



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH



A Parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Father Dave Urban, *Pastor*
Very Reverend Father John Brancho, *Pastor Emeritus*
Subdeacon Ryan Ferko
Timothy Martin, *Reader*
Matthew Peifer, Stephen Brancho, & John Radick, *Cantors*
Lawrence Martin, *Parish Council President*
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SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5 #NATIVITY FAST

24th Sunday after Pentecost
Within the Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos
Apostles Philemon (ca. 109)
9:15 – Nativity Canon & Carols (*Kol'ady*)
9:30 am Divine Liturgy

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7 #NATIVITY FAST

9:30 am Akathist to St. Nicholas

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11 #NATIVITY FAST

9:00 am to about 12-noon – *Winter Maintenance and Decoration Morning*
~~canceled: 11am-1pm Confessions Offered~~ (Please let Fr Dave know when you will be coming)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12 #NATIVITY FAST

25th Sunday after Pentecost
Martyr Paramon (250)
9:15 – Nativity Canon & Carols (*Kol'ady*)
9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-6
Gospel: Luke 13:10-17 (*10th Sunday of Luke*)
Tone 8; Liturgical Color: **Purple**

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Future Services are listed on our online “Parish Calendar” which is continually updated at: www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar (Please ask Fr. Dave if you want a printed copy)

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Live-Broadcast – If you are unable to attend church on Sunday morning, please pray along with our Cathedral’s services online at **9:00 am**.
www.acrod.org/organizations/cathedral/live/

BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wed.)

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The Nativity Fast began last week - This fasting period in the church is referred to as the Nativity Fast, Philip’s Fast (*Filipovka*), or sometimes by its Latin roots, Advent. It runs for 40-days until the Eve of the Nativity on Monday, January 6. As in Great Lent, you should establish for yourself a rule of fasting and stick to it. It is often said that the Nativity Fast is so much more difficult because of the nature of society around us. We can enjoy the season with our extended family & friends and still witness to our Faith and keep the spirit of the Fast! Everyone should try, at a minimum, to keep Monday, Wednesday & Friday as fast days, no matter what is happening on the ‘new calendar’. Also, Metropolitan Gregory has offered a “Prayer Challenge” to all of the faithful and especially the youth and young adults of the Diocese to strengthen their spiritual lives. The challenge is to offer a special prayer for the increase in Faith, Hope and Love during your evening prayers every day for 40 days. For more info, visit:

www.acrod.org/consecration/prayerchallenge/

If you have any questions, please talk with Father Dave as we **prepare the Manger of our Soul for the coming of the new borne Messiah!**

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Winter Maintenance and Decorating Morning - On **December 11th** we will have our next maintenance morning along with decorating for Christmas. Please sign up on the sheet in the hall if you are able to offer any of your time that day.

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS!

Glory be to Jesus Christ!

(responded with: **Glory be forever!**)

Slava Isusu Christu! (Slava na viki!)

We are happy that you have joined us today! It is our pleasure to have you in our presence this morning and we wish God’s Blessings to all who visit with us today and hope you stop again soon! **If you have any questions** in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy, please see Fr. Dave.

Spiritual Vitamin:

“Come, all you people, and let us praise her who is alone undefiled, she who was foretold by the prophets and offered in the Temple, the Mother preordained before all ages, who in the last times has been shown forth as the Mother of God. O Lord, at her intercession grant us Your peace and great mercy.”

Litiya hymn from Vespers for the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos

Akathist to Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker – Thursday morning at 9:30 (along with on 12/23), we will pray an Akathist to St. Nicholas. (An Akathist is a hymn (a song of praise or adoration) dedicated to a saint, holy event, icon, or one of the persons of the Holy Trinity.)

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St Nicholas Breakfast at St. John’s – We are going to have the return of our local St. Nicholas Breakfast on Sunday, December 19 following the Divine Liturgy (on the Feast of St. Nicholas). **Please sign up** on the sheet in the hall (or email Fr Dave).

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2022 Wall Calendars are now in the vestibule.

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Spiritual Vitamin:

“Never confuse the person formed in the image of God, with the evil that is in them: because evil is but a chance misfortune, an illness, a devilish reverie. But the very essence of a person is the image of God, and this remains in them despite every disfigurement.” +St. John of Kronstadt

BULLETIN IS OFFERED:

If you wish to sponsor a bulletin In Honor of (anniversary, birthday, etc.) or In Memory of someone, please do so by signing up on the sheet in the church hall or by contacting Fr. Dave (email, text, or call). An additional stewardship offering to the Church is requested.

