



THE MESSENGER

JANUARY 2024

Inside This Issue

Bookstore	10
Missions and Outreach	9
Our Life Together.....	2
Parish News and Events.....	3
Philoptochos.....	8
Stewardship.....	11
Youth News	6
Worship Schedule	2

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

Happy New Year! Καλή Χρονιά!



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

Maxwell Evan

Parents: Trevor Arnold & Megan Caldbeck

November 19, 2023

Damian John

Parents: Angelo & Jennifer Demetriades

November 26, 2023

The Cash Family:

Brock, Christina, Milena, and Constantine

December 17, 2023

Deaths

John Koutsoukos

November 16, 2023

Margo Kosmas

November 16, 2023

Our Sympathy

We extend our sympathy the family of former St. Mary's member Maria Lamont Marshall (sister of Jeanne Jacobson) who passed away in Brainerd, Minnesota, on Thursday, November 9, 2023. May her memory be eternal.

We extend our sympathy to the family of former St. Mary's member James B. Tiggas (brother of St. Mary's parishioners Mark Tiggas, Joanne Tichy, and Gigi Daugherty), who passed away in Tucson, Arizona, on Monday, December 4. May his memory be eternal.

Fellowship and Study Groups

Men's Fellowship

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

Book of Judges (Chapter 1)

Fireside Room

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

Psalm 15 (14 in the Septuagint ("LXX"))

Fireside Room

Share YourShelf

January's recipient is

JOYCE UPTOWN FOOD SHELF

IMMEDIATE NEEDS:

Diapers and wipes, toothbrushes and toothpaste, Ramen Noodles

Sunday, January 7

Ramen Noodles

Sunday, January 14

Cereal (both hot and cold)

Sunday, January 21

Canned Meal – large cans
(e.g. Chili / Pork and Beans)

Sunday, January 28

Coffee and Tea

Almighty God, it is difficult to see children suffer, especially from hunger. We pray for You to give the hungry daily bread today (Matthew 6:11) and end their persistent hunger. Provide the food they need to grow and thrive. Pour out Your grace on hungry families, especially parents straining to feed their children despite dwindling resources.

www.joyceuptownfoodshelf.org



**Donate Online,
Visit the site, then
select "Donate"
in the navigation**

Saturday Bible Study

9:00 a.m.

January 13, 20, and 27

Fireside Room (and on Zoom)

Women's Bible Study

Wednesday, January 10 and 24

11:30 a.m.

Fireside Room

Koinonia

Thursday, January 25

6:30 p.m.

Fireside Room

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, January 1

Circumcision of Christ;

Saint Basil the Great;

New Year's Day

Orthros – 9:00 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, January 4

Theophany

Royal Hours – 6:00 p.m.

Friday, January 5

Eve of Theophany

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, January 6

Holy Theophany

Orthros – 9:00 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, January 17

Saint Anthony the Great

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, January 18

Saints Athanasios & Cyril

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Monday, January 22

Saint Timothy

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, January 25

Saint Gregory the Theologian

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, January 30

Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs

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 Directors

Jonathan Klein

Scott Rudquist

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

Grief Support Group

The Grief Support Group will continue monthly meetings in 2024. If you have experienced a loss and are looking for support with other Orthodox Christians, join us for Grief Explorations at St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church. This will be facilitated by Matushka Jenny Schroedel, a hospice chaplain specializing in grief support, along with Joni Snidarich. For the winter months we are planning a monthly drop in session with the hope of offering the six week series in the spring. No requirements to attend all of the monthly sessions, just attend when you can. Upcoming sessions are Tuesdays, January 23 and February 27, 2024, in the Fireside Room. Please RSVP to stmarysgriefgroup@gmail.com. You can also contact Joni with any questions, 612.910.0855.

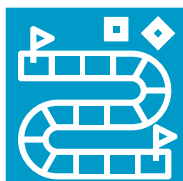


Registration

Intro to Orthodox Christianity Catechism Course

Beginning on Monday, January 22

The MEOCCA (Minnesota Eastern Orthodox Christian Clergy Association) catechism course, Intro to Orthodox Christianity will be starting next month. Classes will be held on Monday evenings from 7:00-9:00 p.m. starting January 22 and continuing through April 15. Catechism is open to all: People interested in learning more about Orthodox Christianity, inquirers, catechumens, and current Orthodox Christians as well. Learn more at www.meocca.org or register by using the code.



