



THE MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2023

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Our 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



BLESSED + MERRY CHRISTMAS

Christmas Worship Schedule

Friday, December 22
6:00 p.m. – Nativity Royal Hours

Saturday, December 23
5:00 p.m. – Great Vespers

Sunday, December 24
8:30 a.m. – Orthros;
9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy;
4:00 p.m. – Vespers of Nativity

Monday, December 25
9:00 a.m. – Orthros;
10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy

Holy Theophany Worship Schedule

Thursday, January 4
6:00 p.m. – Theophany
Royal Hours

Friday, January 5
9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy
and Great Blessing of Waters

Saturday, January 6
9:00 a.m. – Orthros;
10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy
and Great Blessing of Waters

Our Life Together

Baptism

Theros

Parents: Christian Rieck and
Claire Nordquist

November 5, 2023

Kalista Mae

Parents: David and Jenna George
November 12, 2023

Deaths

Alexandra Deckas

October 17, 2023

Marion Zahhos

October 22, 2023

Our Sympathy

We extend sympathy to George and Kostas Kosmides on the passing of their sister Elpida Ragavanis on September 29, 2023, in New York. May her memory be eternal.

Fellowship and Study Groups

Edina Koinonia

Tuesday, December 6

6:00 p.m.

Fireside Room

Men's Fellowship

Friday, December 1, 7:00 a.m.

Joshua (Chapters 23-24)

Fireside Room

Friday, December 15, 7:00 a.m.

Psalm 14 (13 in the Septuagint ("LXX"))

Fireside Room

Saturday Bible Study

9:00 a.m.

December 2, 9, and 16

Fireside Room (and on ZOOM)

Women's Bible Study

Wednesday, December 6 and 20

11:30 a.m.

Fireside Room

Women's Book Club

Thursday, December 7, 6:30 p.m.

Terrace Room

Share YourShelf

December's recipient is

Community Emergency Service
(CES)

IMMEDIATE NEEDS:

pasta sauce, ground coffee, canned fruit (peaches, mixed fruit), Individually wrapped toothpaste, toothbrush, bar soap, razors, shampoo)

Sunday, December 3

Individually wrapped bars of soap

Sunday, December 10

Diapers (Size 5)

Sunday, December 17

Hygiene items

(Individually wrapped toothpaste, soap, shampoo, conditioner, razors)

Sunday, December 24

Individually wrapped toothbrushes

Sunday, December 31

Toothpaste

"Make us worthy, Lord, to serve those throughout the world who live and die in poverty or hunger. Give them, through our hands, this day their daily bread; and by our understanding love, give peace and joy. Amen."

~ Mother Teresa



Donate Online,
Visit the site, then
"Make Donation"

www.cesmn.org



Worship Schedule Weekend

Saturdays

Great Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

Sundays (live-streamed)

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.



Weekday

Monday, December 4

Saint Barbara

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, December 6

Saint Nicholas

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Friday, December 8

Holy Unction – 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 9

The Conception of the Theotokos

Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Friday, December 15

Saint Eleutherios

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, December 27

Saint Stephen

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Parish News & Events

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

Office Manager

David Mertesdorf

Communications & Marketing

Nikolas Kouzes

Finance

Michael Rakes

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 Psychogios

Sophia Rouman

Louis Tiggas

Year-end Giving

As we approach the end of both our calendar and fiscal year, it is important that the parish correctly records your stewardship gifts. Every dollar we receive before 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 28, will be recorded and reflected on your Contribution Statement as stewardship income for 2023. Electronic donations, via online giving or Venmo, must be made by Tuesday, December 26. Online contributions take 3-5 days to process. Contributions made after December 26 cannot be guaranteed of being recorded as a current year gift. Please plan ahead when making your year-end contributions.



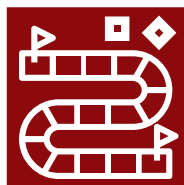
Greek Consulate General to Visit St. Mary's Sunday, December 10

The Greek Consulate General in Chicago will be with us at St. Mary's on Sunday, December 10. After Liturgy that morning, he will make a presentation in the Terrace Room regarding Greek citizenship and other consular matters. More information will be made available closer to the date.



