

## **GOA Center for Family Care Teams with UOC St. Nicholas Family Camp for Families with Special Needs, Offers Virtual Parent Retreat**



Presvytera Melanie DiStefano

In the wake of COVID-19 social distancing measures, The Saint Nicholas Family Camp offered at the Ukrainian Orthodox All Saints Camp in Emlenton, PA provided an online option this year. The program seeks to create a church camp experience for families who have children with all varieties of special needs.

This year Presvytera Melanie DiStefano of the Center for Family Care offered parent retreat content in two 15-minute video sessions based on the theme “As For Me and My House, We Will Serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:15) Using scriptural examples and personal experiences, the retreat content seeks to encourage parents to see their children’s challenges as unique opportunities to serve the Lord and further bear witness to His love within their communities.

This virtual camp program is free and can still be accessed through August 2020 at <https://www.uocyouth.org/campingministry>. A follow-up videoconference is in queue for participating parents to meet, discuss their unique joys and struggles,

and ask questions regarding the retreat video content.

The Center for Family Care is excited to work with church communities to provide similar resources and retreat options for assisting families with special needs and providing encouragement for their journeys.

Contact Melanie DiStefano at [\[email protected\]](#) to schedule a retreat for your parish on this topic, or for more information and resources on this ministry.

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