



St. George Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral
Library

Strategic Plan
2014-2019

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12/06/2013



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Background and Context:

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral is a seat of Bishop Thomas of the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic, of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. It is located in the heart of the South Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh, at the corner of the Boulevard of the Allies and Dawson Street. The church was formed through the merger of two Syrian parishes: St. George, formerly located in the Hill District, and St. Michael, formerly located in Homestead, PA. The parishes merged and moved to the current South Oakland location in 1955. The parish has stayed close to its Syrian roots, with many parishioners still having ties to Syria and the Middle East. There are also many converts from various backgrounds in the parish. St. George is a very large, active, and pious community in the heart of a city that is a center for East Coast American Orthodoxy. Besides being a Cathedral, and thus the seat of the Bishop, St. George is home to an estimated 425 families, 2 choirs (including a top-notch Byzantine Choir), numerous ministries and societies, and is a major supporter ministries such as FOCUS Pittsburgh. Thus, it befits St. George to have a high-quality library for use by its faithful community.

The St. George Orthodox Library began at an undetermined time. Its most recent caretaker was the Departed Servant of God Khouria Joanne Abdalah, wife of then-parish priest Fr. John Abdalah. By all accounts, Kh. Joanne was a beloved Khouria and a faithful steward of the library. The collection seems to have circulated widely. After her repose on May 27, 2008, the library appears to have been largely neglected, from an administrative standpoint. Parishioners still used the collection, but there were no circulation policies or management. There was no finding aid, besides a literally dusty single-box card catalogue, of indeterminate origin and date. Any semblance of order to the collection, besides faded and peeling call number labels, had ceased to exist. A card-and-pocket circulation system had at one time been used, with perhaps 60% of the books containing pockets. After Kh. Joanne's repose and Fr. John's elevation to Auxiliary Bishop, Bishop John left a large amount of his personal book collection with the library. These were stored in the Education Building, separately from the original Church Hall collection. This was the state of the library when I arrived in September 2012.

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to optimize efforts to return order and administration to the library, and, having re-established physical and intellectual control, to make the library into a vehicle for ministry and service. The reading and study of pious materials is highly respected in the Orthodox Church, going back to St. Justin Martyr and St. Basil the Great. Even modern spiritual elders have spoken on the benefits derived from spiritual reading and education, such as Fr. Arseny of Russia and Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica. In the words of Elder Thaddeus, "People should be educated. Man should learn what he can. However, school only educates our minds; it does not teach us spirituality ... School gives a person a rational education, but no spirituality. However, the young should have a living example to learn from, for such examples teach better than words ... Every kind of knowledge that we discover through education is a gift from God to His people, and it proclaims His presence in this world ... Our knowledge is used either for the benefit of mankind or against it." Thus, the St. George Library has a mandate to support the spiritual education of our parishioners, in synergy with and in obedience to the teachings of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and its head, Our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Mission: Our mission is to provide professional library services in the highest tradition of Orthodox spirituality and piety with the purpose of providing spiritually edifying and educational resources on our users' path to theosis.

Vision: Our vision is to be the most utilized and useful parish library in the history of our parish, run by the most helpful staff.

Values:

- *Orthodoxy (ὀρθοδοξία)*- We believe in and actively propagate the teachings of the Eastern Orthodox Church, as established by the Holy Spirit as the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church on the Feast of Pentecost, as handed down through Apostolic Succession, the Ecumenical Councils, the Church Fathers, Holy Scripture, and Holy Tradition.
- *Orthopraxy (ὀρθοπραξία)*- In the words of St. Maximus the Confessor, "Theology without action (praxis) is the theology of demons." Therefore, we value doing our part in fostering Orthodox praxis, and strive ourselves to attain to an Orthodox phronema in our own library service.
- *Professional work*- We value providing the highest quality of professional library service to our patrons.
- *Superior organization*- We believe that an essential aspect of an efficient library is impeccable organization, both in shelving materials and in managing circulation.
- *Concord and customer service*- We believe in striving to uphold God's words, "Behold now, what is so good or so joyous as for brethren to dwell together in unity?" in our customer service, our participation in parish life, and in our outreach.

