

The Messenger

St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church | 3450 Irving Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55408 | 612.825.9595 | www.stmarysgoc.org

August 2020

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St. Mary's

Mission Statement

To proclaim, celebrate, and share the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ in accordance with the Orthodox Tradition.

The Five Tasks of Our Parish Vision

- Hear
- Pray
- Grow
- Serve
- Share



METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

A Message from Father Jason

Father Jason Houck, Associate Priest

"For this city, and for every city and land, and for the faithful who live in them, let us pray to the Lord."

—From the Litany of Peace of the Divine Liturgy

Every Divine Liturgy, we pray "for this city." On June 2, I joined approximately 1,000 local clergy for the Clergy Silent March to do just that. This march was in response to the killing of George Floyd. The march began at Sabathani Community Center in South Minneapolis, a few blocks from where George Floyd was killed. Some marchers wore T-shirts saying, "The church has left the building"—I particularly liked those! The march culminated at the spot where George Floyd was killed and concluded with prayer right there in the street.

As Orthodox Christians, we need to engage society, not just stay within our church walls. Although the Orthodox Church does not have the influence on

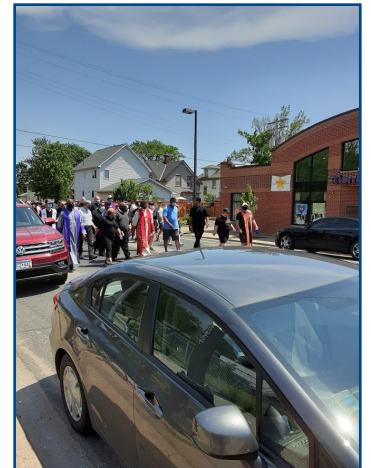


Archbishop Iakovos with Martin Luther King Jr., marching from Selma to Montgomery, March 7, 1965

society here as it does in places like Greece or Romania, that is not an excuse to ignore the problems around us. As Greek Orthodox Christians, we have the example of Archbishop Iakovos of blessed memory, who marched for civil rights with Martin Luther King Jr. from Selma to Montgomery. Archbishop Iakovos could relate to America's civil rights movement, since he grew up in Turkey, where the rights of its Christian minority populations were often violated and unprotected.



Silent Clergy March on 38th Street, June 2, 2020



—article continues on page 3.

Our Life Together

Births

Alexander

Parents: James & Erica Delles
May 24, 2020

Navya

Parents: Jonathan & Priya Backos
May 24, 2020

Baptisms

Basil

Parents: Riley & Patty Odom
July 11, 2020

Theodore

Parents: Charrine Liu-Maddox
& Julian Maddox
July 17, 2020

Pericles

Parents: Jimmy & Larisa Sioris
July 18, 2020



Our Sympathy

Nausica “Nancy” (Strenglis)
Lambros of St. Paul passed away
on June 18, 2020. *May her memory
be eternal.*

Congratulations!

Congratulations to *Andrew
Dovolis* and *Rebecca Lauer* on
their recent engagement. A 2021
wedding is planned.

Share YourShelf

August’s recipient of Share Your-
Shelf contributions is Community
Emergency Service (CES).

Sunday, August 2

Canned soups and vegetables

Sunday, August 9

Diapers, size 5

Sunday, August 16

Hygiene items

Sunday, August 23

Baby formula

Sunday, August 30

Canned meat
(e.g. tuna, chicken)

“There will always be poor
people in the land. Therefore, I
command you to be openhanded
toward your brothers and toward
the poor and needy in your land.”

—Deuteronomy 15:11

*Please consider making a mon-
etary donation. Through a part-
nership with the Food Group, the
food shelves we support are able
to purchase staple food items at
a marked reduction in price. This
means that your donated dollars
go farther – almost doubling the
money you give to purchase much
needed food items.*

St. Mary’s Church Staff

Priest

Fr. George Dokos

Associate Priest

Fr. Jason Houck

Attached Priest

Fr. John Kostas

Deacon

Deacon Paul Kalina

Administrator

Julie Moricz

Parishioner Support Communications

David Mertesdorf

Ministry Support

Doria Saros

Youth Director

Jonathan Klein

Church School Director

Dena Tortorelis

Facilities Coordinator

Bob Yang

Music Director

Thespina Macres

Organist

Mark Macres

St. Mary’s Parish Council

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Dean Murdakes

Vice President

John Beauchamp

Secretary

Paul Hastings

Treasurer

Michael Rakes

Assistant Treasurer

Naira Istephanous

Members

Joseph DiGiovanni

Thomas Hainlin

William M. Hoeft

Nicholas Legeros

Dean Psychogios

Andrew Theodotou

Randy Twito

Education • Fellowship • Worship

Fellowship and Study Groups

Men's Fellowship

Friday, August 7
7:00 a.m.

