



THE Veil

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
ST. MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH
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2025 Year in Review: A Vision for Growth and Stewardship

FR. DAVID SUBU

Our Annual Parish Assembly will be held on March 1st this year, rescheduled due to the winter storm we endured recently. The Assembly provides a powerful moment to reflect on a year of significant transformation at St. Mary's. As we look back on 2025, the theme that emerges is one of transition—moving from a period of stabilizing our foundations to a bold "re-visioning" of our future.

A Vibrant Liturgical and Sacramental Life

The heartbeat of our parish remains the Altar. In 2025, our clergy maintained a rigorous liturgical cycle. We were blessed to witness the growth of the Body of Christ through 14 Baptisms, 2 Chrismations, and many new Catechumens. These numbers are more than just statistics; they represent new souls joined to Christ and a growing generation of Orthodox Christians in our community. This trend appears to continue into the foreseeable future, something which is happening across the country in the Orthodox Church.

Strategic Growth: From Hall to Temple

The most significant shift this year involves our physical future. Due to an influx of approximately 35 new members, the Parish Council and Building Committee have determined that our previous plans for a simple hall expansion are no longer sufficient (even if we could afford it). To

accommodate our trajectory, we are now seeking a larger property and a significantly larger temple design. To make this a reality, we have set a strategic capital goal of \$2 million in liquid reserves to ensure we can act decisively when the right opportunity arises.

Stewardship and Financial Peace

To support this vision, we have partnered with Bill Marianes of Stewardship Calling. Our focus is shifting toward a culture of percentage-based giving, moving away from a reliance on a small group of donors toward a model where every household experiences the joy of the tithe. Complementing this, we reintroduced Financial Peace University to help our families achieve personal financial stability, enabling them to "live and give like no other."

Immediate Improvements: The St. Olga House

While we plan for a larger campus, we are taking immediate steps to alleviate crowding on our current property. The "Roosevelt House" is being transformed into the St. Olga House, which will serve as our administrative and ministry center. By moving the Priest's office and archives next door, we are reclaiming vital space in the Church School for our youth.

Cont'd on pg. 7



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

March

Laila C.
 Roland C.
 Pdsa. Tanya D.
 Sophia D.
 Pete D.
 Harrison E.
 Joshua F.
 Gabriel F.
 Edward H.
 Kieran H.
 Sarah J.
 Emilia J.
 Sarah J.
 Renee L.
 Michael M.

Sdn. Bogdan M.
 Clara M.
 Alexandra M.
 Luca S.
 Nadine T.
 Lydia T.
 Emilia Z.



NAMESDAYS

Mar. 5 — St. Kieran of Saighir (Ireland)
 Mar. 10 — St. Galina the Martyr
 Mar. 21 — St. Christian of Cologne
 Mar. 25 — St. Mary the Mother of God
 Mar. 26 — Archangel Gabriel

ANNIVERSARIES

David & Amy D.



BUILD OUR LEGACY



CHECK OUT OUR NEW LEGACY GIVING PAGE

Scan To Learn More



Support the parish's future

How You Can Help:

- Planned giving through beneficiary designations & bequests
- Estate planning
- ...and more!

<https://www.stmaryorthodox.org/legacy-giving>



From the Pastor's Desk



Need to chat? Whether you're seeking a home blessing, pastoral guidance and care, exploring Orthodoxy, or simply need a place to share what's on your heart, let's talk.

Visit <https://calendly.com/frdavid-p308/> or scan here to get on Fr. David's calendar!





