

**St Matthew Orthodox Church**  
Orthodox Church in America - Diocese of the Midwest  
Rev. John Thetford  
607 Ravenswood Dr  
Green Bay WI, 54302

### From the Desk of Fr John:

The Sunday when the Gospel of Zaccheus is read marks a turning point in the Church's calendar: we finish the "regular cycle" of the liturgical year, and we begin the special time of preparation leading up to Lent, Holy Week, and our Lord's Pascha. This year of 2023, the Sunday of Zacchaeus falls on January 29, which is the day that we will be having our parish's Annual Meeting.

The Annual Meeting, of course, has a lot to do with finances. The whole parish gathers to approve the parish's budget, taking into account the amount of expenses that are required to run the parish for a year, to employ the priest, to have iconography and other nice things, and also, to keep our building and property maintained and insured throughout the year (some of these ancillary costs can be surprisingly high!). We additionally, as a whole parish, elect a parish council to take care of the financial responsibilities throughout the year.

Naturally, then, this is a time to reflect on what we personally can do to provide financial support to the parish. And in considering this, we cantake into account Zaccheus' example of giving. Zaccheus had been a tax collector, and he had defrauded people, charging extra on the tax and skimming it off the top. But when Christ called him to repentance, he said: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold."

Zaccheus thus shows us something very important: to

be truly repentant, to be a real follower of Christ, we not only are called to be just or fair to all, but to even to go beyond simple "fairness." Because Zaccheus doesn't just say, 'Ok, I repent, I'll give back what I stole'. He says, rather, that he will restore fourfold, 4-for-1 instead of 1-for-1. And on top of that, he will give not just 10%, but 50% of whatever other goods he has, to the poor! This excessive giving, certainly, is born out of the trust he now has in God, after having met his Savior Jesus Christ. He no longer fears for the future, hoarding and even defrauding in order to hoard more, but he now trusts in God.

So when we consider how to support our parish (and keeping in mind that the parish as a whole does, in excess of what it needs to pay its bills, give any surplus donations it receives to the poor), we have Zaccheus to emulate. May we learn to imitate his trust in our Savior Jesus Christ to care for us, and his zeal in giving born from that trust, and seeing the needs of our parish, may we fearlessly and freely give.

In Christ,  
Fr. John



## Parish Council President's Perspective.....Paul Novak



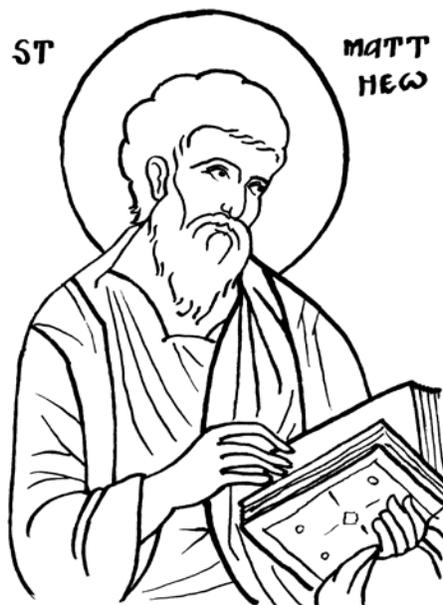
It is the time within most churches where plans are being made for the Annual Meeting. The Parish Council at SMOC is doing just that and I hope you can stay for this year's meeting which will be held on January 29th following our coffee fellowship. At these meetings the word Stewardship will be mentioned many times. "Most Orthodox Christians only hear about the subject of stewardship when it is related to money. When dues are being assessed, when there is a fund drive or some other financial program, then homilies are preached on stewardship, much talk goes on about "financial stewardship," and we are challenged to become better stewards by giving more money! In other words, for most of us, stewardship and the giving of money to the Church are one and the same. That is not Christian stewardship.

Stewardship does not mean being hit up for an annual pledge to the Church. Rather, it is a well-rounded view of life and an incarnation of that view based on theology and ecclesiology – the giving of time and talent and treasure."\*\* Within our Church there are innumerable acts that quietly happen every day that most of us don't even know about. There are many of us who serve God on a daily basis who prefer to offer their time, talent or treasure as anonymously as possible. We all have different talents and skills that can help our parish grow and prosper. Maybe you like to clean, paint, or do electrical work. Others might enjoy working in the church gardens or trimming trees. We are always looking for people to sing in the choir, serve in the altar, help out in the kitchen before and after coffee fellowship on Sunday mornings. If you are looking for a way to contribute or have an idea you would like to implement please see Father or myself.

The SMOC Parish council will continue to move us forward with God's will, working to keep the needs of our parish in mind, working with the gifts that the Lord has given all of us. I look forward to expanding all of stewardship activities in 2023.

In Christ,  
Paul M. Novak

\*\* excerpt from - An Orthodox Understanding of Stewardship by Benjamin D. Williams. His complete article can be found at [bit.ly/3GNhZnZ](https://bit.ly/3GNhZnZ)



# God grant you many years!

## January Birthdays

- 2 Anani Roman
- 4 Anna Jeffers
- 5 Andrea Hurst
- 5 Wyatt Verlen
- 10 Ethan Belau
- 10 Nathaniel Ocokoljich
- 14 Emmelia Roegner
- 15 Rebecca Pagan
- 17 Peter Parry
- 17 Nathaniel Tomac
- 24 Oksana Brown
- 25 Sophia Pfitzinger
- 30 Maddie Kotz
- 30 Elizabeth Parry
- 31 Samuel DeBroux

## January Wedding Anniversaries

- 9 Matthew & Sarah Tomac

## Reader's Schedule

### Saturday Vespers

- 1/7 Tom
- 1/14 Noah
- 1/21 Doug
- 1/28 Pedro
- 2/4 Paul

### Sunday Matins & Liturgy

- 1/8 Pedro
- 1/15 Matt
- 1/22 Tom
- 1/29 Matthew
- 2/5 Doug



## Choir Practice

Children's Singing: January 15

Regular Choir Practice: January 8 & 22

## From the Nativity of the Lord, 2022, at St Matthew Orthodox Church

In addition to serving Royal Hours, Father John led the singing for this beautiful piece of the Nativity liturgical schedule





Jeff led our parish in its annual tradition of singing Christmas carols (above)

Sarah and Jeff led our parish children in a very special musical presentation after Christmas liturgy (below)





## Letter from the Treasurer

Dear SMOC Family,

As 2023 has arrived I am reflecting on how fortunate we are to have talented people in crucial roles in our parish, an abundance of space to operate and grow, and faithful giving.

In preparing our 2023 budget I see a need for sustained regular giving to support a wonderful priest and his family, increases in nearly every fix expense and to meet our diocese assessment.

In the past we have communicated about two specific areas where regular weekly or monthly giving is most crucial. First a commitment to a regular pledge to maintain a positive cash flow and secondly a pledge of at least \$42 a month per member to pay our mortgage down more rapidly.

We met all payments in 2022 and paid off an additional \$3750.00 of principal against our loan.

We used operational funds and candle income to make this happen. If you are not already doing so please consider making Project 42 donations an increase in your giving in 2023. This would improve our monthly cash flow and help us meet the challenge of increased fixed expenses.

It is crucial that as a church family we talk openly and honestly about finances. All of our monthly cash flow, unless specifically directed, is spent on operational costs. I will be presenting the 2023 budget at our January 29th Annual Parish Meeting. I encourage you to ask me any questions regarding our church finances prior to or at that meeting.

Joyful giving fills your heart with joy!

Tom J  
SMOC Treasurer

## Liturgical Schedule

Sat, January 7, 5:00 PM Great Vespers  
Sun, January 8, 8:30 AM Matins, 9:30 AM Liturgy  
Wed, January 11, 6:00 PM Daily Vespers  
Sat, January 14, 5:00 PM Great Vespers  
Sun, January 15, 8:30 AM Matins, 9:30 AM Liturgy  
Wed, January 18, 6:00 PM Daily Vespers

Sat, January 21, 5:00 PM Great Vespers  
Sun, January 22, 8:30 AM Matins, 9:30 AM Liturgy  
Tues, January 24, 7:30 AM Akathist  
(Saint Xenia of St. Petersburg)  
Wed, January 25, 6:00 PM Daily Vespers  
Sat, January 28, 5:00 PM Great Vespers  
Sun, January 29, 8:30 AM Matins, 9:30 AM Liturgy

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Outdoor Water Blessing, Sunday, January 15:

At approximately 1:15 PM following Coffee Fellowship, we will be gathering near the boat lock at Voyageur Park in De Pere to bless the Fox River. This is a common practice in the Orthodox Church and a great witness to our faith. By doing this, we show that Christ continues to sanctify all of Creation through His baptism in water! Please see the following Google Maps link for the location we will be meeting at: <https://goo.gl/maps/sLMDPejauFWV9FT47>

**Home Blessings:** It is the practice of the Orthodox Church to bless homes through prayer and Holy Water at this time of year, after Theophany on January 6 and before the beginning of Great Lent (this year on February 27). Fr John is more than happy to travel to your home to bless your house and property, praying together with you that your home and families be protected by our Lord. This is especially a good idea for those who have moved into a new home and have never had it blessed. If you would like your home blessed, please reach out to Fr John at your earliest convenience. And do not worry if you live far from church - blessing your home is part of his job description as your priest! Email, call, text his cell, or talk to him at church, and time will be found to bless your home.

### SMOC Catechism Classes beginning January 22:

There will be a series of Catechism Classes in January, February, and March, geared toward the group of Catechumens who will join the Church in Holy Week before Easter in April (or later in the year, if need be). There will be a 2 - 2.5 hour class, one Sunday a month after Coffee Fellowship, each of these 3 months. The first of these classes will be Sunday, January 22, from 12:30 - 2:45 pm. Anyone who is learning about Orthodoxy, and anyone who is a Catechumen (formally preparing to join the Church) is strongly encouraged to attend. And anyone else who would like to attend is welcome too!

