A Message from Father Jason
Father Jason Houck, Associate Priest

The Icon of the Annunciation
What does it have to do with cooperation?

Sometimes in life, we are faced with big news...big news and consequently, a big decision. On March 25, we celebrate the Annunciation of the Theotokos (Luke 1:26-38). The Annunciation or Ευαγγελισμός (quite literally, the announcing of good news), comes from the lips of the Archangel Gabriel to Mary the Theotokos. The Archangel, as seen in the icon, is rushing towards Mary, his feet spread as if running, flying, or leaping forward toward Mary. This would have been startling, don't you think? Gabriel’s wings denote that he is a messenger (this is also the case in other instances of ancient art, such as icons of John the Baptist or depictions of Hermes, the messenger of the gods). His κηρείκειο or herald’s staff, too, is typical of a messenger in ancient art. This messenger of God has an immensely important message, which he begins with a formal greeting in typical Biblical manner. The Archangel’s greeting is met with some bewilderment. Luke 1:28-29 reads, “And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.’ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.” The Archangel had to reassure Mary, saying, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.” Gabriel goes on to explain to Mary that her Son will be the Son of God and the Savior of God’s people (Luke 1:31-25).

But that isn’t the end of the story. There is an important theological point we emphasize as Orthodox Christians. The Theotokos, like all humans, has free will. God would not force her to be a part of God’s plan of salvation. The following verse is an important detail from a theological perspective. Mary had to say “yes” to God’s plan of salvation. Luke 1:38 reads, “Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’” This is a critical point for us, too. We, too, are faced with the Annunciation. We, too, are faced with big news. But the question is, what is our decision? Will we let God be present in our lives or will we shut Him out? Will we accept the joyous proclamation, or sit on the sidelines? We, like Mary, all have free will. God will not force us to accept Him. The question is, what will we do with the good news of the Annunciation? Direct messages from God are very rare, but we all have direction from God in the form of His commandments. “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love” (John 15:10). When we reflect on the Annunciation this month, let us remember the appropriate response to the good news of the Annunciation—as modeled by the Theotokos—obedience to God’s will. For us Christians, this is primarily following His commandments.
**Daylight Saving Time goes into effect on Sunday, March 10.**

*Set your clocks ahead one hour before retiring Saturday night.*

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**Baptisms**

Isaiah Luker  
Kaison Luker  
Parents: Kevin Luker and Georgi Speliopoulos  
January 27, 2019

Ephraim  
Parents: Kristen and Amanuel Medhanie  
February 9, 2019

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**Chrismation**

Jake Houseman  
February 10, 2019

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**Marriages**

Will Pappas to Adele DeNicola  
January 20, 2019

Steven Janke to Cassandra Apostolou  
January 21, 2019

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**Saint Mary’s Visitation Ministry**

Our Visitation Ministry is continually updating its list of parishioners who are homebound or in care facilities and would like to be on our Visitation List. If you or your loved one is a member of St. Mary’s and physically unable to attend church and would enjoy a visit or a telephone call from either a member of our clergy and/or a member of our Visitation Committee, please notify the Church Office, 612.825.9595, or doria@stmarysgoc.org.

If you are interested in being trained as a member of our Visitation Team, please save the date for our next Visitation Training meeting on Sunday, April 7, 11:30 a.m., in the Fireside Room.

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**Memorial Prayers**

**Sunday, March 10**

Pauline Peters (40 days)  
Akrivi Dereskos (1 year)  
John Dereskos (10 years)

**Sunday, March 24**  
Karen Kolas (1 year)

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**Share YourShelf**

March’s recipient of Share YourShelf contributions is Joyce Uptown Foodshelf.

**Sunday, March 3**

Canned fruits and vegetables

**Sunday, March 10**

Cereal (both hot and cold)

**Sunday, March 17**

Canned meals – large cans  
(Chili, pork and beans, etc.)

**Sunday, March 24**

Coffee and Tea

**Sunday, March 31**

Hygiene items  
(toothpaste, soap, shampoo, etc.)

... and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. — Isaiah 58:10

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**Thank You Notes**

from Joyce Uptown Foodshelf

Thank you for donating 93 pounds of food in October. Your support for our community is sincerely appreciated!

from FOCUS Minnesota

We were moved by your beautifully written letter and generous donation as we begin in our new St Paul facility. We are very appreciative of the partnership we have with St Mary’s Greek Orthodox Church.

