



THE MESSENGER

FEBRUARY 2025

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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



“God, be merciful to me a sinner!”

Entering the Season of the Triodion: Preparing for Great Lent

This March, we are once again invited into a profound journey of spiritual renewal through Great Lent. This sacred time of fasting, prayer, and alms-giving is preceded by a three-week preparation designed to transition and guide us into a time where the depths of repentance and humility are experienced. During this time, the Church presents us with a rich tapestry of hymns, Gospel readings, and theological themes to prepare our minds and hearts for the Great Fast. Let us explore the significance of this preparatory period and its key Sundays, as well as the spiritual disciplines introduced through Meatfare and Cheesefare weeks.

The Sundays of the Triodion

This preparatory period of the Triodion, has come to refer to the Sundays before the start of Great Lent, but it actually encompasses the weeks prior to lent and lasts until Holy Saturday (70 days, or 10 weeks). This is because **Triodion** is the name of the liturgical book that is used during this time. The word literally means “three odes” in Greek and refers to the hymns that are sung during the Orthros services of this period. The period of the Triodion begins with four Sundays, each offering a unique spiritual lesson to shape our hearts and minds for the Lenten season:

(Continued on page 5)

Our Life Together

Baptisms

Joe Peshek
Demetrius Woolridge
December 21, 2024

Chrismations

Spencer Coop
Jassir Conway
December 21, 2024

Marriage

Bethany Wysocki to
Steven Gianakas
January 11, 2023

Deaths

William (Bo) Kozak
December 23, 2024

William Panos
January 4, 2025

May their memories be eternal.

Fellowship and Study Groups

Byzantine Chant Class
Tuesdays through February 25
6:30 p.m., Classroom #2

Koinonia
Thursday, February 20
6:30 p.m., Fireside Room

Men's Fellowship
Fridays, February 7 and 21
7:00 a.m., Fireside Room

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

Senior Citizens' Bible Study
Tuesdays February 4 and 18
11:00, Fireside Room and on Zoom
Topic: Epistle to Titus

Office Closure

The Church Office will be closed on Monday, February 17, in observance of Presidents' Day.

“Help others without any reason and give without the expectation of receiving anything in return.”

—Roy T. Bennett

Share YourShelf

February's recipient is
SIMPSON FOOD PANTRY

IMMEDIATE NEEDS:
Peanut Butter

Sunday, February 2
Canned Meal – large cans (e.g. chili / pork and beans)

Sunday, February 9
Peanut Butter

Sunday, February 16
Pancake Mix and Syrup

Sunday, February 23
Hygiene items (toothpaste, soap, shampoo, conditioner; razors)

www.simpsonfoodpantry.org



Donate Online
Visit the site, then
“Donate.”

Thank you...

The clergy and staff of St. Mary's wish to thank everyone for your cards and gifts shared with us this past Christmas season. Your thoughtfulness at this time and throughout the year is so much appreciated! May God bless you richly in 2025.

Weekend Worship Schedule

Saturdays
Great Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

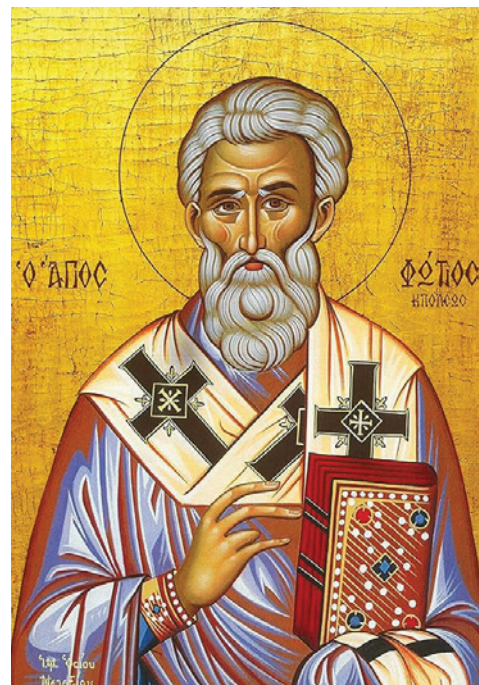
Sundays (live-streamed)
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Weekday Schedule

Thursday, February 6
Saint Photios
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Monday, February 10
Saint Haralambos
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, February 22
First Saturday of Souls
Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.



