

PAIDEIA CALL FOR PAPERS

We are pleased to announce the inaugural meeting of a new community of Orthodox Christian academics, clergy, monastics, and interested laity. We are calling it “*Paideia*,” after the Ancient Greek word meaning “education” or “learning,” but also more broadly signifying “culture” as a whole. In choosing this term, we recall the derivation of “culture” from the Latin “*cultus*,” meaning worship, while agreeing with Fr Pavel Florensky that culture in this broadest sense—which shapes our experience of space, time, meaning, and reality itself—derives from (and must be grounded in) *worship* or the practice of religion, as was the case in the Ancient Greek *Paideia*, in the Christian Culture of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and indeed in traditional cultures everywhere. Yet today the weaknesses of modernized and secularized forms of Christianity have become glaring and inescapable, not only through decreasing numbers of observant believers, but in the reign of commercialized mass culture and the pseudo-cultures of political ideology that now serve as simulacra for religion. Moreover, we believe that Orthodox Christianity stands in a unique position to lead in the retrieval and revitalization of Christian culture through remaining steadfast in the ancient liturgies and ascetic practices of the Church. Thus, we believe that the path through and beyond the problems of modernity leads not backward through a nostalgic retreat into an often fancied past, but forward by drawing upon the illumination and witness proper to living Orthodox worship, prayer, and ascesis to articulate elements for a Christian culture of the future.

Accordingly, the theme for our first meeting will be “Orthodoxy and Contemporary Life,” addressing the resources that Orthodox tradition can bring to contemporary problems perhaps perennial in nature, but often unprecedented in the forms they now assume, ranging from the rise of the internet and social media, unrelenting social changes inspiring the term “liquid modernity,” novel beliefs and behaviors involving sexual identity and practice, growing political polarization, and increasing alienation from traditional modes of religion, to name only a few. The meeting will also feature a plenary text-seminar devoted to a chapter (in English) from the previously untranslated masterpiece of Florensky’s later thought, *Философия культа*: “The Philosophy of Worship.”

Our meeting will take place May 18-21, 2023 on the beautiful grounds of Antiochian Village in the Laurel Mountains of Pennsylvania. We are structuring the conference to unfold at a less hectic pace than is usual, with papers of roughly thirty minutes followed by discussion and then generous break-time after each paper for refreshment and informal discussion. And if response is robust, there will be multiple concurrent sessions. Room and board at Antiochian Village are relatively modest: \$416.25 for a single and \$318.36 for a double room, for three days and including meals from dinner on Thursday to brunch on Sunday, or pro-rated for shorter stays. The cities of Ligonier and Latrobe are nearby for those wishing to procure their own accommodations and dining. The conference fee will be \$100.00 for the gainfully employed, and \$50.00 for seminarians, students, monastics, and others with limited funds.

The conference will feature a mix of invited speakers along with speakers chosen on the basis of a four hundred word abstract, to be submitted by February 15. Confirmed speakers at this point include: Metropolitan Jonah Paffhausen, Fr Ignatius Green, Fr Hans Jacobse, Deacon Paul (Alfred) Siewers, David Bradshaw, Seraphim (Bruce) Foltz, David Ford, Mary Ford, and Rico Vitz. And of course, those wishing to participate in the conference discussions without presenting a paper are heartily welcomed. Proposals for papers on this year's topic should be submitted to *both* Foltz and Bradshaw at foltzbv@eckerd.edu and david.bradshaw@uky.edu . And we ask those planning to attend, but not presenting papers, to notify us by April 1, so that we can plan accordingly.

Since this is a new organization, many possibilities beyond an annual meeting will be open for exploration during our discussions.

We look forward to seeing you in the spring. And feel free to share this Call for Papers with friends who may be interested.

In the spirit of Orthodox fellowship,

Sincerely yours,

Seraphim Foltz, David Bradshaw, Fr Hans Jacobse, Dcn Paul Siewers
Co-conveners: PAIDEIA