

# OCCJ

Orthodox Christian JOURNAL<sup>®</sup>

SPRING/SUMMER 2021

volume 95 number 2

**Also Inside:**

- Virtual Tour of Holy Land
- Virtual Youth Retreat
- Remembering Father Daniel Ressetar
- National Golf Tournament



*The official publication of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America*

*Navigating to the 95th in 2022*



Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America - 95th National Convention

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**OCJ** Orthodox Christian JOURNAL®

**SPRING/SUMMER 2021**  
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**Orthodox Christians in America,**  
**to showcase the talents of its membership**  
**and, in so doing, to propagate the**  
**Holy Orthodox Christian Faith.**

**Mission Statement of the  
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**TO WITNESS  
OUR FAITH  
BY  
CHARITABLE  
WORKS  
THROUGH  
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## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTARY

**Allison Steffaro**

*44th National FOCA President*



I hope this letter finds all of you well. It's been quite a while since we have actually been together face to face but our activities throughout the Spring have used technology to its fullest! To start, we had over 80 youth from across the country, Alaska, Canada, and Mexico participate in a Youth Retreat. Using technology, each age group was able to have their own unique experience with children from all over the world. This was so successful that we are planning to hold another one next year! Our Lenten journey then took all of us on a trip to the Holy Land that was both spiritually and intellectually uplifting. Fr. Ilya provided a unique look into the sites of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ still standing today. This event raises over \$2200 for our Gifts of Love campaign. We thank all of you for your generosity and attendance. Look for another trip to the Holy Land during the Advent season. A big thank you to Fr. Nickolas Wyslutsky for putting together these wonderful activities. In the next few weeks you will receive a video message from me addressing upcoming events for our Fellowship. Although we all face uncertainty about gathering in the near future, our executive board has come up with many exciting activities for all of us to participate in. We look forward to "seeing you" at these events.

## EDITOR'S NOTES

**Marge Kovach**

Interim Editor, *Orthodox Christian JOURNAL*

It is a pleasure to bring FOCA news directly to your home, especially during a time when activities are still being cancelled, rescheduled, or conducted virtually. Since we are limited in our interactions, it is even more important that you submit news-worthy stories, from your chapter and district, so we can continue to share this information.

In this issue we highlight two, very well-received, virtual events. Father Ilya Gotlinsky took us on a tour of the Holy Land and youth from across the continent came together for a virtual retreat.

We also feature two weeks of Ohio Camp, complete with photos capturing the excitement of our youth as they returned to camp after the pandemic caused the cancellation of the 2020 program. Be sure to read the quotes from campers, included within the articles, to gain some perspective on what the camp experience means to them.

We also report on the annual Summer Sports Tournament held near Columbus, Ohio as well as updates from several districts.

The 95th National FOCA Convention, previously scheduled for 2021, has been rescheduled for July 2022. Plans for "Navigating to the 95th" are moving forward and specific details will be in the OCJ Fall/Winter issue as well as posted on our website. Additional events and activities planned for the next few months are also listed in the F.O.C.A. Calendar as well as described in the Highlights and News In Brief.

On a somber note, the "Transitions" section includes several memorials for extremely dedicated, long-time members and supporters of the FROC/FOCA as well as the Church. We are thankful for their contributions on a local, district, and especially on a national level. They will be missed. May their memories be eternal!

### 2021 Articles Deadline for the OCJ:

***Fall/Winter due January 15th 2022***

*Send articles, photos, and information to:*

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Phone: 917-887-5023

*Please send photos in jpg format and don't embed them in the document; attach separately.*

## F.O.C.A. HIGHLIGHTS AND NEWS-IN-BRIEF

A **Virtual Caucus** will be held on October 9th. This national meeting will precede Convention sessions planned by several Districts. Agenda items include presentation of our budget, discussion of upcoming events, and selection of a 2021-2022 Gifts of Love recipient.

Our virtual gatherings were so successful last year that plans are already in the works to host them again in the same format. Look for further details on the **Lenten Youth Retreat, tour of Bethlehem** during the Nativity Fast, and **Akathist service in honor of the organization's patron - St. Andrew** scheduled for November 30, 2021.

Also in the planning stage is a **Virtual Christmas Concert** with a tentative date of Sunday, December 26, 2021.

The **95th National FOCA Convention** has been rescheduled in conjunction with 20th All-American Council, for July 2022 in Baltimore, Maryland. Details on "Navigating to the 95th" will be available in the next OCJ issue in addition to updates posted on our website and shared via email newsletters.

**Charitable Outreach Update** – In consideration of the financial impact of extended pandemic restrictions on our members and chapters, the Executive Board approved modifications to our charitable outreach for the year ending June 30, 2021.

2021 Gifts of Love campaign contributions have been added to 2020 funds and \$6,500 have been forwarded to the Diocese of Alaska to support their newly established ministry program. The Orthodox Care Network of Alaska is an online resource for both Alaskan clergy and laity who are in need of food, seasonal clothing, and school supplies. Once requests are reviewed by the Diocese, and approval is granted, needed items will be purchased through the Amazon gift registry and shipped directly to the respective parishes. Additional information on this program is available on the Diocesan website: [doaoca.org](http://doaoca.org).

Additionally, our 2021 St. Andrew's Appeal is ongoing, but for this year, chapters were NOT given suggested fund goals based upon membership. However, donations to the appeal are welcomed on a voluntary basis. A financial summary will be prepared and distributed to the Board of Trustees and participating chapters. Scholarship awards and other donations are dependent upon funds received.

# NAVIGATE TO THE 95TH

*95th National FOCA Convention*

July 15th – 18th

*20th All-American Council*

July 18th - 22nd



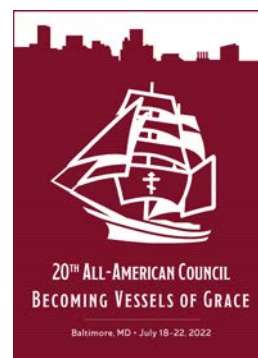
Chart your course for Baltimore, Maryland in 2022 and plan to attend the 95th National FOCA Convention, held in conjunction with the Orthodox Church in America's 20th All-American Council.

We drop anchor at the Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor Hotel, set in an iconic seaport area with restaurants, museums, shops, sports complexes, nightclubs, and historic ships. It is a quick walk to Camden Yards, M&T Stadium, the National Aquarium, Maryland Science Center, and a waterfront concert at Pier Six Pavilion.

Your "Convention Crew" is finalizing the itinerary for an extended weekend of business, faith, fellowship, and fun. Updates will be posted on our website as well as shared via email newsletters.



Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America - 95th National Convention

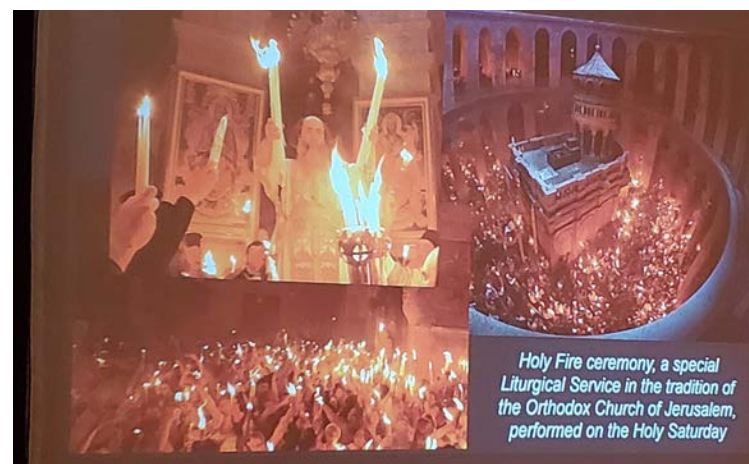
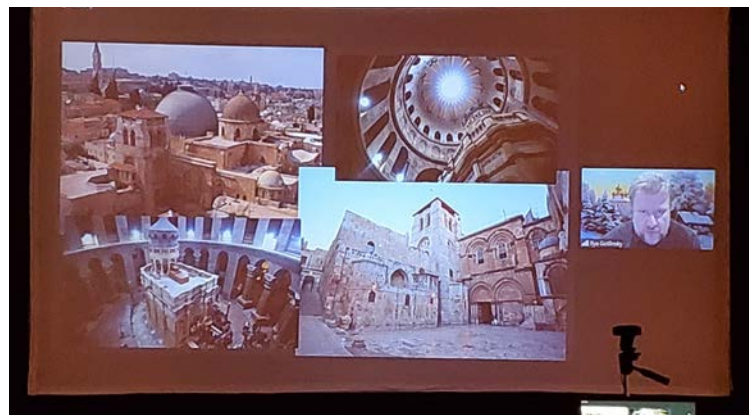


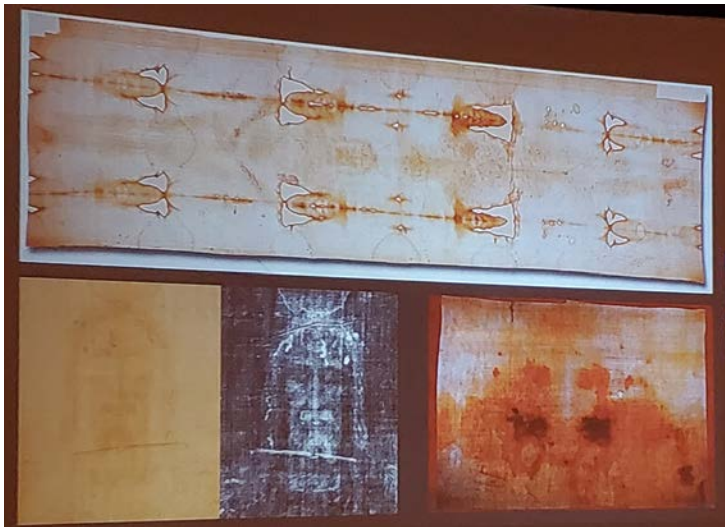


On Sunday, April 18, 2021, sixty-three households, from across the country, gathered for a “virtual tour” of the holy sites of Jerusalem organized by the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America.

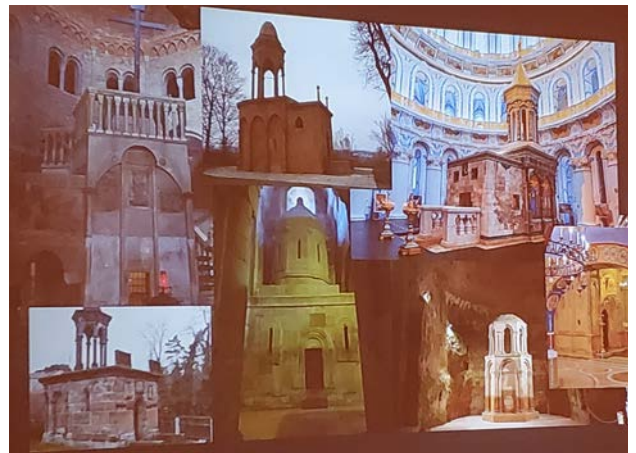
Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky, Pastor of Dormition of the Virgin Mary Church, Binghamton, NY and Director of the Orthodox Tours Company, led our group as we journeyed to the holy city of Jerusalem. Focusing on the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, we learned about the discovery of the holy sites contained in the Church, Golgatha, and the Lord’s tomb. Fr. Ilya shared the history of the excavation of these sites and discussed the traditions, events, and burial methods that support the certainty that these are, in fact, the true sites of the Lord’s crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.

Participant registration donations benefit the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America’s United Fund – financing youth programs and activities, educational scholarships, and charitable outreach efforts. Through the generosity of our attendees, \$2,200 was raised. We want to offer our thanks to all for supporting these efforts.





Very Rev. Father Nicholas Wyslutsky, National Spiritual Advisor and coordinator of the event, received a lot of positive feedback. Many of the participants expressed their thankfulness for the opportunity to visit this holy place saying that “it was the next best thing to being there.” Father Nick expressed our thanks to Fr. Ilya for his informative and engaging presentation.

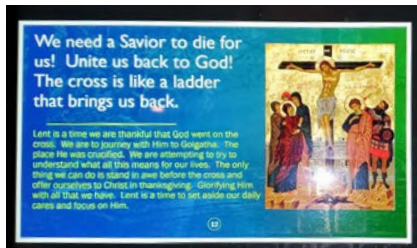


## Virtual National Lenten Youth Retreat

Eight-eight Orthodox youth, from several jurisdictions, came together for the first ever “Virtual National Lenten Youth Retreat” sponsored by the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America on Sunday on April 11. The zoom event was a tremendous success, gathering participants from a number of dioceses from across the Continent – including Alaska and Mexico.

Retreat leaders Archpriest Benjamin Tucci (St Mary’s Cathedral in Minneapolis, MN) and Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky (Holy Apostles Parish in Mechanicsburg, PA) lead the retreat entitled: “Rediscovering Pascha” After a Year of Pandemic.

Participants, ranging in ages from Pre-K to grade 12, were guided

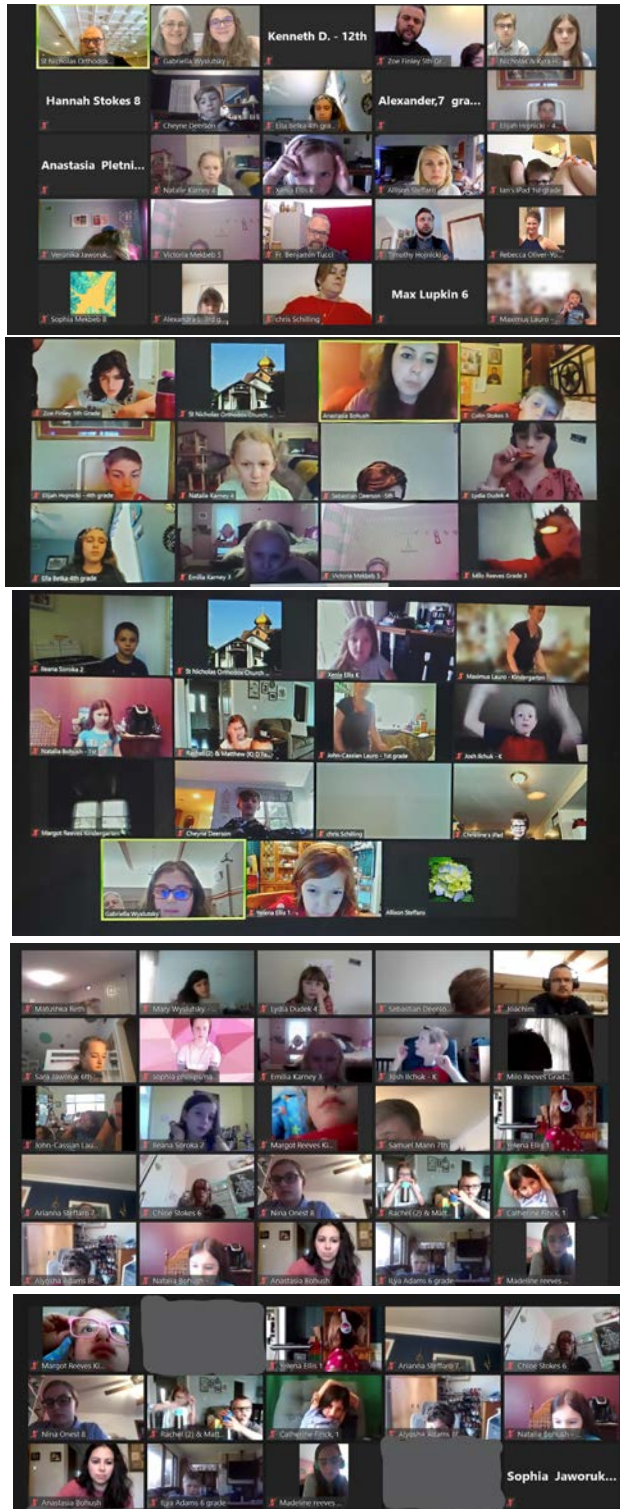


through the Season of Great Lent- from the days of Holy week through Pascha. All appreciated their insightful and engaging presentations and the opportunity to ask questions and grow their knowledge and faith.

Participants also enjoyed the fellowship portion of the retreat facilitated by Matushka Elizabeth and Gabriella Wyslutsky (St. Nicholas in Mogadore, OH). Fun and social time allowed opportunity for members of each age group to make new friends. Activities included singing, dancing, and reading stories with the youngest attendees. Middle schoolers enjoyed a virtual scavenger hunt, and the teens really enjoyed Orthodox themed virtual escape room.

FOCA National Spiritual Advisor, Very Rev. Father Nicholas Wyslutsky coordinated the event. He extends his sincere thanks to the army of volunteers who helped chaperone, monitor, and facilitate the sessions. Saying, "Thanks to all of you, a great day was had by all."

He is currently working on our next youth retreat with dates and details forthcoming.



*"All of the presenters were very kind and passionate about their topic. The escape room was very cool and creative. I was really glad I was able to register and come to the retreat. God bless you all! I really liked the breakout rooms and meeting other kids."*

*"I was so happy my daughter was able to learn more about both Great Lent and Holy Week. I thought both Fr. Ben and Fr. Tim did a great job of presenting to the younger crowd, especially with the slides used to support their content. My son loved the last session with Matushka Elizabeth and Gabriella."*





# In Memoriam Mitred Ap. Daniel D. Ressetar

March 27, 1927 - January 20, 2021

When we finally gather again for the National Convention, there will be a noticeable absence at the Altar during Divine Liturgy as, on January 20, 2021, the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) lost a long-time supporter and spiritual advisor to the pandemic. Moreover, the Orthodox Church in America lost one of the eldest, most respected, and beloved priests when Mitred Archpriest Daniel Dimitri Ressetar reposed in the Lord just shy of his 94th birthday.

Father Daniel was born in Edwardsville, PA on March 28, 1927, to Mitred Archpriest Dimitri J. and Matushka Margaret (Tomcho) Ressetar. He graduated from Lincoln High School in Jersey City, NJ, Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary in South Canaan, PA in 1948 (where he directed the choir), and Lafayette College in 1951 (where he won the Greek language prize).

A few years later, Father Dan became the choir director at Saint Michael's Russian Orthodox Church in Cleveland, OH, where he married Theodora V. Prislopsky, daughter of the parish priest and 1st National President of the Federated Russian Orthodox Clubs (FROC), in 1958. After ordination, he was assigned to Holy Trinity Church in McAdoo, PA, revitalizing the Sunday School program and reactivating the FROC chapter which proudly hosted the Central Pennsylvania District Convention in 1959. In 1962 he was assigned as chaplain at Lackland Airforce Base in San Antonio, TX for three years, retiring later as Lt. Col.

In 1965, he was assigned to the newly established parish of Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church in Harrisburg, PA where he faithfully served for over 55 years. Fulfilling his mission, Father Dan retired at age 80, but remained active as pastor emeritus.



Mitred Archpriest Dimitri and Rev. Daniel Ressetar



Ordination to the priesthood

Ordination to the priesthood

The current rector of Christ the Saviour, Fr. Stephen Vernak, writes of Fr. Daniel:

He was a "living legend" and my entire priesthood (which is comparatively small and insignificant) has been intertwined with his. I was ordained in 2007 with the express purpose of filling the pastoral vacancy left by his retirement, and we served together as concelebrants at Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church for the past 13 years. His love for the Lord and the ministry, humor, and deep connections throughout the Orthodox world (and beyond) are a reminder of the great impact a faithful servant of Christ can have in this fallen world. May his soul dwell with the righteous, and may his memory be eternal!

In addition to his parish ministry, Fr. Daniel served as a prison chaplain at the Dauphin County Prison for eight years, and in numerous Church-wide capacities, most notably serving as Dean of the Frackville Deanery and as National and District Spiritual Advisor for the FROC/FOCA.