Previous issues of


THE MESSENGER
are available to view
on our website

VIEW NOW.  **SCAN THE CODE.**

www.stmarysgoc.org/resources/the-messenger/

Parish News & Events

St. Mary's Church Staff

Proistamenos

Fr. Timothy Sas

Associate Priest

Fr. Jason Houck

Deacons

Fr. Paul Kalina

Fr. Luke Twito

Office Manager

David Mertesdorf

Office Assistant

Giulia Chatfield

Communications & Marketing

Nikolas Kouzes

Finance

Michael Rakes

Ministry Support

Doria Saros

Youth Director

Scott Rudquist

Church School Director

Dena Tortorelis

Chanter

Joseph Karos

Choir Director

Emily Skoutelas

St. Mary's Parish Council

President

Nicholas Santrizos

Vice President

Louis Tiggas

Secretary

Elisabeth (Libby) Cheolis

Treasurer

Cristina Nicklow

Assistant Treasurer

Athena Mihas

Members

Benjamin Amundgaard

Alex Dascalos

Louis Ellis

Andrew Gatchell

Andrew LeRoy

Chris Menke

Sophia Rouman



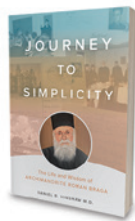
Coffee Hour Hosts Needed

Nearly all the Sundays in the next several months are open for coffee hour hosts. Do you enjoy the fellowship and refreshments after Sunday Liturgy? How about taking a Sunday to host? Get your family and friends together, or a ministry group you are a member of and share some favorite pastries with the parish. If you don't have time to bake or go shopping, call the office a week ahead and we'll place an order for cookies for you. The cost is about \$100.00 for enough cookies for a Sunday coffee hour (we provide the coffee). Contact the Church Office if you'd like to host or for more information.



Lenten Dinner Hosts

Our Lenten Wednesday dinner host slots are filling up for this year. Two dates remain: Wednesdays, March 26 and April 9. If your family or organization would like to host one of the evenings, please contact David in the Church Office.



In the Bookstore...

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. The Women's Book Club resumes book discussions on Tuesday, February 4, at 7:00 p.m., in the Fireside Room. This meeting will not be a potluck as earlier announced.



Annunciation/Greek Independence Day Sunday, March 23

Mark your calendar! Sunday, March 23, will be the date for the annual Annunciation/Greek Independence Day Celebration. A delightful program by the youth of our community featuring dancing, readings, and music will be performed. Don't miss this always popular event. Watch for further details.

Parish News & Events



OCMC Fundraiser

Thursday, February 6

The Twin Cities fundraiser support the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) will be held at St. Mary's on Thursday, February 6, beginning at 6:30 p.m. The evening will consist of dinner and a presentation. Details will be forthcoming, so hold the date!



St. Mary's Housekeeping Ministry

Thank you to all who checked the Church Detail Cleaning box on the stewardship time and talent form. We're getting a good crew together! At present, the group gets together about one morning per month to clean various portions of the church building. We hope to expand to offering a late afternoon/evening cleaning session as well for those who work during the day. We will keep you posted on future cleaning opportunities, and thank you all again for your interest.



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* that meets at St. George Greek Orthodox Church.

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.

MEETING DATES

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

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

POCM CHOIR PRESENTS

LET US
draw near
IN FAITH

A CONCERT OF LENTEN MUSIC

SATURDAY 7PM
FEB 22, 2025

FREE-WILL OFFERING TO BENEFIT FOCUS MN
ST MARY'S GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
3450 IRVING AVE S, MINNEAPOLIS



ST. MARY'S
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

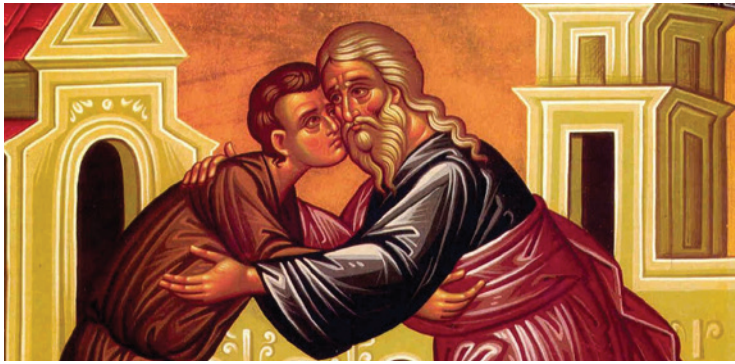
*For the MEOCCA catechism course, visit:
<https://meocca.org/our-faith/cooperative-catechism>

Entering the Season of the Triodion: Preparing for Great Lent

(Continued from page 1)

The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee February 9

This Sunday introduces the central theme of humility. In the parable (Luke 18:10-14), the Pharisee boasts of his religious observances, while the Publican humbly confesses his sins, praying, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” The Church teaches us that true righteousness is found in humility and repentance, not in self-righteousness or pride. This lesson sets the tone for the Lenten journey, reminding us to approach God with contrite hearts.



