A Message from Father Jason

Father Jason Houck, Associate Priest

What does Christmas have to do with cremation?

What does Christmas have anything to do with cremation? At first, it may seem it doesn't have anything at all to do with it…but when we take a closer look, the connection is clear.

When the Son of God took physical form and was born as a human being, He came to sanctify us. He came to save us. God became human to save humanity. But the larger question is what is a human being? A human being is not simply a spiritual being. A human being is both soul and body. We are reminded of this in Scripture, Orthodox prayers, and other Orthodox literature. Christ Himself said that a human being is both body and soul. For example, in the Gospel of Matthew we read, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt 10:28). In addition Saint Paul wrote, “May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 5:23).

We know that humans are body and soul not only from Scripture. We often hear this—that a human being is both soul and body—in our Divine Liturgy. In the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, we repeatedly speak of a human as both soul and body. We call God, “the Healer of our souls and bodies.” We ask for an angel that is “a guardian of our souls and bodies.” We ask God to “cleanse our souls and bodies of every defilement of flesh and spirit.” We also ask God to “sanctify our souls and bodies and grant that we may serve You in holiness all the days of our life.” We proclaim God “the enlightenment of our souls and bodies.” Repeatedly, in Scripture, the Divine Liturgy, and other Orthodox sources, a human being is claimed to be both soul and body.

Jesus Christ, who is God, took on our human flesh on Christmas. He did that to save us humans—who are both soul and body. Christ became man to sanctify humanity. Christ became physical to bless even physical things—starting with our own bodies. God blesses the physical, not just the spiritual.

Not only did God come to save our bodies and souls, He also made our bodies His temples. Saint Paul wrote, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own” (1 Cor 6:19). Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit—we have God within us! What a great honor! Just as we do not burn down a sacred church building…how much more, then, should we avoid burning our bodies, which are temples of the Holy Spirit? In our Orthodox faith, the body is reverenced in both word and deed.

Knowing that a body is part of a human being, the body even receives sanctification and respect even after someone has passed on. This is clearly demonstrated in the Orthodox funeral service. For example, the body is blessed, prayed over, anointed, and even venerated out of love and respect at the

Article concludes on page 5
Our Life Together

Chrismation
Steven Selin
October 13, 2017

Marriages
Chris Broderson to Emily Johnson
October 22, 2017
Michael von Brendel to Elizabeth Beltaos
October 26, 2017
Michael Grundman to Carrie Street
November 4, 2017

Deaths
Paul W. Peters
October 14, 2017
Bertha Bisbecos
October 16, 2017

Correction
In last month’s issue, the Hellenic Post American Legion scholarship awards incorrectly listed Katherine Pappas as a winner, the name should be Kristina Pappas. We apologize for the error.

Memorial Prayers
Sunday, December 3
Dennis Giannakakis (3 years)
Iakovou and Iakovos
Poliskeni Psavarites
His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos (6 months)

Our Sympathy
George R. Nimmer, Attorney, of Omaha, Nebraska, passed away November 5. He is survived by his wife, Terry, his children John, Stephanie, and Jennifer, and many other family members. George maintained many friendships in the Twin Cities area through his work and his membership in several church organizations.

May his memory be eternal.

Thank You
Many thanks for thoughts, prayers, cards, telephone calls, and flowers following my recent surgery.
Bless you all!
Fifi Kafkas

Share YourShelf food donation list is found on page 3 of this issue.

Yiassou!

MEA Service Project Sunday
In lieu of Church School on MEA weekend, we like to do a quick lesson and three service projects instead. We invited the school children and their parents to come help us with these projects. The younger students (Pre K3, 4, and kindergarten) color and sign their names on beautiful icon cards that are placed in each of the three projects while older students do the assembly line work. This adds a personal touch to all we do and the beneficiaries appreciate the gesture.
St. Mary’s college student Advent packages – 57 (treats and a beautiful book of meditations on the Twelve Great Feasts.)
IOCC School Supply Bags for Greece – 50 (this was a Philoptochos sponsored project).
FOCUS – Filled socks for homeless – 47 (water, beef jerky, tissues, soap, razors, small first aid kits, and a nice pair of warm socks along with a colored icon card with directions to FOCUS for meals and the free store)
The children did a great job and all 47 socks went out the door to be given out to homeless people on so many of our street corners.
Thank you, good and faithful servants!