According to Matushka Theodora, Father Dan had been a member of the FROC/FOCA since the 1940's. He was appointed National Spiritual



Met. Ireney and Fr Ressetar as National Spiritual Advisor. 1970 National F.R.O.C. Convention in Pittsburgh, PA



90th National FOCA Conv. Chicago, IL - 2016

Advisor of the FROC in 1969, serving for five years alongside National Presidents Joseph Baldowski and Edward Onisko. Father Dan actively participated in national conventions for decades.

For the past 26 years, Father Dan had been serving as Spiritual Advisor for the Central Pennsylvania District FROC/FOCA, having been appointed by His Eminence, Archbishop Herman in 1995.



75th Central PA District Convention - Harrisburg, PA, 2005

Long-time Governor of the Central Pennsylvania District, Gary Lelo, has “many fond memories of Father Ressetar,” noting that, “he had been our Spiritual Advisor for many, many years and in the past five years was seeking a replacement to no avail.”



Installation of officers at the Central PA District Convention - Alpha, NJ, Oct 2019

Governor Lelo recalls how, “Father Dan continuously urged all Orthodox students to apply for the National and District educational scholarships and always tried to organize a basketball team each year for the National Tournaments.” Father Dan participated in many clergy foul-shooting contests during National Basketball Tournaments.

You can always count on Father Dan’s participation in

National Basketball Tournament Banquet  
OCJ • Spring 2007



Clergy Shooting Contest OCJ • Spring 2014

district activities such as baseball game/picnic outings at First Energy Park in Reading, PA and the annual outing at Knoebel’s



OCJ • Spring 2014

Amusement Park in Elysburg, PA. Gary said, “Father Dan always made sure to ride all the rides.”

Father Dan received many high priestly honors, including the St. Innocent Award (Silver Class); the Chaplain’s Cross presented in July 2018 by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon in recognition of his years of service as a chaplain;

and in December 2018, he received the highest honor given to a married priest in the Orthodox Church, the Mitre (priestly crown) bestowed upon him by His Eminence, Archbishop Mark in recognition of Father Dan’s long and distinguished service to the Orthodox Church, the parish of Christ the Saviour, and numerous other religious and civic institutions.



Presentation of Chaplain’s Pectoral Cross  
Photo Credit: Subdeacon Roman Ostash OCA

Some of Father Dan’s varied accomplishments include conducting a Pan-Orthodox Choir; serving as the oldest active Civil Air Patrol chaplain in the country, Veteran’s Hospital chaplain, and Vietnam Vet’s chaplain; marching in the annual Veteran’s Day parade in New York City; walking in the annual March for Life; and participating in the 1994 canonization services for his great uncle, Saint Maksym Sandowicz, the great martyr of the Carpatho-Rusyn people, in modern-day Poland; and much more.



His Eminence, Archbishop Mark bestowed the Mitre on Fr. Daniel Resseter

He enjoyed sports, especially baseball and football, following the Harrisburg Senators and other teams. He was a music lover as well, conducting choirs, singing, playing the piano, and attending Harrisburg Symphony concerts.



Veteran’s Day NYC 2014

Father Daniel is survived by his wife, Matushka Theodora, who was always by his side, and their three sons, Nicholas, Gregory, and Alexander.



Fr Dan received a Metropolitan’s ‘challenge coin’ – 2013

Funeral services were held in Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church, with His Eminence Archbishop Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania officiating, along with other Orthodox Clergy. Due to pandemic restrictions, visitation was limited, and services were live streamed allowing hundreds to participate virtually. Private burial was in Saint Tikhon Orthodox Cemetery in Waymart, PA.

Memory Eternal!

# Ohio District Camp Week 2

– Melissa Tesar

As I sit here getting ready to write this article to cover the 2nd week of Ohio District Camp, I can't help but think back to this time 1 year ago. We had so many disappointed kids (and Camp staff) who wanted, more than anything, to be at Camp. Fast forward a year, and we are so grateful to be back! Because we had to establish our procedures at the



end of March following CDC guidelines, it was decided that we needed to cut our capacity to half to ensure the safety of our Campers and Staff, we made the very tough decision to not hold Junior Olympics this year. We held two very successful weeks of Camp and are planning to have Junior Olympics back again in 2022.

I could talk about Camp, and the reasons why the kids come every year, all day long. Instead of hearing my take, I asked the Campers and Staff to write down what they love about Camp, why they come, etc. I must confess that I get a bit teary-eyed reading these, as I have gotten to know these kids and seeing what they wrote is, well, incredible, and the reason that I spend one week of vacation from work to come out and cook for them.

Nathan Chandler – age 17

*“Every year I look forward to Camp because I get to see all my friends from other sates. All the counselors are super helpful and friendly. The cooks make amazing food every day. The hardest part about Camp is leaving.”*

Nathan also provided some jokes. Why is it so easy to weigh a fish? Because they come with their scales. How does the moon cut its hair? Eclipse it!

Marta Arn – age 16

*“What makes Camp special is the people, the fellowship and the lifestyle.”*

Joe Deyling – age 13

*“Camp helps me learn about myself and my friends and I missed it a lot.”*

Gabby Rubis – age 13

*“This place is a second home to me. All the people here are so kind and genuine. This place is the best.”*

Rissa Paduchik – age 15

*“I’ve been coming to camp for like 10 years and what separates it from an average summer camp is*

*now, even after two years apart, we can walk into a room and pick up right where we left off. That’s not something that you can find everywhere.”*

Ethan Baker – age 13

*“Camp for me here at St. Vlad’s is a great experience since I get to know such wonderful people. That for*

*me is a 100!”*

Laura Arn – age 17

*“The camp is a refuge from the world. I’ve been coming here for over 10 years and it has always felt like home to me. St. Vlad’s has helped me grow a lot as a person and has fostered relationships that will last for the rest of my life. I’m really sad that this is my last year, but I’m glad I got to have this experience.”*

Emma Wassell – age 15

*“This was my first year at camp and even though I was new this year everyone was so welcoming, and I feel like I’ve been coming here for years. Camp has been such a good experience for me and has definitely helped me grow spiritually and as a person. There are so many amazing people here that I’m so glad I got to meet. I’ll miss them so much.”*

Hope Puskas –Former Camper and current Counselor

*“To me, camp is the safest place in the world. There is no gate, no fence, no bodyguards, but I know no matter what, I am safe with some of the most amazing souls in the world. I have confided in campers, co-counselors, Dcn. Dan and Mat. Catrina, or even the cooks in the kitchen. They have all become parts of this safe place. The beauty of camp can only go so far on its own, it is the people here that make camp truly what it is, a home for all of us when we need it the most.*

This is just a small selection of what I received. We truly, truly have a treasure in St. Vladimir’s Camp.