Senior Citizens' Christmas Party Tuesday, December 12

Saint Mary's Seniors Christmas celebration will be held on Tuesday, December 12, 12:00 noon, in the Terrace Room. A delicious luncheon will be catered by Tony Nicklow. We will be entertained by the Edina Singing Seniors. Festivities will also include door prizes, group photo, cake from Queen of Cakes, and December birthday and anniversary celebrations. Flyers with further ticket price and information will be distributed to all Seniors members, or check at our Seniors table at church on Sundays for further details.



Orthodox Game League Saturday, January 20, 2024

The fun continues! The next gathering of the Orthodox Game League is Saturday, January 20, 2024, 6:00 p.m. at St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral Parish Center, 1701 Fifth Street NE, Minneapolis (across the street from the Cathedral). Bring a munchie or dessert to share. Please call Nikki Beauchamp with any Game League questions, 612.910.2943.

Parish News & Events

Update: St. Mary's Young Adult Ministry – Fueled by Telos

We would like to thank all those young adults who took the time to complete our recent survey. We were able to see some trends and use this information at the recent Telos Project Design Day in Chicago. This day is used to take the information gathered from each parish's young adults and make a customized plan for ways to implement the desired needs for each parish.

Three members of our new Telos Team attended the Design Day and came home full of excitement and ideas to further engage the young adults here at St. Mary's.

Our three areas of focus are:

- How might we help young adults prioritize spiritual based events?
- How might we communicate and encourage young adults to get involved in other existing church ministries?
- How might we create a mentorship program (to encourage intergenerational relationships)?



Follow our NEW Instagram account:
@St.Marys_GOC_YAM



Join our NEW What's App
Group Chat: St. Mary's Young
Adult Ministry

Come to Parish Night!



Wednesday, December 13

Parish Night is back for another year! It is a parish-wide event for kindergarteners through adults and occur monthly on a Wednesday from October through March.

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. This year's theme is "Understanding the Liturgy." This year's dates are: Wednesdays, December 13, January 10, February 21, and March 13. Everyone is welcome!

A Christmas Carol - The Musical



Now through December 17

Don't miss Ashland Productions' production of "A Christmas Carol, The Musical" this season. St.

Mary's chanter and choir member Seth Steidl will be playing the role of Ebenezer Scrooge. Ashland

Productions is located at 2100 White

Bear Avenue, Maplewood. Tickets may be purchased on the theater's website: ashlandproductions.org, or by calling 651.274.8020, option 1.



Pumpkin Bars to Support a Mission Priest

You can help subsidize an Orthodox Mission Priest serving in a far away land! Stop by the Missions and Outreach table after Liturgy for a pan of freshly baked pumpkin bars for only \$10.00. They will be available every Sunday at the Missions and Outreach table until December 20, or by special order from Terri Leckas, 612.710.0609. 100% of the proceeds go directly to OCMC's Support a Mission Priest Program!

Got Extra Orthodox Books?



The Little Library seems to be a big hit! People are taking books and pamphlets. We will need more books, so if you have some Orthodox books to donate, please bring them to the Philoptochos table after Sunday Liturgy or bring them to the church office during the week. Thank you.

Parish News & Events



Registration

Registration is Open!

January 12 – 15, 2024
at Camp Courage

Winter Camp is for kids grades 6 through 12. It will be held on January 12 – 15, 2024 at Camp Courage in Maple Lake, MN (note place change). This year's theme is, "Relentless, In our pursuit of faith, spiritual discipline, and seeking God." Use the registration link below to register online. **The deadline to register is December 30.**



Venmo
Payment

The cost for attendance, per student, is \$270. Payment can be made through Venmo or send a check to:

St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral
c/o Lisa Tucci
414 17th Ave
Minneapolis, MN 55413

For questions contact Matushka Lisa Tucci at 612.599.0814 or at lisatucci71@gmail.com



COLLEGE CONFERENCE 2023



Registration

Orthodox Christian College Conference Midwest

December 27 – 30,
St. Iakovos Retreat Center

Registration is open now for college students ages 18 – 25. There are scholarships offered by the National OCF. In addition to the needs-based scholarships from the National OCF, St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church will partially reimburse members or active attendees of our parish. Please first apply to the National OCF scholarship before requesting reimbursement from St. Mary's.



Scholarship

If you have any questions regarding reimbursement, please contact Fr. Jason at frjason@stmarysgoc.org



Φιλοξενία Philoxenia

Pronounced:
Fee-low-kSEN-NEEya

Meaning:

The ancient tradition of hospitality, an act of hospitableness and welcome, a love of strangers through generous hospitality.