The Sunday of the Prodigal Son February 16

The parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) presents the theme of repentance and God’s boundless mercy. The younger son’s return to his father after a life of sin is a powerful image of our return to God through repentance. This Sunday assures us that no matter how far we stray, God awaits us with open arms, ready to forgive and restore us to His grace.

Judgment Sunday (Meatfare Sunday) February 23

On this day, the Gospel reading (Matthew 25:31-46) shifts our focus to the Final Judgment, emphasizing acts of love and mercy. Christ teaches that our salvation is intertwined with how we treat others, particularly “the least of these”—the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick, and the imprisoned. This reminder encourages us to practice tangible acts of charity and compassion as part of our preparation for Lent.

Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare Sunday) March 2

The final Sunday before Great Lent is dedicated to forgiveness. The Gospel reading (Matthew 6:14-21) exhorts us to forgive others so that God may forgive us. The Vespers of Forgiveness, held on this evening, is a moving service where the faithful seek and extend forgiveness to one another, symbolizing the mutual love and reconciliation necessary for our spiritual journey.

The Discipline of Preparation: Meatfare and Cheesefare Weeks

In addition to the spiritual themes of the Sundays, the Triodion introduces us to the physical discipline of fasting incrementally:

Meatfare Week

This is the last week when meat is permitted before Lent begins. It helps us transition from our regular eating habits to the stricter fasting of Lent. Meatfare Sunday, also known as the Sunday of the Last Judgment, reminds us to focus on eternal priorities and detach from earthly excesses.

Cheesefare Week

During this week, dairy products are allowed, but meat is no longer consumed. This gradual step helps us ease into the full Lenten fast. Cheesefare Sunday is a time to reflect on forgiveness and to prepare our bodies and spirits for the rigorous fasting and prayer ahead.

Embracing the Journey

The period of the Triodion is not merely a prelude to Great Lent but a spiritual treasure in its own right. Through the themes of humility, repentance, mercy, and forgiveness, the Church calls us to align our lives more closely with the Gospel. The fasting practices of Meatfare and Cheesefare weeks allow us to transition into a different way of living through more deliberate discipline and prepare us to embrace the full Lenten fast with gratitude and reverence.

As we enter this sacred season, let us heed the wisdom of the Church, opening our hearts to transformation and renewal. May the prayers, hymns, and lessons of the Triodion guide us on our path to Pascha, the Feast of Feasts, where we celebrate the ultimate triumph of Christ’s Resurrection and the fulfillment of God’s Covenant with mankind.

Philoptochos



Upcoming Activities

February Philoptochos Meetings

Tuesday, February 18, 6:30 p.m.
Board Meeting, Fireside Room

Sunday, February 23, 11:30 a.m.
Philoptochos Meeting, Terrace Room

Membership Drive Is Underway Now Through March 31

In January, all women of the parish received a letter inviting them to engage with Philoptochos as new or returning members. For 92 years, Philoptochos has served as the philanthropic arm of the church. At St. Mary's, our chapter actively supports local, national, international, and Orthodox charities, while coordinating numerous hands-on activities throughout the year. We also contribute to the parish by decorating for seasonal events, hosting Pan-Orthodox and community gatherings, and organizing the Festival bake sale. Visit our table during coffee hour on Sundays to learn more about Philoptochos, submit your membership form, or sign up to volunteer for upcoming activities. Membership dues are self-determined, with the first \$22 supporting our Metropolis and National Philoptochos, and the remainder directly benefiting our local chapter.

Women's Book Club

Tuesday, February 4, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

The book we will discuss is *Journey to Simplicity, The Life and Wisdom of Archimandrite Roman Braga* by Danielle B. Hinshaw, MD. Copies of this book are in stock in the bookstore now. New or renewed interest in joining the Women's Book Club? 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.)

Sweet Sunday

Sunday, February 9

Sweet Sunday is a cherished Philoptochos fundraiser where we host coffee hour after Liturgy and invite donations to support a charitable organization. Members are encouraged to volunteer and contribute baked goods or treats to fill our Sweet Sunday tables. Please sign up in advance for the treat you'd like to bring, and please wear red for the occasion! Stay tuned for upcoming church communications to learn more about this year's beneficiary. Thank you in advance for your kindness and support!

