

The Messenger

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

December 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



METROPOLIS
OF CHICAGO

A Message from Father George

Father George Dokos, Proistamenos

Beholding the star leading to God, the Magi followed its brightness; and holding it as a lantern, they searched for the powerful King, and reaching the Unreachable, they rejoiced and cried to Him: Alleluia.



Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

From the time of Adam's disobedience and man's fall from his communion with God, humanity drifted far from the Divine and lost its way. Nevertheless, a distant memory remained in him, a certain longing for... something; something beyond himself. This fact is illustrated in one of St. Paul's speeches recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

As the great Apostle was making his way through the city of Athens around the year 50 AD, he came to a place known as the Areopagus, very near the Acropolis. There he said to those gathered:

"Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you" (Acts 17:22-23).

Appealing to the Athenians' consciences and inner longing for that unknown god, St. Paul goes on to tell them that this desire to know the true God has been implanted in every human being, as St. Paul even quotes the ancient philosophers who were searching for the truth while yet in the darkness of ignorance, for God had created men in order "that they should seek God, in the hope that they might grope after Him and find Him. Yet He is not far from each one of us, for 'In Him we live and move and have our being' (Epimenides the Cretan); as even some of your poets have said, 'For we are indeed His offspring' (Aratus the Stoic)" (Acts 17:27-28).

One can see from this that even the ancients, such as Plato, Epimenides, Aratus, and son on, were literally groping in the dark, as it were, in search of the Creator and Fashioner of all things. And the hymn quoted above from the Akathist to the Theotokos paints a picture of the Magi, pagan philosophers from the East, being guided from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge, from hopelessness to hope, from meaninglessness to purpose, by using the Star of Bethlehem as a guiding lantern. At last, "reaching the Unreachable,"

—article continues on page 2.

Our Life Together

Baptisms

Owen Theodore

Parents: James & Maggie Menter

October 23, 2021

Alexis Sasha Nicolle

October 30, 2021

Katherine

Parents: Andy & Kristi Gatchell

October 30, 2021

Chrismation

Rachael Wolff

November 7, 2021

Marriage

Rachael Wolff to George Chronakos

November 13, 2021

Death

Stella Boosalis

November 1, 2021

May her memory be eternal.

Memorial Prayers

Sunday, December 5

Bill K. Nicklow (1 year)

Share YourShelf

December's recipient of Share YourShelf contributions is Community Emergency Service (CES).

Sunday, December 5

Canned soup or vegetables

Sunday, December 12

Diapers (size 5)

Sunday, December 19

Hygiene items

Sunday, December 26

Baby formula

Nothing can satisfy and please your soul as much as helping others.

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

Facilities Coordinator

Bob Yang

Music Director

Thespina Macres

Organist

Mark Macres

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

that is, beholding in the flesh the Word of God "through Whom all things were made" (John 1:3), they rejoiced and cried aloud: Alleluia!!

As I write this final message to you, beloved, my heart's desire is that you might cherish like nothing else in the universe the knowledge of the truth that has been given to you, that has been revealed to you: the knowledge of Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world; your Savior. The unknown and unreachable god that humanity could neither comprehend nor reach on its own merits has come to us and made Himself known, and this unfathomable gift has been given to you and me.

As we approach Christmas – the Birth of the Son of God in time and through the holy Virgin – let us give thanks for what God has given us in Jesus Christ: the remission of our sins, victory over the devil, and the promise of everlasting life. And let us acknowledge that there is nothing we can ever do to repay God for His infinite blessings, but we can at least glorify His holy Name by our every word and action, love Him above all else, and love our neighbor as ourselves. Let us also humbly pray the following, again from the Akathist:

"Unsuccessful is every hymn that attempts to pay honor to the multitude of Your mercies. For even if we offer You songs in number equal to the sands, O holy King, yet we do nothing worthy of what You have given us who cry to You: Alleluia."

May the divine grace and rich blessings of the Coming of the Savior at Christmas be with you and yours.

With love in our Incarnate Lord,



+Fr. George

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

Education • Fellowship • Worship

Fellowship and Study Groups

Intercessory Prayer

Wednesdays, December 8 and 22
10:30 a.m., Nave Chapel

Men's Fellowship

Friday, December 3
Exodus Study

Friday, December 17
Psalms Study

7:00 a.m., Fireside Room

Saturday Bible Study

Every Saturday
9:00 a.m., Fireside Room
No class session on December 25 or
January 1

Women's Bible Study

Wednesdays, December 8 and 22
11:00 a.m., Fireside Room

Orthodox Game League Is Back!

Adults (age 18 years and older)... come to Orthodox Game League, enjoy time with each other, and play some fun games. Do you want to learn a new game? Do you want to play a classic? How about teach a game? Then this is for you! Questions? Contact Nikki Beachamp, 612.910.2943

Next Game Night

Saturday, January 22, 2022
7:00 p.m.
St. Mary's Cathedral
1701 - 5th Street NE, Minneapolis

* We'll gather in the Parish Center across the street from the church *

Bring a munchie or dessert to share.