Church Courtyard

An e-mail confirmation of the meeting will be sent prior to August 7.

Senior Citizens Club will not meet in August.

All other gatherings are cancelled until further notice.

Koinonia

All Koinonia gatherings are suspended for the time being. We will keep you posted as to when gatherings can safely resume.

Weekend Schedule

Saturday

Orthros – 9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.
Saturday Great Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday (live-streamed)

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Weekday Schedule

Monday, August 3

Tuesday, August 4

Paraklesis – 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 5

Eve of Transfiguration

Great Vespers – 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, August 6

Holy Transfiguration

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.
Paraklesis – 6:00 p.m.

Friday, August 7

Paraklesis – 6:00 p.m.

Monday, August 10

Tuesday, August 11

Paraklesis – 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 12

Holy Unction – 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, August 13

Paraklesis – 6:00 p.m.

Friday, August 14

Eve of Dormition

Great Vespers – 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 15

Dormition of the Theotokos

Orthros – 9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, August 29

Beheading of John the Baptist

Orthros – 9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

—Fr. Jason's article,
continued from page 1

Having this in mind, let us not turn a blind eye to the problems around us. Let us also continue to pray "For this city, and for every city and land, and for the faithful who live in them."

To learn more, check out the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese's Resource Center on Racial Reconciliation:

<https://www.goarch.org/society/racial-reconciliation>

In Christ,
Fr. Jason Houck

Virtual Town Hall Meeting

Sunday, August 2, 7:00 p.m.

Thank you to all of our parishioners who responded to our "Returning to Worship Survey." Your heartfelt comments were very much appreciated and will allow us to continue adjusting our message and procedures as we progress on this journey together.

Now that the survey is closed, we wish to share the results with you, virtually, at a Parish Town Hall meeting on Sunday, August 2, 7:00 p.m.

From the comfort of your homes and cabins, you can learn more about the survey results, the procedures the church has been taking, and additional plans for the fall.

To join the meeting, you must register for this meeting by following this link: shorturl.at/qwIX2. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Please contact the Church Office for additional information. We look forward to gathering together again as a parish family and celebrating the many blessings of St. Mary's.

Parish News

Returning to Worship Survey Communication

Thank you to everyone who took time to respond to our Returning to Worship Online Survey. Almost 200 parishioners shared their thoughts with us, helping to continue to make St. Mary's a safe environment for everyone.

We will sponsor a Digital Town Hall Meeting on Sunday, August 2, where we will have an opportunity to discuss your feedback in more detail. Don't forget to register to participate in the Town Hall by following this link: shorturl.at/qwIX2

Cleaning Protocols

For the past year, Metro East Cleaners has been our preferred vendor for overnight cleaning and meeting set-ups. They are well versed in the latest CDC guidelines for disinfecting and sanitizing. Currently they clean the entire church, including the nave and narthex areas each Wednesday and Saturday evening. Pews are first cleaned with a soapy water solution, then wiped down, utilizing one cloth per pew. Then, using a misting machine, disinfectant is sprayed on each pew. In addition, all high contact areas, including door handles, rails, and light switches are also cleaned and sanitized. The cleaning staff is also required to wear proper PPE when cleaning all areas of the building.

For services during the week, the office staff or volunteer ushers disinfect the nave at the conclusion of the service.

Wearing of Face Masks

We received many comments about wearing a mask during Divine Liturgy. While we are grateful for your comments, the requirement to wear a mask is mandated in the City of Minneapolis. Just as many stores and restaurants have this stipulation, we are also obligated to follow this requirement. In addition, the Metropolis of Chicago has a similar guideline which states: "The laity, including those in the pews and the support staff (e.g. acolytes, ushers, parish council members, sextons, etc.) must wear a

face mask or similar covering of the mouth and nose at all times."