Sacred Baking Hands-On Workshops

One of the missions of Philoptochos is "to promote the Greek Orthodox Faith and traditions, in accordance with its doctrines, canons, discipline, divine worship, usages and customs." With that in

mind, we are pleased to announce two workshops to teach how to make the food that is integral to Orthodox services. If you'd like to learn how to make Koliva-Sitari or Prosforo, please join us for two separate events.

✦ Koliva-Sitari Workshop

Friday, February 21, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Save the date for Friday, February 21, if you are interested in our Koliva-Sitari making workshop. In this hands-on workshop, you'll create a koliva/memorial wheat tray. Koliva is boiled wheat combined with ingredients such as almonds, walnuts, pomegranate seeds, raisins, parsley, powdered sugar. Koliva is used during the first Saturday of Lent and the two Saturdays of Soul services prior to the start of Lent. Koliva is also used during memorial services. Participants, please bring a small bowl or tray. **RSVP to the Church Office by Tuesday, February 18**

✦ Prosforo (Communion Bread) Workshop

Tuesday, March 4, 5:00-9:00 p.m.

At this workshop we will make the bread used for Communion. You will learn the traditional techniques and significance behind crafting this holy bread. **RSVP to the Church Office by Tuesday, February 25**

Thank You...

- **Vasilopita** – Thank you to **Toni Bazakos** and her baking team for the wonderful Vasilopita! Also, thank you to **Cathy Forchas** and her team for cutting the Vasilopita.
- **Committee Chairs** – Thank you to all the committee chairs for their presentations at last month's general members' meeting on how our membership can be engaged in the Philoptochos' mission!
- **Women's Book Club Chairs** – Thank you to **Katherine Boosalis** and **Alexandria Kalina** for their work throughout the year.

*Time spent with Philoptochos will
change your life for the better.*

Watch for more postings of events in the parish weekly bulletins and sign up to attend!

Follow Saint Mary's Philoptochos on Social Media

 Facebook



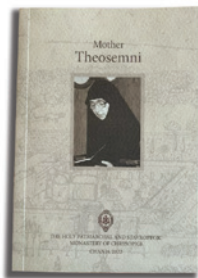
 Instagram



In the Bookstore

By Rebecca Myerly

bookstore@stmarysgoc.org



Mother Theosemni is a book from The Holy Patriarchal and Stavropegic Monastery of Chrysopigi (“Golden Fountain”) in Chania, Crete. It includes a brief biography of, testimonials about, and a collection of the words of the beloved Gerontissa of the monastery, Mother Theosemni.

Born in 1938 in Larissa, Greece, Mother Theosemni grew up there and was devoted to Christ and the Church from her youth. Her vocation to missionary service was evident early in her life. After graduating from the Red Cross Nursing Academy in Athens and working at various hospitals there, in 1966 she entered the Monastery of Saint Stephen in Meteora. The biographical note continues:

In 1976 she came to Chania along with two other sisters and, with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Irenaeus, she embarked on the restoration of the ruined Monastery of Chrysopigi. For twenty four years she worked silently with complete self-denial. Her spiritual presence and ascetic example inspired many young souls to devote themselves to the Bridegroom Christ and these souls she guided and formed in the Lord.

Ascetic, industrious and wise, the Gerontissa raised up from ruins and gave spiritual foundation to the Holy Monastery of Chrysopigi and its dependency the Holy Monastery of St Kyriaki.

Latterly, in her search for a more solitary environment for the community, she founded the Monastery of the Transfiguration on a high prominence above the Monastery of St Kyriaki.

During the years when she guided the community, Chrysopigi became a spiritual oasis for the town of Chania and the surrounding area. Gerontissa Theosemni was a source of light and hope, a staff and support for countless souls....People from near and far...all found peace and support in her wise words. All confided in her and found assurance in the presence of the peaceful and saintly Gerontissa who had the rare gift of combining a life of vigilance and prayer with missionary activity.