Weekend Schedule

Saturday

Great Vespers – 5:00 p.m.
(Except Saturday, December 25)

Sunday (live-streamed)

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

Weekday Schedule

Saturday, December 4

Saint Barbara
Saint John of Damascus
Orthros – 9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Monday, December 6

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

Thursday, December 9

The Conception of the Theotokos
Evening Divine Liturgy – 6:00 p.m.

Friday, December 17

Saint Dionysios; The Prophet Daniel
Evening Divine Liturgy – 6:00 p.m.

Friday, December 24

Eve of Nativity
Royal Hours – 9:00 a.m.
Vesperal Divine Liturgy – 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 25

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

Monday, December 27

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

Parish Night 2021-2022



Join us for our next Parish Night on Wednesday, December 16! The evening begins at

6:15 p.m. with a brief prayer service in the Nave, followed by dinner in the Terrace Room and breakout sessions for the adults and kids. Parish Night ends by 8:00 p.m.

Parish Night is a parish-wide event for Kindergarteners through adults that occurs monthly on a Wednesday evening from September through May, taking a hiatus during Great Lent.

Parish Night Schedule:

- December 15 • January 19
- February 16 • May 18

2021-2022 Themes

- Adults: The Illness and Cure of the Soul
- Senior GOYA (grades 9-12): Tending the Garden of Our Hearts
- Junior GOYA (grades 6-8): Be a Bee
- HOPE/JOY (K-grade 5): Journey Through the Parables

Parish News & Events

Year End Giving

As we approach the end of both our calendar and fiscal year, it is important that we correctly record all stewardship gifts. Every dollar we receive **before 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 28**, will be recorded and reflected on your year-end Contribution Statement, and matched against your yearly pledge, as stewardship income for 2021. Donations received after the deadline will be counted towards our budget for 2022. Please note the holiday office closures listed below.

On occasion, a parishioner may choose to provide additional funds to the church, indicating these dollars should be recorded as a donation for a "future year." While we can make a notation of this request, the funds will still be recorded and reported as income for 2021. Your Statement of Financial Giving will accurately reflect all income received in a particular calendar year. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please see our Parish Council Treasurers, Tom Hainlin and Michael Rakes, for clarification.

Holiday Office Closures

The office will be closed for the Christmas holiday on the following days: Thursday, December 23, the office will close at 12:00 noon and remain closed on Friday December 24 and Monday, December 27.

Intercessory Prayer

"Pray for one another that you may be healed. The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" —James 5:16

Never has the world needed more prayer than right now. Though we know we have so many blessings, in these stressful times it is hard for some to get past their current struggles to remember this. One of these blessings is our opportunity to pray for each other and to be prayed for, unworthy as we may feel. We need not be monastics in order to live a life filled with prayer. We simply need to take time out to think of others for just a few minutes each day.

Saint Mary's Intercessory Prayer group gathers every other Wednesday of the month at 10:30 a.m. in the nave (just before Women's Bible Study) to say prayers and remember those on our parish prayer list. Also, "those whom we prayerfully call to mind" in our own lives.

Now, if you are not able to join us in person, you can do the same in your own home. Fr. Anthony Coniaris created a small prayer book for us and the church can give you a copy along with the current prayer list. You simply need to ask for it. Please consider becoming a prayer warrior with us.

Senior Citizens' Christmas Party

Tuesday, December 14

Kick-off the Christmas season with the Senior Citizens' Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 14, beginning at 11:00 a.m., in the Terrace Room. We'll begin with a social time complete with appetizers, punch, and wine. Our lunch menu will be salad, garithes with manestra (shrimp with manestra in a special tomato sauce), a special Christmas dessert, and coffee. We will be entertained by our own Elena Biessener. She will perform holiday favorites and other delights. Our afternoon will conclude with Bingo, complete with prizes.

Tickets are \$10.00 for Senior Citizens' Club members and \$35.00 for non-members and available during Sunday coffee hour. If you become a member, a ticket is \$25.00. Deadline to purchase tickets is Sunday, December 12.

O.C.F. College Conference Midwest

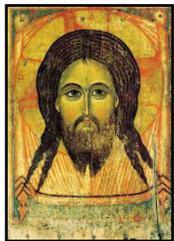
Please register for the Orthodox Christian Fellowship College Conference at the St. Iakovos Retreat Center December 27-30. Spots are filling up fast—register soon!

For more about the Midwest OCF College Conference, to register, and to apply for scholarships, go to <https://www.ocf.net/college-conference/#register>. Bishop Paul is the speaker this year.