Youth News & Events



Church School News

Sunday, December 3 — Book Fair

Saint Mary's Bookstore will have many children and teen books and gifts for everyone for sale on large carts outside of the Church School Hallway after Holy Communion. Find great gifts for your children, godchildren, grandchildren, or yourself for Christmas, name day gifts, or the upcoming Godparent Sunday!

Sunday, December 10

We will celebrate the feast day of St. Nicholas! Children: please bring a \$5.00-\$10.00 unwrapped toy. We will process in the Great Entrance and offer our gifts to St. Nicholas to donate to the children at FOCUS Minnesota. Also, remember to wear clean, no holey socks to church as we will put out our shoes to see if St. Nicholas will give us a gift!

Sunday, December 17

Christmas Program in the Nave at the end of Divine Liturgy (all classes). Check with your teachers for songs or parts.

Sunday, December 24 — No Class

Sunday, December 31 — Church School classes will meet.



DECEMBER 2023

Sunday, December 17 – 4:30 p.m.
Live Animal Nativity Scene
Meet at St. Stephen Church
1965 East County Road E White
Bear Lake, MN 55110

Please contact Fr. Jason to
RSVP or if you have questions:
frjason@stmarysgoc.org
612.401.0660



HOPE (K-grade 2)
JOY (grades 3-5)

Sunday, December 3

11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m.: HOPE/JOY Christmas Party in Youth Room. 'Tis the season for joy, laughter, and making memories with our church friends! Wear your ugly Christmas sweater and join us as we celebrate the Nativity. RSVP in Realm! This is a child drop-off event.

Wednesday, December 13

6:15-8:00 p.m.: HOPE/JOY at Parish Night. 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!

Youth News & Events



(grades 6-8)

Wednesday, December 6

6:15-8:00 p.m.: Junior GOYA Christmas Party in Terrace Room. 'Tis the season for joy, laughter, and making memories with our

church friends! Wear your ugly Christmas sweater and join us as we celebrate the Nativity. RSVP in Realm!

Wednesday, December 13

6:15-8:00 p.m.: Junior GOYA at Parish Night. 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!



(grades 9-12)

Date Change: Wednesday, December 13

6:15-8:00 p.m.: Senior GOYA at Parish Night. 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!

Date Change: Wednesday, December 20

6:15-8:00 p.m.: Senior GOYA Christmas Party in Terrace Room. 'Tis the season for joy, laughter, and making memories with our church friends! Wear your ugly Christmas sweater and join us as we celebrate the Nativity. RSVP in Realm!



Follow the GOYAns on Instagram
@St_Marys_GOYA

Youth Feedback

If you have any comments, suggestions, or concerns regarding our youth program(s) please let us know. We have a new 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.

Western Region Family Basketball Tournament and Practices

February 2-4, 2024

The Western Region Family Basketball Tournament is being hosted by Sts. Constantine & Helen in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, February 2-4, 2024. Your child must be at least 7 years old and no older than 12 before December 31, 2023, if they would like to participate in the JOY division. If your child is 12 years old on December 31, 2023, they have the option to play on the JOY team (co-ed), or on the Boys



GOYA/Girls GOYA. If your child is interested in participating in the tournament this year, scan the code and fill out the form. All players must purchase the weekend meal package and our parish will cover the cost of the team registrations.

JOY Practices: Co-ed ages 7-12

Sunday, December 10: 12:30-2:00
Sunday, December 17: 12:30-2:00
Sunday, January 7: 12:30-2:00
Sunday, January 14: 12:30-2:00
Sunday, January 21: 12:30-2:00

Girls' GOYA Practices: Ages 12-18 (High School)

Saturday, December 9: 12:30-2:15
Sunday, December 10: 2:00-3:30
Saturday, January 6: 12:30-2:15
Sunday, January 7: 2:00-3:30
Saturday, January 20: 12:30-2:15
Saturday, January 27: 12:30-2:15

Boys' GOYA Practices: Ages 12-18 (High School)

Sunday, December 3: 2:00-3:30
Saturday, December 9: 2:15-4:00
Sunday, December 17: 2:00-3:30
Saturday, January 6: 2:15-4:00
Saturday, January 20: 2:15-4:00
Sunday, January 21: 2:00-3:30
Saturday, January 27: 2:15-4:00

*All players and parents are expected to help take down the tables and chairs, whether you are practicing first or second. You can begin breaking down the tables and chairs after coffee hour (about 12:10 p.m.)