St. Mary’s Church Staff
Priest:
Fr. George Dokos
Associate Priest:
Fr. Jason Houck
Emeriti:
Fr. Anthony Coniaris
Fr. Theodore Filandrinos
Deacon:
Deacon Paul Kalina
Administrators:
Sylvia Kafkas
Julie Moricz
Administrative Assistant/Communications:
David Mertesdorf
Ministries Coordinator & Office Secretary:
Sandra Anderson
Pastoral Assistant:
Doria Saros
Youth Director:
Jonathan Klein
Music Director:
Thespina Macres
Organist:
Mark Macres

St. Mary’s Parish Council
President:
Katherine Boosalis
Vice President:
Joseph DiGiovanni
Secretary:
Dean Tortorelis
Treasurer:
Louis Tiggas
Assistant Treasurer:
Marshall Estep
Members:
George Andreadakis
Paul Hastings
William M. Hoefl
Dean Murdakes
Pamela Nelson
Steven Rakes
Gigi Tiggas
Sunday Schedule
Saturday Great Vespers – 5:00 p.m.
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Weekday Schedule
Monday, December 4
Saint Barbara
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, December 6
Saint Nicholas
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, December 12
Saint Spyridon
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Friday, December 15
Saint Eleutherios
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 6:00 p.m.

Friday, December 22
Royal Hours – 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 24
Eve of Holy Nativity
Great Vespers – 4:00 p.m.

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

Wednesday, December 27
Saint Stephen
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Fellowship and Study Groups
Adult Senior Bible Study
On Winter break.

Intercessory Prayer
Wednesday, December 20
10:30 a.m., Nave Chapel

Men’s Fellowship
Friday, December 1
7:00 a.m., Fireside Room
There will not be an evening gathering during December.

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

Senior Citizens
Tuesday, December 12
11:00 a.m., Terrace Room
Christmas Party

Women’s Bible Study
Wednesdays, December 6 and 20
11:00 a.m., Fireside Room

Koinonia
Edina Koinonia
Thursday, December 7, 6:30 p.m.
Lecture Room
952.929.5428 (Tia Muchulas, contact)

Northeast Metro Koinonia
December meeting tbd. Watch the Sunday bulletin.
Costas & Barbara Nichols’ home
763.571.0460

South of the River Koinonia
No December gathering

West Metro Koinonia
No December gathering

Christmas Season Highlights
St. Nicholas Celebration
Sunday, December 3
Children are asked to bring a small gift, $5.00 in value, for the St. Nicholas procession during the Liturgy. Festivities and lunch follow.

Church School Christmas Program
Sunday, December 17, at the end of the Liturgy.

Royal Hours
Friday, December 22, 9:00 a.m.

Choir Christmas Choral Meditation
Sunday, December 24, at the end of the Liturgy.

Christmas Eve Great Vespers
Sunday, December 24, 4:00 p.m.
(Communion is not offered at this service.)

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

Share YourShelf
December’s recipient of Share YourShelf contributions is Community Emergency Service (CES).

Sunday, December 3
Canned soup or vegetables

Sunday, December 10
Diapers (Size 5)

Sunday, December 17
Hygiene items
(toothpaste, soap, shampoo, conditioner, razors)

Sunday, December 24
Peanut Butter and Jelly

Sunday, December 31
Canned Meat (tuna / chicken)

Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed. —Proverbs 19:17
Senior Citizens’ Christmas Party

Tuesday, December 12

Don’t miss the special Senior Citizens Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 12, 11:00 a.m. (we’re beginning the festivities one hour early than our usual meeting time). We’ll gather in the Terrace Room for a holiday lunch, entertainment, and some Christmas caroling. All seniors are welcome!

The Ministry of Iconography

The schedule of 2018 classes are as follows: please register by sending a deposit of $75.00 to Icon Art Studios, 13921 127th Street North, Stillwater, MN, 55082. All inquiries can be sent via e-mail at akorluka@aol.com or my cell at 612-889-5868.

Session 1

Thursdays, January 11, 18, 25, and February 1
5:30-9:30 p.m.
St. Mary’s Greek Orthodox Church
Tuition cost is $135.00 plus materials.
Session 1 will concentrate on the prototype of “The Holy Face.”

Session 2

Thursdays, February 8, 15, 22, March 1, 8, and 22
6:00 to 9:00 p.m.
St. Mary’s Greek Orthodox Church
Tuition cost is $165.00 plus materials.
Session 2 will study an icon of Saints Peter and Paul. The student can choose an icon from various selections offered.

Session 3

February 17, 24, March 3, and 24
Saturdays during Great Lent
9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
The Basilica of Saint Mary, Hennepin at Sixteenth Street
Tuition including materials $295.00.
Session 3 will contemplate the sacrament of Repentence and will study and write an icon of St. Mary Magdalene.
All sessions concentrate on technique, along with a spiritual and theological study on the prototype.
Icon Art Studios, Inc.
Debra Korluka
www.korlukastudios.com

Parish Night

2017-2018

Wednesdays
6:15-8:00 p.m.