We are always accepting donations for St. Vladimir’s Camp, both items and monetary donations. Please contact me at [mjtesar@gmail.com](mailto:mjtesar@gmail.com) or 216-509-2573 for information. We have an Amazon wish list – the link is [bit.ly/stvladscampoh](https://bit.ly/stvladscampoh) If you purchase anything off of the list, it will be automatically shipped to my address.

# 2021 Ohio District Camping Season



# 2021 Ohio District Camping Season



# 2021 Ohio District Camping Season

Younger Kids (8-13)

July 4-10, 2021

Name: Emilia Age: 13

My favorite thing to do at Camp was hanging out with friends

My favorite food at camp was taCOS.

I love Camp because I get to hang out with friends and learn more about God.

Name: Christian Age: 11

My favorite thing to do at Camp was going to church

My favorite food at camp was sandwiches.

I love Camp because it's a lot of fun to go to church everyday.

Name: Sammy Age: 8

My favorite thing to do at Camp was having a lot of friends to hang out and play with because at home I just have my sister and here I have multiple sisters and brothers.

My favorite food at camp was ham sandwiches.

I love Camp because it's a BIG place and there are so many people and my sister is here.

Name: Inez Age: 10

My favorite thing to do at Camp was siesta, cantine, skit night and chapel.

My favorite food at camp was cheesy potatoes, taCOS and Camp donuts.

I love Camp because it's super fun and you make friends and the counselors are amazing.

Name: Lexus Age: 11

My favorite thing to do at Camp was making crafts.

My favorite food at camp was pierogies.

I love Camp because you get to meet friends and have fun!

# 2021 Summer Sports Tournament

Cap City O Club was the sponsor for the National Summer Sports Tournament on August 20-21. Golf Friday afternoon was held at the Cumberland Trial Golf Club, with its 60 bunkers, undulating greens and 27 water hazards it presented a challenge for the 19 golfers. After golf everyone enjoyed drinks and conversation on the patio. On Saturday 21 golfers played the Virtues Golf Club one of the topped ranked public courses in Ohio, with the varied terrain and elevation changes the course presented a different set of challenges then Friday. The awards banquet was held at the course following golf Saturday.



## 2021 Summer Sports Tournament Results

### ONE DAY EVENT

|                 |             |     |                      |            |    |
|-----------------|-------------|-----|----------------------|------------|----|
| <b>Actual</b>   |             |     | <b>Callaway HDCP</b> |            |    |
| 1. Greg Pawlack | Columbus OH | 103 | 1. John Schultz Jr.  | Weirton WV | 76 |

### TWO DAY EVENT MEN 54 and Under

|                    |               |     |                       |               |     |
|--------------------|---------------|-----|-----------------------|---------------|-----|
| <b>Actual</b>      |               |     | <b>Callaway HDCP</b>  |               |     |
| 1. David Stockman  | Canonsburg PA | 153 | 1. Fr. Andrew Nelko   | Weirton WV    | 149 |
| 2. David Schenken  | Canonsburg PA | 177 | 2. Christopher Wright | Canonsburg PA | 150 |
| 3. Anthony Schultz | Columbus OH   | 189 | 3. Andy Petty         | Mason OH      | 153 |
|                    |               |     | 3. Kevin Rudolph      | Canonsburg PA | 153 |

### TWO DAY EVENT MEN 55 and Over

|                 |               |     |                         |                  |     |
|-----------------|---------------|-----|-------------------------|------------------|-----|
| <b>Actual</b>   |               |     | <b>Callaway HDCP</b>    |                  |     |
| 1. Joe Lear     | Ambridge PA   | 175 | 1. Mark Marton          | Sun City West AZ | 148 |
| 2. Bob Markvan  | Cincinnati OH | 176 | 2. John Lord            | Garden St. NJ    | 153 |
| 3. Bob Schenken | Canonsburg PA | 201 | 3. Fr. Andrew Nelko Sr. | Campbell OH      | 155 |

### Friday

- #3 Closest to Pin Fr. Andrew Nelko Sr
- #6 Closest to Pin David Stockman
- #11 Closest to Pin David Stockman
- #17 Closest to Pin Bob Schenken

### Saturday

- #5 Closest to Pin David Stockman
- #9 Closest to Pin David Stockman
- #12 Closest to Pin Bob Schenken
- #14 Closest to Pin Joe Lear

# District Updates

## Colonial District

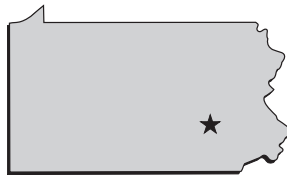
The Colonial District is trying to proceed as normal. Our annual stock award drawing took place as usual after Pascha. The stock award drawing was held at St Mark's, on June 1st, with Walter Alesevich, Nancy Stanton, and John Ihnat in attendance. The winners were \$200.00--Fr. Gregory Safchuk (St. Mark), \$100.00--Barbara Belsito (St. Stephen's), and \$50.00--John Ihnat (St. Mark).



Assuming that the country will continue to open from the lockdown precipitated by Covid-19, the Colonial District will probably resume activities in the Fall of 2021. We treated as 2000 not having taken place and our schedule was shifted by a year. As such, according to the 2020 District rotation schedule (being held in 2021) --the district convention will be hosted by Vladicon in Baltimore on October 9, and the religious education day will be hosted by Nation's Capital in Washington (likely during Advent).

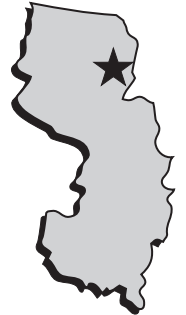
## Central Pennsylvania District

The district held their annual Orthodox Family Picnic at Knoebel's Amusement Park on Sunday, July 11, 2021. All of the Senior and Junior members, as well as the parishioners of the parishes in our district were invited.



## New Jersey District

Members of the South River R Club are committed to provide the maintenance of our church lawn at the tune of \$2,000/year. To keep this up we held two food sales where we sold pierogies, mushroom soup, cheese blintzes and some sweets.



Now that some restrictions have been lifted, we are planning on two pysanky decorating workshops - Sunday, August 15 and 11:00 a.m. (immediately following Liturgy) and Monday, August 23, at 7:00 p.m. Cost is \$10 for the two sessions which includes the necessary supplies and some light refreshments.

We are also planning a trip to Atlantic City on Tuesday, September 28 and are working on an Oktoberfest Party for Saturday, October 2, featuring German cuisine and live music.

