
Inside this issue:

Veteran honored	2
Diocesan Grants	3
ONE Stewards 2022	3
Orthodox Christians for Life	7

Two Catechumens Share Their Stories at St. Alexis Church



Right: Daniel Cummings (left) and Gregory Hawkins (right) are enrolled as catechumens by Fr. Steven Hosking at St. Alexis Church, Clinton, Conn.

Kathryn Jankura

This autumn, St. Alexis joyously welcomed two catechumens. Daniel Cummings and Gregory Hawkins have dedicated themselves to Orthodoxy and St. Alexis wants to share both of their stories that brought them to our faith.

Daniel was born and raised in Connecticut and currently resides in Madison, Conn. Currently, he works as

a prosecutor for the State Attorney's Office in the major crimes unit and he also works as a part-time paramedic on the shoreline. After his parent's divorce, Daniel and his sister stopped attending the Catholic church that he was raised in. Fast forward to Daniel's graduation from law school, he experienced a much deeper calling to return to his faith.

Catechumens continued on 4

Czech Republic Awards American Veteran and Member of Diocese of New England

M. Lydia Westerberg

For his part in liberating the city of Pilsen from the Nazi occupation in the Czech Republic during WWII, one hundred year old Robert (Bob) Muthersbaugh received a medal of honor presented by Major Pekar and Lt. Colonel Keketko of the Czech Republic.

Bob was a twenty-three year old radio operator of the Headquarters Company of the 16th Armored Division as part of General George Patton's Third Army. In 1945 for heroic and meritorious deeds, Bob received the Bronze Star Medal, which is the fourth highest-ranking award of the United States Military.

Now in 2021 Robert was filled with particular joy as the members of the Czech military traveled from Washington D.C. to personally present him with the Honorary Commemorative Medal from the Ministry of Defense of the Czech Republic.

Recognizing that the American Soldiers changed the course of their history, the citizens of Pilsen and the Government of the Czech Republic have held celebrations every year. Their celebrations have been held in Washington, D.C., in New York City and in Pilsen. Over the years Bob has participated in many of these celebrations, but this year he was especially overjoyed to be individually recognized and honored in his own

home in Hamden, Connecticut where he was surrounded by close family and friends. As Americans we thank Bob for his service and we congratulate him!

Bob is an active parishioner at Holy Transfiguration Church in New Haven, Conn.

ONE +



**Right: Major Pekar,
Bob Muthersbaugh,
Lt. Col. Keketko
Photo: New Haven
Register**

Diocesan Grant Applications 2022

Protodeacon Paul Nimchek

The 2022 Diocesan "Parish Grant Guidelines" and "Grant Application" are available on the Diocesan website at www.dneoca.org. Parishes in the New England Diocese can apply for financial grants to help support out-

reach and charity programs in their communities. The diocese has again budgeted up to \$10,000 for grant monies to support parishes in these efforts. Applications will be reviewed as received. Check the website for details.

ONE +

ONE Stewards 2022

"Giving Above and Beyond"

Protodeacon Paul Nimchek

Your "giving above and beyond" to ONE Stewards enables the Diocese to in turn "give above and beyond" to the following essential Diocesan programs:

- ◆ Youth Rally and other Youth Programs
- ◆ Seminaries and Scholarships for Seminarians
- ◆ Support for Diocesan Missions
- ◆ Charitable Giving to support programs like IOCC, OCMC, OCA Stewards

In 2008, our ever-memorable Archbishop Nikon began the "Bishop's Circle Challenge", asking us to join him in donating \$500 or more to ONE Stewards. The "Bishop's Circle" of donors has grown each year since then and provides a substantial part of the total contributions to ONE Stewards.

FACT: If every parish in the Diocese had 2 Bishop Circle donors, the total donations to ONE Stewards would far exceed our usual budgeted amount.