At the age of 48 she became very seriously ill with cancer and was miraculously healed through the prayers of the saintly Father Porphyrios (now Saint Porphyrios) who had a special love and regard for her. Her illness returned during the last four years of her life. She dealt with it with

great courage and steadfastness, with limitless patience and meekness and with a deep peace, carrying out her duties unfalteringly until her last breath....She fell sleep in the Lord on the 31st of May 2000 at the age of 62. (14-16)

Mother Theosemni was published one year after her passing. In the Introductory Note from Mother Theoxeni, who followed Mother Theosemni as the Abbess of the monastery, and the sisters in the community, they explain:

The major portion of this book comprises teachings of the blessed Gerontissa which were recorded during the last eighteen months of her life when, sensing that her end was near, she started to offer us more frequent words of guidance. (9)

Mother Theosemni’s words of spiritual guidance are treasures to receive in one’s mind and heart, words to be pondered with gratitude and growing awareness as their meaning is revealed and applied in one’s life. Three examples from just one page in **Mother Theosemni** are:

- *We should not expect things of others but rather always offer to them.
- *It is a terrible thing to fritter away the gifts of the soul. “If we love Christ and have Him within us, nothing else is required. (40)

Several testimonies about Mother Theosemni from people who knew her are included at the end of the book. They offer the reader insight into her person—a glimpse of her being—and her character. Professor Anestis Keselopoulos wrote:

She knew how to transfigure silence into peaceful words and words into eloquent and articulate silence. She taught more through her prayerful tranquility and the silence of her example. And even when on some occasion it was necessary to express her thoughts, every word she spoke possessed an authenticity because it was founded on her silence. (79)

Zoi Pliakou Nika keenly observed: “Acquaintance with her transformed the lives of those who came to know her as they strove to become better out of gratitude.” (82) Such is the potential, too, for the attentive reader of **Mother Theosemni**.

Please visit the bookstore for a large selection of books and icons and many other items for people of all ages. Gift certificates are available.

Children and Youth News



Church School News

Church school classes will meet each Sunday through February. The Triodion begins on Sunday, February 9, so make it a priority to come to church and church school. There is so much to learn through our discussions, crafts, and videos!



Parish Night Wednesday, February 12, 6:15-8:00 p.m.

A prayer service proceeds a meal and session on Feast Days. HOPE, JOY, Junior GOYA, Senior GOYA, and Adults are invited!



Valentine's Day Daycare February 14, 4:30-10:00 p.m.

Crafts, dinner, games, and a movie. Drop your children off for a fun night, so you and your spouse can spend Valentine's Day together.



Basketball Day Sunday, February 23, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Because we didn't send a HOPE/JOY basketball team to Libertyville, anyone between grades 1 and 5 is welcome to come play basketball and eat some pizza following coffee hour.



Valentine's Day Daycare February 14, 4:30-10:00 p.m.

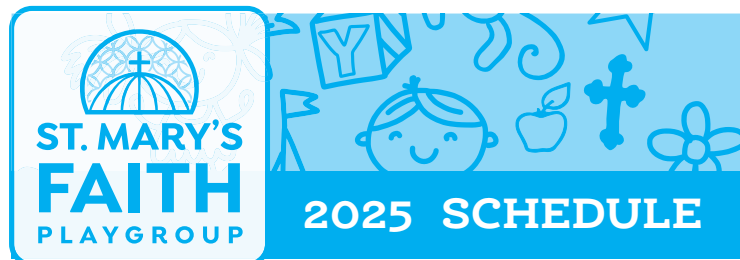
Crafts, dinner, games, and a movie. Drop your children off for a fun night, so you and your spouse can spend Valentine's Day together.



Valentine's Day Daycare February 14, 4:30-10:00 p.m.

Crafts, dinner, games, and a movie. Drop your children off for a fun night, so you and your spouse can spend Valentine's Day together.

Senior Goya will be helping to lead and run the events (games and activities) of the night.



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

Saturdays 10:00-11:30 a.m. in the Great Hall FEBRUARY 1, MARCH 15, APRIL 15

FAITH Playgroup is for children birth and their parents/guardians through pre-K. Meet us in the Great Hall for social and play time. FAITH Playgroup is a wonderful time to play in the gym and meet fellow parishioners. Caregivers, grandparents, and older siblings are welcome!

Please contact Lea Hoeft if you have questions:
Angelea.hoeft@gmail.com | 206.779.1354



Timberwolves Outing

The Timberwolves game scheduled for Friday, March 21, has been cancelled and will be rescheduled for another date. Watch the church communications for updates.

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.



Follow the GOYAns on Instagram
[@St_Marys_GOYA](https://www.instagram.com/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.

Stewardship



In 2025, 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 2025. Thank you for committing to Christ and His Church!



