



THE MESSENGER

JUNE 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



METROPOLIS
OF CHICAGO



My Paschal Reflection

By David Rist

Wiping, wiping, and wiping again. The beautiful Altar Gates had weathered another year of sacred incense and settled dust. A timely task to fill an hour of Lenten contemplation.

I remembered a TV commercial about a cleaning spray with scrubbing bubbles. Busy little bubbles making ease of daunting cleaning work. These could come in handy if we were trying to rush onto our next moments of the day. Would the circles of the doors accept those intense smiling faced bubbles? Not today, simple vinegar, water, and repetitious wiping with rotating cloths were all we needed. My mind was immersed in thoughts.

These wonderful circles have opened to me so many times the beauty of our Holy Church's various services. Since 2013, I along side my loving wife Julie, have been blessed by the opening of these gates. I have seen these circles so many times, but as I wiped away the tarnish of the year, it became clear to me that the circles are all connected, welded to one another in a bond unbroken. Positioned to open and reveal the light of the Holy Word.

Wow. So many of you are connected with each other and with me, in fact the whole Body of our Orthodox Church is bonded in connection. Some of us more intertwined together, and others simply just on the surface with warm greetings, hugs, and handshakes while we Pray and Celebrate together. I know the circles on these gates may have many different meanings, and that is for good reason. All of us have our own pathway to God. I am just thankful I am connected to *all of you!*

The services this season have edified me and solidified in my soul a feverish love for Saint Mary's. Continuing on my pathway right alongside and connected to all of you, I thank you for holding me and bonding to me. May God have mercy on me and on all of us.

Truly He is Risen!
With brotherly love, David

Our Life Together

Baptisms

Marko

Parents:

**Aleksander & Jessica
Knezevich**

May 4, 2025

Phoebe

Parents:

Cooper & Jessica Buss

May 10, 2025

Anthony

Parents:

Fotis & Anna Bazakos

May 11, 2025

Deaths

Demos Hadjiyanis

April 9, 2025

Dena Karigan

April 15, 2025

Memorial Prayers

June 15

Patricia Pollnow

(5 years)

June 22

Christopher (Kalju) Kubits

(1 year)

Study Groups

Koinonia

Thursday, June 19

6:30 p.m., Fireside Room

Men's Fellowship

Fridays, June 6 and 20

7:00 a.m., Fireside Room

Senior Citizens' Bible Study

Tuesdays, June 3 and 24

11:30 a.m., Fireside Room



MATTHEW 5:14-16

Share YourShelf

June's recipient is

SIMPSON FOOD PANTRY

IMMEDIATE NEEDS:

Peanut Butter

Sunday, June 1

Canned Meal – large cans

(e.g., Chili / Pork and Beans)

Sunday, June 8

Peanut Butter

Sunday, June 15

Cereal (hot and cold)

Sunday, June 22

Hygiene items (toothpaste, soap,
shampoo, conditioner)

Sunday, June 29

Creamettes / egg noodles / spaghetti

If you pour yourself out for
the hungry and satisfy the
desire of the afflicted, then
shall your light rise in the
darkness and your gloom be
as the noonday.
~ Isaiah 58:10

www.simpsonfoodpantry.org



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"Donate."

Previous issues of



THE MESSENGER

are available to view
on our website

VIEW NOW.



SCAN THE CODE.

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

Worship Schedule

Weekly Saturday Great Vespers is on
break through the summer. Vespers
will be held the evening prior to major
feast days.

Sundays (live-streamed)

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, June 7:

Saturday of Souls

10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy

5:00 p.m. – Great Vespers
for Pentecost

HOLY PENTECOST IS SUNDAY, JUNE 8.



Sunday, June 8:

Holy Pentecost/

Eve of the Holy Spirit

5:00 p.m. – Great Vespers for
Monday of the Holy Spirit

Monday, June 9:

The Holy Spirit

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, June 11:

Saint Nathanael (Bartholomew)

Our Metropolitan's Name Day

9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, June 24:

Nativity of John the Baptist

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Monday, June 30:

Synaxis of the Holy Apostles

No Divine Liturgy due
to Summer Camp.

