

The Messenger

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

February 2021

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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



A Message from Father John

Father John Kostas

Behold, I make all things new

There is no feeling like mounting a calendar for the new year on the wall. Especially after this past one! Then there are all those make-over resolutions for a sharper, slimmer more successful new you.

We all know in our hearts, however, that the feeling is likely to last as long as that 'new car smell.' In fact, the higher our expectations, the greater the sense of disappointment.

A new year is nothing new when compared to the newness that Christ brings us.

When God was born in the flesh, and revealed in the Jordan, there was a break in all that had gone before in the history of the human struggle with sin and suffering. The change at our own baptism is so momentous that St. Paul said it is like death and resurrection. We are buried in the tomb of the waters, and raised from the womb of those same waters into new life in Christ.

The prophets themselves bore witness to the promise of this newness. 'A new heart I will give to you, the Lord told Ezekiel, 'and a new spirit I will put within in you.' Jeremiah spoke of the new covenant. The Old Testament law was written on tables of stone; Christ's law is written in our hearts, and sealed with His blood. One drop of that blood, St. Gregory Nazianus tells us, recreates the whole creation.

Ancient Greek had two words for newness. There is neos in the sense of being a younger, fresher version of the same, like a new version of the same old iPhone. Yet there is also the word kainos to convey the sense of new as never before experienced. Some new reality breaks all bounds, so that we cannot contain it.

All of us have a past that contains things that seem so meaningless, or painful, or a source of despair, of failure, of guilt. But Christ offers us a way of putting off the old man and putting on the new. The freshness of Christ is rooted in the steadfast love, mercy and healing grace of God. It is both new and eternal. It is 'now and forever, unto the ages of ages.'

Let us rejoice in our spiritual renewal through the good will of our Father, our newness of life in Christ, and the presence of the Holy Spirit of freshness and joy.

Our Life Together

Chrismation

Sandy Jacobs
December 20, 2020



Marriage

Alex Dascalos to Sandy Jacobs
December 31, 2020



Deaths

Donald Johnson
December 28, 2020

Peter Roumel
January 13, 2021

John DeMoss
January 14, 2021

May their memories be eternal.



Our Sympathy

...to **Bill Daravingas** and family on the passing of his father, George Daravingas, on December 19, 2020, in Naples, Florida.

...to **Diana Santrizos** and family on the passing of her father, Aristotle (Tel) Pappajohn, on December 24, 2020, in Mason City, Iowa.

Share YourShelf

February's recipient of Share YourShelf contributions is Simpson Food Pantry.

Sunday, February 7

Canned meals – large cans

Sunday, February 14

Potatoes: boxed, instant, or canned

Sunday, February 21

Pancake mix and syrup

Sunday, February 28

Hygiene items

"You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you."
—John Bunyan



Each February we celebrate Valentine's Day, the day we show our affection toward someone special, and one other. During 2020, St. Mary's showed a generous amount of love toward our brothers and sisters in need. In this February issue of "The Messenger," we are highlighting a number of thank you notes received from the many agencies to which we contributed recently. Look for the heart graphic by each of the notes to see what a difference we made in the lives of many. Thank you for being so generous!

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

President

Naira Istephanous

Vice President

William M. Hoeft

Secretary

Paul Hastings

Treasurer

Thomas Hainlin

Assistant Treasurer

Michael Rakes

Members

John Beauchamp

Daniel Buss

Ina Dunham

Nicholas Legeros

Dean Psychogios

Maria Smith

Andrew Twito

Thank You



The clergy and staff of St. Mary's wish to thank everyone who remembered them with prayers, thoughts, cards, and gifts during this holiday season, as well as throughout the year. Your thoughtfulness is so much appreciated!

Thank you also to everyone who has sent kind notes to us, especially over the past several months. It's nice to hear from you!

Education • Fellowship • Worship

Fellowship and Study Groups

Men's Fellowship

Fridays, February 5 and 19
7:00 a.m.

Watch your e-mail for meeting announcements.

Virtual Bible Study

Mondays, February 1, 8, 22
7:30 p.m.

The Zoom link is on our website.
Or join by phone by dialing
1.301.715.8592 or 1.312.626.6799.

Meeting ID: 838 4110 4908

Passcode: 660926

(use for Zoom and phone meeting).

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.