In addition to the needs-based scholarships from the National OCF, St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church will partially reimburse members of the parish and active attendees of this parish. Please first apply to the National OCF scholarship before requesting reimbursement from St. Mary's. The partial reimbursement amount will depend on the number of registrants from our parish. Only St. Mary's members or active attendees are eligible for partial reimbursement.

In order to receive this reimbursement, you must email your registration to Fr. Jason by December 14 at frjason@stmarysgoc.org. Partial reimbursements will be issued at the end of December. If you have any questions, please contact Fr. Jason, 612.401.0660.

Iconography Classes



Saint George Greek Orthodox Church in St. Paul is hosting session 1 icon class taught by Debra Korluka which will serve the purpose of an introductory study of icon painting technique along with theological and spiritual study of icons. Participants will learn how to paint the icon of the Holy Face.

The Holy Face, the Church's first icon is significant for iconography because the Word of God took flesh in Christ and became part of the material world. Christ Himself gave us His image, His Face, on the cloth for the King of

This session meets for four sessions: Tuesdays, January 11, 18, 25, and February 8 from 6:00-9:00 p.m.

The fee is \$245 (\$145 for tuition plus required kit of materials approx. \$100 provided by Wet Paint) Icon Painting Kit includes acrylic paint, brushes and cradled panel)

Please contact *Debra Korluka* to register/for inquiries at akorluka@aol.com or at 612.889.5868.

About the Instructor

Debra Korluka is an internationally renowned artist and Byzantine iconographer. She was the first American to exhibit in the former Soviet Union and has studied with icon masters from the Ukraine and Russia. Her work, which is displayed in museums around the world, has been commissioned by churches and private collectors nationally and internationally. Over the years, Debra has developed many close working relationships with renowned artists, churches, and monasteries in Russia. To learn more about Deb see www.korlukastudios.com

About Orthodox Icons

The word, icon, can be found in many cultures in contemporary society. The computer industry most likely never knew how much they would contribute to the familiarity of the word "icon" when choosing the word to represent symbols that would reveal magnitudes of information via the technical world.

For centuries, holy icons have been handed down to Christians as a "sacred doorway" into the spiritual world.

Edessa. It is why we can make images that represent Him.

The coursework is divided into individual steps; the instructor explains the principles and then demonstrates each phase in detail, answering all questions. The course begins with drawing the icon on a prepared panel. Next, local colors within the painting are applied to the panel. Shadows and highlights are developed in the forms of the face and clothing. Painted highlights are finally applied to the painting. Additional educational materials will be provided by the instructor during class

Icons have been inseparable in the function of liturgy in the Eastern Orthodox Church since the sixth century. These religious icons denote the same idea as a computer icon; they offer information. The primary purpose of a holy icon is to enable a face-to-face encounter with a holy person or make present a sacred event. Icons communicate Christian Truth in a visual form. Narrative icons are images corresponding to the written Bible, portrait icons reveal information in regards to the virtues that we try to observe and remember in the holy person being depicted. We as onlookers are asked to enter into the living presence and power of the holiness being depicted and into the celebration of the sacred event.

The art form in a Holy icon is intended to be an abstraction producing a spiritual art, which recurs in the painting of icons in any generation or country, always remaining constant, consistent and prescribed by canon rule. It is for this reason that icons convey an art purely idealistic, and not meant to be realistic.

Philoptochos



During this season of the Nativity, Philoptochos wishes the congregation a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! We don't have a meeting scheduled, but we're holding our bake sale, Book Club, Vasilopita sales, and much more!

Philoptochos Bake Sale and Festival Boutique

December 4-5, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Inside Flag Pole Entrance

The Festival Bake Sale and Boutique is happening on the first weekend of December! The Bake Sale includes kourambiethes, baklava and chocolate baklava, and the "Come Sit at Our Table" Cookbook. The Boutique is offering Greek olive oil, jewelry, apparel, and more. Come do your holiday shopping, browse for something special for yourself, and share this event with your friends and family!

Bake Sale Preparations

Tuesday, November 30

Come to the Church on Tuesday, November 30, and lend a hand between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. as we prepare more packages of baklava and kourambiethes for our sale the following weekend. Go to our Signup Genius site to sign up! <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080C49A8A722AAF85-bake>, or sign up at our Philoptochos table on Sunday. We need lots of ladies to help with this project!

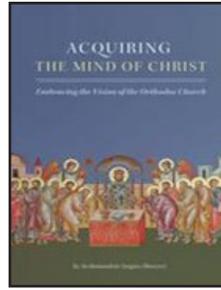
Order Your New Year's Day Vasilopita

Sundays, November 28, December 5 and 12

Our annual fundraiser for St. Basil Academy is here! Pre-order delicious Vasilopita (Sweet Bread) for your New Year's celebration by stopping at the Philoptochos table on Sundays through December 12. Loaves are \$15 each with payment requested at the time of your order. You can pick up your bread on Sunday, December 19. It will be frozen and will include thawing and powdering instructions. A limited number of additional loaves will be available for purchase on Vasilopita Sunday, January 9, 2022. Chair: Toni Bazakos.

