



**An Orthodox Christian Initiative**  
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# The Blessing of ZOE Women's Center

Saturday, December 8, 2018, was an auspicious day in the history of ZOE for Life! On that day, His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Pittsburgh, together with His Grace Irinej of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Eastern America, came together with local clergy to bless the newly created ZOE Women's Center.

The facility at 5454 State Road in Parma, Ohio, has been leased by ZOE for Life!, and used for three years to host ZOE House, where single parents and families in distress are cared for and lifted up by Christ filled volunteers. Under the guidance of Board Member and Executive Director Kathleen Kovalak, through the generosity of many across the country, parents are provided with many of the material goods necessary to create safe and healthy homes for their children. More than 600 clients visit ZOE House each year to receive much needed support at absolutely no cost to them.

Architect Michael Tabeling provided the design to subdivide the location to include ZOE Women's Center, pro bono. Thanks in large part to the generosity of Jason and Angelique Berry, ZOE Women's Center became a reality. A state of the art ultrasound machine was purchased through the generous support of The Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

George Thomas, D.O., has volunteered to serve as Medical Director. Radiologist, Craig George, M.D., has volunteered

*Photo below (L to R): Bishop Irinej and Metropolitan Savas, Fr. Nicholas Mihaly.*



to read the ultrasound scans. Under the direction of Dr. Thomas, abortion minded and abortion vulnerable women will receive reliable medical information regarding their pregnancy, and when indicated, an ultrasound to confirm pregnancy and its viability.

His Eminence Metropolitan Savas and His Grace Irinej concelebrated the blessing of the new ZOE Women's Center, sprinkled it with Holy Water brought from the River Jordan, and anointed its walls with Holy Oil from the Monastery of the Holy Ascension outside of Jerusalem. Following homilies delivered by both hierarchs on the meaning of the blessing and of the good work of ZOE itself, His Grace, Bishop Irinej also blessed everyone present with the Holy Oil as well. An Open House with Lenten refreshments followed the ceremony.

Our beloved Hierarchs, together with our reverend clergy, joined together to bless this new ministry of ZOE for Life!, so that through His Guidance, we may broaden the scope of support offered to our sisters and brothers in Christ, sharing His love in a tangible way, thereby empowering them to make decisions everyone can live with by sustaining life itself.

*Photo below (L to R): Kathleen Kovalak, Olga Rafidi, Anna Warren, Fr. Nicholas Mihaly, Paula Kappos, His Grace Bishop IRINEJ, His Eminence Metropolitan Savas, Cynthia George, Helen Primbas, ZOE Women's Center, Executive Director Lisa Palivoda, and Iryna Mahlay.*



# 2018 Gifts

To all those who donate to preserve life, please accept our sincere thanks! To be better Stewards of your generosity, we are no longer printing the names of each Donor. We hope that our personal letters of thanks express to you our never ending gratitude. We are sharing those gifts made for special commemorations. **God bless you all!**

## For the Health of:

Marianne Kormos

## In Honor of:

Violet Nikki Allard  
Craig George  
Rose Golio  
Benjamin M. Grysiak  
Shirley Kules  
Ileana & Theo  
John in Iraq  
Matushka Cheryl  
Matushka Eleanor Margitich  
Mother of God  
My mother's 84th Birthday, James and  
Eva Mackoul  
Greek Orthodox Philoptochos  
St. Irene Philoptochos  
Rev. Fr. Alessandro Margheritino  
Megan Minamyer  
90th Birthday of Xenia Do Thi Nguentan  
Our Adopted Children, Alex and Stacy  
Past info Data When Stranded  
Rade, Milena, Milan, Vlado, Hilda,  
Aleksander, Harry,  
Erla, JR, and Martha  
Baptism of Elianna Skopp  
Antonia, Alexandra & Nathan Tatsis  
The Theotokos  
Dr. George Thomas, D.O.

## In Memory of:

Sada Abdala  
Aborted Babies  
All Aborted Children  
All Infant Victims of Abortion  
Irene Antonios  
John Bacik, III

Manera Jameel Badek  
Fr. George Bartz  
Lydia Becker  
Deceased Family of Bugariu Families  
Fr. Demetrius Carellas  
Caryn Cherpas  
Anne Cuba  
Archimandrite Dimitri  
Bishop Elias  
Sada Dergham  
Christine Timko Deutsch  
Sophia Dimopoulos  
John Fairchild  
John Fassett  
Arthur Fay  
Betty Levonia George  
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Issa Jamleh  
Dr. John G. Janas  
John Joanides  
Diane O. Judge  
Stella Karas  
Archpriest John M. Klembara  
Matushka Kay Kompkoff  
Dr. Harry N. Kotsis  
Konstantinos and Vasiliki Koutroubas  
Harriet Lalos  
Archdeacon Dennis and Matushka  
Helen Lucak  
Mary  
Israel Mihaly  
Nazareta Mihaly  
Gerasimos Manalis  
Richard Marge  
Presvytera Margaret O.  
Metropolitan Phillip  
Metropolitan Shaheen  
Miscarried Baby