Elevator Pitch: We want to take our current library, reorganize it, nurture its development, and make it into a top-quality library, to meet the needs of our active and pious parish.

SWOT Analysis

<p><i>STRENGTHS</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Large existing collection 2. Large potential user base 3. Many extra-parish Orthodox visitors 4. Generally well-educated, pious congregation 	<p><i>WEAKNESSES</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inexact cataloguing scheme 2. Limited hours 3. Limited resources & budget 4. Missing books 5. Single copies and old editions
<p><i>OPPORTUNITIES</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repurpose unused corner of Church hall 2. Re-do cataloguing scheme 3. Re-order library 4. Fresh start 5. Lots to gain, little to lose 	<p><i>THREATS</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Librarian moving away 2. Excessive delays 3. Bureaucratic issues 4. Lack of interest 5. Limited work time 6. Lack of funds

Goals:

NEXT MONTH

1. *Meet with Fr. Demetrios Regarding Collection Development Plan*

Within the next month, we will meet with the parish priest to discuss the needs of the parish that can be met through the library, and how these needs can be met through library collection development and ministries. The end result will be an articulated Collection Development Plan.

2. *Build New Shelving and Shelve Collection*

We will have enough shelves built in the Church Hall to house our entire existing collection by February 1, 2014. We would like to have all of our collection shelved by February 14, 2014.

NEXT QUARTER

1. *Establish Annual Amnesty Periods*

We will institute an Annual Amnesty Period (that is, a return en masse with no penalties) at the beginning of Great Lent, according to ancient monastic practice. A general Amnesty Period will be held for 2 weeks in February 2014, then annually during Meatfare and Cheesefare weeks.

2. *Catalogue Collection*

We will completely catalogue the contents of our current collection in an Excel spreadsheet with 9 fields (see **New Cataloguing Scheme**) by April 1, 2014.

3. *Revise Cataloguing Scheme & Re-label Books*

We will revise our library-cataloguing scheme from a Roman numeral-based system to a 3-letter subject and number-based system, by relabeling the existing collection, by April 1, 2014.

4. *Create Finding Aid, and Establish ILS and OPAC*

We will get estimates on a subscription-based hosted ILS system and OPAC, and obtain a library computer (possibly donated), in order to upload catalogue information from Excel (see Next Quarter Goal 2). We will purchase our subscription to the ILS within our budget by April 1, 2014.

5. *Website Revision*

We will revise the Library website to reflect the changes detailed in this Strategic Plan, with focus placed on reducing visual clutter and making the site more usable for older parishioners, by April 1, 2014.

6. *Continue Library Promotions*

We will promote the library weekly in the church bulletin, monthly in the Cathedral Messenger (including publishing the library site address), and increase co-operation and communication with parish organizations, with the goal of reportable increase in site traffic, materials circulation, and service to at least one parish organization, by April 1, 2014.

WITHIN NEXT YEAR

1. *Compile Online Lib Guide/Online Resource Database*

Within the next year, we will compile a list of useful online Orthodox resources for publication on the Library website.

2. *Continue Collection Development*

During the course of the next year, we will acquire books and materials according to our Collection Development Plan (to be determined during implementation of Next Month Goal 1). We will also consult with Fr. Demetrios and other clergy quarterly to update the collection development plan in synergy with the needs of the parish.

3. *Add Online Version of "Let's Get To Know Each Other" to the Library Website*

Within the next year, we will upload and make accessible previous "Let's Get to Know Each Other" articles from the weekly bulletin, and include all future weekly articles, pending approval by Dan Siemasko.

4. *Provide Materials and Service to the Ministry of at Least Two Parish Organizations*

We will advertise our services to the various parish organizations with the goal of providing services to at least 2 of them, within the next year.

5. *Strategic Plan Revision*

We will re-evaluate and revise the Strategic Plan, particularly the Goals sections, Budget, Mission and Vision statements, KPI, and SWOT Analysis, once a year, at a suitable time to be determined.