**Online Class:** "Beginnings: Creation, Fall, Renunciation, and Initiation": The Saint Macrina Orthodox Institute of the Diocese of the Midwest is pleased to offer a new series of courses which will allow students who are not enrolled in the Diaconal and Catechetical certificate program to study more in-depth, the texts and traditions of the Church. (I.e., these courses are open for everyone!). These courses will consist of 2 hour classes in 6 sessions. Time TBD by class member consensus, to start in mid January. Initially we will start with online participation through zoom. Beginnings: Creation, Fall, Renunciation, and Initiation. Please contact Fr. Elijah Mueller at 312-714-9775, or [elijahmueller@sbcglobal.net](mailto:elijahmueller@sbcglobal.net) for more info or to

## Cleaning Schedule

SARSAMA: Week of 1/8/23 for 1/15/23  
MYKHAYLYUK: Week of 1/15/23 for 1/22/23  
BISBEE: Week of 1/22/23 for 1/29/23  
SCHWEINER: Week of 1/29/23 for 2/5/23



## Duties of a Orthodox Deacon by Dn Spyridon

As we are experiencing growth and changes in this parish (and as a newcomer to the parish myself) I wanted to discuss a few things as I have received some questions lately. It has been some time since a deacon has served regularly at this parish and I wanted to address some questions regarding communion and services without a priest.

We can learn a few things about the purpose and intent of each office of the priesthood when we examine the ordination services. A deacon's ordination takes place after the consecration of the Holy Gifts during a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, by virtue of the fact that he does not participate in the consecration himself. In contrast, a priest's ordination takes place immediately following the great entrance, for the priest does perform the consecration of the Holy Gifts. This is indicative of the respective duties of each office. It is the duty of the deacon to assist in distribution of the Holy Gifts when needed. Deacons can take communion to the sick and shut-in, and can also be part of the distribution of the holy gifts. Deacons do "serve" communion - it is part of their job, as one who mediates between heaven and earth, between God and the people. We also see this during the services when the deacon goes in and out through the "deacon's" doors of the iconostasis (often depicted with icons of archangels, as angels are continually going out and coming into the presence of the Lord, the "High Place," as His Divine Ministers).

The Deacon's Doors, also called the North and South Doors, are the two side doors of the iconostasis in an Orthodox church, placed toward the ends of the iconostasis on either side of the central Holy Doors. These doors are used frequently by deacons in entering and leaving the altar (as the angels do in the presence of the Lord). The South Door is typically the liturgical entrance to the altar, interpreted mystically as heaven. An icon of the Archangel Gabriel is generally depicted on the door because he is the "Messenger", whose announcement to the Theotokos marks the beginning of the Incarnation, our entrance to the heavenly realm. The North Door is the liturgical "exit" door, on which Archangel Michael is depicted because he is the "Defender" of God and guards the door to heaven..

The deacon ministers/assists the priest and bishop in the divine services. This includes:

- Preaching the Gospel of Christ (with the blessing of the presiding priest or bishop)
  - Assisting in the celebration of the all of the Holy Mysteries of the Church
  - Leading the people in the collective prayers (with the blessing of the presiding priest or bishop)
  - Reading from the Scriptures during the divine services (with the blessing of the presiding priest or bishop)
  - Keeping the decorum of the public worship, including calling people to attention at appropriate times. (i.e. "Let us attend!")
  - Any tasks of the subdeacon or reader
  - Administrating the charitable and/or educational work of the Diocese, Deanery/Vicariate or Parish
  - Other tasks related to Church life, with the blessing and direction of his priest or bishop.
- So, in general, deacons serve with the blessing of the bishop/priest, as needed. The term deacon simply means, "servant," so any one deacon's responsibilities will vary greatly.

When Father John is out of town on a Sunday, we will be celebrating the Typika Service without a priest, but with Reserve Sacrament. The Reserve Sacrament has been consecrated at a previous Divine Liturgy and it is only at the Diving Liturgy, with a priest and the prayers of the Faithful, that the Holy Mysteries can be performed. There must be an, "Amen" to the priestly prayers. On the altar is the Tabernacle in which the Reserve Sacrament is kept throughout the year for the sick and infirmed (or whenever needed). The Reserve/Pre-Sanctified Sacrament is also used during the season of Great Lent when mid-week Liturgies are not called for. During this season we celebrate the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts (of St. Gregory the Dialogist) in which the Faithful partake of the Mysteries that were sanctified usually at the preceding Sunday Liturgy. On a Sunday where we will not be celebrating the Divine Liturgy we are blessed with the opportunity to partake of the Body and Blood of our Lord which was sanctified during a previous Divine Liturgy.

I hope that this helps in clarifying questions you may have about the duties of the Deacon. Please feel free to reach out to me should you have any more questions regarding the duties of Orthodox Deacon.