

Church Ministries / Departments

Department of Communications

Chairperson	Serge Schmemann 300 W. 108th St. # 2B New York, NY 10025 Home 212-316-9834	Members	V. Rev. Paul Kucynda James Karabin David Lucs Alex Machaskee John Mindala Gregory Sulich
Vice-Chairperson	V. Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky Home 516-671-6616 Email leonid@oca.org	Department Email	communications@oca.org
Director of Communications	V. Rev. John Matusiak 1 Wheaton Center # 912 Wheaton, IL 60187 Home 630-668-3071 Email jjm@oca.org	Department Web	www.oca.org /DOdept.asp?SID=5&LID=4

Accomplishments/Progress Since the 13th All-American Council

Since the 13th All-American Council in Orlando, FL, the Department of Communications has pursued a variety of major projects.

The Orthodox Church Newspaper

- ◆ After years of printing in black and white, four-color printing was introduced in 2004. Initially, half of each issue was printed in color; currently color is used throughout. The response has been extremely positive, and the reproduction of color rather than black-and-white photos has greatly improved the paper's appearance. Unfortunately, many photos we receive are not high resolution, which results in poor reproduction, but all in-house photography is high-resolution. In the spring of 2005 we experienced some technical difficulties with the firm that prints *TOC*, Johnson Printers of Downers Grove, IL. Pending resolution of these difficulties, which involve the actual print press and mailing, we will determine whether we will continue with this firm or seek the services of another.
- ◆ Recent issues have highlighted major events in the life of the Church — the 100th Anniversary of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, the 14th All-American Council, the presidential inauguration, the appeal for Poland's Grabarka Monastery, the 40th ordination anniversary of His Beatitude Metropolitan Herman, etc. Detailed information on the All-American Council has appeared consistently in recent issues. The June-July 2005 issue will highlight the 14th All-American Council.
- ◆ Many departments continue to submit regular articles in a timely manner, while other departments are sporadic in submitting articles. Schedules of deadlines have been made available to all department personnel on a regular basis. The schedule is being strictly adhered to and, in most cases, departments have responded on time. Special thanks must go to Mrs. Michelle Jannakos for her assistance in obtaining articles and features from the Church ministries and departments.
- ◆ Response to the "Communities" section, which highlights the lives of our parishes, has been exceptional. Many parishes continue to send in photos and information on various events and ministries, to the point that we have more photos and articles than we have space to print in the typical issue!
- ◆ After publishing six double issues per year during 2002 and 2003, we returned to printing eight issues per year in 2004. In September 2004, a special issue on the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards and the work of our departments, funded by FOS, was published.

Church Ministries / Departments

Web Site

- ◆ On March 2, 2005, the new OCA web site made its debut, after nearly two years of intense work by Mr. John Mindala, Sandwire Corp., and several department and OCA staff members. The task was, to say the least, monumental, given the fact that the site had grown to include several thousand pages of material and over 10,000 individual images and icons. The new site features enhanced graphics, user-friendly features, better search functions, and numerous technical improvements. Many new features and resources are also found on the site. Technical difficulties have been addressed as they have been brought to our attention, although the web team is confident that most, if not all, have been resolved. Protopresbyter Robert Kondratich and Father John Matusiak monitored the web team's work. Special thanks are due to Mr. John Mindala and his co-workers, who spent countless hours "beyond the call of duty" to facilitate the upgrade.
- ◆ Concurrently, the Department of Christian Education's new site also made its debut. Mr. John Pusey was responsible for the technical aspect of the redesign, while department members provided a number of additional study units and resources. Further information may be found in the DCE's report.
- ◆ Press releases and other new resources are added to the web site on an almost daily basis, thanks to the close daily contact between Father Matusiak, Mr. Mindala, Mr. David Lucs, and others. Offerings from the departments continue to be expanded on the web site.
- ◆ The photo galleries have become extremely popular. Recently, we have expanded this section of the web site to include major parish events. A request to all parishes in May, asking that photos of their Holy Week and Pascha celebrations be sent for posting, proved to be very popular, with dozens of parishes responding. The photo galleries are invaluable in presenting the life of the Church in North America, recognizing that "one picture is worth a thousand words."

