



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES (Y²AM)

**REPORT TO THE 45TH BIENNIAL
CLERGY LAITY CONGRESS**

September 9-10, 2020 ■ Virtual
Steven Christoforou, Director

Y²AM's MISSION

Y²AM's mission is to:

1. Introduce youth and young adults to the person of Jesus Christ;
2. Challenge and inspire them to live their relationship with Christ every day; and
3. Set the tone, standards, and vision for youth and young adult ministry across the Archdiocese.

GOALS

One year:

- a. Support the Department of Youth Safety with communications regarding the Policies for the Safety of Children and Youth
- b. Complete a new season of videos (“Be the Bee,” “3 Men and a Bible,” etc.)
- c. Complete a new season of podcasts (“Pop Culture Coffee Hour,” “Wandering the Desert,” etc.)
- d. Complete a new season of “Small Group” ministry resources
- e. Add bonus lessons to the “Effective Christian Ministry” training course
- f. Launch the “Effective Christian Ministry” podcast
- g. Begin work on a new iteration of the “Y²AM Ministry Plan”

Two years:

- a. Continue to support implementation of the Policies
- b. Refine and improve the “Effective Christian Ministry” training course
- c. Launch “Effective Christian Ministry” in-person seminars
- d. Develop in-person training for camp counsellors and ministry workers
- e. Resume “Be the Bee” retreats

Five years:

- a. Further develop digital ministry resources
- b. Further explore new training opportunities
- c. Further refine the vision of ministry across the Archdiocese

SUMMARY OF RESOURCES

I. Website

- a. y2am.org – home page for all our offerings and resources

II. At Home

- a. Pan-Orthodox, collaborative effort to bring together online resources for youth and young adult ministry
 - i. Central landing page at y2am.org/AtHome
 - ii. Digital calendar which pushes notifications directly to subscribers' phones and devices
- b. Developed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and suspension of in-person ministry events

III. Blogs

- a. Extensive archive of challenging and thoughtful pieces on a variety of contemporary topics and challenges
- b. Available at blogs.goarch.org/y2am/theladder

IV. Communications and Social Media

- a. Daily social media presence (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- b. Weekly email newsletter

V. Curriculum

- a. Y²AM Ministry Plan
 - i. Integrated resources for youth, young adult, and family ministry
 1. Designed to unite various ministries with a common theme and mutually supportive work
 - ii. Help for the entire ministry year (September through May)
 - iii. Developing materials for summer camp as well
 1. Designed to better connect camping ministries with parish ministries
 - iv. Will be an annual offering of fresh materials with continual improvements and refinements
 1. Three iterations currently available
 2. Unfortunately, a new version will not be available for the 2020-21 ministry year
 - v. Available at y2am.org/ministryplan

VI. Effective Christian Ministry

- a. Comprehensive training course for all ministry workers (clergy, parents,

- youth workers, etc.)
- b. Identifies the needs of young people today, explores the challenges of ministry, and sets forth core ministry practices to help shape a new generation of faithful Christians
- c. Available at effectivechristianministry.org

VII. Podcasts

- a. *Pop Culture Coffee Hour* – casual, weekly discussion of pop culture and theology
 - a. Active, weekly series
 - b. Also available on YouTube in video format
- b. *Wandering the Desert* – exploration of the struggles young adults face in their spiritual lives
 - a. Active, biweekly series
- c. *We Are Orthodoxy* – biweekly podcast offering interviews with young adults exploring their connection to (or distance from) the Church
 - a. Active series
 - b. New episodes when young adults offer to share their stories
- d. *Effective Christian Ministry* — a new podcast which will explore the challenges of ministry and share a vision for effective, transformational ministry
 - a. Premiering in early 2021
- e. Available at ancientfaith.com

VIII. Retreats/Events

- a. Be the Bee Retreats (BeeTreats) – monthly retreats offering sessions/workshops for youth, parents, youth workers, and young adults
 - i. Currently on pause due to Covid-19
- b. Skype appearances with parishes, other lectures and talks
- c. Information available at y2am.org/beetreats

IX. Small Group Materials

- a. Weekly resource offering study guides and questions for honest conversation centered on the Sunday Scripture readings
- b. Designed, not to inform, but to help develop more personal and intimate connection between ministry participants
- c. Training materials available for Small Group leaders

X. YouTube Series

- a. *3 Men and a Bible* – 10-episode panel discussion exploring the Sunday Gospel and Epistle readings
 - a. Active, weekly series
- b. *Be the Bee* – 146-episode series exploring how we can find God in everything we encounter and everyone we meet, everyday
 - a. Active, weekly series
- c. *Books of the Bible* – brief introductions to the books of the New Testament canon

- a. Several episodes are still in process
- d. *Live the Word* – 37-episode series exploring how we can find God (and better understand ourselves) through the Sunday Gospel and Epistle readings; paired with 35 response videos answering weekly Three Questions
 - a. Archived series
- e. *The Trench* – 35-episode mini-series exploring how relationships with people shape who we are, and how to approach them as Orthodox Christians
 - a. Archives series
- f. Available at youtube.com/y2am and y2am.org

XI. Scripture

- a. *ExeGenius* – annotated Sunday Gospel readings from the Triodion and Pentecostarian period, featuring patristic quotes, scriptural cross-references, and other comments and questions
 - i. Available at exegenius.goarch.org
- b. Triodion Bible Study Guide
 - i. Annotated versions of the Sunday Gospel readings during the Triodion period
 - ii. Available as a free PDF
- c. Daily Scripture reflections on Instagram and YouTube stories

VIDEO ANALYTICS (AS OF AUGUST 8, 2020)

NOTE: The below analytics come from device views. A view on a single device counts as one view no matter how many people view the video.