Great Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday (live-streamed)

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Weekday Schedule

Tuesday, February 2

Presentation of Our Lord

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, February 3

Small Blessing of Water

– 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 10

Saint Haralambos

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, February 17

Saint Theodore the Tyro

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, February 23

Saint Polycarp

Evening Divine Liturgy

– 6:00 p.m.

Parish-Night Week 2020-2021: The Church Facing the World

February 16-18



Parish-Night Week continues the week of February 15.

During the week, HOPE/JOY (kindergarten-grade 5) will meet virtually on Tuesday, 6:30-7:15 p.m., adults and Senior GOYAns (grades 9-12) will meet virtually on Wednesday from 7:00-8:00 p.m., and Junior GOYAns (grades 6-8) will meet virtually on Thursday

from 7:00-8:00 p.m. The adults and Senior GOYAns must register by going to the URL below.

Fr. Maximos Conostas presents on *Adversity as Spiritual Opportunity* on February 17.

Registration link: <https://tinyurl.com/FebruaryPNRegistration>

Next Parish-Night Week: May 18-20

• HOPE and JOY

"A Life of Offering: Offering our Lives/Commitment" from Y2AM

• Adults and Senior GOYA

Fr. Perry and Presvytera Cassie Kallis present on Special Needs in Our Church Home

• Junior GOYA

"A Life of Offering: Offering our Lives/Commitment" from Y2AM

Parish News & Events

House Blessings

Now through the end of February our clergy will be available for house blessings. To schedule a blessing, please send a request to: stmarysgoc@stmarysgoc.org or call the Office, 612.825.9595.

2021 Parish Council Installed

The 2020 Parish Council was installed on Sunday, January 3. The following is a list of current officers and members: President - Naira Istephanous; Vice President - William M. Hoeft; Secretary - Paul Hastings; Treasurer - Thomas Hainlin; Assistant Treasurer - Michael Rakes

Members: John Beauchamp, Daniel Buss, Ina Dunham, Nicholas Legeros, Dean Psychogios, Maria Smith, Andrew Twito.

Virtual Icon Classes

Icon Art Studios Inc. has accepted the challenge with gratitude to offer Virtual Icon classes hosted by Wet Paint to witness to our Orthodox communities and the collaboration we have been enjoying with The Basilica. Both St. Mary's Church (who has previously hosted sessions 1 and 2) and The Basilica of St. Mary (hosting session 3) have offered to be a sponsor for 2021. All sessions will be taught by iconographer Debra Korluka.

For more information and to register, go to www.wetpaintart.com and click "events & classes" at the top of the homepage.

- Session 2 (begins February 10): Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos - She Who Is Quick to Hear
- Session 3 (begins March 20): Icon of Saint Josephine Bakhita

Please contact *Deb Korluka* at akorluka@aol.com to obtain detailed information about sessions 2 and 3. Virtual classes will take place Wednesday evenings from 7:00-9:00. Session 2 begins February 10.

Men's Fellowship

Friday, February 5, 7:00 a.m.

Men's Fellowship will continue the study of the Book of Exodus (Chapter 5). We will plan to meet at St. Mary's in the Lecture Room. Zoom option will also be available.

Friday, February 19, 7:00 a.m.

Men's Fellowship will continue the mid-month series "Reading and Praying the Six Psalms of Orthodox Matins," and focus on Psalm 103 (102) ("Bless the LORD, O my soul"). Going forward, we will continue to meet via Zoom only for our mid-month meeting. Contact Stephen Wehr (952.240.8066) if you would like to receive e-mails that include the Zoom link.

Parish Photo Directories

We are very happy to announce that we have finally received our first shipment of our long-awaited new Parish Directory. We thank all of those who submitted pictures for inclusion in this updated book. As we patiently wait to receive our full order of directories, the parish office will begin mailing out the updated booklets to all those who participated in this process.

After our initial mailing is complete, we will begin selling copies to those who did not submit a picture or those families requesting additional copies.

Finally, we still have a number of complimentary 8 x 10 photos of those who took their pictures with a Lifetouch photographer here at church. Please contact the office if you have still not received your complimentary photo.

While this process is over a year in the making, we hope you will enjoy the new look and feel of our directory, including its spiral bound composition and compact size.

Looking good, St. Mary's – we are definitely a great looking parish!

Rejoice in our Generosity



2020 was a year like no other! While it started off with our normal activities and preparations, it quickly turned into a very challenging time, not only for many of our parishioners and neighbors, but for those whom God has placed before us.

