



THE Veil

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
ST. MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

DECEMBER 2025
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In This Issue



**Capital
Campaign
Update: Strong
Support,
Continued
Discernment**

PAGE 4

**Parishioner
Honored by MLA**

PAGE 4

**Parish Safety
Team Begins
Service**

PAGE 5

**Giving to Each
Other and to our
Community**

PAGE 5

**Faces of Our
Parish**

PAGE 6

**Strengthening
our Parish
through Realm
Connect**

PAGE 7

...and more inside!

Glory to God in the Highest! Peace on Earth! Good Will Toward Men!

FR. DAVID SUBU

"Brothers and sisters,

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Several times over the last week, I have heard Orthodoxy described as an "embodied" faith. One cannot truly be Orthodox in the abstract. It is only made real by living in community, participating in the sacraments, practicing virtues with bodily effort and asceticism, acts of charity that go beyond thoughts and prayers. Everything we do is "in the flesh." We do this in part because that is where we live our real lives, even if during much of the day our real bodies are parked in front of digital interfaces with a virtual world. We also live this way because God Himself came down from heaven and now participates with us, in the flesh, through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The full human nature, body and soul, flesh and spirit, that we all have, is now shared by the uncreated and true God who was born of a Virgin for us and for our salvation. This profound mystery which sanctifies and illumines the very nature not only of our humanity but of the entire creation is what we are celebrating at Christmas. I give thanks to the Lord for his ineffable condescension for us and I give thanks for all of you

being participants of that mystery—locally, humbly, and truly in the local parish. Your faithfulness and fellowship are the embodiment of the continuing mystery of our salvation in Christ.

I have been overwhelmed lately (in a good way!) by the sincere engagement, attendance, generosity, kindness, dedication, and other examples of embodied faith I have seen in all of you over the course of this last year. Glory be to God in the highest! I am inspired by the genuine love I see between people who might never otherwise know each other or cross paths, and the tolerance for diversity of thought, personality, and idiosyncrasy (especially for my own!) Even though the broader world does not show it, the parish reveals to me what "Peace on Earth, good will towards men!" looks like. May we continue to be pleasing unto God in the new year to come and work together to fulfill His good will towards our community and to those whom we will serve as a result.

May God bless all of you, our families, our friends, and especially our enemies, with a beautiful, peaceful, healing Christmas!"

-Fr. David



Saint Mary
ORTHODOX CHURCH

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God Grant You Many Years!

Don't see your name? Join us on Realm and fill out your profile. If you include your birthday and nameday, you'll see them here.

BIRTHDAYS

Petra A.
Jeff B.
Amy B.
Jehan C.
Phoebe D.
Will D.
Michaela D.
Tim E.
Anthony F.
Libby H.
Lori J.
Kai J.

Sue K.
Vincenzo K.
Nicholas M.
Chrstina M.
Eleni W.
George W.
Angie Z.

NAMESDAYS

Dec. 2 — St. Phorphyrios
Dec. 6 — St. Nicholas
Dec. 9 — St. Anna
Dec. 13 — St. Herman of Alaska, St. Lucia
Dec. 14 — St. Eugene, St. Nathan
Dec. 15 — Righteous Sarah
Dec. 17 — St. Daniel
Dec. 20 — St. Ignatius, St. John of Kronstadt
Dec. 31 — St. Melanie
Dec. 21 — Sunday of the Holy Forefathers (Foremother Eve, St. Ruth, St. Esther, St. Joseph)
Dec. 24 — St. Adele
Dec 27 — St. Stephen

ANNIVERSARIES

William & Allison J.

Pray for Our Parish

Prayer for Divine Guidance and Discernment

O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, Who are the Way, the Truth, and the Life, send down Your Holy Spirit upon Your servants in this holy parish. Illumine the hearts and minds of the clergy and the entire parish council that they may discern Your will with clarity and wisdom. Grant us the grace to seek not our own desires, but Your divine and perfect will in all matters concerning the growth of Your Holy Church and the building of a new Temple. Preserve us from hasty decisions and human error. Guide our steps to glorify Your all-holy Name, and to serve Your people with faithfulness. For You are the Giver of all good things, and to You we ascribe glory, with Your Father Who is without beginning, and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.



