# 2021 Parish Development Forum Online -- Agenda

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| 10:00 AM (All times EDT) | **Opening Prayer**  **Welcome Video *His Beatitude Metropolitan TIKHON***  **Introduction *Joseph Kormos*** | | |
| 10:40 AM | [**Feature Speaker: Opportunity and Opposition: Learning From Jesus and the Apostolic Church**](#_Learning_from_Jesus)  [***Archpriest Dr. John A. Jillions***](#_Archpriest_Dr._John) | | |
| 11:25 AM | *Break 10 min* | | |
|  | *[Track 1](#_Track_One:_Personal)*  **[Personal Spiritual Resiliency](#_Track_One:_Personal)**  *Track Leader*  [***Archpriest Peter Baktis***](#_Archpriest_Peter_A) | *[Track 2](#_Track_Two:_The)*  **[The Back-To-Better Parish](#_Track_Two:_The)**  *Track Leader*  [***Archpriest Stephen Frase***](#_Archpriest_Stephen_Frase) | *[Track 3](#_Track_Three:_Being)*  **[Being Fishers of Men](#_Track_Three:_Being)**  *Track Leader*  [***Joseph Kormos***](#_Joseph_Kormos) |
| 11:35  Track Segment A | **1A** [**Personal Spiritual Resiliency**](#_Segment_1A_Personal)  [***Susan Smoley***](#_Susan_Smoley) | **2A** [**Eight Parish Challenges**](#_Segment_2A:_Eight)  [***Arhpriest Paul Jannakos***](#_Archpriest_Paul_Jannakos) | **3A** [**Going to Where the People Are: Digital Communication**](#_Segment_3A:_Going) **and Social Media**  [***Archpriest Jonathan Ivanoff***](#_Archpriest_Jonathan_Ivanoff) |
| 12:35 PM | *Lunch (or Brunch) Break 30 min* | | |
| 1:05 PM | **AM Review – *Track Leaders*** | | |
| 1:20 PM | [**Feature Speaker:** **"Engaging Spiritual But Not Religious. (Or 'Nones')"**](#_Engaging_Spiritual_But)  [***Dr. Nathan Jacobs***](#_Dr._Nathan_Jacobs) | | |
| 2:10 | *Break 10 min* | | |
| 2:20 PM  Segment B | **1B** [**Home and Family Resiliency**](#_Segment_1B_Home)  [***Thomaida Hudanish***](#_Thomaida_Hudanish) | **2B** [**Reintegrating Youth and Families into the Parish Post-COVID**](#_Segment_2B:_)  [***Natalie Kapeluck Nixon***](#_Natalie_Kapeluck_Nixon) | **3B** [**Continuing Our Look at the “Nones” and “Dones**](#_Segment_3B:_)**”**  [***Dr. Nathan Jacobs***](#_Dr._Nathan_A._1) |
| 3:20 PM | *Break 10 min* | | |
| 3:30 PM Segment C | **1C** [**Recognizing Additive and Abusive Behaviors**](#_Segment_1C_Recognizing)  [***Fr. Leonard Herrem***](#_Fr_Leonard_Herrem) | **2C** [**Moving Forward as a Parish**](#_Segment_2C:_)  ***Workshop*** | **3C** [**The Evangelizing Orthodox Parish**](#_Segment_3C:_The)  ***Workshop*** |
| 4:30 PM | *Room Change 5 min* | | |
| 4:35 PM | **Final Review**  ***Track Leader Panel:* *Fr Peter Baktis, Fr Stephen Frase; Joseph Kormos*** | | |
| ~5:15 PM | **Adjourn** | | |