Vera Proctor  
Executive Director, FOCUS MN

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**St. Mary’s Parish Council**

President  
Joseph DiGiovanni

Vice President  
Dean Murdakes

Secretary  
Andrew Theodotou

Treasurer  
Michael Rakes

Assistant Treasurer  
John Beauchamp

Members  
George Andreadakis  
Paul Hastings  
William Hoef  
Naira Istephanous  
Pamela Nelson  
Dean Psychogios  
Randy (Luke) Twito

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**St. Mary’s Church Staff**

Priest  
Fr. George Dokos

Associate Priest  
Fr. Jason Houck

Attached Priest  
Fr. John Kostas

Emeriti  
Fr. Anthony Coniaris  
Fr. Theodore Filandrinos

Deacon  
Deacon Paul Kalina

Administrator  
Julie Moricz

Parishioner Support/Communications  
David Mertesdorf

Ministry Support  
Doria Saros

Youth Director  
Jonathan Klein

Music Director  
Thespina Macres

Organist  
Mark Macres

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Vera Proctor  
Executive Director, FOCUS MN
Education, Fellowship, & Worship

Sunday Schedule
Saturday Great Vespers – 5:00 p.m.
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Weekday Schedule
Saturday, March 2
First Saturday of Souls
Orthros – 9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, March 9
Second Saturday of Souls
Forty Holy Martyrs at Lake Sebaste
Orthros – 9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, March 16
Third Saturday of Souls
Orthros – 8:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:00 a.m.
Note time change due to Lenten Retreat

Monday, March 25
The Annunciation
Orthros – 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Fellowship and Study Groups
Adult Senior Bible Study
On Winter break

Intercessory Prayer
Wednesdays, March 6 and 20
10:30 a.m., Nave Chapel

Men’s Fellowship
Friday, March 1
7:00 a.m., Fireside Room

Saturday Bible Study
Every Saturday
9:00 a.m., Fireside Room
No session on March 16 due to the Lenten Retreat.

Senior Citizens
On Winter break

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

Lenten Schedule
Mondays (beginning March 11)
6:00 p.m. - Great Compline

Wednesdays (beginning March 13)
4:00 - Holy Confession
5:45 p.m. - Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
7:00 p.m. - Lenten Dinner
7:30 p.m. - Youth Groups and Activities
7:30 p.m. - Choir Rehearsal

Fridays (beginning March 15)
4:00 - Holy Confession
6:00 - Salutations to the Theotokos (Akathist Hymn)

Koinonia
Edina Koinonia
Thursday, March 28, 7:00 p.m.
St. Mary’s Fireside Room
Tia Muchulas, contact 952.929.5428

Lake Calhoun Koinonia
No March gathering

Northeast Metro Koinonia
Thursday, March 28, 7:00 p.m.
Costas & Barbara Nichols’ home
763.571.0460

South of the River Koinonia
Date and time to be announced
Mark & Elizabeth Skoog’s home
612.743.2789

West Metro Koinonia
No March gathering

MEOCCA Pan-Orthodox Lenten Vespers
Sundays, 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 17
St. Mary’s Orthodox Cathedral
1629 Fifth Street NE
Minneapolis, MN 55413

Sunday, March 24
St. George Greek Orthodox Church
1111 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105

Sunday, March 31
St. Mary’s Romanian
189 Atwater Street West
St Paul, MN 55117

Sunday, April 7
Holy Trinity OCA
956 Forest Street North
St Paul, MN 55106

Sunday, April 14
St. George Antiochian Orthodox
1250 Oakdale Avenue
West St. Paul, MN 55118

Sunday, April 21
St. Herman’s Orthodox Church
5355 - 38th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55412

Young Adult League (YAL)
The Twin Cities Young Adult League (ages 18-35) will meet on Sunday, March 17, at St. Mary’s Orthodox Cathedral, 1629 Fifth Street NE, Minneapolis. We’ll meet in the Parish Center (across the street from the Cathedral) from 2:30-4:00 p.m. for a questions and answers session with the priests, them move to the Cathedral for Pan-Orthodox Vespers for the Sunday of Orthodoxy, followed by dinner and social time back at the Parish Center. We plan to wrap up by 7:00 p.m.
Parish News & Events

Guidelines for the Observance of Great Lent
March 11-April 19, 2019 • Holy Week: April 20-27, 2019

The guidelines for the observance of Great Lent, the 40-day period of preparation for Easter, include increased prayer, more intense fasting, and almsgiving to the poor and needy. Preparation for and reception of the Sacrament of Holy Confession is also strongly advised. The rules of the traditional physical fast are:

Saturday and Sunday we abstain from meat and meat products, dairy products, and fish.