Philoptochos



December Meetings

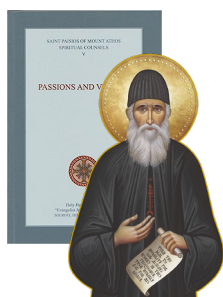
No Philoptochos meetings are planned in December. Watch for postings of the Advent activities in the church weekly bulletins and on the church website. Please sign up to volunteer at the Philoptochos table on Sundays.

Upcoming Activities

Help Decorate the Church for Christmas

December 1

Every year, we are blessed with festive volunteers who lovingly hang and arrange ornaments on our Christmas trees. Once again on Friday, December 1, volunteers are invited to meet in the Great Hall at 10:00 a.m. to decorate the Christmas trees. We estimate decorating will take until approximately 3:00 p.m. Volunteers are welcome for the entire day or part of the day.



Women's Book Club Discussion December 7

Join the Women's Book Club on Thursday, December 7, at 6:30 p.m. in the Terrace Room to recap *Passions and Virtues* by St. Paisios the Athonite. Following the discussion, we will enjoy a Lenten potluck supper. You may bring a Lenten-appropriate dish to share (fish is

allowed). Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend! New or renewed interest? Contact Katherine Boosalis (katherine@boosalis.net). (If you have declined a book club meeting invitation in the past, your email may have inadvertently been omitted in future invitations.)

Healing House Gifts for AHEPA Children's Christmas Party

December 16

Children from Healing House are invited to the AHEPA Christmas Party on December 16 at 11:00 a.m. At this festive event, they will wiggle through lunch as their anticipation grows for welcoming Santa and opening their gifts. If you purchased a gift for a child, drop off the wrapped gift on either Sunday, December 3 or 10 at the Philoptochos table.

Philoptochos Hosts Christmas Coffee Hour

December 25

We are looking for a family or persons to help serve coffee and cookies on Christmas morning after the Liturgy. All treats will be provided by Philoptochos. If you're interested, please contact Annette Legeros.

Vasilopita Pre-Sales

December 3 and 10

Vasilopita presales will be available on Sundays on December 3 and 10. The pickup date is scheduled for December 17 at the Philoptochos table during the social hour. You can still purchase Vasilopita on December 17, but preordering is encouraged. The cost per loaf will be communicated soon. Cash and checks will be accepted. Proceeds will be donated to Saint Basil Academy in New York. Their mission is to provide a safe and supportive environment where our children and young adults are nurtured to become healthy members of society with vision and hope.

Membership Drive Kicking Off in January

Membership in Philoptochos is a wonderful way to connect with the women in our parish community as well as supporting our local community at large through our Orthodox ministry. Watch for how you can join or renew your Philoptochos membership beginning in January! Our membership drive will run through March 2024.

Thank You

Thank you to everyone who helped with events that took place in November:

Prosforo Bakers — Thank you to all who helped bake bread this past month.

FOCUS Meal — Thank you Paulette Hastings and Mary Ellis for chairing the November meal at FOCUS. Thank you to all who cooked, baked and/or purchased portions of the meal to make it another success. We are blessed with such wonderful volunteers!

FOCUS Food, Blankets and Shoe Drive — Thank you to everyone who donated food, blankets and shoes for FOCUS. Donations will be accepted through December 11.

Nave Decorating — Thank you to the members of the newly formed young girl's group, St. Olympia Ministry, who joined us in preparing the nave for the Nativity Fast. Your help was very much appreciated in hanging drapes, setting up the advent candles and other details that make our nave beautiful.

Ministry Fair — Thank you to all the ladies that helped staff our Philoptochos table.

Fillo Sales — Thank you to **Andrea Tiggas** for chairing this event and all those that helped with the sales and distribution.

Wishing everyone a Blessed Advent, a Very Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year!

Missions & Outreach

Upcoming Harvest Pack Event!

Sunday, December 3 ~ After Divine Liturgy

St. Mary's Missions and Outreach Ministry again sponsoring a meal pack event in the Terrace Room after Liturgy. We can use everyone's help to pack 15,000 meals. This is an excellent way to begin the giving season by giving a little of your time so that those who are less fortunate might have something to eat this coming Christmas season.