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 Mihos

Members

Benjamin Amundgaard

Jennifer Coin

Alex Dascalos

Louis Ellis

Andrew Gatchell

Andrew LeRoy

Sophia Rouman

Thank You to All Our Cleaners!

The Lazarus Saturday crew cleaned and polished the furniture in the nave and made preparations for Palm Sunday and Holy Week. Our housekeeping ministry picked up after Pascha by carefully removing all the wax that dripped on the pews as well as always keeping our common areas cleaned. Thank you to everyone!



Coffee Hour Hosts Needed

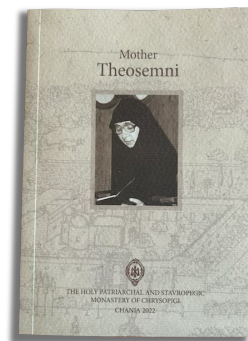
We again have a number of Sundays that hosts are needed for coffee hour. The Sundays available are: **June 1, 15, and 29; August 10, 24, and 31.** If you would like to host a Sunday, please contact the Church Office to get on the schedule. Also, contact the office if you have questions about hosting.



Senior Citizens' Meeting

Tuesday, June 10

Our St. Mary's Senior Citizens will meet on Tuesday, June 10, at noon in the Terrace Room. We will celebrate all June birthdays and anniversaries with a group photo of the celebrants, a delicious luncheon, and a gourmet cake by Terri Leckas. Our program will feature Author Peter Georgas who will speak about his latest book entitled "Destiny, Kismet, Karma, Fate: A True Love Story." All Seniors (55+) of St. Mary's are welcome to join our lively group. Dues are currently \$15.00. For further information, please contact President Tessie Bourdamis or any current officer.



Women's Book Club Discussion

Thursday, June 12

Our next book club discussion is on Thursday, June 12, beginning at 6:30 p.m., in the Fireside Room, and the chosen book will be **Mother Theosemni**. 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.)



Additional Paschal Reflection

Parishioner Ben Wehr assembled a mix of photos and videos taken during Holy Week and Pascha at St. Mary's. The images are presented in chronological order and feature the beautiful voices of our choir and chanters.

WATCH THE VIDEO. SCAN THE CODE.



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

Jennifer Coin

Alex Dascalos

Louis Ellis

Andrew Gatchell

Andrew LeRoy

Sophia Rouman

COUNCIL CORNER

First, a special "thank you" to...

- **Chris and Dena Angelos Family** for hosting the Anasti Meal after Pascha services. The meal was delicious and enjoyed by all after our Lenten Fast.
- **Christine Buss and Lani McCollar** for re-starting and orchestrating our Koinonia ministry and for the following host groups: **Brad & Erline Holman, Karl & Heather Koutroupas, George & Connie Kouzes, Tia Muchulas, and Justin & Kyrsten Theodotou.** Diana and I also hosted a group and felt we gained a deeper understanding of the nine Epistle and Gospel lessons we discussed, had thoughtful conversations on the readings and how we relate to them in our daily lives, and made really nice connections with the 15 other members in our group. I encourage all to consider joining this ministry.

Spring Parish Assembly Re-cap

We invite all parishioners to join us at future Parish Assemblies. Our conversations deliver added details (and are more spirited!) than what we can share here. For those that could not attend the May 4 Assembly, the PC and Parish discussed the following orders of business:

- 2024 Financial Review - **Athena Mihas** shared that Ministries and Operations ended 2024 with a modest net loss of \$66,000. This will be covered by transfers of the income generated by rentals from the On-Campus Facility and the "Yellow House" and \$12,000 from the Greek Festival, which gives us approximately \$118,000 of Festival income to be used to fund various buildings and grounds projects for our church. Athena also shared that year-to-date, while the number of stewards for the church has declined slightly (325 vs 338 last year), 71 parishioners paid more than their pledged amount in 2024 and total payments are outracing our pledges by over \$175,000 so far this year. Thank you for your continued commitment and generous support of St. Mary's!
- Board of Elections - **Lou Pappas, Jim Geogleris, and Dean Murdakes** will serve another year on our Board of Elections and look forward to receiving the applications for many candidates to the PC this fall.
- Security Committee - **Louis Tiggas** outlined the plan for church security with a review of the eight operational functions of security: cyber, personal, notifications, fire alarm, parking lot, insurance, building and events. Please reach out to Lou if you would like to participate in this critical work.
- Buildings and Grounds - Summer will be busy with projects happening throughout our church and grounds. This will include starting work on the four restrooms on our south side, adding new sporting equipment and refurbishing the floor in the Great Hall, and repairing the retaining wall structure. Be sure to check the bulletin board for pictures of the progress.

