



# The Cornerstone

St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church  
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## JANUARY

Jan. 6 Theophany

Jan. 6 Zalaby

## FEBRUARY

Feb. 1 Presentation of Christ  
Divine Liturgy - 6PM

Feb. 9 St. Elias Annual Winter Party,  
Cavalry Club

## MARCH

Antiochian Women's Month

Mar. 4 Great Lent Begins

Mar. 25 Annunciation

Mar. 31 Veneration of the Cross

## THE CORNERSTONE

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## DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

March 15, 2019

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## WINTER 2019

# The Certainty of God's Love

Dear Elians:

I greet you with a holy kiss as we embark on a New Year 2019. I pray that your festive celebrations of Christmas and New Year with your family and friends have created a stronger bond of love crowned with the love of God.

Beloved, each year, we tend to get ourselves occupied with these celebrations and neglect the true purpose: celebrating the solemn incarnation of THE ONLY WORD of God who made it possible for humanity to be reformed and transformed into the likeness of God. This transformation by the renewal of mind will bring us into a closer relationship with one another and ultimately with God who grants hope to the hopeless, strength to the weak, liberty to those in bondage of sin, and light of knowledge to those living in darkness.

Every year each person is faced with his/her own trials and challenges whether dealing with health, family, and personal issues that causes us frustrations and crippling



life. In the midst of all these uncertainties we are certain the love of our merciful philanthropic God is near to all who believe in him. As the Psalmist says "from whence my help comes, it comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2). "In my distress I called upon the Lord and he answered me"(Psalm 120:1).

Yes beloved, in my 40th year as a priest and in my 10th year at St. Elias I have witnessed his divine love in many ways and likewise you can. Indeed his love & mercy is a

*Continued on next page*

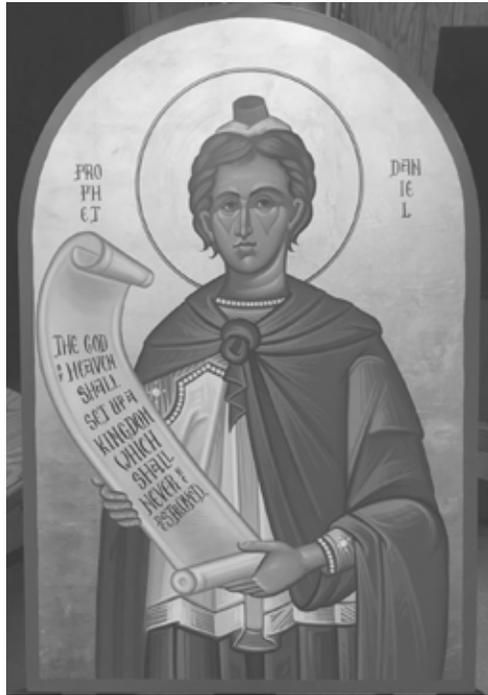
humbling experience to our unworthiness. This humbling experience of his love will bond us together as we face the challenges of our beautiful Temple. You are a special and vital member of this Holy Temple growth. Your active participation in the liturgical life will invigorate and nurture our faith that is challenged daily by the dark forces of Satan.

2019 is a special year for us at St. Elias as we celebrate 90 years in Syracuse, 50 years at the present location and our Kitchen-Church hall renovation. A milestone that began with struggling pioneers and today we enjoy the fruition of the laborers.

May the Christ-child bestow his abundant blessings upon you and your loved ones.

Fr. Elias Nasr

## NEW ICONS HAVE ARRIVED!



Prophet Daniel, donated by Cathy Khammar for the health and wellbeing of her brother, Danny Khammar.



St. John of Demascus, donated by Michele (Sopp) Wingrave in memory of her parents, Charles & Rose Sopp.

# Order of St. Ignatius

In January 1975, Metropolitan Philip of Blessed Memory saw the need to study the possibilities of a new organization that would challenge the laity of the Archdiocese to a new dimension of service.

A small committee was organized under the chairmanship of Albert Joseph and was composed of Ernest Saykaly, Robert Andrews, Robert Laham, Theodore Mackoul, Archpriest Paul Schneirla and Archpriest Antony Gabriel. During the Archdiocese Convention held in Louisville, KY, in July 1975, a preliminary report was filed at the General Assembly. The Metropolitan accepted the findings of the report and by the Archdiocese Convention held in 1976 in San Francisco, CA, the provisional chairman, Albert Joseph, was installed and the first

inductions to The Order took place.

