



**ST. MARY'S**  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

December 22, 2024  
*The Sunday Before Nativity*

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## THE DIVINE LITURGY

### *Commemoration*

Sunday before Nativity; Forefeast of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; Anastasia the Great Martyr; Chrysogonos, Theodota, Evodias, & Eutygianus, the Martyrs; The opening of the gates of the Great Church of God.

*Morning Gospel: Luke 24:1-12*

*Tone: First Tone*

### **Variable Hymns and Readings in the Liturgy**

#### *At the Second Antiphon*

Save us, O Son of God, who rose from the dead, save us who sing to you: Alleluia!

#### *At the Small Entrance*

#### **Resurrection Hymn, First Tone**

Although your tomb was sealed with a stone, O Savior, and your most pure body was guarded by the soldiers, you rose on the third day giving life to all the world.

Therefore, O giver of life, the powers of heaven praise you:

Glory to your resurrection, O Christ. Glory to your kingdom.

Glory to your saving wisdom, O only lover of mankind.

#### **Hymn of Entrance**

Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ. Save us, O Son of God, who rose from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

#### *Repeat the Resurrection Hymn, above*

#### **Hymn for the Preparation of the Nativity, First Tone**

Make ready, Bethlehem; O Eden, open to all. O Ephratha, prepare, for soon the Tree of Life will be brought forth from the Virgin in a cave. Like paradise itself, she will bear the fruit divine, and if we eat of it, we shall never die like Adam. For Christ is born, and by His birth, He will raise that image that fell so long ago.

#### **Hymn for the Sunday before the Nativity of the Lord, Second Tone**

How great is the power of faith. By faith three young men rejoice in flames as if in refreshing water, and Daniel in the lions' den is like a shepherd with his sheep.

Through their prayers, Christ our God, save our souls.

#### **Hymn of the Dormition of the Theotokos, First Tone**

In giving birth, you preserved your virginity, O Theotokos; in falling asleep you did not forsake the world. You passed over into life, O Mother of Life; and by your prayers you deliver our souls from death!

Ἐν τῇ γενήσει τὴν παρθενίαν ἐφύλαξας, ἐν τῇ κοιμήσει τὸν κόσμον οὐ κατέλιπες,  
En ti gennisi tin parthenian efilaxas en ti kimisi ton kosmon u katelipes,  
Θεοτόκε. Μετέστης πρὸς τὴν ζωὴν, μήτηρ ὑπάρχουσα τῆς ζωῆς, καὶ ταῖς πρεσβείαις  
Theotoke. Metestis pros tin zoin, mitir iparhusa tis zois, ke tes presvies  
ταῖς σαῖς λυτρομένη ἐκ θανάτου τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν.  
tes ses litrumeni ek thanatu tas psihās imon.

### **Kontakion of Preparation for the Birth of Christ, *Third Tone***

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 new-born babe and who is our God before all ages.

### ***Epistle*..... *Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40***

BRETHREN, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundation, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets - who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated - of whom the world was not worthy - wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

### ***Gospel*.....*Matthew 1:1-25***

The book of the Genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of

Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

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### **Litany for the Catechumens**

Deacon: Catechumens, pray to the Lord.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: Let us, the faithful, pray for the catechumens.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: That the Lord will have mercy on them.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: That He will teach them the word of truth.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: That He will reveal to them the gospel  
of righteousness.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: That He will unite them to His holy,  
catholic, and apostolic Church.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: Save them, have mercy on them, help them, and protect them, O God, by Your grace.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Deacon: Catechumens, bow your heads to the Lord.

**People: To You, O Lord.**

### **Prayer for the Catechumens**

Priest: Lord our God, Who dwells on high and watches over the humble, You sent forth Your only-begotten Son and God, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of the human race. Look down upon Your servants, the catechumens, who have inclined their necks to You, and grant them at a proper time the baptism of rebirth, the remission of sins, and the garment of incorruption. Unite them to Your holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and number them among Your chosen flock.