# Track and Segment Descriptions

## Feature Speakers

### Opportunity and Opposition: Learning From Jesus and the Apostolic Church

### [*Archpriest Dr. John A. Jillions*](#_Archpriest_Dr._John)

Building on the theme of this year’s forum, *‘The Orthodox Parish: Awakening to Opportunity,’* Fr. Jillions will look at how Jesus, and following Him the apostolic church, saw new opportunities for sharing the message of God’s Kingdom among those “outside the camp” (Hebrews 13:13), namely the marginalized and Gentiles.  Pursuing those opportunities ignited opposition among those who saw the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles as a threat to familiar and even God-given customs and traditions. Fr John will explore how the interpretation and application of the biblical record can leave believers on opposite sides –some seeing threat where others see opportunity.  Secular culture with its massive social changes presents opportunities, not just threats, to Orthodox parishes today. The New Testament gives some striking models of risk-taking and bold action in making the most of opportunities.

### Engaging Spiritual But Not Religious. (Or 'Nones')

### [*Dr. Nathan Jacobs*](#_Dr._Nathan_A.)

In this feature presentation, Dr. Jacobs will explore who the religiously unaffiliated, or "Nones," really are. He will share information about their numbers, explore the sociological data on how they are shaped, and look at common contours in the worldview of the spiritual-but-not-religious. Jacobs will also discuss best practices for engaging Nones, both on the individual level and the community level. For individuals, he will discuss practices of active listening and points of contact between the common worldview of the Nones and Eastern Orthodox belief and practice. Jacobs will also discuss the type of community practices that tend to draw in Nones, and are likely to be of particular appeal in our post-pandemic culture.

## Track One: Personal Spiritual Resiliency

### [A*rchpriest Peter A Baktis, Track Host*](#_Archpriest_Peter_A)

Spiritual Resiliency is the balance of body, mind, and soul. How has a period of separation from loving parish relationships and communal worship and fellowship impacted your spiritual resiliency? How did people build spiritual resiliency and ‘muscle’? Were they able to strengthen their ability to weather the storm of the pandemic’s uncertainty and to embrace disorder to adapt and evolve to become closer to God?  What emotional, addiction and psychological issues may have been exposed or exacerbated by the pandemic? How can we as parish leaders be better prepared to recognize, assist and even intervene? Your spiritual resiliency is a means to help integrate the local community to become a spiritually vibrant and resilient worshiping and witnessing community

### Segment 1A Personal Spiritual Resiliency

### [*Susan Smoley, Session Contributor*](#_Susan_Smoley_1)

Focus on the resources, and lessons learned in developing and integrating body, mind, and soul for personal spiritual resiliency. How do you bring your spiritual resiliency as a gift to integrate the local community into becoming a resilient community?

### Segment 1B Home and Family Resiliency

### [*Thomaida Hudanish, Session Contributor*](#_Thomaida_Hudanish_1)

The home became the focus for spiritual resiliency. What were the practices, and custom-developed that made the home a resilient community? How are those practices, customs, and lessons to be brought to help build the local community into a resilient worshiping and witnessing community?

### Segment 1C Recognizing Addictive or Abusive Behaviors

### [*Fr. Leonard Herrem; Session Contributor*](#_Archpriest_Leonard_Herrem)

The pandemic was not the sole cause of addictive or abusive behaviors. Learn how to understand how these behaviors affect your spiritual resiliency and can be a stumbling block to full integration into the local worshiping community.

## Track Two: The Back-To-Better Parish

### [*Archpriest Stephen Frase; Track Host*](#_Archpriest_Stephen_Frase)

The parish we knew before the pandemic no longer exists. We know it will be different, but we’re not sure exactly how. Parishioners return as different people to a parish that is also different in many ways. Roles, jobs, and ministries may have changed as well as who were leading and serving in those areas of parish life. Fears and concerns continue to exist. New Sunday morning rhythms have been established both at home and at the parish. What can parishes do to overcome the secular gravitational pull of new routines of kids’ sports, Sunday brunch in place of the Eucharist, or even a brisk morning walk instead of participating in Divine Liturgy? What special considerations are needed to engage youth and children – the youngest of whom *church* is a faint memory at best. To move forward, we need to heal, re-engage, rethink *and* act on new possibilities.

