

"THE WEEKLY FORERUNNER" *Our Parish Weekly Bulletin*

O Holy John, Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptizer of the Lord, pray to God for us!

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS!

Glory be 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. 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.

UPCOMING SERVICES

*** SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2024

FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD

FEAST OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT

32nd Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday after Nativity

Sunday before Theophany

9:20 am Theophany Canon

9:30 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Epistle: Colossians 2:8-12 (Circumcision)

Gospel: Luke 2:20-21, 40-52 (Circumcision)

Epistle: 2 Timothy 4:5-8 (Sunday before)

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8 (Sunday before)

Tone 7; Liturgical Color: **Gold**

HAPPY JULIAN NEW YEAR!

take down the Manger Scene after Coffee Social

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*** = **FAST FREE until the eve of Theophany**

(Sviatki – "Holy Days")

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 18 ## STRICT FAST DAY

CANCELED: 9:30 am Royal Hours of Theophany

6:30 pm Great Compline (Velikij Povečerije)

Vigil Service with the Great Blessing of Water

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19

FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

9:30 Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20

FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

9:30 Divine Liturgy

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2024

34th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday after Theophany

9:20 am Theophany Canon

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Ephesians 4:7-13 (Sunday after)

Gospel: Matthew 4:12-17 (Sunday after)

Tone 8; Liturgical Color: **Gold**

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024

35th Sunday after Pentecost

9:15 am Third Hour

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Tone 1; Liturgical Color: **Gold**

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***Live-Broadcast** – If you are unable to attend church services, please pray along with our Cathedral online:

www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/

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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

(Please see Fr. Dave if you want a printed copy)

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BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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* **Seasonal Greeting** - The greeting used amongst Orthodox Christians for the period from the Nativity until Theophany is "Christ is born!" with the response "Glorify Him!"

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* **Fast-Free Period** – There is rejoicing in the celebration of the Birth of Christ! The Church reminds us of this as no fasting is required from **January 7th until January 17th**. We fasted - now we feast (in moderation). This is a time of joy when the Christ-Child, our Savior, is Born! Enjoy!

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

Father Dave Urban, *Pastor* +++ 2201 Duncan Avenue, Allison Park, Pa 15101

www.OrthodoxPittsburgh.com +++ 412-748-0148 (*Talk or Text*) +++ OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com

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** **THANK YOU** to everyone who brought items in for our Nativity Pot-Luck community meal!

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*** **Parish Council Meeting** – Our next Parish Council Meeting will be this Wednesday, January 17 at 6:30 pm in the Multi-Purpose Room.

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** **River Blessing** – The Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh will be having the inaugural Holy Water River Blessing on **Sunday, January 21** at 4:00 pm at Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church (12 Washington Avenue, Oakmont, PA 15139). Please plan to attend and prayer with other Orthodox from around Greater Pittsburgh!

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** **Parish Picnic** – We are looking to book *The Cabin* for our Summer Picnic (*ironic as there is snow on the ground now*). Would you rather have the picnic in August or September??? Please contact Fr. Dave.

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** **Framed Icons** – Please consider framing your previous church calendar tops: cut them out, use a 5x7 frame, and hang them on your walls. Each year you can add an icon to another room in your home. This is also a nice project to do with our youth!

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** **Greeting Cards** – Please repurpose your greeting cards (and if you do not frame them, calendar icons) after the season concludes. The collection box will return to the vestibule for the *Holy Transfiguration Monastery*. Thank you for giving back!

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COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS

Please sign up on the door in the multi-purpose room or by contacting Fr. Dave

January 21: _____?_____
January 28: _____?_____
February : _____?_____

OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 831
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 119
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 2190
Total Collections:	\$ 3130
Capital Improvement Fund:	\$ 135

Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials were offered last week by the Nelson Family; Carol and Tom Lorenzi; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin; Matthew Peifer; Juliana and Fred Anton; Eleanor Sanger; Melanie Paieski; Stephen Brancho; Lynn and Joe Mainolfi; Cindy Pavilonis

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*** **Third Hour** – Chanting of the Third Hour will return on Sunday, January 28. If you are interested in reading or chanting this short prayer service, please contact Fr. Dave.