It was during the Patriarch's historic trip that the newest Archdiocesan organization was called into being and was given his Apostolic blessings. The first officers and chaplain were formally installed and many new members were inducted at the Washington Archdiocesan conclave in 1977. Ever since his Beatitude, Patriarch Elias IV, of Thrice Blessed Memory, and our beloved primate, Metropolitan Philip of Blessed Memory, formally blessed and inaugurated The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch, an unprecedented number of lay persons were awakened to their global Archdiocesan responsibilities and scores of earnest women and men have come forward to join The Order.

From a handful of dedicated and devoted women and men, since inception

## HISTORY OF THE ORDER OF ST. IGNATIUS

Submitted by Dona Savage

The Order has grown to over 4,800 members and continues to grow steadily. There are currently nearly 3,000 active members. The projects of The Order continue to attract Antiochian Orthodox Christians from all over North America to join this productive ministry. Today members of The Order come from all walks of life: secretaries, executives, factory workers, hospital personnel, home managers. Some members are young, some are senior citizens, some have young families and some have grandchildren. All share a common love for Christ and his Church and a common belief that through The Order they can collectively assist our Archdiocese in performing Christ's work.

By the Grace of God, the growth of The Order has contributed, since its inception, over \$16 million to many worth-



Brothers and Sisters in Christ –

These words of Jesus have resonated within the hearts of people for two thousand years – but what was Jesus talking about? In the previous two verses Jesus explained why one should store one's treasure in heaven rather than on earth. This verse states that if one places one's treasure in heaven that is where one's heart or attention will be. This is an implicit warning, which is made clear later in the chapter; if one's treasure is on earth, one's heart and attention will also be on earthly matters, to the exclusion of God. A person cannot pursue both material goods and spiritual well-being.

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.  
(Matthew 6:21)

All we have is a loan from God – it is all a gift. What we do with our time, talent and treasures will have to be given account of on the last day. As people, when we become burdened with a mindset of materialism, we become slaves to our wealth. Are we sharing our time, talent and treasures in the way that God intended of us?

As we start 2019, there are many activities taking place within St. Elias. We will be starting the hall and kitchen renovation – phase 1 of the overall building renovations needed at St. Elias. Additionally, after Easter, we will be repairing the stained glass icon at the back wall of the Altar. This building is over 50 years old and there is a need for these renovations. We need to take care of our church so that it can continue to be here for generations to come.

Have you donated your time, talents or treasures to help us in this endeavor? Have you committed to supporting the building fund drive? No amount is too small and will help complete all three phases of the renovations. Have you volunteered time to help take care of some of the smaller items that arise within the church? As we take care of and beautify our own homes – we must also find time to take care of St. Elias. If we put our treasures within St. Elias – our hearts will be here as well.

I would like to thank last year's Parish Council for a fruitful and productive year. We are all working in service to St. Elias – and this was especially true of last year's council. I would like to thank Shukri Dayeh for his work last year on the council – he will be missed. I also want to welcome Bassel Sakkab to this year's council and look forward to another year dedicated to the service of St. Elias.

**while projects. The annual budget now exceeds over \$1,500,000! The Order has contributed to Archdiocesan departments and projects such as: Missions and evangelism, Youth Ministry, Campus Ministry, Camp Scholarships, the Antiochian Village Camp, aid to married seminarians, the Antiochian Village Heritage Museum and Learning Center, Prison Ministry, Retired Clergy Housing Allowance, the College Conference, Christian Education and many, many more. Equally important The Order has responded to special needs outside our Archdiocese such as: the Special Olympics, Project Mexico, the Chinese Translation project, Mexico earthquake relief, Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Montreal Ladies Aid Society, flood and earthquake relief, and the International Orthodox Christian Charities to name a few.**

Article from [Antiochian.org](http://Antiochian.org)

A message  
from Dona &  
Nabil:



" As December is designated to St. Ignatius, it is time to reflect on our mission and spread the word. Do we care about the continuity of our Archdiocese programs, the pastors retirement, the camps, prison evangelism, the Antiochian village, the seminarian assistance fund, and many others to name?

Those programs require committed funding. Would you offer our lord a cup of coffee a day? That's what it costs to join. We are inviting you to join the group, be part of its mission and receive heavenly rewards. Please contact father Elias, either one of us or any member"

The glorious feast of Christmas is finally here – when the Eternal Word of God becomes man. The good news of Christmas is that Jesus Christ is born this day, not to judge or to destroy – but to save and bless us. May each of you have a Blessed Christmas season full of peace, love and happiness.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Your sister in Christ,  
Mai Makhlouf

**Memory Eternal**

Sami Tawil - December 26, 2018



## ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

Dear parishioners of St. Elias,

With continuous support from all of you, especially our dear ladies, the past three months have been exceedingly successful.