### Segment 2A: Eight Parish Challenges to Overcome

[Archpriest Paul Jannakos](#_Archpriest_Paul_Jannakos)

Parishes are faced with two alternatives, the first is simply return to how things were before the pandemic, or second, we can we see the new opportunities afforded us by the crisis so that we might bring our parishes “back online” by being *intentionally* BACK TO BETTER.

But what does “better” mean? It means knowing the difference between *10 specific parish virtues and their corresponding vices or failings:* Loving vs. un-loving, focused vs. unfocused, adoring (worshipping) vs. un-adoring, caring vs. uncaring, evangelical vs. un-evangelical, disciplined vs. un-disciplined, ministering vs. un-ministering, catechetical vs. un-catechetical, creative vs. un-creative, and pastored vs. un-pastored. Each of these vices is to be seen not as an “opposite” of its matching virtue, but as a **failure** of the virtue itself. Parish communities (re-)acquire these virtues by learning how to overcome each of the failures, that is, by learning once again how to be the Church of Christ.

### Segment 2B:  Reintegrating Youth and Families into the Parish Post-COVID

### [*Natalie Kapeluck Nixon: Session Contributor*](#_Susan_Smoley)

As we return to everyday life parish ministries need to adapt. Youth and families have, in many cases, been estranged from the rhythm of parish life. This session will look at how those in ministry can support youth and families to become reintegrated into parish life. How can we provide space and warmth? What new skills and activities might be useful in reincorporating those who have been away? How can we use this as an opportunity to define and implement a back-to-better youth effort.

### Segment 2C:  A practical template and plan to move forward together in our parish communities

*Workshop. Archpriest Steven Frase*

Track participants will apply concepts from the prior two sessions along with their own unique parish situations to create a plan to address one area of parish life that can serve as template for other areas of parish life needing to be addressed in the months to come.  The hope is for clergy and lay leaders to have both learned useful information during all the sessions as well as have a practical plan to share with their parish leadership and communities as they strive to move forward.

## Track Three: Being Fishers of Men

### [*Joseph Kormos Track Host*](#_Joseph_Kormos_1)

In the past year Orthodox parishes have opened themselves to the world as never before. The now common practice of streaming of liturgies has helped to allay concerns by visitors and help them to taste and see prior to walking through the door. Other technology uses have enabled visitor classes. As a result, in a period of relative dormancy, many parishes are experiencing an unprecedented stream of visitors, inquirers, catechumens, converts and “reverts”.  How will we handle these exceptional evangelistic and service opportunities? Will we retreat? Will we focus only on "ours." Or, will we engage the world with the message of the gospel?  This track will explore using social media to communicate the uniqueness that Orthodox communities offer to the unchurched, understanding tools for listening and building trust and defining what the “Evangelizing Orthodox Parish” might look like.

### Segment 3A: Going to Where the People Are: Digital Communication and Social Media

[*Archpriest Jonathan Ivanoff; Session Contributor*](#_Joseph_Kormos)

While a good parish website is the foundation of your parish’s digital communication and marketing, websites are passive –waiting for people to arrive. This session will explore how to use social media, specifically in this case Facebook, as a tool to drive encounters – emails, phone inquiries and website visits from persons who would not normally visit your site or even know about your parish, Orthodoxy or perhaps even Christianity? How can we use promotional tools such as post boosts and platform ads? Do they work? What is a appropriate budget? How much time is required? What is the best way to fish for those with unrealized Christian needs and interest?

### Segment 3B: Continuing Our Look at the Nones and Dones

[*Dr. Nathan Jacobs; Session Contributor*](#_Dr._Nathan_A.)

This interactive session will continue the previous feature session with Dr. Jacobs as we explore talking to and listening to unchurched friends, relatives, neighbors and chance encounters. In these encounters trust is the key ingredient. How do we establish this?