St. Mary's is required to follow the directives of the Metropolis of Chicago, the City of Minneapolis, and the State of Minnesota, thus we are not able to change the rule regarding the wearing of face masks. You will also note that during weddings and baptisms, our priests will be wearing face masks throughout, as these sacraments make it difficult to maintain the 6-foot social distancing guideline.

We will continue to update you in the coming weeks as new guidelines are established or changes are introduced. Our Parish COVID-19 Safety Committee meets each Tuesday afternoon to review the previous week and make plans for the future. Should you have a topic or concern, please contact the office to have something placed on the agenda. We look forward to sharing more updates on August 2.

Company Matching Funds

Many of our parishioners work for companies that provide matching funds for contributions to non-profits. This is a wonderful way to increase our stewardship and income, but we need your help. The checks we receive do not indicate the name of the donor so we cannot properly account for these funds. Should you work for an organization that offers this benefit, and have designated St. Mary's as the beneficiary, please contact the Church Office. This will allow our staff to acknowledge the contribution and appropriately record the donation on our financial statements.

Philoptochos



We're happy to share that several August events are happening through Philoptochos! Please join in as you're able.

Virtual Women's Book Club Discussion

Tuesday, August 4, 7:00 p.m.

The Zoom discussion of "The Holy Angels" by Mother Alexandra will be on Tuesday, August 4, and all women are welcome. An email with Zoom credentials will be provided closer to the date. Copies of the book can be purchased from the St. Mary's office for \$20.

Dormition Vespers and Liturgy

Friday-Saturday, August 14-15

At the time of this printing, Philoptochos is working with Fr. George and His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael to determine how we will celebrate our church feast day beyond the beautiful services. Please watch for more information.

Virtual National Philoptochos Convention

Delegates Wanted!

Friday-Saturday, August 20-21

St. Mary's Philoptochos can have three delegates and unlimited observers attend the virtual Philoptochos Convention. The chapter will cover the \$50 cost of attendance. Please let Annette Legeros know if you'd like to participate. More information:

Philoptochos.org/2020-national-philoptochos-bienial-convention/

Face Masks for Parishioners and the Community

Do you need a face mask for your outdoor excursions? Philoptochos is providing them free of charge. Please contact Toni Bazakos (612.554.7861 or georg310@umn.edu) to let her know how many you need, and she will coordinate getting them to you. For the Community: As part of Metropolitan Nathanael's Metropolis-wide humanitarian efforts, all Philoptochos chapters are asked to participate in the Masks Matter initiative. The goal is to make and distribute 10,000 masks by the end of the year. If you're making masks, please track how many you make and who gets them! Watch for details on how to provide these numbers to us. So far, St. Mary's members have made about 2,000 masks!

Thank You

...Carol Karos and Donna Psihos for organizing Families Moving Forward and to Kathleen Swenson and family for making food deliveries so our hotel-hosted guests would have three meals a day.

...Kally Youngdahl for getting us moving with Greek Zumba on Zoom!

...to the 61 people who completed our Summer 2020 Outreach Survey. We received excellent feedback regarding mask making, festival volunteerism, and outreach to the community. The board is moving forward on some activity and will publicize it shortly!

...to Toni Bazakos for sending out masks to parishioners, and to all the mask sewers.

Missions & Outreach

Share the Harvest

Over 50+ volunteers said “yes” to our first meal pack for 2020. We met our 2019 goals of 45,000 meals in two events and received a commitment from our St. Mary’s Foundation to sponsor two more events in 2020. With your help, Missions and Outreach coordinated the first event on June 28. The number of meals packed came to 26,240. What a blessing for the food shelves to help those who are facing hunger.

Our parish leadership organized a process to both protect the safety of our volunteers and still allow us all to offer a prayerful giving of our time and talents.

The Share the Harvest setup made use of a safe distancing model and carefully followed the requirements of the Metropolitan and the St. Mary’s COVID-19 Safety Committee to make this event possible. It was a successful non-liturgical event.