Monday through Friday we abstain from meat and meat products, dairy products, fish, olive oil, and wine.

As always, the fast is modified or eliminated in the case of young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and infirm. Please feel free to consult a priest about your observance of this period if you have any questions or concerns. The preparation is definitely worthwhile when we willingly enter into it for the glory of God and the benefit of others around us.

Myrrhbearer Greeter Ministry

Young ladies of St. Mary's ages 12-18: We need you! St. Mary's has a year-round Myrrhbearer Greeter Ministry and we're looking for young ladies who are interested in being greeters for our parishioners and guests (you will be paired with an adult greeter). Please prayerfully consider joining — it's easy and fun, and you can sign up to greet when it works for your schedule (via Doodle). You will go through a brief training, then you, and a parent/guardian, will sign a consent/commitment form. If interested, or any questions, please contact Mrs. Beauchamp @ 952.906.8974 or inkehoots@q.com.

American Legion Hellenic Post 129
100 Celebration Year!

Did you know…

It has been (and continues to be) the American Legion mission to honor the sacrifice of men and women who have served our country. Goals include enhancing the lives of the military veterans and their families, advocating for veterans, educating our citizens, mentoring youth, and promoting patriotism, good citizenship, peace, and security. In 1919, one of the first items that the American Legion advocated and helped to pass, was disability pay to injured veterans.

Remember, save the date: November 9, 2019, for the 100 year celebration of Post 129, and watch for more… did you know!

Church Cancellation Procedures for Winter

The winter months are upon us and we want to ensure all our parishioners stay safe and don’t attempt to travel during icy or severe conditions. Here’s how we plan to keep you informed.

- Cancellations of events, activities, and services will be announced a minimum of two (2) hours prior to the start time.
- We will update our website and office voicemail announcing the cancellation as another opportunity for you to be notified.
- All individual group leaders (choir, church school, senior citizens, etc.) must notify the church office of your decision to cancel so we can make the necessary updates.
- The Parish Council President must also be notified of any cancellations, and no cancellations will occur without the blessing of our priests.

While we plan on always having scheduled services, no one should travel to church if road conditions in your area are dangerous. Please remain at home, giving thanks to God that at least a priest and chanter are leading the services praying for all of us.

Summer Camp Q & A

We will be hosting a Summer Camp Q & A on Sunday March 10, 11:30 a.m.-12:00 noon (following Church School) in the Fireside Room. A brief presentation about our camp will be offered. Please bring your campers and your questions! If you miss the Q & A, please feel free to make an appointment with Doria, 612.825.9595, or Doria@stmarysgoc.org.

Holy Land Pilgrimage Update

Due to unforeseen events, the dates have changed for our proposed pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2019. The new dates this year will be from September 17-26, 2019. We will stay three nights in the Old City of Jerusalem, three nights in the little town of Bethlehem, and two nights in Nazareth. The cost will be $1450 which includes hotels, land transportation, entry fees, all breakfasts, all dinners, two lunches, and a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. Tips and airfare are additional.

If you are interested in joining us on this spiritual journey, please notify Tom Rudquist for information. The email address is abousean@yahoo.com; the phone number is 651.890.6817. You can also request a detailed proposed itinerary at our email address and phone number.

We plan to limit this pilgrimage to 25. Please confirm your plan to accompany us on this spiritual journey by March 15, 2019.
Charitable Giving to Saint Mary’s

Our parish continues to be blessed with so many generous individuals who support us through their weekly, monthly, and quarterly donations. In addition, many parishioners are starting to show their support by gifting shares of stock to St. Mary’s. This is a wonderful option, but we need YOUR HELP to ensure the donation is recorded accurately.

If you would like to donate stock to St. Mary’s, please follow these important steps to ensure everything is handled efficiently and you receive the appropriate credit on your quarterly statement of giving.

1. Please contact our Church Administrator, julie@stmarysgoc.org, indicating your interest in donating stock
2. She will ask you a few key questions and in some instances ask you to complete a form
3. Please do not contact any other individuals, thinking that copying more people is more efficient – the opposite is true and adds unnecessary confusion
4. Once we receive your information, we will notify you that the stock has been sold and provide you with the amount of your donation

We thank you for following this simple four-step process. In our Spring General Assembly we will provide more information on stock donations. Thanks to all for your financial support of St. Mary’s.

