



# 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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## UPCOMING SERVICES

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4 #NATIVITY FAST**  
FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS  
25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Church School (*1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month*)

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6 #NATIVITY FAST**

9:30 Akathist to St. Nicholas  
followed by Decorating for Christmas

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8 #NATIVITY FAST**

9:30 Moleben for the Nativity Fast  
followed by Decorating for Christmas

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10 #NATIVITY FAST**

11-1 Mystery (Sacrament) of Confession offered  
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**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11 #NATIVITY FAST**

26<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
Martyr Stephen the New (767)

9:30 Divine Liturgy  
Epistle: Ephesians 5:8-19

Gospel: Luke 13:10-17 (*9<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke*)

Tone 1; Liturgical Color: **Purple / Red**  
Panachida for +Steven Fucsko, Sr (40-day) and  
+Mary Ann Kirish (40-day)

**Special Meeting Concerning Relocation**  
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**Mystery of Confession** – Father is available to hear  
Confessions after every service  
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**Calendar** - Future Services are updated online at:  
[www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar](http://www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar)  
(Please see Fr. Dave if you want a printed copy)

**Live-Broadcast** – If you are unable to attend church  
services, please pray along with our Cathedral online:  
[www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/](http://www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/)

## DECEMBER SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2 #NATIVITY FAST**

9:30 Paraklis of the Nativity Fast

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3 #NATIVITY FAST**

11-1 Mystery (Sacrament) of Confession offered  
4:00 Feast Day Vespers

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4 #NATIVITY FAST**

FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS  
9:30 Divine Liturgy followed by Church School

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6 #NATIVITY FAST**

9:30 Akathist to St. Nicholas  
followed by Decorating for Christmas

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8 #NATIVITY FAST**

9:30 Moleben for the Nativity Fast  
followed by Decorating for Christmas

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10 #NATIVITY FAST**

11-1 Mystery (Sacrament) of Confession offered

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11 #NATIVITY FAST**

9:30am Divine Liturgy  
**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14 #NATIVITY FAST**

9:30 Paraklis of the Nativity Fast  
**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16 #NATIVITY FAST**

9:30 Akathist for the Nativity Fast  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18 #NATIVITY FAST**

9:30am Divine Liturgy (and Youth Sunday)  
followed by St. Nicholas Breakfast

7:00 *in Homestead* Feast Day Vespers  
**MONDAY, DECEMBER 19 #NATIVITY FAST**

FEAST OF SAINT NICHOLAS  
9:30 Divine Liturgy

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23 #NATIVITY FAST**

9:30 Moleben for the Nativity Fast  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25 #NATIVITY FAST**

9:30am Divine Liturgy

## “THE VOICE” Our Parish Monthly Newsletter

John the Baptist said, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ (Jn 1:23)

### A WARM WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS!

Glory to Jesus Christ! (*responded with: Glory 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! Please see Fr. Dave if you have any questions in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy.

## RELOCATION UPDATE

Due to the sales contract requirement concerning the parish house not being met, our closing has been postponed.

This also postpones our Last Liturgy on the North Side.

No additional information on our timeline is available at this time beyond that we will be on the North Side into January. The Allison Park Church had extended our contract until December 9. More details will coming soon.

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The address of our next church is:  
**2201 Duncan Avenue, Allison Park, PA 15101**  
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What has been talked about for over a dozen years is going to happen! Let’s work together!  
Remember: Many Hands Make Light Work!  
Contact Fr. Dave or Larry Martin if you are interested in being added to the *Construction Committee*.  
**May God continue to guide our journey!**  
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As updates are available, they will be shared here.  
Please contact Larry or Fr. Dave with any questions  
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**VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE**  
Diocesan Website: [www.acrod.org](http://www.acrod.org)  
Camp Nazareth: [www.campnazareth.org](http://www.campnazareth.org)  
FB: [www.facebook.com/acroddioocese](https://www.facebook.com/acroddioocese)  
Twitter: [twitter.com/acrodnews](https://twitter.com/acrodnews)  
YouTube: [youtube.com/acroddioocese](https://youtube.com/acroddioocese)

## 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 Saturdays December 3 and 10, or 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

## BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)  
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**LAST CALL for the St Nicholas Charity Dinner**  
\*\*\* Please order your tickets from Fr Dave by TODAY, Sunday, December 4 \*\*\* this is sponsored by the Pittsburgh Deanery to benefit our Christ the Saviour Seminary and will be on **Sunday, Dec. 11** at The Wooden Nickel (4006 Berger Ln, Monroeville, PA 15146). Doors open at **4:30 pm** with a Buffett Dinner at 5:00. Adults - \$35; Teens - \$25; Ages 2-12 - \$10 (*make checks payable to “Pittsburgh Deanery”*). If anyone (or organization) would like to “sponsor a seminarian” (or part of their family), please see Father. Come meet the seminarians, enjoy the fellowship, carol sing-a-long, and a special guest!  
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\*\*\* **Lost-and-Found Coat** - After the 2-day cleaning when we had the dumpster, a black coat was left behind and has not found it’s owner...

**\*\* Nativity Fast began last Monday (11/28)** - 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 pray *specifically* for special intentions, "40 Days – 40 Prayers", during your evening prayers of the Nativity Fast. For more info, visit:

[www.acrod.org/metropolitan/prayerchallenge/](http://www.acrod.org/metropolitan/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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**\*\*\* Decorating for Christmas** – We will decorate a bit differently this year during the weekday mornings on **Tuesday and Thursday, December 6 & 8** after the morning services. Our usual 'schedule' is a bit off this year and this is a one-year temporary adjustment.

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**\*\* Para-Liturgical Services** – During the Nativity Fast, Para-Liturgical Services will be offered through the week for us to increase our prayer during this fasting season. The Moleben, Paraklis, and Akathist services do not have Communion, so no fasting is necessary. These services range from 25 to 45 minutes. Come and pray with us!

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**\* Sr. ACRY NEWS: Lots-O-Luck Calendars** – The National ACRY Lots-O-Luck Calendars are available. \$25 per ticket gets you a years worth of prizes totaling \$10,000! Please see Theresa Sharpless for tickets.

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**\*\* St. John's St Nicholas Breakfast** – Our parish St. Nicholas Breakfast will be on **Sunday, December 18** following the Divine Liturgy. Please plan to stay for this wonderful fellowship tradition that we have!

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**\* Modified Icons** – Recently, roughly 50 of our paperboard Icons were mounted on ½” board so that they can be hung on the walls. Thank You to John Dziak and the folks at Printscape Imaging & Graphics who did this and generously donated their time and supplies! May God grant them many years!

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**\* Sunday School Teachers are needed.** Please contact Fr. Dave if you are interested in guiding our youth. **Our Sunday School program this year will be on the first and third Sundays of the month**, but we need more teachers. As of now we could have as many as 20 kids in our Sunday School...

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**\* Neighborhood Resilience Project Volunteers Needed** – If you have time available to help pack weekend meals for children in local schools and the Hill District. All ages are welcome! Mondays and Tuesdays from 10 am to 2 pm (or contact them for a different time). Call 412-261-1234 or visit [www.neighborhoodresilience.org](http://www.neighborhoodresilience.org).

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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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**Speaking With Your Priest** - Please know you can call me anytime if there is something troubling you. It is not a sign of weakness to share something that may be heavy on your heart or mind. As a priest and Father to our parish, I am here for you. Please call if you need someone to listen or to pray with you. Every heart has a cross and you do not need to carry it alone. Please also call if you have an idea for the growth of our parish. I am praying for you and am grateful for your prayers. With love in Christ, Fr. Dave

### OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| Stewardship Offerings: | \$ 90  |
| Candle Stewardship:    | \$ 148 |
| Envelope Stewardship:  | \$ 822 |
| Community Outreach:    | \$ 170 |

|                                  |                |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Total Collections:</b>        | <b>\$ 1230</b> |
| <b>Capital Improvement Fund:</b> | <b>\$ 50</b>   |
| <b>Relocation Fund:</b>          | <b>\$ 50</b>   |

*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

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### October Financial Report:

**General Stewardship = \$ 4924.13**  
(includes \$ 224.13 from online stewardship)

**\*Expenses = \$ 4452.39**

**Net Deficit = \$ 471.74**

**Relocation Fund = \$ 485**

**Capital Improvement Fund = \$ 90**

**Average at Sunday Divine Liturgies: 28**

*\*details listed on the church hall bulletin board*

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### Fiscal Year-to-Date Financial Report:

(September through last month)

**General Stewardship = \$ 12,145.57**

**\*Expenses = \$ 16,207.04**

**Net Deficit = \$ 4061.47**

*\*details listed on the church hall bulletin board*

**Average at Sunday Divine Liturgies: 28**

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**Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials** were offered last week by Nelson Family; Shuster Family; Tim Martin; Patty Watson; Cindy Pavilonis.

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**The Eternal Lamp** was offered last week by Melanie Paieski in memory of her mother, +Catherine Gaydos. May Her Memory Be Eternal! Vičnaya Pamyat!

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**End-of-Calendar-Year** - The end of the civil calendar year is here. Have you made a financial contribution to your parish yet? Please fulfill your stewardship responsibility of time, talent, and *treasure*.

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**On-Line Giving** is available from our parish website to donate to the: *General Stewardship Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, and/or Relocation Fund.* The best option is to come to church and give your offering to God in His Temple (2<sup>nd</sup> best is to mail it in to Tim Martin, 2225 McAleer Rd., Sewickley, PA 15143). If you miss coming to church for a week, online giving allows you another option to "catch up" on your weekly stewardship. You can also set up a recurring donation online. For our parish to continue its ministries, outreach, and general bill paying, your generosity and stewardship is needed.

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**Bulletin Sponsor** – If you wish to sponsor a bulletin In Honor of (nameday, birthday, anniversary, etc.) or In Memory of someone, please sign up on the sheet in the vestibule or by contacting Fr. Dave (email, text, or call). An additional stewardship offering to the Church is requested.

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### MINISTRY OF THE MONTH

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 **Sr. 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!*



ORTHODOXY AROUND THE  
'BURGH AND OUR DIOCESE

\* **19<sup>th</sup> Annual St. Matrona Cooke Walk** will be on **Saturday, December 10**, 10 AM – 2 PM, or until sold out at Sts Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church Hall, 220 Mansfield Blvd., Carnegie. Come experience the “WALK” and start a new family holiday tradition! A variety of Eastern European holiday cookies, traditional favorites, homemade nut rolls, & gluten-free cookies available. Most cookies sold by the pound. No online orders. For questions, Email: [smladiessociety@gmail.com](mailto:smladiessociety@gmail.com)!

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**Christmas Food Festival** at Holy Virgin Russian Orthodox Church (214 Mansfield Blvd., Carnegie, Pa 15106) will be on **Saturday, December 10** from 11a-2p. Order in advance at <https://hvroc.org/>

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

*Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-6*

**Unity in the Body of Christ**

4 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup>with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, <sup>3</sup>eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

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*Gospel: Luke 12:16-21*

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

*Epistle: Hebrews 9:1-7 (Theotokos)*

**The Earthly and the Heavenly Sanctuaries**

<sup>9</sup>Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. <sup>2</sup>For a tent was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence; it is called the Holy Place. <sup>3</sup>Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies, <sup>4</sup>having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, which contained a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; <sup>5</sup>above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

<sup>6</sup>These preparations having thus been made, the priests go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties; <sup>7</sup>but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people.

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*Gospel: Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28 (Feast Day)*

**Jesus Visits Martha and Mary**

<sup>38</sup>Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. <sup>39</sup>And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. <sup>40</sup>But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” <sup>41</sup>But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; <sup>42</sup>one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her.”

**True Blessedness**

<sup>27</sup>As he said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that nursed you!” <sup>28</sup>But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

**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 worshiped in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

LIVING ORTHODOXY

**THE CANON OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST**

*Ode 1:* Christ is born, glorify him! Christ comes from heaven, meet Him! Christ is an earth, be exalted! O all the earth, sing to the Lord, and sing praises in gladness, all people, for He has been glorified.

