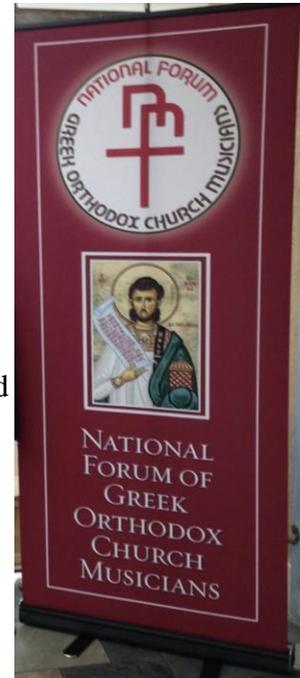


## Honor and Distinction

The week of July 1, 2018, marked the start of the annual meeting of The National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians, which was held in conjunction with the 44th Clergy - Laity Congress. Forum members Maria Keritsis (Chairman), Sondra Awad (Delegate), Father Nicholas Bacalis (Spiritual Advisor) attended in Boston, MA with other delegates and members from throughout the United States. Participants arrived on Friday to rehearse for the Divine Liturgy, singing music from both Kevin Lawrence and Dean Limberakis Liturgies. The National Forum members also sang the national anthems for Greece and the United States for the opening of the National Philoptochos Annual Meeting Sunday afternoon. Sunday evening, the National Forum held a reception for Forum patrons, which included Hierarchs and Clergy. During the reception, the National Forum presented a short concert and awarded a special gift to His Eminence Archbishop Demitrios of America, in appreciation of his continued support to the Archdiocese music ministry.



*Maria Keritsis making a presentation to His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios*

Also during the reception, individuals were awarded the medallion of St. Romanos the Melodist, to acknowledge their exemplary national contributions to church music in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

This year three individuals received this honor: Athan P. Theodorides of Asia Minor, posthumously awarded; George Theodossou of Boston; and our own Maria Keritsis of Richmond, Axia!



*Hierarchs and clergy gather with the National Forum Board*

On Monday morning Forum members sang for the Congress Opening and presented a workshop for Congress participants in the evening. The workshop focused on music ministry materials which the forum either developed or was an active participant in preparation. These include:

- Adapting and Publishing the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom by Roubanis, with the approved English translation adapted and type set by George Theodossiou. This music will be sung during the Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians (EFGOCM) annual conference which will be held at our Cathedral the weekend of October 12, 2018.
- Completion of the new pew hymnal with the approved English translation to encourage congregational singing.
- In conjunction with composer Kevin Lawrence, a new 4-part choral setting of the Divine Liturgy has been completed. This corresponds with the pew hymnal.
- The teaching series, “Hymns of the Orthodox Church”, using the approved English translation and melodies that correspond with the pew hymnal has been revised. We were honored to have our own Saints Constantine and Helen Cathedral youth participate in recording for the series.

All publications are available for purchase and distribution through the National Forum website under Publications. You may also consider becoming a steward of this very worthy organization, <http://churchmusic.goarch.org>.



*Cathedral Youth recording for the new teaching series*

After participating in the Doxology for the Fourth of July, Forum members presented a concert, complete with brass quintet to help celebrate our nation's Independence Day.

As part of the Forum meeting, every two years a vote is taken to select the National Forum chairman. This year, Maria Keritsis received unanimous support to continue in a fourth term as National Chairman. Congratulations, Maria! Below is part of her nomination:

“The Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians nominates Maria Keritsis for the upcoming term of Chairman of the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians. Maria is the current National Forum Chairman and manages her responsibilities with grace and diplomacy. She interfaces with the hierarchy, clergy, and laity in a respectful and professional manner.

Maria is a former President of the EFGOCM and currently serves on the federation board as scholarship chairman. She was the first female Parish Council President of her Richmond community, has served as President six more times, and continues to serve on the parish council. Maria has served as president of Philoptochos and continues to serve on the Philoptochos board. Maria served as District Governor and was on the Grand Lodge of the Daughters of Penelope. Maria has been an outstanding National Forum Chairman and the EFGOCM would like her to continue in that role.”

We are very blessed to have such a dedicated and faithful individual as part of our Cathedral community.

Our Cathedral's music ministry welcomes you to serve and participate in whatever capacity your talents allow. We are organizing a youth choir, open to all youth, which will participate in the upcoming choir conference. Contact choir master, Sondra Awad, for additional information.

[Sondra.awad@gmail.com](mailto:Sondra.awad@gmail.com)