Beginning in March, then again in late May, and during our Big Greek Give Back in September, the Parish Council and other members of St. Mary's continuously sought out ways to ensure those in our community received needed support.

St. Simeon the New Theologian commented: "When a man really considers his neighbor as himself, he will never tolerate having more than his neighbor. If he does have more, but refuses to share things generously until he himself becomes as poor as his neighbor, then he will find that he has not fulfilled the commandment of the master." Recognizing the need to fill the gospel commands, our parish provided the following cash donations during the year. This blending of funds from our BGGB, Philoptochos chapter, and the St Mary's Foundation is indeed a cause for great joy.

This list highlights just some of our overall philanthropic giving, while our own parishioners continue to support local food shelves, St Mary's, the Metropolis and Greek Archdiocese through their generosity and love for neighbor. May our Lord bless each of you, as we learn from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians: "... he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly ... for God loves a cheerful giver."

Foundation Donations

\$10,000	FOCUS Minnesota
\$10,000	JOYCE Foodshelf
\$10,000	Metropolis of Chicago COVID-19 Parish Relief Fund
\$10,000	Salvation Army

Philoptochos Donations

\$3,000	FOCUS Minnesota
\$2,000	Metro Hope Ministries (Healing House)
\$1,500	Community Emergency Service (CES)
\$1,000	St Stephen's

Big Greek Give Back Cash Distributions

\$4,500	Simpson Food Pantry
\$2,500	Community Emergency Service (CES)
\$2,000	Minneapolis Police Foundation
\$2,000	Groveland Food Shelf
\$2,000	Every Meal (formerly Sheridan Story)
\$ 500	The Aliveness Project

Angel Tree

On behalf of over 100 children of an incarcerated parent, thank you for your generosity to the Angel Tree program of Prison Ministry. This year, St. Mary's parishioners donated \$2,463.00 to purchase gifts and gift cards for children who have a parent serving time in prison. Your kindness and compassion helped make this Christmas a more joyful one for these young people.



Philoptochos



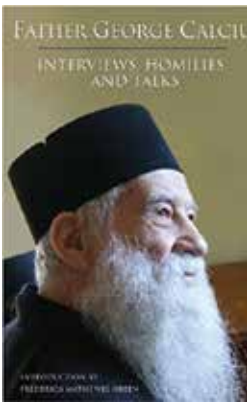
Membership Drive

January-March

The Annual Philoptochos Membership Drive is underway, and you're invited to join! Membership is open to anybody in the church, age 18+. (Yes, men can be associate members and support our charitable work!) Dues are a free will offering with the first \$22 of your gift going to Metropolis and National Philoptochos and anything above that staying in our own chapter. Ladies, watch for your letter in the mail describing our philanthropic activities and how you can join. Coming Soon: In May 2021 we will be holding our election and we are looking for ladies to come join the board. If you have interest in serving on this board please contact Annette Legeros, 952.239.5060 or MplsPhilo@gmail.com.

Women's Book Club Discussion

Tuesday, February 9, 7:00 p.m.



The current Women's Book Club book, which can be purchased in the church office, is Interviews, Homilies and Talks by Fr. George Calciu. St. Herman Press describes the book and author as such: Father George Calciu (1925–2006) was one of the great confessors of Christianity in the twentieth century. Having

survived the diabolic prison experiments of Communist Romania, Fr. George went on to become an apostle to spiritual seekers in Romania and, eventually, throughout the world. He was able to speak authoritatively of God's love and forgiveness because of his own experience of God's mercy. As a priest in America, Fr. George maintained a strict ascetic life of fasting and prayer, while at the same time pastoring his flock as a joyful and loving father. Here we present a collection of his interviews, homilies, and talks. In them he shares his thoughts on his imprisonment, how to pray, his own experience of God's Uncreated Light, and the Orthodox Christian's battle

against temptations in America. Included in this volume are the "Seven Homilies to the Youth" that he gave in Bucharest in 1978. These homilies, in which he fearlessly called Romanian youth to turn from atheism and materialism to Christ, led to his second imprisonment by the Communist regime. Here, as in his other writings and talks, the common thread of God's mercy and forgiveness is woven into the fabric of man's need for repentance and union with his Creator. You can buy the book in the church office.

Mark your calendar for the book discussion on the evening Tuesday, February 9, 7:00 p.m.. This will be a Zoom meeting. Password to connect via Zoom will be posted in future bulletins and via e-mail.