January

2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28 9am-11:30am Matins & Divine Liturgy of St. James	29	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE 7pm-8pm: Great Vespers & Te Deum	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY/CIRCUMCISION OF THE LORD/ST. BASIL THE GREAT 10:30am-12pm: St. Basil Liturgy	2 ST. JULIANA THE MERCIFUL	3 5-6pm: Great Vespers
4 9am-11:30am Matins & Divine Liturgy	5 EVE OF THEOPHANY (STRICT FAST) 10am-11:30am: Royal Hours of Theophany 6pm-8pm: Vespers Liturgy of Theophany with Blessing of Waters	6 THEOPHANY (FAST-FREE) 10:30am-11:30am: Divine Liturgy with the Blessing of the Waters	7 ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST	8	9 3pm-4pm Philokalia Book Study 7-8pm: HB: Arlington	10 12pm-3pm: St. John Dinner Prep 5-6pm: Great Vespers
11 9am-11:30am Matins & Divine Liturgy 12pm-1pm St. John Dinner	12 7-9pm: Parish Council	13	14 ST. NINA 7am-8am: Divine Liturgy	15	16 3pm-4pm Philokalia Book Study 6:30-8pm: Women's Bible Study	17 ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT 8-10am: Men's Fellowship 3-4:30pm: Adult Catechism 5-6pm: Great Vespers
18 9am-11:30am Matins & Divine Liturgy	19	20	21 ST. MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR 7am-8am: Divine Liturgy	22	23 3pm-4pm Philokalia Book Study	24 ST. KSENIA 2-8pm: Wedding: Cheshire
25 9am-11:30am Matins & Divine Liturgy	26	27	28 SS. EPHRAIM & ISAAC THE SYRIAN 7am-8am: Divine Liturgy	29	30 THREE HOLY HIERARCHS 3pm-4pm Philokalia Book Study	31 11am-1pm Baptism: Shin 3pm-4:30pm Adult Catechism I: The Faith 5-6pm Great Vespers

Visit stmaryorthodox.org/calendar for the most updated event listings.

Capital Campaign Update: Strong Support, Continued Discernment

DAVID D. | PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

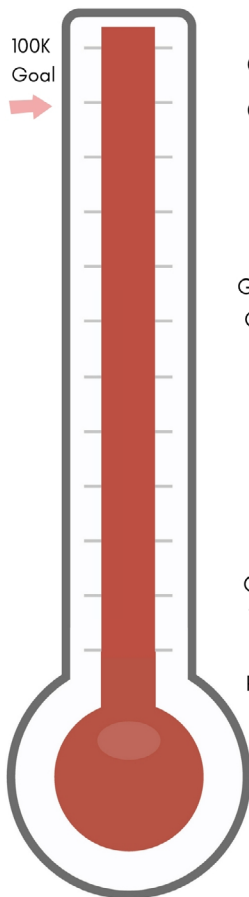
St. Mary's parishioners have continued to generously support our capital campaign. We have significantly exceeded our \$100,000 goal for 2025, thanks to many donations during the Advent season. I appreciate the trust in the parish council and Father David this reflects, particularly given the economic uncertainty facing many here in northern Virginia.

Unfortunately, another party has provided an all-cash offer to the sellers of the property at 5610 Inverchapel Road. We were excited by this

potential purchase as the site met several (though not all) of the needs of our growing parish. To purchase this property, though, we would have had to add multiple contingencies to the sales contract, including county approval of a special permit, successful site studies, parish/episcopate approval, and sale of our existing properties. The seller's preference for an all-cash offer without contingencies is not surprising.