### Segment 3C: The Evangelizing Orthodox Parish

When a parish truly commits itself to becoming an Evangelizing Parish” what does that mean? And what does the parish look like? After examining previously defined Orthodox *Principles of Evangelization* (see [here](https://www.oca.org/reflections/joseph-kormos/facing-forward-part-1-practical-principles-of-orthodox-evangelization) and a second article [here](https://www.oca.org/reflections/joseph-kormos/facing-forward-part-2-personal-considerations-in-orthodox-evangelization)) the track attendees will explore the activities, abilities, skills and commitment necessary for becoming a parish of intentional outreach.

# Contributor Biographical Information

### Archpriest Dr. John A. Jillions

**Archpriest Dr. John Jillions**, former Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America and Associate Professor of Religion and Culture at St Vladimir’s Seminary is author of *Divine Guidance: Lessons for Today from the World of Early Christianity* (Oxford, 2020).

Fr. John Jillions was born in Montreal (Canada) and raised as an Orthodox Christian, attending churches in Montreal, California, Massachusetts and New Jersey before returning to Canada to study at McGill University (BA, Economics 1977). He went on to study at St Vladimir’s Seminary (MDiv, 1980, DMin 2005) and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (PhD, New Testament 2002). He was married in 1979 to Denise Melligon and worked as Administrator of Saints Cosmas and Damian Adult Home and then as an officer at Bankers Trust in New York. Ordained deacon in 1981 he was attached to Holy Protection Cathedral in New York before being ordained priest in 1984 and assigned to Holy Annunciation Church in Brisbane, Australia. He returned to the US in 1987 to serve a parish in New Jersey and later as a captain in the US Air Force Reserve. In 1994 he moved to Thessaloniki, Greece with his wife and three sons to begin a doctoral program which in 1995 brought him to do research at the University of Cambridge and Tyndale House Library.  In Cambridge he served a parish and was the founding principal of the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies (1998). In 2003 he moved to Ottawa (Canada) to serve as dean of Annunciation Cathedral and to teach at the Sheptytsky Institute and Saint Paul University where he was tenured as Associate Professor of Theology. He subsequently served as Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America (2011-2018), adjunct Associate Professor of Religion and Culture at St Vladimir’s Seminary (2014-21) and adjunct instructor at Fordham University. He has an extensive list of publications, most recently *Divine Guidance: Lessons for Today from the World of Early Christianity* (Oxford University Press, 2020) and a children’s book, *The Christmas Story: Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem* (2020, Xist Publishing). He currently serves as pastor of Holy Ghost Church in Bridgeport, CT

### Dr. Nathan A. Jacobs

**NATHAN A. JACOBS**, Ph.D. is Scholar in Residence of Philosophy and Religion in the Religion in the Arts in Contemporary Culture Program based in Vanderbilt University Divinity School. He has served as a professor and lecturer of philosophy and religion at such schools as Calvin University, Trinity College and Graduate School, and University of Kentucky. He holds advanced degrees in Philosophy, Historical Theology, Systematic Theology, Church History, and Fine Art. Dr. Jacobs has three books and over thirty refereed articles to his credit. His most recent book, Kant and the Question of Theology, is published by Cambridge University Press. His previous book, The Persistence of the Sacred in Modern Thought (University of Notre Dame Press) received the Choice Gold Seal for Outstanding Academic Title. His first book, In Defense of Kant's "Religion" (Indiana University Press) was nominated for the American Philosophical Association's Book of the Year and the American Academy of Religion's Textual Analysis Prize. Jacobs' areas of specialization include modern philosophy; Eastern patristic thought; and the intersection between modern philosophy and patristic metaphysics in the philosophy of religion. Before studying philosophy and religion, Jacobs studied art at the Maryland Institute College of Art where his interest in art and ideas intersected in the world of film several years back. He made his writing-directing debut with the college comedy, KILLING POE (2016), which showed at numerous film festivals, including the Lone Star Film Festival, LA Comedy Film Festival, and Chicago Comedy Film Festival. The movie received numerous awards and nominations for Best Feature Film (HorrorHound Film Festival), Best Independent Film (Rondo Statuette), Best Screenplay (Maverick Movie Awards), Audience Choice Award (Chicago Comedy Film Festival), and more. Jacobs is also writer-director of the feature documentary, BECOMING TRULY HUMAN (2017), which looks at the rise of the religiously unaffiliated, or "Nones," and the beliefs of this growing demographic. The film also documents Jacobs' own journey from a "spiritual-but-not-religious None" to an Eastern Orthodox Christian. The film received a limited theatrical release through Aspiration Studios and digital distribution through Freestyle Digital Media. Both movies are now available on all major VOD and SVOD platforms. Jacobs is currently in development on his next feature film.

