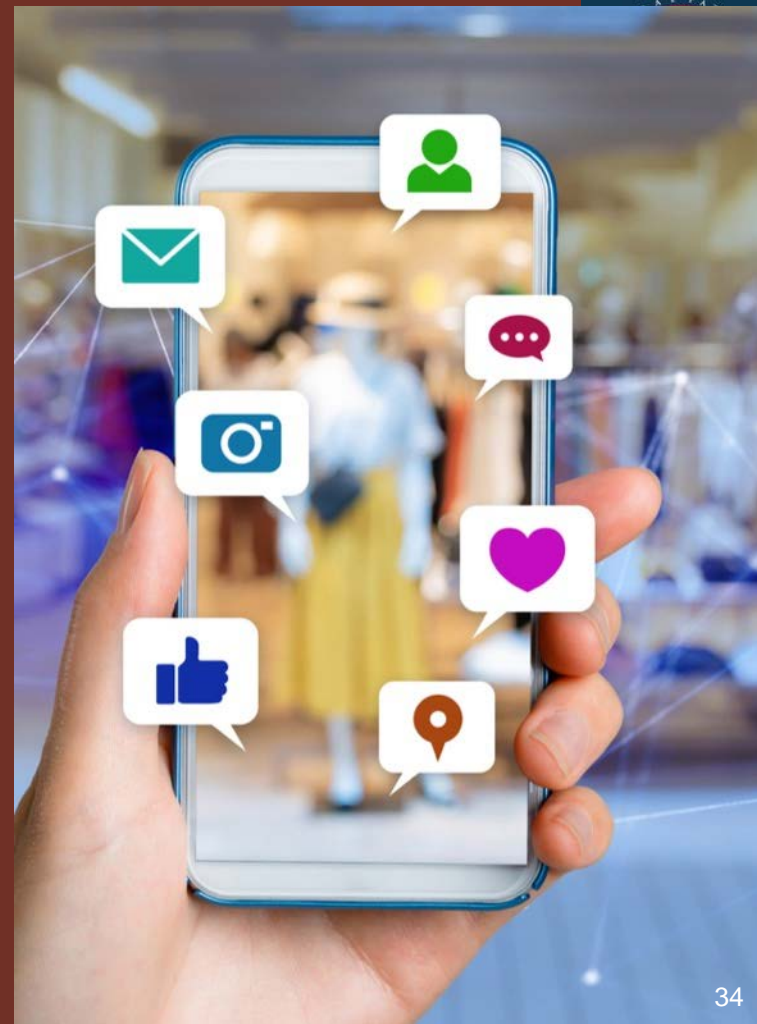
Prayers on Facebook

- On our Facebook Group Page
- Four times during the Evangelism Season
- Each Evangelism team member takes a turn



Social Media Ad Campaign

- Facebook and Instagram
- Stage 1 - 30 second videos
- Stage 2 - 5 to 10 minute videos
(Intro to the faith & Convert Stories)
- Stage 3 - Invite videos
- Cost: \$1200 - \$1500



