

St. Phoebe Center Annual Report 2023

We educate and prayerfully advocate for the revival of the ordained female diaconate to help serve the ministerial needs of the Orthodox Church and the world today.



St Phoebe Center
FOR THE DEACONESS
orthodoxdeaconess.org

Message from the Chair



Dear mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters in Christ,

2023 was a tremendous year for the St. Phoebe Center for the Deaconess. We celebrated our ten-year anniversary with a series of Zoom events, new materials, and a well-attended in-person symposium held at the Maliotis Cultural Center at Hellenic College Holy Cross in Boston in November 2023.

The St. Phoebe Center has come far from its humble origins. In 2013, a group of faithful Orthodox Christians led by St. Phoebe Center Founding Chair Ann Marie Mecera formed a US non-profit in response to the church-wide calls for deaconesses: the St. Phoebe Center for the Deaconess. The mission of the St. Phoebe Center is to educate and prayerfully advocate for the revival of the ordained female diaconate to help serve the ministerial needs of the Orthodox Church and the world today.

In the last decade, the Center has lifted up the history of deaconesses, shining light on the presence and function of deaconesses in the first millennium of the Church. The Center has also elucidated the real need for the revival of this ordained order—not only to align our Church practices with our teachings—but to help overworked priests, offer woman-to-woman ministry for many issues, and generally build up the entire Body of Christ. As the largest online resource on the female diaconate and its revival, the St. Phoebe Center for the Deaconess has been committed to sound scholarship and authentic Orthodox theology.

The order of the deaconess is a part of the history of the Orthodox Church, its reinstatement is dearly needed today, and the Church has frequently and firmly called for the renewal of this ordained order. The St. Phoebe Center will continue to review this history, need, and calls, but intends to shift its focus in our second decade to how the Orthodox Church might go about ordaining women as deaconesses again. The St. Phoebe Center intends to build on its foundation of education and conversation and turn its attention to the pragmatic details of how the Orthodox Church might welcome women as deaconesses.

The renewal of the ordained order of deaconesses is vital to the future of the Orthodox Church. We can move together with love and hope to see deaconesses once again. The St. Phoebe Center hopes to spark our God-given creativity as a community and to facilitate conversation and action regarding this urgently needed ministry.

The St. Phoebe Center offers this Annual Report as a glimpse of the work of our all-volunteer board and many supporters and volunteers. We are grateful for your continued support and prayers. May we be blessed and fruitful in our works this day and always, to God's glory.

In Christ,

Carrie Frederick Frost, PhD

Chair, St. Phoebe Center for the Deaconess

stphoebecenter@gmail.com

“The Church has always understood men and women to be equally created in the image and likeness of God, even if its broader cultural surrounding was highly patriarchal. As such, statements like this from Saint Basil were nothing short of radical: ‘The natures are alike of equal honor, the virtues are equal, the struggle equal, the judgment alike.’ ”

Women's Gifts and the Diaconate, Dr. Carrie Frederick Frost

2023: The Year in Review



As our tenth year in existence, 2023 was one of our most fruitful years. 2023 saw a new Chair stepping into the role and proving to be most capable in all aspects of serving the organization. The board planned a year of events including online presentations and an in-person symposium that drew long-time supporters, new and enthusiastic faces, trusted academics and theologians, and a Metropolitan who was both challenging and supportive. We are most grateful to those who have supported us from the beginning, and who pray for our work.

JANUARY

- New Chair Announced
- Deacon Salvatore Fazio Joins the Advisory Board
- Private Library Donated to Fordham University

MARCH

- OCF Event held at Fordham University

APRIL

- Dr. Elizabeth Prodromou Joins the Advisory Board
- New Deaconess Basics Video Series Launched

MAY

- Legacy of Rhodes Online Event

JUNE

- Girls' and Women's Liturgical Service Zoom Event with Axia Women

JULY

- Myth-busting: Addressing the Myths Around Ordaining Deaconesses Zoom Event

AUGUST

- St. Phoebe Network Meeting

SEPTEMBER

- *Church of Our Granddaughters: An Evening with the Author* Zoom Event
- Resource Published for Celebrating St. Phoebe's Feast Day

