

The Cathedral Monthly Bulletin



St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral • A parish of the Orthodox Church in America • Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest • Founded in 1887

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Minneapolis, MN 55413

Pastoral Reflection

Reflection for the New Year: Seeking Christ in All Things

As we begin this New Year, I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to each of you. Whether you support all of us through your prayers, donations, volunteering, or sharing your talents, you are a necessary part of our church family. Some of you love listening to our services online, while others actively join us in worship or lend a helping hand through volunteering behind the scenes. Please know how appreciated you are. It is your faith, love, and dedication that make our cathedral a place of light and hope. Thank you for being part of this journey, and I warmly invite you to embrace the New Year with us as we grow together in the Lord.

As we step into this season of renewal, we are reminded of the opportunity to continuously turn our hearts and minds toward Christ. One of the first and most important steps we can take is to seek reconciliation with God, with others, and even with ourselves. Through regularly receiving the sacraments and a willingness to forgive, we open our hearts to God's healing. Even attempting to forgive is not merely an act but a journey that leads us to peace, humility, and a renewed relationship with the Lord. Let this be the year we embrace forgiveness and extend mercy to those around us, reflecting the love of Christ.

Central to our spiritual life is the cultivation of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, the three pillars of Orthodox Christian practice. Prayer strengthens our connection to God, fasting purifies our hearts, and almsgiving teaches us to love our neighbors as ourselves. These disciplines work together to shape us into vessels of God's love and mercy. As we prioritize these practices, let us approach them with sincerity and consistency, remembering that small, faithful steps often lead to depth of spiritual growth. Another vital aspect of our faith journey is participating in the life of the Church. Attending services regularly immerses us in the rhythm of worship, the gift of the sacraments, and the community of the faithful of St. Mary's. Outside of the services, we can deepen our faith through spiritual reading by learning the lives of the saints, the teachings of the church fathers and mothers, and Scripture itself. These sources not only nourish our souls but also inspire us to reflect on our purpose in life. What gifts has God given us? How can we use our talents to serve Him and others? By exploring our vocation and discerning God's will, we align our lives more fully with God's divine plan and enter into the mystery of discernment and our synonymous alignment of our will to His.

As we grow in our spiritual lives, let us also make room in our hearts for others. Hospitality is a cornerstone of the Christian life, and we are called to welcome and invite others into the life of the Church. This includes greeting newcomers with warmth, encouraging catechumens on their journey, and being attentive to those who may feel out of place or unsure. In doing so, we reflect the love of Christ, who invites all people to His heavenly banquet. Let this year be a time when we open our homes, our parishes, and our hearts to those seeking the light of Christ, showing them that they are not alone in their journey.

In this process of seeking God's will and extending love to others, we must cultivate trust in His care for us. Life's uncertainties can challenge our faith, but they also provide opportunities to rely more deeply on God's wisdom and love. As we navigate the joys and trials of the year ahead, let us hold fast to the hope of the risen Lord. Christ's victory over death assures us that no matter what we face, His light will always shine in the darkness.

May this New Year be a time of spiritual renewal, a season of growth in faith, hope, and love. Let us seek Christ in all things, trusting that He will guide us on the path of salvation. With hearts full of hope and hands open in welcome, let us journey together toward His eternal kingdom. Thank you for being part of our cathedral family. May the Lord bless and guide you in the year to come!

- Fr. Benjamin

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Wishing you and your family a Blessed Christmas and may 2025 bring peace, happiness, and good health to you and your family!