Everyone is welcome to attend our monthly Parish Night. We begin with a brief prayer service at 6:15 p.m., followed by dinner and a breakout session and then wrap up. The evening will conclude by 8:00 p.m.
The upcoming schedule is as follows:

Session 4 — December 20, 2017
I Am the Way
For more information, contact Jon Klein in the Church Office, jon@stmarysgoc.org, or 612.825.9595

Seventh Annual Christmas Carol Meditation

Enjoy beautiful seasonal music celebrating our Lord’s birth in the beautiful setting of our nave.

Saint Mary’s Music Ministries presents a Christmas meditation of traditional, sacred choral music of the season immediately following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 24.
This is sure to be an inspiring musical tribute to our Lord’s birth!

Holiday Office Closures

Saint Mary’s Church Office will close at 12:00 noon on Friday, December 22, and reopen at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, December 27, for the Christmas holiday.
Our New Year break will be Monday, January 1, and reopen at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, January 2.
Who Is My Neighbor?

We are a very blessed parish. I say this all the time and sometimes I get funny looks. Are not all parishes blessed? I would answer yes, but, I still believe that we are especially blessed, starting with our beautiful church and grounds.

Do you remember when Archbishop Demetrios was here for the Oratorical Festival? He looked out at our beautiful patio and said: “It’s like a beautiful Italian Villa.” Clearly not all parishes are so blessed.

Now, the rest of the blessings are what all churches are blessed with, the faithful! Big or small. Our parish happens to be big, some could say sometimes it almost feels too big. It is hard to know everyone, keep track of who’s new and who’s been here forever since we are a constantly changing congregation.

What I want us to think about this month and in the coming months is: Who is my Neighbor? Who do I sit near every Sunday? Truth be told, don’t most of us have our ‘seats’ to where we make a beeline to every week? Sometimes, I believe some of us have been known to inform some poor unsuspecting visitor that they are in our pew! Yes, sad but true, we know this has occurred.

Do we really know that family in front of us, or the man two seats over? I would venture to say we sometimes spend a lot of Liturgy time looking to see who is around us, who is sitting where, when did they come? Am I right? Just sayin…

My challenge to you all is to spend a few Sundays getting to know those people around you—front, back, and on the side. Try to introduce yourself if you don’t know them. If you find out they are new why not invite them to sit with you in the coffee hour, or perhaps a Parish night or some other event. The priests, Parish Council, stewardship, Mission and Outreach, and other St. Mary’s ministries are making valiant efforts to be more intentional and personal towards in-reach to parishioners, old and new.

The danger of a big parish, if there is one, is just that it’s big, it is hard to pay attention to the comings and goings of so many. For this reason, we are tasked to look out for each other. The best place to start? Right there in the pews with folks surrounding us.

Here is the critical thing I want us to keep in mind, when we don’t see someone for weeks at a time, we should never assume they are snowbirds. Ask around, say “Hey, I haven’t seen ___ for quite a while. Have you?” Take it one step further. Pull out your directory, find their number and ... GIVE THEM A CALL, REACH OUT, find out if they are okay. Let us all get better at knowing “Who is my Neighbor?”

Father Jason’s article concluded from page 1.

funeral. Just as the body is blessed with physical actions while living by partaking in Holy Baptism, Chrismation, Holy Unction, Holy Communion, Holy Water, etc., so the body is blessed and reverenced after one has passed on. What does Christmas have to do with cremation? Christ was born to save His creation, both spiritual and physical. The body is sacred. The body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. The body will be raised and renewed when God resurrects the dead. Knowing that our body is sanctified and saved by God, we should not willingly destroy it through cremation. Let us have great respect for our souls and our bodies and honor them with proper funerals.

Ancient Greece and Eastern Christianity Tour

May 22–June 1, 2018

Dr. David Frederickson, Professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary, and Fr. John Kostas are leading a tour to Greece this spring. Visit places like Athens, Delphi, Sparta, and Nafplion. Explore vast archaeological sites, learn about the Mycenaean civilization, visit the remains of the sports structures erected for the Olympic Games, which began in 776 B.C., and much more. The program cost is $4,395.00 from Minneapolis/St. Paul. A $700.00 deposit is due immediately to secure registration. Details are available in a brochure found in the racks outside the Church Office, or contact Fr. John on Sundays after Liturgy for more information.
This month we encourage everyone to participate in our Days for Girls service project as well as our Vasilopita sales, as they both positively impact the lives of others. Philoptochos appreciates the support of our philanthropic efforts all year long. If you wish to make a year-end donation to Philoptochos, we will be excellent stewards of your gift and will be most grateful! Blessed Advent!

Days for Girls Hands-On Service Project  
**Tuesday, December 5, 6:30-9:00 p.m.**

Come to the third annual Days for Girls Service Project, which gives us a chance to work together and help girls around the world. Days for Girls Kits provide reusable feminine hygiene products that are given to girls without access to such supplies. Without supplies, girls often stay home from school when they have their period, missing a quarter of their education and ultimately impacting their earning potential as adults.