Let's make 2022 a new record year for ONE Stewards donations. Be on the lookout for the 2022 ONE Stewards reply envelopes in your mail at the end of February. You can get a head start by donating online at our Diocesan website, <https://dneoca.org/>

During our upcoming Lenten journey, let us all commit to prayer, fasting, and charitable giving. Thank you for your continued support.

ONE Stewards
PO Box 1182
Torrington, CT 06790

ONE +

Catechumens from I

Daniel sought Catholic churches to join, but the more he researched the history and doctrines of the church the more he found himself questioning them altogether. His further search led him to the Orthodox Church. Daniel said that after much thought and prayer, he finally decided to reach out to Father Steven Hosking at St. Alexis. Daniel made the decision to enter the church as a catechumen after attending services for several weeks and experiencing a warm welcome from all of the church members.

Gregory Hawkins thoughtfully shared his detailed account of his journey to the Orthodox faith and to St. Alexis. Below is Gregory's adventurous, emotional, and awe-inspiring story, in his own words:



My journey to Orthodoxy appears to have begun in 1988 at the age of 25 after visiting the Mt. Athos peninsula in Greece. I had recently graduated from U.C. Berkeley with a degree in Architecture and after completing an internship, I decided to set off on an adventure and try to work my way through Europe, starting with an architectural opportunity that was available to me in Oslo, Norway.

After brief work opportunities in the Netherlands, Germany, France and Italy, I headed for Greece with a desire to explore Athens and some of the Greek islands. I had read that the Athos peninsula had been closed to the outside world for over a thousand years and I was attracted to the idea of visiting a place not tainted by modern influences. I had no idea what Orthodox Christianity was and

although I considered all people to be part of a spiritual existence, I considered organized religions to be the antithesis of spirituality.

In Thessaloniki, I was granted a permit to visit the Athos peninsula for four days and three nights. Upon my arrival, I walked to a monastery, knocked on the door, was greeted, given a room and quickly learned that English was not a common language in the monasteries. Somehow, the next day, I crossed paths with a monk that was originally from the United States and he became a friendly, English-speaking companion who would meet me daily and guide me for the next few days.

At one monastery, the monk who greeted me also took me to where a very special relic was kept and I was blessed with it by the monks present. It was the first time I had seen a hand that was so old and kept in a jeweled box.

My blessed English-speaking guide then took me to an area near where he resided. He showed me a small abandoned chapel that had been overgrown with vines and brush, I remember it had vaulted ceilings and felt sacred to me. He told me that if I wanted to stay, I could reside in this chapel, clean it out and help restore it and work in the gardens and help with the architectural restoration of the nearby monastery.

Much of my inner being said yes and wanted to stay; but then a more rational inner voice spoke in my mind and said, this is a serious commitment and a decision like this should be made back on the mainland, not while standing in the presence of everything here which is intoxicatingly beautiful and peaceful. So I departed the Holy Mountain with a blessed experience, continued my journeys

and went right back into the everyday life of a 25 year old not really knowing the depth of all I had just experienced.

Fast forward thirty three years and in that time, I only stepped into a church for a wedding or a funeral and always felt the experience to be not as spiritual as the other things I had pursued including yoga, meditation and camping in nature.

In March of 2021, as I awoke one morning, I was overcome with the image of me and the Athos monk standing in a wheat field together on Athos, and I was overcome with the feeling that my whole life had been in vain. I felt that I had been offered the most golden of opportunities and walked away from it. I was in great turmoil and wanted to sell everything and move to Athos and become a monk at age 58.

Dismayed and confused, I did what many of us do in 2021, I turned to Amazon.com. I typed in the word, Athos, up came a book: *Elder Paisios of Mount Athos* by Heiromonk Isaac—one copy left. The monk on the cover looked like Athos monks I had met, so I bought the book, and, as I read it, I experienced almost unexplainable great reverence for Elder Paisios and all he accomplished spiritually, including his deep love and reverence for Jesus Christ, the Theotokos and all of humanity.