We continue to investigate multiple alternatives, but in the meantime ask that you continue to pray for us

and relay advice to Father, to me, and to the parish council. We also need to further develop our "war chest" of available funds, which will be required regardless of what future expansion or relocation option we take. This year's success in meeting our goals means we continue to make progress towards building or purchasing an attractive space adequate to our parish size and needs. ✠



**GROWING PARISH.
GROWING VISION.**

WE DID IT!

THANKS TO YOUR
GENEROSITY, WE MET BOTH
OUR MATCHING GOAL AND
WELL-EXCEEDED OUR
\$100K GOAL.

THANK YOU!

THERE IS STILL TIME TO
CONTRIBUTE TO OUR
CAPITAL FUND BEFORE THE
YEAR-END--EACH DOLLAR
BRINGS US CLOSER TO A
REVAMPED PARISH HOME!



Saint Mary
ORTHODOX CHURCH

Parishioner Honored by MLA

St. Mary Parishioner Jonathan Chaves, professor of Chinese at George Washington University, received an honorable mention from the Modern Language Association for his translation work on *The Same Moon Shines on All: The Lives and Selected Poems of Yanagawa Seigan and Kōran*, published by Columbia University Press. The MLA recognized Chaves's elegant translations—presented with facing original texts—as part of a landmark volume that brings nineteenth-century Sino-Japanese poetry into English for the first time in a comprehensive way. The work highlights the rich literary tradition of Literary Sinitic in Japan and was praised for conveying the beauty, cultural significance, and social vitality of poetic exchange during a period of profound historical change. ✠

Parish Safety Team Begins Service

IOANA M. | PARISHIONER

Beginning December 21st, St. Mary's will have a dedicated Safety Team in place to help ensure the well-being of all parishioners during services and fellowship hour. You will notice volunteer Safety Officers wearing yellow/green vests.

Each Sunday, seven trained volunteer Safety Officers will be positioned strategically throughout the church, including:

- Main entrances
- Side entrances
- Right and left sides of the church
- Fellowship Hall
- Outdoor grounds

Their role is to observe and respond to potential concerns such as suspicious behavior, crowd management needs, spills or hazards, and to provide initial assistance until help arrives.

To further enhance safety, beginning December 21st, all side doors will be locked at 10:00 AM. After that time, entry into the church will be through the main door only. We kindly ask for your understanding and cooperation as we implement these measures for the protection of our parish community.

The Safety Team exists to ensure a safe, secure, and welcoming environment for all who gather for worship, fellowship, and ministry. Team members serve by monitoring the facility,

supporting emergency preparedness, and responding to incidents with care and professionalism. Both Volunteer Medical Safety Officers and Volunteer Non-Medical Safety Officers contribute essential skills to promote the health, safety, and well-being of the congregation.

If you are interested in learning more or getting involved, please talk with Volunteer Coordinator Ioana M. Thank you for your support and partnership in keeping our church a safe and welcoming place for everyone. ✝

Giving to Each Other and to Our Local Community

ILEANA C. | PARISHIONER

On December 13, 2025, St. Mary's had its first Gift Exchange Party, also called the Swap Meet. Parishioners brought items they had at home but no longer needed to the Fellowship Hall, and then parishioners shopped for donated items that they needed or wanted. It was a great opportunity to exchange clothes and shoes for children, women, and men; accessories like belts, purses, and work bags; adult and children's books on a wide variety of subjects; toys, games, and puzzles; and even electronics and other household items like food processors, printers, fans, microwaves, and chairs! Living in the D.C. area is expensive, and this Gift Exchange Party made it easier for parishioners to share with each other and stretch their hard-earned dollars. We will donate what was not taken by parishioners, so that others in our local community outside our parish can also be the recipients of your generosity. The

Gift Exchange Group plans to have another party in the spring during Lent, which will give parishioners another opportunity to share items found during their spring cleaning, but we also have an active group in Realm that donates individual items on an ongoing basis. If

you are interested in seeing and claiming those wonderful individual items, please join the group in Realm. And please be on the lookout for an all-parish announcement for the spring rendition of the Gift Exchange Party, so you can donate and collect even more treasured items for your



Faces of Our Parish

JENNI S. | PARISHIONER

Lacie asked me to give a “brief summary” of my faith journey. I once told it to a bunch of cloistered Catholic nuns and it took 90 minutes. That was over 10 years and 3 (or 4?) denominations ago.