6. *Continue Promotion of the St. George Book Club*

The Library will continue to promote and support the St. George Book Club, with the goal of providing materials and increasing participation in cooperation with the Fellowship of St. John the Divine.

7. *Establish and Coordinate a Sharing Network*

Within the next year, we will network with other parishes in the city to set up a network for the distribution of unwanted library materials, with a particular priority of building an Orthodox library for FOCUS Pittsburgh. A successful network will include at least one other parish to send unwanted library materials to.

8. *ATLA Affiliation/Certification*

Within the next year, we will become affiliated with the ATLA, and become certified by some certifying body.

WITHIN NEXT 5 YEARS
(*Or At A Seasonable Time)

1. **Solicit Book Reviews, Articles, and Other Materials for Library Blog*

At a seasonable time within the next five years (as determined by completion of earlier, more fundamental goals), we will solicit book reviews, blog entries, and other materials for the Library Blog from parishioners and neighboring clergy.

2. *Compile Digitized Archival Information*

At a seasonable time within the next five years, the Library will assume control of usable parish archive material (especially large photographs and ephemera), with the goal of establishing a small exhibit (pending permission, budgetary approval, and time allowances), potentially including a guide of ephemera in the parish and digitized copies of archival information.

3. *Compile Oral Histories*

At a seasonable time within the next five years, the Library will solicit oral histories from parishioners for collection and publication, in cooperation with Proto-Psalti Richard T. Esper and/or other interested parties.

4. *Establish Arabic Library Services*

At a seasonable time in the next five years, the Library will establish services in the Arabic language for Arabic-speaking parishioners, with the goal of having parallel Arabic-language services for basic library circulation functions.

Evaluation: Key Performance Indicators (KPI):

The target numbers or percentages of these KPI will be determined in the future. The ideal is for there to be reportable increases after the Monthly and Quarterly goals are completed. The targets will be re-evaluated yearly at the time of the yearly Strategic Plan revision.

- # of books borrowed per quarter
- # of organizations requesting materials per quarter
- # of special ministries by library per quarter
- # of acquisitions per quarter

Marketing:

Note that the vehicle and target columns are not linked in any specific way (i.e. weekly bulletins do not target laity, Cathedral Messenger does not target parish council, etc.). This is a general listing.

Vehicles

- Weekly bulletins
- Cathedral Messenger (monthly)
- Parish website
- Library website & blog
- Bulletin boards
- Book Club promotions
- Verbal announcements
- Word-of-mouth
- ATLA listing

Targets

- Laity
- Parish Council
- Adult education classes
- Sunday School
- Teen SOYO
- Antiochian Women
- Society of St. George
- Fellowship of St. John the Divine
- FOCUS Pittsburgh

User Populations & Characteristics:

1. *Clergy*: Very subject literate, attended seminary or St. Stephen's Course, teach on Orthodox subjects, may have specific interests or specialties (i.e. counseling, church history). May need reference materials, specialized works. Makes recommendations to other user populations.
2. *Iconographers*: May have attended seminary or St. Stephen's Course. Need books of icon prints for reference or study. May request Lives of Saints for icon they are working on, or Church history and works on theology of icons.
3. *Catechumens*: New to Orthodoxy, preparing for Baptism. Often read "popular" titles (e.g. Orthodox Way, For the Life of the World). May like to explore various subjects, especially Church history, Orthodox Sacraments, theology, icons, issues or practices

different from their background (“How is Orthodoxy different than Calvinism?”). May have readings assigned/recommended by catechist.