## Michael Kupec, Jr completes Master of Arts (M.A.)



At the age of 58, as Michael Kupec, Jr. celebrated his 50th year as a member of FROC/FOCA, he also celebrated completing his Master of Arts (M.A.) at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. Michael is a member of Garden State Chapter #209 and has been serving the NJ District as Treasurer for most of the last 25+ years. He also served as interim National FOCA Treasurer for 2 years. At his home parish, SS. Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Cathedral (MP), Passaic NJ, Michael has served as a Sunday School Teacher, Choir Member, Church Council Trustee, and Tonsured Reader. He also served as an elected member of the Bishop's Council for 9 years as well as a member of the Spirit of Orthodoxy Choir for 20 years

## FOCA CALENDAR 2021-2022



- October 8, 2021 Virtual Caucus
- November 30, 2021 Virtual St. Andrew's Day Service
- July 3 - 9, 2022 Ohio Camp - Children ages 8 - 11
- July 10 - 16, 2022 Ohio Camp - FOCA Jr Olympics
- July 15 - 18, 2022 95th National FOCA Convention in Baltimore, MD
- July 17 - 23, 2022 Ohio Camp - Children ages 12 - 18

For updates and detailed info, visit [www.orthodoxfellowship.org](http://www.orthodoxfellowship.org)



# Transitions: *Spring/Summer 2021*



## In Memoriam: Archpriest Peter Pawlack

The Very Reverend Archpriest Peter Pawlack, 80, fell asleep in the Lord on April 19, 2021. Father Peter was born in Mayfield, PA the son of the late Julia (Hadginske) and Peter J. Pawlack. A younger sister and only sibling recently fell asleep in the Lord.

He graduated from (Eastside) New Jersey High School. He attended Rollins College in Winter Park, FL and subsequently transferred to Rider College (now Rider University) in Lawrenceville, NJ to continue his undergraduate studies. He received his undergraduate degree in Commerce and Industrial Management from Rider College. In the fall of 1962, he entered St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY.

In June of 1964 he and the former Barbara Rugala were married by the late V. Rev. Dimitri Ressetar, Rt. Rev. John Meyendorff and Very Rev. Paul Shafran in St. John's Orthodox Church, Mayfield, PA.

On October 10, 1964 Fr. Peter was ordained to the Holy Diaconate in St. Vladimir's Seminary Chapel by the late Archbishop of San Francisco. Four months later on February 15th he was ordained to the Holy Priesthood at Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary in New York City by the late Archbishop Ireney of Boston. Upon completion of his Bachelor of Divinity degree from St. Vladimir's Seminary in the spring of 1965 he was assigned to St. Mary's Church in Waterbury, CT.

While serving as pastor of St. Mary's Church, Fr. Peter advocated the use of the English language in an era when Church Slavonic was still quite prevalent. He served as Spiritual Advisor to the Atlantic District Eastern Orthodox Christian Education Association and the Atlantic District FROC, Secretary of the Diocese of New England and University Chaplain for the New England Diocese.

He returned to St. Vladimir's Seminary in 1967-68 and completed requirements for the Master of Divinity degree which was awarded in May of 1968.

In June of 1968, Fr. Peter was assigned to St. John the Baptist Church, Warren, Ohio where he served as pastor for 38 years.

During his pastorate at St. John's Church, Fr. Peter has served as: Chairman of the Department of Church School Programs for the Chicago-Minneapolis Diocese, Member of the Midwest Diocesan Council, Member of St. Joseph Hospital's Pastoral Advisory Council, Member of the Warren Police/Clergy Crisis Intervention Team and Vice-President of the Warren Clergy Association.

He has served as Secretary of the OCA Pension Board, Chairman of the Cleveland Deanery Publications Committee and was a member of the Howland Clergy Association.

Fr. Peter was elevated to Archpriest in 1977 and awarded the Jeweled Cross by the Synod of Bishops in 1990.

Prior to his retirement Fr. Peter served as Dean of the Ohio Deanery from 2004 to 2006. He retired from St. John the Baptist Church in August of 2006. During his retirement years he was a substitute priest as needed in parishes of the Ohio Deanery and for the last six years served Sunday Liturgy at the Orthodox Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Ellwood City, PA.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara of 56 years, two sons, Peter III and Gregory (Ruth Ann Bowers) and two grandchildren. His parents and only sister preceded him in death.

Fr. Peter's earthly body was received at Holy Transfiguration Monastery, lying in state in the monastery chapel until his burial.

May Father Peter's memory be eternal.

Source: <https://domoca.org/in-memoriam-archpriest-peter-pawlack/>



## In Memoriam: Archpriest Vladimir Lecko

Archpriest Vladimir Lecko, 91, fell asleep in the Lord on March 16, 2021, after a long battle with prostate cancer.

Throughout his 51+ years of pastoral ministry, Father Vladimir faithfully worked to build up the church and its members with kind words, wise counsel, well-written homilies, personal attention, laughter, and loving hugs. He appreciated the joy of children and their sense of wonder, connecting with others, and laughing out loud. Father Vladimir especially loved bearing witness to Jesus Christ.

Born in May 1929 to immigrants from the Carpatho-Rusyn region of Poland, he was the last surviving member of his siblings (5 other brothers and 2 sisters). Father Vladimir was a faithful life-long member of the Orthodox Faith, having served as an altar boy in his home parish of Saints Cyril & Methodius Church, Terryville, CT. He learned to sing and chant from his father, Alexander, the parish cantor.

In school Father Vladimir excelled in his studies, played basketball and baseball. His musical accomplishments led to being a member of the school bands in both Terryville and the neighboring town of Thomaston.

Father Vladimir enlisted in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. In 1952, joined by his new bride, Virginia, Father Vladimir was stationed in Anchorage, Alaska. He moved through the enlisted ranks, while also handling percussion duties in the Air Force Band. After nine years in the Air Force, Father was discharged to attend seminary. Father Vladimir and Virginia moved to eastern Pennsylvania, where he enrolled in Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary and later Wilkes University.

After graduating from Saint Tikhon's in May 1963, Father Vladimir became choir director at Saint John the Baptist Church, Edwardsville, PA, while completing his undergraduate degree in Sociology at Wilkes University, graduating in 1965.

During his time in Edwardsville, Father Vladimir worked with the youth programs of the Federated Russian Orthodox Clubs (later the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America), encouraging young people to be active Orthodox Christians, while living the Faith in the life of the Church. Father was involved in many youth activities including teaching Russian and coaching the girl's youth basketball team. While in Edwardsville PA, Father was instrumental in obtaining and installing the first language laboratory at St Tikhon's Seminary. He also established the Anthracite Valley Balalaika Orchestra as a way to nurture fellowship and musical expression by the area youth.

In October 1969, Father Vladimir was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood by Metropolitan Ireney. His first parish assignment was Nativity of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church, Madison, IL. Father Vladimir served for nearly ten years in Madison, having a profound impact on the faithful.