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.



Come to Parish Night!

Wednesday, January 10

Come on out for these parish-wide events that occur once a month, on a Wednesday. 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. The theme is "Understanding the Liturgy." The remaining dates are: Wednesdays, January 10, February 21, and March 13. Everyone of all ages are welcome!

Young Adult News & Events

St. Mary's Young Adult Ministries presents:

Divine Liturgy

THE GREATEST INVITATION



By Faithtree Resources

The Liturgy is the single most important thing we can do in our lives. There is no better use of time, energy, or focus! No matter where you are on your journey to know God in the Divine Liturgy, this course is for you!

4 SESSIONS: SHORT VIDEOS • ACTIVITIES • DISCUSSION

Facilitated by Cindy Karos
Chairman of the Board, Faithtree Resources

SESSION 1

Thursday, January 25, 2024
6:30 - 8:30 p.m. • Dinner provided

SESSION 2

Thursday, February 1, 2024
After participation in Festal Vesper at 6:00 p.m.
Dinner provided

SESSION 3

Thursday, February 15, 2024
6:30 - 8:30 p.m. • Dinner provided

SESSION 4

Thursday, February 29, 2024
6:30 - 8:30 p.m. • Dinner provided

At St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church, in the Terrace Room.



RSVP HERE

RSVP REQUIRED for session materials and food.



Register for the Annual YAL Conference

February 16–19, 2024 in Chicago

Registration is underway for the annual YAL conference open to young adults ages 18–35. Limited spots remain for the early registration pricing. There is also a need for sponsorship/donation to help keep conference ticket prices low. If you are interested in helping, use the code for registration and click on the support button or reach out to Sia Tortorelis at: yalchicagoconference@gmail.com



YAL Ball — Mark your Calendar

Saturday, January 13, 7:00-10:00 p.m.

Young adults, ages 18-35, are invited to join the Twin Cities YAL for our YAL Ball and dance the night away! The Ball will be held in the Terrace Room at St. Mary's. Tickets will be available soon. Watch for it in upcoming emails and on social media.



Follow our NEW Instagram account:
@St.Marys_GOC_YAM



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

Youth News & Events



Church School News

Godparent Sunday

Sunday, January 21

Invite your godparent or godchild to join you at Divine Liturgy and receive Holy Communion together. Godparents are invited to come to Church School class to see what the children are learning, play a game, have a treat, and perhaps tell stories from their baptismal day.



Greek Dance Practices Resume

Monday, January 29

All St. Mary's youth ages 6 to 19 are welcome to join our Greek Dance program which will resume in January. Classes will start Monday, January 29, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the Great Hall and continue on Monday evenings in February and March with final rehearsal on Saturday, March 23, 11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Our performance will be at the Greek Independence Day luncheon and program sponsored by the AHEPA and Daughters of Penelope on Sunday, March 24. We also welcome any adults who would like to assist with Greek dance instruction, as well, youth who play musical instruments, or can recite or read Greek and/or English poems and prose are also welcome to participate in this program. Contact Tessie Bourdamis (tbourdamis@comcast.net) by January 15 to register or for further schedule details.



Registration

Registration Ends December 30

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." Scan the code 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 Avenue NE
Minneapolis, MN 55413

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



THE GREEK CORNER

μετάνοια
Metanoia

Pronounced:

Meh-TAHN-EE-ya

Meaning:

Repentance; Denotes a change of mind, a reorientation, a fundamental transformation of outlook, of one's vision of the world and of oneself, and a new way of loving others and God.



ST. MARY'S FAITH PLAYGROUP

*Dear St. Mary's families,
join us for another
great season of fun,
fellowship, and faith.*

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

St. Mary's FAITH Playgroup is a
parent/child playgroup geared
towards families with children
ages birth through pre-K. It is
a wonderful way to meet other
young families at our parish.
Grandparents, caregivers, and
siblings welcome!



ST. MARY'S GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

3450 Irving Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55408
612.825.9595
www.stmarysgoc.org

2024 EVENT SCHEDULE



JANUARY 2024

Thursday, January 4

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. — Great Hall

10:15 - 11:00 a.m. — Terrace Room

Tuesday, January 16

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. — Great Hall

10:15 - 11:00 a.m. — Terrace Room

Saturday, January 27

10:00 - 11:30 a.m. — Great Hall (Open Gym Play Time)



FEBRUARY 2024

Saturday, February 24 — 10:00 a.m.