4. *St. Stephen’s Course*: Essentially a distance-learning seminary course. Have specific texts to read, of high quality but low cost. Likely will need extended loan periods. May be useful to obtain 2 complete sets of complete reading material for the library.
5. *Children (Sunday School)*: Cradle or convert children (meaning that their parents raised them Orthodox, or they converted with their parents). Need simple stories, Children’s Bibles, simplified Lives of the Saints, and explanations of services and practices. Varying ages and levels of comprehension and knowledge. Unknown if parents will choose most books for them or with them, or if they will be interested in materials on their own.
6. *Laity (cradle and convert)*: Have a variety of needs, depending on previous religious background, spiritual maturity, interests, gifts, talents, and needs. Most varied user population, potential users of all categories and subjects of library materials.
7. *Parents*: May request materials for their children, either to read with them, to borrow on their children’s behalf, or to assist with pious Orthodox parenting. Otherwise, characteristics may overlap with other populations (laity, clergy, etc.).
8. *Educators (Adult Education & Sunday School)*: Require specialized educational or didactic works tailored to student needs, such as homilies or reference works. Likely to need Xerox reproductions or multiple copies of books.
9. *Choir/Chanters/Musicians*: Keep control of their own music, but may request audio-visual materials, such as chant recordings.
10. **Elderly/Impaired*: Likely to request audio-visual materials. Some books on tape may be useful. Otherwise, characteristics overlap with other populations.
11. **Arabic-Speaking Parishioners*: Large minority of native Arabic speakers. May speak Arabic as first or second language. May attend Arabic liturgical services at St. George. May be interested in having Arabic language materials, or materials on Arabic Christianity.
12. *+Inquirers*: Similar characteristics to catechumens, but may not be attached or committed to Orthodoxy in any way. Lack of loan privileges prudent, due to risk of lost materials.

*Special needs +No borrowing privileges

Library Team:

- *Michael Janakis, Librarian:* Michael Janakis, as the Librarian, is in control of the majority of library tasks. He will oversee cataloguing, circulation, planning, administrative duties, and patron relations. In sum, he will be in charge of the operations of the library, but will use the other members of the team for assistance, advice, counsel, and support.
- *Khouria Tammy Makoul, Coordinator/Liaison/Assistant:* Kh. Tammy is Fr. Demetrios' wife. She has been helping Michael Janakis since September 2012 with the library. Kh. Tammy assists with funding, coordination with other committees, including the Decorating Committee regarding shelving, and helps especially with book sorting, donations, and the St. George Book Club. She is instrumental to helping the Librarian navigate relations with other parishioners and parish organizations, as well as taking some pressure off of him by serving as a mother figure, which is the main role of a priest's wife. Kh. Tammy also serves as a circulation assistant.
- *Fr. Demetrios Makoul, Dean, Advisor:* Fr. Demetrios is the Dean of the Cathedral and the Priest-in-Charge. In addition to being married to Kh. Tammy, he is Michael Janakis' Confessor and advisor. Fr. Demetrios provides spiritual guidance to the Librarian personally and the entire parish in general, as well as specifically working with the Librarian in regards to the library. The Librarian works closely with Fr. Demetrios regarding money matters, and seeks advice from him regarding the spiritual needs of the parish that can be met through the library.
- *Decorating Committee:* The Decorating Committee must be consulted regarding the new shelving sought by the library. The Decorating Committee is in charge of decorating the Church Hall, where the library is located. Because the library is in need of new shelving in a new location in the Church Hall, the Decorating Committee is involved in this process.
- *Potential Cataloguing Helper:* The Librarian may in the future seek a cataloguing/circulation assistant. There have been parishioners who have voiced their desire to help in the past. The assistant(s) would be especially helpful during the process of cataloguing the collection and developing the new finding aid. As circulation assistants, they could assist patrons with circulation in the event that the Librarian or Kh. Tammy are unavailable.

Budget (Anticipated Needs):

1. \$100/quarter for books and supplies (i.e. call number labels)
2. Few \$/month for hosted ILS [Integrated Library System] subscription
3. \$400 or donation of computer for circulation and ILS access
4. Cable to connect to Internet for ILS access.

Implementing the Strategic Plan:

We would do well to note that dates contained in the **Goals** section reflect an ideal timeline. Thus, they mostly serve for planning purposes. There are two reasons for this. One is the volunteer nature of the Library Team. The library is being run on the free time of volunteers. Some tasks can be completed when the congregation is assembled, such as helping patrons find books after Divine Liturgy on Sunday. Other tasks can be completed remotely, such as website design and maintenance. A difficulty arises with the necessity of some tasks being completed on-site. The second reason is the need to accommodate other people's schedules and commitments. Shelving in particular will likely not be completed by the published date.

