The Messenger

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

June 2023

Inside This Issue

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



Saint Paul: Gratitude in Action by Presvytera Alexandra Houck

When we were little children learning our manners, one of the first habits our parents drilled into our heads was the habit of saying "please" and "thank you." Thank you for our food. Thank you for a present. Thank you to God for keeping us safe. Sometimes expressing our gratitude seems just in words, and sometimes our gratitude shapes our actions.

Out of all the leaders in the Church, nobody showed gratitude more fully and more fervently than St. Paul. This man's gratitude defined the future of the Christian Church. Through his gratitude St. Paul glorified God, honored his brothers and sisters in Christ, and built up the Church.

St. Paul had reasons to be grateful. He had spent the early part of his life persecuting Christians, condemning many even to death. But God called him to serve Him, even in a dramatic way. He called him close, and for that Saint Paul was forever grateful. Throughout his ministry, St. Paul continually thanks God for this new life. He tells the Corinthians, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15), the gift of salvation.

St. Paul realized that God was using his talents for the Church, but he also realized he could not do it alone. Though he was important for the growth of the Church, St. Paul needed other faithful workers to support him and help with the Lord's ministry. Throughout his letters, Paul continually gives thanks to God for his fellow workers. To the Thessalonians he writes, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers" (1 Thessalonians 1:1-3).

St. Paul was grateful to God and joyful for the gifts God had given to him. He expressed his gratitude by offering this joy to others, working tirelessly to reach out to people who had not yet heard the good news. Throughout the sufferings and the difficulties, Paul thanked God. "For what thanks can we render to God for you," he asks the Thessalonians, "for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God?" (1 Thessalonians 7:9).

St. Paul knew that gratitude meant sharing with others. That's why we too look outwards. We can look outwards in our churches when we welcome a newcomer into our church. We look outwards when we serve the poor and give money to the hungry. We look outwards when we invite others to help us with our good work, and when we show the younger generation how to get involved. We look outwards when we allow others to participate in the work of the Church.

We celebrate St. Paul's feastday at the end of this month, so let's remember the tremendous gratitude he had. Let's follow St. Paul's example too by thanking God and using our gratitude to glorify God, honor our neighbors, and share the good news.

Our Life Together

Birth

Sophia Parents: Nathaniel & Emily Kostick March 31, 2023

Baptism

Michαel Parents: Fotis & Anna Bazakos May 13, 2023

Deaths

Harry Youtsos April 27, 2023

Marion West April 30, 2023

Hope Kennedy May 4, 2023 May their memories be eternal.

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Worship

Weekend Schedule

Saturday (June 3 only) Great Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday (live-streamed) Orthros – 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Weekday Schedule

Saturday, June 3 Saturday of Souls Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Monday, June 5 The Holy Spirit Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, June 24 Nativity of John the Baptist Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, June 29 Saints Peter and Paul Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Friday, June 30 Twelve Holy Apostles Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Our Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to Louis Trigas on the passing of his sister Dimitroula Kartanou in Aigion, Greece, on Holy Pascha, April 16, 2023. May her memory be eternal.

We extend our sympathy to *Elaine Regan* on the passing of her husband Stephen on April 23, 2023. Funeral services have been held.

Share YourShelf

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

Sunday, June 4 Canned meals –large cans (e.g. chili; pork and beans)

Sunday, June 11 Potatoes (boxed, instant, or canned)

Sunday, June 18 Cereal (hot or cold)

Sunday, June 25 Hygiene items (e.g. toothpaste, soap, shampoo, etc.)

When people were hungry, Jesus didn't say, 'Now is that political, or social?' He said, 'I feed you.' Because the good news to a hungry person is bread. —Archbishop Desmond Tutu

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Fellowship and Study Groups

Men's Fellowship Friday, June 2 (Joshua) Friday, June 16 (Psalms) 7:00 a.m., Fireside Room

Saturday Bible Study Every Saturday 9:00 a.m., Fireside Room

St. Mary's Church Staff

Proistamenos Fr. Timothy Sas

Associate Priest Fr. Jason Houck

Attached Priest Fr. John Kostas

Deacons Fr. Paul Kalina Fr. Luke Twito

Administrator vacant

Parishioner Support Communications David Mertesdorf

Ministry Support Doria Saros

Youth Director Jonathan Klein

Music Director Thespina Macres

Organist Mark Macres

St. Mary's Parish Council

President Jeannie Possis

Vice President Sam Hanna

Secretary Maria Smith

Treasurer Andrew Twito

Assistant Treasurer Cristina Nicklow

Members

Daniel Buss Libby Cheolis Alex Dascalos Ina Dunham Dean Psyhogios Sophia Rouman Louis Tiggas

Parish News & Events

Join Realm Connect

...for news, events, our online directory, and more

By now you've probably heard about Realm Connect, but do you know what it is? It is St. Mary's online "channel," that

you can tune into anytime just like a TV station. It's not just for our youth - we even have seniors who have already joined.