Sign up today!

What a surprise for the St. Mary's Mixer!



This October Mixer had thirteen new to St. Mary's attendees. Yes, what a blessing to see thirteen new parishioners that had 'Come to See.' And a thank you to all

the Ambassadors who attended to warmly greet and share this time making each new person feel welcome.

The Mixer events are a more one-on-one way to get to know each other and move from seeing faces to making friends. What a feeling and privilege to feel more welcome at St. Mary's. The Mixers, also, are helpful to learn about volunteer opportunities for reaching out to help others, working and meeting other volunteers which can be helpful in our own personal life.

As our Clergy often tell us "every Sunday is Pascha." It is a joy to pray and worship with each other and each new person, couple, and family that are coming to Liturgy.

Follow-Up on Fundraiser



Your contributions were much appreciated and will be used to show new worshippers the value of attending a church. Your donations in support of the Jones Family were over \$2,600.00 for the church of Tonga. What a good feeling!

Simpson Housing Services Meal



A thank you to the St. Mary's Simpson House Team who created a warm and wonderful dinner for those who need a home at this moment in their lives. A 'thank you' to those who had a few moments to talked to the attendees. There was one volunteer who provided a very special emotional moment for one of the Simpson House attendees - this volunteer brought tears and hugs as she looked just like her grandmother! It turned out to be a wonderful moment as they talked about her deceased grandmother, a very important person that had been in her life.



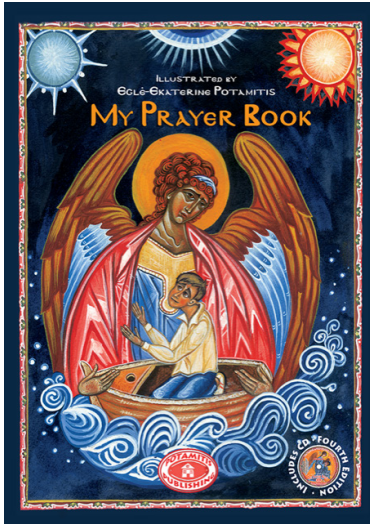
And look again to see the joyful, wonderful smiles of being a volunteer to cook, bring, and serve a meal. Also, do meet one very new to St. Mary's, tall volunteer, who would like to do this for each Simpson House meal that is served by St. Mary's team.

In the Bookstore

By Rebecca Myerly
bookstore@stmarysgoc.org

In the bookstore you will find a large selection of books, icons, and other items for your Christmas gift giving—gifts that are truly meaningful.

The two books featured below are “on the surface” books for children, but they are actually for people of all ages. They would be especially good gift choices for families with children.



My Prayer Book by Dionysios and Egle-Ekaterina Potamitis is an Orthodox Christian prayerbook presented for children but, as mentioned above, it is also for people of all ages. The book begins: “May this book help you find the way to the immense beauty of prayer to the true Triune God.” (6) **My Prayer Book** does this simply yet profoundly through the prayers presented and the beautiful

illustrations by Egle-Ekaterina which carefully teach the faith. (They had Demetrios Kokoris advise on the dogmatic accuracy of the illustrations.) Introducing the book, they explain:

Prayer is a way unique to man, the only way to communicate and enter in a personal relationship with God, His saints, and the Theotokos. Prayer fills our lives with matchless joy. It fills our soul and the world around us with peace and serenity. (10)

Prayers included in this book are Heavenly King; Lord, Have Mercy; The Trisagion; Glory to the Father; All-holy Trinity; and The Lord’s Prayer. These are followed by the Creed and many other prayers for before and after Holy Communion, different times of the day, before and after meals, hymns for feast days, and more. Each prayer is illustrated to inform and inspire. There is a second part to this book with explanations and some historical facts about the prayers. As a result, this book can be read as simply a prayer book while also being a resource for understanding and appreciating more about and in each prayer.