COMMITMENT + 2025

Below is a beautiful testimony from one of our parishioners, Emily Skoutelas, who shared her message of Stewardship following the Liturgy on November 17, 2024

Every year, around the same time, I feel a rush of anxiety. It's that time of year when we start to sign up our kids for their extracurricular activities. I have a date, bolded in my calendar - 12PM. Winter sport sign-up. I wait at my computer, and as the clock changes from 11:59 to 12:00pm, I click in, eager to sign up our kids for various activities which should 'enrich them, round them out, and keep them moving with the pack.' Heaven forbid they be left behind.

As I pondered on what to speak about today, this idea, which I believe we all encounter in one way or another, of keeping up, looking the part, knowing the things, and having the skills. I thought about the often times heavy weight of the pressure we feel to do, say, and be involved in the right thing.

Social media is no help, as we sign on with bated breath to see what our friends and often times people we don't even know are saying we need. Are saying we MUST have. What second home did they buy, what new shoes did they get? What new company has employed them? The list is endless. I myself struggle greatly with this need to keep up appearances. Especially now that I'm a mom, I see it translates strongly into how I think my own children are perceived. What sports do they play? What arts can they master? It's a great and relentless pressure. However, it's pressure we willingly and eagerly take on daily.

This got me thinking about the concept of a second home. Admittedly, it's a dream my husband and I have! To buy another space, preferably on the water someday. We discuss, how can we plan for this luxury? How can we budget accordingly? Or perhaps it's our children's education future? What great school will they attend, and how can we plan to make sure they can get there?

When I was a very new mom, John was maybe six months old, I met with a dear young Presbyteria in Chicago. And seeing how the world was changing from when I was a child, I asked her, 'Presbyteria - how are you able to keep your children in the church?' What she said to me really stuck. She told me that when your children walk into the building of the church and through the doors that enter into this sacred space of the sanctuary, they should feel like they are home. For all of us, too, but especially our children. They should walk through these doors and immediately relax, knowing they are surrounded in the best hospital, the best therapy room, and the best home they will ever know. This really stuck with me. Perry and I have tried to make it a goal for our children to feel this way.

In a world that is changing faster than we can keep up, I can already see the challenges our young kids will face. How we spend our time, energy and money speaks volumes to our kids.

The truth is, and I'm speaking from personal experience, the investments we make for ourselves and our children, often times doesn't make our church the priority. But when you think about it - the only thing that is guaranteed for any of us, is meeting Christ when he calls us home. No amount of baseball practice, ballet, skiing, new shoes or new homes, or new jobs could ever prepare us for this sacred meeting.

Truthfully, the ONLY valuable investment in our entire lives and in the lives of our children, is an investment in

Stewardship

our TRUE second home. Our church. This sacred space, this hospital where we come to receive sacraments, to worship, to meet our God, and to have fellowship with one another.

I have been very honored to now be employed by the church. I come in a few times a week, and although I've been attending church regularly my whole life, I never realized the amount of effort, time, sacrifice and love for Christ those who are employed by our church have. I see priests, deacons, administrative staff, youth, and volunteers who come together and work tirelessly to make our church a second home. This takes not only time and talent, it takes money, as well.

So I propose, that this year, we make a NEW date and time in our calendar. A date that will help serve as a reminder that in order to know our creator we have to come here. To this exact place. A reminder that here in this sanctuary, here in our second home is where we will meet Him. Here, in this spot is where we can prepare for that inevitable final meeting with our Lord. A reminder to make our beloved church a priority, knowing that it is the only investment we will ever make that will ever have any true valuable gains.

OWNERSHIP
ENGAGEMENT
GENEROSITY
MPLS

COMMITMENT + 2025

Need a new Time, Talent, and Financial Pledge Form? Scan the Code.

2025 Time and Talent Pledge Form
Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
Home: _____ Cell: _____

Ownership Opportunities

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Directors | <input type="checkbox"/> | Finance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Stewards | <input type="checkbox"/> | Human Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Trustees | <input type="checkbox"/> | Information Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Visitors | <input type="checkbox"/> | Legal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Youth | <input type="checkbox"/> | Marketing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Women | <input type="checkbox"/> | Music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Children | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Families | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Nurse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Elders | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Ministers | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Clergy | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Lay Ministers | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Hall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Deacons | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Kitchen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Pastors | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Priests | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Shop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Bishops | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Cafeteria |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Cardinals | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Gymnasium |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Popes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Office Building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Cardinals | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Office Building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Cardinals | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Office Building |