Mitered Archpriest Michael  
Mitered Archpriest Michael Margitich  
Helen Ann Moore  
Aphrodite (Frieda) N. Murton  
Hristos (Chris) J. Murton  
Salim Nammorine  
Parents of Nicholas and Euridici  
Papadakis  
Daria Petrykowski  
Darlene Petrykowski  
St. Barbara Ladies Philoptochos  
Fr. George Rados  
Daniel Resanovic  
Walter & Mary Rohan  
Phillip Serene  
Fr. George Sayef  
Roseanne Sepsick  
Phillip Serene  
Peter W. And Mary Y. Souvall  
Tom  
Millie Vovos  
Nawal Watfa  
Mircea & Mihjai, Fathers of the Williams'  
Deacon John Zarras

## For the Special Occasion of:

Assisting Mothers & Couples  
Christmas  
Nativity of Christ  
The Formation of our Holy Theotokos  
Feast of the Nativity

## Prayers for the Living:

Rev. and Mrs. Anthony Sabbagh & Family  
Spiritual Growth of Xernia Do Thi  
Nguentan

## Godparents Are Such Treasures!

As Orthodox Christians, we gain intimate family when we are baptized. The sacrament of Baptism brings with it Godparents, guardians to watch over us, to guide us, to help our parents direct our steps.

Not so with the clients we see at ZOE House and ZOE Women's Center. Many are bereft of any support system whatsoever. They are alone and struggling with crushing burdens. Some grapple with an unplanned pregnancy; some are new parents without support; some are dealing with the effect of an abortion in their past. Some do not know Christ, never having recognized Him working in their lives

At ZOE Women's Center, we have programming available to help them. To help them make decisions everyone can live with

if they find themselves expecting a baby and are unprepared, or how to be a better parent, or how to plan for their futures, or how to heal from past mistakes. These women need Godparents, to encourage them to make better decisions in the future, beginning with taking steps today that will open doors for them tomorrow. But they need encouragement to do so.

That's where you can make the crucial difference. By becoming a Godparent, you can offer her the encouragement to participate in classes that will ultimately enhance her life in ways she cannot see. Your financial support can be the catalyst that allows her to take the vital next step towards a better life. Please, help us with a donation in anyway you can. Simply write 'Godparent' in the memo line of your check. Her life will be forever changed.

# ZOE for Life! Southeastern Michigan

Happy New Year! A group of women from the Ann Arbor, Michigan area have formed an official board for **ZOE for Life! Southeastern Michigan Chapter!** During 2018, a steering committee—comprised of members of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and St. Vladimir Russian Orthodox Church—have been meeting at St. Nicholas in Ann Arbor to work towards creating a board, creating by-laws, and discussing the collaboration with St. Vladimir's next door in Dexter, Michigan. The board is currently working to set up our chapter so that we can begin our outreach work in 2019. It has been a long journey, and we still have a long way to go! Both churches are excited to work with each other for the same philanthropic goal, and hopefully we can roll out our presence to all the area churches in Southeastern Michigan soon.

What started off as a small aspiration from our Parish Priests has turned into an official existing chapter! St. Vladimir Russian Orthodox Church had been working with the Livonia ZOE for Life! Chapter before it dissolved. The Livonia Chapter had decided to fold, and offered valuable information to help start our own ZOE for Life! Chapter. Father Nick Kotsis at St. Nicholas Kotsis and Father Gregory Joyce at St. Vladimir together discussed a future collaboration for a ZOE for Life! chapter. From there a group of women from both St. Nicholas and St. Vladimir churches met as a steering committee, put together an informational retreat, and eventually formed the board. St. Vladimir has the ability to offer storage space for storing baby clothing and layette items that were donated from the Livonia Chapter. St. Nicholas has the ability to offer meeting space. Together our churches have formed an organization, as well as a new bond between Orthodox churches, and new friendships!

Our chapter is currently working towards functional operations in 2019, being realistic in the services we can offer with our resources. We have been blessed to acquire social workers,

medical professionals, business professionals, and women of action and passion. We plan to launch an informative website and a ZFL hotline number and text service in 2019. We will work towards outlining services that we can provide, or be a conduit to area services that can be useful to a mother in need. We will be looking for patrons to join our efforts and will share more information at our first annual patron meeting in the first quarter of 2019. Patrons are not exclusive to our two parishes. While our first goal is to work on our internal structure, in order for ZOE for Life! Southeastern Michigan to be a sustainable organization, we will need to grow in numbers and spread out our arms to hold hands, from church to church, encompassing all of our southeastern Orthodox brothers and sisters in Christ.

