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St. Phoebe Center

FOR THE DEACONESS

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Blessed Feast of the Nativity of our Savior

Board Members of the St. Phoebe Center for the Deaconess wish each of you a blessed and most joyous Feast of the Nativity of Christ. We thank you for your continued support and prayers. May God also bless you and your loved ones in the coming year.



AnnMarie Mecera, B.S., Chair
Caren Stayer, Ph.D., Secretary
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Kyra Limberakis, M.T.S.
Teva Regule, Ph.D.
Helen Theodoropoulos, Ph.D.



Deacon Perry T. Hamalis, Ph.D. Joins St. Phoebe Center Advisory Board

It is with great pleasure that the St. Phoebe Center welcomes Rev. Deacon Perry Hamalis, Ph.D. to its advisory board.

Deacon Perry is the Cecelia Schneller Mueller Professor of Religion at North Central College (Naperville, IL). In 2015-16, he was a Fulbright Senior Fellow and Underwood Visiting Professor at Yonsei University (Seoul).

He is a deacon of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea (Ecumenical Patriarchate) and, currently, a visiting clergy member within the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago. While not officially assigned to a specific parish, he mostly serves at Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church in Westchester, Illinois. Deacon Perry teaches, writes, and lectures on Christian Ethics, and is the co-editor, with Valerie Karras, a member of the St. Phoebe Center Advisory Board, of the book, *Orthodox Christian Perspectives on War* (University of Notre Dame Press).

Kyra Limberakis, M.T.S. Speaks at Religion News Association Conference

Board Member Kyra Limberakis, M.T.S. was invited to speak on a panel at the annual Religion News Association (RNA) Conference on the topic of reviving the female diaconate in the Orthodox Church.



RNA is the nation's trade association for journalists who cover religion in the general news media. RNA includes more than 400 members both nationally and internationally; they represent The Associated Press, The New York Times, NPR, CBS News, and other outlets.

"It was an honor and joy to share the work being done in the Orthodox Church on the revival of the female deacon to the Religion News Association community at their annual conference in September!" Ms. Limberakis reports. "My fellows panelists and I shared our perspectives and experiences as millennials doing unique work in our respective traditions, which sparked thought-provoking questions from the audience of journalists and reporters. This particular panel was produced in collaboration with

The Fetzer Institute and focused solely on the religious and spiritual landscape of the millennial generation. The organizers of this panel commented on how grateful they were to have a voice from the Eastern Orthodox tradition present, especially to share the important work that is being done to revive the ordained female deacon, a topic they had not covered before!"

RNA desires to improve the professional standards of religion reporting in the mainstream media through training and resources for journalists.

Panel at OTSA Meeting Includes St. Phoebe Center Board Members Carrie Frederick Frost, Ph.D. and Teva Regule, Ph.D.

A panel presentation entitled, "How important is unity and/or uniformity in the ministry and lives of women in the Church?" was part of the annual meeting of the Orthodox Theological Society in America (OTSA). The panel was organized by St. Phoebe Center advisory board member Carrie Frederick Frost, Ph.D, who is also an OTSA member.



"At the 2019 Orthodox Theological Society in America, I moderated a panel that spoke to the question: How important is unity and/or uniformity in the ministry and lives of women in the Church?" Dr. Frost reflects.

The panel consisted of Teva Regule, Ph.D. who addressed women in minor orders, Deacon Nicholas Denysenko, Ph.D., who spoke to women in the diaconate, Father Gabriel Rochelle, Ph.D., who approached women's roles in parish life, and Dr. Frost, who addressed church practice and prayers.

