



Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology, and Religion
2024 Annual Report
Submitted to the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops

OCAMPR is an Orthodox Christian nonprofit composed of professionals in the fields of medicine, psychology, and religion. OCAMPR continues to actively serve its membership and the Orthodox community with energy and enthusiasm. The OCAMPR Board of Directors is dedicated to sharing their diverse professional talents for God's glory and in the service of the Orthodox Church. 2024 was a year of stability, with a focus on the future efficiency and longevity of operations as it relates to the growth of membership, programming, and networking, details of which are described below.

Board Member Composition:

2024 was a continuation of terms for all of the board members, with no changes. The 2024 Board of Directors: Dr. Randa Anderson, President; Susan Zacharia Sanders, LCSW, Vice President; Dr. Sarah Byrne-Martelli, D.Min BCC- Secretary; Fr. Andrew Andrews, MHA-Treasurer; Fr. Sean Levine, D.Min-Religion Chairperson; Dr. Ioana Popa-Medical Chairperson; Joel Klepac LMFT-Psychology Chairperson; and Dr. Mena Mesiha-Associate Members Chairperson, and Dean Theophilos, MA, Board-Member-at-Large. This continuity allowed the board to improve many aspects of OCAMPR's programming and administration without interruption.

OCAMPR Board of Directors



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Advisory Board

2024 was a continuation of terms for all of the advisory board members, with no changes. The 2024 Board of Directors: Bishop John Abdalah, D.Min.; Michael Christakis, M.D.; Demetra Jaquet, D.Min.; Philip Mamalakis, Ph.D.; Fr. Stephen Muse, Ph.D.; Fr. Vasileos Thermos, M.D., Ph.D.; Gayle Woloschak, Ph.D., D.Min.

Organizational Management:

Throughout 2024, the primary aim of the OCAMPR board was to set up the organization for growth, longevity, and continuity, while maintaining the overarching goal of the OCAMPR mission.

In 2024, the OCAMPR Board drafted and passed new bylaws for the organization. These bylaws will help guide the current board and future OCAMPR board members for years to come.

In 2023, OCAMPR hired a part-time Assistant, Keely Andrews Sarsama. Keely's ongoing work through 2024 has contributed to more frequent organizational communication. She has put a process in place to track membership, and she communicates regularly with individuals whose membership is up for renewal. She assists the OCAMPR board with other tasks necessary to implement OCAMPR events, such as the Community of Practice virtual member gatherings and the Annual Conference.

At the end of 2023, the board contracted the services of a new webmaster through Fly Creative Solutions. Throughout 2024, OCAMPR has benefited from the continuity of the same webmaster who is continually updating and improving the OCAMPR website and member portal.

With the assistance of two part-time contracted OCAMPR roles, the OCAMPR Board can focus on improving and expanding member offerings, long term goal setting and planning, and reaching more professionals throughout the Orthodox community.

2024 Annual Conference:

The Annual Conference is OCAMPR's largest event of the year, during which OCAMPR members and supporters gather for fellowship and education. The OCAMPR 2024 Annual Conference, on the theme "Embodied Life: Perspectives of Human Personhood," took place in person at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, IL (Chicago area). 153 people attended the event, a number that shows slight growth over the prior year attendance. Over 60 of the conference attendees were attending an OCAMPR conference for the first time. OCAMPR received donations from 5 conference attendees, totaling just under \$900. These donations, in addition to other OCAMPR funds, were used to offer scholarships to 11 conference attendees. Attendees came from all over the country, with some traveling from countries as far as Romania and Uganda. The retreat-like setting of the venue was ideal for building community, connection, and collaboration among our attendees.