Greek Zumba

Tuesday, February 16, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

Every Third Tuesday of the Month! By request of participants, Kally Youngdahl will now offer a monthly Greek Zumba class on Zoom! Mark your calendars for 5:00-6:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month (January 19, February 16, March 16, April 20, and May 18) and get ready to enjoy Greek music and exercise with your friends!

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85100956362>

Philoptochos Meeting

Tuesday, February 23, 7:00 p.m.

Philoptochos Meeting via Zoom February 23. Plan to attend the February Philoptochos meeting at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Grab your favorite beverage and join us as we discuss what Philoptochos will look like in the coming months. Zoom link will be provided closer to the date.

Quilt Tops for People in Need

Ongoing

Philoptochos has joined the quilting women of Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Hopkins, to create quilts for someone in need. As of January, five quilt tops have been completed by Philoptochos ladies. How can you participate?

1. Pick up a quilt top kit. Each kit has a sewing machine needle, instructions, and the correct number

of quilt squares to make a 60" x 80" top. This is easy sewing – straight lines only – plus some ironing. And, you can do it safely in your own home.

2. Donate old blankets, sheets, bedspreads and draperies. The quilters of Gethsemane will use them for filling and backing the quilts.

Bins have been placed in the main entry of St. Mary's south parking lot, one for contactless kit pick-up and the other for drop off of your donations.



Vasilopita Bread Sale



As of the printing of this Messenger, we are still selling Vasilopita bread until sold out. Please go to the church website to order and pick up will be arranged individually.

Dear Friends:



This has been an incredibly challenging year for our members, staff, and volunteers. And while 2021 will be unlike any we have ever experienced before, your gift has helped bring love and joy to our organization when our community needs it most.

Your donation of \$500.00 helps us link people living with HIV to resources for leading healthy, self-directed lives—which are needed now more than ever. With your commitment, we are one step closer to ending the HIV epidemic in Minnesota. Your support means nearly 2,000 Aliveness members have access to the social support and direct services they

Congratulations

We've always known we had accomplished, impressive women in Philoptochos. This month, we give an extra special congratulations to these members:

- **Naira Istephanous** – Newly elected president of the St. Mary's Parish Council
- **Ina Dunham** and **Maria Smith** – Newly elected to the St. Mary's Parish Council
- **Andrea Tiggas** – Appointed to the National Philoptochos Board by Archbishop Elpithophoros

Thank you for your service! *Axia! Worthy!* May God be with you as you work in these leadership positions of the church!

Thank You...

To all who purchased or have made donations to St. Basil Academy as part of our Vasilopita sale. Thanks also, those helped with selling and slicing bread: **Cathy Forchas, Zoe Gabor, Elena Gabor, Sean Gabor, Marina Gabor, Lisa Gallmeyer, Paulette Hastings, Connie Kouzes, Annette Legeros.**

To **Sofia Johnson** for coordinating the Quilt Top project, and to all who are sewing, including **Sofia Johnson, Photine Saar, Cathy Selin, and others.**

To **Kally Youngdahl** for leading Greek Zumba each month!

To **Katherine Boosalis** and **Dca. Alexandria Kalina** for organizing the Women's Book Club.

need to lead their best lives and achieve viral suppression.

When this pandemic is resolved, we look forward to welcoming you into our space to share a meal with our community. If you have any questions about our work, I encourage you to contact me using the information below.

Thank you again for giving generously to the Aliveness Project! You make our community stronger, and I am proud to call you a partner in our work.

Sincerely,
(signed) Matt Boston

Director of External Relations
The Aliveness Project



Mission & Outreach

What is new? Have you some goals for 2021?

Mission and Outreach has updated the list of people that are interested in Orthodoxy and have chosen to worship with us at St. Mary's. How about setting yourself the goal to meet one of these seekers?

We may want to upgrade our parish warmth with a greeting to others and each other during our worship time together. You have made a person's day by just catching their eye and saying hello. You may expect a reply when you say "good morning." If necessary, greet yourself for practice, practice, practice, and practice.

Along those lines, how are you doing this February 2021? It feels like many of us are especially hopeful this year. Each year we are prayerfully hopeful, but more so this year.

As 2021 is moving along with the introduction of vaccines, how do you feel about being a volunteer? Do you feel more comfortable leaving your home to volunteer? Can you make a difference by helping others?

