THIS YEAR'S CONVENTION - JULY 16-19!

Our 68th Annual Convention will occur on July 16th – 19th at the Sts. Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church Westland, Michigan. Our Westland friends hosted us 5 years ago with a convention full of good food, good music, and good friends, now they’re at it again!

As we gather this year to refresh and re-dedicate ourselves as church musicians, they have planned scrumptious meals and great social activities – Greek dancing, a Talent Show, and a Grand Banquet to complement our church music workshops and Gallos music rehearsals.

By now, you should have received registration forms through the MEFGOX email list. Registration forms and other Convention information are also available on the Federation website: www.mefgox.org.

If you’ve been a regular at MEFGOX conventions, you know they are fun, educational, and rejuvenating. If you’ve not ever attended or if it’s been a long time, you should consider it – especially those in Michigan, since it’s in your own backyard. Come on! Give it a try!

CONVENTION HOTEL: Embassy Suites
9526 Victor Parkway, Livonia, MI.

A great hotel for our Conventiongoers – only 10 minutes from the church and full of extras!

Complimentary cooked-to-order breakfasts are included in room rate. Also there’s a 24-hour fitness center, large indoor pool with waterfall, and high-speed internet access. The hotel is also 20 minutes from downtown Detroit and conveniently located near many popular Detroit area attractions. Call 734-462-6000 to reserve: cost per room is $125 per night plus tax.

Be sure to order your copy of Gallos II before July 31st, as that is the last chance to order the Greek-English side-by-side version of this work from MEFGOX. This is the music that will be used at Regional Rehearsals as well as at the Convention as a fitting tribute to Presvytera Anna Gallos, who fell asleep in the Lord just this past spring. Order forms are available at www.mefgox.org.
OUR GUEST DIRECTOR!

We’re pleased to welcome back Pam Cramer as this year’s Guest Director. Pam has been choir director at Annunciation Cathedral in Houston, TX since 1984. She was President of the Metropolis of Denver’s Church Music Federation President from 2000-2004 and since 2010. In 2015, she served as Guest Conductor of the Metropolis of Denver Church Musicians Federation Conference for the third time. She was also honored to be Guest Conductor for the 2003 New England Federation Conference, and she has twice been a vocal clinician for MEFGOX’s Church Music Institutes. She has led the Annunciation Cathedral Choir in presenting a Christmas Program with orchestra for the past 20 years.

Pam gives private voice instruction for 20 years for students in the Fort Bend and Houston area schools. She is a frequent adjudicator for Texas All-State and UIL solo and ensemble competitions. Pam also provides vocal coaching for the Cathedral’s priests and choir members.

Pam attended Washington State University, majoring in vocal performance and music education, and the Opera School in Zurich, Switzerland. She was a professional opera singer for 10 years in Germany, where she met her husband, John, who was Concertmaster at the Giessen Stadttheater.

Pam is a member of the Houston Symphony Chorus and Houston Masterworks Chorus. She has given master classes at the Houston International Theater School and helped coach youth for the Houston Grand Opera.

In a new venture, Pam has written a murder mystery called “Murder at the Frankfurt Opera,” about an opera chorus singer whose colleague is mysteriously killed. You can find out more information about her books by visiting www.pamelacramer.com. Her next book in the series will be “Murder at the Berlin Opera.”

CONVENTION WORKSHOPS

There will be lots of great workshops in store for you at this year’s Convention! Plan to arrive early afternoon on Thursday for a great start! The afternoon will start at 1:00 pm with a workshop on the Apolytikia, with new music and theological information. Concurrently, a Chanter’s Workshop on the Second Mode will be led by Christine Stavros of Traverse City, one of the first chanter groups to earn a Byzantine Music certificate from Holy Cross. She will also present the evening workshop for everyone about “Rediscovering Byzantine Chant: A Look at Hymns in Worship.”

On Friday, Metropolitan Nicholas will present us with an informative session about “The Ecumenical Councils,” which is the feast we celebrate on Sunday of the Convention. And on Saturday, we are privileged to have two young Orthodox musicians from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music work with men and women in separate groups on “Vocalizing for Men’s/Women’s Voices.”

All in all, a terrific line-up of instructors and topics! We hope you agree and will plan to join us – all workshops will be held at Sts. Constantine and Helen Church. Keep in touch about these workshops via the Federation’s website: www.mefgox.org.

ATHENAGORAS AWARD NOMINATIONS

MEFGOX will be accepting nominations for the National Forum’s Athenagoras Award for Meritorious Service to the Metropolis until June 15th. This award is given to individuals in our two Metropolises who have extended their church music service and contributions beyond the local parish. Church music contributions beyond the parish can include activities such as guest conducting in other parishes or groups, composing, accompanying, singing or chanting in other parishes or groups, presenting talks and workshops, providing administrative service to the Federation, etc., especially at regional or Metropolis levels. Making musical contributions beyond the local parish is the most important element in considering candidates for this award. Nomination materials and forms can be found on the MEFGOX website under the tab “Resources” at www.mefgox.org.
**AKRON ST. ROMANOS RETREATS**

This past year, Akron’s Annunciation Choir committed time and energy towards a program of choir development. **Georgia Stathopoulos** describes what they did!

“Akron has begun what will hopefully become our annual **St. Romanos Retreats**! Our choir seemed to be in a slump and we needed something to energize us! We thank Father Jerry Hall for suggesting a retreat and for bringing Father Seraphim Dedes to our attention.

Our first St. Romanos Fall Retreat was on October 10th–12th. Father Seraphim from Charlotte, NC was our Guest Director. Along with members of St. Paul’s Choir from North Royalton, OH, we learned and sang Father’s liturgy. Choirs from the Canton area had hoped to participate, but due to an expected visit of Metropolitan Savas, were unable to.

