

# ***DIAKONIA***

SPRING 2011



*Christ is risen from the dead,  
trampling down death by death,  
and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!*

## **ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN**

A SISTERHOOD SERVING CHRIST THROUGH SERVING OTHERS

## The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women Of North America

The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan PHILIP  
Founder

The Right Reverend  
Bishop JOSEPH  
Overseeing Hierarchy

### North American Board

Archimandrite John Abdalah, Spiritual Advisor

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Cindy Nimey ..... President  
Violet Robbat ..... Vice-president  
Dianne O'Regan ..... Recording Secretary  
Sherry Abraham-Morrow ..... Treasurer  
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Laila Ferris ..... Immediate Past President

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Kh. Suzanne Murphy ..... Membership  
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Kh. Helene Hajal ..... Scholarship  
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Bylaws  
Kh. Barbara Baz ..... Widowed Clergy Wives Program

#### *Antiochian Women's Prayer*

*In the Name of the Father  
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
O Christ our God, we are all pledged to  
serve Thee with our whole being.  
Help us to continue to work for Thee  
through our Church, without seeking praise,  
without seeking personal gain,  
without judging others, without a feeling that  
we have worked hard enough  
and now must allow ourselves rest.  
Give us strength to do what is right and  
help us to go on striving and to remember  
that activities are not the main thing in life.  
The most important thing is to have  
our hearts directed and attuned to Thee.  
Amen.*

**DIAKONIA** is a Newsletter of the North American Board of the Antiochian Women, an organization of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, and is published quarterly in the fall, winter, spring and summer.

#### **PUBLICATION GUIDELINES:**

##### **Deadlines**

- Please submit your articles by the first of the month prior to the month of publication so we can be sure they are included.

##### **Preferred Methods of Submission**

- E-mail as an attachment to **Roberta Royhab (419-340-4560)**, **DIAKONIA Editor**, at robertaroyhab@bex.net.
- Submit your article on a CD to Roberta Royhab at PO Box 1128, Perrysburg, OH 43552-1128.

##### **Submission Details**

- Please include your name and the phone number where you can be contacted for questions.
- Attach a hard copy for reference.
- Keep a copy. Articles will not be returned. Photos will be returned if requested.

##### **Content**

- All articles must be of interest to or regarding NAB, Diocesan or local Antiochian Women.
- All articles may be edited for length and clarity.

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In this issue of the **DIAKONIA** we highlight the  
**Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America**

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#### **What is DIAKONIA?**

The word **DIAKONIA** is a Greek word meaning *Service*, usually pertaining to service in the Church. The purpose of the Antiochian Women's organization is primarily spirituality and humanitarian service. In the words of our beloved Metropolitan PHILIP it is "*Theology in Action*".

## **Women of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America, known as “DOWAMA”, were active at conference in Oklahoma City, OK; they look forward to meetings in Shreveport, LA**

***By Deana Engle, Public Relations for DOWAMA***

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Despite being part of a region that spans from Wyoming and South Dakota down to Texas and New Mexico, there are two things that can bring the DOWAMA women together: our love for the Orthodox faith and our love for one another.

This past year has been no exception. Our diocesan convention was held in Oklahoma City, hosted by St. Elijah, in mid-June. As always, the parishioners of St. Elijah were fabulous hosts! Many attendees were left enlightened and fulfilled by the various sessions offered, while the clergy of DOWAMA provided beautiful services throughout our time together. Adding to the awe-inspiring beauty of our church services were the chanters, the choir, the altar servers and our own Bishop BASIL.

The Antiochian Women of DOWAMA met as a group on Thursday afternoon, hosting a luncheon with His Grace, Bishop BASIL and a business meeting for those in attendance. Winona Nava (current President) led our business meeting, with women from the various parishes represented offering a report of the ongoing projects of their individual women’s groups. Many fundraisers and family fun nights were in the works, giving the rest of our ladies wonderful ideas to take home with them.

Our fall gathering was held in late October, also in Oklahoma City. After a business meeting for the DOWAMA women, all those in attendance spent quality time Friday evening with keynote speaker Kh. Susan Wallace, who spoke on “Envisioning United American Orthodoxy.” Discussions were offered on Saturday, led by Subdeacon Joshua Armitage and Kh. Susan, along with a Christian Education and Sacred Music workshop. Unfortunately, due to various fall fundraisers in different parishes, His Grace decided that we will no longer have our fall meeting in October. He did encourage inter-region retreats and get-togethers to keep the camaraderie in full swing.