NOVEMBER

- Anniversary Year In-Person Symposium
 - "Proposed Guidelines for the Revival of the Ordained Female Diaconate in the Orthodox Church Today" are Released at the In-Person Symposium
 - St. Phoebe Award is Bestowed on Long-time Supporter Marilyn Rouvelas at the In-Person Symposium
 - The St. Phoebe Center established an African Orthodox Women's Grant to support the women engaged in Orthodoxy in Africa, and wish to acquire education and skills in order to better serve God.
 - "Deaconesses in the Orthodox Church Today" online event
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Board Members

Carrie Frederick Frost, Ph.D.,
CHAIR

Helen Creticos Theodoropoulos, Ph.D.,
SECRETARY

Gust Mecera, TREASURER

Ann Marie Mecera, FOUNDER

Kristina Baktis, MPS, LCAT, ATR-BC,
ATCS

Mardi Kring Perry

Teva Regule Ph.D.

Susan Smoley, M.B.A

Sara Tsugranis

*The question of reinstating
deaconesses is a matter of praxis;
it is not a dogmatic issue, as some
would assert, and this gets to the
heart of how we understand the
Church.*

[Towards a Reasoned and Respectful
Conversation About Deaconesses](#)

Advisory Board Members

Metropolitan KALLISTOS of Diokleia +

Archpriest Very Reverend Father Daniel
Rentel +

Fr. Radu Bordeianu, Ph.D.

Dr. Lori Peterson Branch

Fr. Marc Dunaway

Deacon Salvatore ‘Sal’ Fazio

Deacon Perry T. Hamalis, Ph.D.

Demetra Jaquet, D.Min

Valerie A. Karras, Th.D., Ph.D.

Dr. Cary J. Limberakis

Very Reverend Professor
John Anthony McGuckin

Paul Meyendorff

Jennifer Nahas

Dr. Elizabeth H. Prodromou

Fr. Philip Zymaris

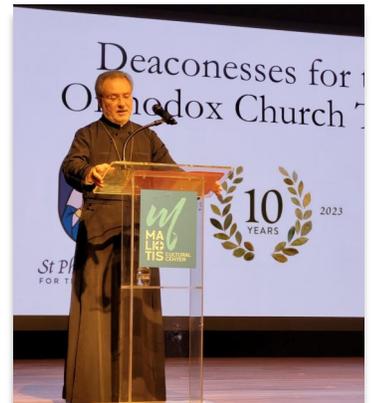
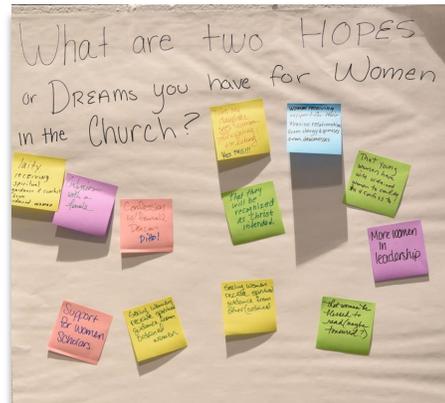
Financial Statement

St Phoebe Center for the Deaconess

Financial Report 2023

Balance 12/31/22		\$ 21,407.17
Money in		
PayPal automatic	\$ 4,396.29	
PayPal one time	\$ 3,388.36	
PayPal African Womens Grant	\$ 485.04	
Square	\$ 3,378.38	
Eventbrite	\$ 3,650.49	
Donations	\$ 26,643.80	
		\$ 41,942.36
Money out		
OCAMPR	\$ 354.81	
Volos Videos	\$ 1,500.00	
Travel	\$ 2,898.35	
Postage	\$ 448.63	
MailChimp	\$ 283.83	
Slack	\$ 534.46	
Zoom	\$ 2,209.73	
Website updates	\$ 997.49	
Miscellaneous	\$ 337.34	
Bank Fees	\$ 258.78	
Zimbabwe donation	\$ 600.00	
Honorarium	\$ 2,400.00	
Merchandise	\$ 5,322.98	
Symposium	\$ 9,633.90	
		\$ 27,780.30
Balance 12/29/23		\$ 35,569.23

2023 in Pictures



RESOURCE
for Celebrating
St. Phoebe's Feast Day
on September 3

St Phoebe Center
FOR THE DEACONESS

Introducing the African
Orthodox Women's Grant

The St. Phoebe Center is
delighted to announce
the establishment of the
African Orthodox
Women's Grant.

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The St. Phoebe Center's work centers around the recommendations of the 1988 International Orthodox consultation in Rhodes, Greece where the revival of the female diaconate was proposed, and numerous calls from around the world since 1855 for revival of the female diaconate.



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