



Volume 34, Number 12
December 2025

The Cathedral Messenger

A Publication of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Christian Cathedral

Women's Retreat 2025

This year's Women's Retreat was a huge success! We had almost 80 women gathered at St. George from across Nebraska and Kansas. Our speaker, Heidi White, came in from Colorado to talk with us about the conflict between duty and desire that we all feel and how the Orthodox Church is the real healing of this tension. The talks were wonderful and spilled over into lots of discussion during meals and social hours.

Heidi was not only an engaging speaker, but spent so much time talking with us and really getting to know the women who came. We even saw her holding a baby so that a mom could eat lunch with ease! The talks were not just for moms, not just for wives, not just for any particular group but rather spoke to all the women across age groups, family situations, and life stages. We were all able to learn from and simply appreciate being with each other as Orthodox women.

Being at St. George this year was a beautiful experience for everyone, including the women from the parish. Instead of doing compline in a hotel con-



Heidi White

ference room, we were able to go to the cathedral and hear Fr. Mark serve with Chris Farha chanting. Instead of getting catering from a restaurant, we were able to eat delicious food made with love by Ilham and the Klotz family. We were able to relax and enjoy being together while also opening up our home to our friends. Additionally, many women were able to come who wouldn't have been able to otherwise because they didn't have to travel away from their families.

Thank you to everyone who made the Women's Retreat this year a success—the women who came, the people who offered their gifts of cook-

ing, and the husbands who made sure kids were taken care of so moms could come too. We are so looking forward to next year and we hope that all those who were thinking about coming but didn't get around to it this year is able to make it then!

— Danielle Farha & Rebekah Sturgill



Teen SOYO Nativity Card

If you would like to have your name printed on the Cathedral Nativity Card this year, please visit the Teen SOYO table during coffee hour or call the Cathedral office M-F. Donations received go towards scholarships for Winter Camp and the Ski Retreat.

Our Teens would like to extend a thank you to each and every one of you for your continued support of the Youth ministries and wish you a blessed Nativity season.

2026 stewardship

To date we have received 51 pledges totaling \$234,507 compared to last year of 33 pledges totalling \$139,748.

Please make your online –pledge via Realm at <https://onrealm.org/StGeorgeCathedral/AddPledge/2026stewardship>

NATIVITY SERVICES



WEDNESDAY
December, 24
Eve of the Nativity
9:30a Royal Hours
4:00p Vesperal
Divine Liturgy

THURSDAY
December, 25
Christ is Born!
8:00a Orthros
9:30a Divine Liturgy

DECEMBER FASTING

The Nativity Fast is observed through December 24th. From Nativity through January 1 there is no fasting.



MANY YEARS!

MABROOK! BLESSINGS!

baptism

Adele Adelaide Elfangely, 11/9
(daughter of Omar and Malory Tangeman Elfangely)

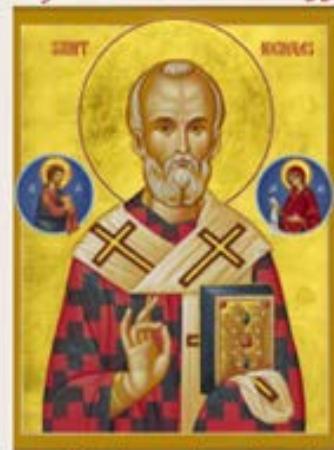
Margaret Noelle Stiebens, 11/23
(daughter of Joshua and Courtney)

Jaden James Braswell, 11/29
(son of Porter and Juliana Elkouri Braswell)

marriage

Robert Rodriguez and Mary Michael Gomez, 11/15

Join us for the
Saint Nicholas Day Festival
Saturday December 6th at 10:30am
after Orthros and Liturgy



There will be brunch, arts and crafts,
and a visit from St. Nicholas!
We hope to see you there!



THEOPHANY HOME BLESSINGS

If you would like one of our priests to come bless your home during the Theophany season, please email Gina at gina@stgeorgecathedral.net or call the Cathedral Office 636-4676
by Tuesday, December 23rd

Potpourri Fr MARK ELEVATED TO CONFESSOR



From August 29-30, Fr. Mark traveled to Houston to meet His Eminence Metropolitan SABA in order for His Eminence to bless Fr. Mark to be a Confessor. Having served as a priest for one year, Fr. Mark became eligible to begin hearing confessions, according to the standards of our Archdiocese. As a part of this blessing, Fr. Mark was awarded the epigonation, a vestment worn around the right knee in the shape of a diamond.

In our Archdiocese, this vestment is the sign that a priest is a Confessor. The blessing took place at St. Paraskevi Greek Orthodox Monastery outside of Houston where Fr. Mark and His Eminence were able to spend time together and tour the monastery with its Abbess, Gerondissa Paraskevi.

Fr. Mark has begun hearing confessions and is available by appointment.

adult education

Saints of the Western Church

A Series Introducing Orthodox Saints of the West to Eastern Orthodox Faithful

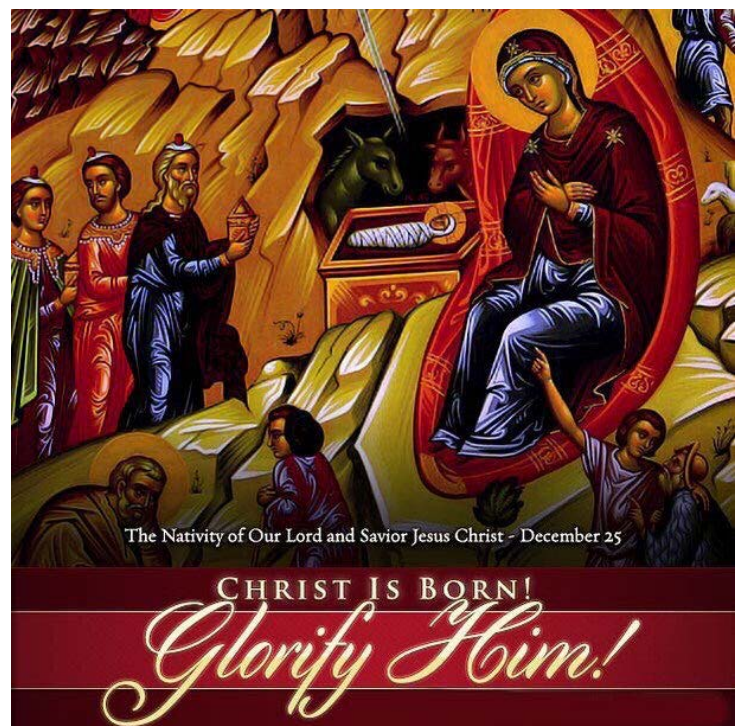
December 3: Pope Leo the Great
— Jacob Andrus

December 10: St David of Wales
— Jay Mullinix

December 17: St Martin of Tours
— Fr Mark



All presentations will take place on Wednesday evenings following Vespers at 7:15.





CSA CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

AN INVITATION TO CELEBRATE THE SEASON

Thursday, December 11th

6PM - Student Art Exhibit, 6:30PM -Christmas Program

in the St George Fellowship Hall



Dear St. George Family,

The students of Christ the Savior Academy warmly invite you to join us for our annual Christmas Program, a beautiful evening of song, scripture, and reflection on the Nativity of Christ.

This year's program features all our students, from Pre-K through 8th grade, sharing their talents in a blend of beloved carols, dramatic recitations, and sacred hymns. It's a perfect way to pause during the busy Advent season and prepare our hearts for the joy of Christmas.

Program Highlights

Our students have worked diligently to prepare a program that celebrates the light of Christ. Highlights include:

- **Traditional Carols:** Beloved songs like "ADESTE FIDELES," "SILVER BELLS," "AWAY IN A MANGER," and "WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS."
- **Liturgical Focus:** Poignant recitations of Luke 2 and The Canticle of Zechariah, alongside the singing of the Kontakion—Prefeast to the Nativity and **VENI VENI EMMANUEL.**
- **Classical Recitation:** A special reading of Isaiah 9 in Greek by our 3rd and 4th graders, connecting us to the ancient roots of our faith.
- **Dramatic Arts:** An exciting excerpt from a Nativity play featuring the Magi, and a recitation of "A Christmas Carol" by G.K. Chesterton.
- **The Festive Sound:** An advanced performance of the classic "CAROL OF THE BELLS" by our Middle School choir.

Come Support Our Students!

This performance is a testament to the hard work and faith formation happening daily at CSA. We encourage all parishioners—especially grandparents, godparents, and alumni—to attend and show your support.

News from :The Treehouse

Scan QR Code
to donate



Since opening our doors,
The Treehouse has served over
7,000 women through God's love,
education and basic necessities.

If you would like to support
this ministry, please visit:

www.wichitatreehouse.org
to donate today.

The Treehouse will be celebrating the growth and perseverance of eight moms who are graduating from The Treehouse's first Getting Ahead program. Getting Ahead is a transformative 16-week program designed to help individuals build stability, confidence and a path towards a brighter future. If you are interested in attending the graduation ceremony, email: programs@wichitatreehouse.org

Wichita Teen SOYO *Yes* Trip

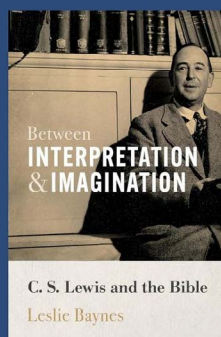


On November 8th, St. Mary's and St. George's SOYO met to serve in a joint YES Trip. YES, 'Youth Equipped to Serve' gives youth opportunities and experiences that encourage service in Christ. Led by our own Anna Spencer, who traveled from Boston to lead the group around and Wichita, where we got to learn about and experience poverty in our city.



Beginning Sewing Classes offered in 2026

Ladies are you frustrated by the lack of available modest and conservative clothing in stores? Learn to sew them yourself! St. George Sewing Sisters is offering a weekly Beginning Garment Sewing class for adult women starting Tuesday, January 6, 2026, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm in Fellowship Hall (no childcare). Taught by Sewing Sister Carey Tarkman, there is no charge for the class, but you will need to bring your own sewing machine and supplies. Learn to sew clothes for yourself, your children and/or grandchildren. Or join the Sewing Sisters in learning to make quilts once basic sewing skills are acquired! Contact Carey to register your interest and for a supply list at careytea@gmail.com and get excited about learning to sew!!



author talk & book signing with
Leslie Baynes

Between Interpretation and Imagination:
C. S. Lewis and the Bible

A presentation by Leslie Baynes
(Orthodox Christian and author)

Thursday, December 11, 7:30pm
at Eighth Day Books



meets **Thursday, December 4th**
at the Parish House.

A West Side Mission?

by Fr Paul O'Callaghan

The growth in Sunday attendance at St. George Cathedral is readily observable to all of us. It is now common for people to stand for Liturgy in the narthex because no seating is available in the nave. I have heard accounts of parishioners pulling into the parking lot and leaving because they couldn't find a spot. Others admit to simply watching the live stream.

What are possible solutions to this problem? One is to add additional seating and arrange for expanded parking. Another is to found a mission congregation, a second campus, of our St. George Cathedral community. The Parish Council has been studying both options. What is their answer? Both.

The Council has approved a resolution to purchase chairs like those found in the chapel, to be placed in the balcony and on the outer aisles of the nave. By removing the pews from the balcony and replacing them with chairs, it is estimated that we could gain up to 30 seats. Lining the aisles with chairs would add about 50 more for a total of 80. This would certainly alleviate some of the seating pressure we are currently experiencing and provide temporary relief.

However a band-aid fix that allows us to cram more and more people into the Cathedral doesn't constitute a long-term strategic solution for accommodating continued growth. It doesn't account for the fact that both St. George and St. Mary parishes are filled to the brim. For new seekers and inquirers, there is "no room in the Inn." Nor does it address the issue that there is no Orthodox presence on the west side of Wichita, an area that is booming with growth.



For this reason, the Parish Council has been studying the possibility of forming a satellite location of our Cathedral community on the west side. This would establish an Orthodox presence in the area, and potential new members from that side of town could be directed to that campus. Some existing members also may find it desirable to attend Liturgy there on a regular or occasional basis. No one would be asked to "leave St. George Cathedral and join the new church." No, we would remain one community.

This is how it could work. At first, only Sunday Divine Liturgy, or perhaps Orthros and Divine Liturgy, would be served at the second campus. Our priests would alternate presiding at the Cathedral and at the mission. Groups of choir members would also rotate between the Cathedral and the satellite site. In time, more services could be added and a new congregation could assume a life of its own.

By this point, you will have received an email with a brief survey gauging the openness of our membership to this idea. A property has been located that offers great potential for conversion into a church facility. A proposal is being formulated to be presented to a general parish meeting called to decide whether to pursue this option. Of course, it will include a funding proposal, budget, renderings, and projected timeline for completion of the project.



Please stay tuned for more information, and may God guide our community to what best serves the propagation of the Faith and our faithfulness to His gospel!

Community Corner
St. George
Community
support

Submitted by Mikell Awaad

Volunteer Opportunities

Cook-Up-A-Storm St. George Volunteers provided brunch for The Treehouse's "Getting Ahead" program, a 16-week workshop to help women strengthen their financial stability and build a better future. We'll be providing one more brunch December 5th; if you'd like to help, please contact Carrie Camden by December 3rd. To learn more about The Treehouse, check them out at www.wichitatreehouse.org.



Food for Friends - Christmas Food Baskets Project
December 20th, 10:00 a.m. This is our 41st year of giving Christmas food baskets to those less fortunate in the Wichita area. We will once again be adopting 100 families who are in need and WE NEED YOUR HELP!!! Please donate to this project. Over \$14,000.00 will be spent to purchase the groceries (13,000 pounds of food) that are given to the families. Donations, made payable to "St. George" and earmarked "food baskets", can be sent to the Cathedral office or donations can also be sent through Realm. Volunteers will pack and deliver groceries beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 20th in the gym. This project is for everyone so plan to bring the entire family to participate in this fun and worthwhile event.

Gifts For Children

Along with groceries given to the 100 families, we will also be delivering gifts for the children. If you would like to adopt a family by purchasing 1 gift per child in that family, you may sign up during coffee hour. Gifts will need to be brought to the church by Sunday, December 14th. For more information, contact Debbi Elkouri (316) 204-6688

Next Meeting:
Tuesday, December 9
at The Parish House
Join us!

For more information contact Carrie Camden at camden9492@gmail.com

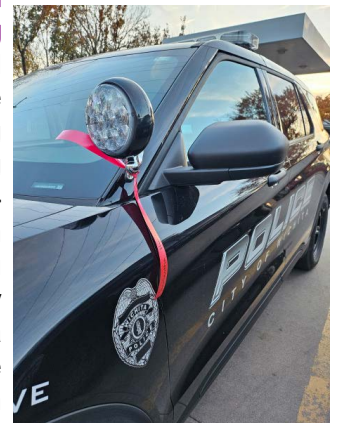
The Lord's Diner

December 21st, 5:00-7:30 The Lord's Diner provides a hot meal to anyone who has a need. To volunteer with our St George/St Mary Team contact Pat Milburn at pat-milburn74@gmail.com.

a different kind of Holiday Drive

December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Month

Impaired driving crashes increase 40% between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve. During this time you might see a patrol vehicle with a red ribbon attached to its mirror. If you can look closely, you may see a name... the name of a person affected by DUI. The troopers are participating in the Holiday Drive for Victims,



a different kind of holiday drive. It is not a drive to collect things, but rather a drive to remember those that have been impacted by DUI. Each year a group of St George volunteers led by Jane Evans partners with the DUI Victims Center of Kansas to write DUI victims' names on these red ribbons. May their memories be eternal. DUI Victims Center of Kansas provides support services to DUI victims and education opportunities for high school students and recent offenders. To learn more, go to duivictimscenterofkansas.com

Call for 2026 Agencies

Do you know of an area non-profit that could benefit from St George's support, either through volunteerism or financially? Now is the time to let us know! Please submit recommendations to Carrie Camden at camden9492@gmail.com or Mikell Awwad at mikell_awwad@hotmail.com by December 8th.



Dillons Community Rewards To earn money for St George Cathedral every time you shop at Dillons, designate St George Cathedral as your Community Rewards recipient. For more information go to <https://tinyurl.com/2p9zrezy>

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St. George Orthodox Christian Cathedral

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Wichita, KS 67206-1223

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