Why do you need it? It will become our "one place to go" as we develop this in the coming months. Here are a few things you can do:

-You can see church news and view events calendars for your ministries - no more searching for info in emails

-Send a note directly to another parishioner that only they can see through the Chat function

-View our directory online - members are already doing this, but it only shows those who have joined - so encourage others to join and add a photo to their profile so our directory grows

-Sign up for events and volunteering (coming soon)

-Access your stewardship giving history, and make a pledge - no need to call the church, or send a check

-Get tips on how to use Realm - you can also visit our table in the coffee hour each Sunday for help

-It's private, so only our church community sees our content

An email invitation reminder was sent on May 14. You simply need to open that email and click on the link to get started. Getting started takes 3 simple steps:

1) click on the link in the invite to join;

2) create your password for your account, and

3) Open the confirmation email to download the app through a link to the Apple App store or the Google Play store.

Lastly, since it takes a village to build this, we'd love your help, especially if you have talents in developing content, training or app/technical skills. Please reach out to David (<u>david@stmarysgoc.org</u>) or Bettina (<u>bhanna25@</u> <u>gmail.com</u>).

Senior Citizens' Meeting Tuesday, June 20

Saint Mary's Seniors' meeting and social will be held Tuesday, June 20 (note the date change to the third Tuesday of the month), at noon in the Terrace Room. We will celebrate June birthdays and anniversaries with a group photo, a luncheon, and delicious cake from Queen of Cakes. We will be entertained afterwards with a musical performance by the Minnesota Mandolin Orchestra. A short meeting and announcements will follow. All St. Mary's seniors (55+) are welcome to join our lively group. Dues are \$15. For further questions, please contact President Tessie Bourdamis.

Twins Game Outing

Sunday, July 23

Grab your glove and come on out to see the Twins play the White Sox on Sunday, July 23, at 1:10 p.m.! St. Mary's will provide a bus to and from Target Field, departing from St. Mary's at 12:00 noon. The tickets are \$32 and we are sitting in Section 102. We will purchase the tickets so we all can sit near each other, but you are responsible to reimburse us for the ticket(s). This event is open to all parishioners! To reserve your spot, please RSVP to Jon Klein (jon@stmarysgoc.org) by Sunday, June 25. Tickets are a first come, first served basis.

Philoptochos



During the summer, Philoptochos moves into a season of few meetings and many activities, including Women's Book Club, Day of Service, Bake Sale preparations, Dormition celebrations, and more.

The new board (which will be announced next month) will take the oath of office and elect officers in June, with no meetings for all members until September.

Upcoming Activities

Women's Book Club Discussion and Potluck Thursday, June 1

Join us on Thursday, June 1, 7:00-8:30 p.m., in the Terrace Room for a discussion of Wisdom from the Holy Mountain: Life Lessons from the Monks of Mt. Athos with the author Steve Rakes. Please bring a food item to share in our potluck. All women of the parish are welcome. The book is available in the church bookstore.

Day of Service Friday, June 9

9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. in the Lecture Room — enter at the south door by the flag pole

Come for an hour or any part of the day! Sofia Johnson has many local and international projects planned for sewers and non-sewers, including pillowcases for Shriners Hospital and Reach and Restore, nightgowns for Sojourner Project, wheelchair bags for the VA, boys/men's boxers for FOCUS Minnesota, and Days for Girls shields for delivery to Uganda. Days for Girls donations are welcome and needed:

- gallon size freezer Ziploc bags (not slider top)
- underpants (girls 12-16 or women's small-medium)
- suitcases (you won't get them back).

Summer Festival Baking 2023

The Taste of Greece Bake Sale preparations are underway, with kourambiethes in the freezer and baklava sessions in June. EVERYONE is welcome to come for part or all of the work sessions. On-the-job training is provided, we have great fellowship, and we support the church.