The National Philoptochos Society purchased the estate that became St. Basil Academy in 1944, and has responded to the needs of the Academy and its children for more than 70 years. Located in Garrison, New York, St. Basil Academy is a home for children in need and provides a loving Christian environment where resident children are nurtured to adulthood.

Women's Book Club Discussion



Our December Book Club meeting date and location are still in the planning stages. Watch for further details coming soon.

The book we are reading for this discussion is "Acquiring the Mind of Christ, Embracing the Vision of the Orthodox Church" by Archimandrite Sergius Bowyer and available in the bookstore.

Thank You for November Volunteering

November 8, Bake Sale Preparations

Thank you everyone who helped with packaging and cutting the kourambiethes, baklava and chocolate baklava: Paulette Hasting, Joanna Morgan, Linda Stanton, Annette Legeros, Connie Kouzes, Vangie Karakatsanis, Mary Kafkas, Cathy Forchas, Fifi Kafkas, Elaine Smith, Elena Gabor, Tia Muchulas, Roxanne Muchulas, Tina Menter, Carrie Petrou.

November 7, Ministry Fair Sunday

Thank you for helping at the Philoptochos table.

November 14, Thank you for helping making the dinner and helping serving meals at FOCUS Minnesota

Dena Tortorelis, Kristina Matsch, Kathleen Wendland, Jayne Klatt, Erlene Holman, Carol Smith, Carol Karos, Tia Muchulas, Sandra Anderson, Mary Ellis, Connie Kouzes, Cathy Forchas, Krissa Rovolis, Cathy Selin, Sofia Johnson, Elena Gabor, Paulette & Paul Hastings, Cindy Karos, Lisa Gallmeyer, Stephanie George, Mary Kafkas, Hope Kennedy, Maria Boosalis, Diana Santrizos, Alexandra Houck, Ann Theodotou, Mary Pappas, Demetra Kordopitoulas, Helena Orlandi, Julie Anderson-Smith, Barbara Pappajohn, Effy Triantafyllou, Kathy Richardson, Toni Bazakos, Sandra Dascalos, Kathy Pinger.

November 23, Day of Service

Thank you everyone for helping out in our great Mission.

2021 Parishioner Reimbursements

We are fast approaching the end of our fiscal year and wanted to remind all parishioners that we will not accept any reimbursement requests after the close of the calendar year. One of our St Mary's Policies allows for reimbursement only within the year the expense was incurred, and a best practice is to submit any expenses within 30-days of the purchase. We process all our expenses each week on Tuesdays. If you submit an expense after 5:00pm on Monday, it will be held until the following week. Once all invoices are entered into the system, expenses are electronically approved, and checks are generated and mailed directly to your home.

Save the Date – Sunday, December 12

Please join the Parish Council and Church Staff as we honor Fr. George and his dedicated service to St. Mary's. Following Liturgy on Sunday, December 12, we encourage everyone to join us for a festal meal.

In just over seven years, Fr. George has impacted each of our lives and been a loving and faithful presence. We will miss him and his family and wish them continued joy as he begins his service at Holy Apostles in Westchester, Illinois.

To ensure we have enough room for everyone, please RSVP via Sign Up Genius (in e-mail communications) or contact the Church Office to let us know you plan to attend.

"To you therefore who believe, he is precious, . . . you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people . . ." I Peter

Missions & Outreach

So Very Thankful in 2021

What a blessing to be back in the Nave, and what a blessing to be back seeing each other, seeing each other with and without masks. Isn't it exciting when we see more and more opening up? It is great to talk with a neighbor who feels things are getting back to normal. I never thought that each opening would be so exciting, like an old memory!



Meal Pack Event

Sunday, December 5 – 21,000 Meals

Thank you for joining other volunteers who give of their time and energy to reduce food insecurity by packing meals that can help many make their way through the colder months. Each Harvest Pack packet that you fill will be helpful for those in need who CES, Simpson House, and Joyce Uptown Food Shelf assist to have food until the end of the month. It is hard to imagine the need and you have been so very thoughtful and helpful.

Upcoming Event...

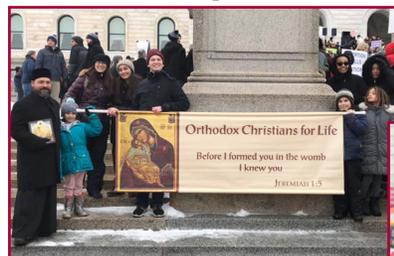
Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life (MCCL) March

Saturday, January 22 in St. Paul.