Regarding volunteer work, some people like to be asked to volunteer, others think about it and may sign up and there are those who are ready and are looking for that opportunity to volunteer. Most of us have so much on our plate. Maybe a volunteer project for one day or a few hours is more likely to fit a busy schedule. i.e. Greek Festival or a Share the Harvest meal pack.

The very best part is to meet other volunteers with each one having a good time helping. Helping those in need can make you feel good.

One way to help is to contact CES (Community Emergency Services) for the opportunity to do a food drive. Visit their website, <https://www.cesmn.org/help/food-drive> for the steps in conducting a food drive. Joyce Food shelf has also seen an increase of first-time visitors with approximately 1,000 added over 2019's visitors.

Mission and Outreach wants to especially thank all the volunteers who helped with the first of the 2021 Simpson House meal, meals

provided to Healing House, and the two "Share the Harvest" meal packing events. It is the hope that St. Mary's can once again provide and serve



the meals for the homeless at Simpson House, continue to provide meals at Metro Hope, continue to put together lunch bags for clients who come to

FOCUS House, and continue to safely hold meal packing events which take place at St. Mary's.



"... Then suddenly, the spirit will emerge through the lives of ordinary people who hear a call and answer in extraordinary ways." —*Mother Teresa*



On behalf of Every Meal, we would like to say thank you for St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church's support for our program this past year through your "Big Greek Give Back" distribution event! Your food donations were sincerely appreciated in supporting our mission of fighting child hunger. We look forward to continuing our partnership with your church in the New Year.

In gratitude,
The Every Meal team

Stewardship

by Athena Mihas

2020 Stewardship Offering Final Results

Thank you for your on-going support of St. Mary's through your gifts of time, talent, and treasure. As of December 31, 2020, we received \$1,045,521 in offering income in 2020, which is short of our goal by \$23,905 and only \$7,663 less than the prior year.

Results compared to Budgeted Goal:

Offering Income as of 12/31/2020	2020 Year-End Actual	2020 Annual Budget	Year-End Difference
Total Payments Received to Date	\$1,045,521	\$1,069,426	(\$23,905)

Results Compared to Prior Year:

Offering Income as December 31	2019 Year-End Actual	2020 Year-End Actual	Increase or (Decrease) vs. Last Year
Total Payments Received to Date	\$1,053,184	\$1,045,521	(\$7,663)

Thank you for your participation in our 2020 Stewardship Campaign and helping us to nearly reach our goal this year. Results came in very close to what we received in the prior year. Your contributions make it possible for St. Mary's to continue providing all its ministries and to cover operating costs of the church, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are so blessed to have your generous support!

Stewardship Campaign 2021

"...The Greatest of These Is Love."

—1 Corinthians 13:13

Stewardship packets for 2021 were mailed in November! Please prayerfully consider how you would like to contribute to St. Mary's with your time, talent and treasure and return your completed pledge and time/talent forms to the office. We hope to increase our number of pledged members in 2021, in order to plan more efficiently for our budgeted items. If you have contributed but not pledged in the past, please consider making a pledge for 2021. Also, remember that you can pledge and contribute online.

For more information, contact:

- Diakonissa Alexandria Kalina at: ackalina@yahoo.com
- Athena Mihas at: athenamih@gmail.com
- David at St. Mary's Office: David@stmarysgoc.org or 612.825.9595

Goals and Plans for 2021

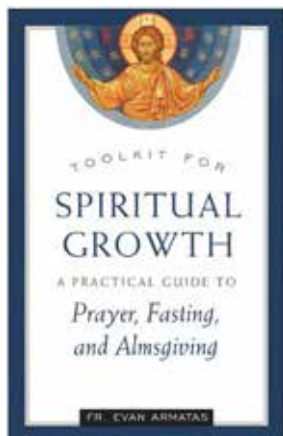
For 2021, the Stewardship Committee will continue to focus on member engagement and implementing and enhancing digital approaches to giving and communications for our parish. Specific goals will include the following:

- o Member access to accounts – self-service
- o Website re-design completion (including link to member accounts)
- o On-line pledging and payments – from church or anywhere
- o App options for giving via cell phone
- o Text to give option
- o iPad / Kiosk in Narthex for on-line contributions
- o More extensive use of social media for engagement
- o Appreciation Glendi (hopefully!) in the Fall
- o Parea Potluck dinners in member homes (once we are able to safely meet)
- o Young adult engagement
- o On-going communications – The Messenger, General Assembly, bulletin, e-mail, quarterly updates, social media

Look for more information and updates in communications throughout the year.