Keeping St. Mary’s Safe

Over the past year the Parish Council has been reviewing our security and emergency plans to ensure St. Mary’s is prepared and our parishioners and visitors have a sense of peace and safety when they come to church. One of the critical areas is access to our building both during office hours and other times throughout the week. During the month of March we will be asking all parishioners that possess a key to St. Mary’s to contact our Administrator so your key code and access can be appropriately documented. In addition, we will begin rekeying many areas of the complex and providing new keys or key fobs to those ministry leaders that require access. We appreciate everyone’s cooperation in this important endeavor. Please look for additional information in the weekly bulletins during March.

Saint Mary’s Foundation

At the August Parish Council meeting, a motion was passed to distribute $15,000 for disaster and wildfire relief. The Lyreo Orphanage outside of Athens received $5,000, while a $10,000 donation was sent to IOCC. The following is a letter of acknowledgment from IOCC:

Dear Father George:

Thank you for your generous gift supporting the critical humanitarian and emergency response efforts of International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC). IOCC’s life-changing work would not be possible without you!

Your donation is helping IOCC respond quickly to the people in need, particularly those who were affected by the recent fires in Greece. IOCC is helping to provide for the most basic of needs including access to food and hygiene products.

Your gift was tremendous, and because of your generosity we can act quickly and with flexibility when disaster strikes. On behalf of the beneficiaries IOCC is serving, please accept our sincere gratitude.

Yours in Christ,
(signed) Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director and CEO

We also sent a contribution to The Salvation Army to assist with their ministry to those in need:

Dear Father Dokos, Parish Council, St. Mary’s Staff and Members:

Thank you so much for your support and partnership with The Salvation Army and those we serve. Your gift of $10,000 will create an immediate impact on our community by bolstering life-sustaining services such as our hot meal programs and emergency housing initiatives.

For the men, women, and children who come through our doors, their lives are in crisis. They need someone who can provide a lifeline to keep them afloat in what seems to them like an ocean of unknowns. Luckily, we can ensure that they are in good hands. Our teams meet each individual or family where they’re at, helping them to feel safe, seen, and valued.

Because of you and your partnership, those in crisis will continue to find a safe harbor where they can reclaim their hope and futures. Thank you for making good happen in our community.

Sincerely yours,
(signed) Lt. Colonel Lonneal Richardson
Divisional Commander
Northern Division
St. Mary’s Lenten Retreat
Friday and Saturday, March 15 and 16, 2019

This year’s theme is:
“Talking in Circles: The Orthodox Understanding of Scripture,”
led by Fr. John Kostas.

There will be two sessions with a midday break for lunch.

Friday Evening
6:00 p.m. – Salutations to the Theotokos
Father John will deliver the sermon
Refreshments and fellowship will follow

Saturday Morning
8:00 a.m. - Orthros; 9:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy
Breakfast and Presentations follow Liturgy
Session 1 – St. Irenaeus: The Bible & The Church
The Rule of Faith as Key to the Scriptures

Saturday Afternoon
Session 2 – St. John Cassian: The Letter & The Spirit
The Four Senses of Scripture

Please RSVP by going to our website and following the link (stmarysgoc.org),
or calling the Church Office (612.825.9595).

Rev. Fr. John Kostas
Fr. John Kostas was ordained to the priesthood at St. Mary’s in 1995, and served as assistant priest for five years. He later served in Pittsfield (MA), Knoxville (TN), the Bahamas, and under the late Fr. Thomas Hopko at the Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City (PA). He and Presbytera Janis have now retired to the Twin Cities and Fr. John has returned to service at his ‘home’ parish.

Fr. John entered the priesthood after a 16-year career in government and politics. He graduated summa cum laude from St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, and holds a Master’s of Theology in New Testament from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. He also holds a master’s degree in Classics from the University of Maryland, College Park.
Great Lent is generally known as a season of fasting in the Liturgical year. At the same time, Lent is a season to feast on the good spiritual nourishment that certain books can provide. You can find many books suitable for Lenten reading in the bookstore. To read a spiritual book meditatively—slowly and with reflection—during Lent is like having a spiritual companion and mentor accompanying you on the journey.

*The Parable of the Prodigal Son: A Commentary in the Light of the Fathers* by Hieromonk Gregorios is a brilliant gathering and synthesis of the wisdom of the Fathers filtered through the lens of this parable. The book begins with the actual parable (Luke 15:10-32) and then dives deep into the meanings found and illustrated in this parable. Although we hear the Parable of the Prodigal Son in the Divine Liturgy every year on the Second Sunday in the Triodion, the question and concern is how deeply we hear and process this parable by meditating on it in our minds and hearts. This book is a beautiful companion and aid for growth in one’s awareness regarding the need for repentance and gratitude to God, who is exemplified by the father in the parable. According to Hieromonk Gregory, “From the first words of the parable, we can see that Christ told it in order to reveal to us the magnitude and quality of God’s love.” He explains:

When God offers us freedom, He wants us to choose life; but He accepts whatever choice we make. If we decide to leave Him for a far country, since He knows the outcome of our journey, He offers His divine gifts with grief: He divided his livelihood between them.