Engagement Opportunities

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Directors | <input type="checkbox"/> | Finance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Stewards | <input type="checkbox"/> | Human Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Trustees | <input type="checkbox"/> | Information Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Visitors | <input type="checkbox"/> | Legal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Youth | <input type="checkbox"/> | Marketing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Women | <input type="checkbox"/> | Music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Children | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Families | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Nurse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Elders | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Ministers | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Clergy | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Lay Ministers | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Hall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Deacons | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Kitchen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Pastors | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Priests | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Shop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Bishops | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Cafeteria |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Cardinals | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Gymnasium |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Cardinals | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Office Building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Board of Cardinals | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Office Building |

2025 Generosity Commitment

Amount: _____

Frequency: _____

Comments: _____

Saint Mary's Stewardship

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.**



St. Mary's Stewardship Campaign Update

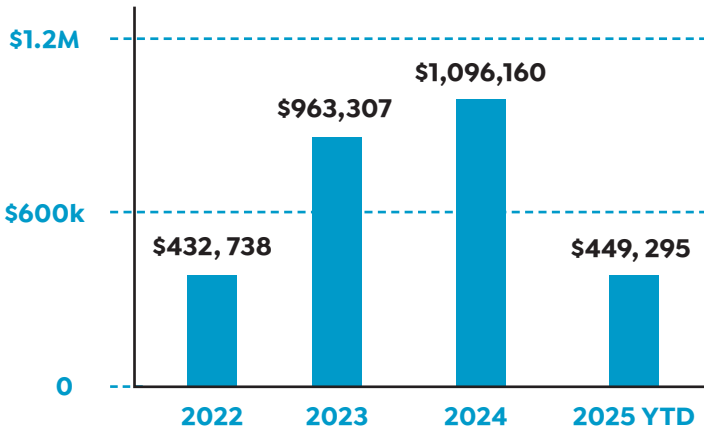
FEBRUARY 2025

Stewardship Pledge Forms Completed

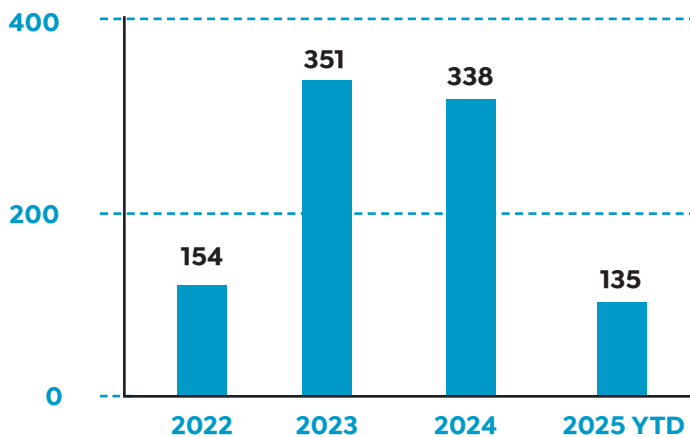
Thank you to all parishioners that completed a financial commitment form in 2024 and that have already completed and submitted a pledge form for 2025. Below is a summary of the number of pledges and dollar amount of pledges received in 2022, 2024, 2024 and year to date for 2025.

| Pledges | # of Pledges | Pledges Total | % of Budget |
|----------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 2025 YTD | 135 | \$449,295 | 29.9% |
| 2024 | 338 | \$1,096,160 | 73.7% |
| 2023 | 351 | \$963,307 | 72.2% |
| 2022 | 154 | \$432,738 | 34.1% |

Pledges 2022 to 2025 Year-to-Date (YTD)



Number of Pledges 2022 to 2025



2024 Offering Income Summary (Preliminary Actual)

Below is a summary of actual offering payments received in 2024 (both pledge payments and non-pledge offering). Note: These are preliminary numbers. The 2024 financials are not yet finalized.

| Offering Income | 2024 Actual | 2024 Goal | YTD % of Budget |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Pledge Payments | \$1,158,985 | | |
| Non-Pledge Offering | \$200,005 | | |
| Other Offering* | \$76,815 | | |
| TOTAL | \$1,435,805 | \$1,486,537 | 96.6% |

*Christmas, Easter, Dormition, Candles, etc.

