



# ACCESSIBILITY *to Beauty*

A COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN OF  
ST. MARY BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



Keeping beauty accessible to  
the public through relationship,  
community and calls to action



**FOR MORE THAN 125 YEARS,  
ST. MARY BYZANTINE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS BEEN  
WELCOMING THE STRANGER  
AND CREATING FAMILY.**

Our church was founded in 1898 by Eastern European immigrants in search of a better life. It has the distinction of being the oldest Eastern Catholic church in Indiana and Chicagoland.

Today, our congregation represents five language groups and offers a multicultural and intergenerational experience of prayer and community. We pray according to the Byzantine rite, a spiritual tradition that privileges beauty, chant, mysticism and ascetism. Our tradition is ancient, but our community is committed to living our faith in the present day.

St. Mary's parishioners have put their church and volunteerism at the service of the Whiting-Robertsdale community and beyond for over a century. Our \$1.3 million campaign currently underway will position us to continue being a beacon of light in Northwest Indiana for the next century.

I hope you will consider being a part of St. Mary's beautiful story by making a contribution toward our future.

Rev. Andrew J. Summerson, S.Th.D



**MAKING  
*Beauty*  
PUBLIC  
PROPERTY**

St. Mary's participates in the long-standing tradition of local pride and investment through our commitment to the sacred arts, classic architecture, beautiful worship, public events, educational outreach and volunteerism. We want our community to be a beacon of beauty for the Region and the Chicago area.



# BEAUTY SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE TO EACH AND EVERY HUMAN HEART

Every church should bring beauty, truth and goodness more clearly into view.

## CREATION *is Beautiful*

### THE BLESSING OF LAKE MICHIGAN

Since 2019, St. Mary's has partnered with the Hammond Port Authority to gather over 1,000 people at our **ANNUAL BLESSING OF LAKE MICHIGAN** in January. The event has garnered national media attention and encouraged environmental advocacy.

### MARIAN PRAYER GARDEN

Beauty is to be shared, which is why St. Mary's opened up its grounds to a create a beautiful outdoor space open to the public. The park benches invite passers-by to peaceful contemplation of a glorious mosaic of sacred art and of a classic Byzantine icon in our Marian flower garden.



## WHITING *is Beautiful*

### FAMILY AND FUN

Whiting's Pierogi Fest is a huge draw for families across the Region and St. Mary's is in the middle of the action, with our "Holy Rollers" participating in the parade and selling the best homemade walnut, poppy seed and apricot rolls in the Region.

St. Mary's also plays a key role in making Whiting a national hub for the Catholic community.

In 2024, St. Mary's introduced **CATHOLIC DAY** at Pierogi Fest, drawing over 500 people for an outdoor concert featuring the chart-topping bluegrass band The Hillbilly Thomists, welcomed over 200 people for a **SUMMER FAMILY CAMP**, and hosted the **NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC PROCESSION** at the request of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, drawing over 600 people.

In July 2025, St. Mary's will welcome 400 Byzantine Catholics for the **NATIONAL BYZANTINE CATHOLIC ASSEMBLY**—a week dedicated to prayer, fellowship and evangelization. The Eastern Catholic bishops chose St. Mary's as the model of a historic church embracing growth and renewal.

# EDUCATING

FORMATION  
OF THE WHOLE  
PERSON

# *for Beauty*

St. Mary's is a driving force in Northwest Indiana in educating for beauty through its lecture series, retreats, symposia, parish missions, family camps, icon-painting workshops and a monthly reading group, called "Taproom Talks," at The Standard Taproom in downtown Whiting.

The parish has also sponsored and coordinated public lectures in Chicago on faith and work and an Eastern Christian sacred music concert at the University of Chicago's Rockefeller Chapel with the world-renowned Capella Romana.



# *The Beauty of* COMMUNITY

## EMPOWERING VOLUNTEERISM

Whiting's volunteer base is largely made of the men and women who pray in our churches, including the parishioners of St. Mary's, who have dedicated countless to raise up our community, offering care and comfort for those in need.

Whether they are organizing national faith gatherings, coordinating Lunch With Friends, making weekly soup delivery to shut-ins or helping to plan Pierogi Fest or other Chamber of Commerce events, St. Mary's volunteers bring love for their neighbor and their community to everything they do.



DONATE TO THE CAMPAIGN  
[www.stmarywhiting.org](http://www.stmarywhiting.org)



# *The Beauty of* HOSPITALITY

Virtual connections are on the rise, but we seem more isolated than ever. The only antidote is face-to-face encounters with a community that cares and that recognizes the value of each person. St. Mary's is that place.

Our theology of iconography gives us a face-to-face encounter with the living God and urges us to seek the image of God in each other.

The interior remodel of our church in 2012, which included the addition of numerous beautiful icons in the Byzantine tradition, also led to a renewal of our congregation. Today more than 70% of parishioners, with young families and people of all ethnic traditions, have been members less than five years. These new members have been blessed by St. Mary's spirit of welcome. You are welcome, too!





# YOUR INVESTMENT WILL HELP US TO:

## *Preserve* OUR STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS

### NEED

Our stained-glass windows—our largest and most historic sacred art, weathered and worn by the natural elements for over 100 years—need repair.

**INVESTMENT: \$750,000**

### PLAN

Install protective glazing; repair wooden window frames; create climate-controlled ventilation system for windows; expose covered windows and restore damaged areas.

## *Expand* OUR HOSPITALITY

### NEED

Our growing community needs more suitable space for hospitality after Sunday worship and for educational and outreach activities.

**INVESTMENT: \$150,000**

### PLAN

Expand our narthex to create a multipurpose space for parish meetings, an information station and hospitality for large groups after services, lectures, and concerts.



## *Create* ACCESSIBILITY

### NEED

Our church needs a stairless entrance and bathrooms that can accommodate people with disabilities, as well as a diaper-changing facilities for our growing infant population.

**INVESTMENT: \$200,000**

### PLAN

Install an ADA-compliant ramp by the church entrance and renovate the facilities to create an accessible ADA-compliant restroom with a family-friendly change station.

## *Leave* A LEGACY

### NEED

We need to stabilize our finances for future generations of parishioners.

**INVESTMENT: \$500,000**

### PLAN

Expand an endowment to sustain our building and ministries into the future.





# *Be a part* **OF OUR FUTURE**

Join us in shaping the future while honoring the rich legacy of our past. Through our sacred space, cherished traditions, and vibrant community, we continue to be a beacon of faith and connection in Northwest Indiana and Chicagoland.

Your support—whether through online contributions, planned giving, or charitable gifts—plays a crucial role in advancing our mission and realizing our vision for generations to come. Together, we can ensure that the values and heritage we uphold continue to thrive and inspire.







# CONTRIBUTE *today!*

Together we can keep the beauty accessible in Whiting for another 125 years.

## ONLINE DONATIONS

Go to [www.stmarywhiting.org](http://www.stmarywhiting.org) and click on "Donate." Choose "Accessibility to Beauty" as your fund

## DONATE THROUGH THE MAIL

Mail your check, payable to "St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church," to:

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church  
2011 Clark St  
Whiting, IN 46394

Write "Accessibility to Beauty" in the memo line.