March

2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY Matins & Divine Liturgy (Hosted by A-Di) 9-11:30am Parish Assembly (& Children's Movie) 12:30pm-2pm	2	3	4 Confessions 6-7pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 7-8:30pm	5	6 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 10:30am-12pm Philokalia Book Study 3-4pm Akathist 6-7pm	7 Financial Peace University 10-11:30am Adult Catechism 3-4:30pm Great Vespers 5-6pm
Great Lent February 23-April 11						
8 Matins & Divine Liturgy (Hosted by Do-Ke) 9-11:30am Church School 11:30am-1pm	9	10	11 Confessions 6-7pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 7-8:30pm	12	13 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 10:30am-12pm Philokalia Book Study 3-4pm Akathist 6-7pm	14 Financial Peace University 10-11:30am Adult Catechism 3-4:30pm Great Vespers 5-6pm
Great Lent February 23-April 11						
15 Matins & Divine Liturgy (Hosted by Kh-P) 9-11:30am Church School 11:30am-1pm	16	17	18 Confessions 6-7pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 7-8:30pm	19	20 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 10:30am-12pm Philokalia Book Study 3-4pm Akathist 6-7pm 3:30-8pm: Women's Bible Study	21 10am-11:30pm: Financial Peace University 3-4:30pm: Adult Catechism 5-6pm: Great Vespers
Great Lent February 23-April 11						
22 Matins & Divine Liturgy (Hosted by Q-Z) 9-11:30am Church School 11:30am-1pm	23	24	25 ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS Confessions 6-7pm Vespers Liturgy 7-8:30pm	26	27 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 10:30am-12pm Philokalia Book Study 3-4pm Akathist 6-7pm	28 Financial Peace University 10am-11:30pm 5-6pm: Great Vespers with Group Confession
Great Lent February 23-April 11						
29 Matins & Divine Liturgy (All-Parish) 9-11:30am OCMC Soup Luncheon 11:30am-1pm Church School 11:30am-1pm	30	31	1 6-7pm: Confessions 7-8:30pm: Pre-Sanctified Liturgy	2	3 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 10:30am-12pm Philokalia Book Study 3-4pm	4 LAZARUS SATURDAY Lazarus Day Retreat @ 10am
Great Lent February 23-April 11						

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

Reel Women: A Year in Review

ANNA C & CHRISTINA J. | PARISHIONERS

For decades, I had almost forgotten the pure, unadulterated thrill of my youth: the magic of going out to the movies. There is nothing quite like the big-screen experience—munching on popcorn and M&Ms, browsing before the show, and feeling that electric buzz as you dissect every scene with friends afterward.

Joining Reel Women has been an unexpected and beautiful homecoming. It's more than a nostalgic return to those "nights out"; it has become the pulse of my month. Together, we've explored incredible films I never would have discovered—or chosen—on my own. Along the way, we've developed little rituals that enhance the experience: shopping before the film, dinner before or after, lively conversations, and a group photo in front of the movie poster.

Here is the vibrant collection of films our group shared throughout 2024–2025:

January: A Real Pain

Cousins played by Jesse Eisenberg and Kieran Culkin travel to Warsaw to honor their late grandmother's final wish. They join a Jewish American heritage tour to explore their ancestral roots and the history of the Holocaust. The journey becomes a poignant attempt to reconcile their family's past with the trauma carried across generations.

February: A Complete Unknown

This film explores the early career of American singer-songwriter Bob Dylan, portrayed beautifully by Timothée Chalamet. Focusing on the years 1961–1965, it captures the artists who emerged during that era and is filled with raw, authentic renditions of songs by Bob Dylan and Joan Baez.

April: The Ballad of Wallis Island

Whimsical and funny, this is the tale of an eccentric lottery winner, Charles, who lives on a remote island. After the death of his wife, he clings to the dream of

bringing his favorite pop musician, Herb McGwyer, to the island for a private performance.

May: The President's Wife

Catherine Deneuve stars as Bernadette Chirac, the marginalized wife of French President Jacques Chirac. Sidelined as an old-fashioned spouse, she decides to take control of her own narrative. The film follows her transformation into a savvy media figure and powerful political strategist.

June: The Phoenician Scheme

A 2025 comedy-drama written and directed by Wes Anderson, the film centers on the eccentric and semi-shady industrialist Anatole "Zsa-zsa" Korda (played by Benicio del Toro) and his attempt to reconcile with his estranged daughter.