### Archpriest Peter A Baktis

**Father Peter Baktis** received a BA from Concordia College, Bronxville NY, MDiv from St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, a MDiv and MTh from The General Theological Seminary, and a Master of Strategic Studies US Army War College.

He has served 25 years of active service as an Army Chaplain (COL) retiring 2015.  He was the Associate Pastor of the Cathedral Church of the Protection of the Holy Virgin NYC, Rector of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Jamaica Estates and currently the Rector of Mother of God Joy of All Who Sorrow Orthodox Church in Princeton, NJ.

Father Peter has published several articles in both Theological and Military Professional Journals.  He is currently a board member of the Dialogue Institute, Temple University and second vice president Military Office Association of America Pines and Lakes Chapter in NJ. He is the Orthodox Church in America representative to the National Council of Churches USA convening table of Interfaith Dialogue and is the representative for both the Jewish-Christian Dialogue and Christian-Islam dialogue sponsored by the NCC.  He resides in Hopewell NJ.

### Archpriest Stephen Frase

**Father Stephen Frase** is the Parish Rector of St. Gregory of Nyssa in Columbus, OH. Additionally Fr. Stephen is the spiritual advisor for the campus ministry groups / Orthodox Christian Fellowships (OCFs) at The Ohio State University, Denison University, and Ohio University.

Along with his parish and para-Church service, Fr. Stephen is a science teacher in the Olentangy Local School District, north of Columbus.

Fr. Stephen and his wife, Matushka Elizabeth, have two daughters - a high schooler as well as a middle schooler.

### Archpriest Jonathan Ivanoff

Father Jonathan is originally from Los Angeles, CA, and grew up in Hollywood's Bulgarian Orthodox Church in a close-knit Macedonian-Bulgarian family and community. He is a 1986 graduate of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and was ordained a deacon in January of 1992 and a priest in April of 1993, having served at St. John the Theologian Orthodox Church on Long Island ever since.  For over two decades now, Fr. Jonathan has been involved in various pan-Orthodox ministries at the national and diocesan level in church growth, parish renewal and revitalization, and evangelization and outreach. He also works at Adelphi University, a private liberal arts college on Long Island, is married and has two grown children.

### Archpriest Leonard Herrem

Father Leonard Herrem grew up in a Lutheran home where the Christian faith was a central part of life. He had then and still has a strong sense of curiosity. Curiosity is an inherent part of Fr. Leonard’s nature.

While studying at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon Saskatchewan, he and several of his good friends encountered Orthodox faithful from an English language Orthodox Parish. While asking questions about some theological issues that were not answered in a satisfactory manner anywhere, the parish priest, Fr. Orest Olekshy, said, "That we do not know. This is a mystery. And do not stop asking questions." Fr. Leonard became Orthodox and joined this parish, Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church, in 1976.

He married his wife Chrystal, who is also from a Lutheran background in 1983. They have three adult children. After owning and operating a print shop, in his early 40's, Fr. Leonard completed a degree in Social Work and developed a private practice in Marriage and Family therapy.