This heartfelt event begins with a small service at the Cathedral of Saint Paul at 10:30 a.m., then a march/walk to the Minnesota State Capitol steps. Below are photos from 2019 which show the large number of younger people attending. As we re-read the signs and think about us singing "Amazing Grace," this will be a truly ardent, devout morning to think about how we can help give tiny unborn and born lives a chance.

Please prayerfully plan to attend this emotional and very special March for Life. While attending, take a moment to read the signs that people are holding so dearly. The signs share and confess their "regret."

Orthodox Christians for Life: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you." —Jeremiah 1:5



Stewardship

by Athena Mihas

Saint Mary's Stewardship Testimonial

Parishioner, William Buss, shared the following powerful testimonial with us on Sunday, October 24, 2021, following the Liturgy:

Good morning. My name is William Buss. I am 13 years old and have been a member of this parish for nine years. I was asked to speak to you this morning on the subject of stewardship and what it means to me.

I first want to say that stewardship is taking care of what God has given us. It is giving our first fruits, talents, and gifts back to God. God is always willing to accept our best if we mean it from the heart.

Jesus does not always ask us to give money. There are many ways to give. We can use our time to pray for the needs of our world and the needs of the people. We can use our talent for service and our money through almsgiving. Regardless of which contributions we make, we must also give our love, devotion, joy, charity, and kindness. These virtues help those who are in need to regain a new hope.

When I consider what to give, I try to remember the story of the poor widow who gave out of what she herself needed, compared to those who gave donations of large sums out of their excess. Although her contribution was small, it had more meaning. It was more sincere and from the heart.

I want us to not just think of money. An experience when I shared my time was when I went to Feed My Starving Children to help hungry and needy kids turn into healthy boys and girls who now have a hope of reaching their potential. It was valuable for me because I realized that we can only understand our own calling when we understand the people around us.

Building our own virtues does not come easily. Sometimes I don't want to give away my time. Other times, I want to save my money for myself. But I do it to give God what he rightfully deserves and to get a better understanding of myself and others. When I think about it, God allows me to see MYSELF more clearly through the way I want to spend my time, talent, and treasure.

Sometimes I wonder what will happen to the money that I contribute from my savings. Will it be used to help people? Will the homeless person I gave it to buy illegal drugs with it? I try not to judge others through words or thoughts. The great missionary, Mother Theresa of Calcutta, said "if you judge others, you will not have time to love them."

Through our stewardship, we can help others, but also help ourselves to focus on increasing virtues like generosity, kindness, gratitude, and compassion. These virtues are not developed if we only try them once in a while. It takes practice to form a habit. Do not be afraid to practice acts of mercy as often as you can. Whether through prayer, offering your service, or giving your money, try to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless, bury the dead, visit those in prison, care for the sick, clothe the naked.

I want to give, not only with the mind, but with the heart. I want to avoid giving out of pride, like the Pharisees. I want to be able to give freely with generosity and stewardship, as Christ would. As a member of St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church, I would like to say that our church is pretty good at generosity and stewardship. I feel that I have been taught well by your example. The question for all of us is whether we will remain true to the faith. We have to continue growing.

When you give, don't just think of a physical award or prize, but an eternal one. Strive for the fullness of humility. There is no need to give a lot in order to claim you are a steward. You can give small amounts until it grows into something great. Even the smallest prayer can save a soul. The important thing is to practice, every day if you can, acts of generosity, kindness, and mercy.

---William Buss

Stewardship Committee Update

The Stewardship Committee has been busy this year making progress on our goals. Here are highlights shared at the October 24th General Assembly:

- **Stewardship giving has continued to be strong in both 2020 and 2021, despite the COVID-19 pandemic impact.**
- **Improving in-reach and engagement continues to be a focus.**
 - o Young adult engagement continues to be a priority. The Committee met with the Parish Council to discuss strategies for improving young adult engagement and will be conducting focus groups with young adults as a next step. The purpose of the focus groups will be to request feedback from young adult members on strategies for increasing engagement.
 - o The Parish Picnic in August was a huge success and was a joint effort of the Stewardship Committee and Parish Council. Parishioners enjoyed coming together again for fellowship after so many months of virtual events and social distancing.

