

S O I L R E F L E C T I O N

Light Takes Root Where Darkness Once Lived

Healthy soil does not grow in constant sunlight alone. It often begins in shadow, waiting for warmth to return. Matthew tells us that when John is arrested, Jesus does not withdraw - He goes toward the darkness, settling in Galilee, a place long overlooked and spiritually weary.

Scripture says the people there were "walking in darkness." Not because they were abandoned, but because they had not yet seen the Light. Christ enters that space quietly, deliberately, and with purpose. Renewal does not begin at the center of power, but at the edges - where hope has thinned and faith feels distant.

Jesus' first proclamation is simple and demanding: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Repentance is not shame - it is turning. Turning the soil. Breaking the crust that prevents roots from forming. Leadership begins not with instruction, but with conversion of heart.

For those called to lead, this moment matters. Christ does not wait for ideal conditions. He plants Himself where the ground is hardest. Where darkness lingers, He offers light. Where confusion reigns, He brings clarity. Where hearts are tired, He invites change.

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church

كنيسة القديس جاورجيوس الانطاكيه الارثوذكسيه

Est. 1927

Jurisdiction

A parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

- **His Eminence Metropolitan SABA**, Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America
- **Archimandrite Jeremy Davis**, Archepiscopal Vicar for Toledo and the Midwest

Clergy

- **Rev. Fr. Habib Ghantous, Pastor**

Cell: (812)262-0038 & (309) 453-2186
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- **Rev. Fr. Archdeacon Elias Corey**

Cell: (812) 249-6694
frdneliasc@gmail.com / mrshooz@aol.com

Services

- 6:00 PM Saturday Vespers
- 9:00 AM Sunday Orthros
- 10:00 AM Sunday Divine Liturgy

Parish Office Hours

Tuesday - Friday
10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Appointments are Encouraged!

For urgent pastoral needs outside these hours, please contact Fr. Habib directly.

Contact

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We are one soil. One family. One
Church. One St. George

St. GEORGE

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church

كنيسة القديس جاورجيوس الانطاكيه الارثوذكسيه

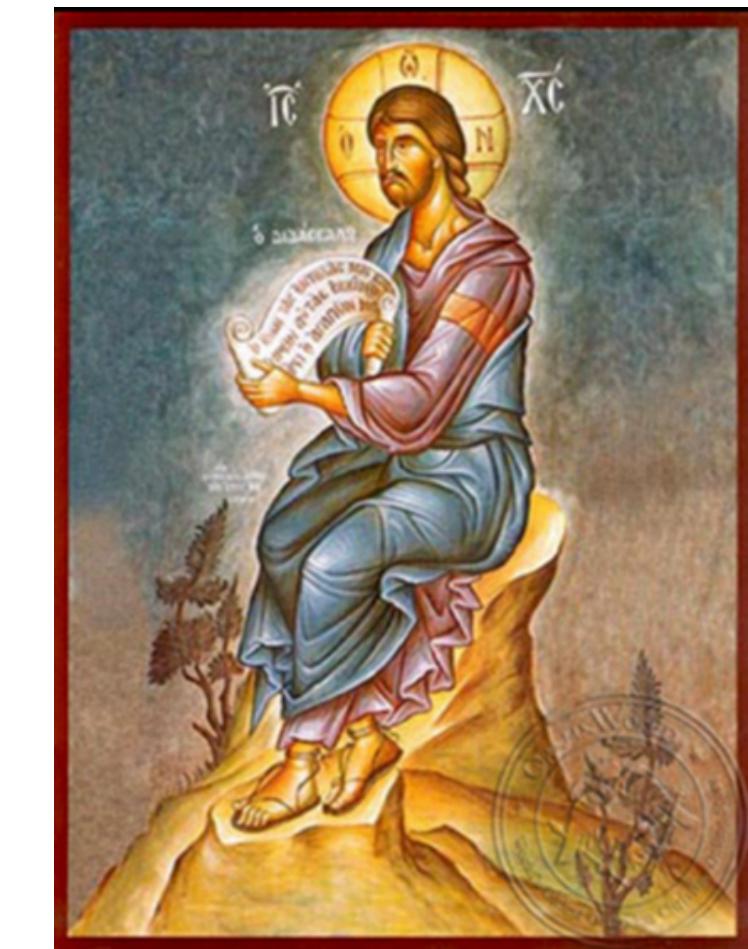
Est. 1927 - Preparing for Our Centennial 2027



GOSPEL - MATTHEW 4:12-17

Repent!

**Turn Your Heart
Toward Christ,
For His Kingdom
Is Near**



Today's Gospel calls us to awaken our hearts.

Christ proclaims that the Kingdom of God is not distant or hidden, but near - inviting us to repentance, renewal, and a living encounter with Him.

أهلاً وسهلاً! (Ahlan wa Sahlan!)

We are blessed to have you with us today. Whether this your first visit or your hundredth, you are part of our family in Christ.

In the Orthodox tradition, only Baptized & Chrismated Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves may receive Holy Communion. All are warmly invited to share in the blessed bread (Antidoron) and the love of our parish.

"Welcome to St. George - May you find here a home of faith, hope and love."

Divine Liturgy Variables for Sunday, Jan 11, 2026 - St. Matthew. (4:12-17) - Tone 6 / Eothinon 9;**Sunday after the Theophany of Christ***Theodosios the Great, head of monasteries (Cenobiarach)***RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SIX**

Let us believers praise and worship the Word; coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation. For, He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh to suffer death; and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

APOLYTIKION OF THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST IN TONE ONE

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, worship of the Trinity was made manifest; for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of His word. O Christ our God, Who hast appeared and enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. THEODOSIOS IN TONE EIGHT

The barren wilderness thou didst make fertile with the streams of thy tears; and by thy deep sighing thou hast given fruit through thy struggles a hundredfold. Accordingly, thou hast become a star for the universe, sparkling with miracles. Therefore, O righteous Father Theodosios, intercede with Christ God to save our souls.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. GEORGE IN TONE FOUR

As deliverer of captives and defender of the poor, healer of the infirm, champion of kings, victorious Great Martyr George intercede with Christ our God to save our souls.

KONTAKION OF THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST IN TONE FOUR

On this day Thou hast appeared * unto the whole world, * and Thy light, O Sovereign Lord, * is signed on us who sing Thy praise * and chant with knowledge: Thou hast now come, * Thou hast appeared, O Thou Light unapproachable.

THE EPISTLE

What shall we render to the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto us?

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (13:7-16)

Brethren, remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings; for it is well that the heart be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited their adherents. We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through His own blood. Therefore, let us go forth to Him outside the camp and bear the abuse He endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city, which is to come. Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His Name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

THE GOSPEL

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (4:12-17)

At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulon and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

St. GEORGE - PARISH CALENDAR

Sun	Jan 4, ...	9 / 10 AM	Orthros 9 AM and Divine Liturgy 10 AM Blessing of water - Post Divine Liturgy
Tue	Jan 6, ...	all day	Blessed Epiphany!
Sat	Jan 10...	6 PM	Vespers
Sun	Jan 11...	9 / 10 AM	Orthros 9 AM and Divine Liturgy 10 AM
Sat	Jan 17,...	6 PM	Vespers CANCELLED!!!!!!
Sun	Jan 18...	9 / 10 AM	Orthros 9 AM and Divine Liturgy 10 AM
Sat	Jan 24...	6 / 7 PM	Vespers and Commencement of Orthodoxy: The Way to the Kingdom - A Journey to all who seek Christ - Sat (weekly) at 7:00 PM
Sun	Jan 25...	9 / 10 AM	Orthros 9 AM and Divine Liturgy 10 AM
Sat	Jan 31...	6 / 7 PM	Vespers and Orthodoxy: The Way to the Kingdom
Sun	Feb 1, ...	9 / 10 AM	Orthros 9 AM and Divine Liturgy 10 AM
Sat & Sun	Feb 7, ...	All day	Visit of Archimandrite Jeremy Davis, Archiepiscopal Vicar for Toledo and the Midwest
Sat	Feb 7, ...	6 PM	Vespers and (CANCELED!) Orthodoxy: The Way to the Kingdom
Sun	Feb 8, ...	9 / 10 AM	Orthros 9 AM and Divine Liturgy 10 AM
Sat	Feb 14...	9 AM	Saturday of Souls
Sat	Feb 14...	6 & 7 PM	Vesper & Orthodoxy: The Way to the Kingdom
Sun	Feb 15...	9 / 10 AM	Orthros 9 AM and Divine Liturgy 10 AM - Meat Fare Sunday
Sat	Feb 21...	6 & 7 PM	Vesper & Orthodoxy: The Way to the Kingdom
Sun	Feb 22...	9 / 10 AM	Orthros 9 AM and Divine Liturgy 10 AM - Cheese Fare Sunday
Mon	Feb 23...	All day	Great Lent Begins
Sat	Feb 28...	6 & 7 PM	Vesper & Orthodoxy: The Way to the Kingdom
Sun	Mar 1, ...	6 & 7 PM	Sunday of Orthodoxy
Sat	Apr 4, ...	9 AM	Lazarus Saturday
Sun	Apr 5, ...	10 AM	Palm Sunday
Sun	Apr 5, ...	6 PM	Start Holy Week at Vespers - Holy Week Schedule TBA
Wed	Apr 8, ...	6 PM	Holy Wednesday - Blessing of the Oil
Thu	Apr 9, ...	6 PM	Holy Thursday
Fri	Apr 10...	6 PM	Good Friday

Little Saints Corner
"A Little Heart Growing in God's Love"
Gospel: Matthew 4:12-17

After John the Baptist was taken away, Jesus went to live in Galilee, near the Sea. Many people there were sad and confused, and they did not know God very well. But Jesus came to change that.

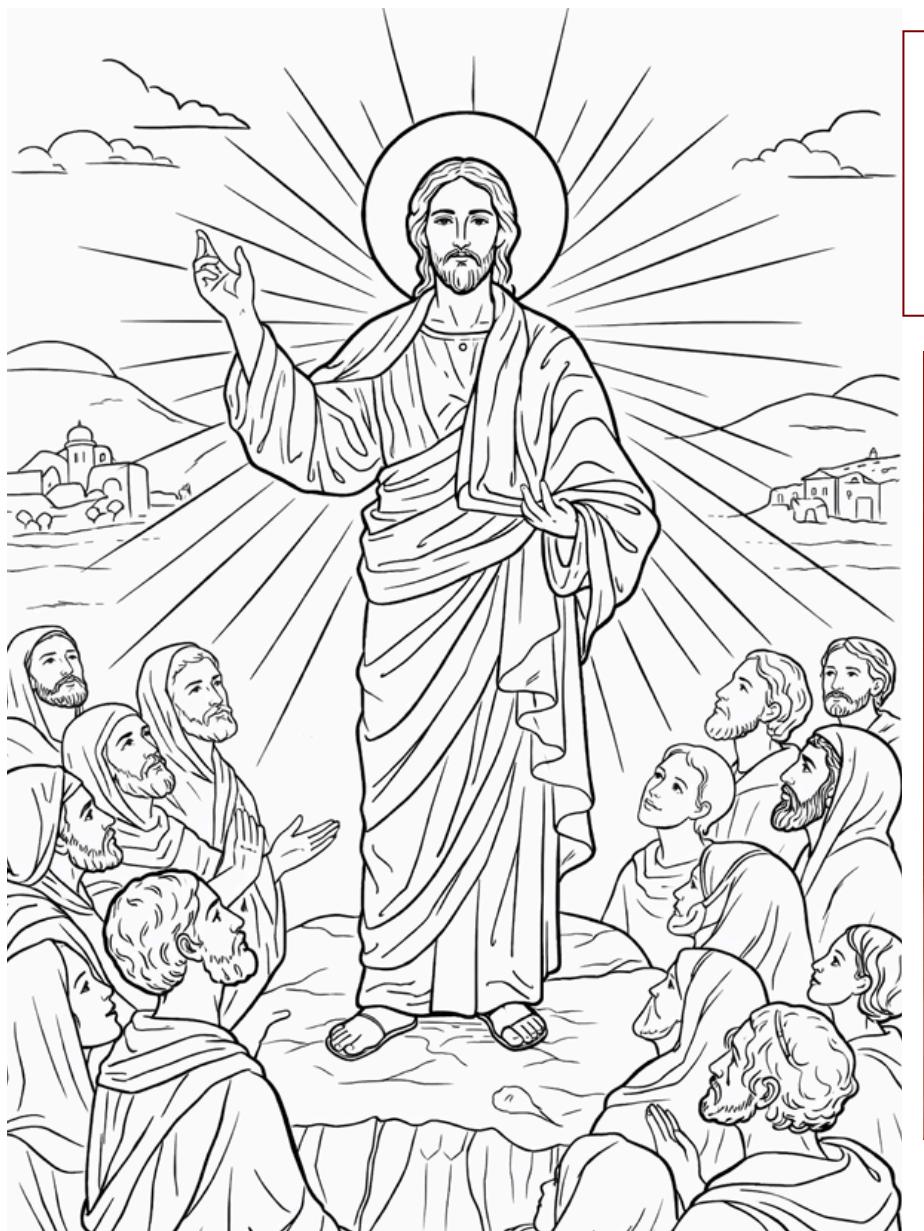
- Jesus began teaching and preaching to the people
- He shared God's love with everyone
- He healed the sick and helped those in need

The Bible tells us that the people who lived there were "walking in darkness," but when Jesus came, a great light shone.

This was very important, because it showed that Jesus is the Light of the world.

- Jesus brings light where there is darkness
- Jesus brings hope where people feel lost
- Jesus invites everyone to follow Him

Jesus began His ministry not with anger, but with love—calling people to change their hearts and walk in the light.



Jesus chose to begin His ministry in a place many people ignored. This reminds us that God's light is for everyone, no matter where they live or who they are!



From the Desk of Fr. Habib
Living the Gospel with Sophia



Beloved in Christ,

The words we hear in today's Gospel are simple, yet they carry the weight of eternity:

"Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand."

Christ does not begin His ministry with condemnation, but with invitation. He does not say, "You are lost," but rather, "Come home." The Kingdom He announces is not merely a future promise or a distant heaven - it is the living presence of God breaking into our lives here and now.

Repentance, in the Orthodox understanding, is not fear-driven guilt. It is a turning of the heart. It is the moment when we stop running, stop hiding, and allow Christ to meet us exactly where we are. The Kingdom draws near whenever we choose humility over pride, mercy over judgment, prayer over distraction.

A question I am often asked is: **"How do I know if the Kingdom of God is truly present in my life?"**

The answer is simple, though not always easy. The Kingdom is present wherever Christ reigns in the heart - where forgiveness is chosen, where love is offered without conditions, where prayer becomes a way of breathing, and where trust in God replaces fear.

My prayer for each of us this week is this:

- May we not delay our response to Christ's call.
- May we open the door of our hearts without hesitation.
- And may we discover that the Kingdom we long for has been standing at our doorstep all along.

With love in Christ,
Fr. Habib



January Fellowship by:

- 11 Jan - Ladies Society
- 18 Jan - SOIL - Commencement
- 25 Jan - Not assigned

**February Fellowship by:**

- 1 Feb - Tanoos - 40 Years Memorial
- 8 Feb - Drs. Steve & Jamie Maynard - FHO Steven
- 15 Feb - SOIL - Valentines Day Luncheon
- 22 Feb - Kal & Christy Ellis - Kal's 63 birthday

March Fellowship by:

- 1 Mar - Not Assigned
- 8 Mar - Lynn Shahadey - Kadin's 20th Birthday
- 15 Mar - Turner Family - Jeremiah's Birthday
- 22 Mar - Bocard Family - Illiana's 22nd Birthday
- 29 Mar - Zack Kassis - Zack's 68th Birthday

April Fellowship by:

- 5 Apr - Ladies Society - Palm Sunday
- 11 Apr - Mary Helen Ellis
- 12 Apr - Easter
- 19 Apr - Not Assigned
- 26 Apr - Cache & Trent

PRAY FOR THE SICK

- Betty Azar
- Kalea Ellis
- Tiah & Baby
- Tory and Baby

- Carl Ellis
- Dan Hester
- Salwa Nasser
- Denise Issa

- Jacque Davis
- Naime Ghantous

Birthdays

- Jan 14 - Jake Ellis
- Jan 15 - Lauren Mnayarji
- Jan 16 - Kendra Bailey
- Jan 17 - Antonios Ghantous
- Jan 19 - Patrick Abdayem

- Jan 19 - Wyatt Lockhart
- Jan 22 - Karah Ellis
- Jan 25 - Noor Bittar
- Jan 29 - Jason Lake
- Jan 30 - Alecia Corey
- Jan 30 - Peyton White

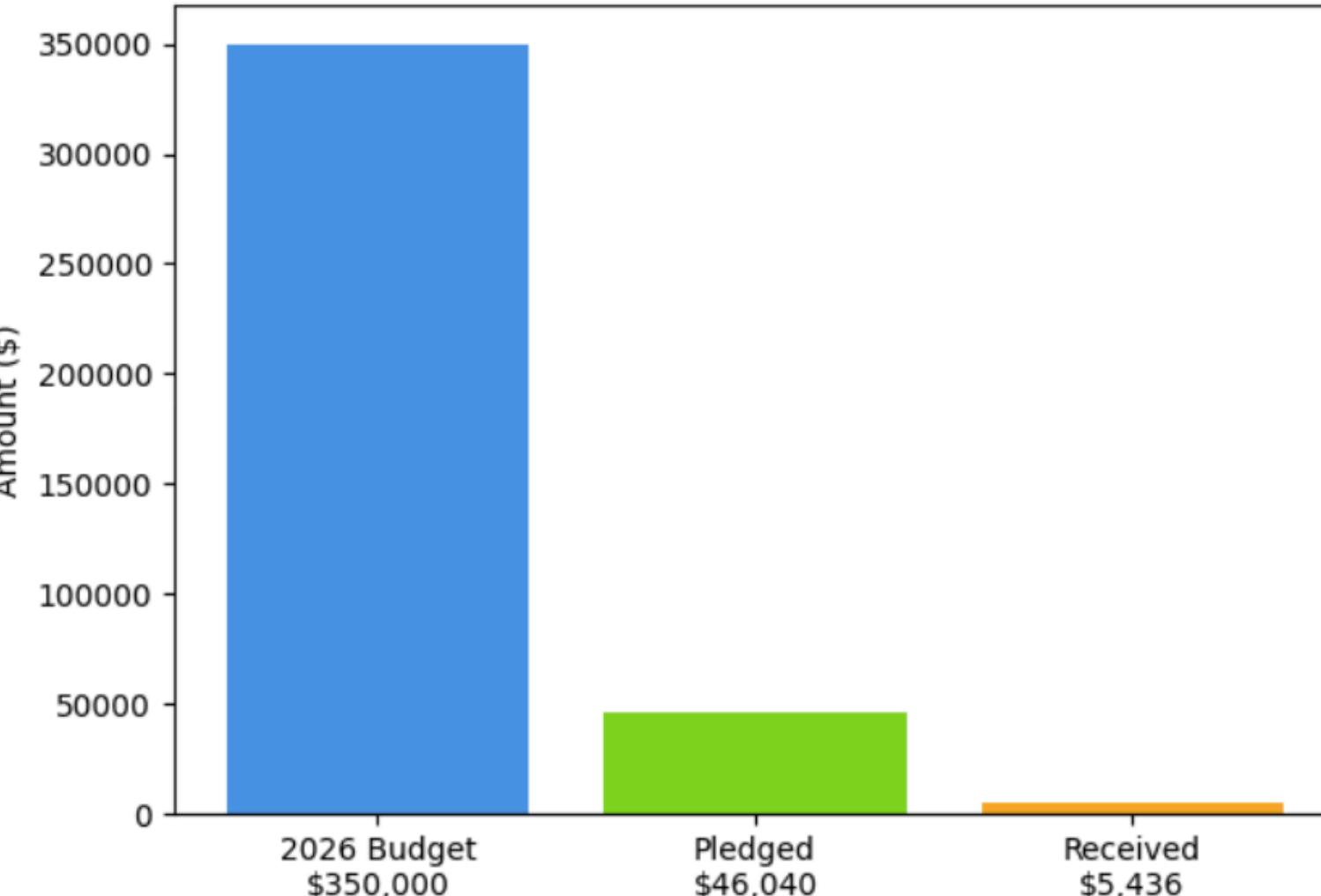
- Feb 02 - Courtney Lake
- Feb 02 - Christina Issa
- Feb 02 - Kensington Cook
- Feb 02 - Sophia Davis
- Feb 02 - Crew Davis
- Feb 08 - Ian Neice

HOLY OBLATION - Offered this Sunday by: Sophia Davis**DIPTYCHS****Living**

- Sophia & Don
- Andrew, Nicole and Children
- Lucas, Lyndsee and Children
- Loretta and Michael
- Sheri
- Davis Family
- Kassis Family
- All of the St. George parishioners, board members, choir, Chanters and that serve in this Holy Temple.
- All the People suffering in the world

DEPARTED**May there memories by eternal!**

- Rosemary
- Mary Ann
- Naim
- George
- Albert
- Kreme
- William
- Latefee
- Charlie
- Sauda
- Mose
- John
- Pam
- Brenda
- John
- Joanne Mareena
- Bob
- Sheri
- Our fathers, forefathers, founder of this Holy Temple
- All the Orthodox departed in the world. May the Lord remember them in His heavenly Kingdom.

REMINDER TO PLEASE FILL OUT YOUR 2026 PLEDGE FORMS ASAP!!!**2026 Pledge Summary
as of 01/09/2026**

PLEASE REMIT YOUR 2026 FORMS
BY 01/18/2026