The goals of the Strategic Plan are all aimed at reorganizing the library and nurturing it as it develops into an indispensable part of extra-liturgical parish life. The most immediate goals are to get the library back into good working order by reestablishing physical and intellectual control over the collection. Once this has been accomplished, new programs and initiatives can be launched. In general, the phases of the Strategic Plan can be separated into the following categories:

- Reorganization
- Resumption of Browsing and Circulation
- New Programs
- Outreach
- Parishioner Involvement

Reorganization entails physical reorganization, such as building new shelving, and intellectual reorganization, such as implementing the new call number system, creating a finding aid, and subscribing to an ILS for circulation. Resumption of Browsing and Circulation will follow naturally from Reorganization. The remaining phases are organic and concurrent: that is, they are not steps flowing from each other, but are rather all aspects of the overall activities of the Library. New Programs, such as a Sharing Network and Arabic Language Library services, will be implemented alongside Outreach, which will include services to other organizations within the parish. At the same time, parishioners will become involved in the Library by creating oral histories, creating content for the blog, and, most importantly, *using the Library!*

New Cataloguing Scheme:

We will take the opportunity to implement a new cataloguing scheme for our library (see Next Quarter goal #3). The current cataloguing scheme uses a Roman numeral system of 21 categories, with intermittent use of the first 3 letters of the author's last name. The proposed new system will replace the 21 Roman numeral scheme with a 2- or 3-letter subject code (ex. PAT for Patristics, HIS for History), followed by the first 3 letters of the author's last name (ex. MEY for Meyendorf), and a number. For example, Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions: The Church 450- 680 A.D. will be moved from II (Church History), to HIS MEY 01. This should aid in organization and retrieval when the collection is re-shelved.

Additionally, we have chosen 9 fields to use in our circulation database: 7 related to cataloguing, 2 related to circulation. These fields are

- Author
- Title
- Publisher
- Place
- Year
- Volume #
- Part #
- Patron Name
- Status (In, Out, Reference, Lost)

This revised cataloguing scheme should be sufficient for the size of our collection for the foreseeable future. We have chosen to abstain from the Library of Congress system because the vast majority of our collection would be catalogued under variations of the B section, thus likely resulting in a cataloguing nightmare, not to mention a nightmare for our parishioners searching the shelves.

Web Resources:

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral: <http://sgcoakland.org/sgc/>

Antiochian Archdiocese: <http://antiochian.org>

St. George Orthodox Library: <http://sgcoakland-library.weebly.com>

St. George Book Club: <http://sgcoakland-library.weebly.com/st-george-book-club.html>

St. George Library Blog: <http://sgcoakland-library.weebly.com/st-george-cathedral-blog.html>

St. Vladimir Seminary Library: <http://www.svots.edu/academics/library>

Holy Cross Seminary Library: <http://www.hchc.edu/library/>

St. Tikhon's Seminary Library: <http://www.stots.edu/library.html>

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank and acknowledge the following people who contributed to the development of this strategic plan. To God be the Glory!

Father Demetrios Makoul, St. George
Cathedral (SGC)

Khouria Tammy Makoul, SGC

Decorating Committee, SGC

Aunt Sophie Farah, SGC Book Store

Fr. Irenaeus du Plessis of Belfast

Eleana Silk, Librarian, St. Vladimir's
Orthodox Theological Seminary
(SVOTS)

Matthew Garklavs, Archivist, SVOTS

Subdeacon Ignatius and Aimilia
Thompson-Greene, SVOTS

Khouria Joanne of Blessed Memory +
Bishop John Abdalah

Patsy and Dan Siemasko, SGC, for their
prayers

University of Pittsburgh iSchool

Ellen Detlefsen, Advisor, who agreed to
take me on in this project

Faithful of St. George Cathedral

Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica of Blessed
Memory +

Fr. Arseny of Blessed Memory +

St. Basil the Great

Our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ

And to God be the Glory!