When I told Fr. David I wanted to enter the catechumenate, he asked me why. I said: “Because I’ve been everywhere else and this is all that’s left.”

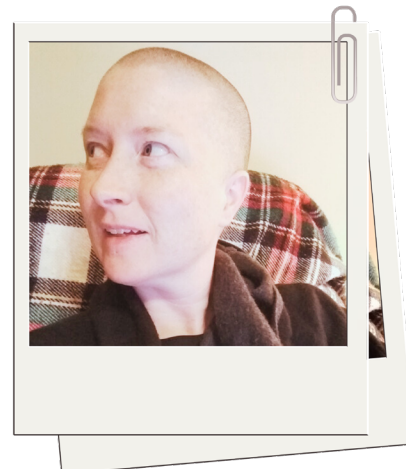
But when people ask me in passing whether I’m “cradle or convert”, I tell them I came from Catholicism, because that’s really where my faith was formed. I was a traditionalist (Latin Mass) Catholic, and I conducted almost all of my Masters and doctoral research on the Catholic Church. For my thesis, I inter-

viewed nuns about their experience of hearing God’s call to their vocation. For my dissertation, I interviewed priests about their experience of preaching.

I have a friend in national security who jokes that if they ever need advice on how to infiltrate the Vatican, they’ll call me. Which is a shame, cuz I could really use some of that sweet federal consulting money.

From the time I was a wee lass, I knew God made me to write. My writing was praised from a very young age. I won some awards. It carried me through my tortured teenage years. But then...

I realized 99% of writers struggle to make ends meet, so I got a bunch of degrees so I could do research writing.



Which led me into consulting. Then into research—consulting. Because I’ve had so much career trauma in my life, I specialized in what secular academics call “work and careers”, which Christians call “vocation”. My degrees are actually super useful to organizations, but it’s very difficult to convince them of that, so even with my fancy degrees, I spent lots of time unemployed.

After my last layoff, I was sick of being unemployed, so when I got the idea to start Pray the News, I just did it. I find it kinda’ funny now (in the breaks-your-heart sort of way) that I spent all those years developing research and consulting and corporate collaboration skills just so God could flush them all down the toilet and say, “My gifts are sufficient for you.”

There’s a Yiddish saying I consider the motto of my life: Der Mensch tracht und Gott lacht. Man plans and God laughs. (It sounds better in Yiddish cuz it rhymes.)

Anyway, Pray the News is what I do now. I write all day, every day, except when I’m at church. Lacie also asked me to tell you some of my “volunteer work/extracurriculars”, at which I literally LOLd. I work 80-hour weeks. But since I can’t go straight from my computer to sleep, I do read a murder mystery every night for 20–120 minutes, depending on how long before bed I took my nightly dose of Benadryl for Allergies.

Which, right now, is about an hour ago. So... it’s time for Inspector Pel. ✕

Why We're Giving!

"For many years, St. Mary's has been seeking to make our building accessible to people with disabilities and to expand our capacity. Due to dramatically escalating costs for renovating our building, we are considering new options, including the possibility of moving to a new facility. Although we don't have concrete plans yet, one thing is certain -- we will need funds to accomplish our goals. Irene and I plan to donate to the capital campaign now because St. Mary's is our home and we believe in contributing to its future, no matter what God has in store for us!"



-Dn. Ken Liu

Strengthening Our Parish Life Through Realm Connect

LACIE F. | COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

As our parish continues to grow—welcoming new families, expanding ministries, and deepening our life together in Christ—it is increasingly important that we stay well connected and communicate clearly with one another. Realm Connect, our parish database and communication platform, plays a vital role in helping us do just that by supporting everything from parish records and communications to ministry coordination and volunteer engagement.