The Father’s love responds to the younger son’s demand to take his share of the estate by dividing the property. The Father needs nothing, otherwise “he would have kept something for himself as well... He divided the fortune, that is to say the whole world, between the two children. Because just as human nature, which is one and entire, is divided by differences in intent, so is the world, which is one whole, divided by the different uses made of it... God distributes all creation indivisibly to all people, allowing each person to make use of it according to his own will....

[The Prodigal son]... departed to a far country, that is to say far away from the home of his Father’s love. So too do we: “when we sin, we depart from God, we break away, we go to a foreign land.” (Saint John Chrysostom)

Sin is man’s migration away from his paternal Home. Because, as we approach sin we alienate ourselves from God.... Withdrawal from God occurs “through intellectual choice, from within, since it cannot happen physically. For how can one escape the omnipresent God?” (Saint John Chrysostom)

Hieromonk Gregorios elucidates the process of awareness and repentance through the prodigal son, his return to his loving father, and the anger of the elder son who had stayed with his father, saying, “God does not only examine our deeds, but primarily our disposition.” There is much to learn from, in, and through this parable. This book is a guide pointing the way. This book is a guide pointing the way, and it is a convenient companion to keep close by for the journey because it is only 71 pages in length.
Have you joined Philoptochos yet? It’s one of the best ways to support charitable work, Orthodox traditions, and activities of the Metropolis and Archdiocese. Stop by the Philoptochos table on Sundays before March 17 and join us! Dues are self-determined.

When making this financial decision, consider that the first $21 goes directly to Metropolis and National Philoptochos programs. Any donation above $21 goes to local, national and international organizations chosen by our chapter. The full amount of your dues is tax deductible. Thank you!

Women’s Book Club
Tuesday, March 5, 7:00-9:00 p.m.
As requested by attendees at our first gathering, the Women’s Book Club will have a second discussion on Dee Pennock’s “God’s Path to Sanity.” We will meet at the home of Deacon Paul and Alexandria Kalina on Tuesday, March 5, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. All women are welcome, even if you were unable to attend the first discussion. Books are available in the church Book Store.

Moving forward, Book Club will meet every other month on Monday or Tuesday evenings. Book titles will be determined as we move forward.

Tandem Fundraiser
Thursday, March 7
6:00 p.m.: Social & Silent Auction
7:00 p.m.: Dinner and Program
The Metropolitan Club
5418 Wayzata Boulevard, Golden Valley

For many years, St. Mary’s has supported Tandem (formerly known as Tapestry). We’d like to fill a table at this free event (with donations welcome). Men and women are encouraged to attend. RSVP at the Philoptochos table on Sunday or contact Paulette at MplsPhilo@gmail.com or 952.564.8388.

From Tandem: For 40 years, motherhood has been the intersection where we meet the mamas and littles we serve. Tandem has been their soft place to land, offering a full spectrum of support and services to equip these families to break the cycle of crisis and poverty. Thanks to people like you, we haven’t done it alone.

Lenten Retreat Preparation and Reception
Friday, March 15
Prepare for the St. Mary’s Lenten Retreat Talking in Circles: The Orthodox Understanding of Scripture on Friday, March 15, with Salutations, words from Fr. John Kostas, food and fellowship. Philoptochos will organize the reception. If you’d like to help, stop by our table on Sunday to volunteer. (The retreat is on Saturday, March 16.)

Prepare and Serve Lenten Meal
Wednesday, March 27
Philoptochos is serving the meal after the March 27 Presanctified Liturgy. Set up starts at 5:00 p.m., serving at 7:00 p.m., and clean-up after. The recipient of the free will offering will be determined soon. Stop by the Philoptochos table to offer your services for this event.

Philoptochos Meeting
Sunday, March 31, 11:30 a.m.
All women of the parish are invited to our March Philoptochos Meeting after Liturgy in the Terrace Room on March 31. We’ll finalize plans for our Lenten journey, have refreshments, and enjoy time with each other.