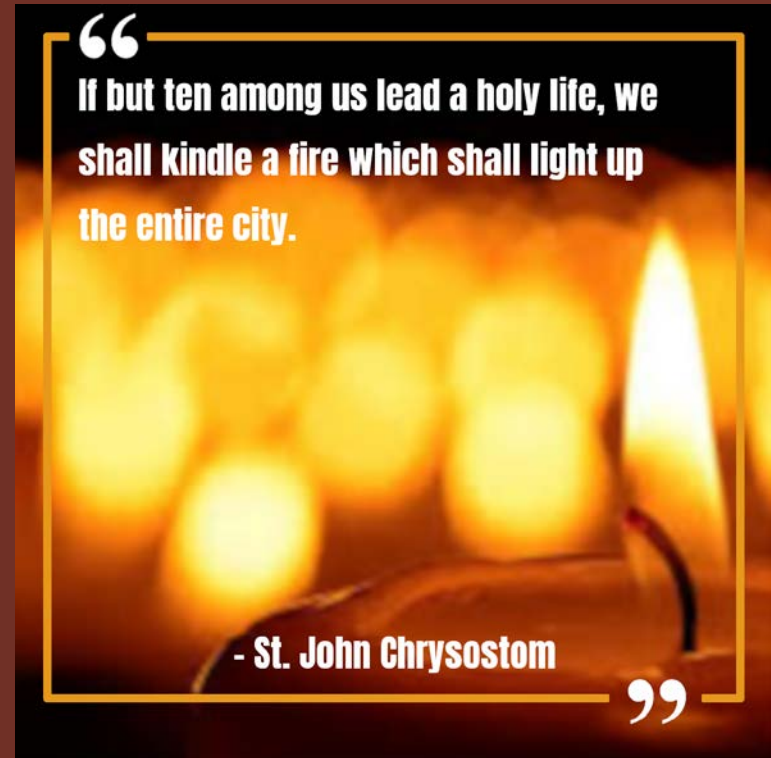
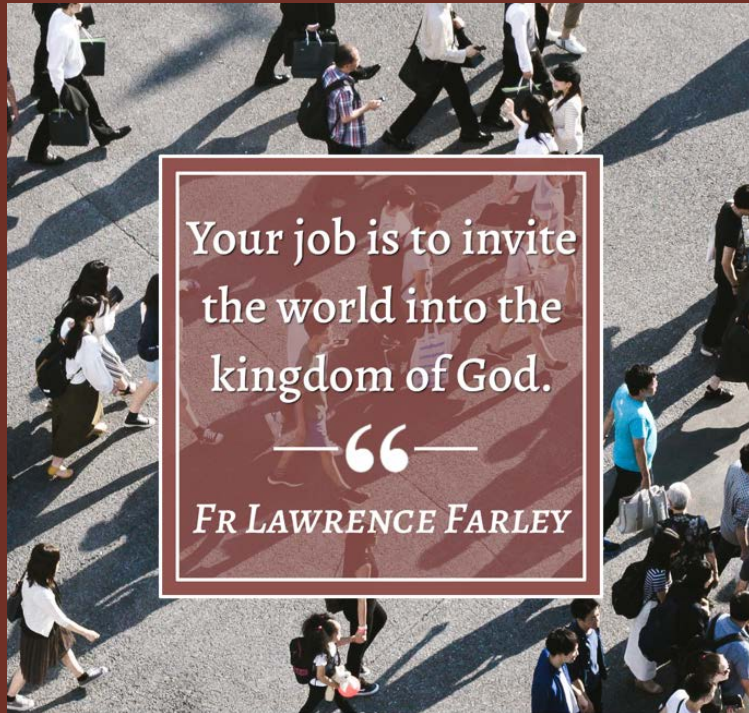
Personal Evangelism

- Facebook Group Page
- Evangelism Quotes
- Evangelism Challenges/Nudges
- Weekly Bulletins
- Weekly Email
- Flocknote

August 22, 2022



Quote Examples



Challenge Examples

What is the Gospel?