"Together, our papers acknowledged that in recent years, some ministries of women in the Orthodox Church have grown organically, such as the increase of women in parish leadership, as choir directors, and in catechetical roles," Dr. Frost explains. "This is true to different degrees in different places, but it is broadly the case across jurisdictions and around the world. But other ministries have been, and continue to be, only discussed and considered, not grown, except in certain pockets of the church, such as women in minor orders (as readers, etc.) or in tonsured positions (as chaplains) or as deaconesses. Furthermore, some jurisdictions and churches have changed prayers and practices that affect women's lives, such as advice given to women around menstruation and communion and the content of the Forty Days after

the Birth of a Child and Miscarriage prayers, but other churches have not addressed these and their related concerns. In terms of the questions about unity and uniformity, there seemed to be consensus that while absolute uniformity may not be necessary in terms of parish praxis, there needs to be theological unity when it comes to how we understand women in the church because these are issues of cosmic importance, not just 'women's' issues that are bound to a certain time or place. The conversation after the panel presentations between panelists and conference attendees was rich, with engaged questions from all present, including OTSA's representative from the Assembly of Bishops, His Grace the Right Reverend Irinej (Dobrijevic) Bishop of Eastern America."

The Orthodox Theological Society in America (OTSA) was founded in 1966 and works to promote Orthodox theology, coordinate the work of Orthodox theologians in North America, serve as a resource for the Assembly of Bishops, and engage non-Orthodox theologians interested in Orthodox theology.

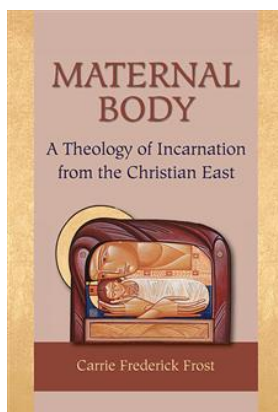
St. Phoebe Center Board Members Elected to OTSA Board

At the 2019 Orthodox Theological Society in America (OTSA) Board Meeting held in Glenview, Illinois this past November, two St. Phoebe Center Board Members were elected as officers of the OTSA board. Teva Regule, Ph.D. was elected President, and Helen Creticos Theodoropoulos, Ph.D. was elected Secretary.

We congratulate both Dr. Regule and Dr. Theodoropoulos for the commitment they have made in this capacity to OTSA. Learn more about OTSA here:

<http://www.otsamerica.org/>

Newly Released Publication is Authored by Advisory Board Member Carrie Frederick Frost, Ph.D.



Maternal Body: A Theology of the Incarnation from the Christian East (Paulist, 2019, 144pp.), written by St. Phoebe Center Advisory Board Member Carrie Frederick Frost, Ph.D. was released earlier this year.

In an interview with Dr. Adam DeVille, on the [Eastern Christian Book blog](#), Dr. Frost said she "became deeply thirsty for spiritual information on motherhood in my tradition," after learning that she was pregnant with triplets. "This led me to dedicating as much of the rest of my graduate work as possible to studying motherhood in Orthodox theology and ultimately to writing this book (which is not an academic monograph, by

the way; it's directed at a wide audience). I composed this book because I went looking for something I could not find—theological writing about motherhood—and after working with other sources like icons, hymns, and prayers, I ended up engaging in theological reflection on motherhood myself and wanted to offer that up to others who might have the same thirst."

Maternal Body: A Theology of the Incarnation from the Christian East can be ordered from Amazon here: <https://amzn.to/32kYGvW>.

"Healing from Adversity as a Woman in the Church Today" Paper is Presented at OCAMPR Conference



St. Phoebe Center Board Chair AnnMarie Mecera, B.S., presented a paper at the annual Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology, and Religion (OCAMPR) conference. The paper was entitled, "Healing from Adversity as a Woman in the Church Today."

"Considering the outstanding group of professionals and theologians present at this conference, I was honored to have the opportunity to share my paper," Mrs. Mecera said. Her presentation included statistics on the number of women who are lonely, depressed, have suffered abuse, and more, pointing out that Orthodox women are not exempt from these statistics. Mrs. Mecera asked the audience to imagine the fruits that could be realized by reviving the woman-to-woman ministry of the female diaconate.

[Read the paper here.](#)

Year End Donation Opportunity

Thank you to those of you who donated during 2019. Some of you gave on a monthly basis, some during our annual St. Phoebe Name Day campaign, some have made commitments for the next five years, and others donated during our Giving Tuesday campaign. We are truly grateful for the generosity and support of each and every one of you!

There is still a chance for you to make a year-end donation that will help us carry out our mission. Every donation, however large or small, makes a difference in our work.

Donate online here: <https://orthodoxdeaconess.org/donate/> or mail a check to: The

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