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** **Make plans to go to Camp Nazareth Events!**

- ✘ April 5-7 - ACRY Spring Encounter
- ✘ April 9-11 - Sts. Joachim & Anna Seniors Retreat (*age 55 and over*)
- ✘ April 12-14 - Young Adult Retreat
- ✘ May 31 – June 2 - Family Camp
- ✘ June 2 - Family Day
- ✘ July 28- Aug 3 - Pgh Deanery Camping Week
- ✘ August 4-10 - Science & Nature Camp (ages 8-18)
- ✘ October 25-27 - Young Adult Retreat
- ✘ November 8-10 - ACRY Encounter

Please, Save the Dates and head to
339 Pew Road, Mercer, PA 16137

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*** **Special Intentions** – Did you ever wonder for what reasons would a person's name go under "For the Special Intentions of..." on our Prayer Page? A special intention request is very diversified! It could be when one is under extreme job stress, struggling with spiritual issues, infertility, dealing with the loss of a loved one... the list goes on. As with the other lists on our page, one does not have to be Orthodox to be added.

*** **Prayer requests** – During the Great Entrance of the Divine Liturgy, prayers are said for the sick and those celebrating special occasions listed in the bulletin. If silent prayers are requested, they will be offered quietly at the Altar at all services. All those listed in the “Prayer Corner” are prayed for during the Proskomedia (*Preparation of the Bread and Wine for Communion*). Prayer requests will remain for (about) 40 days unless requested otherwise. Please let Fr. Dave know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (in the case of answered prayers) to our prayer list.

SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Colossians 2:8-12 (*Circumcision*)

⁸ See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have come to fulness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. ¹¹ In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; ¹² and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

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Gospel: Luke 2:20-21, 40-52 (*Circumcision*)

²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Jesus Is Named

²¹ And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The Boy Jesus in the Temple

⁴¹ Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; ⁴³ and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴ but supposing him to be in the company they went a day’s journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; ⁴⁵ and

when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; ⁴⁷ and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously.” ⁴⁹ And he said to them, “How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” ⁵⁰ And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. ⁵¹ And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart.

⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature,^[a] and in favor with God and man.

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Epistle: 2 Timothy 4:5-8 (*Sunday before Theophany*)

⁵ As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.

⁶ For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

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Gospel: Mark 1:1-8 (*Sunday before Theophany*)

The Proclamation of John the Baptist

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

² As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

“Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way;

³ the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight—”

⁴ John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist, and ate locusts

and wild honey. ⁷ And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

Did you see something new at different times last week during the Divine Liturgy? A beautiful set of Liturgical Fans were donated to the church in memory of +Mary Ann Kirish. Here is a little bit about them:

Liturgical Fans

The Exapteriga (Slavonic: rapidia) is a fan made with a representation of a six-winged Seraphim, the highest order of angel, mounted on a pole or staff for hand carrying. The seraphim, according to Isaiah’s vision of God, surround the throne of God in Heaven. The image of the seraphim is often engraved on a circular disk on the end of the staff. Two fans are found in most Orthodox churches placed on either side of the tabernacle when not in the hands of servers. The fans are reminders that these same angels surround the throne of God on earth - the Holy Altar. During the Divine Liturgy the Liturgical Fans are used to accompany the Holy Gifts during the Great Entrance and the Gospel Book when brought out for the Gospel reading.

Source: https://orthodoxwiki.org/Liturgical_fans

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WHY YOU SHOULD LEAVE UP YOUR CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS UNTIL

FEBRUARY: To bring cheer to the winter months, follow medieval tradition and keep your Christmas decorations up until February 15/2

This year, why not do as our medieval ancestors did and leave up your festive adornments until Candlemas (Feast of the Presentation of Christ into the Temple) on Feb 15 *Old Calendar* / Feb 2 *New Calendar*?

The theory that it’s bad luck to leave decorations up beyond Twelfth Night (around January 19/6) is a modern take on the tradition, but doing so used to be normal practice in the medieval period.

Falling exactly 40 days after Christmas, Candlemas was observed as the official end of Christmas in medieval England. The date itself was a great feast day and is so called because candles intended to be

used in churches in the coming year would be blessed on that day. There were also candlelit processions in honour of the feast.

Evidence that decorations were kept up until the evening before Candlemas is well documented. To this day, Christmas cribs remain in place in many churches until Candlemas, and their removal is described in an early 17th-century poem: *Ceremony Upon Candlemas Eve*, Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

Down with the rosemary, and so
Down with the bays and misletoe;
Down with the holly, ivy, all
Wherewith ye dress’d the Christmas hall;
That so the superstitious find
No one least branch there left behind;
For look, how many leaves there be
Neglected there, maids, trust to me,
So many goblins you shall see.