August: Superman

Written and directed by James Gunn, this film launched the new DC Universe (DCU). Starring David Corenswet as Superman and Rachel Brosnahan as Lois Lane, it was released in July 2025 and reintroduces the legendary DC Comics superhero for a new generation.

September: The Roses

The Roses is a retelling of the 1989 film *The War of the Roses*, which was based on the 1981 novel by Warren Adler. One of the film's greatest strengths is its stellar cast, including Olivia Colman and Benedict Cumberbatch.

October: After the Hunt

Set within the rarefied atmosphere of Yale academia, the film centers on Alma (Julia Roberts), a shrewd and guarded philosophy professor, and her psychiatrist husband.

November: Roman Holiday

It was a pure delight to see the original film starring Gregory Peck as an American journalist and Audrey Hepburn as a European princess visiting Rome.

December: Hamnet (Golden Globe winner and Oscar nominee)

Directed by Chloé Zhao, *Hamnet* is a historical drama centered on William Shakespeare and his wife, focusing on the tragic death of their only son. Jessie Buckley portrays Agnes, the gifted and free-spirited healer, and Paul Mescal plays the young William Shakespeare. The film is a true masterpiece. ✨



Reflections on the Theme of Catharsis at Doxacon 2025

AMY D. | PARISHIONER

At the close of the final event at Doxacon in November, an attendee made a comment to me that summarized the entire convention: “True catharsis begins when the story ends.” The theme for Doxacon this year was catharsis, and not just in a literary or modern sense. The word catharsis stems from an ancient Greek word that means to purge or cleanse. In Aristotle’s poetics, catharsis is a cleansing of fear or pity that happens in the audience members at the end of a tragedy. Catharsis can also take place in the fictional characters themselves. At Doxacon, the speakers took catharsis in a different direction and spoke about how suffering can lead one to a purging of sins, a spiritual catharsis.

What became increasingly clear during the presentations is how important recognition, suffering and reversal are to the story, not just in creating a sense of literary catharsis, but also a spiritual catharsis. In his 2025 presentation, J.C. Hall showed through *Daredevil* season 3 how the characters need to have a right understanding of their identity to undergo a spiritual catharsis. If one lies to himself (as did Wilson Fisk, a.k.a. Kingpin) or creates a false identity for himself (Benjamin Poindexter), the results are catastrophic and lead to tragedy rather than to catharsis (cleansing). Only Matt Murdock recognizes his true identity and he alone experiences catharsis in his story. Likewise, if we don’t recognize our own mortality and sin while at the same time being image bearers of Christ, we cannot begin to undergo the process of transformation and cleansing of our sins. Being able to recognize who we truly are comes with humility.

This leads to the other major theme of the day: suffering. One’s heart must be soft in order to allow suffering to transform us. Suffering is most evident in stories of tragedy. For modern audiences, this may be in the form of hor-

ror. Watching tragedy unfold in a story allows one to examine his/her own life afterwards.

Another topic of the day was Christian horror. In Kenneth Hite’s talk on Arthur Machen, an attendee mentioned that it’s the stories without hope that create catharsis for him. Upon pondering this thought, it became clear that it’s the tragic stories that often allow one to examine his/her own life afterwards. Suffering is necessary in the story for catharsis to take place. It is suffering that shows us our weakness and leads to humility, if we allow it.

Some individuals, like myself, have trouble appreciating the stories that show no hope (like zombie apocalypse stories), while others are drawn to them. Many people, however, are familiar with and more comfortable with Shakespeare’s tragedies, and there is a parallel here. In Shakespeare’s tragedies, the tragic hero has a flaw, which eventually weaves an ugly web in the world around him/her and leads to gruesome deaths and, in some cases, hopelessness (i.e. *King Lear*). It is this remembrance of death, *memento mori*, which can lead us to a spiritual catharsis in our lives. But the catharsis comes after the curtain closes. You shed a tear for the tragic hero, then you begin to examine your own life and what flaws you have that may be similar. Shakespearean tragedy has prompted me personally to go to confession for this reason. I imagine modern horror may have a similar effect on some people.