*The Manzuk Family
Will & Lynn Bjornnes
Dorothy Zurbey & Family
Bob & Jane Smith & Family
Agata McCutcheon & Family
Fr. Benjamin, Mat. Lisa & Phillip
Fr. Richard & Mat. Cassiane Flom
Nick, Pamela, Cassi, & Andy Boosalis
Greg, Briana & SusieMarie Maimares
Fr. Andrew, Mat. Alexandra & Family
Phil & Myra, Phil, Kim & Miles Toconita
Dan, Julie, Sophia, & Samuel Miller
Karen & Jack Schwebach Family
The Family of Dorothy O'Reilly
Mat. Virginia Lecko & Family
Todd & Madeline Pilacinski
Lorraine Parlow & Family
Jack & Barbara Leschisin
Ron & Deb Sterzinger
Irene & Jack Novak
James Varian*

NATIVITY OF CHRIST TROPARION

*Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, * has shone to the world the light of wisdom! For by it those who worshipped the stars * were taught by a star to adore Thee, * The Sun of righteousness, and to know Thee, the orient from on high. // O Lord, Glory to Thee!*

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

President's Column

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One! Angels with shepherds glorify Him! The wise men journey with a star! Since for our sake the Eternal God was born as a Little Child!

Today Thou hast shone forth to the world, O Lord, and the light of Thy countenance has been marked on us. Knowing Thee, we sing Thy praises: "Thou hast come and revealed Thyself, O unapproachable Light."

Wishing you many Blessings on the feasts of the Nativity of Our Lord and His Holy Theophany in the Jordan!

In Christ,

James Varian

Parish Home Improvement Project

An update of all the work done at both of the parish homes will be provided at the annual meeting in February 2025. Work has completed at the 414 17th Ave. N.E. home and renovation is approximately 3/4 completed at the 1630 5th St. NE home. Photos of the interior of both homes will be made available on display at the annual meeting in February.

Parish Self-Assessment

We have been asked to carry out a parish self-assessment by the Diocese and so the Board has set aside a Saturday morning in early January for as many of us as possible to reflect on Evangelization, Christian Education, Christian Service and Humanitarian Aid, Communication, and Liturgical Practice here at St. Mary's. We'll meet on Saturday, January 11, from 9 - 11:30 a.m. in the parish dining hall and our discussion will be facilitated by Alice Woog. The results will be documented and may lead to further discussion. Please join us for this constructive and interesting parish activity!

Choir Notes

January, the New Civic Year. An astute reader with a better memory than mine will doubtless remember that not long ago there was a New Church Year and, may worry that I'm just going to resubmit the article from then. Tempting, and it could almost be done! The church year begins with a Feast (the birth of the Theotokos) and the beginning of the Civic Year also begins with a Feast, two actually (the Circumcision and Theophany). For those who don't know, Theophany, which is Greek for something, has something to do with baptism and... a dove? Hm, I guess those of us with poor memories will have to go to church and see what this Greek word "Theophany" is all about, what an adventure! I'm sure our clergy will have all sorts of Wisdom Pearls to share on the subject (no pressure guys).

Back to the article. New years, new beginnings, birth, baptism, all sorts of parallels just sitting waiting for us to look so they can smack us in the face.

So, recruiting. We could really use more voices in the choir. Not that the ones we have aren't good enough, they're better than good enough. The current voices we have are simply angelic and great. But a person eventually runs out of jokes to tell, and if there aren't new people to tell them to, well, the jokes get kind of annoying. And I've made a resolution to be less annoying! So, I would like to encourage each of you readers to consider whether or not singing might be for you. Why wouldn't it be?

Well, maybe you're nervous. That's reasonable and understandable, singing is an incredibly personal thing and it can be scary to do it in front of other people, even if everyone else around you is singing too. But guess what, you have a wonderful voice, and the tiny community that makes up the choir is full of wonderful

people who are incredibly accepting, patient, and understanding. Hey, they put up with me, don't they? Give it a thought.

You know, we usually make resolutions because we have an idea of the person that we would like to be, somehow the person we are isn't good enough for us. Often, we focus on things, on whats. As a result, we put ourselves into a box, a natural thing for us to do as one of my church school students pointed out. Being what we are, the way we are, with needing to understand things in a logical way with labels, means we put labels on everything, including ourselves. Often these labels are accurate, only God knows us better than we know ourselves after all. But sometimes, we let the labels define who we are, which is kind of silly when you think about it. Who we are is not something that is definable with words. Words deal with whats' while who is something deeper. I challenge you to tell me who someone is without telling me what they are.