Dr Michael Carter, English Heritage’s Senior Properties Historian, said:

In the Middle Ages, houses would be decorated with greenery for the Christmas season on Christmas Eve day. The feast of Christmas started at around 4pm on Christmas Eve afternoon and continued until the Epiphany on January 19/6.

But contrary to popular belief, the Christmas season actually continues right through to Candlemas on February 15/2 - so there’s no real reason why you should take your decorations down earlier.

The tradition that it is bad luck to keep decorations up after Twelfth Night and the Epiphany is a modern invention, although it may derive from the medieval notion that decorations left up after Candlemas eve would become possessed by goblins! I’m of the opinion that, after the year we’ve all had, we certainly deserve to keep the Christmas cheer going a little longer!

From: <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/christmas/leaving-up-christmas-decorations/>

PRAYER CORNER

For the Health of... Lawrence V., Christopher, Robert, Eleanor, Joanne, Patricia, Jason, Kevin, Carlene, David, Donna, George, Kelly, Marie, Juliana, Fredrick, Kenneth, and Michael ...*through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer.*

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For the souls of the newly departed...

+Kathleen Ferko (12/2) ...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in God's Memory!*

ONLINE BONUSES

The Tradition of the Vasilopita (with Recipe)

Published on *Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese* (<http://ww1.antiochian.org/node/18684>)

From the DOWAMA St. Raphael Clergy Brotherhood

The tradition of baking and cutting a special "pita" (which can mean a loaf of bread, a cake, or even a pie) each year on January 1st is observed in honor of our holy father Basil the Great, archbishop of Caesarea in Cappodocia-- hence its name "Vasilopita" meaning "St. Basil's Bread." This tradition is observed in both parish churches and in the homes of the faithful. What is the meaning of this tradition and how did it begin?

For centuries upon centuries, parents, grandparents and godparents have related the following to Orthodox children about St. Basil and the Vasilopita. One year, during a time of terrible famine, the emperor levied a sinfully excessive tax upon the people of Caesarea. The tax was such a heavy burden upon the already impoverished people that to avoid debtors' prison each family had to relinquish its few remaining coins and pieces of jewelry, including precious family heirlooms. Learning of this injustice upon his flock, St. Basil the Great, the archbishop of Caesarea, took up his bishop's staff and the book of the holy Gospels and came to his people's defense by fearlessly calling the emperor to repentance. By God's grace, the emperor did repent! He canceled the tax and instructed his tax collectors to turn over to St. Basil all of the chests containing the coins and jewelry which had been paid as taxes by the people of Caesarea. But now St. Basil was faced with the daunting and impossible task of returning these thousands of coins and pieces of jewelry to their rightful owners. After praying for a long time before the icons of our Master Christ and His All-Holy Mother, St. Basil had all the treasures baked into one huge pita. He then called all the townspeople to prayer at the cathedral, and, after Divine Liturgy, he blessed and cut the pita, giving a piece to each person. Miraculously, each owner received in his piece of Vasilopita his own valuables. They all joyfully returned home, giving thanks to God who had

delivered them from abject poverty and to their good and holy bishop St. Basil the Great! In remembrance of that miracle wrought by God as a result of St. Basil's love and defense of his people, Orthodox Christians have observed the tradition of the Vasilopita each year on January 1st-- the date on which St. Basil reposed in the Lord in the year 379. In some places the Vasilopita is prepared as a loaf of rich bread (like that used for Artoklasia), while in other places it takes the form of a spicy sheet cake (without frosting). But no matter what form a Vasilopita may take, they all have one thing in common-- each contains a single coin. After placing the bread dough or cake batter in the proper baking pan, the baker makes with the foil-wrapped coin the sign of the Cross over it, closes his/her eyes, and then secretly places it into the unbaked Vasilopita. After the Vasilopita is baked and cooled, it is blessed and cut following Divine Liturgy for the feast of St. Basil on January 1st.