- o The “Parea” small group potluck gatherings originally planned for 2021 have been postponed until 2022 due to the impact of COVID-19 this year. The intent of these small group gatherings is to encourage members to connect with parishioners they may not know very well and to continue to build our church community.
 - *“Parea” is the Greek word for a group of friends who regularly gather to share their experience about life, their philosophies, values, and ideas.*
- **Enhancing digital approaches to giving and communications has been a goal for the past couple of years.**
 - o The Stewardship Committee has been working jointly with the Technology Committee and Parish Council to improve the website, enhance communications, and make giving to the church easier.
 - o Website redesign was recently completed with an updated look and updated content.
 - o VENMO was implemented as an option for on-line giving, making it easier for members to make contributions to St. Mary’s from anywhere.
 - o Several volunteers contributed their time and talent on these projects, including Kathy Boosalis, Paul Hastings, Cooper Buss, Jessica Buss, and Mike Rakes.
 - o We also have a goal of expanding the use of social media for engagement of parishioners. This is a critical strategy for reaching our younger members.
- The **Appreciation Glendi** took place on November 13. See details in next section below.
- We kicked off the **2022 Stewardship Campaign** in the past month with the following activities:
 - o Testimonial speakers shared personal messages on stewardship and what St. Mary’s means to them (William Buss on October 24, Alexis and Anastasia Friesen on October 31, and Sylvia Kafkas on November 7).
 - o The sermons for three Sundays in a row were focused on stewardship.
 - o The annual Ministry Fair took place on Sunday, November 7. After Liturgy, several parishioners stopped by the Great Hall for refreshments and to stroll among the tables displaying information from the many ministries and organizations that make up St. Mary’s. This is always a wonderful opportunity for everyone to see firsthand how our gifts of **Time, Talent, and Treasure** are used by St. Mary’s both at home and beyond.

- The Stewardship Committee continues to communicate with members through The Messenger, the weekly Bulletin, quarterly mailings, occasional emails, General Assembly updates and social media.

Annual Stewardship Appreciation Glendi Was a Huge Success!

On November 13, the Stewardship Committee and Parish Council hosted the fifth annual Stewardship Appreciation Glendi to express our gratitude for your gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

Thank you to all parishioners that came out to celebrate. Over 175 members attended the Appreciation Glendi. It was a wonderful evening of fellowship, delicious food, laughter, dancing, and reminded us of the valuable relationships we have with each other and the importance of our faith community.

A big THANK YOU to all the volunteers that helped to make the event such a huge success again this year. We also want to recognize and thank Annette Legeros for planning and coordinating all the event details. We also want to thank John Legeros for preparing and cooking the delicious meal with a team of wonderful helpers. It took a small army of people to set-up for the event, serve the food, and clean up after the event.

Thank you also to the following businesses and individuals for their in-kind donations to the event:

- o Bill Spell
- o Bill’s Imported Foods
- o Dino’s Gyros
- o It’s Greek to Me
- o Queen of Cakes

We couldn’t have done it without everyone’s help and participation!

Stewardship Campaign 2021 Update

“...the greatest of these is love.”

—I Corinthians 13:13

Thank you for your participation in our 2021 Stewardship Campaign and your on-going support of St. Mary’s through your gifts of time, talent, and treasure. We are getting closer to our goal! See progress update below:

Offering Income as of Nov. 5, 2021	2021 YTD Actual	2021 Annual Budget	Additional Needed by December 31
Payments Received	\$805,740	\$1,069,625	\$263,885

Offering Income as of Nov. 5, 2021	2021 YTD Actual	2020 YTD Actual	Increase or (Decrease) vs. Prior Year
Payments Received	\$809,740	\$753,764	\$55,976
Average per Week	\$18,403	\$17,131	\$1,272
Average per Month	\$79,647	\$74,141	\$5,506

Offering Income As of November 5, 2021

As mentioned earlier, stewardship giving has continued to be strong in both 2020 and 2021, despite the COVID-19 pandemic impact. Your stewardship contributions support all of St. Mary's ministries as well as church operations. St. Mary's continues to be a beacon in the community and throughout the nation among Orthodox Churches.

In addition to Stewardship giving, St. Mary's has relied on both the Greek Festival and rental income to fully cover the costs of the church operations and all ministries. This year, St. Mary's has experienced income losses due to the cancellation of the Greek Festival and reduced rental income.

As a result of this decrease in income, additional sources of funding are needed. The increase in Stewardship giving we are seeing so far this year will certainly help to offset some of these losses. Please prayerfully consider increasing your giving in 2021 to offset these losses.



Our
Church

Our
Spiritual
Home

Saint Mary's Greek Orthodox Church • Stewardship 2022

In the Bookstore

by Rebecca Myerly

bookstore@stmarysgoc.org



The bookstore at St. Mary's is a great source for truly meaningful gifts in all seasons, but especially for Christmas. Now is a good time to visit the newly remodeled

and conveniently organized bookstore to select gifts that nourish the spirit. For people stopping in for a quick browse, there are featured item displays including a "New and Noteworthy" section. You will find a large selection of icons and books and other gift ideas from which to choose. Gift certificates are also available.

During this season of grace, there are many icons of the Nativity and books available to enrich the Advent journey. Christmas ornaments and micro icons (1"-1 1/2" in size) are popular gifts for friends and family.

With an abundance of books to choose from, two to highlight are

- *101 Orthodox Saints* by Presvytera Sarah Wright and Alexandra Schmalzbach, with illustrations by Nicholas Malara

This is a great book for people of all ages, even though the book is featured for children.