2024 Conference Participants



Conference highlights included the Keynote address offered by The Right Reverend Gerasim, Bishop of Fort Worth, Auxiliary to the Diocese of the South (OCA). The medical, psychological, and theological plenary presentations were offered by Reverend Deacon Sampson (Ryan) Nash, MD, MA, The Hagop S. Mekhjian, MD, Endowed Chair in Medical Ethics and Professionalism & Director of The Ohio State University Center for Bioethics and Medical Humanities; Pia Chaudhari, PhD, Founding Co-Chair of the Analytical Psychology and Orthodox Christianity Consultation; and Right Reverend Archimandrite Calinic Berger, PhD, Archiepiscopal Vicar for the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese and Adjunct Professor of Dogmatic Theology at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.

2024 Keynote and Plenaries



12 workshops, three panel discussions, and 11 papers were presented by OCAMPR professionals on a variety of themes related to the healing professions. The workshops included didactic and interactive components, with Orthodox Christian theology and praxis as the foundation. The panel discussions were designed to increase interdisciplinary dialogue by including at least 3 panelists from diverse professions within the fields of medicine, psychology, and religion. The paper presentations were read by the authors. Each presentation was followed by audience discussion and questions.

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Audio and video recording by Fr. John Parsells/Orthodox 360 captured each speaker, workshop, panel, and paper presentation. All but one presenter opted in to make their presentations available to a wider audience on the OCAMPR YouTube Channel. In 2024, the OCAMPR YouTube Channel's 2024 conference presentation recordings received over 2,000 views. The presentation that is not available on YouTube, is available to OCAMPR members online on the OCAMPR member portal. Additionally, the 2024 keynote and plenary presentations are available to listeners on Ancient Faith Radio.

2024 Workshops & Papers



Each year, the conference offers a vendor/exhibitor area, which gives other Orthodox organizations an opportunity to share their work and sell their products to conference participants. Sharing their information in the exhibit area were The Assembly of Bishops (specifically highlighting Mental Health Ministries), Orthodox Youth Ministries, Orthodox Christians for Life, Orthodox Christian Mission Center, The Family Wellness Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco, Agape Circle, Team for the Soul, Beauty First Films, and St. Phoebe Center. Thrive Life Skills, Sebastian Press, and Lift Up Uganda displayed and sold their books and products.

2024 Vendors



Conference attendees that provided feedback on a post-conference survey had many positive comments to share about their conference experience. One longtime OCAMPR Member wrote, “OCAMPR, via its conference presentations, publications, and collegial support, has enabled me to integrate my Orthodox faith with clinical practice. Whether purposefully incorporating Christian truths into the therapeutic process, or inconspicuously praying the Jesus Prayer during a difficult psychotherapy session, my professional psychological treatment approaches are informed and guided by the teachings and practices of the Church.”

Community of Practice:

A Community of Practice is an organized group of people who have a common professional interest and who come together regularly to learn from each other, gain new skills, and collaborate with other professionals. These Community of Practice events are truly unique gatherings. They offer the benefit of improving our professional work, while sharing fellowship and drawing on the beauty and richness inherent to our Orthodox Christian faith.


Community of Practice gatherings include a 10-15 minute presentation by an OCAMPR professional on a topic relevant to professionals in medicine, psychology, and religion, as well as small and large group discussions on the day’s topic. Participants engage in thoughtful conversations with other professionals to achieve the goals of these events: fellowship, networking, and continuing education.

Going into the third year of offering the OCAMPR Community of Practice gatherings, events became a benefit of membership in 2024. During the year, two of the Community of Practice gatherings were held as open house events, open to members and nonmembers alike. Throughout 2024, eight events were held in total, with 172 in attendance across the eight events.

Topics and presenters in 2024 included, “The Science of Service” by Silvia Farag, MSW, LSW, PsyD Candidate; “Sacred Hospitality: The Dia-Logos of Love” by Fr. Stephen Muse, PhD, LPC, LMFT; and new this year, “Member Networking Event” hosted by OCAMPR Executive Board Medical Chairperson, Ioana Popa, MD, BCC, MTS. For a complete list of past Community of Practice events, please visit the OCAMPR website (<https://ocampr.org/community-of-practice-gatherings/>).