I'm one of those annoying Jack of All Trades people. Perhaps that explains my issues, there isn't really a single label that fits me. Maybe you find yourself in the same boat and don't think the label of singer will fit. But maybe it can? Maybe singing isn't what you are, but could it part of who you are?

Give it a thought. Happy New Year!

- Mark Wesche

January Birthdays - Many Years!

3 - Penny Peters	20 - Barbara Leschisin
11 - Jane Traikos	23 - Dan Balach
16 - Anna Memorich	28 - Darlene Felegy



Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

2025 Annual Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting will be on Sunday, February 23, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. in the Parish Center dining room. Stay tuned for more information. Members eligible to vote must have a '2025 Declaration of Membership' card on file in the Cathedral Office, and have been a member for six months (August 23, 2024).

2025 Declaration of Membership Cards & Letters

The 2025 Declaration of Membership cards/letters and times & talents survey were mailed out at the beginning of December. If you have not received your letter in the mail by the end of the second week in December, please contact the office at office@stmarysoca.org or (612) 781-7667. It may be that we do not have you in our records as a member, or do not have your current address on file. If you are moving, or have moved recently, please contact the church office with your new address.

2024 Annual Reports

It is that time of year when the Church Board asks the organizations of St. Mary's to submit their reports to the Church Office no later than Friday, January 17, 2025.

Perohi Update

Please consider spending a few hours on Monday and Tuesday mornings, twice a month to learn the art of Perohi making! **Our next work dates are January 20 & 21.** Set-up and food prep on Monday begins at 7:30 a.m., forming the filling at 9:00 a.m. Set-up and dough making on Tuesday begins at 7:30 a.m.,

rolling, cutting, filling, pinching, cooking, and packaging begins at 9:00 a.m. Contact Janice Strauss at jmbstrauss@gmail.com.

Grief & Loss Support Group

The group meets the last Wednesday of each month from 7:00-8:00 p.m. at St. Mary's OCA parish center following Vespers. Meeting Dates: January 29, & February 26. Questions? Please e-mail Joni at stmarysgriefgroup@gmail.com.

Cemetery Ice Candle Parastas

Annual Candle Parastas will be held Sunday, February 2, at the Cemetery Chapel (3025 Stinson Blvd. N.E.). Before the Parastas Service, which commences at 6:00 p.m., participants are encouraged to place candles at your chosen grave sites. These illuminations glowing in the darkness from their protective ice enclosures have been likened to a "very sacred bridge connecting a grave to the beyond." Come and witness yourself the light you could provide that defies all of winter's darkness. Cold tolerant votives available. Refreshments served afterwards in the chapel basement. Contact Mike Fredrikson (riksson@gmail.com) with any questions.

Adopt-A-Camper

Please visit: <https://give.mn/wyzz9g> to support St. Mary's OCA Youth - Adopt A Camper. Donations would allow families that may have multiple children or have a financial crisis the opportunity to go to camp. No obligation, just the ability to attend camp with their peers. The grant can not be paid directly to the individual but would be sent directly to vendors/invoice once approved.