- *Timeless Wisdom: Frescoes from the Community of St. John the Baptist (Essex, England)*

This beautiful book is filled with icons of Saints and meaningful passages for prayerful meditation. In the introduction explaining this book, the community writes:

Saints were selected based on their ascetic writings, and each carries a scroll presenting their words on the general theme of "brotherly love." In the case of women monastics whose writings have not come down to us, their scrolls contain some representative aspect of their lives. (6)

If you are looking for a gift to be enjoyed around the house or in a dorm room, the bookstore has branched out and brought in some new items with designs by Ortho-

dox Christian artist Aaron Gray, including mugs and framed canvas prints. The mugs feature Saints with their powerful words of inspiration. They are microwaveable, dishwasher safe, and available in 11 oz. and 15 oz. sizes. The canvas prints feature words of faith and encouragement. They measure 8"x 8" x 1 1/2" so they can be featured on a table or desk top—or be hung on a wall. Aaron explains that all his creations are "made with the prayer that [they] will bring the spirit, beauty and joy of the Orthodox Church out into the world and into the everyday lives of Orthodox Christians."

For parents and grandparents looking for a child's gift that can last for generations, we are delighted to offer hand-carved Orthodox Churches made of building blocks. We are grateful to Presvytera Alexandra for introducing us to Alex Goncharov, who lives in Canada and carves the churches from Canadian Red Western Cedar and Olive Wood harvested in Bethlehem. His labor of love began as a way to teach his daughter about Orthodoxy and all the parts of the Church. He makes two churches a week, at night, after his day work. If you are interested in one of these sets, please come to the bookstore or email:

bookstore@stmarysgoc.org

This is simply a sampling of the gift ideas in the bookstore. Come and see!

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.

Parish Night

Wednesday, December 15

We start with prayer in the nave from 6:15-6:30, eat dinner from 6:30-7:00, lesson from 7:00-7:45 (break out into different groups: HOPE/JOY, Jr. GOYA, Sr. GOYA, and Adults), and wrap up from 7:45-8:00. All are welcome to attend!

Faith Group

0-5 Year Olds and Parents

- ▶ Wednesday, December 1, 9:30-11:00 a.m.
- ▶ Thursday, December 16, 9:30-11:00 a.m.
Faith Play Group meets at St. Mary's for playtime, snack, craft, and lesson. Fr. Jason is the contact person for questions: frjason@stmarysgoc.org

HOPE and JOY

Kindergarten-Grade 2 and Grades 3-5

- ▶ Saturday, December 11, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
HOPE and JOY at Elf the Musical, Jr. at Stages Theater
RSVP to jon@stmarysgoc.org by November 21 if you would like to attend so we can reserve the tickets. Parents/Guardians are responsible for their child, but we sit together as a group. St. Mary's will pay for the HOPE/JOY kids (grades K-5) and 1 parent or guardian. Any additional family member will have to be covered by the family (\$9.50 per ticket).
- ▶ Wednesday, December 15
HOPE and JOY at Parish Night
The theme for the HOPE/JOY group is "Journey Through the Parables: The Parable of the Rich Fool."
See details above.

Junior GOYA

Grades 6-8

- ▶ Wednesday, December 1, 6:15-8:00 p.m.
Junior GOYA Christmas party in the Great Hall and Youth Room
Watch your e-mail for updates.
- ▶ Wednesday, December 15
Junior GOYA at Parish Night
The theme for the HOPE/JOY group is "Be a Bee."
See details above.

Senior GOYA

Grades 9-12

- ▶ Wednesday, December 8, 6:15-8:00 p.m.
Senior GOYA Christmas party in the Great Hall and Youth Room
Watch your e-mail for updates.
- ▶ Saturday, December 11-Sunday, December 12
Senior GOYAns will have a sleep over in the Terrace Room! We will play games, watch a movie, and enjoy being in each other's company. The sleep over will begin with Vespers at 5:00 p.m.
Watch your e-mail for information on how to sign up.
- ▶ Wednesday, December 15, 6:15-8:00 p.m.
Senior GOYA at Parish Night
The theme for the Senior GOYAns is "Tending the Garden of Our Hearts." Mr. Paul Karos will lead the discussion.

Basketball Practices

All practices are in the Great Hall

- Sunday, December 5: 12:45-2:00 p.m.
Girls GOYA Basketball Practice
- Sunday, December 5: 2:00-4:00 p.m.
Boys GOYA Basketball Practice
- Sunday, December 12: 12:45-2:00 p.m.
JOY Basketball Practice
- Sunday, December 12: 2:00-4:00 p.m.
Girls GOYA Basketball Practice
- Sunday, December 19: 12:45-2:00 p.m.
Girls GOYA Basketball Practice
- Sunday, December 19: 2:00-4:00 p.m.
Boys GOYA Basketball Practice

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**

Church School

Saint Nicholas Celebration

We will be celebrating the feast day of St. Nicholas on Sunday, December 5. We ask that every church school child, all ages, bring an unwrapped toy or gift to donate. The children will process in the Great Entrance and place their gifts on the solea in front of the icon of St. Nicholas. The toys/gifts will be distributed through FOCUS to children in need. As in past years, the children will place their shoes outside their classroom in hopes that St. Nicolas will bring us a small gift - so be sure to wear good clean stockings without holes!