All girls and women, from middle school and up, are encouraged to attend. Invite a friend to come, too! Jobs include cutting fabric, ironing, sewing, and assembling. If you can, bring a sewing machine, serger, and/or sharp scissors. Chair: Sofia Johnson.

Donations are also welcome:
- dark colored washcloths
- gallon size freezer zip-top bags
- girls underwear (sizes 10-14)
- embroidery floss (for friendship bracelets)

Order Your New Year’s Vasilopita  
**Through December 10**

Our annual fundraiser for St. Basil’s Academy is here! Pre-order delicious Vasilopita (Sweet Bread) for your New Year’s celebration by stopping at the Philoptochos table on Sundays through December 10. Loaves are $15 each with payment requested at the time of your order. You can pick up your bread on Sunday, December 17. It will be frozen and will include thawing and powdering instructions. A limited number of additional loaves will be available for purchase on Vasilopita Sunday, January 7, 2018. Chair: Toni Bazakos.

The National Philoptochos Society purchased the estate that became St. Basil’s Academy in 1944, and has responded to the needs of the Academy and its children for more than 70 years. Located in Garrison, NY, St. Basil’s Academy is a home for children in need. The academy provides a loving Christian environment where resident children are nurtured to adulthood. Twenty-four children currently live at St. Basil’s.

Christmas Activities! Decorate and Host Receptions  
**Wednesday, December 6, after Liturgy-5:00 p.m.**

Join us for part or all of the day to beautify the church campus with Christmas decorations. We will begin immediately after the St. Nicholas Liturgy and continue until all the halls are decked! Chair: Andrea Tiggas.

**Sunday, December 24 and Monday, December 25**

Philoptochos is hosting 3 receptions in 2 days, so we’re calling on our members to lend a hand. If you’ll be attending these services and can assist, please let Paulette Hastings know. No baking required!
- Christmas Eve, 9:30 a.m. Liturgy
- Christmas Eve, 4:00 p.m. Vespers
- Christmas Day, 10:00 a.m. Liturgy

Coming Up…
- January 6: Cut Vasilopita for Sunday Distribution
- January 7: Vasilopita Sunday
- January TBD: Special Presentation regarding Super Bowl 52 and What’s Not for Sale – Watch for Details – Sponsored by Daughters of Penelope and Philoptochos
- January – March: Annual Member Drive

Thank You…
To parishioner Hend Bshara, who gave an excellent presentation on Syria at our November meeting, and to Naira Istephanous and Samira Saleh, who offered insight on the current climate in Egypt. Thanks to the Philoptochos members who helped coordinate the set-up and clean-up for the evening as well.

To the many women who helped host the social hour on Philoptochos Sunday by contributing their time, talent and treasures: Jamie Amacci, Sandra Anderson, Stephanie Barakos, Toni Bazakos, Joan Calott, Jennifer Coin, Athena Dascalos, Vicki DiGiovanni, Cheryl Dragotis, Nancy Hartwig, Paulette Hastings, Linda Hodge, Elena Gabor, Stephanie George, Fifi Kafkas, Mary Kafkas, Alexandria Kalina, Hope Kennedy, Jayne Klatt, Connie Kouzes, Annette Legeros, Lamona Legeros, Tina Menter, Joanna Morgan, Barbara Nichols, Popie Rakes, Samira Saleh, Cathy Selin, Carol Smith, Andrea Tiggas, Harriet Witt.

To Jayne Klatt, Tina Menter, Cathy Selin, and Carol Smith, who baked koulouria and kourambiethes for the IOCC fundraising dinner.

To AHEPA, who is hosting the families of Healing House at their December 9 Children’s Christmas Party. Also, special thanks to Donna Psihos for purchasing a gift for each Healing House child.
What Does St. Mary’s and Stewardship Mean to Us?

Parishioner, Tom Hainlin, shared the following testimonial with us on Sunday, November 5, 2017, following the Liturgy:

My name is Tom Hainlin. The Hainlins are the family with the five teen-aged kids and three last names, and now, two grandparents that take up an entire pew right over there. In the spirit of Stewardship Sunday, I was asked to share a little bit of our story and a little bit of what St. Mary’s means to us.

We started coming to St. Mary’s about 4 ½ years ago. I had met my wife, Shannon, and her three beautiful girls when they were living in California. After they moved to New York for a couple of years, I finally got the tractor beam on her, and we got married (at Holy Cross in Belmont by Father Peter Salmas). Then Shannon and her girls moved in with me and Nick and Ellie here in Minneapolis, and then it became “the story of the man named Brady…”

So, Shannon and the girls move in, and we start to put our families together, and the first thing she says to me is, “Tom we have to find a church, because that’s what we do.”

So, she was Orthodox, and at the time, I was not, but we had gotten married in the Greek Orthodox church, and with help from her parents, we settled on joining St. Mary’s, and now we come for Divine Liturgy on Sundays because that’s we do.