Thank You
• To all who helped create a successful St. Basil Academy Fundraiser: our chair Toni Bazakos, who along with Giannoula Bakritzes, Paulette Hastings, and Tina Menter, baked and prepped 144 loaves of Vasilopita (Sweet Bread); to Terri Leckas, Sofia Johnson, Barbara Nichols, Libby Nicklow, and Hrisoula Regas who baked additional loaves for Vasilopita Sunday, to bread cutters Mary Anderson, Sofia Johnson, Fifi Kafkas, Mary Kafkas, Vangie Karakatsanis, Dena Karigan, Joanna Morgan, Tia Muchulas, and Elaine Smith, to Stephanie George, Paul Hastings, Demos Murdakes, and Georgie Tortorelis who distributed bread to the Sunday School classes, and to donation collectors Annette Legeros, Donna Psios, and Andrea Tiggas. We are most grateful to our parish community who, by purchasing Vasilopita and making donations, allowed us to give $2,700 to St. Basil Academy.
• To Paulette Hastings, Annette Legeros, David Mertesdorf, Tia Muchulas, and Dena Tortorelis, for preparing the January membership mailing. Thanks also to membership chairs Annette Legeros and Dena Tortorelis for managing the member drive.
• To Andrea and Louis Tiggas, for their work to prepare budget materials for our January meetings, and to board members Jennifer Coin, Paulette Hastings, Sofia Johnson and Connie Kouzes, who worked with Andrea to create and recommend a 2019 budget to the Board and Membership.

• To Mary Kay Twito, for opening her home to host the women of St. Mary’s for Ladies Night Out.

• To the dozens of women who shopped, baked, arranged, hosted, and cleaned in order for us to have a successful Sweet Sunday. Thanks be to God, the generosity of our parishioners resulted in a $1,100 donation to the Philoptochos Children’s Medical Fund.

Coming Up in March 2019

• Sunday, March 10 – Last day to order fresh fillo
• Monday, March 11 – Lent Begins
• Friday, March 15 – Reception after Salutations
• Sunday, March 17 – Last day to join Philoptochos!
• Tuesday, March 19 – Board Meeting
  6:30 p.m., Fireside Room
• Sunday, March 24 – Fillo Distribution
• Wednesday, March 27 – Prepare and serve meal after Presanctified Liturgy
• Sunday, March 31 – March Philoptochos Meeting
• No board or membership meeting in April

Saint George Greek Orthodox Church will hold its annual “St. Gregory Palamas Festival of Light” Retreat on March 22-24, 2019. The schedule of events is as follows:

**Friday, March 22**
6:00 p.m.: Akathistos/Salutations Service; 7:30PM Lenten Meal
8:00 p.m.: My Ancestry, Life Journey and Orthodoxy
  Fr. Moses, a third-generation African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) pastor’s son, shares the fascinating stories of his ancestors, his own life journey and how he became an Orthodox Christian and eventually a priest in the Orthodox Church of America. As with every conversion story, his can be helpful when we seek a different, perhaps broader understanding of our faith, and how to share it with our neighbors.

**Saturday, March 23**
10:00 a.m.: Coffee and Fellowship
10:30 a.m.: History of Orthodox Christianity in Africa
  Fr. Moses speaks about the rich history of the Eastern church in Africa. While Christianity has been characterized by some as “White man’s religion,” the truth of the Faith as it has developed over the millennia challenges that harmful description at every turn. Fr. Moses speaks to his experience of the saints, particularly those desert Fathers who have been so influential to him and other people of color.
12:00 p.m.: Lenten Potluck Luncheon
1:00 p.m.: African American Experience & Orthodoxy
  Until recently, African Americans have had little exposure to the Orthodox Church, and the Church as a whole has done little to change this. However, the Christianity adopted by slaves has been called this country’s only “suffering church.” Fr. Moses describes how strongly the traditional Black church connects with Orthodox spirituality and how we Orthodox can approach our country’s racial history to move towards healing and reconciliation.
3:00 p.m.: Great Vespers Service

**Sunday, March 24**
4:00 p.m.: Pan Orthodox Lenten Vespers – Guest Speaker: Fr. Moses Berry
  African Americans and Orthodox Christianity: Ancestry, History and Mission
  *Fr. Moses Berry is an archpriest in the Orthodox Church in America Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest, serving Theotokos “Unexpected Joy” Eastern Orthodox Church in Ash Grove, Missouri. He is also curator of The Ozarks Afro-American Heritage Museum. Fr. Moses is in demand as a speaker on African American Christianity and Orthodox mission. He is co-founder and current president of the Brotherhood of St. Moses the Black. Fr. Moses is a contributor to “An Unbroken Circle: Linking Ancient African Christianity to the African-American Experience.” In 2017 he was awarded a Louisville Institute Pastoral Study Grant, “Bringing African Americans to Orthodoxy” and is a recipient of the St. Irenaeus Institute award.*
A Place at the Table
Benefit for Joyce Uptown Foodshelf