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A Simple Recipe for Vasilopita

Ingredients

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 extra-large eggs
- Grated rind of 2 large oranges
- Grated rind of 2 large lemons
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed/powdered sour cherry pits
(*Arabic mahleb, Greek makhlepi*)
- 2 teaspoons crushed/powdered gum mastic (*Arabic miski, Greek mastikha*)
- 4 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 egg yolk blended with 1 tablespoon milk
- sesame seeds
- blanched almonds
- a clean coin - a quarter will do nicely - wrapped in silver or gold foil

Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Thickly butter a 10-inch round spring form pan.
2. In a large bowl of an electric mixer, cream the butter until it is light and fluffy. Beat in the sugar and beat until the mixture is light. Beat in the eggs, one a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in the orange and lemon rinds, and the crushed/powdered sour cherry pits and gum mastic.
3. In a separate bowl, sift together three cups of the flour, the baking powder and salt.
4. With the mixer on low speed, gradually beat in the dry mixture alternately with the milk. The batter will be very thick. Using a wooden spoon, gradually blend in the remaining flour, beating well until completely smooth.
5. Spread the batter into the pan, press the coin into the dough until it is completely covered (don't let anyone see where you place it!), and then smooth the top. Brush the top evenly with the egg and milk mixture and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Gently press the blanched almonds into the top to make a Cross and spell out the date of the new year.
6. Bake for 45 minutes, until golden brown (if it browns too quickly, cover the top with aluminum foil). Cool in the pan for 15 minutes before removing from spring form and thoroughly cool before slicing.



Did You Know?
 The “12 Days of Christmas” is the period from Christmas (Dec. 25) to Epiphany (Jan. 6) – not, as some mistakenly believe, the 12 days before Christmas. In traditional Christianity, this season is one great celebration of the appearance of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh.

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***** Panachida (Memorial) Services** – If you desire to offer a Panachida Service in memory of a departed loved one, please contact Fr. Dave prior to Sunday morning to make these arrangements. (Depending on the number of requests, we may combine with other families’ commemorations.) *Customarily in the Orthodox Church, Panachidas are offered at 40 days; at 3, 6, and 9 months; at 1 year; at 3 years; annually on All Soul Saturdays; and (at the family’s request) on the anniversary of their passing from this life to our eternal life. Making and offering the Koliva (Kutya or Boiled Wheat) is also encouraged. On a side note, sponsoring the bulletin in memory of someone should not replace having the prayers of a Panachida Service*

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Additional Church Curators Needed – A synonym for *curator* is *steward*. Our curator list needs expanded! If anyone is interested in being a *steward of their time* and be “on-the-door”, please see Larry Martin

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CHURCH BUILDING UPDATE

Here is a brief update from the past few weeks:

- ✘ *** We have returned to the Nave of the Church for services going forward! Thank You for your stewardship in this journey!
- ✘ * Foam-insulation was installed in the Sanctuary (roughly \$5,000 – donations requested)
- ✘ * New drywall was installed in the Sanctuary (roughly \$7,000 – donations requested)
- ✘ ** A chandelier for the nave has been donated by our sister parish in Potomac, MD – Is anyone able to help in getting it to the parish in January 2024? See Fr Dave
- ✘ *** Quotes for a new electrical panel are being received. IF You Have An Electrician You Would Recommend – Please Contact Fr. Dave. *(covered by an anonymous donor)*
- ✘ A contract was signed on 11/3 for new windows on the 1st floor that will be installed around February *(cost is \$28,000 – covered by an anonymous donor)*
Through your generosity and dedication, all of this will come together – one thing at a time!
 Glory to God for All Things!

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2023-24 SJB PARISH COUNCIL OFFICERS

- President: Lawrence Martin
- Vice-President: Subdeacon Ryan Ferko
- Treasurer: Timothy Martin, Reader
- Financial Secretary: Rich Mirilovich
- Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Radomsky
- Chief Auditor: Robert Fall
- Auditors: Gina Fall, John Kirish, Mary Jane Hudak, Kathy Schrmack *(5th position open)*

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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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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

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MONTHLY COMMUNITY OUTREACH



This month, through the efforts of our Sr. ACRY, we will be collecting donations for the **Orthodox Christian Network**. *(This is the site that Father uses to get the “Children’s Word” that is distributed each week.)* The Orthodox Christian Network (OCN) is an official agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America. **MyOCN is YourOCN!** Visit www.myocn.net to see the variety of materials they provide online! *Thank you in advance for your prayers and offerings this month!*

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LIVES OF THE SAINTS

SAINTED BASIL THE GREAT, ARCHBISHOP OF CAESAREA CAPPADOCIA

Commemorated on January 14/1

Sainted Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea Cappadocia, "belongs not to the Church of Caesarea alone, nor merely to his own time, nor to his own kinsmen was he merely of benefit, but rather to all lands and cities worldwide, and to all people he brought and yet brings benefit, and for Christians he always was and will be a teacher most salvific", – thus spoke the contemporary of Saint Basil, – Sainted Amphylokhios, Bishop of Iconium (+ 344, Comm. 23 November).