Help Wanted!

Church School parent helpers are needed for special events as well as general help such as making copies, buying craft supplies, etc. Contact *Dena Tortorelis* if you are interested in helping.

Christmas Program

The Church School Christmas Program will take place in the nave immediately following Liturgy on Sunday, December 19. Please try to attend Liturgy and Church School to help prepare and learn the songs. Also, if there are any child musicians, i.e. harp, cello, violin, guitar, that would like to play for the performance or would like to perform a duet or trio, please contact *Dena Tortorelis*: churchschool@stmarysgoc.org.

No Church School classes on December 26.

*The Clergy and Staff
of
Saint Mary's Greek Orthodox Church
wish all our members and friends
a most blessed Holy Nativity!*

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

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Today the Virgin cometh, cometh unto the cave, to give birth to the Word who was born before all ages, begotten in a manner that defies description. Rejoice therefore, oh, Universe if thou should hear and glorify with the angels and the shepherds. Glorify Him who by His will shall become a newborn Babe and who is our God before all Ages.

—Kontakion of Preparation for the Birth of Christ

St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church

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Greek Orthodox Church,
3450 Irving Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55408
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Telephone

612.825.9595

Fax

612.825.9283

Email

stmarysgoc@stmarysgoc.org

Website

www.stmarysgoc.org

Facebook

www.facebook.com/stmarysgoc/

Publication Deadlines

The Messenger—

First Sunday of each month.

Sunday Bulletin—

Preceding Thursday,
12:00 Noon

December 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9:30am-FAITH Play Group 6:15pm-Jr. GOYA Christmas Party 6:30pm-Choir Rehearsal	2	3 7:00am-Men's Fellowship	4 <i>Saint Barbara</i> <i>Saint John of Damascus</i> 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 9:00am-Bible Study 5:00pm-Great Vespers
5 <i>Tenth Sunday of Luke</i> <i>"The Messenger" Deadline</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy <i>Saint Nicholas Celebration</i> 11:30am-Harvest Pack 12:30pm-Basketball Practice	6 <i>Saint Nicholas</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	7 6:00pm-Open Gym	8 10:30am-Intercessory Prayer 11:00am-Women's Bible Study 6:15pm-Sr. GOYA Christmas Party 6:30pm-Choir Rehearsal	9 <i>Conception of the Theotokos</i> 6:00pm-Evening Divine Liturgy	10	11 9:00am-Bible Study 1:00pm-HOPE/JOY Outing 5:00pm-Great Vespers <i>Senior GOYA Lock-in</i>
12 <i>Eleventh Sunday of Luke</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy after Liturgy-Luncheon honoring the Dokos family	13	14 12:00noon-Senior Citizens 6:15pm-Parish Council	15 <i>Saint Eleutherios</i> 6:15pm-Parish Night 6:30pm-Choir Rehearsal	16 9:30am-FAITH Play Group	17 <i>Saint Dionysios Prophet Daniel</i> 7:00am-Men's Fellowship 6:00pm-Evening Divine Liturgy	18 9:00am-Bible Study 5:00pm-Great Vespers
19 <i>Sunday before Nativity</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy Church School Christmas Program 11:30am-Missions/Outreach 12:30pm-Basketball Practice	20	21 6:00pm-Open Gym	22 10:30am-Intercessory Prayer 11:00am-Women's Bible Study	23 <i>Church Office closes at Noon</i>	24 <i>Eve of Nativity</i> <i>Church Office Closed</i> 9:00am-Royal Hours 4:00pm-Vesperal Divine Liturgy	25 <i>Holy Nativity</i> 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy
26 <i>Sunday after Nativity</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy <i>No Church School Classes</i>	27 <i>Saint Stephen</i> <i>Church Office Closed</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	28 <i>Stewardship contributions are due by 3:00 p.m.</i> 6:00pm-Open Gym	29	30	31	

Parish Christmas Card

Send holiday greetings to your family and friends at St. Mary's!

Simply fill out this form and return it to the Church Office
with a contribution ***no later than*** Sunday, December 5...
(we send the card to the printer on Monday, December 6).

Your name(s) as you want it listed in the card:

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Christmas Decorations

Name of Contributor(s): _____

In memory of:

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Contributions will be acknowledged in the Christmas bulletins.

Please return this form and your donation to the Church Office no later than Sunday, December 19.