



Volume 2 No. 1

September–October 2016

# Newsletter

Of the Eastern Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

## OCMC Mission Trip to Kenya

On August 10, our team of 11 gathered at the Orthodox Christian Mission Center in St. Augustine, Florida, and spent two days getting to know each other and learning some of the culture and work we would be doing in Kenya.

Most of the team were young. One woman was returning to Nyeri (the region in Kenya we were going to) after an OCMC trip 27 years ago when the school was built and where she met her husband. Another woman brought her 12-year-old daughter, who became a favorite of all the children at the Children's Home. The other 7 members ranged in age from 19–29 and included one young man. I very much appreciated the talents and

energy of all the young people on our team. Our team was blessed to have several teachers amongst us, including an amazingly gifted music teacher.

We left on a red eye flight from Jacksonville, Florida on August 12, and arrived in Amsterdam for an 8-hour layover in the morning. Most of us took the opportunity to explore Amsterdam that afternoon. After another red eye flight, we were greeted at the airport by Fr. Gregory, the Vicar General of the Nyeri Diocese. He was with us throughout the entire stay and treated us with great care.

In Kenya, Americans are known for being accustomed to luxury, so they did their best to not shock us. We were continually



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asked if we were okay. Is the food okay? Do you have everything you need?

Our first stop was to a parish that is only 4 months old. We arrived immediately after their Sunday Liturgy. About 30 of the faithful of all ages were gathered in a small church building with a tin roof and tin walls, located off the highway about 1/2 mile up a bumpy dirt road. Fr. Francis, their priest, was giving a homily, but when we came in we were greeted with a welcome that included singing and dancing. Then we followed them up the hill further on foot to where they showed us their 3 pigs that were their investment in the future of their new parish.

The next day we attended the Dormition Liturgy celebrated by the Bishop Neophytos and about 16 priests from his Diocese. Bishop Neophytos is the first native Bishop

in Kenya and has been caring for this Diocese for a couple of years. The children from the Makarios Children's Home were there, and after lunch we began our camp. We were there to provide some good Orthodox teaching with the theme "You Are God's Beautiful Creation!"



There are about 150 children who live in the Children's Home. They call it a home, and not an orphanage, because it is their home! They have all come from very difficult circumstances, including those orphaned and abused. Children from the nearby countryside also attend the school.



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We worked with the 3rd–8th graders, as the younger ones didn't know enough English to understand us. It was a stretch for some of the older ones as well! We learned a little Swahili, and did lots of singing; this is what they love. In church they sing with all their hearts, and often break into rhythmic clapping and dancing.



We were provided rooms in a nice hotel, so we did not have it too rough. We were picked up early every morning and taken to the church to worship with the children. Then we walked the 1/4 mile to the Children's Home where

we had breakfast, and then back to the church and school for our camp.

The team taught about Creation, the Feasts of the Church and Lives of Saints. We brought lots of craft activities that the children loved. Their classrooms have simple wooden benches with a narrow table for writing. There are no pictures on the wall and we saw very few books. The children taught us also! Besides, their open and joyful spirits we learned many songs and games from them.

We were given the opportunity to visit several other small churches in the Diocese in Nyeri. At each one, we were shown the same loving welcome by everyone. On Sunday we went to their Cathedral. It looked just as the smaller churches did with a tin roof and walls, but it was a bit larger. There, His Grace did his first Ordination of a young man to the diaconate. There were about 500 people in attendance.



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A group of people from the Masai tribe were also received into the Church during this service. There were mostly women and children, as the husbands practice pagan rituals, in which the women and children are not permitted to participate. At the end of the service we were welcomed to the front and asked to sing a Swahili song we had learned from the children at Makarios Children’s Home. After this we began our 3-hour journey back to the Nairobi airport.

I am so grateful to have had this grace-filled experience. It was a wonderful opening into our Holy Orthodox Church expressed in another culture. I felt the prayers of those back home and highly recommend that if you feel God’s call to a Mission Team, GO! It will be life changing!

**Mat. Connie Shank**

## **Sacraments and Blessings**

### Baptisms

7/17: Winifred Bright (infant)

7/17: Nikolai James (baptismal name Nikolai) (infant)

Godparents: Oleksandr Rybchynskyi and Susan Marie Burlingame

7/17: Theodon Joseph Nicolulis (baptismal name Joseph) (infant)

Godparents: Oleksandr Rybchynskyi and Shamiron Shahbaz–Arami

8/21/16: Miriam Vallejos (infant)

Godparents: Christopher Banke and Cindy Olson

8/21/16: Naomi Martinsen (infant)

Godparents: Robert Dales and Rosalie Broding

### Chrismations:

8/21/16: Gerald Delgado (St. Lawrence) and Dolores Delgado (St. Anna)

Sponsors: Nathaniel and Brigid Gerard



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**Catechumens:**

6/19: Laura Wachsmuth

7/17: Michael Hodges (St. Seraphim of Sarov); Olga Hodges (St. Olga)

**Marriage Blessing**

July 3: Rdr Nathaniel and Brigid Girard

**Hospitality Schedule**

4–Sep	Shaw, Nash, McFadden
11–Sep	Jensen / McMichael
18–Sep	Alex & Diana Shechenko
25–Sep	Michael & Xenia McConnell
2–Oct	Walker / Boyd
9–Oct	Vallejos

**Upcoming Events – Sept. and Oct.**

- Sacrament of Holy Unction, 9/1, 7:00 p.m.
- Nativity of the Theotokos, Vigil, 9/7, 6:30 p.m.
- Mat. Connie will share videos and photos of her Kenya trip after Liturgy, 9/11
- Elevation of the Cross, Vigil, 9/13, 6:30 p.m.
- Ministries Sunday, 9/18, after Liturgy
- Sunday School classes begin, 9/18
- Greek Open Golf Tournament to support Agia Sophia Academy, 9/19. Please go to [www.greekopen.com](http://www.greekopen.com) for more information or to register.
- Harvest Festival, 9/24, 2:00 p.m. – Vespers
- Diocesan Assembly, 10/11–13



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## Recipe

### Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

In every issue we include an easy recipe that can be used for Fast Days or Fish and Oil days on the fasting calendar.

#### Ingredients:

1–½ cups raw pumpkin seeds

2 Tbsp. melted butter

Salt to taste

Other ingredients to choose from might be soy sauce, some garlic powder, or other flavors.

#### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees.
2. Toss pumpkin seeds in a bowl with the melted butter and seasoning, then spread evenly on a cookie sheet.
3. Bake for about 45 minutes and stir every 15 minutes.
5. Remove from oven and let cool, then store in a container until ready to eat. These pumpkin seeds are a good substitute for popcorn.

"If you guard your tongue, my brother, God will give you the gift of compunction of heart so that you may see your soul, and thereby you will enter into spiritual joy. But if your tongue defeats you--believe me in what I say to you--you will never be able to escape from darkness. If you do not have a pure heart, at least have a pure mouth." – **St. Isaac the Syrian**

"Silence saves us from all evils."

**St. Porphyrios the Kapsokalivite**

"Pray persistently about everything, and then you will never do anything without God's help." – **St. Mark the Ascetic**

If you have submissions for the newsletter  
please e-mail them to

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