You shared your time with such positive comments of gratitude like “I wanted to give something back,” or “we always enjoy this event and the people that volunteer here.”

Thanks to our St. Mary’s Foundation, the leadership from the Parish Council, the Safety Committee and, of course, St. Mary’s Office staff. *Thank You!*



Socially distanced food packers at our Share the Harvest Food Pack

Mission Take Heart



Thank you to all who attended the Zoom fundraiser on Sunday, July 12, for Mission Take Heart. **Aida Samir**, Executive Director, presented their mission helping persecuted Christians get back on their feet with 3 to 5-year leadership and training, partnering with local churches and organizations to equip rather than supplying handouts. Reminder that Take Heart uses 100% of your donation to help persecuted Christians in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Nigeria with local leaders to once again be making a living.



Aida Samir

For example, noted on the Take Heart website is that Christianity is nearly extinct in Syria! Can you imagine a country without a Christian? During the last five years, Christians have fled Syria because of persecution and were not being allowed to take anything with them. Your donation can help generate business projects, leadership training, trauma care, education support, medical clinics, and Ignite Academy. Note that 100% of your donation is used to benefit persecuted Christians.

It is difficult for us in America to begin to imagine how hard it would be for any Christian. Imagine a Christian who has converted from Islam to a new and precious life in the name of our Lord. Please pray for the Islam converts that are risking their lives to follow Christ.

Thank you for your prayers for protection of persecuted Christians, and thank you for any support you offer as donations.

Through the support of our valued donors, Take Heart has established 212 income-generating projects in Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, in addition to two mega projects. Mega projects employ 49 women and served hundreds of families.

Stewardship

by *Diaconissa Alexandria Kalina*

"In the matter of piety, poverty serves us better than wealth, and work better than idleness, especially since wealth becomes an obstacle even for those who do not devote themselves to it. Yet, when we must put aside our wrath, quench our envy, soften our anger, offer our prayers, and show a disposition which is reasonable, mild, kindly, and loving, how could poverty stand in our way? For we accomplish these things not by spending money but by making the correct choice. Almsgiving above all else requires money, but even this shines with a brighter luster when the alms are given from our poverty. The widow who paid in the two mites was poorer than any human, but she outdid them all."

St. John Chrysostom

In the midst of the chaotic world around us these past few months, we want to thank our St. Mary's parishioners who have lived out the words of scripture and of the Holy Fathers like St. John Chrysostom, and have continued to submit stewardship payments to St. Mary's. This last Sunday, we had over 120 worshipers in church, and the palpable feeling of joy at being altogether, praying for the

world, and receiving the Eucharist was overwhelming. The masks, the hand sanitizer and the social distancing added to the "protective" feeling of being in a larger group, yet these did not detract from the experience of communal worship, and all of our five senses were indeed touched in ways they cannot be when worshipping as an Orthodox Christian in front of the computer.

We are embarking on new and improved ways of communication and stewardship collection, so stay tuned for more details! To those who have come back for liturgy in church, WELCOME BACK! We look forward to praying with you often. For those not yet ready to return, continue to pray with us virtually, and please know that we follow the most strict of safety procedures at St. Mary's; the safety committee has done an amazing job.

Thank you once again for those who are fulfilling their stewardship pledge regularly. If you have not submitted your 2020 pledge we encourage you to do so." We are frugal with your money, and we have been helping many in need during this time, both in our community and beyond.

Families Moving Forward

by *Carol Karos*

New Face for the Families Moving Forward Program

Due to the corona virus, the families were housed at the Homewood Suites Hotel instead of residing at St Mary's Greek Orthodox Church. Families Moving Forward (FMF) requested that we provide five commercially prepared meals and deliver them to the hotel at 5:00 p.m. They also sent a list of requested breakfast foods to be delivered to the service center in Chaska where the families spent the day.

God continues to provide. Five Orthodox churches, St. Mary's GOC, St. Mary's OCA, St George GOC, St. George Antiochian, and St. George Coptic, all provided funds for the meals. Then, two charitable, energetic, teen-angels, Anna Swenson and friend Chloe Miller, stepped up and offered to order, pick-up and deliver the meals for four of the five evenings.