But then, Shannon lets on that, for her, there’s a lot more than just coming for Liturgy, if we’re going to be parishioners of St. Mary’s, because of what church was for her and how she grew up and how she wanted our kids to grow up.

So we start coming here in the summer and she says “Tom, we’re going to volunteer at the Greek festival, because that’s what we do.”

Then it was: “Tom, we’re going to Family Camp with the kids, because that’s what we do.”

“Tom, the kids are going to be in youth group, because that’s what we do.”

“Tom, we’re going to send the kids to summer camp every year, because that’s what we do.” (Maybe it’s also how we finally get some alone time with each other…)

“Tom, the kids are going to join Greek dance because that’s we do.”

“Tom, we’re going to sign the kids up for the basketball tournament, and you should coach, because that’s what we do.”

“Tom, you should sign up for men’s camp, because that’s what we do.”

Even Father George got in on it, “Tom, you should really be Orthodox, because that’s what we do.”

So I did. Two years ago, I was Chrismated here. And so were my kids.

So after 4½ years of being parishioners here, what does St. Mary’s mean to us?

❖ It’s a place of worship and a spiritual home, which I had been away from for a long, long time.

❖ It’s a foundational place of grounding for our blended family.

❖ It’s the fellowship with all the people here we call our friends.

❖ It’s the stories and the memories and the friendships and the connection with each other that our kids bring back from summer camp every year.

❖ It’s watching our kids come to know and appreciate Greek culture by dancing with Tessie.

❖ It’s watching our son grow in his own faith and serve on the altar.

❖ It’s watching our girls become Maids of Athena.

❖ It’s watching our older kids grow to be officers of GOYA.

❖ It’s the way our kids hold their church friends up as standards for what they want their school relationships to be like.

❖ It’s looking forward every year to men’s camp and a weekend of treasured fellowship with a group of Christian men I call my friends.

❖ It’s the music of the choir, which I catch myself humming all day long at work to help keep myself grounded.

❖ It’s the support of Father George and Father Jason and all of the other pan-Orthodox priests.

❖ And it’s all the ministries that I mentioned which have provided us so many ways to plug in, and connect, and participate, and grow in our own faith, because, well, that’s who we are and that’s what we do.

❖ And it’s meant more to me and my family than I could possibly share in these few short minutes.

To conclude and summarize what St. Mary’s means to us: In the immortal words of Garrett Morris from the original Saturday Night Live: “St. Mary’s has been berry, berry good to us.” —Tom Hainlin
Stewardship Campaign 2018

Ark of the Covenant

On Sunday, November 12, 2017, the St. Mary’s Stewardship Committee kicked off our 2018 Stewardship Campaign. This year, we have planned a new stewardship approach that hopes to further foster parish growth and unity and obtain our parishioners’ commitment of time, talent and financial support to God’s Church for 2018. As part of our goal this year to increase in-reach activities and connect with more parishioners, we believe our Stewardship Campaign will give us all the opportunity to connect with each other in new ways and to experience “CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST!”

We are calling the 2018 Stewardship Campaign the “ARK OF THE COVENANT” because of the significance of this symbol. The ARK was a wooden chest built by Moses to contain the tablet of the Ten Commandments. It was understood as the visible sign of the presence of God. Another early symbol of the Church is the ARK OF NOAH, which is shown sailing through troubled waters. The rainbow symbolized hope and fulfillment. Since the Church is the visible presence of God and carries the faithful through all condition of life, the ARK is a very appropriate symbol of a stewardship campaign.

The main objectives of our program are to:

- Educate and inspire members regarding the full meaning of Christian stewardship;
- Connect to each and every parishioner in a very personal way to demonstrate that “Christ is in our Midst;”
- And to inform parishioners of the importance of active participation in the life of the Church and the role your support plays.

We are all being asked to participate in the Stewardship Campaign this year by delivering the packet of stewardship materials in-person to one other parishioner that lives close to us.

We are NOT being asked to solicit a financial contribution.

We are only being asked to deliver the packet of materials, which we are calling the ARK, and to have the opportunity to meet with another member in person, just for a short time.

Here is how this program will work:

The parish member households have been divided into zones based on zip codes. Each zone consists of approximately 15 families/members. A Captain has been designated for each zone. The Captain’s primary responsibility is to make sure the ARK packet, which contains all of the stewardship information for that zone, moves from family to family within his or her zone.

The Captain will deliver the ARK containing the packet of stewardship materials to the first family on the list. Then this member will review the materials, fill out a Financial Commitment Form and the Time and Talent Form, if they choose to do so, and then will deliver the ARK to the next family on the list and so forth.

The Captain’s role will be to make sure the parishioners are passing on the ARK to the next family on the list. Once the ARK has reached the last household, the Captain will pick up the packet, which will include completed Financial Commitment Forms and Time and Talent Forms, and deliver it to the Church office.