Baklava Chair Elena Gabor has scheduled 4 dates to assemble, cut, clove and bake.

Volunteer at the Philoptochos table on Sundays, through Sign Up Genius (link available in the weekly church emails and website) or contact Elena directly (<u>elenagabor14@gmail.com</u> or 952-288-3011).

- Wednesday, June 14, 2:00-8:00 p.m. Assemble: Bring a saucepan & pastry brush
- Monday, June 19, 2:00-8:00 p.m. Assemble: Bring a saucepan and pastry brush
- Tuesday, June 20, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Cut and Clove: Bring a sharp knife if you have a favorite
- Wednesday, June 21, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Syrup and Freeze

Save these dates for future Bake Sale sessions

- Friday, July 21: Melomakarona
- Thursday, August 24: Koulouria
- Tuesday, August 29: Theples Fry Day
- Thursday, August 31:

Honey Day for Theples and Melomakarona

• Tuesday-Wednesday, September 5-6:

Packaging and Final Preparations

Thank You...

Eleni George, for hosting Ladies Night Out.

Toni Bazakos, Tina Menter, and Maria Prassas, for leading the kourambiethes baking for the Festival, and to all who helped with this project.

To all who helped with the Pan-Orthodox Women's Tea and the Spring Finale.

Missions & Outreach

Simpson House Dinner



Our next Simpson House Dinner is scheduled for Tuesday, June 20,

St. Mary's third dinner this year to help the homeless. Please



consider helping to feed those who do not have a home. St. Mary's is known among the staff of Simpson House for our excellent meals and hospitality. Yes, by saying "Hello" and giving a warm smile along with a warm meal really helps each person in need. Please ask about a way to contribute or to help by contacting William Fazio at the Welcome Table, who is organizing the dinners.

"Come and See!" Orthodox Vespers



What a Joy! The Vespers service and presentation on Orthodoxy on Saturday, May 6, was attended by parishioners who were asked to "Bring A Friend. "The invitation included co-workers, children's friends, and neighbors.

There is a St. Mary's neighbor, who is a friend of Father Luke Twito, that would like to see him in "action" now



that he is a Deacon.

On a Tuesday afternoon, a volunteer handed out flyers to invite our neighbors to come to St. Mary's Vespers on May 6. People were happy to be invited. We will invite

neighbors in the future.

Reminder: Please come to the Vespers even if you do not have a friend, co-worker, family member – and say "Hello" to everyone!

Harvest Pack Sunday, June 25

How wonderful that you are ready to help those with food



insecurity! Yes, June 25, after Liturgy, we will get together to package oat meals, get to know each other, and really, really feel good about reaching out to help.

Healthy Food on Every Table Last month there was an article in the Star Tribune stating that older ladies are being



greet each other while packing meals. Your caring and kindness is like many angels helping.





Stewardship

Saint Mary's 2023 Stewardship Campaign Update

Ownership, Engagement, Generosity

Thank you for your participation in our 2023 Stewardship Campaign and your on-going support of St. Mary's through your gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

As of May 15, we have received \$473,995 in Stewardship Income payments.

- This represents only 36% of this year's budget for ministries and operating expenses and is ahead compared to where we were last year at this time.
- An additional \$858405 is needed by year end to cover all our costs.

2023 Offering Income YTD vs Annual Budget

Offering Income As of May 15, 2023	2023 YTD Actual	2023 Annual Budget	YTD % of Budget	Additional Needed by December 31
Payments Received	\$473,995	\$1,332,400	36%	(\$858,405)

REMINDER: The goal is to cover 100% of ministry and operating costs with Stewardship Income rather than relying on rental and festival income.

2023 Offering Income vs Prior Year as of May 15

Offering Income As of May 15, 2023	2023 YTD Actual	2022 YTD Budget	Variance from Budget	
Payments Received	\$473,995	\$378,558	\$95,437	
Average per Week	\$24,947	\$19,924	\$5,023	
Average per Month	\$86,181	\$68,829	\$17,352	

2023 Pledge Forms Completed to Date

Thank you to all parishioners that have made a pledge for 2023. We have had a significant increase compared to prior years in the number of pledge forms completed as well as the dollar amount of pledges.

Pledges To Date	# of Pledges	Pledges to Date
2023 Pledges	333	\$946,187
2022 Pledges	154	\$432,738
Increase vs. Prior Year	179	\$513,449

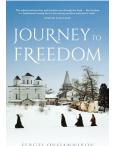
Although our deadline to have a pledge form completed has passed, we still want to encourage everyone to complete a pledge form this year. The form is available on-line and also available at Church if you need one.