We have learned many lessons from the process of creating our ZOE for Life! chapter. We have learned to move slowly and think things through. We have learned to ask, listen, and research all that we can. We have been blessed to receive both solicited and unsolicited advice from our mentors. We have learned that walking instead of running results in realistic expectations. We have learned that we can't do it all, but if everyone does a little, we are left holding an enormous gift that is light as a feather. We hope someday we will be there to help when you want to open a chapter, but in the meantime we seek your support. Please keep an eye out for our future growth, and hopefully our hand will reach your parish soon.

ZOE for Life! Southeastern Michigan is accepting monetary donations. Please make your checks payable to ZOE for Life! and mail to:

**St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, C/O ZOE for Life!**  
3109 Scio Church Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

If you would like more information, contact Erica Foster via email at [elpetha@gmail.com](mailto:elpetha@gmail.com)



## Special Delivery on Christmas Eve

December 24, 2018, was an amazing night! ZOE received 3 big boxes from Denise McIntyre and her friends at St. Luke's Orthodox Church in Erie, CO, overflowing with winter coats and warm clothing for the little ones who visit us at ZOE House. There are so many snug children because of their generosity!

Then, we received a huge care package from the the Bumps Family in Missouri. They blessed us with warm clothing, baby food, diapers, wipes and other hygiene items for our children. You are all so very generous and giving! God bless you all! Blessed New Year!

# In Memory of Lucy Grace

November 14, 2018



The date on her memorial card announces both the birth and passing of Lucy Grace. She lived for just one day, in fact, barely five hours. This sweet baby came into our world under the worst possible conditions. That she was born and breathed the air which surrounded her is a miracle. At a routine ultrasound at 6 months gestation, Lucy Grace was diagnosed with a severe brain abnormality which

prevented her vital organs from fully developing. The doctors told her parents, Brandon and Amy (pictured above with Lucy Grace), that it's rare to see a baby at this stage still in utero because the pregnancy usually terminates itself with this type of abnormality. Naturally so, Brandon and Amy were beyond heartbroken upon hearing the news that their fourth child would likely not survive much longer; they were given the option of terminating the pregnancy.

Believing that all life is sacred and living their lives for God's glory, Brandon and Amy, again put their trust in God and prayed for His will to be done. The pregnancy brought much strain to Amy's body, having at times to confine herself to bedrest. With God's grace and the support of her husband and family, Amy's resolve facilitated the continuation of the life of Lucy Grace inside her womb. This precious child continued to grow and kick, alerting her mother that she was still there. The flood of emotions which stormed the hearts of this couple and their family is unimaginable – fear, sadness, anger – all competing against hope.

At 8 months gestation she had swelling on her brain and was in breach position. The doctor determined it was time to deliver Lucy Grace, and it would have to be by C-section. She came into this world surrounded by her family, she was held in someone's arms her whole life, she was showered with love and tears. Brandon and Amy and the rest of their family wish to convey the depth of honor they feel for having even just a few hours with their beautiful, Lucy Grace. They poured their hearts and minds into this child to proclaim their trust in God's sovereignty.

At the memorial for Lucy Grace anyone would be awestruck with grief at the sight of the tiny casket with delicate flowers draped over it. I certainly did not expect to leave being inspired with joy. By their extraordinary example of faith, Lucy Grace's parents and family bore witness to God's promise in 2 Cor 12:9, And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Their witness brings joy amidst sorrow.

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Amy's father's tender words, "she [Amy] gave Lucy Grace a mother's love that would last a lifetime," speaks truth to a love that never ends. Lucy Grace is in heaven with Our Lord, Jesus Christ. She will continue to grow in Christ and know the love of her family. Please pray for Amy and Brandon that they remain steadfast in their faith and that they will always be blessed by the true love that comes from their connection with their daughter, Lucy Grace.



## Join Our Bottles for Babies Campaign

*We want to send you a baby bottle, and ask you to fill it with loose change. What could be simpler? Simply empty your change into the bottle every day. When it is full, take it to the bank and send the cash to ZOE. Reuse and repeat! Contact Despina at [despina@mavrakisfamily.com](mailto:despina@mavrakisfamily.com).*

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*"ZOE for Life! is a Christian ministry which affirms the value of all life by helping women in a confidential manner during and after crisis pregnancies. We are committed to providing care, support and education to empower women to make decisions everyone can live with."*