*Ode 3:* To the Son Who was begotten of the Father without change before all ages, and in the last times was without seed made flesh of the Virgin, to Christ our God, let us cry aloud: You have raised up our horn, holy are You, O Lord!

*Ode 4:* Rod of the root of Jesse, and flower that blossomed from his stem, O Christ, You have sprung forth from the Virgin. From the mountain overshadowed by the forest You came, made flesh for her that knew not wedlock, O God not formed from matter. Glory to Your power O Lord!

*Ode 5:* As You are God of Peace and Father of mercies, You have sent to us Your Angel of Great Counsel, granting unto us peace. So are we guided towards the light of the knowledge of God. And watching by night, we glorify You, O Lover of mankind.

*Ode 6:* The sea monster spat forth Jonah as it had received him, like a babe from the womb: while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh: came forth from her yet kept her undefiled. For being Himself not subject to decay. He preserved His Mother free from harm.

*Ode 7:* Scorning the impious decree, the three children brought up together in godliness feared not the threat of fire: but standing in the midst of the flame they sang: “O God of our fathers, blessed are You!”

*Ode 8:* The furnace moist with dew was the image of a wonder past nature. For it burned not the children whom it had received, even as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin’s womb into which It had descended. Therefore in praise, let us sing: let the whole creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him above all forever.

*Ode 9:* I behold a strange and wonderful mystery. The cave has become heaven, the throne of the Cherubim, the Virgin. The manger a noble place where lies Christ our God Who cannot be contained. Let us praise Him in song and magnify You!

FEAST DAY FEATURES OF THE MONTH

**The Entry Into The Temple Of The Most Holy Mother Of God**

*Commemorated on December 4 / November 21*

The Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Mother of God happened, according to the preserved accounts of Holy Tradition, in the following manner. The parents of the Virgin Mary, Righteous Joakim and Anna, in praying for a solution to their childlessness, gave a vow that if a child were born to them, they would dedicate it to the service of God.

When the Most Holy Virgin reached three years of age, the holy parents decided to fulfill their vow. Having gathered together their kinsfolk and acquaintances, and having dressed the All-Pure Mary in Her finest clothes, and with the singing of sacred songs and with lighted candles in their hands they carried Her to the Jerusalem Temple. There the high-priest with a throng of priests met the maiden of God. In the Temple, the stairway led up fifteen high steps. The Child Mary, so it seemed, could not Herself make it up this stairway. But just as they placed Her on the first step, strengthened by the power of God, She quickly made it up over the remaining steps and ascended to the highest. Then the high-priest, through an inspiration from above, led the Most Holy Virgin into the Holy of Holies, and herein of all people it was only the high-priest that entered one time a year with a purifying sacrifice of blood. Therefore all those present in the Temple were astonished at this most unusual occurrence.

Righteous Joakim and Anna, having entrusted their Child to the will of the Heavenly Father, returned home. The MostBlessed Mary remained in the domicile for girls, situated near the Temple. Round about the Temple, through the testimony of Holy Scripture (Exodus 38; 1 Kings 1: 28; Lk. 2: 37), and also the historian Josephus Flavius, there were many living quarters, in which dwelt those dedicated to the service of God.

In remembrance of the Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Jerusalem Temple, Holy Church from ancient times established a solemn feastday. The decretals for the making of the feast in the first centuries of Christianity are found in the traditions of Palestinian Christians, where mention is made that the holy Empress Helen built a church in honour of the Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Mother of God.

## Sainted Nicholas, Archbishop Of Myra In Lycia, And Wonderworker

Commemorated on December 19 / 6

Sainted Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, and Wonderworker is famed as a great saint pleasing unto God. He was born in the city of Patara in the Lycian region (on the south coast of the Asia Minor peninsula), and was the only son of pious parents Theophanes and Nonna, who had given a vow to dedicate him to God. As the fruition of longtime prayer of his childless parents, the infant Nicholas from the very day of his birth revealed to people the light of his future glory as a wonderworker. His mother, Nonna, after giving birth was immediately healed from illness. Saint Nicholas from his infancy began a life of fasting, and on Wednesdays and Fridays he accepted milk from his mother only but once, after the evening prayers of his parents.