Spiritual Vitamin:

"Let us strive to comprehend the mystery. The reason God is in the flesh is to kill the death that lurks there. As diseases are cured by medicines and assimilated by the body, and as darkness in a house is dispelled by the coming of light, so death, which held sway over human nature, is done away with by the coming of God. And as ice formed on water covers its surface as long as night and darkness last but melts under the warmth of the sun, so death reigned until the coming of Christ; but when the grace of God our Saviour appeared and the Sun of Justice rose, death was swallowed up in victory, unable to bear the presence of true life. How great is God’s goodness, how deep his love for us!"

+St. Basil the Great, *Homily II on the Nativity of Christ*

Sr. ACRY NEWS: The National ACRY Lots-O-Luck Calendars are available. \$25 per ticket get’s you a year’s worth of prizes totaling \$10,000! Please see Theresa Sharpless.

A REMINDER TO MAKE TIME FOR YOUR NATIVITY FAST CONFESSION

“Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.” (Lk. 5:12)

Fr. Dave will be available for confessions after ALL services, from 11-1 on Saturday Dec. 18, and by appointment.

As we prepare for the Feast of the Nativity, it is time to prepare the “Manger of our soul” for the coming of the Messiah.

“There is more mercy in God than there are sins in us. Confess your sins at once, whatever they may be.” +St Tikhon of Zadonsk

OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Stewardship: | \$ 171 |
| Candles/Eternal Lamp Stewardship: | \$ 231 |
| Envelope Stewardship: | \$ 459 |
| Community Outreach (IOCC): | \$ 270 |
| Total Collections: | \$ 1131 |
| Capital Improvement Fund: | \$ 50 |
| Relocation Fund: | \$ 100 |

In faith that God provides:

“And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, ‘He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever.’ – 2 Cor. 9:8-9

Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials were offered last week by Nelson Family; Tim Martin; John Radick; Melanie Shuster; Eleanor Sanger; Patty Watson; Cindy Pavilonis.

*“I am the light of the world;
he who follows Me will not walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life.” - John 8:12*

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Weekly Offerings to God – During this time, if you are not yet coming to the church, we request that weekly donations be mailed to Tim Martin (2225 McAleer Rd., Sewickley, PA 15143)



On-Line Giving is now available from our parish website! The best option is to come to church and give your offering to God in His Temple (2nd best is to mail it in). Now you can also donate from your home and set up a recurring donation to the:

General Stewardship Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, and/or Relocation Fund.

If you miss coming to church for a week, this allows you another option to “catch up” on your weekly stewardship. For our parish to continue its ministries, outreach, and general bill paying, we need your generosity to continue.

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Nativity Commemorations – We offer you the opportunity to sponsor items to be used for Nativity as commemorations: *anonymously, in memory of departed loves ones, OR for the health of loved ones.* If you are interested in making any of these commemorations, please sign up on the sheet in the vestibule (or email Fr. Dave) and give an *additional stewardship free-will offering* to the Church.

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ORTHODOXY AROUND THE ‘BURGH AND OUR DIOCESE

Christmas Food Festival at Holy Virgin Russian Orthodox Church (214 Mansfield Blvd., Carnegie, Pa 15106) will be on **Saturday, December 11th** from 11a-2p. If you wish, you can order in advance at <https://hvroc.org/>

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Cantor and Choir Director Positions – St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Homestead, PA is in need of a fulltime cantor and choir director (filled by one person or two.) Please email Tom Pingor, Parish Council President, at tpingor@verizon.net for more information.

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VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE

Diocesan Website: www.acrod.org
Camp Nazareth: www.campnazareth.org
FB: www.facebook.com/acroddioecese
Twitter: twitter.com/acrodnews
YouTube: youtube.com/acroddioecese

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MONTHLY COMMUNITY OUTREACH

During the Nativity Fast, we are called to increase our Prayer, Fasting, *and* Almsgiving. This month, through the efforts of our Sr. ACRY, we will be:

- Having a monetary collection for the **ACRY Stewardship Campaign** (our community outreach collection at the end of the month). The Stewardship Campaign helps support the ACRY Scholarship Fund, Camp Nazareth, Youth Workers’ Conference Fund, Ambassador Fund, and Lenten Retreat Fund,