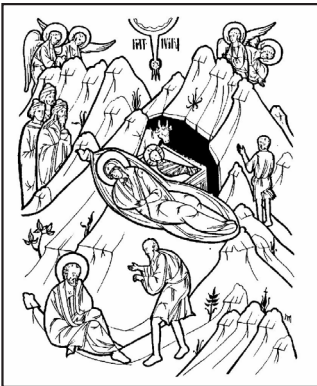
Priest: So that with us they also may glorify Your most honorable and majestic name, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

**People: Amen.**

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*The Communion Prayers are found on page 40 of the hymnal.*

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## **Christmas Week Worship Schedule**

**Monday, December 23**

Royal Hours – 6:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, December 24: Eve of Nativity**

Vesperal Divine Liturgy – 5:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, December 25: Holy Nativity**

Matins – 9:00 a.m. • Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

**Friday, December 27: Saint Stephen**

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

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# Today

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Prosforo is provided by **Cheryl Sioris**.

Our church school's Christmas program takes place in the nave today at the end of Liturgy.

The coffee hour today is hosted by **Saint Mary's Missions and Outreach Committee**.

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## Welcome visitors and guests!

Members of our Missions and Outreach Committee are at the welcome and information table in the Great Hall after Liturgy this morning to welcome you and answer your questions about St Mary's Greek Orthodox Church and the Orthodox faith. Join us for a cup of coffee and always enjoyable refreshments.

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## Announcements

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### Christmas Flowers Donations

Today is the final day to make a donation for Christmas flowers and decorations. These can be made in memory of departed loved ones. Drop your form and envelope with payment in the stewardship box.

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### Year-End Giving Notice

Electronic donations, via online giving or Venmo, **must be made by Friday, December 27**. Online contributions take 3-5 days to process. Contributions made after December 27 cannot be guaranteed of being recorded as a 2024 contribution. Please plan ahead when making your year-end contributions. Contributions placed in the offering tray on Sunday, December 29, will be credited as 2024 contributions.



### *Saint Mary's Digital Donation Options*

**Text to Give\***: Text **smgoc** to **73256** • **or Scan to Give**

*\*This number will never send unsolicited texts.*





## Visit the St. Mary's Bookstore

Please come visit the bookstore for truly meaningful Christmas gift giving. You will find a large selection of books, icons, and other items. If you don't know what specifically to give, gift certificates are also available.

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## Women's Book Club Book

The next book the Philoptochos Book Club will be reading and discussing is *Journey to Simplicity: The Life and Wisdom of Archimandrite Roman Braga* by Daniel Hinshaw. (In his later years, Father Roman was at Holy Dormition Monastery, where Mother Macrina is. For those new to St. Mary's, Mother Macrina is from our parish.) Copies are available in the bookstore.

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## Blood Drive

Saturday, January 25

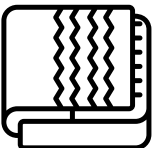
Hellenic Sons Squadron 129, Sons of the American Legion will host a blood Drive at St. Mary's on Saturday, January 25, 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Scan the QR code to sign-up or call MBC at 888.448.3253.



## FOCUS Clothing Needs

FOCUS continues to need men's winter clothing, including jackets, boots, warm socks, and gloves. The men's closet continues to need these essential articles of clothing. As we move further into winter, the need increases all the more. Please bring these needed items to church and place them by the FOCUS sign in the hallway leading to the office.

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## FOCUS Blanket Drive

The FOCUS blanket drive is for all types of NEW blankets, up to the size of a full bed. Roll it up and tie it with a ribbon. Put the blanket at the church FOCUS sign by the church school doors or take to FOCUS at 550 Rice Street, St. Paul. FOCUS clients will appreciate the warmth this winter.

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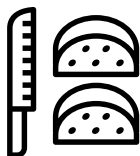
# Philoptochos News

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## **Vasilopita Sales Today**

Our Vasilopita bakers have baked our annual New Year's bread for 2025 and we are selling loaves every Sunday until January 12. Loaves are \$15 each on a first come first served basis...so buy them early!!



## **Vasilopita Cutters and Baggers Needed**

We are looking for ladies to help cut and bag Vasilopita bread on Saturday, January 11, at 10:00 a.m. We will be distributing the bread after Liturgy as well as to the Sunday School children on Sunday, January 12. Please sign up at the Philoptochos table in the Great Hall.



## **Our Little Orthodox Library Needs You in 2025**

We are looking for more volunteers in 2025 to help with the management of our Little Library outside the church. Sign up for a month, check it weekly, make sure it is stocked and that only Orthodox materials are there. Please stop by the Philoptochos table on Sundays to see how you can help. We would also love additional Orthodox books to help keep our stock full.