From the time of his childhood Nicholas thrived on the study of Divine Scripture; by day he would not leave church, and by night he prayed and read books – fashioning in himself a worthy dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. His uncle, Bishop Nicholas of Patara, rejoiced at the spiritual success and deep piety of his kinsman. He ordained him a reader, and then elevated Nicholas to the dignity of presbyter, making him his assistant and entrusting him to speak instructing the flock. Constantly at work and vivacious, being in unceasing prayer, presbyter Nicholas displayed great kind-heartedness towards the flock, and towards those afflicted coming to him for help, and he distributed all his inheritance to the poor. Having learned about the bitter need and poverty of a certain formerly rich inhabitant of his city, Saint Nicholas saved him from great sin. Having three grown daughters, the despairing father considered to give them over to profligacy so as to save them from hunger. The saint, grieving lest the man perish a sinner, by night secretly brought him through the window three sacks with gold and by this saved the family from falling into spiritual destruction. In bestowing charity, Saint Nicholas always strove to do this secretly and conceal his good deeds.

In setting off on pilgrimage to the holy places at Jerusalem, the bishop of Patara entrusted the guidance of the flock to Saint Nicholas, who fulfilled this obedience carefully and with love. When the bishop returned, he in turn asked blessing for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Along the way the saint predicted the onset of a storm threatening the ship with inundation, since he saw the devil itself having got on ship. At the entreaty of the despairing pilgrims, he calmed by his prayers the waves of the sea. Through his prayer also was restored to health a certain sailor of the ship, who had fallen from the mast and was mortally injured.

Having reached the ancient city of Jerusalem and having come to Golgotha, Saint Nicholas offered up thanksgiving to the Saviour of the race of mankind and he made the rounds of all the holy places, doing poklons and making prayers. By night on Mount Sion the closed doors of the church opened by themselves in front of the arriving great pilgrim.

Upon the death of archbishop John, he was chosen bishop of Lycian Myra – after one of the bishops of the Council gave a decisive reply on the question of choice of a new archbishop – the choice of God as directed him in a vision – Saint Nicholas. Summoned to the flock of the Church in the dignity of archbishop, Sainted Nicholas remained a great ascetic, appearing to his flock as an image of gentleness, kindness and love towards people. This was particularly precious for the Lycian Church during the time of persecution of Christians under the emperor Diocletian (284-305). Bishop Nicholas, locked up in prison together with other Christians, sustained them and exhorted them to bravely endure the fetters, punishment and torture. He himself the lord preserved unharmed. Upon the accession to rule of the holy equal-to-the-apostles Constantine, Saint Nicholas was restored to his flock, which joyfully received back their guide and intercessor.

Despite his great gentleness of spirit and purity of heart, Saint Nicholas was a zealous and ardent warrior of the Church of Christ. Fighting evil spirits, the saint made the rounds of the pagan temples and shrines in the city of Myra and its surroundings, shattering the idols and turning the temples to dust.

In the year 325 Saint Nicholas was a participant in the I OEcumenical Council (Sobor). This Council proclaimed the Nicean Symbol of faith, and he stood up with the likes of saints Sylvester the pope of Rome, Alexander of Alexandria, Spyridon of Trimiphuntum and others of the 318 fathers of the Council against the heretic Arius.

Saint Nicholas, in the heat of denunciation and fired up with zeal for the Lord, even gave the false-teacher a good drubbing on the ears. He was indeed a light in the world and the salt of the earth, wherein his life did shine and his word was mixed with the salt of wisdom.

Having reached old age, Saint Nicholas expired peacefully to the Lord (+ 345-351). His venerable relics were preserved undecayed in the local cathedral church and flowed with curative myrh, from which many received healing. In the year 1087 his relics were transferred to the Italian city of Bari, where they rest even now.

Part of all the churches devoted to the saint were those established at market-squares by Russian merchants, sea-farers and land-goers, venerating the wonderworker Nicholas as a protector of all those journeying on dry land and sea. They sometimes received the name among the people of "Nicholas soaked". Many village churches in Russia were dedicated to the wonderworker Nicholas, reverently venerated by peasants as a merciful intercessor before the Lord for all the people in their work. Ancient Kiev preserves the memory about the miraculous rescue of a drowning infant by the saint. The great wonderworker, hearing the grief-filled prayers of the parents in the loss of their only child, by night snatched up the infant from the waters, revived him and placed him in the choir-loft of Saint Sophia church in front of his wonderworking image. And here in the morning the infant was found safe by his thrilled parents, praising with a multitude of the people Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker.

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### The Jesus Prayer

*(Inhale)* O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
*(Exhale)* have mercy on me, a sinner!

*(Repeat until your heart is calm...)*

## SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

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

**Parish 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.

**Parishioners in “good standing”** are those Orthodox Christians who, as members of Saint John’s Orthodox Church, strive to live according to the teachings of the Orthodox Church; participate in the life of the parish through regular attendance of services, regular reception of Holy Communion and periodic Holy Confession (*and receive these Mysteries no less than once a year*); if married, having been married in the Orthodox Church; and share their stewardship of their time, talents, and treasures which includes financially supporting the parish.

**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 in the church. 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). It is critical that marriages are blessed in the church.

**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.

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*“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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## PRAYER CORNER

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

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### **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..** Suzanne, Brian, Emily, Thomas, David, Donna, Gregory, Joshua, George, John, Beverly, Kelly, Paul, Kathleen, Joanne, Marie, Barbara, Brian, Kristina, Sean, Julia, Susan, Juliana, Fredrick, Kenneth, Michael, and Roberta *...through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer.*

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**For the Special Intentions of...** His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. David S., Fr. Myron, Dcn. Dean, Michael L., Laura & family, Carlene, Georgia, Eleanora, Mark, Michaleana, Dorell, Donald, Susan, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Ameer, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin *our diocesan seminarians:* Nicholas, Dylan, Thomas, Samuel, Timothy, Nicholas, Aydin, Subdeacon Seamus, Nicholas, *and our Church Council, Curators, and Relocation Committee:* Lawrence, Matthew, Timothy, Elizabeth, Rich, Robert, Gina, Jane, Mary Jane, Katherine, Theresa, 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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### **December Namedays:**

Caitlinn Brozell, Carol Lorenzi, Katherine Schrmack - Great-martyr Catherine of Alexandria (12/7)  
Andrew Mirilovich, Fr. Dave Andrew Urban - Holy & All-praised Apostle Andrew the First-called (12/13)  
Barbara Kirish - Great martyr Barbara (12/17)  
Nicholas Kubis - St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (12/19)  
Patrick Wertz - St. Sturm of Fulda Monastery (12/30)  
*...May God grant them many and blessed years!*

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### **December Birthdays:**

Matthew Hanchulak (12/1)  
Stacy (Martin) Dzambo (12/1)  
Joshua Winkler (12/1)  
*Father's Godson,* Joseph Sekerak (12/2)  
Lucy Jo Blobner (12/4)  
His Eminence, Metropolitan Gregory (12/7)  
Pañi Eleanor Herbert (12/8)  
Deborah Brancho (12/9)  
Jim Potoski (12/10)  
Alexis Jesko (12/9)  
*Father's God-sister,* Lauren Babbie (12/12)  
Brian Gogal (12/15)  
Madelyn Spirnak (12/17)  
Donald Paul Gavulich (12/19)  
Patricia Deluca (12/20)

Patricia Donley (12/20)  
Fr Nik Ferencz (12/20)  
Mike Puhac (12/21)  
Jaydon Maruscak (12/23)  
Molly Rose Blobner (12/27)  
Caitlin Brozell (12/28)  
*...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...** Tyler, Susan *...through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, & St. John Maximovitch.*

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

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### **December Anniversaries:**

Faith (Sekerak) and Zach Thousands (12/28/19)  
*...through the prayers of St. Nicholas Planas*

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**For Pregnant Mothers...** Erica (*due in April*), Lindsay *...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 *...through the prayers of St. George, the Great-Martyr & Wonderworker.*

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**For the souls of the newly departed...**  
+Steven Fuesko, Sr (11/5), +Mary Ann Kirish (11/4)  
*...May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in God's Memory.*

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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.*

## DEVOTIONAL PRAYER FOR THE MONTH

### NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE 2022

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

O Master and Creator, You have made us to know You, to love You, and to serve You in this life, and to be happy with You forever in heaven. You desire all to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth. For this reason, You sent Your Only-Begotten Son to be born in Bethlehem as our King and Redeemer. As we fast and prepare to celebrate His Nativity, we offer prayers and supplications for all people, and most especially at this time for...