February brought our mid-winter North American Board meeting, but also brought heavy snowfall for much of the country...including the East coast. Since no one could make it to the Antiochian Village for the meeting, the meeting came to us! A phone conference was held so that anyone could dial in and be a part of the mid-winter meeting. Even though we couldn’t see each other, it was still great to be able to interact with women from all the dioceses and be a part of this business meeting.

As the weather is starting to warm up, and with Pascha right around the corner, we anxiously look forward to beginning a new cycle with the DOWAMA Parish Life Conference. The 2011 convention will be hosted by St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Shreveport, Louisiana. There is no doubt that this PLC will rank among the best!

Deanna Engel

DOWAMA Public Relations Coordinator

# Meet the Board of Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America (DOWAMA)

## **BIOGRAPHIES :**

### ***The V. Rev. Christopher Morris- Spiritual Advisor***



Fr. Christopher received a Bachelor of Arts from Bethel College in 1996, a Master of Fine Arts degree from Kansas State University in 2001, and a Master of Divinity degree from St. Tikhon's Seminary in 2006. Fr. Christopher also

attended St. Herman Seminary in Kodiak, Alaska.

Fr. Christopher was ordained to the holy priesthood in February of 2006 by His Grace Bishop BASIL at St. Tikhon's Monastery during his final year of seminary. While attending seminary, he was attached to St. Mary's parish in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

Following his graduation, Fr. Christopher was blessed to return to his home diocese of Wichita and Mid-America and the omophorion of His Grace Bishop BASIL. Currently, he is serving as pastor of St. George Orthodox Church in Kearney, Nebraska, our archdiocese's 5th oldest parish, founded by St. Raphael of Brooklyn in 1904.

Fr. Christopher is married to Kh. Anastasia. They have 3 young children—Gabriella, Juliana, and Joseph.

### ***Winona Nava - President***



My home parish is Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Santa Fe, NM. I was among a group of 21 founding members of Holy Trinity who traveled to Salina, Kansas in December of 1995 to enter into communion with the Holy Orthodox Church through the sacrament of

Chrismation. The following day, December 31, 1995, we traveled to Wichita to begin the process of ordination for our Priest, Fr. John Bethancourt and Deacon Basil Rives.

The first member of the Wichita congregation to welcome me was Sherry Abraham-Morrow. She shared with me the importance of being a part of the Antiochian Women's Sisterhood. She encouraged me to start an Antiochian Women's chapter at our new parish and to attend the annual Parish Life Conference. Over the years we have discussed ways of helping more of the parishes and missions become active. I believe that Sherry's personalized and loving outreach is a great example of how to attain that goal.

I founded our Holy Trinity Antiochian Women's group in the spring of 1996 after my encounter with Sherry in Wichita. As she suggested I began attending the Parish Life Conferences and the Antiochian Women's Meetings. Active membership in the Sisterhood of the Antiochian Women has been a blessing to me.

I have been privileged to serve over the years as President of the Holy Trinity Chapter of Antiochian Women, Treasurer of the DOWAMA (at that time Southwest Region) Antiochian Women and now as President of DOWAMA. I am honored that the women of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America elected me

to lead them as President of the Antiochian Women in 2007. It is a pleasure to lead and work alongside the dedicated and hard-working women of our Diocese and the Archdiocese.

My husband, Sub-Deacon Raphael, and I have five children and 12 grandchildren who are our joy. We love spending time with our children and grandchildren, particularly in the mountains during the summer, and traveling, when time allows.

My husband I have worshipped at Orthodox Churches throughout North America and been privileged to meet and correspond with other Antiochian Women and faithful Orthodox. We have attended many of the local and national meetings and enjoy our time at these wonderful—family reunions. Since our first service in Salina, Kansas, we have truly felt at home at all of the parishes we have visited thanks to the warmth and love shown by all.

Professionally I'm President/CEO of the Guadalupe Credit Union in Santa Fe, NM. I have been involved in the financial services industry for over 30 years. I am a graduate in business and accounting from Santa Fe College. I have served on the Holy Trinity Parish Council, currently serve as one of the 24 directors representing the 8,000 United States Credit Unions at the national level on the CUNA (Credit Union National Association) Board and serve on the Board of the Credit Union Executive Society-Rocky Mountain Chapter.