Our weekend began Friday evening. We had a light supper and then rehearsed with Father Seraphim for two hours. Saturday morning, we had breakfast, rehearsed for 2½ hours, had lunch, and then continued with a 2-hour rehearsal in the afternoon. Sunday morning, led by Father Seraphim, we sang his music for Liturgy.

It was very fulfilling to sing new music and a joyous experience to be directed by Father Seraphim. Everyone ended their weekend refreshed and happy to have been a part of such a unique experience!

Our Winter St. Romanos Retreat was held the evening of February 11th during our regular choir rehearsal time. This retreat was designed to be a one-evening event. It was directed by Sally Schneider, a master musician and teacher in Akron. The title of our retreat was, “Learning Vocal Techniques.” Sally used two pieces of our Anna Gallos convention music as her teaching tool that evening.

Twenty members from St. Paul in North Royalton joined us again. Beginning with a light supper at 6:00 pm, we worked from 7-9:00 with Sally. It was WONDERFUL! She was a joy to work with and gave us a wealth of helpful information! All participants left completely refreshed and satisfied with their experience.

We had originally planned to have a third retreat, but decided against it for this year. We realized that once spring and summer arrived, we were all just too busy! Two retreats seemed to be perfect, one fall and one winter. We may rethink this, but for now, we all feel what we did was enough and perhaps two retreats are sufficient.

This October 2nd–4th, Akron will host a 2nd St. Romanos Fall Retreat. Much to our delight, Nancy and Stan Takis and their choir will be with us! They will teach us Nancy’s entire liturgical setting and conduct us on Sunday morning. We are SO excited!!!! And, we are very much looking forward to spending the weekend with our Michigan church musicians!”

**SPRING WORKSHOP and FEDERATION COUNCIL MEETING**

Church musicians from all our Federation parishes are invited to participate in MEFGOX’s Spring Federation Council meeting. This is one of two meetings where the entire membership meets and votes on key issues – the second meeting is held at the Convention.

The Spring Federation Council meeting will take place on Saturday, June 6th at St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church in North Royalton, OH. A light “Meet-and-Greet” breakfast will be served at 9:00 am and the meeting will start at 9:30 am. The major decision item at this meeting will be selection of music for the next two years’ Conventions. Each parish represented and in good standing with MEFGOX stewardship will have one vote.

Also, at 11:30 am, we will be treated to a workshop on “All Saints Sunday and Its Music,” the feast day we celebrate the very next day! After that, our hosts will provide us with a delicious lunch. The meeting will then resume at 1:00 until about 3:30 pm. Much of the afternoon discussion will focus on ways of rejuvenating our choirs. If you can’t come for the whole meeting, come for the workshop and lunch!

Please be sure to RSVP to Vicki Pappas by June 1st at pappas@indiana.edu so we can plan meals and materials accordingly.
STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

So far, 59 of the 94 parishes in the Metropolises of Detroit and Pittsburgh (63%) have renewed their stewardship for 2015-16, and we thank them for their commitment to and support of MEGFOX. We have not yet heard from the following parishes as of May 21st but hope to before July:

- Ambridge, PA, Holy Trinity
- Binghamton, NY, Holy Trinity
- Bloomfield Hills, MI, St. George
- Campbell, OH, Archangel Michael
- Canton, OH, Holy Trinity
- Canton, OH, St. Haralambos
- Charlestown, WV, St. John
- Chattanooga, TN, Annunciation
- Cleveland, OH, Annunciation
- Dayton, OH, Annunciation
- Detroit, MI, Annunciation Cathedral
- Easton, PA, Annunciation
- East Pittsburgh, PA, Presentation
- Elmira, NY, St. Athanasios
- Ft. Wayne, IN, Holy Trinity
- Grand Rapids, MI, Holy Trinity
- Hot Springs, AR, Zoodochos Peghe
- Huntington, WV, St. George
- Little Rock, AR, Annunciation
- Louisville, KY, Assumption
- Morgantown, WV, Assumption
- Nashville, TN, Holy Trinity
- Nashville, TN, St. John Mission
- New Kensington, PA, Annunciation
- Oakmont, PA, Holy Dormition
- Pittsburgh, PA, Holy Cross
- Plymouth, MI, Nativity of the Virgin Mary
- Saginaw, MI, St. Demetrios
- Springfield, OH, Assumption
- Stroudsburg, PA, Holy Cross
- Traverse City, MI, Archangel Gabriel
- Vestal, NY, Annunciation
- Watertown, NY, St. Vasilios
- York, PA, Annunciation
- Youngstown, OH, St. Nicholas

Please send your parish stewardship contribution to Treasurer Peter Vatsures before July 1st to be in good standing. His address is: 68 West Cooke Rd., Columbus OH 43214.

MEFGOX and HOLY TRINITY/CARMEL TO HOST THE NATIONAL FORUM

The parish of Holy Trinity in Carmel, IN, and MEGFOX as the local Federation, will host the 39th Annual Meeting of the National Forum of Church Musicians, the music ministry of our Archdiocese. The meeting will be held July 8th – 12th. Delegates from each Metropolis will attend, as well as individual Forum stewards.

The weekend promises to be busy, with meetings to discuss youth initiatives, the new English translation for the Divine Liturgy and the hymns being developed for it, and development of church music resources for parishes. Delegates will also discuss needed training for chanters and directors and learn about Church Music Institutes that are held in each Metropolis. There will also be time explore new music and learn about Holy Trinity’s icons. Evenings include a Greek Night at the parish and socials at local restaurants, including a Mystery Night Dinner Theater.

MEFGOX members are welcome to attend to see national church music issues being addressed, meet church musicians from across the US, and chant or sing with Holy Trinity’s a cappella choir on Sunday (Kevin Lawrence music).