Model Railroad Museum (www.tcmrm.org)

668 Transfer Road Saint Paul.

RSVP with Fr. Jason



MARCH 2024

Thursday, March, 7

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. — Great Hall

10:15 - 11:00 a.m. — Terrace Room

Tuesday, March 19

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. — Great Hall

10:15 - 11:00 a.m. — Terrace Room

Saturday, March 30

10:00 - 11:30 a.m. — Great Hall (Open Gym Play Time)



APRIL 2024

Thursday, April 4

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. — Great Hall

10:15 - 11:00 a.m. — Terrace Room

Saturday, April 6

10:00 - 11:30 a.m. — Great Hall (Open Gym Play Time)



Tuesday, April 16

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. — Great Hall

10:15 - 11:00 a.m. — Terrace Room



MAY 2024

Saturday May 18 — 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.

Lake Harriet Trolley Station

4200 Queen Avenue, South, Minneapolis.

*Meet at the trolley station to ride the trolley, then
go for ice cream at the pavilion, and stick around at
playground if you like! RSVP with Fr. Jason*

Youth News & Events



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

Wednesday, January 10

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!

Saturday, January 20

12:30-2:00 p.m.: Ice Skating at Centennial Lakes. RSVP in Realm by January 18 if you would like to attend. Parents/Guardians are responsible for your child and welcome to join us! Bring your own skates! If you don't have any skates, 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 (\$10.00/rental).



(grades 6-8)

Wednesday, January 10

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!

Friday, January 12–Monday, January 15

Winter Camp at Camp Courage with St. Mary's OCA. See page 5 for more details!



(grades 9-12)

Wednesday, January 10

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!

Friday, January 12–Monday, January 15

Winter Camp at Camp Courage with St. Mary's OCA. See page 5 for more details!

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, January 7: 12:30-2:00 p.m.
Sunday, January 14: 12:30-2:00 p.m.
Sunday, January 21: 12:30-2:00 p.m.

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

Saturday, January 6: 12:30-2:15 p.m.
Sunday, January 7: 2:00-3:30 p.m.
Saturday, January 20: 12:30-2:15 p.m.
Saturday, January 27: 12:30-2:15 p.m.

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

Saturday, January 6: 2:15-4:00 p.m.
Saturday, January 20: 2:15-4:00 p.m.
Sunday, January 21: 2:00-3:30 p.m.
Saturday, January 27: 2:15-4:00 p.m.

*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.)



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.

Reflections on Family Camp 2023

Learning about the Christian Family through the Orthodox Camping Experience

Over the years families around Twin Cities gather together on the first weekend of October at Family Camp.

So, what is it about the camp experience that makes our families love it so much?

Certainly, many things contribute to it: friends, activities, the speaker, services, and being in the outdoors, to name a few. The thing that makes camp so special, however, is the camp environment, which presents a living experience of the Orthodox faith.

Family Camp transforms the lives of families and nurtures their faith in Jesus Christ through Orthodox Christian community living, worship, education, fellowship, and love.

Why do families attend?

To learn Christian living by doing it. It's the best way to learn. The best way to learn is by doing things. When you come to Family Camp, you get to do everything in a Christian fashion. You get to pray together, to learn new things, to listen to each other, and that means that you get to share your life experiences...We learn and sing church hymns, we have a good time at our meals, and we play games in the evening. The campers learn Who we worship and why we worship. Campers also learn how to pray and are encouraged to make it part of their morning and evening routine. It's great to be at camp. It's one of the greatest experiences that a family can have together.

Our camping programs have become a vital part of the spiritual growth of the families in the Midwest. Camp provides not only a place for them to learn about our faith but also to learn

how to live our faith. Without the support from the Orthodox Church, many of our families would not have had this experience.

The spiritual education at camp is always centered around a different curriculum each year; allowing adult campers to explore different theological concepts and lessons. It also provides well-rounded knowledge to help equip the young campers to live a richer spiritual life.

Family Camp offers a chance to have a great weekend together with your immediate family members and other Orthodox Christians. For children, they need to meet other Orthodox kids and create new friendships. The friendships you make at camp are essential to developing a full and healthy spiritual life.

