

Leadership Bios

Christopher Hondros, Resurrection Castro Valley

Christopher, who has been the Team Leader of the Church Music Development Team since 2019, is active in improving his local church music ministry at Resurrection GOC, having been involved in youth music and education around multiple parishes within the Metropolis. He sees the Metropolis Church Music Ministry as a key ingredient to supporting all musical needs for the parish. An instrumentalist turned vocalist, Christopher has used his knowledge of both Western Music Theory and Byzantine Music Theory to help others, whether it is more efficient breathing techniques for students in band, or learning to match pitches and sing together with the youth choir. A recent recipient of Patriarch Athenagoras Medal, he has also earned his Certificate in Byzantine Music from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.

Christopher resides in Castro Valley with his wife Darlene, and their daughter, Kassiani.

Athena Anastos, Assumption Scottsdale

Athena has been the Co-Leader of the Events Team since 2019 and is a native of Burlington, Vermont where her love of singing in choir began at an early age. While living in Vermont, Athena also taught Sunday School and was Philoptochos Chapter President for 4 years. In 2001, Athena, along with her husband Nick and two boys Tom and Chris, moved to Scottsdale, Arizona. She has been involved with Assumption Church's

choir ever since, serving as choir director from 2007 to 2020. In 2005, Athena attended her first ever San Francisco Church Music Federation Ministry conference and truly enjoyed singing her first ever hierarchal liturgy. Since then she has become involved in the ministry's conferences, workshops, and meetings as well as serving the Metropolis as a delegate to the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians, from which she received the Patriarch Athenagoras Service Medallion. In September 2020, she was appointed by the National Forum's Chair, Nick Chimitris, to be Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Greek Orthodox Church Music Education. One of her greatest joys is meeting and singing the beautiful music of our Church with other fellow church musicians from across the Metropolis and Archdiocese.

While their boys have grown up to be a doctor and lawyer, Athena and Nick still make their home in Scottsdale.

**Sarah Gyurkovitz,
Saint Demetrios Camarillo**

Sarah has served as Team Leader of the Ways and Means Team since 2019, has been a singer and musician since she was a small child. Her great passion for teaching and helping others expand their musical horizons and musicianship has been central to her life. She has performed in a wide variety of musical groups in and out of Orthodox circles (including performances at Disney Hall) and has been very involved with fundraising for several local children's choruses as well as serving on the board of directors for the Saint John of Damascus Society.

After becoming Orthodox in 2014, she discovered a love of Byzantine music, studying chant with Dr. Alexander Khalil. She has sung with the choir at St. Sophia Cathedral, served for two years as choir director at Saints Constantine and Helen Cardiff, CA and is currently in music leadership at Saint Demetrios in Camarillo, California, where she lives with the youngest five of her seven children.

**Liz Levy,
Resurrection Castro Valley**

Liz Levy has been Co-Team Leader of the Events Team since 2019, having been actively involved with the Federation Ministry for nearly 40 years, serving as its secretary, vice-president, and president for six years, having received the Patriarch Athenagoras Medal for outstanding service from the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians. She grew up singing in the choir with her beloved sisters, Kathy and Carol, and is currently the choir director at her parish as well as serving as its Administrative Assistant. Liz knows the ins and outs of conference and event planning, having been involved in the planning and preparation for numerous conferences, CMIs, and meetings, not to mention almost single handedly planning and preparing for Resurrection's Greek festival.

She lives with her husband, Mark, in Livermore, CA.

**Margarita Jakovas,
Annunciation Sacramento**

Margarita has served as the Ministry Records and Archives Team Leader since 2019. Having learned to read music at age 3, she has sung in choirs her entire life, joining the Resurrection

Greek Orthodox Choir in Sacramento at age 18 under the direction of Kathy Trapp, of blessed memory, who was also her YAL advisor. She began majoring in music and psychology at the college level, but turned her attention to the legal profession. She earned an ABA Approved Paralegal Certificate in 1989 and a B.S. in Business Administration, with a Human Resources emphasis from Cal State Hayward in 1997. Having worked as a paralegal and legal assistant for over 30 years, Meg brings outstanding organization and protocol skills to the Church Music Federation Ministry. As a problem solver, she has a keen ability to find possibilities and options that others overlook. Her love of the ministry and her reverence for the beauty and richness that hymnology adds to our lives, has kept her involved in the ministry since 2005, when she began serving as Regional Administrator.

She resides in Sacramento, California and with her husband, Dino, who shares her love of travel.

**Samuel Herron,
Assumption Scottsdale**

Samuel Herron has been serving on the Church Music Development Team since 2109, developing and presenting workshops, and working in preparation of the ministry's youth Divine Liturgy project. Currently the Protopsaltis of Assumption GOC in Scottsdale, he also served as Protopsaltis of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Boston. As director of the Dynamis Byzantine Ensemble and of co-founder of the Trisagion School of Byzantine Music, he has become well-known in Orthodox music around the nation and the world.

Samuel began studying Byzantine Music under Leonidas Kotsiris in 2002. In 2006, he spent three months studying under Lycourgos Angelopoulos, Archon Protopsaltis of the Archdiocese of Constantinople, Protopsaltis of Hagia Eirini in Athens, and director of the Greek Byzantine Choir, which Samuel performed with as an isokrates while living in Athens. From 2015-2017, he studied under Fr. Romanos Karanos while attending Hellenic College, and in 2015 received his Certificate in Byzantine Music from Holy Cross.

Sam and his wife, Christina, and daughters Lexi and Sophia live in Glendale, Arizona.

**Ross Ritterman,
Holy Cross Belmont**

Ross has served the Church Music Development Team since 2019, assisting in the preparation and editing of music education videos for the ministry's YouTube Channel and consulting on other CMD projects. With a background in instrumental music, he began learning Byzantine Music in 2009 to fill a need when a chanter in his parish passed away suddenly. Having grown to love the richness of the received tradition, Ross obtained a Certificate of Byzantine Music from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in 2016 and was tonsured a chanter of the Church by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos in February 2022, and currently serves as the Protopsaltis of his parish.

Ross and his wife, Irene, and daughter Zoe live in Redwood City, CA.

**Kay Harkins,
Saint Spyridon San Diego**

Kay has been involved in the Federation Ministry since 2010, beginning as a Regional Administrator, then serving as Secretary, Transition Coordinator, and lastly being appointed as Ministry Chair in 2019. She is an author, artist, and creative collaborator with a BA in Liberal studies with concentrations in music and literature, an MA in Writing and Literature, and an MFA in Writing. She taught writing and literature for 25 years at Point Loma Nazarene University, the University of Tampa, and the University of Saint Katherine. After being received into the Orthodox faith in 2003, her love of music led her to the St. Spyridon choir, where she continues to sing and serves as the music librarian.

Kay resides in San Diego, California with her husband Jack. She has two grown children and a rescue dog, Glory.