

Beloved in Christ,

She was only ten the first time she stepped into the Panagia Chapel at the Alexios Retreat Center. The moment she crossed the threshold, her eyes widened—the soaring arches, the soft glow of candlelight, and the great chandelier shimmering above made her feel as if she had walked into a piece of heaven.



As the Summer Camp Paraklesis Service began, she slid quietly into a seat, taking in every icon, every curve of the dome, every whisper of prayer rising like incense. Then, suddenly, she heard the Priest say it – her name – now joined with her friends' names as the Priest prayed for their health and salvation amidst the litany of supplications.

Her face lit up.

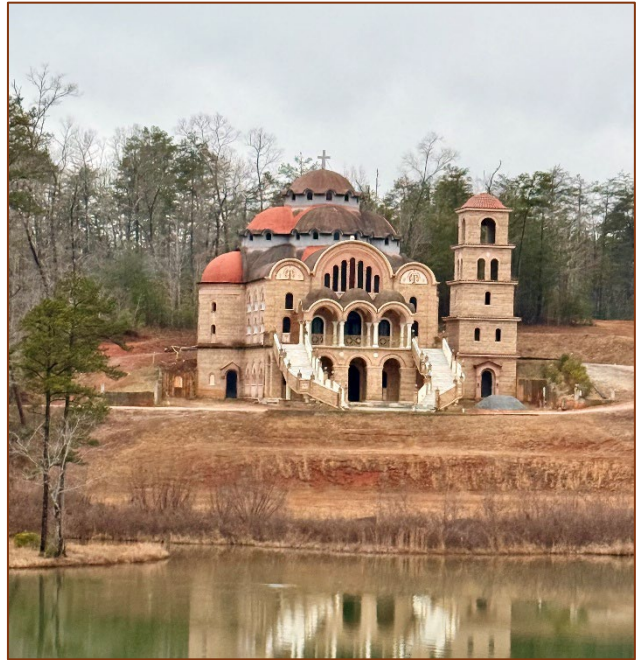
For a moment she could not move.

She felt seen, held, and wrapped in something far bigger than herself.

Sitting there beneath the great arches, surrounded by the beauty of the Kingdom of God depicted all around her, she whispered to her best friend, *"If I am blessed to be married one day... I want it to be here."*

And in her heart, the chapel felt like home.

My brethren, this true story captures the vision of our Former Metropolitan Alexios, whose dream was to build the Panagia Chapel for the long-term future – not just for us today, but for our children’s children and for all our families who would be blessed to worship there.



Last week, His Eminence Metropolitan Sevastianos asked all clergy to invite our faithful to offer a renewed and heartfelt gift to the Alexios Retreat Center (ARC) to help complete the construction of the Panagia Chapel. This sacred project began last November to honor the retirement of His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios, whose vision and leadership blessed our Metropolis for decades. Through His guidance, this exquisite retreat center was acquired—a spiritual home that will serve generations to come. The Panagia Chapel is the centerpiece.

In thanksgiving for his devoted ministry, I feel strongly that we as a parish should step forward and support this initiative, which soon will welcome even more pilgrims and retreatants to experience the peace and beauty of the ARC.

Last November, I was thankful to be one of two families among our St. Christopher parishioners who made personal contributions in response to the Metropolis-wide goal of raising \$500,000 to complete the Panagia Chapel. Unfortunately, that goal was not met and to prevent further delay on this project, I am seeking your help now.

Feeling strongly that every parish has an obligation to ensure that Metropolitan Alexios' vision for Panagia Chapel is achieved, I am rallying our parish with this opportunity to offer a formal gift in our parish's name supporting Metropolitan Sevastianos' renewed appeal. I invite all our parish families to join and pool what we can offer in the name of our beloved St. Christopher Church.

Please put in context that we are uniting our efforts with our 74 sister parishes across the Metropolis to help complete Metropolitan Alexios' legacy of the Panagia Chapel during this holy Lenten season—especially meaningful as we will gather every Friday for the Salutations to the Mother of God, whose blessed name "Panagia" this Chapel bears.

For this renewed effort, I am setting a parish goal of \$5,000.

To lead this offering, Presbytera Marinda and I are contributing the first ten percent—\$500. If we can raise more than our goal, that is a greater blessing, and it will enable smaller parishes who are not as blessed some leeway so that in the end Panagia Chapel is completed.

If you feel inspired to support this Lenten effort, I thank you and invite you to do two (2) things:

1. **Designate your willingness to offer a pledge** [using this link to share your family name and pledge amount.](#)
2. **Place your check in the Narthex collection tray** with the memo: **"ARC Gift."** **If you prefer to give online,** include **"ARC Gift"** as a note with your payment.

I hope to collect all family offerings by the Friday of the Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos (March 27, 2026) so that our parish may present one

unified check on behalf of the faithful of St. Christopher Church. Your donation will appear on your St. Christopher giving statement as an extra donation in addition to your stewardship and building fund gifts. Our joint parish offerings will be forwarded to the Alexios Retreat Center to help complete the construction of the Panagia Chapel.

Thank you, as always, for your generosity, your love for our Metropolis, and your desire to strengthen the ministries that nurture and renew the Holy Body of Christ. Through the prayers of the Theotokos—whose Chapel bears witness to her love and devotion to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—may God bless and guide us in this sacred effort.

With gratitude in Christ's service,
Fr. George

P.S. The photo below was taken during last week's Winter Clergy Retreat hosted at the St. Gregory Chapel in the basement of Panagia Chapel. Both levels of the Panagia Chapel are gifts that will sustain us until our Lord's Blessed Return... I pray you will be part of this opportunity to help complete our Panagia Chapel. Thank you! + *Fr. George Tsahakis*