Members were surveyed about the impact of the Community of Practice gatherings. One new member shared, “I’m new to Orthodoxy and wanting to grow as an Orthodox Psychotherapist. So this community is introducing me to other therapists. I’m continually asking ‘What is... (soul, emotion, transference...)?’ and I’m interested in patristic answers. These meetings give both direct and indirect help in understanding the Orthodox mind on these types of questions.”

The above survey response, as well as others, will help the OCAMPR Board improve member experience and inform future topics and discussions. Member feedback is central to decision making around events and speakers.



**INTERDISCIPLINARY
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**
MONTHLY VIRTUAL GATHERING FOR
MEMBERS ONLY

**Wednesday, February 7th,
11 AM ET**

Access the Zoom link from the
OCAMPR member portal

Become a Member Today
ocampr.org

**“ Soul – Psyche,
Spirituality – Therapy:
Theoretical Clarifications and
Practical Consequences**

Presented by
Rev. Vasileios Thermos, MD, PhD

**Brief Presentation followed by
Small & Large Group Discussion**

Member Portal:

The OCAMPR Online Member Portal is an exclusive member networking resource where members can:

- create a profile and share professional information
- network with others through chat for further connections and professional partnerships
- access exclusive member resources and recordings from the conference and past Community of Practice events
- keep up with calendar events and announcements
- access the OCAMPR “suggestion boxes”
- share and receive updates from the broader OCAMPR Community through the Community Bulletin Board announcements page.

Synergeia: The Journal of OCAMPR:

The previous Synergeia Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Steve-John Harris, the current Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Jim Burg, the editorial board, Dr. Helen Theodoropoulos,, and Dr. Cathy Creticos, along with the OCAMPR board, sought to develop the publication further during 2023. Publication standards became more rigid and a blind peer review process was put in place. This began a new chapter for the OCAMPR journal, *Synergeia: The Journal of the Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology and Religion*. In 2024, *Synergeia*

continued this transition. With a more rigorous publishing and review process, publication timing was impacted. The publication of noteworthy articles and publications from the proceedings of the 2023 annual OCAMPR conference will be released in an edition of *Synergeia* in early 2025, while the 2024 conference proceedings are expected to be published in late 2025.

Each issue of *Synergeia* is offered to the general public via a subdomain of the OCAMPR website (<https://journal.ocampr.org/>). Hardbound editions will be printed and distributed to the Bishops of the Assembly every two years, combining two journal issues into each hardbound edition.

Membership Growth:

Through consistent Community of Practice events with quality speakers and guests, the expansion of the OCAMPR member portal, increased member involvement, and growth in attendance of the Annual OCAMPR Conference, OCAMPR continues to see an increase in membership. In January of 2024, OCAMPR had 195 members. This number grew 10% to 219 by December 2024.

Collaboration with the Mental Health Ministries of the Assembly of Bishops:

The OCAMPR board and many of its members continued to volunteer their time and professional talents to the Mental Health Ministries of the Assembly of Bishops. OCAMPR President, Dr. Randa Anderson, and Religion Chairperson, Fr. Sean Levine, continued as consultants and offered input into current projects. During the 2024 OCAMPR conference, MHM presented a workshop, which was well attended by conference participants.

The National Directory of Orthodox Mental Health Providers is continually adding new providers to the database (<https://www.assemblyofbishops.org/directories/mental-health>). Many of these providers are OCAMPR members.

Public Outreach:

Motivated to offer education on current issues in the fields of medicine, psychology, and religion from an Orthodox viewpoint, OCAMPR board members and 2024 OCAMPR Conference presenters offered various podcasts on Ancient Faith Radio and other popular platforms (Appendix A). The topics covered were relevant to the general public, with many focusing on mental health.

In addition, OCAMPR board members regularly present retreats, workshops and webinars to parishes, other Orthodox organizations, and at Diocesan or Archdiocesan assemblies. These have included retreats on topics such as an Orthodox perspective on grief and loss; preventing professional burnout and adapting an Orthodox approach to self-care; and adolescent mental health. OCAMPR members and leadership welcome the opportunity to share professional knowledge integrated with Orthodox praxis for the benefit of the Orthodox community.

In 2023, the OCAMPR YouTube Channel was expanded to include past conference recordings reaching back to 2014 (<https://www.youtube.com/@ocampr8542/playlists>). Many of the conference recordings continue to be available to the general public on Ancient Faith Radio (<https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/ocampr>). Through these two

online platforms, OCAMPR shares edifying content with a wider audience. Analytics from YouTube and Ancient Faith Radio indicate a reach of over 8,000 listeners in 2024.

The OCAMPR email listserv reaches over 1,600 people with a regular newsletter and event-related announcements, and the number continually increases as more people learn of the organization.

OCAMPR maintains a social media presence on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn with regular postings and interactions reaching over 2,000 followers across the four platforms.

Looking to the future:

The OCAMPR board is continuing to increase offerings to members, while setting up the organization for longevity, growth, and efficient administration. Looking to 2025, leadership changes on the executive board will bring new ideas and fresh perspectives to guide the organization.

While OCAMPR leadership agrees that membership is growing because of increased offerings that support professionals in their development, it is also evident that members join because they eagerly seek to connect their work with their Orthodox faith. OCAMPR members care about living out our shared Christian faith in our vocations, and they seek community, collaboration and connection with other like-minded professionals. OCAMPR's members, programs, communications, and benefits have created a unique and expanding community of Orthodox Christian practitioners.

OCAMPR is grateful to be an affiliate ministry of the Assembly. We hope and pray that our work reflects the generosity of the Assembly in caring for the Orthodox flock in America. We aim to continue offering our ministry for God's glory and the benefit of the Orthodox Christian Church.

Respectfully submitted,



Randa K. Anderson, Ph.D., President,
Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology and Religion

Appendix A
Podcasts from OCAMPR Board Members & Conference Presenters

“Dealing with Trauma,” Sangeetha S. Thomas MS, LPC, LCDR, NCC on *Live with the Louhs*
https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/livewiththelouhs/dealing_with_trauma

“Becoming a Healing Presence,” Dr. Albert Rossi on *Live with the Louhs*
https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/livewiththelouhs/becoming_a_healing_presence

“Introducing 6 Hours, 7 Lessons,” Dr. Randa Anderson on *Live with the Louhs*
https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/livewiththelouhs/introducing_6_hours_7_lessons

“Understanding Eating Disorders,” Dean Theophilos, LCPC on *Live with the Louhs*
https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/livewiththelouhs/understanding_eating_disorders

“Active Listening is Love Delivered,” Dr. Albert Rossi on *Live with the Louhs*
https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/livewiththelouhs/active_listening_is_love_delivered/

“Meet Fr. Eugen Rosu!,” Fr. Eugen Rosu on *Everyday Orthodox*
https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/everydayorthodox/meet_fr_eugen_rosu/

“Meet Dr. Mark Faries!,” Dr. Mark Faries on *Everyday Orthodox*
https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/everydayorthodox/meet_dr_mark_faries/

“Fr. Simon Menya,” Fr. Simon Menya on *Voices From St Vladimir's Seminary*
https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/svsvoices/fr_simon_menya/

“Filled with Less - January 2024,” Ioana Popa, MD, BCC, MTS on *Filled with Less*
https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/filledwithless/filled_with_less_january_2024/

“Renewal Conversation: Threads of Creativity, IFS and Growth in Christ,” Joel Klepac LMFT-S on *Thriving In Christ: High Level Holistic Habits*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvHu92qC3WI>

“Mind Your Mind: Powerful Tips to Shift Thoughts & Assumptions,” Dr. Randa Anderson on *Thriving In Christ: High Level Holistic Habits* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EG46SAjBCA>