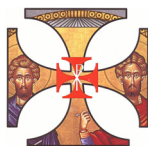
As summer progresses, we will continue the efforts to enhance our many valuable ministries which will include plans for formally welcoming and nurturing new members and catechumens to St. Mary's and the Orthodox Faith.

Yours in Christ,

Nick Santrizos

St. Mary's Parish Council President

viewfromthepew@stmarysgoc.org



Philoptochos Meetings

Philoptochos Board and General Membership meetings will resume in the fall! Watch for communications soon!

Taste of Greece Festival Baking: Baklava – All Welcome!

June 3, 9 and 11

Let's make sure no one misses out on baklava this year! Last year we sold out of baklava on Saturday, so to make sure we have enough for the entire weekend this year, we're baking even more — and we need your helping hands! We invite you to join us in assembling, cutting, cloving, and syruping this festival favorite...All are welcome! Remember that many hands make light work! To sign up, visit our table after church or scan the QR code below for the following dates:

- June 3: Assembly
- June 9: Assembly
- June 11: Cut, clove, and bake



SCAN THE CODE TO SIGN UP

Service Day

Thursday, June 5

Join for a day of service in the Terrace Room to sew simple items for various items for organizations like Tandem Family Resource Center and general health care centers. NO NEED TO KNOW HOW TO SEW to attend! We'll have plenty of needs for ironing and cutting, so all are welcome! Come for an hour, two hours or whatever works for you! If you plan to attend, please bring a pair of scissors, or if you are a sewer, bring your sewing machine or serger. Donations of new or gently used hand towels to sew baby bibs are welcomed!

Women's Book Club Discussion

Thursday, June 12

See note on Parish News page.

Clean Philoptochos Refrigerator

We're still looking for volunteers to take on Refrigerator Duty once a month! Our monthly fridge cleanup is quick, clean, and surprisingly satisfying—bonus points if you discover a mystery container! It only takes about 15 minutes on the last Sunday of the month to keep the Philoptochos fridge fresh, organized, and ready for all the good work we do. The task is simple: toss expired items, wipe up any spills, and make sure everything is in order. A tidy fridge means fewer surprises and more room for what really matters—feeding others with love. You can find the sign-up sheet on the refrigerator.

Sunday Table Coverage Reminder

We ask for your assistance in ensuring that the Philoptochos table remains staffed after liturgy each week. We're looking for a minimum of two members to manage

the Sunday table, providing updates on current volunteer opportunities and addressing general inquiries about our mission and membership. Ideally, this should involve one board or chair member and one general member. Please consider joining us after the liturgy and committing approximately one hour to this vital task. Your help is greatly appreciated!

THANK YOU!