In 2009 he was ordained to the Holy Deaconate and was perfectly content to be a lifelong Deacon. He was ordained to the Holy Priesthood in 2013 and has been full time as the Rector of Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church in Saskatoon Saskatchewan Canada since 2016.

He continues to be a therapist with a small practice. He is also trained to facilitate Clergy Peer Learning groups and facilitates these groups for clergy in the OCA.

### Archpriest Paul Jannakos

**Fr. Paul Jannakos** was born in E. St. Louis Ill., and grew up in Golden Colorado.   In September of 1976 he began his studies as a pre-theological student at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in NY, also taking courses at Concordia College/NY in Bronxville. In 1980 he graduated from Concordia College with a B.A. in Music. He graduated in 1983 with a M. Div. degree from St. Vladimir’s and was married to Michelle (Julylia) Jannakos in Cleveland Ohio, the year before, in 1982.

Fr. Paul was ordained to the holy priesthood on March 3rd, 1985 by Bishop Boris in Chicago at Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral.  He is currently the Rector of St. Luke Orthodox Church in Palos Hills, IL., and is the Chancellor of the Diocese of the Midwest. After his four children graduated from high school, he began studies in professional counseling at the University of Detroit/Mercy and graduated with a Dual Master Degree (MA) in Community and Addictions Counseling (2010). Fr. Paul also works as a licensed professional counselor (LPC) for Ethos Counseling Group. He loves to compose music, garden, and fly-fish.

### Thomaida Hudanish

**Thomaida Hudanish** serves as Director of the Missions and Evangelism Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco. Thomaida worked for eight years in parish ministry before joining the Metropolis Missions & Evangelism Ministry in 2014. In addition to her work in the American mission field, she has volunteered with Orthodox programs in India, Israel-Palestine, and Mexico, and served on short-term mission teams to Mongolia and Kenya with the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC). She is also the co-founder of Beauty First Films, publishers of a unique Liturgical Seasons wall calendar and creators of a forthcoming documentary about St. Amphilochios of Patmos. Thomaida lives and works in Portland, Oregon.

### Joseph Kormos

As the Parish Development Ministry leader for the OCA’s Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania, **Joseph Kormos** presents workshops and webinars, authors a parish leadership newsletter and helps to create parish tools for stewardship, growth and parish administration. He has served as leader for three OCA Pre-Conciliar Commissions and as a member of the Midwest Diocesan Council.

As a result of travels and in his role as parish development ministry leader Joe has visited 90 Orthodox parishes in the past 10 years. Materials from this ministry can be found at [www.ocadwpa.org/pardev.html](http://www.ocadwpa.org/pardev.html)

Experienced in communication, team building, project management and an ability to conceptualize fresh solutions, Joe has been a product innovation consultant and product development executive.

Joe and his wife Joyce are founding members of Christ the Savior – Holy Spirit Orthodox Church in Cincinnati OH where he serves on the stewardship committee and as choir director.

### Natalie Kapeluck Nixon

Natalie has served as the Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministry for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA since 2000. Her role as National Youth Director also encompasses supervision and planning of the camping ministry programming. She obtained her B.A. in the arts from Point Park College in Pittsburgh, PA. Ms. Kapeluck Nixon sits on the Board of Directors for Orthodox Christian Fellowship and currently serves as the Chairman of the Orthodox Youth Directors in North America.

### Susan Smoley

Susan Smoley is an Orthodox Christian who has served the church in many areas in varied ways and roles for many years. She lives now in Arlington Heights, Illinois, and is enrolled in a course of study with the St. Macrina Institute of the OCA Diocese of the Midwest. She is a wife and mother, and has enjoyed a career in the federal government and as a substitute teacher in the public schools. Her graduate degrees include a Diploma in Economics from Essex University, Colchester, U.K., while a Rotary International Scholar, and an MBA from the Graduate School of Business, University of Chicago. She completed undergraduate studies in economics and public policy at Kalamazoo College which included study at University of Erlangen, Germany, and Syracuse University, New York.