But the best part of Family Camp is the FUN! Camp is for the camper! Activities and programs are designed to provide entertainment, excitement, and joyful memories for each camper, especially the campfire and the songs that we sing.

The memories that campers make during Family Camp are carried through their entire lives.

We are blessed to have this program for our families in the Twin Cities.

On behalf of each of our camp organizers, spiritual advisors, staff, and all the families who attend camp, we thank God for this blessed opportunity that we have.

The article was written by Fr. Mircea Vasiiu,
St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church

Philoptochos



Philoptochos would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year for 2023! God bless you and your families in the New Year.

Blessings are like friends who love and labor with us. Let's raise our

voices in praise and give thanks to the Lord so all Philoptochos friends can hear us.

January Meetings

Tuesday, January 9

Budget Committee Meeting, 6:00 p.m. (via Zoom)

Tuesday, January 16

Board Meeting – Fireside Room 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Tuesday, January 21

Philoptochos Meeting – Terrace Room, 11:45 a.m.

We will approve the budget for 2023.

Upcoming Activities

Cutting of the Vasilopita – Saturday, January 6

Vasilopita – Sunday, January 7

Every year, we are blessed with volunteers will cut Vasilopita for Sunday's distribution after Liturgy on Saturday, January 6, 11:00 a.m. Additionally, although the pre-sales have passed, a limited number of loaves will be available for purchase on January 7.

Proceeds go to St. Basil Academy. 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. The academy provides a loving Christian environment where resident children are nurtured to adulthood.

Undecorate the Church

We will “undecorate” the church and halls in early January, after Holy Theophany, and can use your assistance! Please stop by the Philoptochos table and sign up to help.

Membership Drive Begins

January is the start of our Philoptochos Membership Drive. Letters and instructions on how to sign up will be sent this month to all the women of our parish. The drive will conclude at the end of March.

Book Club

The Book Club will not meet in January. Watch for details for the next meeting on February 8! 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.)

Thank You

Healing House Gifts: Thank you to all who purchased a gift for the children and mothers of Healing House!

Christmas Decorating: Thank you all who volunteered their time and talent to decorate the church for the Christmas celebration!

FOCUS Blankets: Thank you everyone who made blankets for FOCUS! at our general meeting in December!



Missions & Outreach

Happy New Year, 2024!

Did year 2023 go by you so quickly? I cannot believe all the wonderfully good things that made the St. Mary's year go by so quickly. And more to come in 2024!



MCCL (Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life)

March for Life will be on Monday, January 22, 2024, with a 10:30 a.m. prayer service at the Cathedral

of Saint Paul in St. Paul. After the Prayer Service, we will march to the Minnesota State Capitol. The March is an annual reminder that over 60 million unborn tiny human lives have been lost. This caring reminder brings to light thoughts about respect and protection for all unborn children and their mothers. In previous years, the crowds have been made up of mostly younger people and a great many had signs: "I Regret Lost Fatherhood," "I Regret My Abortion," "Protect Life." Even though it may be cold out, this gathering is very, very touching. Photo from MCCL website, 2023.

Simpson Housing Services Meal



It felt good to be able to provide and serve meals to those who are without a home at this time in their life. The meals are a wonderful way to help and one volunteer especially would like to help with each meal St. Mary's serves at

Simpson House. Isn't it great to see the joy of being a volunteer to help with a meal?



Harvest Pack – Thank You!

First of all, it was so wonderful to see everyone - how delightful! There were two Harvest Pack events in 2023 and everyone felt grateful to help pack oatmeal meals to help with the food shelves. Many of those who helped, enjoyed helping on a "project" that one can have fun talking about while packing meals...15,000 meals (wow!). St. Mary's has become quite efficient in this process, "more sugar in aisle 3," "we need more oatmeal," "more bags," etc. What a



good way for new parishioners to get to know others in this smaller setting while helping those with food insecurity. Lastly, this past December 3, two boxes of the packed meals went right from St. Mary's to FOCUS House to help provide a healthy breakfast meal as our winter comes along. Thank you to all who helped set up, the 55 volunteers who helped pack, and those who helped clean up. To use an older cliché, "Awesome." The time went fast in meeting our goal of 15,000 meals in 90 minutes.

Mixers

What a blessing to see thirteen new St. Mary's attendees at October's Mixer. And a thank you to the Ambassadors who welcome newcomers with a more one-on-one way to get to know each other, "placing names with new faces" and learn about volunteer opportunities.