This brings us back to the previous point. In order to experience catharsis we need to have a right understanding of our identity, but we also need to be able to recognize ourselves in the characters we see and read. This became clear during the panel discussion at Doxacon, when each panelist had very different answers on what brought about a spiritual catharsis in their lives after reading, watching or playing a story. The uniting factor was that each

person saw something of themselves in the characters they identified with. It made me think of the quote from *Hamlet*, that drama

“is to hold, as ’twere, the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure” [Act 3, scene 2]

I want to make a distinction here, because much of modern cinema and literature creates characters who we want to be like, but who aren’t true to who we are. In order to hold a mirror up to nature you need to show both virtue and scorn. A story must be truthful. It needs to reveal our sins to us while also showing us who we can be. We need to be able to recognize our sinful nature in the characters we identify with, but we also need to recognize there is some greater virtue to reach for. Shakespeare was able to do this, and there are writers and filmmakers and actors able to do this, and these are the ones that lead us not only to a cathartic moment in film, but to examine our lives afterwards and experience a spiritual catharsis.

This leads to the final part of Aristotle’s poetics - reversal. In story, reversal can often appear as the tragic hero losing everything he/she started out with at the beginning of the story. For some cathartic stories, it could be a villain who experiences catharsis inside the plot and has his/her life transformed through love. Reversal can be a positive or a negative change.

Hopefully, the reversal in our own individual stories happens when we allow the catharsis from the stories we read to work in our own lives, examine our sinful lives, and allow Christ to purge them with his Love and transform them for his glory. ✠

Faces of Our Parish - Seminarian Edition!

MEET FIRST-YEAR SEMINARIAN, ANDREW BENTON

"I was born in Allison Park, Pennsylvania, and baptized at St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Pittsburgh at age six, where I grew up singing, reading, and serving in the Altar. I was also active in the Boy Scouts—earning the rank of Eagle in 2010—and enjoyed backpacking, hunting, and playing ultimate frisbee.

I completed undergraduate studies at Virginia Tech, where I earned a degree in Engineering, met my wife, Paige, and joined the U.S. Marine Corps upon graduation. During my decade of active military service, I was stationed in California and Virginia, deployed to the Pacific and Middle East, and earned graduate degrees from the Naval Postgraduate School. Through our travels, Paige and I were blessed to experience the beauty and diversity of Orthodoxy through worship, singing, serving, and teaching Sunday school.

The idea of pursuing the priesthood arose several times in my life, dating back to high school, but Paige and I first discussed it when, during a deployment, I witnessed the deep need for Orthodox chaplains. Over the next six years, Paige and I prayed, sought guidance from spiritual mentors, and worked to discern if this was our calling. We also witnessed many in the military express interest in, and convert to, Orthodoxy, deepening our desire to minister to that community. We chose St. Tikhon's for its clear missionary focus, its close connection to the monastery, its rich liturgical life, and at the recommendation of our spiritual mentors. When we visited in December 2022, an unexpected six inches of snow fell overnight—and my southern wife loved it!

Our journey to seminary was nothing short of miraculous. After welcoming a daughter in late 2024 and being accepted into seminary in early 2025, I was unexpectedly delayed in leaving the military. Then, in July 2025, weeks before orientation, everything came together. In twenty days, I separated from the military, Paige left her nursing job, we sold our house, and

moved the family to Honesdale. As the first semester draws to a close, we find life here beautiful and humbling—a joyful struggle of learning, growth, and faith."

When asked what he loves about St. Tikhon's, Andrew replied, "I really appreciate the effort St. Tikhon's makes to build a community and connections that prepare

the whole family for a life of ministry. This is a place for the whole family to participate in the services, engage in community life, and develop their gifts."

-- Article from *St. Tikhon's Seminary: Meet the Seminarists* found at <https://stots.edu/andrew-benton>



Cont'd from front page

This project includes creating a dedicated sensory refuge and a room for Dads with kids, ensuring our facilities are hospitable to all families.

