



Orthodox Christian Laity

Winter Newsletter and Focus of Efforts in 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

William Souvall, President
William Caras, Vice President
Argo Georgandis-Pyle, Secretary
Dr. Gayle Woloschak, Treasurer
George E. Matsoukas,
Executive Director Emeritus
Alexander Billinis
Alice O. Kopan
George Pontikes

ADVISORY BOARD

His Eminence, Metropolitan ISAIAH
His Eminence, Archbishop BENJAMIN
His Eminence, Archbishop MICHAEL
His Eminence, Archbishop NATHANIEL
Rev. Dr. Timothy B. Creemens
Rev. Fr. Nicholas J. Greanias
V. Rev. Dr. Chad Hatfield
Rev. Fr. Michael Massouh
V. Rev. Fr. Steven J. Vlahos
Charles R. Ajalat
John Kaloudis
Andrew Kartalis
John Maddex
Sbdn. Stratos Mandalakis
Frederica Mathewes-Green
Ron Muresan
George Pawlush
Alex Petkas
Peter J. Petkas
Dr. Teva Regule
Dr. Marian Simion
Stacy Vasilatos
Dr. William J. Tenet
Dr. Helen Theodoropoulos
Dianne N. Thodos
Peter Vezmar

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

David Oancea

Annual Meeting and Conference

The OCL Board of Directors held the organization's 37th annual business meeting and conference on October 18-19, 2024, at St. George Romanian Orthodox Cathedral, Southfield, Michigan. Board members and Advisors met on October 18 to discuss the **focus of OCL's efforts in 2025: a)** to work with a data research specialist to expand OCL's reach, and **b)** to work with the Inter-Parish Associations Project to develop roundtable discussions in key geographic areas.



OCL Board Members and Advisors at the Annual Meeting

OCL held a conference on October 19 about **Inter-Parish Associations (IPA) and Dialogue Across Orthodox Jurisdictions** featuring **Reverend Father Nicholas Anton**, Director of Operations of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA, as keynote speaker. Fr. Anton introduced **Spyridoula Fotinis**, Director of the Assembly's IPA program, who joined the conference via ZOOM, and presented a slide presentation highlighting the scope, purpose and progress of the project to date. The conference participants then had an opportunity to ask questions of a panel that included Fr. Anton, Ms. Fotinis and Their Eminences, **Metropolitan Nicholas** of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit and **Archbishop Nathaniel** of The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America.



Rev. Fr. Nicholas Anton



Archbishop Nathaniel, Fr. Nicholas Anton, Metropolitan Nicholas

Subdeacon Adam Murphy, Director of **FOCUS Detroit**, presented a slide presentation and answered questions about his work with people in the inner city of Detroit.



Subdeacon Adam Murphy

Following lunch, **OCL President William Souvall** read a letter of appreciation to Archbishop Nathaniel for his 24 years of active service on OCL's Board of Advisors and presented him with a donation to the Archbishop's Charity Endowment Fund. Following a short video highlighting the Archbishop's participation in OCL's events, **Reverend Father Nicholas Greanias**, also a long-time Advisory Board member, sang an original musical tribute to the Archbishop to the delight of all the participants.



William Souvall with Archbishop Nathaniel

The participants then gathered for a round-table discussion on several topics: What successful examples of cross-ethnic collaboration exist within our Church? What are some practical steps to integrate parishioners from different backgrounds? What theological foundations support the pursuit of unity? How do we celebrate cultural diversity while maintaining Orthodox unity? How do personal biases hinder parish unity, and how can they be addressed?



Some participants in the round-table discussion

The conference concluded with Great Vespers celebrated by **Fr. George Cautis**, parish priest of St. George Cathedral, and **Fr. Nicholas Anton**, with heavenly responses by the **Orthodox Choir of Detroit** under the direction of **Matushka Victoria Kopistiansky**.



The Orthodox Choir of Detroit

View the **Conference video recordings** at <https://bit.ly/OCLVIDEOS> or point your smart phone at the QR code to the right:



HOLIDAY BLESSINGS TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

We appreciate your spiritual and financial support. Your contributions make OCL's projects and activities possible. We welcome your comments (ocladmin@ocl.org) and "thank you" for your support!

Praying that you have a blessed Christmas season and a joyous New Year!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William P. Souvall".

William P. Souvall, President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Argo Georgandis-Pyle".

Argo Georgandis-Pyle, Secretary

About OCL

Orthodox Christian Laity (OCL) is an independent, national, Pan-Orthodox, 501(c)3 non-profit, educational association, incorporated in the State of Illinois on March 17, 1988, to advance the renewal of the Orthodox Christian Church in the United States by advocating that the laity remain part of the conciliar governance process which provides balance to the hierarchy and clergy, all working together in governance, spiritual and other matters to ensure accountability and transparency in the affairs of the Church. OCL is committed to the establishment of an administratively and canonically unified, self-governing Orthodox Church in the United States.

DONATE ONLINE at: <https://ocl.org/donate> or