Saint Basil was born in about the year 330 at Caesarea, the administrative centre of Cappadocia. He was of illustrious lineage, famed for its eminence and wealth, and giftedly zealous for the Christian faith. The grandfather and grandmother of the saint on his father's side, during the time of persecution under Diocletian, had to hide themselves away in the forests of Pontum for a space of seven years. The mother of Saint Basil – Saint Emilia (Emily), was the daughter of a martyr. The father of Saint Basil was also named Basil: he was a lawyer and reknown rhetorician and lived constantly at Caesarea.

Into the family of this elder Basil ten children were born – five sons and five daughters. Of these, five were later enumerated to the ranks of the Saints: Basil the Great; Macrina (Comm. 19 July) – was an exemplar of ascetic life, and exerted strong influence on the life and character of Saint Basil the Great; Gregory, afterwards Bishop of Nyssa (Comm. 10 January); Peter, Bishop of Sebasteia (Comm. 9 January); and Righteous Theozua – a deaconess (Comm. 10 January). Saint Basil spent the first years of his life on an estate belonging to his parents at the River Irisa, where he was raised under the supervision of his mother Emilia and grandmother Macrina. They were women of great refinement, preserving in memory the tradition of an earlier sainted-hierarch of Cappadocia – Sainted Gregory Thaumaturgos (Wonderworker) (+ c. 266-270, Comm. 17 November). Basil received his initial education under the supervision of his father, and then he studied

under the finest teachers in Caesarea Cappadocia, and it was here that he made the acquaintance of Sainted Gregory the Theologian (Bogoslov, i.e. title of Saint Gregory Nazianzus; Comm. 25 January and 30 January). Later on, Basil transferred to school at Constantinople, where he listened to eminent orators and philosophers. For the finishing touches to his education Saint Basil set off to Athens – a centre of classical enlightenment.

After a four or five year stay at Athens, Basil the Great had mastered all the available disciplines: "He so thoroughly studied everything, more than others are wont to study a single subject, each science he studied to its very totality, as though he would study naught else". Philosopher, philologist, orator, jurist, naturalist, possessing profound knowledge in astronomy, mathematics and medicine, – "this was a ship, loaded down full of learning, to the extent allowed of by human nature". At Athens a close friendship developed between Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian (Nazianzus), which continued throughout all their life. Later on, in an eulogy to Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian speaks with delight about this period: "Various hopes guided us and in deed inevitably – in learning... Two paths opened up before us: the one – to our sacred temples and the teachers therein; the other – towards preceptors of disciplines beyond".

In about the year 357 Saint Basil returned to Caesarea, where for a certain while he devoted himself to rhetoric. But soon, refusing offers from Caesarea citizens wanting to entrust him with the education of their offspring, Saint Basil entered upon the path of ascetic life.

After the death of her husband, Basil's mother together with her eldest daughter Macrina and several maid-servants withdrew to the family estate at Irida and there began to lead an ascetic life. Basil, however, having accepted Baptism from the bishop of Caesarea Dianios, was ordained a reader. As an expounder of the Sacred Scriptures, he at first read them to the people. Later on, "wanting to acquire a guide to the knowledge of truth", the saint undertook a journey into Egypt, Syria and Palestine, – to the great Christian ascetics dwelling there. Upon returning to Cappadocia, he decided to do likewise. Having given

his wealth to the needy, Saint Basil settled on the opposite side of the river not far from his mother Emilia and sister Macrina, gathering around him monks living in common community. Through his letters, Basil the great attracted to the wilderness monastery his good friend Gregory the Theologian. Saints Basil and Gregory asceticised amidst strict abstinence in their hovel, without roof and without fireplace, and the food was very humble. They themselves heaved the stones, planted and watered the trees, and carried heavy loads. Their hands were constantly calloused from the hard work. For clothing Basil the great had only chiton-tunic and monastic mantle; the hairshirt he wore only at night, so that it would not be obvious. In their solitude, Saints Basil and Gregory occupied themselves in an intense study of Holy Scripture with manuscript guidances from the most ancient commentators, and in parts Origen also, – from all whose works they compiled an anthology – a Philokalia (Dobrotoliubie). And also at this time at the request of the monks, Basil the Great wrote down a collection of rules for virtuous life. By his preachings and by his example Saint Basil the Great assisted in the spiritual perfecting of Christians in Cappadocia and Pontus; and many indeed turned to him. Monasteries were organised for men and for women, in which places Basil sought to unite the coenobitic (koine-bios or life in common) lifestyle with that of the solitary hermit.

During the reign of Constantius (337-361) the heretical false-teachings of Arius spread about, and the Church summoned both its saints into service. Saint Basil returned to Caesarea. In the year 362 he was ordained deacon by the bishop of Antioch, Meletios; later on, in 364 he was ordained to the dignity of priest by the bishop of Caesarea, Eusebios. "But seeing, – as Gregory the Theologian relates, – that everyone exceedingly praised and honoured Basil for his wisdom and reverence, Eusebios, through human weakness, succumbed to jealousy of him, and began to show dislike for him". The monks rose up in defense of saint Basil. To avoid causing Church discord, Basil withdrew to his own monastery and concerned himself with the organisation of monasteries. With the coming to power of the emperor Valens (364-378), who was a resolute

adherent of Arianism, there began for Orthodoxy the onset of a time of troubles – "the onset of the great struggle". Saint Basil then hastily returned to Caesarea at the call of bishop Eusebios. In the words of Gregory the Theologian, he was for bishop Eusebios "a good advisor, a righteous representative, an expounder of the Word of God, a staff for the aged, a faithful support in matters internal, and an activist in matter external". From this time church governance passed over to Basil, though he was subordinate to the hierarch. He preached daily, and often twice so – in the morning and in the evening. And during this time Saint Basil compiled the order of his Liturgy; he wrote a work "Discourse on the Six Days" and another in 16 Chapters on the Prophet Isaiah, yet another on the Psalms, and also a second compilation of monastic rules. Saint Basil wrote also Three Books "Against Eunomios", an Arian teacher who with the help of Aristotelian concepts had presented the Arian dogmatics in learnedly philosophic form, converting the Christian teaching into a logical scheme of rationalist concepts.

Saint Gregory the Theologian, speaking about the activity of Basil the Great during this period, points to "the caring for the destitute and the taking in of strangers, the supervision of virgins, written and unwritten monastic rule for the monasticising, the arrangement of prayers (Liturgy), the felicitous arrangement of altars and other things". Upon the death of the bishop of Caesarea Eusebios, Saint Basil in the year 370 was elevated onto his cathedra-chair. As Bishop of Caesarea, Saint Basil the Great was the newest in rank of 50 bishops in eleven provinces. Sainted Athanasias the great (Comm. 2 May), with joy and with thanks to God welcomed the bestowing of Cappadocia with such a bishop as Basil, famed for his reverence, deep knowledge of Holy Scripture, great learning, and his efforts for the welfare of Church peace and unity. In the empire of Valens the external government belonged to the Arians, who held several various opinions on questions of the Divinity of the Son of God and hence were divided into several factions. And to these dogmatic disputes were connected questions about the Holy Spirit. In his books "Against Eunomios", Saint Basil the Great taught about the Divinity of the Holy Spirit and Its

Oneness together with the Father and the Son. Subsequently, for a full explanation of the Orthodox teaching on this question, – at the request of the Bishop of Iconium Saint Amphylokhios, Saint Basil wrote his book "About the Holy Spirit".

The generally sorry state of affairs for the Caesarea bishop was made even worse by various circumstances: Cappadocia was divided in two under the re-arrangement of governance of provincial districts. Then too at Antioch a schism occurred, occasioned by the ordination of a second bishop. There was the negative and haughty attitude of Western bishops to the attempts to draw them into the struggle with the Arians. And there was also the departure over to the Arian side by Eustathios of Sebasteia, with whom Basil had been connected by close friendship. Amidst the constant perils Saint Basil gave encouragement to the Orthodox, affirmed them in the faith, summoning them to bravery and endurance. The holy bishop wrote numerous letters to the Churches, to bishops, to clergy and to individuals. Overcoming the heretics "by the weapon of his mouth, and by the arrows of his letters", as an untiring champion of Orthodoxy, Saint Basil all his life gave challenge to the hostility and the every which way possible intrigues of the Arian heretics.