***Jane Harakal—Vice President/NAB Project***

I was born and grew up in Northwestern Ohio. I have a



Bachelor's degree in Music Education from Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH, where I met my wonderful husband, John. We married right after my graduation in 1952. I was a public school music supervisor in Kirksville, Missouri, for four years, working John's way

through medical school. I have not been gainfully employed since then, and have enjoyed being a full time Mom to two girls and two boys who have now given me nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. I have been a widow for 13+ years.

John and I became Orthodox Christians in 1993 when our church became St. Peter's in Ft. Worth. What a blessing this gift from God has been. I am active in everything (it seems) at the church, including our chapter of the order of St. Ignatius. I have enjoyed serving as Humanitarian Coordinator, two terms as Recording Secretary, and this term as Vice-President of the Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America.

In addition to my work in the church, I also love the volunteer work I do at the Ft. Worth Botanic Gardens, and the Girls' Service League (an organization giving money to females for as long as it takes to earn a college degree), reading, doing anything with my family and traveling.

***Judy Stevens - Treasurer & Immediate Past President***



I am a member of St. Thomas in Sioux City, Iowa and current President and previous Secretary and Treasurer of my local chapter. On the diocesan level, I am the previous Diocesan President, Vice President and current Treasurer.

My husband is a cradle Orthodox which is how I became Orthodox approximately 34 years ago. We have raised our four sons in the Church where they have all served as altar boys. I have been a Sunday School teacher for 30 of those years. I have also been involved in the Fellowship of St. John the Divine. It is so rewarding to see the children in the Parish grow up and become involved in the Church.

St. Thomas is one of the smaller parishes which gives one the opportunity to be very involved. The ladies'

president is automatically on the church board. When one is involved in the Antiochian Women, one is also involved in the church dinners, fatayer (meat pie) sales as well as other projects the women are involved in.

We have to continue to encourage everyone to be involved. Everyone has talents that we need in our churches. God bless all of you.

### ***Jaclyn Al-Hanna Recording Secretary***

My name is Jaclyn Al-Hanna. I am 24 years old and was born and raised in the sun city of El Paso, Texas. I am the daughter of Nizar and Linda Al-Hanna and am the eldest of two siblings, my sister Jehan and my brother Joseph.

My whole life I have wanted to have a promising career that would make me happy. As I grew older I began discovering that what made me feel good inside was helping children more than anything else. I wanted to touch many lives. Four years ago I answered my calling and pursued my journey through education. I have recently graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso with a Bachelor in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in Education. It was a very happy and honorable moment in my life. It was then that I began my search for a teaching job and was blessed to become a kindergarten teacher at Mesita Elementary in El Paso this past August 2010. I have never been happier in my life; as they say, "I get paid to do what I love."

A woman's strength should be spent on her God. The scriptures say in Proverbs 31:25, *"strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in the time to come."* It also says in Proverbs 31:17, *"She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms."*

It was in the fall of 1986, 24 years ago, that I experienced my "new birth" in to the church life of Christian Orthodoxy at St. George Orthodox Church in El Paso, a life that would be followed through Christ's words and teachings. As a young girl I participated in Sunday school to learn about my faith and participated in functions such as our annual May Festival. My parents assured that I attended church which established me with a strong foundation in the Church. As time passed I reached my late teens, ready to step into early adulthood. It was this time in my life where I was in the darkest point in my faith; my Church life was almost non-existent. It was at that time, five years ago, when I was reunited with a friend from my childhood in the parish, PJ Ferris, and found not only friendship but love.

*"My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will never be shaken."* Psalm 62:1-2. I have been

blessed with my mentor Laila Ferris who has guided me through the path to my accomplishments at my local parish to the North American Board level. I began teaching Sunday School in 2007 to children ages 3 and 4 years old for one year and then began teaching 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders to the present. I have deeply enjoyed teaching the faith to our youth.

In 2009 I was asked to serve as the St. George Antiochian Women's Secretary; I whole heartedly accepted this task. I attended the Antiochian Women's NAB meetings in the winter of 2009 and the summer of 2010. I look forward to making a future at the national level. In 2010, I was asked to become the Secretary of the Antiochian Orthodox Women for the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America and I accepted. Being the youngest of members in the Antiochian Women from my local parish to the National level, I have been blessed with immense support and love which has strengthened me to pursue an active life with the Antiochian Women. I hope to further inspire young women of my age to become active members of the Antiochian Women in their parish, their Diocese, and at the national level.

I would like to close with this verse, *"How all glory to God, Who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to Him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever!"* Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

### ***Deanna Engel - Public Relations***



I have called Sioux City, Iowa, home for my entire life, leaving only to attend college when I studied at the University of South Dakota. Earning my degree in Mass Communications—Public Relations, I graduated in 2001. I am a lifelong member of St. Thomas Orthodox Church, where I currently serve as our Sunday School Program Superintendent as well as a teacher. My church involvement includes being a member of our choir for the past 17 years and a member of our Antiochian Women's group for the past eight years. My involvement at the diocesan level began two years ago. Serving in my church is one of my passions.

I am divorced mom to a wonderful five-year-old daughter, Sadie, who is one of my other passions. She is in Kindergarten and learns something new every day. Sadie keeps me on my toes, as she is very active. I wish I could bottle the energy at this age and use it to keep up! Sadie and I recently started taking Tae Kwon Do classes and are really enjoying learning the sport. We also love spending time with my fiancé, Edward, whom I met at St. Thomas! I am so grateful that God has blessed us with second chance.

In the little spare time that I have, I love to read fiction books and do crossword puzzles. During the summer we spend lots of time outside, taking walks and chasing lightening bugs. When the cold Iowa winter takes its toll we spend our time indoors, cuddled up watching a good movie.

**Paula Snider - Humanitarian**



*“Faith sees the invisible, feels the intangible and achieves the impossible.”*

I grew up in West Virginia and graduated from West Virginia University with a BS in Nutrition. While at WVU I met and married the love of my life Douglas. We traveled many years with the U.S. Air Force and finally

settled in Texas. Our two daughters live in Texas and have six children between them for me to love and treasure. I have been a widow 17 years.

My Parish home is St. Peter’s. Currently I am on the Vestry at church, a board member for St. Peter’s Classical school, President of the local St. Ignatius group and Treasurer of our St. Sophia’s group. I have been retired about two years from Directing University Food Services. Retirement is highly underrated and I recommend it to all. This gives me much time to spend with family and grandbabies, and reading, traveling, working in my garden and going to auctions.

**Sherry Abraham Morrow - Product Sales Coordinator**

A member of St. George Cathedral in Wichita, Kansas, Sherry also is treasurer for the NAB; see her biography

in the October 2009 issue of the DIAKONIA.

**Linda Steinbrink - Website**



My name is Linda Steinbrink and I attend St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church in Omaha, Nebraska. I haven’t always been Orthodox. I was born and raised Catholic living in Lincoln and Grand Island, Nebraska. I attended college in Kearney, Nebraska where I met my husband Steve. As we dated I would attend church with him at St. George’s Orthodox Church in Kearney, where we were married in 1984. It wasn’t until several years later when we moved to Omaha with our two children that I began to deeply appreciate the Orthodox faith.

I was an assistant Church School teacher, learning right along with the children about the richness of our Orthodox faith. In 2003, I received the Sacrament of Christmation.

Since then I have continued to be involved with the Church. I have been the Church School Director for two years and I enjoy being involved with the Antiochian Women. I am also the Chair of our Landscaping Committee. Serving the Lord in these different capacities has enabled me to not only grow spiritually in my faith, but also grow personally. Professionally I am a meeting planner (for 9-1/2 years) at the Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians, a membership organization of 700 active members. Steve and I have two children, Kimberley (22) and Nick (24). Kim attends the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Nick graduated from Wichita State in May of 2010, and is with Bombardier Learjet. He married his high school sweetheart, Amanda, in July.

I enjoy spending time with my family, especially when it works for all of us to be together. In the spring, summer and fall you will find me out in my yard (or at Church) tending to the flowers and plants.



# Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women

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**REMINDER to Diocesan Boards:** Please remember the following schedule for submitting your articles and profiles for the *DIAKONIA*. One diocese is highlighted in each issue according to the following schedule. However, articles and news from all dioceses and parishes of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America are welcome in every issue.—Roberta Royhab, Editor

	Diocese	Date of Publication	Date Due
1	NAB Board	(Fall) October 2009	Done
2	Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic and the Diocese of New York and Washington D.C.	(Winter) January 2010	Done
3	Diocese of Los Angeles and the West and the Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest	(Spring) April 2010	Done
4	Diocese of Miami and the Southeast	(Summer) July 2010	Done
5	Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate NY	(Fall) October 2010	Done
6	Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest	(Winter) January 2011	Done
7	Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America	(Spring) April 2011	Done
8	Diocese of Worcester and New England	(Summer) July 2011	June 1, 2011

To ensure publication in the next issue, please submit your news and articles by