Several activities were held, beginning with the Thanksgiving Luncheon on Sunday, November 11th. Many women and some men from our church came together on Saturday and worked diligently to prepare the food for the luncheon. With their help, and the food being donated by all the parishioners, the luncheon was utterly prosperous and joyful.

Preparing for a Bake Sale of a 60 dozen Ka'ek order, a big group of ladies gathered at church and got it all done in one day. The work produced a major success for the ladies and the church, in terms of bringing profit, and bringing the church ladies together.

Celebrating the feast of St. Barbara on December 2nd, the ladies pre-

pared the Burbara for all those who attended church that Sunday. We would like to express our gratitude to the Habayeb family for donating all that was needed to make the Burbara and serve it.

The festivities continued into the month of December with our annual Christmas Ornament Exchange Party. On December 4th, 88 ladies attended the ornament exchange at Drumlins Country Club; a record breaking number of participants. I would like to reiterate my extensive gratitude to all our parishioners for their genuine and endless help; none of our success would be possible without your support. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Your sister in Christ  
Georgina Al Khoury, President



Marya Al-Khoury helps get things ready for the ladies' ornament exchange at Drumlins.



Beautiful centerpieces and a room ready for over 80 ladies!



Some of the 16 turkeys prepared for the Thanksgiving dinner.



Ladies are ready to serve a delicious Thanksgiving meal!



Room is set for a hungry crowd!

# Happy Birthday!

## January

Lily Abboud	1
Fayez Abu Manneh	1
Nadia Abu Manneh	1
Khalid Ghrayyeb	1
Nuhaila Wazen	1
Jewell Gabriel	2
Eleni Kontopoulos	2
Samih Tadros	2
Josef Akl	3
Rita Algattas	4
Lina Akl	6
Tom Tadros	6
Matthew Tadros	7
Karen Caporizzo	11
Elizabeth George,	11
Nuha Sousou	12
Rami Vassallo	13
Bassel Sakkab	15
Hala Sawalha	15
Mary Alamir	16
Carolina Cotran	17
Nader Souri	18
Joanna Tarazi	18
Albert Totari	19
Thomas Kane	23
Rami Al-Khoury	25
John Rott	27
Janice Abdo-Rott	29
Zeina Akl	30

## February

Salwa Ghrayyeb	1
Julia Totari	2
Nicholas Kontopoulos	3
Souhel Shehadeh	4
Alia Dayeh	5
Dana Nesheiwat	5
Elaina Atallah-Yunes	8
Lana Hazou	8
Elly Cotran	10
Jessica Khairallah	10
Tamar Totari	10
Samantha Dayeh	12
Michael Warner	13
Janet Saba	15
Olivia Sauro	17
Geries Souri	18
Gary George	20
Kailah Mahshie	21
Lisa Dash	22
Nancy Dannoun	23
Sam Tadros	25
Munjed Essi	29

## March

Leon Mazur	1
Angelica Underwood	1
Gada Jiries	3
Nujoud Makhlof	3
Musa Shamma	3
Abeer Tadros	3
Elias Tadros	7
Nabil Akl	10
William Vassily	11
Fahed Jiries	12
Juan Soto	13
Amal Humsi	14
John Abdo	16
Suad Jabaji	16
Roula Khalifeh	16
David Daoud	17
Holly Kane	17
Sophia Tadros	17
Nader Atallah-Yunes	19
Tawfik Jiries	19
Rose Soto	20
Simona Tadros	20
Suha Alamir	21
Jeanette Mtanos	21
Julia Wachna	24
Saher Zawaideh	24
Layal Makhlof	30
Chrystal Mullen	30

## Happy Anniversary!

### January

Jeries & Aida Souri	1
Mahfouz & Lina Abu-Manneh	9
Juan & Rose Soto	9

### February

Charles & Mary Kammar	10
Antoine Azar & Merian Tomeh	13
John Rott & Janice Abdo-Rott	19

### March

Akram & Labiba Tarazi	13
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## Don't miss the St. Elias Annual Winter Party!



Where: Cavalry Club, Manlius, NY  
 When: Saturday, February 9  
 Cost: \$75 per person

For more information, contact  
 Violette Humsi  
 email: [faitbeau@yahoo.com](mailto:faitbeau@yahoo.com)  
 or 315-440-4457  
 text (only, please)

*New & exciting menu!*  
*DJ spinning your favorite*  
*Arabic and American pop music!*

Please make checks payable to  
 St. Elias Church and mail to:  
 Violette Humsi  
 5010 Tall Oaks Dr.  
 Fayetteville, NY 13066

# OCTOBER WAS YOUTH MONTH!

Sermonette by Estelle Khairallah

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, my brothers and sisters,

The parable in the gospel reading today is a well-known one, often referred to as the parable of the sower and the seed. The seed stands for the Word of God; the soil, the hearts of people

Let's look at the four different "soils," or hearts.