- Our immense appreciation to **David Mertesdorf** and the entire office team for your invaluable support with scheduling, communications, mailings, printing and everything in between. Your behind-the-scenes efforts make a world of difference, and we're deeply grateful for all you do to keep things running smoothly!
- Thank you, **Tuesday Night Basketball Players** for your generous help in moving all the Festival baking equipment from under the alter to a more accessible location! Your willingness to lend a hand is deeply appreciated and your efforts made a big difference! Thank you!
- A heartfelt thank you to **Cathy Forchas** and **Connie Kouzes** for leading the charge on our koulourakia baking efforts, and to **Maria Prassas** for heading up the kourambiethes baking this May. We're also so grateful to all the volunteers who rolled up their sleeves and lent a hand — your time and dedication are making a real difference. Together, you're laying the groundwork for what's sure to be a fantastic Taste of Greece festival this fall!
- Heartfelt thanks to **Erline Holman, Dka. Mary Kay Twito, Annette Legeros**, and their dedicated committees—Program, Social, and History—for organizing such a meaningful and memorable Spring Finale in celebration of 80 remarkable years of service. We are also deeply grateful to all the volunteers who generously gave their time and energy, and to everyone who joined us for the evening. Your unwavering dedication to Philoptochos is deeply appreciated and never goes unnoticed.
- Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Pascha celebration—whether you helped dye and wrap eggs, decorate with flowers, or bake and plate koulourakia. Your efforts added so much beauty and joy to the day. We are truly grateful for all you did to make Pascha so special.
- A sincere thank you to **Sandra Anderson** for organizing the Tandem Family Resource Center Baby Bottle and Needs Drive. We're also deeply grateful to everyone who gave so generously—your support means so much!

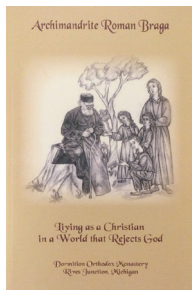
Volunteer Opportunities

Please watch for updates on events or needs from us in the weekly bulletin, webpage and our table on Sundays.

In the Bookstore

By Rebecca Myerly

bookstore@stmarysgoc.org



Archimandrite Roman Braga (1922-2015 Memory Eternal!) was a priest from Romania who suffered much, including imprisonment, under the communist regime. A few years after he was released from prison in 1964, the Patriarch sent him to Brazil for four years. He was invited to come to the United States in 1972 by Archbishop Valerian Trifu

of the Romanian Episcopate of America. After serving in many capacities, from helping with children's camps to translating religious texts and music to serving parishes, "he was able to fulfill his lifelong wish to live in a monastery when he became the resident priest and spiritual father of the community of the women's Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania." (xxix) He moved to Holy Dormition Monastery in Rives Junction, Michigan, in 1989, joining his sister, Mother Benedicta, who had the vision and the desire to establish this monastery and was one of its foundresses and the first abbess. He spent the last 26 years of his life at Holy Dormition Monastery, serving as a spiritual father to the nuns and also to many Orthodox faithful.

Included among Father Roman's spiritual children were Mary Brown and her family. She writes:

My family is tremendously blessed to live near Dormition Orthodox Monastery...where—one bitterly cold day in January 2001—we arrived for our yearly family retreat, and I was presented with a request: "Could you help Father Roman do a book this year?" I proposed a book of Father's wisdom to help modern Christians who yearn for a deeper relationship with God during our busy lives. Also, it could be a book to encourage parents who struggle to raise their children with a devotion to Christ and His Church, while surrounded by a culture pulling us away from God. For several months I had the profound blessing of sitting with Fr. Roman and a tape recorder, asking questions and discussing the challenges of growing closer to God and raising a family in today's world. (xi)

This year, so many decades later, these conversations have become a book titled **Living as a Christian in a World that Rejects God**. An editorial note explains:

During the interviews, Father wove together thoughts that we later sorted into three parts, following Father's urging of the importance of establishing the fundamental understandings before addressing practical ways to grow in God. (xxi)

The fruits of this plan are a book in three parts, the first titled "Fundamental Understandings," the second "Growing in the Image of God," and the third "Family Life in Christ." The result is an effective progression founded on core understandings of the Orthodox Christian faith followed by what could be described as wisdom for living the faith in action—in practice—in one's life. Then the focus becomes living in Christ as a family. This plan is clearly effective as the reader listens to the conversation between Father Roman and Mary develop and evolve, growing in understanding and clarity.