In the Bookstore

by Rebecca Myerly



Toolkit for Spiritual Growth: A Practical Guide to Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving by Father Evan Armatas has aptly been described as a book for someone to learn about Christian Orthodoxy 101 as well as a refresher course for all Orthodox Christians, whether Orthodox from the cradle or through conversion. It truly is

a foundational course on living Orthodoxy through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, which Father Evan describes as “what some call the “three-legged stool” of spiritual life. These legs...together provide a stable base from which we can grow in Christ.” (5)

[I]t is important to understand that Christ’s teaching on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving forms the basis for our spiritual life as Christians. These three disciplines lead to our transformation, and they are the basis for the life of the believing community, the Church. Everything else we do in this life and in the Church that leads to eternal life is built on them. It is also important that the reader understand that when practiced over time and with love, these spiritual disciplines liberate us. (6-7)

Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are disciplines that guide and orient the believer. Father Evan alerts the reader to the hazards and temptations that come if and when one tries to be a spiritual smorgasbord seeker. All three disciplines are vital and must be practiced together in the Church and under the guidance of a spiritual father so the believer does not stray, wander, or in pride choose how to practice them. The three chapters in this book explain each discipline, rooting them in Scripture and Church tradition and practice, helping the reader to recognize and realize that in practicing them one is entering practices/disciplines far greater and deeper than the world could offer. For example, in the chapter titled “Why Do We Fast?” he writes:

Fasting helps us align ourselves, body, mind, and spirit, with God’s purpose in a way that transcends our cultural predispositions and connects us to something timeless, in much the same way as does our prayer life.... Fasting affords us a type of training tool, if you will, that enables us to see the connection between our physical and spiritual selves.... Fasting quickens and clarifies the nous toward prayer in a way that little else does.... Without fasting, we serve only ourselves, and our appetites become disordered; they become our masters. But if we keep the fast in the smallest way, we can, through Christ, begin to conquer the larger appetites of sinful behavior. (71, 72, 75, 79)

Toward the end of the book Father Evan writes:

What I have attempted to offer...is a simple starting point for addressing that very desire to walk with Christ and become like Christ—by simplifying the Church’s teachings since the time of the apostles as they relate to the three-legged stool of spirituality. What we find is that the wisdom of the Orthodox Church is timeless, and if we ignore it then we do so to our detriment. Scripture and the Holy Fathers have given us what we need; we only need to choose to follow it. (110-111)

As we approach Great Lent when the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are especially emphasized, *Toolkit for Spiritual Growth: A Practical Guide to Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving* is an informative and clarifying guidebook to read and study and an encouraging companion to have in hand—and in mind—for the Lenten journey.

Ancient Faith

118 pages

\$13.00

(Available through the bookstore with “curbside” pickup. Please email r.p.myerly@gmail.com if you would like a copy.)

“Electrifying” Your Home with the Energy of the Holy Spirit



by Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol

A home without a lit oil lamp in front of icons is cold and dark, but when you have a lit oil lamp in front of your icons, you are giving yourself a physical reminder of the energy of the Holy Spirit in the home. We should "electrify" our homes, to have the energy of the Holy Spirit in them, with holy icons, oil lamps, holy water, incense and our prayers. In a

home where there is blasphemies and yelling, it is natural that it will have an energy opposite to that of the energy of the Holy Spirit. If there is one person in that home, who takes care to resist the energy of Satan, that person will pray in the home, will have icons, will take care to sprinkle the home with holy water, then the Grace of God will defeat the presence of the devil. We must acquire the blessed habit of receiving the sanctifying Grace of the Mysteries of the Church. In our homes we must have holy water, dried up antidron, and every morning, every morning we must before we leave to go to work, to devote a minute to prayer, to consume the antidron, to drink our holy water, and you know what - our entire lives will change! As well as the future life of our families! Thus making our homes into a little church.

Source: From a Talk by Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol.
Translation by John Sanidopoulos.

Blessing of the River



A number of Orthodox faithful and clergy took part in the **Blessing of the River** at Hidden Falls Park in St. Paul on Saturday, January 9. The participating clergy (pictured above) were: Fr. Perry Kallis (St. George GOC), Fr. John Schroedel (St. Mary's OCA Cathedral), Fr. Jason Houck (St. Mary's GOC), Fr. Paul Hodge (St. George AOC), Fr. George Dokos (St. Mary's GOC), and Fr. Mircea Vasii (St. Mary's Romanian).