Everyone is invited to attend a beautiful evening of music to benefit Joyce Uptown Foodshelf at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, March 1, 2019, at Lake Harriet United Methodist Church, 4901 Chown Avenue South, Minneapolis. Mikyoung Park, MacPhail Center for Music faculty and Music Director at Living Spirit United Methodist Church in collaboration with Jungjoo Park, Director of Music ministries at Lake Harriet Church, are bringing together musicians of all ages. Featuring Soojin Lee, on the gayageum, Jungjoo Park on the organ, soprano Mikyoung Park, Lake Harriet’s adult and youth choirs, the Lake Harriet Trio, and Lake Harriet’s bell choir. All are welcome, no tickets are needed. The program is free and open to the public however a freewill offering will be taken to benefit Joyce Uptown Foodshelf.

Women’s Pilgrimage to St. Paisius Monastery in Safford, Arizona by Jamie Amacci

I had heard about the annual Women’s pilgrimage to St. Paisius Monastery. As the date grew closer, Sandra Anderson encouraged me to sign up. I agreed to go. Little did I know how that experience would affect me.

There were so many inspiring experiences. I would like to share my most favorite part of the day. Every morning leaving for Church, stepping outside, the air was cold and crisp. One could not help but look up at the stars which sparkled against the black sky while the moon shone bright overhead. Amazing! The bells rang as we entered the Church. Only a few candles glowed which caused the icons to glisten. Breathtaking! The nuns sang a cappella, like angels singing praises to our Lord. Taking all of this in, I felt overwhelmed with emotion and a sense of peace. Following the service, we walked outside as the sun rose. What a magnificent way to start each day!

My time there has rejuvenated my faith. Being in Church, prayer, discussions and quiet time, opened my heart and mind which created personal growth in me. Another wonderful bonus was it enhanced friendships with my sisters in the faith.

God willing, I intend to return.

Pictured above at the monastery are: Jamie Amacci, Joan Calott, Linda Stanton, Jenny Hibberd, Yana Patridge, Kathleen Wendland, Sandra Anderson, Nicodimi Dokos, Stephanie Barakos, Cathy Selin, and Fr. George Dokos.
March for Life
by Larry Dunham

Have you ever been in a “march”? The March for Life has long been supported by Orthodox Christians. This year, members of St. Mary’s GOC, St. George’s GOC, St. Mary’s OCA, and St. Herman’s gathered to worship and march together in the annual March for Life on January 22. We marched to shine a light and share love together with hundreds more while holding high the banner “Orthodox Christians for Life.”

The March for Life reverently started with a Prayer Service for Life at the Cathedral of Saint Paul, led by Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda. This beautiful large Cathedral of St. Paul was filled with people young and old. Try to imagine a time of worship in a Cathedral filled with people of one accord.

After the service, we walked/marched to the Capitol, each person thoughtfully, reverently making their way, step-by-step to stand on the Capitol steps. Imagine the warmth that sustained the worshipers to embrace a cold January day. Think of singing “Amazing Grace” with a thousand spirit-filled Christians and other hymns of praise and to say “amen” to God’s word in support of life.

We joined more than a thousand marchers, young children to older marchers, holding signs “Protect Life,” “I am the Pro-life Generation,” “A Person Is a Person No Matter How Small” (this little marcher would not give up his sign), banners, and very, very heartfelt signs saying, “I regret my abortion.” We listened to testimonies of regret and hope, joined others in prayer and raised our voices singing “Amazing Grace” accompanied by bagpipes.

Please help us hold our banner high throughout the year that we may serve with prayers for our church and the community we serve dedicated to Orthodox Christians for Life.

The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops, January 31, 2019, “Statement on the Sanctity of Life” talks about “Christ is a beacon of hope in this challenging world... The Church is ever a mother – loving, understanding, nurturing, praying, and protecting all human life.”

May we march to “Christ’s beacon of Hope.”

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.”

—Jeremiah 1:5

Pictured above are (l to r): Nicholas Rother, Doria Saros, Presvytera Christa Dokos, Evie Dokos, Presvytera Jane Andrews, Ben Boyd, Fr. Rick Andrews, Larry Dunham, Fr. Jason Houck, Ina Dunham, and David Nelson.
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?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faith Group</th>
<th>0-5 Year Olds and Parents</th>
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<tr>
<td>➤ Wednesday, March 13</td>
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<td>➤ Thursday, March 28</td>
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<td>9:30-11:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Great Hall and Terrace Room</td>
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**HOPE and JOY**

*Kindergarten-Grade 2 and Grades 3-5*

➤ Sunday, March 3

11:45 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

The HOPE/JOY youth group will be in the Terrace Room participating in a service project.