Father Vladimir also worked with the youth Cossack Dancers, encouraging them, and starting a balalaika orchestra that became the "toast of the town," performing throughout the bi-state area and in other parts of the United States. Father Vladimir was very involved with the Madison Junior "R" Club, organizing projects, sporting events, and educational programs. He was always available, working late into the night on projects with parishioners, whether it be planning a golf tournament or caring for a parishioner in need.

The Church always came before everything else in Father Vladimir's life. During his years in Madison, Father Vladimir served as Dean of the St. Louis Deanery and was active in the Orthodox Clergy Association of St. Louis, served

as Spiritual Advisor for the Midwest District of the F.R.O.C., the Junior Department of the F.R.O.C., and the International Folklore Federation.

In 1979, Father and Matushka were transferred to Saint Mary's Cathedral in Minneapolis. As rector of one of the oldest and largest parishes in the OCA, Father Vladimir's love for the church, photography, history, and music continued in the dynamic community. Working with the Archpriest John Matusiak, the Cathedral's associate pastor, Father Vladimir spent countless hours involved with activities for seniors, families, and especially the youth. Father Vladimir established another youth balalaika orchestra in Minneapolis, which this year is celebrating its 37th year of performing.

Most importantly, Father Vladimir loved celebrating the divine services. His joy of being at the altar was an inspiration to the dozens of altar servers through the years. That is especially true for those who have gone to seminary, been ordained as deacons and priests, or serve as choir directors today. A strong believer in the educational programs of the Church, Father Vladimir served as spiritual advisor for the cathedral's church school and summer camp programs. Over the years, he remained close with hundreds of young parishioners who, now with families and children of their own, still recall the impression he made on them as youth: to believe in Jesus Christ and follow His example of humility and compassion.

For a number of years, Father Vladimir served on the OCA's Board of Theological Education, and the Diocese of the Midwest's Late Vocations Program, coordinating the training and education of candidates for the diaconate.

After semi-retiring from active ministry in 1996, Father Vladimir and his wife Virginia moved to northern Wisconsin to continue the work of the church at the established Mission of Saint Andrew in Minocqua, WI.

When a growing number of Orthodox faithful expressed a desire for a mission community in nearby Wausau, Father Vladimir agreed to be their first priest. The missionary efforts led to the formal establishment and construction of a church dedicated to the Kursk Root Icon of the Mother of God as a community of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR). Father Vladimir's pastoral ministry served as an example of the growing cooperation between the Orthodox Church in America and ROCOR in the Upper Midwest.

While in "retirement," Father Vladimir also volunteered in the local elementary school. Father Vladimir was recognized for his work with the award "Volunteer of the Year." He partnered with the school's social worker by assisting children with learning disabilities to achieve their potential in the classroom.

In 2013, His Grace, Bishop Peter of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America (ROCOR) presented Father Vladimir with a Thanksgiving Citation for his dedicated service to building up the Orthodox Church. In 2015, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America honored Father Vladimir and Virginia with a synodal citation for their years of dedicated service. In 2018, His Grace, Bishop Paul of Chicago who presented Father Vladimir the order of Saint John of Chicago for his decades of "faithful service to the Orthodox Church as a choir director, priest, father confessor, dean and educator – a ministry distinguished above all by a pastoral wisdom and compassion recognized by all as carrying the fragrance of the Holy Spirit."

Father Vladimir's gentle spirit was respected by all who knew him. He listened intently and spoke softly. He provided wise counsel and advice when asked, always encouraging vocations as a means to become fellow coworkers in the vineyard of our Lord.

Father Vladimir was a loving and devoted husband of Virginia [Faunce] with whom he shared wonderful experiences, adventures, and laughs for 69 years of marriage. Together, they were the parents of Peter [Patricia], and the proud grandparents of Kristen [Daniel] and David [Laura]; three great grandchildren Megan, Andrew, and Amelia; and many faithful dogs as companions.

May Father Vladimir's memory be eternal!

**Adapted from:** [www.chicagodiocese.org/news](http://www.chicagodiocese.org/news)



#### In Memoriam: Dorothy Tarasevich

Dorothy Tarasevich, 90, died peacefully at home on June 4, 2021, surrounded by her loving family.

Dorothy was born to John and Mary Peregrim on December 26, 1930 on the family farm in Johnsonville, NY. At the age of four, she announced she wanted to be a teacher and toddled off after her older siblings to the local one room schoolhouse. And never looked back. She graduated from Greenwich High school at 16,

Russell Sage College at 20 earning her Bachelor of Arts degree in teaching. She taught English in Warrensburg and Rhinebeck, NY, and then earned a Master of Science degree in Library Science from the State University of New York at Albany.

She was married to her partner-in-adventure, John Tarasevich, for nearly 50 years, raising their four children in Vestal, NY where she continued her career working as a librarian in the Vestal school district for 25 years.

Dottie was an avid bridge player, bowler, golfer and gardener, and phenomenal cook, baker, maker and crafter of projects large and small. She was an active member of Sts. Peter & Paul's Russian Orthodox Church where she often led the kitchen in their annual pierogi making fundraisers, but she may be better known for exquisite and massive homemade Christmas cookie collection that she generously shared with family friends and neighbors.

Dottie traveled the world over with her husband and found beauty and joy wherever she went. But New York State — the majesty of the Adirondacks and the magic of New York City and everything in-between — was the place she loved best.

Loving mother, doting Baba, Dottie was the salt of the earth. Known for her welcoming bear hugs, "Aunt Giggle-itis" had a wonderful laugh which she shared easily and often. Dottie was eternally optimistic, gracious, and kind. And filled with gratitude for the incredible life she lived.

Dorothy is predeceased by her parents, her brothers Frank and John Peregrim, sister Helen Sarich, nieces Susan Krough and Lori Flynn and her adoring husband, John.

She is survived by and will be missed dearly by her brother Joe Peregrim and her children Barbara Tarasevich (Alan Joly), Deborah Tarasevich, David Tarasevich, and Joan Tarasevich (Jim Power), and grandchildren Lemat and MinFa Joly, and Kyra and Cullen Power, and several nieces and nephews. A funeral service was held at Sts. Peter & Paul Russian Orthodox Church in Endicott, NY followed by a burial in St. Basil's Russian Orthodox Cemetery in Watervliet, NY.

**Source:** [www.legacy.com](http://www.legacy.com)



#### In Memoriam: Irina Gozick

Gozick, Irina N., (nee Nikitin), 82, of Fairfield, NJ passed away on August 5, 2021, surrounded by her loving family.

Devoted wife of the late Michael Gozick who passed in 2016. Beloved mother of Debbie Drabick and Tanya G. Broome. Cherished grandmother of Devon, Taylor, Elijah, Nina, Elena, and Misha.