August 22, 2022

Prayer Walk



Dogtoberfest



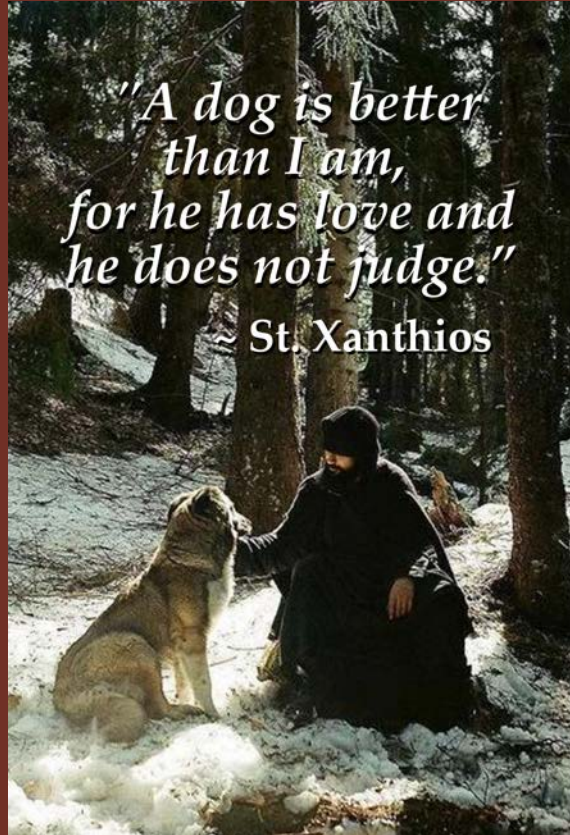
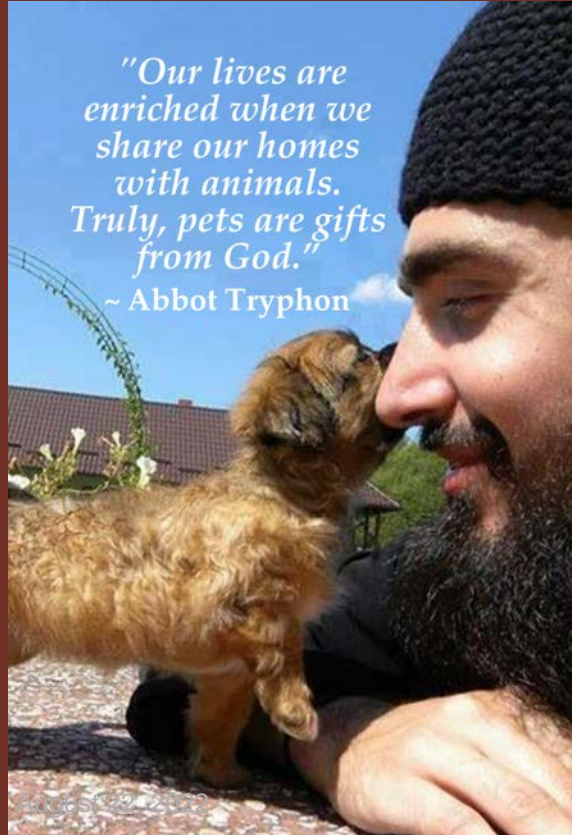
August 22, 2022

Dogtoberfest

- Not forced
- Pet Blessings for Free
 - Donations to locals
- New Skete Books
- New Skete Biscuits
- Handout
 - Biscuits, quote, article, and Church info
- Collect seeker information



Dogtoberfest Handout Cards



A Dog's Best Friend

I would like to suggest that dogs are perhaps the greatest things humans have ever accomplished.

When we survey the world and creation, there are many things that stand as shameful signs of human occupation. The mind-numbing banality of an American suburb and its strip malls is the mark of modernity. But then there are dogs. Dogs seem to be an island that reflects not only their own natural goodness, but human goodness as well.

Of course, there is a darker side. Animal cruelty is revealed as true evil. When animals are objectified (the opposite of personified), we turn our minds and hearts away from them and subject them to unspeakable treatment.

It is interesting that Christ Himself offered no better image of His relationship with people than to compare Himself to a shepherd. There is something godlike in a proper relationship with animals.

Human beings, at our best, are capable of pets. At our worst, we are capable of cock-fights and faceless, nameless exploitation. It is said that a society can be judged by how it treats its weakest members. I would add to that the treatment of animals.

Pets are a movement towards something right and good. We would do well to think often about this and what it means for living rightly in God's good world.

This is an extremely abbreviated version of an excellent article that can be found at
prescottorthodox.com/dog

Has it been successful?

- Are people flooding our church?
- We have baptized those who only knew of our faith because of social media
- Our church bell
- “America’s Best Kept Secret”
- “I forgot I was supposed to do this”
- “I talked to my neighbor”
- “Important people think evangelism is important”



Resources & Links

- [St George of Prescott Facebook Page](#)
- Convert Story Examples
 - [St Basil's in Hampton, VA](#)
 - [St Innocent in Macon, GA](#)
- Intro to the Faith Videos
 - [Welcome to the Orthodox Church Series](#)
 - [Fr Andrew Stephen Damick Series](#)
- Media Folder
 - [Social Media Posts](#)
 - [Personal Evangelism Posts](#)

Any Questions?

August 22, 2022