* Please RSVP to Jon@stmarysgoc.org if you are planning to attend since there will be food.

**Junior GOYA**

*Grades 6-8*

➤ Wednesday, March 13

Following the Presanctified Liturgy, grab your food and meet in the Fireside Room! We will have fellowship and a discussion with one another.

➤ Wednesday, March 20

Following the Presanctified Liturgy, the 7th and 8th graders will be having Confession.

➤ Wednesday, March 27

Following the Presanctified Liturgy, grab your food and meet in the Fireside Room! We will have fellowship and a discussion with one another.

**Senior GOYA**

*Grades 9-12*

➤ Wednesday, March 13

Following the Presanctified Liturgy, the 11th and 12th graders will be having Confession.

➤ Wednesday, March 20

4:30-8:30 p.m.

Senior GOYA to host Lenten dinner

_For those planning on attending the Junior Olympics, you are asked to assist in preparing and serving the meal. More information to come!_

➤ Wednesday, March 27

Following the Presanctified Liturgy, the 9th and 10th graders will be having Confession.

*If a Senior GOYAn is interested in going on a home build to Houston with IOCC (August 3-10), please contact Jon@stmarysgoc.org.*

### January Recap

Back in January, the HOPE/JOY group tried bowling turkeys at Bowlero EP! The Junior and Senior GOYAns participated in the Pan-Orthodox Winter Camp at Camp St. Croix where they had fellowship with other Orthodox Christians, and learned how to enrich the different relationships that they have in their lives.

### Save the Date

**Senior GOYAn IOCC Homebuild in Houston, Texas**

August 3-10, 2019

E-mail Jon@stmarysgoc.org if interested

### 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.

Follow the GOYAns on Instagram: St_Marys_GOYA
On November 2-4 2018, a group of 86 volunteers participated in a Strategic Planning Retreat for benefit of the Metropolis and achieved consensus on the following statements of identity & purpose:

“Why” Statement (why we exist)
To receive and share unconditional love, mercy, healing and peace, so that life has greater meaning and purpose.

Mission Statement
The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago is a Christ-centered community that loves, guides, engages and serves all people.

Core Values
- Christ-centered
- Integrity
- Service
- Humility
- Love
- Merciful
- Spiritual development
- Adaptable

Vision Statement
In 3-5 years, we will grow our Metropolis family through greater:

- Fellowship & Welcoming
- Accountability
- Ministries & Education
- Innovation
- Leadership
- Involved Youth & Emerging Adults
- Engagement on Critical Issues
- Stewardship

We need your help!
Please visit http://chicago.goarch.org/strategic-planning and sign up to join a Strategic Planning Task Force by clicking the “Register to Participate” tab.
The Prayer of St. Ephraim

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk.

(Prostration)

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to your servant.

(Prostration)

Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother, for blessed are you unto ages of ages.

(Prostration)
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<th>Sunday</th>
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<td>8:30am-Orthros</td>
<td>9:30am-Divine Liturgy</td>
<td>11:45am-HOPE/JOY Service Project</td>
<td>6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice</td>
<td>7:00pm-Women’s Book Club</td>
<td>10:30am-Intercessory Prayer</td>
<td>11:00am-Women’s Bible Study</td>
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<td>6:00pm-Small Blessing of Water</td>
<td>6:15pm-Junior GOYA</td>
<td>6:30pm-Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>5:00pm-Great Vespers</td>
<td>5:30pm-Icon Class</td>
<td>5:00pm-Great Vespers</td>
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<td><strong>Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Clean Monday First Day of Great Lent</strong></td>
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<td>7:00pm-Greek Dance Practice</td>
<td>6:00pm-Parish Council</td>
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<td>4:00pm-Pan-Orthodox Vespers</td>
<td>6:00pm-Great Compline</td>
<td>6:30pm-Philoptochos Board</td>
<td>9:00am-“The Messenger” Mailing</td>
<td>10:30am-Intercessory Prayer</td>
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<td>11:00am-Women’s Bible Study</td>
<td>4:00pm-Holy Confession</td>
<td>5:45pm-Presanctified Liturgy</td>
<td>5:00pm-Great Vespers</td>
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<td>8:30am-Orthros</td>
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<td>Independence Day Program</td>
<td>4:00pm-Pan-Orthodox Vespers</td>
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