Photos courtesy of Krisanthly Sikkila



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, February 16, 6:30-7:15 p.m.
Parish-Night Week
"Offering Our Sacrifice"
Watch your e-mails for the Zoom link.
- ▶ Sunday, February 21
10:45 a.m. (following Communion)-11:30 a.m.
HOPE and JOY in the Great Hall
Watch for Jon's e-mail to sign up!

Junior GOYA

Grades 6-8

- ▶ Wednesday, February 3, 6:45-8:00 p.m.
Junior GOYA in the Great Hall
Watch for Jon's e-mail to sign up!
- ▶ Thursday, February 18, 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Parish-Night Week
"Offering Our Sacrifice"
Watch your e-mails for the Zoom link.

Senior GOYA

Grades 9-12

- ▶ Wednesday, February 10, 6:45-8:00 p.m.
Senior GOYA in the Great Hall
Description
- ▶ Wednesday, February 17, 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Parish-Night Week
Senior GOYAns & Adults—
Fr. Maximos Conostas presents on Adversity as
Spiritual Opportunity
Register for meeting:
<https://tinyurl.com/FebruaryPNRegistration>

In-Person Youth Activities

It is important for us to follow social distancing measures throughout our in-person activities. Below are the safety precautions:

- Masks must be worn properly by everyone for the duration of the event
- Practice social distancing (at least 6 feet apart from each other)

- Avoid touching each other
- Sanitize hands frequently. Everyone will be required to sanitize your hands when you arrive and encouraged throughout the evening.

Please note that while the Church has taken steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19, it cannot guarantee safety. Attending this activity may increase your child's risk of contracting the disease. By attending these events for which you are making a reservation, you acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and assume the risk of becoming ill. Further, you agree to release, covenant not to sue, discharge, and hold harmless the Church, its employees, agents, and representatives, of and from all liabilities, claims, actions, damages, costs or expenses of any kind arising out of or relating to COVID-19. You understand and agree that this release includes any claims based on the actions, omissions, or negligence of the Church, its employees, agents, and representatives.

When should I stay home? For the well-being of others, you should stay home if you are displaying COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case. Click this link if you need help discerning whether you are sick: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html>.

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**

December Recap

What a busy month! Our HOPE/JOY kids created Christmas cards for our VIPs and danced along to some Christmas songs in the Great Hall! The Junior GOYAns and Senior GOYAns each had their own Christmas party where we played Christmas Family Feud and enjoyed each other's company. We ended the year by tubing at Buck Hill. Looking forward to 2021!



Tubing at Buck Hill in Burnsville



HOPE and JOY kids' activity in the Great Hall



Junior GOYA Christmas Party

Senior GOYA Christmas Party



Saint Mary's Greek Orthodox Church
3450 Irving Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408

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*This is my commandment,
that you love one another as I have loved you.*
—John 15:12

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

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Publication Deadlines
The Messenger—
First Sunday of each month.

Sunday Bulletin—
Preceding Thursday,
12:00 Noon

February 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 7:30pm-Virtual Bible Study	2 Presentation of Our Lord 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	3 6:00pm-Small Blessing of Water 6:45pm-Junior GOYA in the Great Hall	4	5 7:00am-Men's Fellowship	6 Saint Photios 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers
7 Sixteenth Sunday of Matthew "The Messenger" Deadline 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	8 7:30pm-Virtual Bible Study	9 6:15pm-Parish Council 7:00pm- Women's Book Club Discussion	10 Saint Haralambos 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 6:45pm-Senior GOYA in the Great Hall	11	12	13 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers
14 Sunday of the Canaanite 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	15 Presidents' Day <i>Church and Office Closed</i>	16 5:00pm-Greek Zumba 6:45pm-Parish Night HOPE/JOY	17 Saint Theodore the Tyro 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy "The Messenger" Mailing 7:00pm-Parish Night Senior GOYA/Adults	18 7:00pm-Parish Night Junior GOYA	19 7:00am-Men's Fellowship	20 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers
21 Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee Triodion Begins 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy after Liturgy-HOPE/JOY Activity 1:00am-Mission/Outreach	22 7:30pm-Virtual Bible Study	23 Saint Polycarp 6:00pm-Evening Divine Liturgy 7:00pm-Philoptochos Meeting	24	25 6:30pm-Stewardship Com.	26	27 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers
28 Sunday of the Prodigal Son 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy						