



THE Veil

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
ST. MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

MAY 2026

VOLUME 40, ISSUE 4

In This Issue



Gathering Gardeners

PAGE 4

Life-saving Skills for Parish Life: CPR/BLS Training

PAGE 4

April 2026 Parish Council Summary

PAGE 5

...and more inside!

Shaping our Future Together

FR. DAVID SUBU

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

As we enter this beautiful month of May, we find ourselves amazed, like the Myrrh-bearing women, at the revelation of what God has done in our church nationally. A recent study estimates that 16-18,000 people were received into the church during Holy Week this year, with 20-30,000 expected for 2026. This is 4-5 times the amount that was typical just ten years ago. It's a blessing for the whole church but with such growth comes challenges. We are feeling them here at St. Mary's as well, as we try to provide enough space for worship as well as ministry for all who come, from founders and legacy members to catechumens and seeking newcomers.

St. Mary's has been built on a strong foundation of faith, love, and sacrifice by those who came before us. Now, it is our turn to be faithful stewards of that legacy—not just for our own comfort, but for the generations to come. To ensure we are growing as a Christ-centered community, we have launched a Strategic Planning process. This is a season of intentional, prayerful reflection. We are asking ourselves: Where are we truly? And where is the Lord leading us next?

Your Voice is the Key: For this process to bear fruit, we need your insight. We are using a tool called a SWOT Analysis to look at our internal Strengths and Weaknesses, as well as the external Opportunities and Threats in the world around us. Your experience in the pews, in the kitchen, in our classrooms, and in our community matters. Metropolitan Anthony Bloom famously said, "God can save the sinner you are, not the saint you pretend to be." The same is true for the parish. Recognizing who we truly are as a community and not just what we would like to think about ourselves is the first

step in making good decisions about what we need to do next. We aren't looking for "pious affirmations"—we are looking for your honest, prayerful discernment—given kindly and respectfully, of course. Our parish depends on the goodwill and service of volunteers who do their best. Think about your own tone and how you would like to be approached before speaking about others.

Three Ways to Participate: While we encourage everyone to share their thoughts, nothing beats the energy of a face-to-face gathering. We can listen to one another, build on ideas, and dream together in real-time. Below are three ways you can participate. If you can only do one thing, please join us on May 9. The Holy Spirit often speaks most clearly when we are gathered together in one place, listening to one another's hearts.

- **THE PARISHWIDE RETREAT (High Priority!):** Join us this Saturday, May 9, from Noon to 4:00 PM. This is our open forum to share thoughts in person, pray together, and brainstorm our future. Please RSVP on Realm today so we can prepare!
- **PHYSICAL SUBMISSION:** You can print out the SWOT form and return it to the folder outside Fr. David's office no later than May 26.
- **ONLINE SUBMISSION:** You can email your typed reflections directly to cooley.alexander@gmail.com by the May 26 deadline.

...Cont'd on page 6



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

- Opal B.
- Jessie C.
- Anastasia D.
- Catherine D.
- Leah F.
- Michael F.
- Chris G.
- Warren H.
- Symeon J.
- Alex J.
- Ho K.
- Nathaniel K.
- Dsa. Irene L.
- Jeff M.

- Fotina N.
- Lucian R.
- Mark S.
- Melanie T.
- Nathan W.
- Robert Y.



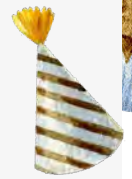
NAMESDAYS

- May 2 — St. King Boris
- May 5 — St. Irene
- May 6 — St. George
- May 7 — St. St. Alexis of Wilkes Barre
- May 8 — St. John the Theologian
- May 13 — Martyr Alexander of Rome
- May 20 — St. Lydia
- May 21 — St. Helen
- May 24 — St. Vincent of Lernis

ANNIVERSARIES

- Rafael & Barbara A.
- Matt & Marie C.
- Steve & Kristine H.
- Kai & Emma J.

- Nicholas & April M.
- Glenn & Toni P.
- Cindy & Brian C



SAVE THE DATE

Oct. 23-25, 2026

Fellowship of St. Moses The Black 33rd Annual Conference

Saints Peter & Paul
Romanian Orthodox Church
Dearborn Heights, MI



WONDERFUL **GIVE THANKS** **AGES 4-12**

save-the-date
vacation church school

THEME: BECOMING BLESSED - LIVING THE BEATITUDES
JULY 27-31 (8:30AM-12:30PM)
REGISTRATION STARTS IN JUNE

Grateful! believe in



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26 OCMC LUNCHEON	27	28	29	30	1	2 10am-11:30pm: Financial Peace University 12-4pm: CPR/BLS 11am-1pm: Baptism: Yuskavage 4-6pm: Great Vespers @ St. Katherine GOA
3 9am-11:30am: Matins & Divine Liturgy (Hosted by A-Di) New Member Sunday 12pm-1pm: Church School	4	5 7-8pm: Festal Vespers	6 MID-PENTECOST 10-11am: Festal Liturgy	7	8	9 8am-12pm: CPR/BLS 12-4pm: SWOT 5-6pm: Great Vespers
10 MOTHERS DAY 9-11:30am: Matins, Churching & Divine Liturgy (Hosted by Do-Ke & Men's Fellowship) No Church School	11	12	13 7-7:30pm: Daily Vespers	14	15 6:30-8pm: Women's Bible Study	16 5-6pm: Great Vespers with Group Confession
Office Closed - May 11th-15th						
17 9am-11:30am: Matins & Divine Liturgy (Hosted by Kh-P) 12pm-1pm: Last Day of Church School 1:35-4pm: Nats Game Outing	18 7-8:30pm: Parish Council	19	20 APODOSIS OF PASCHA 7-8am: Paschal Liturgy 7-8pm: Festal Vespers	21 HOLY ASCENSION 10-11:30am: Festal Liturgy 7:30-8:10pm: Stewardship Committee	22	23 10-11am: Baptism: Jones 2-4pm: Wedding: Knight-Jangmanee
24 9am-11:30am: Matins & Divine Liturgy (Hosted by Q-Z)	25 MEMORIAL DAY	26	27 7-7:30pm: Daily Vespers	28	29	30 SATURDAY OF SOULS 10am-11:30pm: Memorial Liturgy 5-6pm: Great Vespers
31 PENTECOST 9am-12pm: Festal Matins, Liturgy & Kneeling Vespers (Hosted by All Parish)						

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

Gathering Gardeners

ELLEN R. | PARISHIONER

The Gathering Gardeners (Formerly the Weeding Group) was established to beautify the Church Property by planting different varieties of lovely plants and also keeping the flower beds in clean, neat and weed free appearance.

Our church is a lovely building and is enhanced by the plants growing all over the grounds. It is hoped that over time, we can plant more perennials and also plants that can provide items to be used in the church or consumed by parishioners. It is also a way to get families and children involved to truly be a part of the beautification of our grounds.

We maintain the planting beds around the church, suggest ideas for flowers we would like to see growing as well as water, weed and take care of the various species that exist. We also welcome anyone to help beautify our grounds and we will provide training on the needs of various plants.

We would like an additional spicket in the front of the church to water those flowers and more people to keep the beds weed free and beautiful. We have a weeding bucket of tools and there are larger tools in the sheds, but people can bring their own favorite tools to use.

Members of this group can get instructions of needed work to be done and do it on their own schedule or coordinate with others in our Gathering Gardeners Realm group to enjoy this service in community.

Children and families are all welcome to help beautify the church grounds. Beautiful plantings and maintenance of flower beds makes everyone smile! In particular, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) Atrium Garden in the play area welcomes tender care by anyone who can help weed and water. In addition, a variety of new NorthPlease do be mindful of some new seedlings planted, so ask Lacie Faber if you'd like to know

more about how children can help tend this garden!

If you'd like a tutorial of our growing gardens, or want to help dream up ways of bringing beauty and opportunities for reflection to our parish grounds, join the Gathering Gardeners group on Realm and drop us a note. ✂

Recently Planted at the St. Olga House! ✂



Life-Saving Skills for Parish Life: BLS/CPR

LACIE FABER | COMMS MANAGER

This month, St. Mary was grateful to host a Basic Life Support/CPR training for parishioners, offered by our own American Red Cross certified instructor, Caleb Faber, as part of an effort sponsored by the Safety Team. The goal was simple and important: to help ensure that more members of our

parish family are equipped with life-saving skills in the event of an emergency.