When information in Realm is accurate and up to date, we are better able to reach parishioners by both email and traditional mail, share timely announcements, and keep everyone informed about parish life. Just as importantly, reliable data helps parish leadership understand how our community is growing, how our spaces are being used, and where additional care or resources may be needed, allowing us to plan wisely and respond thoughtfully to the needs of our parish family.

As more of us fully integrate into Realm, it also strengthens our ability to provide meaningful, timely support to one another. Whether walking alongside catechumens preparing for reception into the Church, celebrating families welcoming new little ones, or offering care and compassion to parishioners navigating the loss of a loved one, having clear and current information helps us respond with greater attentiveness and care as a community.

Because of this, keeping Realm current truly matters. For Realm to serve our parish well, it depends on complete and accurate parishioner information. We warmly encourage every household to take a few moments to review and update their Realm profile—confirming

contact details, household information, and ministry involvement. Even small updates make a meaningful difference in how effectively we can communicate, plan, and care for one another.

Realm also strengthens our ministries by making it easier for leaders and volunteers to stay organized and connected. Its group and volunteer tools support scheduling, communication, and coordination, helping ministries function more smoothly. Parishioners will soon be invited to complete quarterly skills and interests surveys, which will allow ministry leaders to better match gifts and talents with real ministry needs, while also being mindful not to overburden those who are already serving in many ways.

Several members of our clergy and staff—including Fr. David, Psia. Stephanie, and Communications Manager Lacie—attended the ACS Technologies conference in October in Nashville, Ten-

nessee, where they received hands-on training in Realm's capabilities. Psia. Stephanie, in particular, has become a valued in-house resource, and the team is eager to help parishioners and ministry leaders make the most of Realm's features for the good of our parish.

As part of this effort, you will also hear more about a planned Realm audit in preparation for our annual parish meeting, along with simple tutorials designed to make using Realm easier and more intuitive. All of these steps build on one shared foundation: keeping parish information accurate and up to date.

Thank you for being part of a parish that values connection, care, and thoughtful stewardship. By taking a few minutes to review your Realm profile, you help strengthen communication, ministry, and community life for everyone. ✙



Recycling Update

ELLEN R. | PARISHIONER

As we continue our quest to help beautify our earth and do as little polluting as we can, we are proud to say that the 2025 can collection has brought in over \$200. That does not sound like much, but we got those funds from just saving aluminum beverage cans and taking them to be recycled. We also continue to take glass to be recycled. We will look forward to other ways to help the environment in 2026 and hope you are all doing what you are able to, at your homes. ✝



THE Veil

The Official Newsletter of the Protection of the Holy Mother of God Orthodox Church
Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, Orthodox Church in America (OCA)

Hierarchy: Archbishop NATHANIEL of Detroit | Parish Priest: V. Rev. Dr. Fr. David G. Subu
Deacons: Protodn. Peter Danilchick, Dn. Nicholas Dujmovic, Dn. Kenneth Liu | Choir Director & Head Chanter: Sdn. Nicholas Jones
Subdeacons: Eugene Huang, Nicholas Jones, Bogdan Maxim, Anthony Freude | Parish Council President: David Dill
7223 Roosevelt Ave, Falls Church, Virginia 22042 | Office: (703) 280-0770 | stmaryorthodox.org



Following the Feast of Theophany, it is our longstanding Orthodox tradition to invite the blessing of holy water into our homes as we begin the new year. During this annual home blessing season, Fr. David visits parishioners' homes to pray with families and ask God's blessing upon all who dwell there. Please keep an eye out for the upcoming schedule, which will be shared soon. In the meantime, parishioners are welcome to coordinate with neighbors or nearby families and to contact Fr. David if there is a particular date you would like him to reserve on his calendar.