General Statistics

YouTube Channel: youtube.com/y2am
 Subscribers: 23, 635 (60% growth since 2018)
 Total Views: 2,339,780 (62% growth since 2018)
 Total Videos: 391

<i>Be the Bee:</i>	146
<i>Live the Word:</i>	73
<i>The Trench:</i>	36
<i>Books of the Bible:</i>	10

Average Daily Views: ~1,200

Recorded views only reflect device clicks, we estimate that actual daily views are between 3,000 and 5,000 (given the number of people who watch with families, youth groups, etc.)

Demographics (over the past two years)

Sex Breakdown:	Male	67%
	Female	33%

Age Breakdown:	13-17	<1%
	18-24	23%
	25-34	32%
	35-44	20%
	45-54	13%
	55-64	7%
	65+	4%

Geography	United States	56%
	Other	44%

Devices Used (over the past two years)

Computer	31%
Mobile Phone	53%
Tablet	8%
TV	6%
Game Console	<1%

Top 5 Most Watched Videos (lifetime of the channel)

3 Reasons I'm an Orthodox Christian	186,579
10 Fun Facts About the Orthodox Church	175,413
Be the Bee #61 What is Orthodox Christianity?	92,670
Be the Bee #1 Introduction	56,050
Be the Bee #49 Why You Need a Prayer Rope	49,158

EVENTS & RETREATS (AS OF AUGUST 8, 2020)

BeeTreats (for youth 6th-12th grade and adults/parents/youth workers)

Notes: Made possible by a generous grant from Leadership 100.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>
Akron, OH	October 27, 2018
Orlando, FL	November 17, 2018
Port Jefferson, NY (mini, just for youth)	January 5, 2019
Nashville, TN	February 23, 2019
San Diego, CA	March 9, 2019
Bethesda, MD	March 30, 2019
Florence, SC	October 12, 2019
Detroit, MI	November 23, 2019
Cherry Hilly, NJ (mini, just for youth)	December 7, 2019
New Jersey	December 14, 2019
Jacksonville, FL	January 11, 2020
Providence, RI	February 29, 2020

Our Team also delivered an additional 69 talks, presentations, and retreats since the 2018 Clergy Laity Congress.

PERSONNEL OVERVIEW

Steven Christoforou, *Director*

A graduate of Yale University (BA, history), Fordham University School of Law (JD), and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology (MDiv), Steve is passionate about sharing the Gospel in a clear and accessible way and helping people see Christ at work in their lives.

Cassandra Garibaldi, *Recourses & Training Coordinator (currently on furlough)*

A graduate of Hellenic College (BA in Religious Studies, minor in Elementary Ed.) and Holy Cross School of Theology (MDiv), Cassandra is enthusiastic about ministry, especially leading others to find Christ in their daily lives.

Christian Gonzalez, *Young Adult Ministries Coordinator*

A graduate of Wheaton College, Azusa Pacific University, & Luther Seminary, Christian is a Licensed Associate Marriage & Family Therapist in Arizona committed to the upbuilding of the Church as a family that facilitates the formation of youth & young adults into the image of Christ.

Menios Papadimitriou, *Administrative Coordinator (currently on furlough)*

A graduate of Florida State University (BA) and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology (MDiv and MTS), Menios is now pursuing a PhD at Fordham University, where his research engages the modern history of Orthodox Christian theology and culture. He is committed to delivering fresh, innovative ministry that responds to contemporary challenges with creativity and imagination.

ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh, *Hierarchical Chair*

Jim Gabriel, *Lay Chair*

Committee Members:

Drake Behrakis
Teddy Germanakos
Tom Kanelos
Michael Kusturiss Jr.

Rev. Fr. Larry Legakis
Dean Metropulos
Dr. Gregory G. Papadeas
Peter Pappas Jr.
Rev. Fr. Theodore Poteres
Christopher Rongos
Rev. Fr. John Vlahos

METROPOLIS YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY DIRECTORS

Direct Archdiocesan District:	Rev. Fr. Panagiotis Papazafiroopoulos
Metropolis of Atlanta:	Monica Gjerde
Metropolis of Boston:	Rev. Fr. Dionysios Papiris
Metropolis of Chicago:	Rev. Fr. Kosmas Kallis
Metropolis of Denver:	Jenny Stasinopoulos
Metropolis of Detroit:	Eva Konstantakos
Metropolis of New Jersey:	Rev. Fr. Philotheos Tomczewski
Metropolis of Pittsburgh:	Rhea Ballas
Metropolis of San Francisco:	Johanna Duterte Carter

LEADERSHIP 100 GRANTS

Through the generous support of Leadership 100, we have:

1. Supported and expanded our offering of monthly BeeTreats
2. Greatly improved the studio space we use for video production
3. Begun developing a cutting-edge video Introduction to Orthodox Christianity, which we hope to finalize by the Spring of 2021
4. Begun planning new seminars to help ministry workers connect and develop their skills in forming a new generation of Christians

We are incredibly grateful to Leadership 100 for sharing our vision of ministry and helping us take concrete steps in improving the ministry support we offer to parishes and communities around the world.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Steven Christoforou, Director
Department of Youth & Young Adult Ministries (Y²AM)