## **Volunteers Needed –**

### **Help Host Christmas Day Coffee Hour**

Philoptochos is looking for volunteers to help with coffee hour on Christmas morning following Liturgy. We need people to help, set up, serve, and clean up after. Treats will be provided. If you can help, please stop by the Philoptochos table to sign up.



## **Undecorating the Church – January 10 and 12**

Mark your calendar to help undecorate the church. Friday, January 10, at 11:00 a.m., we will undecorate the trees and take down wreaths, etc. On Sunday, January 12, after Sunday school, we will join the St. Olympia girls in undecorating the nave. Please sign up at the Philoptochos to help or contact Andrea Tiggas, [adtiggas@msn.com](mailto:adtiggas@msn.com) or 612.239.1522. Many hands make light work.

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# Philoptochos News

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## **Philoptochos Annual Membership Drive Begins in January!**

As in previous years, all women aged 18 and older will receive membership details at their home address. If your contact information has changed, please take a moment to reach out to David in the church office to update your phone number, email, and mailing address to ensure you receive the information needed to join or renew your membership. We are truly grateful for your support and dedication, which enables us to continue fulfilling the Philoptochos mission of faith, charity, and community service. Together, we can make a meaningful impact and carry on this vital work. Thank you for being an integral part of our mission!



*Scan to Register*

## **Winter Camp 2025**

*Made in the Image and Likeness: Seeking to understand our true self in Jesus Christ.*

Winter Camp is for kids in 6th-12th grades. It takes place Friday-Monday, January 17-20 at Friends at Camp Courage in Maple Lake, Minnesota. The cost is \$270. To register, visit: <https://bit.ly/registerwintercamp>. Registration deadline is **December 30**. There is a \$30 late payment fee. Or send a check to St. Mary's Cathedral, c/o Lisa Tucci 414 17th Avenue NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413 For more information, contact Matushka Lisa Tucci, [lisatucci71@gmail.com](mailto:lisatucci71@gmail.com) or 612.599.0814

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# YAL News

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## **YAL 2025 Board Application**

We are so excited for this next calendar year and would love to have you join our team! Please consider this ministry prayerfully and apply if you are interested. Positions and their descriptions can be found within the application. Feel free to contact us or speak to a current board member with any questions you may have about the application.





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## Prayer Ministry

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*Please remember the sick, the suffering, and those in need, especially:*

All victims of wars throughout the world; Our brothers and sisters living through the aftermath of disaster; For the victims of violence; Metro Hope Ministries; Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry; Families Moving Forward; FOCUS Minnesota; Our brothers and sisters serving in the Armed Forces throughout the world especially John Ellis and Jassir; San Miguel Del Lago Orphanage; Bryce, Lucy, Olivia, Erik, Sylvia, Pete, Maria, Karen, Steve A., Athena, Betty, Sean, Krisanne, Ann, Mark, Kostantinos & Georgia, Andreas, Jonathan, Jeanette, Mary, Ann, Marilyn, Donna, Dawn, Don, Nancy, Brad, Vangie, Jolene, Mikey, Aphrodite, James, Peter, Lyda, Owen, Michael, Johnny, Jaclyn Jereczek, Dena, Chris, Joy Rose, Nick, John, Demos and Eugenia, Ron, Matt, Laura, Susan, Elias, Constance, Marina, Dion, Annali, Sofia, Juan Cruz & family, Charlie, Stan, Helena, Byrdie, Jennifer, John S., Becky, Noel, Stephen, Alexey, Alexandra, Ray, Christina, Joanne, Charlie, Nuala, Pamela, Avgi, Elena, Speranta, Liz, Efstratia, Jordan, David, Nino, Joe, Donnarae, Samira, Mary K., Monte, Bethany, Mark, Owen, Chrysanthy, Estelle, Justine, Melissa, Megan, Lisa, Michael, Robbie, Judi, Evonne, James, Nichole, Constantine, Theodora, Irene Maria, Olivia, Lincoln, Carole, Patty, Karrisra, Corina, Tom, George R., Ken, Nancy and Tim, Olga, Peter, Cora and family, Bo, Lynn, Sue & Jim, Steve, Sue, Jane, Pat, Dave, Pam, Gilbert, George P., Danielle, Jenny, John L., Presvytera Janis, Sandra, Rick, Nancy, Alex, Eryn, Phil, Karen, Linda, Vicki, Bill, Diana, Doria, Mike, Stephanie, Tyler, Ben, Amy, Christy, Karen, Anastasia, Jamie, Alex and Alexander, Toni, Gina, Julie, R.J., Allie, Vickie, Petra, Bob, Joseph, Christopher, Elizabeth, Judi, Bodil, Ole, and others known to you.