The emperor Valens, mercilessly dispatching into exile any bishops that displeased him, and having implanted Arianism into other Asia Minor provinces, suddenly appeared in Cappadocia for precisely this purpose. He sent off to Saint Basil the prefect Modestus, who began to threaten the saint with ruin, banishment, beatings and even death by execution. "All this, – replied Basil, – for me means nothing, since one cannot be deprived of possessions that one does not have, beyond some old worn-out clothing and some books, which comprises the entirety of my wealth. For me it would not be exile, since I am bound to no particular place, and this place in which I now dwell is not mine, and indeed any place whither I be cast shall be mine. Better it is to say: everywhere is the place of God, whither be naught stranger nor new-comer (Ps. 38 [39]: 13). And what tortures can ye do me? – I am so weak, that merely but the very first blow will be felt. Death for me would be an act of kindness: it wilt bring me all the sooner to God, for

Whom I live and do labour, and to Whom moreover I do strive". The official was bewildered by such an answer. "Perhaps, – continued the saint, – thou hast never had encounter with a bishop; otherwise, without doubt, thou wouldst have heard suchlike words. In all else we are meek, the most humble of all, and not only affront the mighty, but also affront all, since such is prescribed for us by the law. But when it is a matter concerning God and they make bold to rise up against Him, then we – being mindful of naught else, think only of Him alone, and then fire, sword, wild beasts and chains, the rending of the body, would sooner hold satisfaction for us, than to be afraid".

Reporting to Valens on the not to be intimidated Saint Basil, Modestus said: "Emperor, we stand defeated by a leader of the Church". Basil the Great again showed firmness and in front of the very person of the emperor himself and his retinue produced such a strong impression on Valens, that the emperor dared not give in to the Arians demanding the exile of Basil. "On the day of Theophany, amidst an innumerable multitude of the people, Valens entered the church and mixed in amidst the throng, in order to give the appearance of being in unity with the Church. When began the singing of psalmody in the church, it was like thunder to his hearing. The emperor beheld a sea of people, and in the altar and all around was splendour; in front of all was Basil, acknowledging neither by gesture nor by glance, as though in church was occurred aught else, than that everything was intent only on God and the altar-table, and the clergy thereat in awe and reverence".

Saint Basil almost daily celebrated Divine-services. He was particularly concerned about the strict fulfilling of the canons of the Church, and kept attentive watch, so that only worthy individuals should enter into the clergy. He incessantly made the rounds of his own church, lest anywhere there be an infraction of Church discipline, and setting aright any unseemliness. At Caesarea Saint Basil built two monasteries, a men's and a women's, with a church in honour of 40 Martyrs whose relics were buried there. On the example of monks, the metropolitan clergy of the saint, – even deacons and priests lived in remarkable poverty, to toil and lead lives chaste and virtuous. For his clergy Saint Basil got an exemption

from taxes. All his personal wealth and the income-proceeds from his church he used for the benefit of the destitute; in every centre of his diocese he built a poor-house; at Caesarea – an home for wanderers and the homeless.

Sickly since youth, the toil of teaching, efforts at abstinence, the concerns and sorrows of pastoral service early sapped the strength of the saint. Saint Basil died on 1 January 379 at age 49. Shortly before his death, the saint gave blessing to Saint Gregory the Theologian to enter upon the Constantinople cathedra-chair.

Upon the repose of Saint Basil, the Church immediately began to celebrate his memory. Saint Amphylokhios, Bishop of Iconium (+ 394), in his eulogy to Sainted Basil the Great, said: "It is neither without a reason nor by chance that holy Basil hath taken leave from the body and had repose from the world unto God on the day of the Circumcision of Jesus, celebrated betwixt the day of the Nativity and the day of the Baptism of Christ. Wherefore this most blessed one, preaching and praising the Nativity and Baptism of Christ, extolling spiritual circumcision, himself forsaking the flesh, doth ascend to Christ now especially on the sacred day of remembrance of the Circumcision of Christ. Therefore also let be established on this present day annually to honour the memory of Basil the Great festally and solemnly".

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STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET

TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES

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Giving at the Church – The “flow of traffic” is a little different in Allison Park, but the ways to give your stewardship treasures has not changed. One can:

- ✘ hand your offering to the curator who sits at the desk in the vestibule (to the right after you enter),
- ✘ there are multiple baskets around the church for you to drop your offering in, or
- ✘ when saying your prayer and lighting 2 candles, put your donation in the box in the candle stand.