You can expect to receive a phone call, sometime during the next month, from either the Captain of your zone or from a fellow parishioner, asking to schedule a time to deliver the stewardship packet to you in person. We hope you will choose to participate in the ARK OF THE COVENANT program this year by completing the commitment forms and delivering the materials to the next family on the list. Your Captain will be available to answer any questions you may have during this process.

St. Mary’s is counting on each one of us to do our part and to keep the ARK moving from “glory to glory.” Thank you for your participation! CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST!

Stewardship Appreciation Glendi

Thank you to all of you that came out to celebrate at the Appreciation Glendi on November 11. And a big THANK YOU to all of you that helped to make the event such a huge success again this year. We also want to recognize and thank Annette Legeros and Jimmy Geogleris for planning and coordinating all of the details for the event. We couldn’t have done it without everyone’s help and participation.

Stewardship Financial Update

Offering Income Total:
- October Year-to-Date: $659,502
- Last Year October Year-to-Date: $595,721
- Goal for 2017: $937,335
- Additional needed to reach goal: $277,833

Please see next page for financial graph.

Thanks to the generosity of our parishioners, offering income so far this year exceeds the offering total last year at this time by $63,781. This is moving us much closer to achieving our goal this year of increasing offering income by 9% or $78,000. However, we are behind in terms of where we need to be to cover our year-to-date expenses. We still need to an additional $277,833 by year-end.
to cover our operating expenses and to fund all of our ministries and programs for the year. Thank you for your generous gifts of time, talent and treasure. Know that your contributions make a difference every day to the St. Mary’s community.

Our 2018 Stewardship Program

Christ Is in Our Midst
By Lani McCollar

Did you ever wonder what the Ritz Carlton might be like in Heaven? I think I may have gotten a taste of it for my first time at Family Camp this past Fall 2017! It is really hard to put into words, but I will try my best. It isn’t just the loving smiles and warm welcoming hearts at the concierge desk led by “Miss Sandra,” “Miss Doria,” and Paul and Cindy Karos who make you feel that you are immediately part of this incredible church family weekend experience, but guest check-in was SUPER smooth and the accommodations were fantastic! (There are very spacious rooms, and immaculate and huge private bathrooms!) We even had a personalized family-name sign welcoming us to our own cabin with sweeping views of the lake and colorful leaves! Do I have your attention yet? It gets better!!

On Friday when we arrived despite the gloomy rain, I still saw the glow in Michael and Demi’s eyes about how fun it is to be able to “camp out,” roll out their own sleeping bags, make their own little corner of the cabin with stuffed animals, and pull out their brand new flashlights! That same glow, however, transformed from the material to the eternal throughout the weekend. It was their experience in sharing quality time in God’s beautiful nature and sunshine with church family friends, playing and learning through Christ-centered activities, establishing rule of prayer by worshipping together in the morning and at night, (thank you, Fathers!), playing by the lakeside at the volleyball sand courts making “potions,” pick-up football games on the sprawling lawn, (thank you, George Rovolis!), and a plethora of arts and craft projects to last an eternity, (Thank you, Miss Sandra!). Michael made special icon candles that he now lights every night at home before bed, that he cherishes during prayer. Demi’s favorites were the serenity of the scenery, arts and crafts, the yummy snack times and food, and building friendships. The glow not only was established through family camp, but it is truly long-lasting!

Speaking of “glow,” we must not forget THE EVENING CAMPFIRE (my personal favorite) with acoustic guitar, instruments, and gorgeous voices led by Doria, Kally Alevizos Youngdahl (God bless you!), Jon Klein and Marina Gabor! They definitely should record a CD. It was heavenly. Demi still hums and sings the songs during breakfast before school in the morning. And if you don’t know the words to the old classic songs from summer campfires of days gone by, they post the words up on a large projection screen for you! (God bless you, Bettina Hanna, for holding that screen up! Oh my goodness). Truly a heavenly Ritz experience praising God through song!

I haven’t even mentioned yet the weekend guest speaker, Dr. Phil Mamalakis! (You must buy and read his book, Parenting toward the Kingdom, if you are a parent, grandparent, or Godparent). His own personal faith-walk as a parent of six children, incredible educational background and his entertaining yet very “to the point” talks with us were engaging, enriching, and life-changing. Learning how to better guide our children on the path to Christ as we parent them in this ever-challenging world toward His Kingdom were powerful.

Lastly, I am sure you are wondering if the food is as good as the Ritz Carlton, right? YES, it is! (I think I gained a couple pounds). The tables were cloaked in pressed and laundered long table cloths, Saturday breakfast boasted with yummy scents of cinnamon French toast, ham, sausage, scrambled eggs, a cereal bar, homemade pastries, a fresh fruit and cold yogurt bar, hot teas and coffee with flavors if you desire, and the juice machine for kids… “Mom, may I please go up and get another pink lemonade?!?” But the best part of this dining experience? …Spirit-filled conversation with church family friends, (true Koinonia), and meals lovingly blessed each time for nourishment of heart and soul.