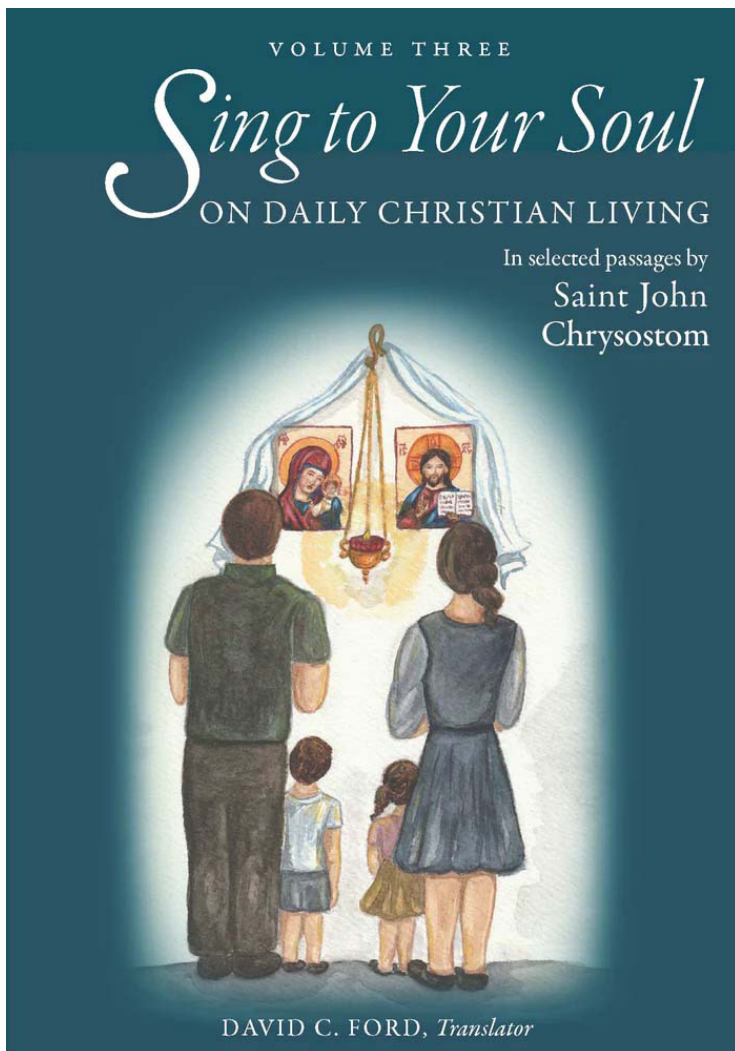
Follow-Up on Fundraiser

The 2023 fundraiser that you attended and helped with funds, will be bringing Orthodoxy to Tonga. Thank you for the 2023 gift to the Jones family helping to build this church.

In the Bookstore

By Rebecca Myerly

bookstore@stmarysgoc.org



Sing to Your Soul: On Daily Christian Living is the third volume of *A Festival of Wisdom for the Christian Life* in selected passages by Saint John Chrysostom. The passages were compiled, edited, and translated by David Ford. The reader is offered the wisdom and insight of one of the greatest and most beloved Church Fathers through passages that are so relevant they seem to be contemporary. In the biographical note included in the book, the editor writes:

Saint John Chrysostom (347-407) is renowned as one of the greatest Christian preachers in the history of the Church. He's equally respected as a great Biblical commentator. We see both of these remarkable talents displayed in the passages contained in this book. (226)

David Ford did superb work collating the passages so the reader is drawn from one to another almost seamlessly and often eagerly seeking more of the grace revealed in each one. The topics included are, in order of presentation: "The Home as a Little Church," "Knowing the Love of God for Us," "Dwelling in Christ," "Living a Life of Virtue," "On Repentance," "Prayer," "Our Love for God," "The Goodness and Power of Love," "Loving One's Enemies," "The Heavenly Perspective," "Apatheia," "Joy," "Humility," "Patience," "Bearing Tribulation Nobly," "Spiritual Warfare," "The Power of the Cross in Daily Life," "Dealing with Despondency," "Scripture Reading," "Hospitality," "Almsgiving," and "Preparation for Death."