This training was especially meaningful because, for Caleb, these skills are not merely theoretical. They are deeply personal. Caleb has experienced firsthand how critical CPR can be in a near-drowning emergency. In that moment, his sister, who had only recently been certified in CPR, was the first to respond and administer care to him before the ambulance arrived. Her quick action helped save a life, and she was later recognized for her heroic efforts.

Stories like this remind us that emergency training is not just about checking a box or preparing for an unlikely scenario. These skills are real. They matter. And in God's providence, they may one day allow us to care for one another in a moment of great need.

We are thankful to Caleb for sharing both his knowledge and his experience with the parish, and we are grateful to the Safety Team for continuing to strengthen our community in such practical and com-

passionate ways.

Please stay tuned for more training opportunities from the Safety Team in the coming weeks. There are still spaces available for the May 9 training before the SWOT, so if you have been considering signing up, there is still time to participate by registering on Realm. ✂





ST MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH | April 2026 Parish Council Summary

The St. Mary Parish Council met in person and online on April 20, 2026. I was unfortunately sick and unable to attend, but our vice president, Ileana C., chaired the meeting.

Quarterly Finance Report

Our parish treasurer, Chris G., gave an overview of St. Mary's finances. Thanks to your generosity, we are meeting all income targets and continuing to sustain planned ministries and activities. Our church store income was higher than expected at \$3,346, standard donations exceeded the projected budget, and recent fundraising events, such as the St. John's dinner and OCMC lunch, went well. We also raised \$12,000 for our Capital Campaign in the first quarter of 2026.

To comply with federal deposit insurance limits, we are spreading assets between bank accounts. Our Savings & Investment Committee is reviewing options to that end and looking for other ways we can be good stewards of our savings while we plan for future larger expenditures, such as a property purchase or facility improvements.

2026 Midnight Service - Photo Credit: Alyssa McCrea in Digital Scrapbook Realm Group



Committee Check-ins

As discussed earlier this year, a series of committees have been created to ensure continued progress in several projects, and we welcome any parish members to join. A portion of the April PC meeting was spent discussing updates for those committees. Please reach out to the below committee leads if you are interested in contributing to their work this year.

- Savings & Investment Committee - Jonathan J.
- Budget -- Chris G.
- Stewardship -- Ileana C.
- Capital Campaign - Dn. Ken L.
- Capital Improvements - Ellen R.
- Property Search -- David D.

Portable Bathroom

With input from our "On Behalf of All" coordinators Allison J. and Richard S., we are considering rental of an accessible, portable bathroom. While we wait to convert our facilities into a more accessible floor plan or purchase a building that already has one, we are looking for ways to make our current space meet the needs of all parishioners. Our current bathrooms are not accessible, since they are in the basement and too small for those with mobility issues. An accessible bathroom rental would cost around \$260/month. Further research is needed, and we will survey parishioners on whether the rental would provide a significant improvement in accessibility.



2026 Lambmeisters - Photo Credit: Alyssa McCrea in Digital Scrapbook Realm Group

Safety Ministry Update

Ioana M. continues to lead many improvements in our safety and security posture. She gave the PC many recent updates on the safety ministry's accomplishments, including improved outdoor lighting, Automated External Defibrillator (AED) installation, updated door numbers and signage, and procurement of new radios. Ioana plans several other near future improvements, including first aid classes and motion detector light installation.

As always, thank you to all our parish members for contributing to our financial needs, assisting in leading our many ministries and activities, and providing feedback to parish council members.

Yours in Christ,

David Dill
St. Mary Parish Council President

FOCUS DMV Surpasses 50% of Fundraising Goal

We are pleased to share that the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve (FOCUS) has surpassed 50% of our goal to raise \$45,000 for launching a chapter in the DC, Maryland and Virginia area (FOCUS DMV). The first \$45,000 raised will be matched to provide the \$90,000 needed to hire a FOCUS center director and begin providing services for our brothers and sisters in need. If you're interested in learning more, then please check out the bulletins posted around the church, connect with any of our parishioners who are on the FOCUS DMV steering committee and visit focusna.org/DMV. Thank you to all who have supported this effort through prayer and financial contributions. ✕

...Cont'd from front page

What to Look For

- Internal (About Us): What do we do well? What are the internal problems we must overcome?
- External (The World): What sociocultural or economic changes outside our parish present a chance for us to grow? What external threats could cause trouble for our mission?