I was honored to be asked to write this article, and sincerely hope that it leads you to want to book your reservation now for next year! God-willing, we will definitely be there, and we hope to be the first to welcome you to the ultimate family camp experience! (Resort disclaimer: Leave your cell phones in your cabin. You won’t need them, and it makes your experience more heavenly. Also, you do not have to have children in order to stay at this amazing resort. We are all part of God’s family and have much to share with each other in it).
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.

What's Happening?

**Important Dates**

**Junior GOYA (grades 6-8)**
- Wednesday, December 6, 6:15-8:00 p.m.
- Junior GOYA Christmas Party
  - St. Mary's

**HOPE and JOY (K-grade 5)**
- Sunday, December 10, 11:45 a.m.
  - Caroling at Jones Harrison Residence
  - We'll starting at Church then go to Jones Harrison about 1:00 and perform at 1:30
  - Lunch will be provided.
  - Please RSVP to Jon (jon@stmarysgoc.org)

**Faith (birth-preschool age children and parents)**
- Wednesday, December 13, 9:30-11:00 a.m.
  - Faith Playgroup Christmas Party
  - Saint Mary’s Great Hall

**Senior GOYA (grades 9-12)**
- Wednesday, December 13, 6:15-8:00 p.m.
  - Senior GOYA Christmas Party
  - Location to be announced

**Parish Night**
- Wednesday, December 20, 6:15-8:00 p.m.
  - Who is God? I am the Way
  - Saint Mary’s Terrace Room

**December Church School Events**
- Sunday, December 3
  - St. Nicholas Day Celebration
  - Children’s Procession with their gifts for FOCUS Minnesota (each child is asked to bring gift valued at about $5.00 for a child their own age).
  - There will be a visit from St. Nicholas during Church School, so leave your shoes in the hallway outside of class!
- Sunday, December 17
  - Church School Program in Nave immediately following Liturgy.

**Basketball Practices**

**Note:** This schedule reflects the request to use a full court during practice in order to gain basketball skills. There is practice nearly every week for the older kids. There are more practices for the JOY teams to help them gain basketball skills. There are five dates that we can add, but I don’t know if we would get people to come: Saturdays: December 23 and 30, and Sundays: November 26 (Thanksgiving weekend), December 24, 31. If you want more practices, we may be able to utilize these. All the practices are at Church.

- When taking down the tables and chairs, the team who is scheduled for the second hour of practice can help the JOY team.

**Saturday, December 2**
- 3:00-5:00 – JOY Practice

**Sunday, December 3**
- 12:30-1:30 – Boys’ Practice; 1:30-2:30 – Girls’ Practice

**Sunday, December 10 (No HOPE/JOY practice)**
- 12:30-1:30 – Girls’ Practice; 1:30-2:30 – Boys’ Practice

**Sunday, December 17**
- 12:30-1:30 – JOY Practice; 1:30-2:30 – Boys’ Practice

**Sunday, January 7**
- 12:30-1:30 – JOY Practice; 1:30-2:30 – Boys’ Practice

**Saturday, January 13**
- 3:00-5:00 – JOY Practice

**Sunday, January 14**
- 12:30-1:30 – Boys’ Practice; 1:30-2:30 – Girls’ Practice

**Sunday, January 21**
- 12:30-1:30 – JOY Practice; 1:30-2:30 – Boys’ Practice

*More practices in next month’s newsletter.*
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<td>7:00am-Men’s Fellowship</td>
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<td>11:00am-Philoptochos Service Project</td>
<td>6:30pm-Edina Koinonia</td>
<td>6:30pm-Orthros</td>
<td>9:00am-Bible Study</td>
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<td>11:00am-Children’s Christmas Party</td>
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<td>Blood Pressure Screening</td>
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<td>6:30pm-Philoptochos Service Project</td>
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**December 2017**