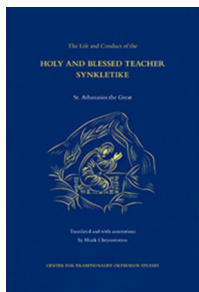
St. Mary's OCA managed and provided for their assigned evening. Anna and Chloe also did the breakfast food shopping and delivered the goods to the FMF Service Center in Chaska. Thank you!

Also a special thank you to all the leadership and volunteers who were so willing to again serve and assist with FMF; however, no opportunity to do so this year. Thanks to those who sent in a monetary donation. Hopefully next summer we will be in full swing again and be able to share our beautiful church facility, and again, provide some face to face hospitality with these homeless families.

Even in these turbulent time, Beacon/FMF is doing a wonderful job in supporting these families and assisting in getting them placed in jobs and affordable housing. Thank you Beacon/FMF workers for your dedication and perseverance.

In the Bookstore

by Rebecca Myerly



Saint Synkletike was one of the great desert Mothers (ca. 265-270 to 350). Little is known about most of the great desert Mothers, but fortunately Saint Athanasios the Great (ca. 296-298 to 2 May 373) wrote *The Life and Conduct of the Holy and Blessed Teacher Synkletike*. This book is a biography of Saint Synkletike that includes her wisdom for the edification of all.

The book starts with Saint Synkletike's early life. Saint Athanasios wrote: "The blessed Synkletike was both conspicuous for her lineage and adorned with the other qualities that are deemed delightful by the world's standards" (14). While still "under her parents' protection, she began to exercise her soul in the love of God" (15). She fled earthly marriage to be betrothed to Christ. Through fasting she grew in the ascetic life. After her parents "departed this life," having "renounced all earthly adornment" (18), she "distributed all her property to the poor" (19), and "continued to progress in the virtues (19). [S]he was less concerned about doing good than about guarding and concealing it. She guarded her virtues, not jealously, but with the help of divine Grace (20). Her life was apostolic, bound together by faith and voluntary poverty, but it shone yet more with love and humility (22). [L]iving in seclusion, she became an accomplisher of good works. With the passage of time, her virtues having blossomed, the fragrance of her most renowned ascetic labors reached many (23). Then, by the will of the Almighty, some women began to visit her and make entreaties for the sake of their edification; and, exchanging stories about her manner of life, they visited her more and more often, wishing to receive benefit" (23). After repeated entreaties, Saint Synkletike reluctantly started sharing the wisdom God had given her:

[I]t became very quiet for some time, and then the blessed one uttered in a quiet voice, "Do no violence unto the poor because he is poor (23). Whatever things that men say which are beneficial, according to the Grace of the Spirit derive from love and end in love. So this is what salvation is: twofold love"(25).

Simple, humble, and profound, the wisdom of Saint Synkletike, although given to a specific group of women at a specific time, is for all of all ages. "Let humility be for you the beginning and end of all good things. I speak of a humble mindset; this refers not only to the outward form, but to the inner man. For what is outward will follow suit" (45).

Following the wisdom of Saint Synkletike, Saint Athanasios wrote of her later life and the horrible physical problems she endured with grace and determination. Reading about her later life, it is clear that Saint Synkletike practiced and applied the wisdom God gave her to her own life.

The Life and Conduct of the Holy and Blessed Teacher Synkletike was translated by Monk Chrysostomos and published by the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies. It is a small book (only 82 pages) but a great treasure of wisdom and courageous inspiration for the Christian journey.

Children & Youth

Our Children and Youth Mission Statement

To cultivate a safe and welcoming environment for kids by nurturing healthy relationships within the church family. We will teach the youth by building a strong foundation of knowledge, and together, we will experience the Orthodox tradition by following the four circles of youth ministry: **Liturgia** (Worship), **Diakonia** (Service), **Martyria** (Witness), and **Koinonia** (Fellowship), leading our youth to develop, by their own free will, a personal relationship with God and to pursue union with Him.

HOPE and JOY

Kindergarten-Grade 2 and Grades 3-5

- ▶ Tuesday, August 4, 4:00 p.m.
Storytime with Jon and Dena
- ▶ Tuesday, August 18
Storytime with Jon and Dena
- ▶ Tuesday, August 25
Storytime with Jon and Dena
 - Watch your e-mails for the Zoom link!