I felt as if I had found the mentor or father I had always been looking for. I also realized that Paisios was born in Cappadocia and after I had visited Athos, I took a boat to Turkey and was “guided” to visit the caves in

Cappadocia where Christians had lived and prayed. In the very last page of the book on Elder Paisios, after the beautiful letter and spiritual will from Elder Paisios, on the very last page is an image of a postcard of the Hagia Sophia on which Elder Paisios had written a note and I too visited that place not even knowing it was Christian.

I also started to remember the English-speaking Monk on Athos, offering to me the opportunity to go meet a famous monk while we were sitting on a shuttle boat going from one monastery to the next and I, as an arrogant young man replied that “famous” and “monk” do not go together, so I have no interest. I now realize

that Paisios was on Athos when I was on Athos and although I now believe I said no to meeting him, he has been in loving support of me all this time. I, who did not even know what Orthodoxy is. I who brought arrogance with me to the Holy Mountain. Yet all this Love and Grace is still here for me, guiding me, the most lost.

Not knowing what to do with this realization and concerned I would make a poor monk at age 58 and be a strain on any monastery, I thought it best to at least visit local Orthodox churches. I was afraid to visit, afraid I would get caught in a web of something that was not in alignment with Mt. Athos, with my fear, I explored the internet and found St. Alexis in Clinton, Conn.

St. Alexis was not Greek Orthodox and that concerned me; still, I reached out to Fr. Steven and appreciated his reply. My first visit to the

I experienced almost unexplainable great reverence for Elder Paisios ... I felt as if I had found the mentor or father I had always been looking for.

parish was the first time in my life that I ever walked into a church with a desire to possibly become a part of it.

I realize now, that the last steps I took as I approached and entered were steps where I could have easily been frightened away—what made a difference for me on my last steps include the graciousness and presence of Joan and John [Skrobat] and Deacon Timothy [Skuby] at my first Vespers. The indescribable wisdom, warmth, guidance and approachability of blessed Fr. Steven and the preciousness of each member of the parish as I come to gradually know you and be present with you.

Although I attribute Elder Paisios to guiding me to Orthodoxy, I do want to give a most honorable mention to C. S. Lewis and his brilliant ability in which through his writings (specifically the trilogy *The Silent Planet*; *Perelandra*; *That Hideous Strength*) helped create a bridge that allowed me to cross over an internal chasm that I may have otherwise never crossed.

With regards to my family life and secular pursuits (all of which are now influenced and integrated with my relationship to the Orthodox Church) I live in Essex, Connecticut with my fiancé of 15 years, Melissa. We moved here four years ago from Santa Fe, New Mexico, where I had lived for 25 years. I have been most blessed to be a step-father to her two lovely kids, Victoria and Weston—both who recently graduated college (Northeastern and Emory & Henry).

Melissa and I have two dogs that add a wonderful balance to our empty nest. Melissa primarily works therapeutically with clients utilizing the Internal Family Systems model. She

hopes to eventually, one day, open a local retail store that reflects her unique character and allows her to share her passions.

My work life includes that I am part of a sales team for a small engineering firm based in Florida. Because of my involvement with St. Alexis, I am currently negotiating the acquisition of a small local business that would better connect me with the local community. I am working on an old sailboat and as a former college sailing instructor, I hope to have the boat seaworthy by next season.

After suffering an unexplainable stroke in 2016, I eventually changed my diet to a ketogenic diet and continue to educate myself on human physiology and modern nutrition via several groups I belong to. I also have been trained in the Internal Family Systems model of therapy and have been an assistant instructor for this model at CCSU (central Connecticut State University) where I was teaching the Internal Family Systems model to therapists.

I am most grateful for this opportunity of sharing my story and appreciate all who are supporting me on my continued journey towards becoming a part of the Orthodox Church.

In Christ,
Gregory Hawkins



St. Alexis is blessed to have these new catechumens. Please join us in welcoming Daniel and Gregory to the Orthodox faith!