Secular Media Contacts

Mr. Lucs has been especially successful in securing exposure for the OCA in a number of media outlets, including Faith and Values Media Network, National Public Radio (NPR), Google, Religion News Service, UPI, the *New York Times*, Associated Press, and others. He regularly sends press releases to more than 300 media contacts, and has discovered a tremendous interest. For example, UPI moved our press releases concerning the 100th Anniversary of Saint Tikhon's Monastery and the new OCA web site. Contact has been made with major networks and other media outlets. Mr. Lucs has also made contact with press offices in the White House and other agencies. To say the least, the secular media are not always easy to work with, but efforts are beginning to pay off and will continue to do so in the future. Media outlets clearly limit the amount of space devoted to Orthodox concerns, and with some of the recent Orthodox news stories from abroad (those concerning the Jerusalem Patriarchate, the Church of Greece, etc.), positive stories are unfortunately often ignored.

A major effort has been made to secure exposure for the 14th All-American Council in various media outlets.

OTHER PROJECTS

- ◆ The annual Desk Calendar, which was prepared by Mr. Mindala, is always well received. The 2005 edition features monthly quotes from Metropolitan Herman.
- ◆ The annual Source Book and Church Directory has been distributed each year, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Lucs and the team.
- ◆ Department members completed a number of other special projects, including the commemorative booklet honoring Metropolitan Herman on the 40th Anniversary of his ordination to the Holy Priesthood and the corresponding program/ad book.
- ◆ Ongoing projects include production of a series of timely, full-color pamphlets that will be posted to the OCA web site in PDF format so that parishes, clergy, and individuals may download them from the site, customize them with their particular parish information, and print them on any color ink-jet or laser printer. Updates to the *Bible and Church History* volume of Father Thomas Hopko's Orthodox Handbook Series are also in process. The "Questions and Answers" section of the web site will also be expanded. To date, Father Matusiak has answered more than 9,000 questions, many of which will be posted on the web site as soon as they are edited.

Church Ministries / Departments

- ◆ Department members handle a wide variety of other day-to-day communications tasks as needs arise and as an awareness of Orthodox Christianity in general and the OCA in particular increases among the public and the secular media. Mr. Lucs coordinates such requests as they arrive in the Chancery and keeps Father Matusiak, Mr. Mindala, and the Chancery staff abreast of needs and requests as they are received.
- ◆ A departmental meeting was held at the Chancery on November 23, 2004, chaired by Mr. Serge Schmemann, the department chairman, and attended by other department members and Father Kondratick. During the meeting, a variety of department projects and concerns were discussed.

Plans for the Future

The Department of Communications' goals include the ongoing expansion and upgrading of the OCA web site, increased contact with the secular media and wire services, and technical improvements to *The Orthodox Church* newspaper.

Concerning the web site, numerous suggestions have been received for adding practical resources that can be used by parishes [tracts, booklets, press releases, etc.]. Some of these are already in process, and are being developed as time permits. Expanding resources offered by the departments and other OCA church ministries is also a worthy goal for the immediate future, as are the ongoing technical enhancements to the site. We also hope to expand the very popular photo galleries to reflect the life of our parishes and communities. The request for photos from parishes detailing their Pascha 2005 celebrations was extremely well received, with some three dozen communities responding. The photo galleries reveal the vibrant life of our Church and its parish communities, in line with the old saying, "one picture is worth a thousand words."

Concerning the secular media, a great deal of time has been spent during the past triennium to develop and foster positive relations with various wire services, networks, and other media reps. This is a time-consuming and often frustrating undertaking, but efforts during the past triennium are beginning to bear fruit. For example, in response to press releases distributed by the department to over 300 media outlets concerning the centennial of St. Tikhon's Monastery, the Associated Press sent a reporter and photographer to the monastery prior to the centennial celebration to interview Metropolitan Herman and a number of the monks and released an excellent piece on the monastery during the week before the celebration. The major obstacle in working with the media and wire services is that their definition of "news" and ours are not always in sync. Also, international stories involving the Orthodox Church elsewhere tend to garner more interest on the part of the media, especially when they involve news that could be termed "sensationalistic." Nevertheless, a number of positive contacts have been established, and a goal for the immediate future is to strengthen the relationships that have already been established.