This is a chance to move from being passive recipients of parish life to being active participant-architects of its future. Let us undertake this work in wisdom, unity, and love. ✕

FOCUS

NORTH + AMERICA

Love Made Visible.



What is FOCUS?

The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve (FOCUS North America) is the domestic service arm of the Church, bringing together Orthodox faithful across the country to live out Christ's call to serve others.

What is a FOCUS Center?

FOCUS currently operates 13 local hubs where Orthodox faithful unite to serve their neighbors. FOCUS Center ministries include:

- Distributing food, clothing & essential supplies
- Supporting mothers, children & families
- Offering job readiness, hygiene & community resources
- Serving all people without discrimination

Each Center is shaped by its city's needs — but united in one mission: **to reveal Christ's love through service that restores dignity, transforms lives, and builds community.**

Faithful across the DMV have been meeting for several years, including in quarterly roundtable gatherings where parish leaders shared ideas and local needs. While these conversations laid important groundwork, it became clear that a new approach was needed to move toward concrete, unified action in a new FOCUS Center.

Over the past year, FOCUS relaunched the effort with fresh energy—working closely with a small team of local clergy and laity, meeting regionally, and hosting retreats to build momentum. Our goal was to gather enough interest to host a strong Kickoff Meeting and form an Exploratory Committee of at least two dozen people.

The response has exceeded expectations, resulting in a larger-than-anticipated and highly engaged team, ready to move this ministry forward and finally develop a new FOCUS Center!

Support FOCUS DMV Today:



focusna.org/dmv

Join the Exploratory Committee!

The Exploratory Committee, made up of local volunteers, meets twice per month via Zoom and provides guidance, strategic input, and early support in developing a new FOCUS Center. Membership ideally includes at least two dozen volunteers from as many local parishes as possible, ensuring a diverse and well-rounded team guided by FOCUS staff to answer the three big questions listed below. Anyone who is interested in joining the Exploratory Committee can contact dmv@focusna.org.

Our Team

- Twice monthly meetings
- Research and project development

3 Big Questions

- What are we doing?
- Where will we do it?
- How will we pay for it?

Raising Funds

- Small monthly donors
- Benefactors
- Institutional Support
- Parishes

Giving Thanks for the Many Ways You Serve

FR. DAVID S. | ST. MARY RECTOR

We want once again to offer our heartfelt thanks to the many volunteers who help build up our parish community. During Volunteer Recognition Week, we highlighted a few individuals whose service has been especially visible, but the truth is that it is nearly impossible to fully name all the ways our parishioners show up for one another.

Again and again, this community is strengthened by quiet acts of care and faithfulness. Some bring meals for fellowship hour. Some organize or contribute to meal trains for parishioners walking through illness, recovery, the arrival of a new baby, or other major life transitions. Some serve faithfully in the altar or sing in the choir. Some participate week after week in ministries behind the scenes, while others take on the steady responsibility of ministry leadership. All of these offerings, whether public or unseen, help sustain the life of our parish.

This kind of service is a blessing to St. Mary. It reflects love for God, love for neighbor, and a willingness to give of ourselves for the good of the community. We are deeply grateful for every hour, every effort, and every prayer offered in service to the parish. ✠



Pictured: Volunteers who cooked for the Volunteer Appreciation Lunch - Gumbo!



Recycling Update

ELLEN R. | PARISHIONER

Latest news on Aluminum Can Recycling:

We continue to save cans and take them to be recycled!

This trip resulted in 55 pounds of cans and we are now being paid 50 cents per pound. Our total for this recycling drop off was almost \$28. That does not sound like very much but if we do \$28 at least 6 times per year we will earn \$168. Remember - there is a drop off can for aluminum cans, just outside the kitchen door and also one inside the Fellowship Hall. This is an easy way to earn money - and if everyone in the church brought cans and we recycled them, we could easily double our earnings! Free money is free money! ✂

*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.

Scan, visit <https://calendly.com/frdavid-p308/> or email frdavid@stmaryorthodox.org to get on Fr. David's calendar!



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. 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