One seed falls along the hard path. Some people hear the truth, but like hardened paths, they do not let it sink into their hearts. Eventually, Satan takes the truth away and if people do not receive and respond, their opportunity will be stolen, it will be lost. The degree of your spiritual growth depends on how much you are willing to receive. These people may be guided by spiritual pride, or ignorance, making them unreceptive to the word of Christ.

Another seed falls onto a rocky place. These are the people that hear the message with great joy, but they do not let it take root; they do not let it sink into their hearts. They believe that God promised to take away all of their problems, so that when they are faced with any trouble, they quickly lose their faith. They don't understand that God's word never promises that life will be easy, without any trials. He promises something far better. He promises that He will be with us in our problems, and that he has a better plan for us. Life is never going to go as perfectly as we want it to be. It is silly to get carried away in your emotions and get frustrated

with your faith, just because you are hit with adversity. As Christians, we learn that it is necessary to trust God, and trust that he has a plan for all of us. In this trust, we are able to find Christ.

Then there are the ones that hear God's Word and start to grow and bear fruit. But soon they become



worried about the problems of daily living. They may think that if only they had more money and more "things", then they would be happy. And in pursuit of these earthly things they lose sight of their spiritual fruit. We get involved in earthly possessions and we forget what really matters. Compare the happiness that one gets from being around the people they love, to the happiness a person gets when they buy a new phone. In 10 years from now, are you really going to look back and remember the day you got that phone? Of course not, but you'll always remember that

kind gesture from a friend, that one day when you went for lunch with your mother, the time that you spent an hour breaking your nails to build a Lego architecture with your brother. These are the moments that matter. However, we lose sight of these things, and the word of god gets suffocated by our greed and worries.

Lastly comes the good soil, the people who hear God's word and believe it, understand it. The ones that put their trust in God and let their hearts receive the message of the Lord. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me". The spiritual fruit that comes from God's Holy Spirit is love. We are called to love our neighbor. We are social beings by nature. God made us like this, built us around this love. It's the connections you make with other people that determine whether or not you lived in God's image, or lived out his message. For "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40). So what have you done for God? Did you serve your neighbor by liking their post on social media? Or did you serve your neighbor when you called them and asked them how they're doing? Or when they were struggling, and you lent them a hand? This is what it means to live in Christ's image. It is easy to get caught up in the materialistic things, but our true goals should be focused more towards leaving an impact, and building strong connections with the people around us. After all, why do we enjoy giving gifts? It is because God has made us for love, that we feel this way. In fulfilling God's plan for us, and living out his greatest

# Teen SOYO

Society of Orthodox Youth Organizations



commandment, we ourselves get a sense of fulfillment and purpose. One of the characteristics that we associate most with being “human”, is the act of caring and love for one another. God’s plan is so deeply rooted in our understanding for each other, that almost everyone, no matter their religious belief system, believes that we are born with a kind of love instilled in us, something that is unique to humans.

Let us be the good soil by hearing



and accepting God’s word and letting it take root in your hearts. Let your beliefs in God and Jesus Christ guide your actions so you allow His Spirit to live in you. My brothers and sisters, a seed has been scattered, has been planted through you and in you. May your life be good soil for the Christ, one that bears fruits in ways we never thought possible without him.

Teens hold their annual poinsettia sale for the Christmas holiday. Thank you to parishioners who supported their effort.

*May Christmas and let the birth of Jesus Christ fill your hearts with grace and compassion!*

Brothers and sisters, in the month of September, the teens went apple picking and the sale was a great success!

They also went on a retreat during that month to Ottawa where they had a good fruitful time and a bonding experience with other teens.

The month of October was Youth Month, during which the teens ushered, read the epistle and gave a sermonette every Sunday. They ended the month by preparing a kafta lunch which was a huge success as well! A pumpkin sale took place during the month of October, which again was great!

Our teens helped our ladies with the clean up after the turkey lunch on Sunday November 11th.

During the month of December, the teens had their annual poinsettia sale, attended the ornament exchange and hosted coffee hour.

We are planning a retreat that will include several churches and that retreat will be discussing the struggles that our teens are facing.

On behalf of all the teens, I present you with best wishes for a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year filled with good health and joy!

More plans for fundraising and volunteering are to come!

Yours sincerely,  
Grace Khairallah



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A publication of:

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