ONE +

Orthodox Christians for Life— *a new parish ministry at Christ the Savior*

Sofia Cole

Christ the Savior Orthodox Church in Southbury, Conn., has recently started an Orthodox Christians for Life (OCLife) Parish Ministry. My friend, Arden Stamper, and I are leading this ministry, and I wanted to tell you about the exciting steps we've taken for LIFE, and what we plan to do next.

The mission of Orthodox Christians for Life is "To equip the Orthodox Christian community to strengthen its commitment to the sacredness of human life from conception to death, illuminating the Church's teaching on life issues through education and engagement."

OCLife—Christ the Savior recently traveled to the National March for Life in Washington, D.C. to commemorate the 49th anniversary of Roe V. Wade. Twelve members of Christ the Savior went to the March, joining a large group of fellow Orthodox, and thousands upon thousands of others. NBC Washington estimated about 50,000 people attended the rally at the National Mall, with even more marching. There were people as far as you could see in every direction.

This was my first March for Life and it was so exciting! I was shocked when I saw Metropolitan Tikhon standing on the stage! The Orthodox held a Moleben for the unborn before the March and the choir from St. Tikhon's Seminary led hymns while we walked. It was a beautiful experience, and we met so many wonderful people, including Emily (Wilkinson) Yokum, the Executive Director of



Right: His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon and other hierarchs lead Orthodox Christians in prayer at the **March for Life**. The Orthodox Christians for Life banner is held on the left.

Photo from OCA.org

OCLife. She was a very sweet person, and filled with energy.

Christ the Savior celebrated Sanctity of Life Sunday on January 23. We petitioned in the Divine Liturgy for an end to abortion, hope for the mothers, and the strength to help those who cannot help themselves. Prayer is an integral part of OCLife. As Christians, we know that we can do all things through Christ, and not on our own.

In the coming months, OCLife - Christ the Savior plans to partner with a local pregnancy resource center, provide support and informational materials for both expecting and post-abortive families, help mothers and their babies both practically and prayerfully, and to educate other Orthodox on the Sanctity of Life by partnering with parishes around Christ the Savior. We also hope to attend the Connecticut State March for Life on March 23. For more information, or if you are interested in joining us, please email oclife.southbury@gmail.com.

ONE +

O.N.E.

Diocese of New England
Orthodox Church in America
Published bi-monthly

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon
V. Rev. John Kreta, Chancellor
V. Rev. Joshua Mosher, Editor
Phone: 203-237-4539
frjmosher@sspeterpaul.org



Advertising: This publication will accept advertisements. However, we reserve the right to refuse any advertisement we find unacceptable for a publication of this kind.

Rate: \$50.00 per quarter page, \$100.00 per half page, \$175.00 per full page.

The opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors. Dogmas of the Church, or Official Statements, will be so labeled. Materials in *ONE* may be reproduced with acknowledgement of the source.

Subscriptions:

The ONE Newsletter is distributed free of charge to members of the diocese. If you live in New England and would like to receive this newsletter at your home address, please contact Fr. Joshua Mosher at the address below.

Electronic Distribution:

If you would like to receive *ONE* in electronic format **only**, please contact Fr. Joshua Mosher at the email address below.

For subscription requests:

frjmosher@sspeterpaul.org
203-237-4539
PO Box 186
Durham CT 06422

Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church
PO Box 2876
305 Washington Avenue
New Britain Conn. 06050-2876
Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
Paid
Permit #559
New Haven
Conn.

Upcoming

- April 15** **Deadline for next issue of the ONE**
- March 13** **Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers: 4 PM, Holy Ghost, Bridgeport**
- March 20** **Conn. Deanery Mission Vespers: 4 PM, SS. Peter & Paul, Meriden, Conn.**
- March 27** **Fellowship of Orthodox Churches in Conn. (FORCC) Vespers: 4 PM, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Bridgeport**
- April 3** **Conn. Deanery Mission Vespers: 4 PM, Holy Transfiguration, New Haven**
- April 10** **Holy Unction Service: 4 PM, Ansonia, Conn.**
- April 17** **Bridegroom Matins: 4 PM, Christ the Savior, Southbury, Conn.**