

FR. MICHAEL SHAHEEN

Story by Susan Kalnas photos from the Shaheen Family

meet
your
neighbor



It was a beautiful breezy and sunny day as I drove up to the St. George Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral on Woodley Road. I was about to meet the new pastor, Father Michael Shaheen. Father Shaheen's lovely wife Adma, or in Arabic, Khourieh (priest's wife) met me at the door.

The Shaheens have been relocated to Toledo from Montreal, Canada. They have two children enrolled in Ottawa Hills High School. Nathaniel, 17, is a senior and his sister, Tatiana, 15 is a sophomore. Father Michael and his two children have dual citizenship with Canada and the U.S. The Shaheen family call home on Indian Road, across the street from the school.

Father Michael, a native of Toledo, had moved around frequently during his childhood. He had originally attended the University of Toledo for Engineering while actively helping his father at church. His father, the late Very Reverend George Shaheen was then Pastor of St. George.

In 1992, the Very Reverend George Shaheen was summoned to expand a very small Arabic speaking parish,



also known as St. George, in Montreal. Father Michael has always been a very religious man, even while working in sales. He left Toledo to help his father, and received his Bachelor of Arts in Theology at the McGill University in Montreal.

Shortly thereafter, Father Michael met his future wife Adma. They dated for three months, got engaged, and married eleven months later.

Father Michael followed the career paths of his father and uncle, the late Archbishop Michael Shaheen. They were Pastors of St. George parish in Montreal and also in Toledo. "I love the United State, and love my American roots," says Father Michael. Adma is, "Happy living in Ottawa Hills. The community has a coziness. The homes remind me of Lebanon. It is a big relief being in Ottawa Hills. It feels so good and safe."

The children have adjusted well and love learning about American History. Nathaniel continues learning his native language of French. While Tatiana has chosen to learn Spanish. Both children however, understand Arabic.

Father Michael is proud of his church and the hard work his wife and he have done. His goals include filling the church with more vibrant parishioners and returning St. George back to its former glory. He is a very committed leader of the church and is willing to sacrifice, "Whatever it takes," to further the success of his beloved St. George's parish.

Father Michael passionately stated, "The church represents who we are as a community and our faith is part of the community." He sees himself as the, "Father of the flock of Christians."

Feel free to join in on Mass Sunday mornings beginning at 9 a.m. and liturgy at 10 a.m. There will also be a Father's Day picnic including hamburgers and hot dogs on Sunday, June 16, 2016.

Father Michael's favorite scripture: Matthew 25:31-46: "As often as you do to the least of my brethren you do unto me."

"We need to see the face of Christ in each other."

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