Father Roman explains much succinctly. For example:

Our salvation is a synergy. It is our own efforts plus the grace of God. The grace of God descends to us from above, and we ascend to Him through our efforts. Salvation begins with the grace of God who puts in our minds the thought that we must become better. Then we start acting. When we start acting, the grace of the Holy Spirit comes to help us in this transformation. Our transformation involves three stages. The first, our human effort, is a difficult stage....Later, as we collaborate with the grace of God, His grace becomes almost equal with our own effort. In the last stage, the grace of God becomes more powerful than our effort, and our effort is almost nothing. This last stage is what St Paul describes when he says, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." (Galatians 2:20) In essence, St Paul says, Jesus speaks through me; He works through me. Saint John says in his first Epistle that, when Jesus comes, "We shall be like Him." (1 John 3:2) Throughout our lives, we are to work with ourselves in such a way that when Jesus comes, we will be like Him. Jesus says,... "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6) He is our prototype and the perfect icon of the Father. We are to be icons of Him, reflecting more and more the image of God. (39-40)

Living as a Christian in a World that Rejects God is a helpful guide offered by a beloved contemporary spiritual father.

Living as a Christian in a World that Rejects God is available now.

Stop in to get this featured book and explore a wide selection of Orthodox Christian literature, icons, and gifts. **Sundays, after the Liturgy until 1:00 p.m.**

Children and Youth News

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.



End of Year Picnic

Saturday, June 7; 10:00-11:45 a.m.

Meet at Minnehaha Falls for games and a walk down the stream.



End of Year Party

Wednesday, June 4; 6:15-8:00 p.m.

Join us in celebrating the beginning of Summer and the completion of another great Junior GOYA year.



End of Year Banquet

Sunday, June 8; 5:00-9:00 p.m.

Parents and GOYAns are invited to come to the end of the year banquet that will include a fancy dinner, slide show, awards, and dancing.



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.



Congratulations, 2025 High School Graduates!

Sophia Angelos
Eva Barnes
Alexandria Jane Bejarano
Eliana Binning
Nicholas Boldt
Edward Buss
Maisy Hoffhines
Victoria Kastanos
Chloe Kauffman
Serafeim Kaznessis
Lauren Kieffer
Gabriella Lucs
Callie O'Donnell
Veronica Pappas
Andreas Parashos
Zoey Ross
Jackson Tsahalalis
Benjamin Wehr

SAINT MARY'S VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL

At Saint Mary's, June 16-20; 8:45 a.m. - 12:00 Noon



Join us for an unforgettable faith-filled adventure with lessons, crafts, snacks, and fun-register today!

REGISTER HERE



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3450 Irving Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Holy Pentecost is on Sunday, June 8.



THE MESSENGER

JUNE 2025

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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



@stmarysgoc

June 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Fathers of the First Council "The Messenger" Deadline 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	2 6:00pm-Festival Meeting	3 11:00am-Intercerssory Prayer 11:30am-Senior Cit. Bible Study 11:00a.m.-Baklava Assembly	4 10:00am-Housekeeping 6:15pm-Junior GOYA 6:30pm-Choir Rehearsal	5 9:00am-Service Day	6 Leave-Taking of Ascension 7:00am-Men's Fellowship	7 Saturday of Souls 10:00am-Divine Liturgy 5:00pm-Great Vespers
8 Holy Pentecost 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy after Liturgy-Church School Teachers' Luncheon 5:00pm-Great Vespers 5:00pm-Senior GOYA Banquet	9 Monday of the Holy Spirit 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 11:00a.m.- Baklava Assembly 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice	10 12:00noon-Senior Citizens 6:15pm-Parish Council	11 Saint Nathanael (Bartholomew) 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 11:00a.m.- Baklava Clove, Cut, Bake	12 6:30pm-Women's Book Club	13	14 Leave-Taking of Pentecost
15 Sunday of All Saints Father's Day 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 11:30am-Missions/Outreach	16	17	18 9:00am-"The Messenger" Mailing	19 6:30pm-Koinonia	20 7:00am-Men's Fellowship	21
	Vacation Church School					
22 Second Sunday of Matthew 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy after Liturgy-Harvest Pack 11:30am-Children's Greek Dance Practice	23 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice	24 Nativity of John the Baptist 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 11:00am-Intercerssory Prayer 11:30am-Senior Cit. Bible Study	25 10:00am-Housekeeping	26 7:00pm-Stewardship Com.	27	28
29 Saints Peter and Paul 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	30 Synaxis of the Holy Apostles <i>No Liturgy due to Summer Camp.</i> 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice					