

March 5, 2026

Building a Foundation of Faith – North County Opportunity

"Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain." (Psalm 127:1)

Dear Members of the Body of Christ,

For over 35 years, our Melkite presence has been a diamond in the rough in the greater San Diego area. Today, we stand at a defining moment in our history. An opportunity has presented itself to us through the work of the Holy Spirit and we are in a unique position to have our very own church and allow the beauty of our ancient expression of faith to shine brightly in our community. This would finally be what St. Jacob has been missing—a space where we can freely gather, accelerate our recent growth, and serve Christ and each other to the fullest. With more baptisms than funerals and two men entering the Deacon formation program in the last few years, the time is now! As Christ told His disciples, He tells us also, *"Lift up your eyes and behold the fields, for they are already white to harvest."* (John 4:35)

We are eager to share our vision (page 3) for the North County building project, which includes a large space for a new sanctuary, classrooms, fellowship hall and ample parking. It is located in downtown Escondido, only four minutes from the I-15 freeway. Our immediate fundraising goal for the next 90 days is to raise one million dollars for the purpose of purchasing the property. After 90 days we will continue to raise funds for construction costs. The Melkite Diocese of Newton, under Bishop François' leadership, has already expressed their support of this endeavor both in spirit as well as financially. First, Bishop François has said repeatedly that the inheritance left to us by Fr. Maximos Mardelli of blessed memory, will be released to St. Jacob, interest included. Second, the Diocese is ready and willing to loan us a portion of the funds needed to help close escrow. However, the Bishop made it clear that this loan would be contingent upon us proving ourselves able to pay back the loan within a short period of time (3 to 5 years).

Thus, with much excitement for the future, we are now appealing to you, our faithful members, family, and friends, to help raise as much of the upfront costs as possible, to seize this momentous opportunity for our church community. We invite you to prayerfully consider making a truly sacrificial and above-and-beyond pledge to help bring this plan to fruition. This is not merely a financial contribution; it is an investment in the future of our church and that of our children, of their children and of all future generations to come. It is a witness of faith in God and His Church. It is our answer to Christ's call to minister to those in need. It is the legacy you and I will leave behind when we fall asleep in the hope of resurrection on the Last Day.

Please find enclosed two contribution forms. The first (page 4) is for committing to financially support St. Jacob on a recurring basis moving forward. The second (page 5) is a pledge form to make a one-time contribution toward the purchase and remodeling of the property. All contributions are tax-deductible. We kindly ask that you complete and return one or both forms before Pascha (April 5). Thank you for your prayers, devotion, and generosity toward building the house of the Lord.

With the Parish Advisory Board and Finance Committee, in Christ's service,
Rev. Shaun Brown



"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. We are barely making it now. How can we afford this?

- a. *"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."* (1 Peter 5:7) We are describing this opportunity as momentous because of its implications for the future, but we could just as easily describe it as phenomenal, incomparable or extraordinary. The seller of this property has already agreed to lease back the property for their own liturgical needs several days per week, for not less than five years after we've completed remodeling. Further, they have expressed their desire to assist us in our fundraising efforts! Finally, we have two other prospective religious groups who are also interested in leasing the sanctuary one day per week. All in all, the chances of something like this coming before us are so small, that the only logical conclusion is that this opportunity has been granted us by the grace of God.

2. \$1 million in 90 days! Are you crazy?

- a. *"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans."* (Proverbs 16:3) This is not the time for complacency. We must be ambitious and work arduously toward this goal, that our labor may yield great fruit. We are not expecting to raise this amount solely from our humble parish, but we do pray that each one of us gives something knowing that if we do our part in good faith, God will provide what is lacking. We also call upon everyone to share this great news and solicit assistance from friends, neighbors and acquaintances. Finally, those whose hearts are inclined to give, do not need 90 days to ponder. It is up to us to reach out timely to all potential supporters. Have you shared it yet?

3. How much of a difference can my small donation really make?

- a. *"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"* (Isaiah 6:8) We encourage you to reconsider your perspective. Each of us is called to holiness. Likewise each of us called to contribute to the success and growth of God's Church. It is up to us to answer each call of our own free will, just as the Word of God took flesh, suffered and died of His own free will for our sake. Every little bit helps, just as *"A little leaven leavens the whole lump."* (Gal 5:9)

4. How much should I give?

- a. *"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."* (Luke 6:38) If you are able to make a sacrificial gift toward the purchase and remodeling effort, we encourage you to give as much as your heart directs. Arguably, it is more important, at least for those who are members of the San Diego Melkite Community, or are seeking to become Melkite, that a long-term commitment be made. This is what the Bishop is looking for to prove we can repay any loans the Diocese would grant us.

5. How can we repay a loan from the Diocese in just 3 to 5 years?

- a. Upon completion of the remodeling project, we will have both cash flow (see answer to question 1 above) and considerable equity in the property. We will continue to make our payments to the Diocese until the loan is either paid off or the Bishop demands full payment. In the latter case, a mortgage would be taken out against the equity we would then have in the property.

6. Where exactly is this property and what does it look like?

- a. We're glad you asked! The property is a two-story, approximately 12,000sf building with an adjacent parking lot, located at 240 S. Maple St. in Escondido. It was formerly the parish hall next to a church which burned down many years ago. Later it was used as a school administration building. Currently, it is owned by John Paul the Great Catholic University, who plans to lease time in the sanctuary after we've completed the renovation. A win-win for both parties. Please check out the renderings on page 3 for an idea of what our preliminary future vision looks like. As we work with the city and architects to further develop the plans and renderings, we'll be sure to share them on our website, so please stay engaged.

Ai-assisted rendering of possible future interior



Current exterior and Ai-assisted rendering of possible future exterior



Recurring Donation Commitment Form

Scan for e-form:



Ongoing Support – Giving Back According to God’s Blessings

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Recurring Donation Structure (all gifts are tax-deductible)

I/We would like to:

- Initiate a recurring donation of \$_____ every **week** **month**
 - Increase our current donation to \$_____ every **week** **month**
 - Continue our current donation of \$_____ every **week** **month**
- (circle one)

I/We intend to fulfill this commitment beginning

- Today
- At close of escrow
- _____ (specify exact date or month/year)

and continue

- indefinitely until I/we cancel
 - over a period of **3** **4** **5** year(s)
- (circle one)

Payment Method

Zelle (donate@stjacobmelkite.org)

Credit Card or ACH/Bank Transfers



Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please mail completed form to PO Box 231328 San Diego, CA 92193 or deliver in person to Fr. Shaun or any board member.

Building Fund Pledge Form

Scan for e-form:



North County Opportunity – Investing in our Future

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Important Any gift made using this form is set aside for the sole purpose of buying, building and/or renovating real property for St. Jacob Melkite Catholic Church. In the event that escrow does not close on the North County Building Project, your gift will be refunded to you.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

My/Our Commitment:

In response to God's grace, I/we pledge to the Escondido property purchase a total amount of \$_____ as a one-time, tax-deductible gift.

Payment Method

- Cash/Check (payable to St. Jacob Melkite Church with "Building Fund" in memo)
- Wire transfer (We will contact you with details)
- Online Giving via Zelle, Venmo, PayPal, Credit Card or ACH/Bank transfer (use QR codes below)
- Stock/Securities Transfer (We will contact you with details)

Recognition

- You may list our names in donor recognition materials.
- We wish to remain anonymous.
- Please dedicate this donation in memory of _____.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please mail completed form to PO Box 231328 San Diego, CA 92193 or deliver in person to Fr. Shaun or any board member.

Zelle



Venmo



PayPal



Credit Card or ACH

