E. Hope Demitry received her BA and MA in Music Education from Trenton State College (The College of New Jersey)

In 1970, Hope began her professional career as a music specialist, teaching vocal and general music to grades pre-K through 8th in the Trenton public schools. Hope was responsible for holiday/spring concerts and closing programs, and produced and directed many musicals in her buildings.

Hope has been the organist of St. George Church of Trenton for 47 years. As a junior choir member, Hope began singing and playing the organ at St. George. She also directed and played the organ when the church was between choir directors. She has served as organist for many weddings over the years. In 2002, Hope founded the St. George Youth Choir at her parish in Trenton and serves as its director and accompanist. In May 2008 Hope was honored by her church and the Metropolis of New Jersey for those years of dedication.

On the federation level, for the Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians, Hope has served as Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. She also served as one of the accompanists for the “Tribute to Anna Gallos Concert” in 2006. In 1999, Hope received the Patriarch Athenagoras I Medal. Hope has also served as a judge at the New Jersey Youth Committee’s Annual “Sights and Sounds Festival.” In 2004, she accompanied the youth choir at a special program for Patriarch Bartholomew in Tenafly, New Jersey. Hope also co-chaired a Youth Singers Workshop and Youth Christmas Singers Workshop. Hope also served on the committee for the Sunday School Children’s Hymn series for the New Jersey churches. This was an outgrowth for the National Forum Hymn Series.

Hope is a Life Member of the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians. She has accompanied liturgies for the National Forum’s participation in biennial Clergy-Laity Congresses as well as for several opening ceremonies and receptions hosted by the Forum at various biennial congresses. Hope currently serves as the National Forum’s treasurer.
For 25 years the Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians, the District of New Jersey, celebrates Lent with an annual concert, called “The Spirit of Lent Concert”. Since 1985 youth singers have been included in a section of the concert. They mainly sing countermelodies. Kathryn Athansoulas, choir director of Holy Trinity in Westfield, New Jersey and Hope Demitry organist at St. George in Trenton, New Jersey collaborate in teaching the music to the youth singers. They rehearse the youth portion of the program one hour before the concert begins. Some former youth singers still participate in the concert with the adults.
Teaching Tips

Tips for Youth Choir Rehearsals:

Warm ups: I have fun little warm ups for them to sing using church music words and other silly patterns. This gets them engaged while warming up their voices.

I mix them up between boys and girls for a fun listening activity.

Because I have a vast age group, I pair up younger children with older ones as role models and to help.

I get their “buy in” with repertoire. I let them choose music to learn.

We also sing many non-sacred hymns for fun and to use for competition. This keeps their attention.

I find that 45 minutes is about all they can handle on a Sunday afternoon.

Weekday rehearsals are too difficult with all their extra-curricular activities. So, Sundays after Sunday school is perfect.

I have my kids come up and sing with the adults each week. It makes them feel special and provides them a sense of belonging as well as gives the adults a special reason to help them.

Submitted by: Kathy Meck, Adult and Youth Choir Director of St. Spyridon in San Diego, CA

Please submit any tips or ideas that have been successfully used with your youth choirs, youth chant choirs, and Church School music/Hymnology classes to:

Denise Karras
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It had been typical in many of our churches that the chanting stand was reserved for a few older men huddled around a leader and struggling with the intricacies of our liturgical services. Lately, however, we have an increasing number of young people filling our psalteria and devoting themselves to reading Byzantine notation, singing in unison, and reviving ancient musical compositions. At Saint Spyridon Hellenic Orthodox Church in Palos Heights, we have been blessed with young chanters who are committed to our Byzantine musical tradition. Led by our chanter, Angelo Angelos, age 21, the students of our Byzantine Music School of our sacred Metropolis of Chicago, starting as teenagers and young adults, have filled our chanting stand with their beautiful voices and their love for church music. Our chanter, Angelo, grew up at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Oak Lawn where he developed a deep love for our worship services which, when combined with his love for music, motivated him to excel in his study of Byzantine notation. Last year he was assigned to the psalteri of Saint Spyridon where he attended the Byzantine Music School along with other young men and women who now assist him in the divine services. You can hear a Paraklesis that our young people chanted in October 2014 at: http://saint-spyridon.org/BYZANTINE_MUSIC_2.html

Submitted by Fr. Tilemahos Alikakos, Protopresbyter, Saint Spyridon Hellenic Orthodox Church, Palos Heights, Illinois
In the first issue of The Youth Network a question asking when to hold rehearsals for youth singers was asked. There have been multiple suggestions given:

1. After Sunday School classes are finished during the parish coffee hour, many youth singers rehearse for approximately 30 minutes. The students will practice every Sunday following Sunday School classes.

2. Communicate with the parents of the students in the parish Sunday School and select an evening when the students will be able to rehearse for about an hour. The students would meet twice a month on the selected evenings.

3. Remember that there will be rehearsals where there will be students that will not be present. That’s ok, kids today are involved in many activities. They will catch up at the next rehearsal. Never underestimate what these kids can do! Set the bar high!

It is **ESSENTIAL** that the youth music director/hymnology teacher create a rapport with not only the students, but their parents. Contact with the parents must be consist and done by email, phone calls and whatever works best for the parents. Without their support your program will not be successful. Directors/teachers must also build that rapport with the students and make their rehearsals and classes instructional, but fun for them. They have to enjoy themselves to want to continue.

**Submit your questions to the editor:** Denise Karras

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