Irina was born in Yugoslavia and came to the United States in 1949. She was a long-time resident of Fairfield living there for the past 55 years. Irina was a member of St. John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Church in Little Falls, NJ as well as a member of the St. Anne Altar Society and the National Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA). Irina was a member of the American Sewing Guild of North Jersey and volunteered much of her time at the Willing Hearts Consignment Shop in Caldwell.

A Burial Service was held at St. John the Baptist RO Church, 29 Weaver Street, Little Falls, NJ.

**Source:** <https://www.gaitamh.com/obituaries>



**In Memoriam: Joan Reagan Kost**

Joan Reagan Kost, 91, of Berwick, PA died Sunday, July 18, 2021, at Geisinger Medical Center, Danville.

Born July 5, 1930 in Berwick, she was the fourth child and youngest daughter of the late Michael and Anna (Laytar) Reagan.

A graduate of Berwick High School, Class of 1948, she was also a member of her class reunion committee. Mrs. Kost was employed as a secretary for various companies, among which were the Berwick National Bank, Fred Vought Insurance, and Dana Corporation. When most people, at the age of 62, were contemplating retirement, Joan started her last & longest secretarial position with Susquehanna Valley Real Estate in Bloomsburg. She retired in 2017 at the age of 87.

Joan was an active member of Holy Annunciation Orthodox Church in Berwick, where she was also a member of the St Ann’s Guild Society, Holy Annunciation Ladies Organization, and a prior church board financial secretary, and Sunday School Teacher. She also sang in the church choir until she was well into her 80’s. She no longer sang when she just could not climb the steps up to the choir loft anymore (but she would never admit that!) Joan enjoyed being one of the perogi & haluski ladies of the church. In addition, she was a member of the Federated Russian Orthodox Clubs for 73 years, where she was a prior secretary of the central PA district. Joan served on the board of the Berwick Russian Club for many years and was well known there. She was also a past member of the Berwick Elks, and the Berwick Hospital Ladies Auxiliary.

Joan was very proud of her hunky heritage, and her Reagan “stock”. She loved to cook ethnic food and Polka dance. She won jitterbug contests at Dinky’s, a favorite Berwick hang out of her era. But as much as she loved to dance, she loved also to bowl. She, along with her five siblings, traveled to many different states to bowl in FROC tournaments. Joan also was a Tuesday night bowler at Stenko’s, as a member of the Stenko’s Bowlerettes and Walker’s Jewelers teams. She enjoyed playing cards with “the girls” on Tuesday nights for many years. She was a second mother to her boys of the BHS Class of 1987, and also a BaBa to her grandchildren’s friends.

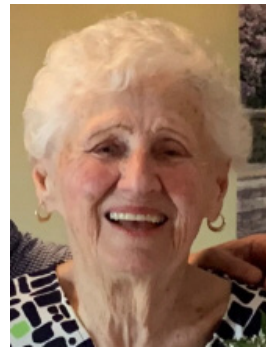
She loved watching the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Berwick Bulldogs.

She was her stubborn hunky self to the end, as baba Joan did it her way. The family would like to thank Robin & John Buckeye for their care and kindness to mom over the past year.

Preceding her in death were her husband of 31 years, Michael Kost, who died in 1984; two brothers: Michael Reagan and Paul Reagan; two sisters: Ann DeMelfi and Ellen Scrip; and her godson, Vaughn Scrip.

Surviving are her two sons: Michael Kost and his significant other, Renee Ptashinski, and Andy Kost and his wife, Tammi, all of Berwick; her daughter, Jean Ann Drum and her husband, Ernie, of Myrtle Beach, SC; three grandchildren: Tara Rixey, Rob Drum and his wife, Julia, all of SC, and Korey Kost and his fiance Krysta Camillocci, of Berwick; four great-grandchildren whom she adored: Ryder Rixey, Reagan Joan Rixey, Owen Drum, and Tyler Drum; her brother, Joseph Reagan of Myrtle Beach, her sister-in-law, Susan Reagan Hinkle of Berwick; twelve nieces and nephews, including her godson, David Reagan; 25 great-nieces and nephews, numerous great-great-nieces and nephews; and her lifelong friend, Mary Burns, of Berwick.

A funeral service was held at Holy Annunciation Orthodox Church, Berwick, PA with the Rev. Michael Demko, her pastor, officiating. Interment was in the church cemetery.



**In Memoriam: Vera Alesevich**

Vera Alesevich (née Kozulko), beloved mother and wife, departed this life July 20, 2021, at age 92. She was predeceased by her husband, Walter, of nearly 50 years. She is survived by her sons, Walter of Alexandria, VA, and Peter (Bridget) of Canton, CT; her sister, Elaine Kosh (Larry); and numerous nieces and nephews and step-grandchildren.

She lived an active and full life, focusing on her faith as well as her family. She was a lifelong member of Holy Ghost Russian Orthodox Church, serving in numerous officer and trustee positions. In addition, she was a longtime member of the Federated Russian Orthodox Clubs/Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America, through which she met her husband and made many friends of numerous ages.

Apart from church activities, she worked in running her reunions from Harding High School class of 1947. Early in her life, she was a bookkeeper at Bridgeport Hospital, raised two sons and helped her husband in managing Shelton Arms Supermarket. After her sons graduated from college, she went back to work at Remington Products. Her larger-than-life personality had an impact on many and will not be forgotten.

A funeral was held at Holy Ghost Russian Orthodox Church, Bridgeport, CT. Due to current health conditions, in lieu of a repast a celebration of the lives of Vera and Walter will be held at a later date.

**Source:** www.legacy.com



**In Memoriam: Barbara Ann Horsky**

Barbara AnnHorsky, of Edison, NJ died peacefully after a long battle with her health. She passed away on April 1, 2020. She was 58 years young. Barbara was a beloved Daughter of her mother Kathleen (Kay) Keimer, and her late father Peter. She was an incredibly strong and devoted mother of her son Tim of Edison, NJ. She was a cherished sister to Karen Gowarty and her husband David of Bethlehem, PA. And she was a loving Aunt and Godmother to their son Gabriel. Barbara lived in Edison for most of her life and she worked for Marsh & McLennan Agency in Somerset, NJ for many years. She was a cherished member of SS Peter and Paul RO Church in South River, NJ. Barbara’s sense of adventure, courageous attitude, and willingness to volunteer and help her fellow friends will be missed and forever remembered. Services for Barbara will be held at the SS Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Church in South River, NJ. During these times, the service was private for family members only. Burial was also private at the SS Peter and Paul RO Cemetery in South River, NJ. May her Memory Be Eternal!

**Editor’s Notes:** Barbara is a cousin to Past President Michael Steffaro and niece to Fr. John and Bob Steffaro



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