You Are an Orthodox Christian by Theofanis Sawabe with illustrations by Vladimir Ilievski begins:

You are an Orthodox Christian. Do you know what that means? When someone asks you, what will you tell them that we do? Who will you tell them that we are? Where will you tell them that we come from? (4-5)

These questions are followed by enlightening, clarifying, and encouraging answers, each well illustrated to also reveal more about the explanations. For example, together with this statement: “Orthodox Christians have been doctors, parents, teachers, soldiers, monastics, artists, cooks, and every job under the sun...and all of them worked to bring this faith, their faith, to you,” (12-13) there are illustrations of saints doing a ministry or service they were known for, each with halos that have their names written within them. In the appendix of the book there is a section telling about each of these saints with a brief biography and their feast day noted. As a result, this book can be read simply or in greater depth and detail, with much to ponder and discuss about each saint and how they lived their journey and glorified God. This is an inspiring book for each Orthodox Christian to know and appreciate that they are part of a great and eternal family of faith, firmly rooted in Christ and growing in grace.

For these and many other books and items, please visit the bookstore for your Christmas gift giving. If you aren’t sure about a gift idea, the bookstore also offers gift certificates.

Stewardship

St. 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 November 6, we have received **\$899,345** in Stewardship Income payments.

- This represents only 67% of this year's budget for ministries and operating expenses and is ahead by **\$68,528** when compared to where we were last year at this time.
- An additional **\$433,055** is needed by year-end to cover all our costs.



Although our deadline to have a pledge form completed has passed, we encourage everyone to complete a pledge form this year. The form is available online and also available at Church if you need one. Completing either the Pledge Form or the Time and Talent Form is required to be considered a "member in good standing" of St. Mary's and in order to vote at general assemblies. In addition, the Stewardship Appreciation Glendi is complimentary for all "members in good standing."

2023 Offering Income YTD vs Annual Budget

| Offering Income As of Nov 6 | 2023 YTD Actual | 2023 Annual Budget | YTD % of Budget | Additional Needed by December 31 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Payments Received | \$899,345 | \$1,332,400 | 67% | (\$433,055) |

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

| Offering Income As of Nov 6 | 2023 YTD Actual | 2022 YTD Actual | Increase vs. Prior Year |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Payments Received | \$899,345 | \$830,817 | \$68,528 |
| Average per Week | \$20,308 | \$18,760 | \$1,547 |
| Average per Month | \$88,171 | \$81,453 | \$6,718 |

2023 Pledge Forms Completed to Date

| Pledges To Date | # of Pledges | Pledges to Date | % of Budget |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 2023 | 349 | \$961,238 | 72.1% |
| 2022 | 154 | \$432,738 | 34.1% |
| Increase vs. Prior Year | 195 | \$528,500 | |

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. With gratitude,

—The St. Mary's Stewardship Committee

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

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit #3735

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**“The giver of every
good and perfect gift
has called upon us to
mimic Gods giving,
by grace, through
faith, and this is not
of ourselves.”**

Saint Nicholas of Myra

Saint Nikolas
is Commemorated on December 6



THE MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2023

The Messenger is published
monthly by Saint Mary's
Greek Orthodox Church.

PUBLICATION DEADLINES

The Messenger

First Sunday of each month

Sunday Bulletin

Preceding Thursday, 12:00 p.m.

CONTACT

3450 Irving Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55408
stmarysgoc@stmarysgoc.org
612.825.9595 | 612.825.9283 Fax

stmarysgoc.org



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 10.

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 17.

Join us for the annual...

Children's Christmas Party



*Santa's visit and keepsake photo,
caroling with Kally, entertainment,
and lunch highlight this special,
St. Mary's Community event,
Sponsored by AHEPA.*

Saturday, December 16th, 2023 11a.m.

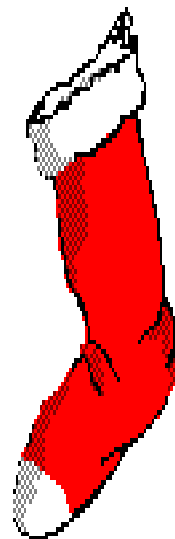
St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church

Terrace Room/Great Hall

All for just \$12 per child (free for children of Mpls AHEPA/Daughters of Penelope members)

In the spirit of the season please bring a food donation for local food shelves.

RSVP by December 9th to: AHEPA Attn: Mark Alevizos
3450 Irving Ave S
Minneapolis MN 55408



For information contact mark.alevizos@gmail.com or 612.990.4211 *Sponsored by Mpls AHEPA*

Parent's name(s) _____

Telephone _____

Email _____



Children's names:

Boy/Girl

Age