Most of the passages in this book are extracts from sermons, Scripture commentaries, or letters St. John wrote, addressed to and for a very specific audience. Yet when he speaks or writes very specifically about a human condition, he is speaking or writing universally, hence the remarkable relevance to all anywhere in and of all ages.

Reading this book is like sitting at the feet of a very wise elder who clearly knows the human heart and gently, yet firmly, wants listeners to see—discern—and know Christ within them and also calling them through His word and their life experience. He is a master at helping the reader or listener put their life in an eternal perspective and live in the light of this awareness. For example, in a homily he explains:

Reading the Scriptures is like sifting through treasure. With treasure, if one finds even a tiny nugget he can gain for himself great wealth. Just so with the divine Scriptures, for even in a short phrase one can find a great depth of meaning, wealth beyond telling. (166)

Sing to Your Soul: On Daily Christian Living is an encouraging book. The subjects are most often presented in quite short passages for the benefit of the reader/listener. Remarkably, one does not feel preached to but invited to grow in insight, understanding, and appreciation for Christ in all and thru all. The awareness of the agape love that permeated Saint John Chrysostom comes through clearly in this book.



Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

In 2024, we are continuing our stewardship theme of "Ownership, Engagement and Generosity: Commit to St. Mary's." We thank the many parishioners who have already submitted their Time and Talent pledge forms for 2024. Thank you for committing to Christ and His Church!



COMMITMENT + 2024

Below is a beautiful testimony from one of our parishioners, Erline Holman, who shared her message following the Liturgy on November 5, 2023, and highlighted how Engagement at St. Mary's has been meaningful to her.

I was asked to speak about church engagement today. I learned about being involved in church from my parents. I grew up on a dairy farm in Wisconsin and attended a very small rural Lutheran parish. Church was the center of our family life. We were there for every service and event at the church, even working at the annual lutefisk supper. I learned that church is where friends become family. I met my husband Brad in high school and after we were married, we continued serving and working in the churches we attended. We moved to Rochester, MN in 1990. At that time, we were attending an evangelical church. It was through Brad that our journey to Orthodoxy began. Brad was adopted as an infant and was always told he was a lot of nationalities, including Greek. The possibility of being Greek always interested him especially growing up in a town where Norwegians were the dominant

nationality. In the early 2000's, Brad began a search for his biological family. He discovered his father was Greek and his mother was German. Brad became very interested in researching his Greek heritage. In 2002, he attended his first Divine Liturgy at Holy Anargyroi in Rochester. For Brad, it felt like coming home, and he was baptized and chrismated into the Orthodox Church in 2003. It took me a bit longer before I too became Orthodox. I was chrismated six years later in 2009. We continued our practice of being engaged in the church. We moved to Minneapolis six and half years ago. I have to say, attending our first service at St Mary's was very intimidating. It is a lot bigger than Holy Anargyroi. My first thought, when we sat down on that Sunday morning, was I wonder whose pew we are sitting in. When you come to a large church like St. Mary's, it is very easy to not get involved. You can come to church every Sunday, but never make an effort to become involved in anything else. It is not always easy to cultivate relationships during coffee hour. I think we were here for three weeks before someone actually sat down and talked to us. We were determined to make this our church home and become involved. So, what did we do? We started attending the Saturday morning Bible study where we met a wonderful group of people that quickly became friends. We volunteered at our first Greek festival. Working side by side is a great way to connect and meet new people. We were working with Elena Biessner, and she introduced us to everyone that was working, and when she found out I sang in choir at Holy Anargyroi, she invited me to join the choir. I met another group of people that I shared a love of music with. St. Mary's is large, but there are so many ways to get connected and stay engaged. Philoptochos, missions and outreach, men and women's Bible studies, game night, youth activities, book club, and Senior Citizens just to name a few. Just look at our newsletter for everything going on. All ways for us to make those connections. It is not always easy, and it may require you to step out of your comfort zone. But your faith will be enriched when your church family become your friends.

When you are engaged in your church, your relationship to Christ is also enhanced. St Mary's is our home, it is where we worship and serve. I challenge all of you, if you have not developed those kinds of relationships at church, find one activity to become involved in. Find something you are passionate about. Growth through relationships leads to a vibrant church.

—Erline Holman

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 December 4, we have received **\$961,786** in Stewardship Income payments.

- This represents only 72% of this year's budget for ministries and operating expenses and is ahead by **\$52,283** when compared to where we were last year at this time.
- An additional **\$370,614** is needed by year-end to cover all our costs.