- **Food Drive Project** for Neighborhood Resilience Project (formerly FOCUS Pittsburgh). *Please bring in non-perishable unexpired food items: canned fruits and vegetables, cereals, canned meats, soups, oatmeal, pasta, peanut butter and jelly, and rice.*,
- And reaching out to **our homebound** parishioners. *Thank you in advance for your prayers and offerings this month!*

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NATIVITY FAST BOOK SUGGESTION



THE RELIGION OF THE APOSTLES

by Fr. Stephen DeYoung
ISBN : 9781944967550

Father Dr. Stephen De Young traces the lineage of Orthodox Christianity back to the faith and witness of the apostles, which was rooted in a first-century Jewish worldview. *The Religion of the Apostles* presents the Orthodox Christian Church of today as a continuation of the religious life of the apostles, which in turn was a continuation of the life of the people of God since the beginning of creation. To purchased from Ancient Faith Publishing, visit: store.ancientfaith.com/the-religion-of-the-apostles/

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SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Ephesians 2:14-22

¹⁴ For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸ for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²² in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Gospel: Luke 12:16-21

¹⁶ And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; ¹⁷ and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ ¹⁸ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.’ ²⁰ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

THE HOLY DISCIPLE PHILEMON AND HIS SPOUSE APPIA

Commemorated on Dec 5/Nov 22 and Feb 6/19

The Holy Disciple Philemon and his spouse Apphia lived in the city of Colossa in Phrygia. Upon receiving Baptism from the holy Apostle Paul, they converted their house into an house of prayer, where all the Colossian believers in Christ gathered together and made Divine services. They devoted themselves to the service of the sick and downcast. The Disciple Philemon was made bishop of the city of Gaza and he preached the Word of God throughout all Phrygia. The holy Apostle Paul did not cease being his guide, and directed to him his Epistle filled with love, and in which he sends blessings "to Philemon our friend and co-worker, and Apphia our beloved sister, and Archippos our co-striver, and their household the church" (Phil. 1: 1-3). Onysimos, about whom it speaks in the Epistle, – a Disciple from among the Seventy – was a former servant of Philemon. During the persecution of Nero (54-68) Saints Philemon and Apphia, and likewise the holy Disciple Archippos (who also lived at Colossa), all received the crown of martyrdom. During the time of a pagan feast an enraged crowd rushed into the Christian church when Divine-services were being made. All fled in terror, and only Saints Philemon, Archippos and Apphia remained. They seized hold of them and led them off to the city governor. The crowd like beasts beat up and stabbed at Saint Archippos with knives, and on the way to the court he died. Saints Philemon and Apphia were stoned to death by order of the governor.

LIVING ORTHODOXY



QUESTION: I was wondering **why we fast before Nativity**. The Lenten fast seems more obvious. Also, from what foods do we normally fast from during the Nativity fast?

ANSWER (by Fr. John Matusiak):

We fast before the Great Feast of the Nativity in order to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Our Lord's birth. As in the case of Great Lent, the Nativity Fast is one of preparation, during which we focus on the coming of the Savior by fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

By fasting, we "shift our focus" from ourselves to others, spending less time worrying about what to eat, when to eat, how much to eat, and so on in order to use our time in increased prayer and caring for the poor. We learn through fasting that we can gain control over things which we sometimes allow to control us -- and for many people, food is a controlling factor. [We live in the only society in which an entire TV network is devoted to food!] While fasting from food, however, we are also challenged to fast from sin, from gossip, from jealousy, from anger, and from those other things which, while well within our control, we all too often allow to control us.

Just as we would refrain from eating a lot before going to an expensive restaurant for dinner -- if we "ruin our appetite" we will enjoy the restaurant less -- so too we fast before the Nativity in order to more fully feast and celebrate on the Nativity itself.

During the Nativity Fast, we are called upon to refrain from meat [*the monastic charter also includes: dairy, fish, wine, and olive oil*]. At the same time, we are challenged, within this framework, to fast to the best of our ability, and to do so consistently.

If we must modify the extent to which we fast within this framework, it is of course possible, but in every instance our fasting should be consistent and regular, for Christ does not see fasting as an option, but as a "must." In the Book of Matthew, Christ says, "WHEN you fast, do not be like the hypocrites," not "IF you fast" or "IF YOU CHOOSE to fast."