Looking Ahead to 2026

Our focus for the coming year is clear: "Be the Candle that Lights the Darkness." We plan to continue improving our current facilities with a new 3-season pavilion and parking lot renovations, even as we build the capital necessary for our future home.

Thank you to every parishioner who contributed to our 121% budget performance in 2025. Your dedication is the fuel for our mission. May the Lord continue to bless our community as we grow in faith and numbers. ✂

Thank you (snif!) from the Dujmovics

THE DUJMOVICS | PARISHIONERS EMERITUS

The Dujmovics extend a sincere and tearful thanks to our St. Mary's family for the heartfelt sendoff on Sunday, February 8. We are especially grateful for and will never forget the moving tributes from Father David and Preoteasa Stephanie, Protodeacon Peter and Diakonissa Tanya, Deacon Ken and Diakonissa Irene, and parish council president David D.

Deacon Nick moved to Greenville SC to start working at St. John of the Ladder parish. Before he left, he received a special Valentine's Day gift--a copy of the "Mister Dog" book that inspired Father David's humorous comments about the deacon.

Despite the distance, we remain brothers and sisters in Christ, and we hope to see our friends from St. Mary's "in the upstate." Meanwhile, Deacon Nick will return to talk about Mount Athos on March 20. ✂

Thank You!!
😊

Town Hall Series: Church School

We invite all parishioners connected to Church School to join our spring Church School Town Hall Zoom series. These meetings are a chance to share ideas and feedback as we consider improvements for the next ministry year.

We will collaborate across ministries to strengthen the Church School experience. Discussion topics may include Realm-based student check-in, foot traffic flow, program length, and curriculum accessibility.

If you are involved in or care about Church School, we value your input and hope you will participate as we work to make a strong program even stronger.

POC: Caleb Faber, St. Mary Church School Director

Town Hall Dates (7:00–8:00pm):

Monday, March 2
Wednesday, April 22
Saturday, May 16

You are welcome to attend one, two, or all three sessions.

Visit

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85621150212>
or scan to join!



Recycling Update



During 2025, we made great strides in recycling Aluminum Cans and also taking all Glass to the Purple Glass Bins throughout the county so that the glass can be recycled. We want to continue these efforts to help the environment!

Recycling aluminum cans is an easy process. Please bring soda, beer, sparkling water and other aluminum cans to church and place them in one of our two bins to be taken for recycling. One bin is in the fellowship hall near exterior door 3 and the other is outside by the door to the kitchen area of the hall.

Aluminum recycling is now worth 45 cents per pound! That does not sound like much but it is free money for a few minutes of our time. Recycling Glass is even easier! There are more than 25 Purple Glass Recycling Bins in the county. If there is one close to you, please take your glass there BUT we will also accept glass at the church and take it to be crushed and reused for building materials. To date, more than 14,000 tons of glass have been recycled in Fairfax County. We can all help the environment of our planet. ✕

Byzantine Notation Recordings

Did you miss the “Intro to Byzantine Notation” class with Subdeacon Nicholas Jones?

Good news—you can still watch it!

This 5-week course covers the basics of Byzantine notation. Participants begin by diving directly into the notation and learning to read the music, then step back to explore the underlying theory, compare it with Western notation, and develop essential foundational skills for chanters.

The recorded live-stream is available at:



www.youtube.com/@metamanks

We encourage anyone interested in chanting or deepening their understanding of Byzantine music to tune in. ✕



THE Veil

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Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, Orthodox Church in America (OCA)

Hierarch: Archbishop NATHANIEL of Detroit | Parish Priest: V. Rev. Dr. Fr. David G. Subu
Deacons: Protodn. Peter Danilchick, Dn. Kenneth Liu | Choir Director & Head Chanter: Sdn. Nicholas Jones
Subdeacons: Eugene Huang, Nicholas Jones, Bogdan Maxim, Anthony Freude | Parish Council President: David Dill

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