The St. Mary's Stewardship Committee



In the Bookstore

by Rebecca Myerly bookstore@stmarysgoc.org



In the early 1970s, during his army service in Russia, Sergei Ovsiannikov was sent to prison for 'propaganda for the American way of life' and 'disobedience to superiors.' He writes:

It was precisely in prison that freedom came to me. Or, more exactly, that I was born into freedom. Contrary

to all logic, contrary to the obviousness of fear. Fear is the main thing that comes over you in prison, in the condition of unfreedom. But it turns out that if you take a good hard look at fear, it does not like the feeling. Fear wants to get away. And then it leaves behind a territory in which freedom may be born. (xvi-xvii) It was while he was in prison that he "heard very clearly the words: Freedom can only be in God." He explains: "God' was not a word in my vocabulary. I never used it....If I were indeed to recognize that 'freedom can only be in God', I had to begin with the fact that I knew nothing about God." (xxvii, xxvix)

Sergei wrote his book *Journey to Freedom* more than forty years later, after being a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church for almost thirty years. He writes of his journey:

In the 1970s I dreamed of meeting Metropolitan Anthony of Surozh, whose sermons I knew from samizdat copies that circulated among us. It seemed to me that he knew some secret of life that other people had only a vague notion of. I met him for the first time at the end of the decade, when he came to Russia, But our real acquaintance took place in London, when I went there in January 1989 to continue my biblical studies after completing my studies at the Leningrad Theological Academy. For a year and a half I served as deacon at the London Cathedral, and once a week I went to talk with Vladyka [Metropolitan Anthony] he was preparing me for the priesthood. It was then that I sensed that a friendship had established itself between us. Later I defined it thus: we shared silence.

Soon after my ordination in 1990, Metropolitan

Anthony... petitioned the patriarchate to send me to serve in Amsterdam. I was transferred....But before we parted—it was not a real parting, I knew I would be coming to visit, but still there was this tradition—I asked for words of farewell. I said, 'Vladyka, what advice would you give me before I start serving in the Amsterdam parish?' He replied, 'First of all, don't emulate me or anyone else. Second, don't pretend to pray. Third, learn to be yourself.'

I have been attempting to do precisely that ever since. (36-37)

In a very real sense, *Journey to Freedom* is a journal of Sergei's life experiences in the light of Metropolitan Anthony's words to him. He notes:

Try to be yourself without playing any role. Try to remain alone with yourself for at least a short period of time, and you will understand how difficult it is to accomplish it. It is not by chance that many sophisticated technologies of the modern world are aimed at the simple task of ridding man of the necessity of remaining alone with himself. 'If we are unable to be ourselves, if we only simulate our existence, we become fictitious, counterfeit beings. And God can do nothing with such an unreal person,' Metropolitan Anthony used to say. (37)

Father Sergei served as a priest in Amsterdam for more than thirty years before his death in 2019. During this time he continued to discern and pursue considerations of freedom from many perspectives. Part autobiography, part philosophical reflection, part psychological consideration, part spiritual awareness—this book is an eclectic mix that is often surprisingly enlightening. Father Sergei read widely and also lived an active involved life in the communities he served, so he brings a unique mix of experiences to his writing and draws often remarkably apt, perceptive, and often nuanced analogies. With these experiences, lived and prayerfully considered, Father Sergei offers much wisdom and direction for the attentive reader. His writing is engaging and permeated with meaning, always with joy and gratitude present in his being and thinking. A remarkable journey to freedom indeed.

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.

Junior GOYA Grades 6-8

Wednesday, June 7, 6:15-8:00 p.m.
 End of Year Mini Golfing at Centennial Lakes
 Please eat beforehand
 RSVP at: <u>linktr.ee/stmarysgoya</u>

Senior GOYA Grades 9-12

Wednesday, June 14, 6:15-8:00 p.m.
 End of Year Mini Golfing at Grand Slam in Burnsville
 RSVP at: <u>linktr.ee/stmarysgoya</u>

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.

Thank You!

