

## **ST. MARY MAGDALENE ORTHODOX CHURCH**

**RINCON/SAVANNAH, GA**

**Annual Parish Meeting 2026 | February 8, 2026**

*37 voting members present (35 needed for Quorum)*

### **Opening prayer: 12:25 PM**

Fr. Michael provided clarification on approval of last year's annual meeting minutes, which are to be approved by the church Council in their first meeting following the Annual Parish Meeting. The Council duly noted.

### **Priest's Report : Full report attached**

Fr. Stephen opened with the words of gratitude towards the parish, Fr. Michael, for welcoming their family, making the first year a success, and helping the parish grow.

He outlined the activities, achievements and developments of the past year, including community events and festivals, strong online presence and collaboration with nearby orthodox parishes. He noted that in the past year 25 people were baptized, 4 were chrismated, there was 1 wedding and 2 funeral services, with 55 catechumens preparing for full reception into the Church.

Memory eternal prayer was offered to the departed Dorothy Kocher and Angie Gimik.

When speaking about the 2026 outlook, Fr. Stephen noted he is focusing on developing a new youth program, looking for a permanent Sunday school teacher for the teens, and launching a "Made In The Image" podcast that would feature conversations with parishioners and converts sharing their journeys in Orthodoxy.

Amongst the priorities is also the church building and church hall expansion.

For the long-term goals, Fr. Stephen spoke about the possibility of establishing missions in the Brunswick and Statesboro areas, which was cheered on by the parishioners offering their time and assistance. There was an interest expressed for starting a Women's Bible Study, perhaps in collaboration with the St. Paul's women's group.

### **Deacon's Report**

In his report, Dn. Vassily acknowledged the progress the parish has made in the last few years, thanks to the efforts of Fr. Michael and the thoughtful work of Fr. Stephen. He noted that there have never been more than 6 people at the Vespers, and now we have an attendance of 15-30 people. He expressed gratitude to all those contributing

tirelessly to the life of the parish – Tammy Collins directing the choir, Anthony Ally leading the catechism classes, Tom Maty tending to the church grounds.

Dn. Vassily noted that there is a need for a new generation of stewards for the parish, those who could carry on the torch and serve this community.

### **Warden Report**

Mark provided a summary of maintenance activities accomplished in 2025:

- Renovation of women's bathroom,
- Renovation of ceiling in the narthex,
- Replacing steps in the parish hall,
- Replacing fan in the parish hall,
- Installation new Keurig machine,
- Removal of hazardous play area,
- Cleanup of St. Nicholas building.

Since a new warden is to be elected for 2026-2029, Mark shared his takeaways from serving as a warden, starting in the parish of 9 people with serious financial limitations. He provided his advice to the next warden, and emphasized the wonderful works of Jesus Christ resurrecting this parish.

Fr. Michael and Fr. Stephen extended AXIOS to Mark for his hard and fruitful work.

### **Treasurer's report:** Full report attached

Ron informed that statements for donations will be ready next Sunday and reiterated that anyone donating to the Church is entitled to tax deductions.

Going over the report, he stated that contributions steadily grew over 20%, which sets the goal for 2026 to achieve a 20% growth.

Expenses have also grown with the full-time priest and will continue to grow taken into the account the church expansion.

Tim Teeter moved to accept the 2026 budget and Maria Guyer seconded, all voted in favor.

### **Old Business**

Parish discussed the following items:

- Exploring possibilities for the new Church Hall

Tom Maty shared the information about purchasing a multi-purpose building ('barnominium'), which allows for the quickest and most flexible set up.

- Grounds maintenance

Tom informed that there is a shortage of volunteers for maintenance and encouraged parishioners to sign up.

Fr. Stephen will add the priority maintenance items to the weekly bulletin to draw attention to urgent matters.

- Food Festivals

In the spirit of serving the community and growing the Church, there are plans to organize several food festivals, information to follow.

- St. Brigid's Table

Susanne provided information about the origins of the ministry and encouraged all to make food donations. On a related topic, contribution to Sunday luncheon was brought up. Fr. Stephen emphasized the importance of using the current online sign-ups. Dia. Janice encouraged good etiquette. Usage of frozen foods and other helpful suggestions were brought up.

## **New Business**

Fr. Stephen stated that the parish will continue to be informed on any developments regarding the Church expansion, hall maintenance and Fellowship/Coffee Hour. He informed that the needed work on the driveway and the bells will need to be tabled until we have a clear plan for the expansion.

Tom presented his plan for building a Choir Loft. Fr. Michael and other parishioners brought up a few questions about accessibility and other building and occupancy code requirements that need to be considered early on.

## **Election Nominees for Parish Council Vacancy**

For the vacancy of the warden on the Parish Council, the Council recommended Dan Leger and he accepted the nomination.

Mark explained the process for the elections of the warden and a vacated council member position. In discussing the candidates, the parish recognized the need to expand the Parish Council by adding another member. Two new council members were nominated – Nathan Hall and Garret Clark – and both accepted the nomination.

Ron made a motion to expand Parish Council by 1 member, vacating Dan's spot and electing 2 new members for 3 years. Michelle Petit seconded, all voted in favor of electing Nate and Garret to the Council.

Mark announced the current Council slate with Dan nominated to be a warden, Tim Teeter moved to accept the slate, Anthony seconded, all voted in favor.

### **Election Nominees for Diocesan Assembly**

Fr. Stephen provided the information about the upcoming Assembly in July. Michelle, Nathan and Bob volunteered to attend. Parish held anonymous voting, electing Michelle as the delegate, with Nathan being a runner-up.

Tim Teeter made a motion to conclude the meeting, Ron seconded.

**Closing Prayer:** 2:05 PM

Minutes taken by appointed secretary Sasha Karbovska