

Akron Unity Initiative Opportunities

OVERALL AND JOINT LITURGICAL EVENTS

- Engage in strengthening the network of inter-parish cooperation
 - Identify and engage a dedicated point person to build relationships and disseminate information across Orthodox parishes
 - Explore hybrid approaches – online and in-person engagement
 - Deepen support of local community/neighborhoods
 - Develop or build on gatherings across parishes/from parishes to identify people who are interested in specific inter-parish areas (e.g., liturgy, education, outreach...)
- Deepen and Broaden Joint Liturgical Events such as:
 - Advent and Lenten Series
 - Joint Divine Liturgy for the Sunday of Orthodoxy
 - Feast Day Vespers of the parish/Individual Feast Day Vespers
 - Visiting priest day/Priest Exchange Day/Pulpit Exchange
 - OCF Lead/Sing a service
 - Youth sing a service
 - Continue Sunday Lenten Vespers and Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers
- Encourage joint services to be 90%+ in English, as much as possible

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Broaden joint educational endeavors such as:
 - Structure and host joint ministry/leadership training across parishes in areas such as religious education and stewardship
 - Develop a joint speakers' series or retreat with national speakers
 - Develop a joint Inquirer's course
 - Establish Pan-Orthodox study/discussion groups in different geographic areas or neighborhoods
 - Further develop youth training opportunities across Canton, Akron, and Cleveland
 - Develop educational opportunities around iconography, chanting, and music
 - Continue developing a joint summer Vacation Church School
- Explore scheduling of educational activities to be during days/times that fit most schedules

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

- Create an Outreach Ministries Network
 - Engage in joint fundraising activities for charities
 - Explore more neighborhood-based parishioner outreach
 - Develop joint family ministry activities/events and invite other parishes to parish-hosted events
 - Provide services to home-bound members based on neighborhood rather than parish-based approach
- Build on current outreach ministries
 - Establish group volunteers at St. Herman House

- Encourage participation in ZOE for Life
- Further develop a Food Pantry – Annunciation Good Samaritans
- Expand school food backpack program and offer service hours
- Expand community charity breakfast (e.g., Stand Down Breakfast for homeless vets, Copley Christmas)
- Revive Helping Hands food pantry
- Explore creative joint information sharing strategies
 - Explore hosting one big joint (multi-cultural) festival
 - Explore having information about Orthodoxy and other parishes visible at parish festivals
 - Create map/information for posting on church bulletin boards of Orthodox parishes in Akron area
 - Explore (???)

APPROPRIATE HIERARCHICAL BLESSINGS AND ORTHODOX CHURCH VISIBILITY (“ONE STRONG VOICE”)

- Encourage letter from each bishop around appropriate hierarchical blessings
- Explore establishing a dedicated information committee to prepare public joint statements vetted by the clergy to the media as quick responses to events/local issues
- Explore establishing a joint Inquirers Class
- Deepen work on the Mission walk to support local charity
- Bring more awareness and support for local committees (e.g., expand COCA ministry)
- Support local opportunities for sharing the one voice of Orthodoxy
- One point person for each church? Through COCA ministry
- Awareness and support to serve the local community