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

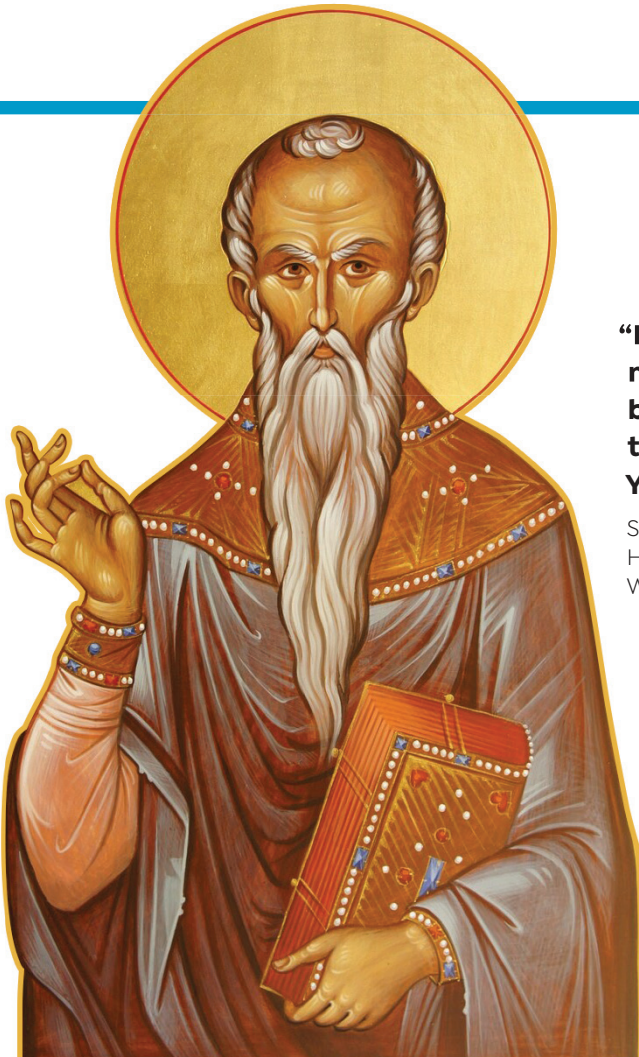
With gratitude,

—The St. Mary's Stewardship Committee

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

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**“Lord, You know that
men are flesh and
blood; forgive them
their sins and pour out
Your blessing on all.”**

Saint Haralambos the
Hieromartyr and Miracle-
Worker

*Saint Haralambos is
Commemorated on
February 10*



THE MESSENGER

FEBRUARY 2025

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

PUBLICATION DEADLINES

The Messenger

First Sunday of each month

Sunday Bulletin

Preceding Monday, 4:00 p.m.

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stmarysgoc.org



February 2025

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | 1 9:00am-Bible Study 5:00pm-Great Vespers |
| 2 Presentation of Our Lord "The Messenger" Deadline 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 10:45am-Seekers' Class after Liturgy-Newcomers/ Ambassador' Brunch | 3 | 4 11:00am-Seniors' Bible Study 6:30pm-Byzantine Chant Class 7:00pm-Women's Book Club | 5 6:15pm-Choir Rehearsal | 6 Saint Photios 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 6:30pm-OCMC Fundraiser at St. Mary's | 7 7:00am-Men's Fellowship | 8 9:00am-Bible Study 10:00am-FAITH Play Group 5:00pm-Great Vespers |
| 9 Publican and Pharisee Triodion Begins 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy <i>Philoptochos Sweet Sunday</i> 11:30am-Koinonia Leaders | 10 Saint Haralambos 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice | 11 12:00noon-Senior Citizens' Valentine Party 6:15pm-Parish Council 6:30pm-Byzantine Chant Class | 12 6:15pm-Parish Night 6:15pm-Choir Rehearsal | 13 | 14 4:00-10:00pm- Youth Valentine Daycare | 15 9:00am-Bible Study 5:00pm-Great Vespers |
| 16 The Prodigal Son 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy | 17 Presidents' Day <i>Church and Office Closed</i> 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice | 18 11:00am-Seniors' Bible Study 6:30pm-Byzantine Chant Class 6:30pm-Philoptochos Board | 19 9:00am-"The Messenger" Mailing 6:15pm-Choir Rehearsal | 20 6:30pm-Koinonia | 21 7:00am-Men's Fellowship 6:00pm-Kollyva Workshop | 22 Saturday of Souls 9:00am-Bible Study 5:00pm-Great Vespers 6:15pm-FOCUS Benefit Concert |
| 23 Judgment (Meatfare) Sunday 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 10:45am-Seekers' Class after Liturgy-Philoptochos Meeting 12:30pm-HOPE/JOY Basketball Day | 24 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice | 25 6:30pm-Byzantine Chant Class | 26 6:15pm-Choir Rehearsal | 27 7:00pm-Stewardship Com. | 28 | |