Thank you to all the volunteers who made our Children's Holy Friday Retreat a great success:

Maria Smith, Cathy Selin, Demetra Kordopitoulas, Aggie Koutroupas, Aaron Shoop, Andy Gatchell, Natalie Hideg, Heather Koutroupas, Lia Nicklow, Danielle Brown, Alexis Friesen, Anastasia Friesen, Nancy Gallos, Steve Gallos, Elena Gabor, Marina Gabor, Kristine Boosalis, Kathy Boosalis, Stephanie Stephenson, George Tortorelis, Perry Angelos, Connie Kouzes, Melina Dillion, Fr. Tim, Fr. Jason

Congratulations High School Graduates!

Congratulations to our high school seniors who are graduating this spring! Sydney Bakritzes • Samuel Balke Josh Benbow • Theodore Berkovski Sophia Binning • Kirubel Birhane Alexander Bjork • Benjahmin Boyd John Checheris • Maria Hadjiyanis Elizabeth Hafey • Kalli Halatsis Emily Hattling • Elena Hicks Alexander Kauffman • Yoel Kesseste Woldekidan Ashlyn Kirou • Cole Kloek Alliyha Pakirtzis • Antonis Pappas

Gavriel Pappas • Jacob Poolos Sofia Sas • Isabell Tiggas Helena Yiangou

Teachers' Appreciation Luncheon

Our Teachers' Appreciation Luncheon is Sunday, June 4, after Divine Liturgy. All teachers and helpers are invited. Contact Kathy Richardson or Krisanthy Sikkila with any questions.

Greek Dance Practices Resume

Greek dance practices will resume in June and continue through the summer months with the final rehearsal in September before our Festival. All youth ages 6 to 18 years old, plus any Greek dance alumni (young adults) are welcome to join the Greek dance program and perform at the Festival, September 8-10. Please contact *Tessie Bourdamis* by May 31 to register students or if you have questions.



Follow the GOYAns on Instagram: **St_Marys_GOYA**

Vacation Church School 2023 ~ The Fruits of the Spirit ~

June 12-16, 2023 • 8:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Kids ages 4 years old (and potty trained) through going into $6^{\rm th}$ grade (fall 2023) are welcome.

Middle and high school students and adults are needed to help

Join us for a fun-filled tropical adventure as we learn about the wonderful fruits that the Holy Spirit gives us.

We will have crafts, singing, gym activities, snacks, and interesting lessons!

Questions? Contact Dena Tortorelis or Krissa Rovolis at...

Churchschool@stmarysgoc.org

Hope to see you there!

To register: <u>tinyURL.com/Fruits-VCS-2023</u> Or scan the code below.





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

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



To you, O Lord, Creator of the universe, the world offers the God-bearing martyrs as the first fruits of creation. Through their prayers, and through those of the Theotokos, keep your church in perfect peace, O Savior rich in mercy.

—Kontakion of All Saints

The Sunday of All Saints ~ June 11

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

	June 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
				1 7:00pm-Women's Book Club	2 7:00am-Men's Fellowship	3 Saturday of Souls 9:00am-Bible Study 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers	
4 Holy Pentecost "The Messenger" Deadline 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy CS Teachers' Appreciation Lunch	5 <i>The Holy Spirit</i> 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice	6 6:00pm-Adult Open Gym	7 6:15pm-Junior GOYA Mini Golf	8	9 9:00am-Day of Service	10 9:00am-Bible Study	
11 Sunday of All Saints Saint Nathanael 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	12	13 6:15pm-Parish Council	14 2:00pm-Baklava Assembly 6:15pm-Senior GOYA Mini Golf	15	16 7:00am-Men's Fellowship	17 9:00am-Bible Study	
	Vacation Church School ~ 8:45 a.m12:00 noon						
18 Second Sunday of Matthew <i>Father's Day</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 11:30am-Missions/Outreach	19 2:00pm-Baklava Assembly 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice	20 9:00am-Baklava Cut, clove, syrup 12:00noon-Senior Citizens 6:00pm-Adult Open Gym	21 9:00am-Baklava-Bake & Syrup 9:00am-"The Messenger" Mailing	22 6:30pm-Edina Koinonia 7:00pm-Stewardship Com.	23	24 Nativity of John the Bapti 9:00am-Bible Study 10:00am-Divine Liturgy	
25 Third Sunday of Matthew 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy after Liturgy-Harvest Pack	26 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice	27 6:00pm-Adult Open Gym	28	29 Saints Peter and Paul 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	30 Twelve Holy Apostles 9:30am-Divine Liturgy		