2024 Yolka (Youth Christmas Program)



January - Youth & Families Calendar

JANUARY 1	Circumcision of the Lord, St. Basil the Great & New Year's Day! Great Vespers on Dec. 31 at 6:15 PM Divine Liturgy on January 1, 2025, at 10:00 AM	
JANUARY 6	THEOPHANY , Matins: 7:45AM; Liturgy: 9:00 AM	
JANUARY 12	11:00 am	Blessing of the Classrooms and Parish Center
	10:30-11:00	<i>Saints</i> Meeting, (Grade 6+), Stage
JANUARY 17-20	Weekend	Winter Camp , Grades 6-12, Camp Courage
JANUARY 25	TBD	<i>Saints</i> , Philanthropy, Candle Making, (Grade 6+)
JANUARY 26	11:00 am	Classroom Choir , Pre-2nd, Classroom
	11:45 am	Youth Leadership Meeting calendar for June-September, Board Room

Theophany House Blessings

It is the custom of many Orthodox Christians to have their homes blessed during the Theophany season with water blessed during the special festal services. When the parish priest comes to bless a home, he uses an ancient prayer of the Church asking the Lord, "to keep safe from all harm those who dwell here, bestowing on them Thy blessing, purification, and bodily health, and granting all their petitions which are for their salvation and eternal life."

We prepare an appropriate place in our homes for the very short service to be sung: a table should be prepared with a clean white cloth, a bowl with holy water, a candle, and an icon or a cross. The priest himself will have holy water, candles, and an icon with him, in case they are needed. A list of the baptismal names of everyone in the family is useful because we sing Many Years at the end of the House Blessing. Televisions and radios ought to be turned off, of course. A member of the family may carry the bowl of holy water and lead the priest through the house as we bless and sing.

At one time, the parish priest would come to every house in the parish as a matter of course, and the days following Theophany would see a veritable parade up and down streets in the neighborhood. It was a festive time and a time for visiting. Alas! Times and circumstances have changed, and houses are only blessed upon specific request. You can make such a request by

filling out the form below and submitting it to the parish office. At the very least people should collect Holy Water at church, bring a jar or some sort of container, from January 6 - 17, to use prayerfully at home.

House Blessing 2025

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone: (Home) _____

(Cell) _____

(E-Mail) _____

Best Days or Dates To Come:

(During the Day) _____

(In the Evening) _____



Winter Camp 2025

For 6th—12th graders

Jan 17 –20@ Friends at Camp Courage
Maple Lake, MN

Made in the Image and Likeness

Seeking to understand our true self in Jesus Christ.

Cost: \$270

To register visit: <https://bit.ly/registerwintercamp>

Deadline to register is Dec. 30th. \$30 late payment fee.

Cost: \$270 Payment info: <https://bit.ly/paywintercamp>

Or send a check to St. Mary's

c/o Lisa Tucci

414 17th Ave

Minneapolis, MN 55413

Contact: Matushka Lisa Tucci

lisatucci71@gmail.com

612-599-0814

Venmo



Update Contact Information

Moving or have a change of phone number or email? Please contact the Church Office with your new address contact information (office@stmarysoca.org or 612-781-7667).

Church Envelopes

Please contact the Church Office if you want to: (a) receive envelopes weekly or monthly; (b) stop envelopes; (c) combine envelopes (e.g., to receive only one set per household); (d) correct information on the envelope (including the title, e.g., from Mrs. to Mr. & Mrs.).

Visitation Ministry

The Visitation Ministry is continually updating its list of parishioners who are homebound or in nursing homes and would like to be on our Visitation List. If you or a loved one is a member of St. Mary's and physically unable to attend church and church activities and would enjoy a visit or telephone call from a member of our Visitation Committee, please notify the Church Office (612-781-7667).

Calendars for 2025

Thank you to Kozlak-Radulovich Funeral Chapels for their generous donation of the 2025 calendars. Please pick up yours today at the Cathedral or Parish Center.

Coffee Hour Update: Hosts Needed

To sign-up to host Coffee Hour visit: <https://bit.ly/coffee-hour-signup>. Please visit the sign-up and see if there is a Sunday you can volunteer to host. In the event that no one signs up for a given Sunday, we will still have a Coffee Hour, but only have coffee available. For more information about Coffee Hour and volunteering/hosting contact our new Coffee Hour Coordinator Agata McCutcheon (agatamcc@gmail.com). Thank you!