Finally, it seems quite odd that in our society -- a society in which people gladly and freely spend huge sums of money for diets, most of which recommend that one refrain from red meats and dairy products -- fasting is not more widely embraced. How odd that a Jenny Craig consultant or diet guru or physician will tell us to refrain from eating meat or cheese or butter and we will gladly embrace -- and pay large sums of money for -- his or her advice, while when the Church offers the same advice [at "no cost"] we tend to balk, as if we were being asked to do the impossible.

PRAYER CORNER

*Our Parish Prayer List for
Special Intentions and Other Needs**

A Prayer For The Sick:

O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly visit Your suffering servant **name(s)**. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, deliver **him/her/them** from sickness and bitter pain. Heal **him/her/them** so that **he/she/they** may sing to You and always praise You for You alone love us. Amen.

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For the Health of... Fr. Robert B., Alexandra, Meredith, Lucy, Bryce, Ryan, Fr. James G., Fr. Michael M., Pañi Mary B., Dennis, Kasamanda, Robert, Gavin, Fr. Mark L., Robert, Douglas, Christopher, John, Joanne, Barbara, Brian, Kristina, Sean, Julia, Susan, John, Juliana, Fredrick, Kenneth, Michael, and Roberta ...*through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer.*

For the Special Intentions of... His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. Photios, Fr. Theodore, Deacon Charles, Laura & family, Carlene, Georgia, Eleanora, Mark, Michaleana, Dorell, Elizabeth, Donald, Susan, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Nancy, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Ameer, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin *our diocesan seminarians:* Nicholas, Dylan, Tom, Samuel, Timothy, Nicholas, Aydin *and our Church Council, Curators, and Relocation Committee:* Lawrence, Matthew, Timothy, Theresa, Rich, Gina, Robert, Jane, Mary Jane, Katherine, Kenneth, John, Wendy, Margaret, John, Patricia, John, Todd *and for those who labor towards our Community Outreaches* ...*through the prayers of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker; St. John the Baptist; the Archangels Michael & Gabriel; and the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.*

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Patronal Feast Days (Name's Day): Caitlenn Brozell, Carol Lorenzi, and Katherine Schrmack - Great-martyr Catherine of Alexandria (12/7) (*contact Fr. Dave with your Patron Saint*)

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Birthday Prayers for... His Eminence, Metropolitan Gregory (12/7), Pañi Eleanor Herbert (12/8), Deborah Brancho (12/9), Jim Potoski (12/10), Alexis Jesko (12/9) ...*May God allow them to grow in peace and love all the days of their lives and may He grant them many and blessed years!*

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For our Catechumens & Inquirers... Susan, Marilyn, John ...*through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, & St. John Maximovitch.*

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For those preparing for Marriage... Nicole & Dustin ...*through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.*

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For Pregnant Mothers... Meredith (*due in Dec*) ...*through the prayers of St. Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, and St. Irene Chrysovalantou.*

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For those serving in the Armed Forces & Civil

Authorities... Thomas R. Dzadovsky and Trevor Meegan ...*through the prayers of St. George, the Great-Martyr & Wonderworker.*

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For the souls of the newly departed... +John Gido, the Priest (11/25), Pañi +Eleanor Polanichka (11/21) ...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in God's Memory.*

DEVOTIONAL PRAYER FOR THE NATIVITY FAST

A Prayer Upon Entering a Church

I will come into Your house in the greatness of Your mercy: and in fear I will worship toward Your holy temple. Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; make Your way straight before me, that with a clear mind I may glorify You forever, One Divine Power worshipped in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

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NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE 2021

Metropolitan Gregory asks each member of our Diocese, either as a family or individually, to pray this every evening of the Nativity Fast.

O Only-Begotten Son and Word of God: I truly believe and confess that You became flesh and dwelt among us for the salvation of the whole world. At Your Nativity, You endured the cold of the manger to enkindle within me love for You. You were bound in swaddling clothes to deliver me from the chains of sin and death. You were nourished with milk and thereby fed the Body which one day would suffer for my sake.

During these days of fasting and prayer, forgive me -- unworthy as I am -- all the sins by which I have offended Your infinite goodness. Renew in me fervent faith, unending hope, and a charitable desire to serve others. Accept this act of thanksgiving, just as You accepted the gifts and worship of the Wise Men, and preserve us all from dangers that we may adore You and say: Glory to You, O Lord Jesus Christ, forever and ever. **AMEN!**

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A prayer for our Neighborhoods

by Archbishop Demetrios of America

I pray to you, God, for the families of my neighborhood. Visit them. Throw their troubles out of them and bring hope. Make the daily cares that devour the heart disappear. Present solutions to life's problems. Settle the disturbed relationships among members of different families whom I know or do not know. O Lord, remind the people of our area that You exist, that You are a strong and loving Protector. Keep away, Lord, anything that causes the disappearance of peace from souls, and the escape of sleep from our eyes. Stay a little while more tonight in our neighborhood. Spread peace along with the night. Let the harshness of the day and its struggles not spread over the night. Amen.

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A Prayer for our Diocesan Clergy

O Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of Your sheep, light the fire of ardent love in the hearts of all Your priests, that they may ever and in all things seek only Your glory. Remember especially, Lord, our Bishop (*name*), and our spiritual father (*name*), and all our diocesan clergy, who are laboring in Your vineyard for the salvation of all those whom You have entrusted to them. Make their lives as holy as the word they preach. Keep them from being discouraged. Hear their prayers for our salvation. Give them wisdom and courage to proclaim Your truth. Make them priests after Your own heart. For You are a merciful God Who loves us and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving- Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

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Spiritual Vitamin:

“There is no greater love than that a man lays down his life for his neighbor. When you hear someone complaining and you struggle with yourself and do not answer him back with complaints; when you are hurt and bear it patiently, not looking for revenge; then you are laying down your life for your neighbor.”

- Abba Poemen

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SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Father is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 3:00pm or by appointment.

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Online Community: Please email Fr. Dave to receive the weekly bulletin via email.

Phone Tree – Please call Fr. Dave to be added.

Emergency Sick Calls – Please notify Fr Dave when you or a family member are going into the hospital or having a procedure. He will pray with you and you will receive the Mystery of Holy Anointing (Unction) to be fully prepared.

Mystery of Confession – Opportunities are available after every service, most Saturdays during fasting periods from 11am to 1pm, OR by appointment.

Holy Communion/Eucharist – The reception of the Holy Eucharist is encouraged for all Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves, with fasting from midnight on, regular Confession, and forgiveness for all people. Those who are not Orthodox may receive a blessing from the chalice.

Lapsed Members – You are always welcome home and we want you back! Generally speaking, sincere participation in the Mysteries of Confession, Communion, and regular attendance at the divine services are all that is required to begin parish life anew! See Fr. Dave for specific details.

Baptisms – Two God-parents are required, at least one of whom must be Orthodox by faith (and the other a practicing Christian). In the case of infants, the newly-baptized must have one name that is Christian in origin. Parents/grandparents/guardians must also promise to bring the child up in an Orthodox Christian way of life. Please consult Fr.

Dave for more details.

Adult Chrismation – New parishioners are always welcome! In the case of adults seeking entrance into the Church, a period of prescribed catechism will be established with Fr. Dave before administration of the Mysteries. An Orthodox Christian sponsor is also required.

Marriages – are only solemnized on Saturdays or Sundays. They are not performed during fasting periods and certain Feast Days. Please consult Fr. Dave ASAP for more details (*before* arrangements are made for the hall).

Church Funerals – are provided for practicing Orthodox Christians who are current in their spiritual responsibilities and their stewardship. Otherwise, burial is from the funeral home. The Church does not permit cremation.

“The cremation of bodies is not a Christian act. It is a custom of modern times. The body of a Christian has been sanctified with the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and as such may not be burned. God did not create our bodies for burning.” - Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica

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How to stay connected with the departed:

- ✘ Pray for them during the Divine Liturgy,
- ✘ Remember them in your daily prayers,
- ✘ Organize memorial services for their remembrance on their anniversary,
- ✘ Honor their memory by following their good deeds,
- ✘ Light a candle weekly for your departed loved ones,
- ✘ Give alms on their behalf, and

✘ Take care of their tombs.

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* This is to be used for the special intentions of our brothers and sisters in Christ and can be inserted as a prayer itself into our daily prayers. Please let Fr. Dave know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (*in the case of answered prayers*) to our Parish List. The words of the Gospel are true: **it is good to pray for one another.** Let this be a place where we lay out our concerns and beg the help of our brothers & sisters in Christ. This prayer list is NOT limited to only Orthodox Christians.

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