Junior GOYA

Grades 6-8

- ▶ Thursday, August 6, 4:00-5:00 p.m.
Junior GOYA on Zoom
- ▶ Thursday, August 27, 4:00-5:00 p.m.
Junior GOYA on Zoom
 - Watch your e-mails for the Zoom link!

Senior GOYA

Grades 9-12

- ▶ Wednesday, August 19, 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Senior GOYA on Zoom
Description
 - Watch your e-mails for the Zoom link!

Dormition Retreat

Kindergarten-Grade 12

Friday, August 14, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

We plan to decorate the Kouvouklion for the Theotokos and having a lesson about the Theotokos and other fun events leading up to Great Vespers. Please watch your emails for the RSVP link for this event.

Youth Feedback

If you have any comments, suggestions, or concerns regarding our youth program(s) please let us know. To access our formal feedback process, go to our St. Mary's home page-Click on "Youth," then "Youth Program Feedback." Your comments will be forwarded to a member of the Parish Council and will be reviewed for follow up.

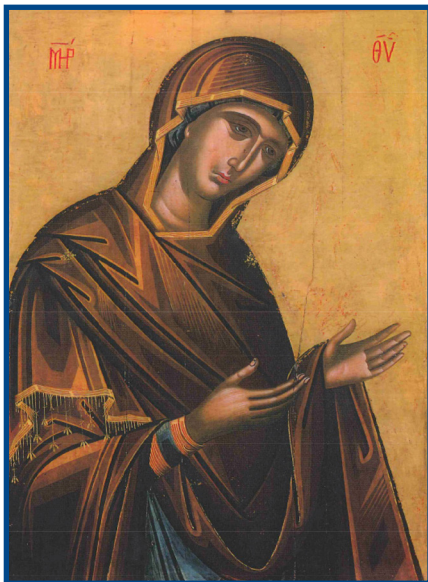


Follow the GOYAns on Instagram: **St_Marys_GOYA**

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**O Virgin pure, immaculate,
O Lady Theotokos.
O brighter than the firmament,
and purer than the sun's light.
O rejoice, Bride unwedded.**

**St. Mary's
Greek Orthodox Church**

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Minneapolis, MN 55408
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Publication Deadlines
The Messenger—
First Sunday of each month.

Sunday Bulletin—
Preceding Thursday,
12:00 Noon

August 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 <i>Dormition Fast Begins</i> 9:00am-Orthros 10:00 am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers
2 <i>Eighth Sunday of Matthew "The Messenger" Deadline</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 7:00pm-Virtual Town Hall Meeting	3 6:00pm-Paraklesis	4 4:00pm-HOPE/JOY Storytime 6:00pm-Paraklesis	5 6:00pm-Great Vespers	6 <i>Holy Transfiguration</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 4:00pm-Junior GOYA on Zoom 6:00pm-Paraklesis	7 7:00am-Men's Fellowship 6:00pm-Paraklesis	8 9:00am-Orthros 10:00 am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers
9 <i>Ninth Sunday of Matthew</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	10 6:00pm-Paraklesis	11 6:00pm-Paraklesis 7:15pm-Parish Council	12 6:00pm-Holy Unction	13 6:00pm-Paraklesis	14 <i>Eve of Dormition</i> 5:00pm-Dormition Retreat 6:00pm-Great Vespers	15 <i>The Dormition of the Theotokos</i> 9:00am-Orthros 10:00 am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers
16 <i>Tenth Sunday of Matthew</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 11:45am-Mission/Outreach	17	18 4:00pm-HOPE/JOY Storytime	19 9:00am-"The Messenger" Mailing 7:00pm-Senior GOYA on Zoom	20 6:30pm-Stewardship Committee	21	22 9:00am-Orthros 10:00 am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers
23 <i>Eleventh Sunday of Matthew</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	24	25 4:00pm-HOPE/JOY Storytime	26	27 4:00pm-Junior GOYA on Zoom	28	29 <i>Beheading of John the Baptist</i> 9:00am-Orthros 10:00 am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers
30 <i>Twelfth Sunday of Matthew</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	31					