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## Food Shelf Needs for December 29

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### *Toothpaste*

December's recipient is **Community Emergency Service**.

*Please do not bring opened packages. They will be discarded.*

# Calendar of the Week

## **Sunday, December 22: Sunday before Nativity**

8:30 a.m. – Matins; 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy  
*Church School Christmas Program*

## **Monday, December 23**

6:00 p.m. – Royal Hours

## **Tuesday, December 24: Eve of Nativity**

*Church Office closes at noon*  
5:00 p.m. – Vespers Divine Liturgy

## **Wednesday, December 25: Holy Nativity**

9:00 a.m. – Matins; 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy

## **Thursday, December 26**

*Church and Office closed*

## **Friday, December 27: Saint Stephen**

9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy

## **Saturday, December 28**

*Great Vespers will not be held this evening.*

## **Sunday, December 29: Sunday after Nativity**

8:30 a.m. – Matins; 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy  
4:30 p.m. – Boys' GOYA Basketball Practice, *Great Hall*  
6:00 p.m. – Senior GOYA Lock-In

## COMMITMENT + 2025



### **2025 Stewardship Pledges**

Thank you to everyone who has already completed a Time, Talent, and Financial Pledge Form for 2025. If you have not yet done so, please take a moment to prayerfully complete a 2025 pledge form and return it to the church office as soon as possible. If you need a form, scan the code or contact the church office. *Please remember that to be considered a Steward in good standing for 2025, you must return your pledge forms by March 31, 2025.*



## Seeking the Faith

*Just learning about Orthodoxy? Relatively new to Orthodoxy?* Please join us for our Seekers group in the Fireside Room. This is a chance to get together to learn more. Led by Presvytera Alexandra Houck. This class is a supplement—not a substitute—to our MEOCCA Catechism Course\* that meets at St. George Greek Orthodox Church.

### MEETING DATES

- January 19
- February 2
- February 23
- March 16
- April 6

*Meet in the Fireside Room, after Communion, about 10:45 to 11:15 a.m.*

### Topics will include:



Prayer life, how we read the Bible, various services of the Church, living the Church year/seasons of the Church, Church culture and etiquette, Lent, saints, icons, and building an Orthodox mindset.



**ST. MARY'S**  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

\*For the MEOCCA Catechism Course, visit: <https://meocca.org/our-faith/cooperative-catechism>

“God can do for me even that which is impossible in my own opinion.”

— *Saint John of Kronstadt*

## Daily Bible Readings

### *Monday, December 23*

I Timothy 5:1-10 • Mark 10:46-52

### *Tuesday, December 24: Eve of Nativity*

Hebrews 1:1-12 • Luke 2:1-20

### *Wednesday, December 25: Holy Nativity*

Galatians 4:4-7 • Matthew 2:1-12

### *Thursday, December 26*

*Hebrews 2:11-18* • Matthew 2:13-23

### *Friday, December 27: Saint Stephen*

Acts 6:8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60 • Matthew 21:33-42

### *Saturday, December 28*

I Timothy 6:11-16 • Matthew 12:15-21

### *Sunday, December 29: The Sunday After Nativity*

Galatians 1:11-19 • Luke 24:12-35



### **Saint Mary's Greek Orthodox Church**

3450 Irving Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408-3399

612.825.9595 | [stmarysgoc.org](http://stmarysgoc.org) | social: [@stmarysgoc](https://www.instagram.com/stmarysgoc)   

*Fr. Timothy Sas, Fr. Jason Houck, Fr. Paul Kalina, Deacon; Fr. Luke Twito, Deacon*

Weekly Bulletin Submissions to: [Communications@stmarysgoc.org](mailto:Communications@stmarysgoc.org)

Weekly Bulletin Submission Deadline: Mondays