Service Cancellation Policy

- No one should travel to church for services if the road conditions are dangerous.
- No services will be cancelled. Most services will be live streamed (links available on our website).
- Those who cannot get to services should instead stay home, watch the live stream of the service if possible, and be happy in the knowledge that a priest and a chanter are singing the services and praying for them.
- Cancellation of services and activities will be posted on our website: www.stmarysoca.org.

Many Years!

Happy Birthday to all who celebrate their birthdays in January and especially to Dorothy Zurbey who is celebrating her 94th birthday on January 10, and John Leschisin who is celebrating his 92nd birthday on January 23. May God grant you many years!



Article deadline for the
February 2025
Cathedral Monthly Bulletin
is **Monday, January 17.**

New Member Applicants

In accordance with the Bylaws, Article IV, Section 3: Notice of the new member application shall be published in the next monthly *Bulletin*. The following individual(s) have submitted an application for membership to St. Mary's: *Anastasia Micich*. If you have any comment pertaining to any applicant, please submit it to any Board member during this 45-day period, which began with the publication of this *Bulletin*.

Membership Documents

A box to collect completed documents and extra copies of membership cards, times & talents surveys, membership applications, & ACH forms, is available in the parish center dining room. Please return items to the collection box, in the collection plate in the Cathedral, or by mailing it to the Cathedral Office. Questions? Contact the Cathedral Office.

Flower Chart 2025

The 2025 flower chart to sign-up for Sunday flowers is available online at: <https://bit.ly/flowersignup>. When signing up, enter your contact information (name & email), and for whom or what the occasion is (ex. in memory of John Doe). You may order flowers from your favorite florist and have them delivered (before 3 p.m.) on the Friday before to St. Mary's Parish Center, 1701 5th St NE, or you may bring the flowers to Saturday Vespers or before Sunday Liturgy.

If you would like a donation or memorial you've made to be published, please be sure to write "to be published" or "publish" on the donation. In the event that a memorial or donation that you requested to be published has not been published, please contact the Cathedral Office.

St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral

January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Circumcision of Christ St. Basil the Great 10:00 am Divine Liturgy 6:15 pm Vespers	2 St. Seraphim 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	3	4 5:00 pm Great Vespers
5 Forefeast of Theophany 7:45 am Matins 9:00 am Divine Liturgy w/ Blessing of Water 11:00 am Church School 11:00 am Coffee Hour 7:00 pm Vespers & Litiya	6 Holy Theophany 7:45 am Festal Matins 9:00 am Festal Liturgy 6:15 pm Great Vespers	7 Synaxis of the Forerunner 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	8 6:15 pm Vespers 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	9 Hieromartyr Philip of Moscow 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 6:00 pm Orthodox Guys' Night	10	11 9:00 am Parish Self-Assessment 2:30 pm Wedding 5:00 pm Great Vespers
12 Afterfeast 7:45 am Matins 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 10:30 am Saints Meeting 11:00 am Church School	13	14	15 6:15 pm Vespers 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	16 Precious Chains of Apostle Peter 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	17	18 5:00 pm Great Vespers <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> St. Mary's Winter Camp: January 17-20 </div>
19 30th Sunday after Pentecost Parastas Sunday 7:45 am Matins 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 11:00 am Church School	20 7:30 am Perohi Making 7:00 pm Board Meeting	21 7:30 am Perohi Making	22 6:15 pm Vespers 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	23 St. Paulinus of Nola 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	24	25 Time TBD Saints Event 5:00 pm Great Vespers
26 31st Sunday after Pentecost 7:45 am Matins 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 11:00 am Church School 11:00 am Classroom Choir 11:45 am Youth Leadership Meeting	27	28	29 6:15 pm Vespers 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Grief Group	30 Three Hierarchs 9:00 am Divine Liturgy	31	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> Schedule is subject to change. Please check the Messenger or www.stmarysoca.org </div>

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