*(Now include the daily prayer intention found on the handout, or at [www.acrod.org/metropolitan/prayerchallenge/](http://www.acrod.org/metropolitan/prayerchallenge/) and then continue below.)*

Look down with merciful eyes upon Your servants. Pardon all their sins committed deliberately or because of human frailty. Protect them against all enemies, visible and invisible, and from every misfortune, distress, and affliction. Keep them in peace, tranquility, and health. We entrust them and ourselves to You, O Lord. 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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**A Prayer for Peace**

Almighty God and Creator, You are the Father of all people on the earth. Guide, I pray, all the nations and their leaders in the ways of justice and peace. Protect us from the evils of injustice, prejudice, exploitation, conflict and war. Help us to put away mistrust, bitterness and hatred. Teach us to cease the storing and using of implements of war. Lead us to find peace, respect and freedom. Unite us in the making and sharing of tools of peace against ignorance, poverty, disease and oppression. Grant that we may grow in harmony and friendship as brothers and sisters created in Your image, to Your honor and praise. Amen.

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**ONLINE BULLETIN BONUSES**



**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.

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**STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET**

**Stewardship of Treasure Guide**

Weekly offering to God through the Sunday Offertory - Will you take a step up?

| Weekly Income | Beyond a Tithe | Tithe | Upper Range Giving | Middle Range Giving | Lower Range Giving |       |       |       |       |      |      |      |
|---------------|----------------|-------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|
|               | 15%            | 12%   | 10%                | 9%                  | 8%                 | 7%    | 6%    | 5%    | 4%    | 3%   | 2%   | 1%   |
| \$200         | \$30           | \$24  | \$20               | \$18                | \$16               | \$14  | \$12  | \$10  | \$8   | \$6  | \$4  | \$2  |
| \$300         | \$45           | \$36  | \$30               | \$27                | \$24               | \$21  | \$18  | \$15  | \$12  | \$9  | \$6  | \$3  |
| \$400         | \$60           | \$48  | \$40               | \$36                | \$32               | \$28  | \$24  | \$20  | \$16  | \$12 | \$8  | \$4  |
| \$500         | \$75           | \$60  | \$50               | \$45                | \$40               | \$35  | \$30  | \$25  | \$20  | \$15 | \$10 | \$5  |
| \$600         | \$90           | \$72  | \$60               | \$54                | \$48               | \$42  | \$36  | \$30  | \$24  | \$18 | \$12 | \$6  |
| \$700         | \$105          | \$84  | \$70               | \$63                | \$56               | \$49  | \$42  | \$35  | \$28  | \$21 | \$14 | \$7  |
| \$800         | \$120          | \$96  | \$80               | \$72                | \$64               | \$56  | \$48  | \$40  | \$32  | \$24 | \$16 | \$8  |
| \$900         | \$135          | \$108 | \$90               | \$81                | \$72               | \$63  | \$54  | \$45  | \$36  | \$27 | \$18 | \$9  |
| \$1,000       | \$150          | \$120 | \$100              | \$90                | \$80               | \$70  | \$60  | \$50  | \$40  | \$30 | \$20 | \$10 |
| \$1,100       | \$165          | \$132 | \$110              | \$99                | \$88               | \$77  | \$66  | \$55  | \$44  | \$33 | \$22 | \$11 |
| \$2,000       | \$300          | \$240 | \$200              | \$180               | \$160              | \$140 | \$120 | \$100 | \$80  | \$60 | \$40 | \$20 |
| \$3,000       | \$450          | \$360 | \$300              | \$270               | \$240              | \$210 | \$180 | \$150 | \$120 | \$90 | \$60 | \$30 |

1. Find where YOU are on the chart (your weekly income/giving).
2. Move one block to the left to determine what GROW ONE% would be.