1. **Saint Barbara**
   - 8:30am-Orthros
   - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
2. **Saint Spyridon**
   - 8:30am-Orthros
   - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
3. **Saint Barbara**
   - Blood Pressure Screening
   - “The Messenger” Deadline
   - 8:30am-Orthros
   - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
   - after Liturgy-St. Nicholas Celebration
   - 12:30pm-Basketball Practice, boys
   - 1:30pm-Basketball Practice, girls
4. **Saint Spyridon**
   - 8:30am-Orthros
   - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
   - 11:00am-Senior Citizens
   - 6:15pm-Parish Council
5. **Saint Nicholas**
   - 6:30pm-Open Gym Basketball (ages 18 +)
   - 6:30pm-Philoptochos Service Project
6. **Saint Nicholas**
   - 8:30am-Orthros
   - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy after Liturgy
   - Decorate Church
   - 11:00am-Women’s Bible Study
   - 6:15pm-Junior GOYA Party
   - 6:30pm-Choir Rehearsal
7. **Saint Nicholas**
   - 6:00pm-Divine Liturgy
8. **Saint Eleutherios**
   - 6:00pm-Divine Liturgy
9. **Saint Eleutherios**
   - 6:00pm-Divine Liturgy
10. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - 11:45am-HOPE and JOY Caroling
    - 11:30am-Church School Teachers’ Meeting
    - 12:30pm-Basketball Practice, girls
    - 1:30pm-Basketball Practice, boys
11. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - 11:00am-Senior Citizens
    - 6:15pm-Parish Council
12. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - 11:00am-Senior Citizens
    - 6:15pm-Parish Council
13. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - 11:00am-Senior Citizens
    - 6:15pm-Parish Council
14. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - 11:00am-Senior Citizens
    - 6:15pm-Parish Council
15. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - 11:00am-Senior Citizens
    - 6:15pm-Parish Council
16. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - 11:00am-Senior Citizens
    - 6:15pm-Parish Council
17. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - Church School Christmas Program
    - 11:45am-Mission/Outreach
    - 12:30pm-Basketball Practice, JOY
    - 1:30pm-Basketball Practice, boys
18. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - Church School Christmas Program
    - 11:45am-Mission/Outreach
    - 12:30pm-Basketball Practice, JOY
    - 1:30pm-Basketball Practice, boys
19. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - Church School Christmas Program
    - 11:45am-Mission/Outreach
    - 12:30pm-Basketball Practice, JOY
    - 1:30pm-Basketball Practice, boys
20. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - Church School Christmas Program
    - 11:45am-Mission/Outreach
    - 12:30pm-Basketball Practice, JOY
    - 1:30pm-Basketball Practice, boys
21. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - Church School Christmas Program
    - 11:45am-Mission/Outreach
    - 12:30pm-Basketball Practice, JOY
    - 1:30pm-Basketball Practice, boys
22. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - Church School Christmas Program
    - 11:45am-Mission/Outreach
    - 12:30pm-Basketball Practice, JOY
    - 1:30pm-Basketball Practice, boys
23. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - Church School Christmas Program
    - 11:45am-Mission/Outreach
    - 12:30pm-Basketball Practice, JOY
    - 1:30pm-Basketball Practice, boys
24. **Saint Spyridon**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - Church School Christmas Program
    - 11:45am-Mission/Outreach
    - 12:30pm-Basketball Practice, JOY
    - 1:30pm-Basketball Practice, boys
25. **HOLY NATIVITY**
    - 9:00am-Orthros
    - 10:00am-Divine Liturgy
    - Office Closed
26. **Church and Office Closed**
27. **Saint Stephen**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
28. **Sunday before Nativity**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - Choir Carol Meditation
    - 4:00pm-Great Vespers
29. **Sunday before Nativity**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - Choir Carol Meditation
    - 4:00pm-Great Vespers
30. **Sunday before Theophany**
    - 8:30am-Orthros
    - 9:30am-Divine Liturgy
    - Office Closed
## Join us for the annual…

### Children’s Christmas Party

Santa’s visit and keepsake photo, caroling with Kally, entertainment, and lunch highlight this special, St. Mary’s Community event.

**Saturday, December 9, 2017 *11:00 a.m.*

**St. Mary’s Greek Orthodox Church**

**Terrace Room, 3450 Irving Avenue South, Minneapolis**

All for just $12 per child*

*In the spirit of the season please bring a food donation for the food shelves supported by St. Mary’s*

**RSVP by Tuesday, December 3 to:**

Mark Alevizos • 2116 Second Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404

*For more info contact Mark at 612.990.4211 or mark.alevizos@gmail.com*

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Parents’ Name(s) ____________________________________________________________

Telephone ________________________________________________________________

E-Mail ________________________________________________________________

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<tr>
<th>Children's Names</th>
<th>Boy / Girl</th>
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Sponsored by Minneapolis AHEPA* (free for all children of AHEPA and Daughters of Penelope members)
**Christmas DECORATIONS**

Name of Contributor(s): ________________________________________________________________

In memory of:

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

Amount enclosed: $ __________________

Contributions will be acknowledged in the Christmas bulletins and in an upcoming issue of “The Messenger.”

Please return this form and your donation to the Church Office no later than Sunday, December 17.

**PARISH Christmas CARD**

*Send holiday greetings to your family and friends at St. Mary’s!*

Simply fill out this form and return it to the Church Office with a contribution no later than Sunday, December 10… (we send the card to the printer on Tuesday morning, December 12).

Your name(s) as you want it listed in the card:

____________________________________

____________________________________

Amount enclosed: $ __________________