2023 Offering Income YTD vs Annual Budget

Offering Income as of Dec 4	2023 YTD Actual	2023 Annual Budget	YTD % of Budget
Payments Received	\$961,786	\$1,332,400	72%
Additional Needed by December 31			
(\$370,614)			

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 Dec 4	2023 YTD Actual	2022 YTD Actual	Increase vs. Prior Year
Payments Received	\$961,786	\$909,503	\$52,283
Average per Week	\$19,919	\$18,836	\$1,083
Average per Month	\$86,421	\$81,723	\$4,698



Please take a moment to prayerfully complete a 2024 pledge form and return it to the church office as soon as possible. 2023 pledged members should have received their 2024 Stewardship packet. If you need a form, it is available online (scan the code), or contact the church office.

Please remember that to be considered a Steward in good standing for 2024, you must return your pledge forms to the church office by March 31.

2022, 2023, and 2024 Pledge Forms Completed to Date

Pledges To Date	# of Pledges	Pledges to Date	% of Budget
2024	123	\$490,421	
2023	351	\$962,313	72.2%
2022	154	\$432,738	34.1%
Increase vs. Prior Year	197	\$528,500	

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



“A tree is known by its fruit; a man by his deeds. A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love.”

Saint Basil

*Saint Basil the Great
is Commemorated
on January 1*



THE MESSENGER

JANUARY 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



@stmarysgoc

January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Circumcision of Christ Saint Basil the Great New Year's Day 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy <i>Church Office Closed</i>	2 6:00pm-Adult Open Gym Basketball	3	4 9:30am-FAITH Play Group 6:00pm-Theophany Royal Hours	5 Eve of Theophany 7:00am-Men's Fellowship 9:30am-Divine Liturgy and Great Blessing of Waters	6 Holy Theophany 9:00am-Orthros 10:00am-Divine Liturgy and Great Blessing of Waters 12:30pm-Girls' GOYA BBall 2:15pm-Boys' GOYA BBall
7 Synaxis of John the Baptist "The Messenger" Deadline 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 12:30am-JOY BBall 2:00am-Girls' GOYA BBall	8	9 6:00 p.m. -Philoptochos 6:15pm-Parish Council	10 11:00am-Intercessory Prayer 11:30am-Women's Bible Study 6:15pm-Parish Night	11	12 <i>Pan-Orthodox Winter Camp</i>	13 <i>Pan-Orthodox Winter Camp</i> 9:00am-Bible Study 5:00pm-Great Vespers
14 Leave-Taking of Theophany <i>Pan-Orthodox Winter Camp</i> 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 12:30pm-JOY BBall	15 <i>Pan-Orthodox Winter Camp</i>	16 9:30am-FAITH Play Group 6:00pm-Adult Open Gym Basketball 6:30pm-Philoptochos Board <i>Simpson House Dinner</i>	17 Saint Anthony the Great 9:00am-"The Messenger" Mailing 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	18 Saints Athanasios & Cyril 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 6:00pm-Telos Faithtree Liturgy Course	19 7:00am-Men's Fellowship	20 9:00am-Bible Study 12:30pm-Girls' GOYA BBall 12:30pm-HOPE/JOY Skating 2:15pm-Boys' GOYA BBall 5:00pm-Great Vespers 6:00pm-Game League at St. Mary's Cathedral
21 Twelfth Sunday of Luke Godparent Sunday Prayers for the Unborn 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 11:30am-Philoptochos Mtg. 11:30am-St. Olympia Event 11:45am-Missions/Outreach 12:30pm-JOY BBall 2:00pm-Boys' GOYA BBall	22 Saint Timothy 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	23 11:45 a.m. - Philoptochos 6:00pm-Adult Open Gym Basketball 6:30pm-Grief Support Group	24 11:00am-Intercessory Prayer 11:30am-Women's Bible Study	25 Saint Gregory the Theologian 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 6:30pm-Koinonia 7:00pm-Stewardship Com.	26	27 9:00am-Bible Study 9:30am-FAITH Play Group 12:30pm-Girls' GOYA BBall 2:15pm-Boys' GOYA BBall 5:00pm-Great Vespers
28 Fifteenth Sunday of Luke 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 11:30am-General Assembly	29 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice	30 Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 6:00pm-Adult Open Gym Basketball	31			