With regard to *The Orthodox Church* newspaper, as noted elsewhere in this report, full color was introduced in 2004. The quality of the photographs, however, is an issue that is currently being addressed. The paper is printed on a web press, which does not ensure the best quality reproduction, even when high-resolution photos are used. Plans to print the paper from offset rather than a web press are in their final stages, and the managing editor is negotiating a cost with a different printing firm that is comparable to that which is currently being expended. The goal is to provide better quality printing without a marked increase in expense.

The excellent working relationship between Father Matusiak, Mr. Mindala, and Mr. Lucs, combined with their "24/7" working policy, makes it possible for the department to "keep on top" of the latest news and needs in a variety of essential areas. This enables the department to fulfill its tasks and pursue its goals with a minimum amount of time and planning sessions. Given the nature of the department's work, the main task is to continually upgrade and expand what is already being done. As needs arise, the department's staff discuss the best methods to achieve goals and complete projects, with the constant positive input of the Church administration.

We plan to further develop all of the ongoing functions, resources, projects of the Department, inasmuch as the department not only provides a wealth of resources, but also serves to present the "image" of the Church in and to the world.

Church Ministries / Departments

Contact with the other departments, boards, commissions, offices, committees, and seminaries is constant and ongoing, inasmuch as one of the department's functions is to present the work of the aforementioned to the faithful and the public via the web site, *The Orthodox Church* newspaper, press releases to the secular media, etc. The working relationship between the department and the aforementioned bodies is excellent, with a high level of collaboration and cooperation.

We wish to thank Metropolitan Herman, as well as the Holy Synod of Bishops, Father Kondratick, and the Chancery staff for their constant encouragement and support of the department's efforts. The encouragement and cooperation we constantly receive have made our efforts rewarding and have enabled us to tend to our duties in a timely manner.

The Orthodox Christian Publications Center (OCPC)

History and Purpose

In 1988, Metropolitan Theodosius established the Orthodox Christian Publications Center (OCPC), a consolidated publications distribution ministry for The Orthodox Church in America.

The center is responsible for the printing, reprinting, and distribution of new or previously published materials prepared by the Church administration (e.g., the Holy Synod of Bishops, the Metropolitan Council) and the Church Ministry Departments, Offices, Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

Accomplishments/Progress Since the 13th All-American Council

Since the last All-American Council there have been some very significant changes at the OCPC that many may not have even noticed. The web site is now fully operational, and the entire catalog of the center is now available for purchase online. This online presence has become a valuable selling and evangelization tool. There have been many orders placed not only from within the OCA but from most of the other Orthodox jurisdictions and from enquirers outside of Orthodoxy. We have received orders not only from all 50 states, Canada, and Mexico, but also from as far away as Cyprus, the Czech Republic, and Trinidad & Tobago.

The location and administration of the center has also changed. Since its inception in 1988, the OCPC has been administered by Mrs. Barbara Kucynda in Wayne, NJ. After many faithful years of dedicated service, she has decided to "retire" in order to focus on other projects. During the summer and fall of 2004, the center was relocated to Brooklyn, OH. On December 1, 2004, under administrator/manager Frank Tkacz, the new center was officially opened.

Also, the bookstore operations have been completely computerized. We are now able, entirely by computer, to receive and process orders, generate bills, maintain a listing of all receivables, and keep an up-to-date inventory.

Plans for the Future

By the next All-American Council, the OCPC hopes to expand our wholesale inventory to include more icons, crosses, and books. To help those churches that cannot afford to invest large sums to start or enlarge their bookstores, the possibility of consignment sales is being researched. Also during the next triennium, a retail location in the greater Cleveland area is being considered.

Accountability

The OCPC is accountable directly to the Office of the Chancellor. The financial responsibilities have been transferred directly to the OCPC. All payments are received and invoices are paid through OCPC accounts. Excess funds are forwarded to the Chancery for use in other areas as may be needed.