We will continue to not “*pass the basket*” which interrupts our focus on our prayers.

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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 (2nd 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 it’s 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. *Remember, sponsoring a bulletin in memory of someone does not replace having a Panachida (Memorial Service) for them.*

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A Prayer of Stewardship

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the good steward, who redeemed Adam and Eve of their failed stewardship by offering Yourself for the life of the world. You did teach us in the feeding of the multitudes that whatever we give to God is returned to us multiplied. You did praise those good and faithful servants in the parable of the talents who returned to the Master their gifts. So help us to learn the joy of stewardship, remembering that everything we have comes from You and belongs to You. We know, Lord, that we often live in fear of the future and insecurity. Help us to remember the lilies of the field and so to trust in Your providence. Grant to us a cheerful and generous spirit. Enkindle in the hearts of all Your people a zealous love for You. For You are the Good Steward, and to You we give thanks, praise and glory, together with Your Father and Your all holy good and life-giving Spirit now and ever and onto the ages of ages. Amen.

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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.

JANUARY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6 ## STRICT FAST DAY
3:00 pm Great Compline (Velikij Povečerije)
Vigil Service of the Nativity of our Lord

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7
FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
Parish Family Photo
Nativity Pot-Luck Meal

FAST FREE THROUGH JANUARY 17

MONDAY, JANUARY 8 – 2ND DAY OF CHRISTMAS
~~CANCELLED: 9:30 am Divine Liturgy~~

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9 – 3RD DAY OF CHRISTMAS
FEAST OF SAINT STEPHEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13
Leavetaking (*Apodosis*) of the Nativity of Christ
6:30 pm Feast Day Vespers

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14
FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD
FEAST OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT
9:20 am Theophany Canon
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
take down the Manger Scene after Coffee Social

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18 ## STRICT FAST DAY
~~CANCELLED: 9:30 am Royal Hours of Theophany~~
6:30 pm Great Compline (Velikij Povečerije)
Vigil Service with the Great Blessing of Water

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19
FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD
9:30 Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20
FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
9:30 Divine Liturgy

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21
9:20 Theophany Canon
9:30 Divine Liturgy (and Youth Sunday) followed
by Church School

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29
9:30 Divine Liturgy



FEAST DAY FEATURES OF THE MONTH

THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

Commemorated on January 7 / December 25
The **Nativity** according to the flesh of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, also called **Christmas**, is one of the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church. In the fullness of time, our Lord Jesus Christ was born to the Holy Theotokos and Virgin Mary, thus entering into the world as a man and revealing Himself to mankind.

According to the Bible and to Holy Tradition, Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem in a cave, surrounded by farm animals and shepherds. The baby Jesus was born into a manger from the Virgin Mary, assisted by her husband St. Joseph. St. Joseph and the Theotokos were forced to travel due to a Roman census; the odd location of the birth was the result of the refusal of a nearby inn to accommodate the expecting couple (Luke 2:1-20). Since it is known historically that dwellings were built directly over such caves housing livestock--in order to make use of the heat

Though three magi from the East are commonly depicted as visiting during the event itself (or, in Roman Catholic tradition, twelve days thereafter), the Bible records the coming of an unspecified number of wise men as being a few years after Jesus' birth (see Matthew 2). In either case, these magi came bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matt 2:11). In the hymnography for the feast, these gifts are interpreted to signify Christ's royalty, divinity, and suffering.

From: <https://orthodoxwiki.org/Nativity>

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THE CIRCUMCISION OF THE LORD

Commemorated on January 14/1

The Circumcision (Obrezanie) of the Lord: On the eighth day after His Nativity, our Lord Jesus Christ – in accordance with the Old Testament Law, accepted circumcision, which was decreed for all infants of the male gender as a sign of the Covenant of God with the Forefather Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17: 10-14, Lev. 12: 3). Upon the performing of this ritual the Divine Infant was given the name Jesus, which had been announced by the Archangel Gabriel

on the day of the Annunciation (Blagoveschenie) to the Most Holy Virgin Mary (Lk. 1: 31-33, 2: 21). According to the explanation of the fathers of the Church the Lord, the Creator of the Law, accepted circumcision, giving example for people how faithfully the Divine ordinances ought to be fulfilled. The Lord accepted circumcision for this reason – so that later on no one should be in doubt that He was truly Man, rather than merely being the bearer of illusion-seeming flesh as certain heretics (Docetism) happened to teach. In the New Testament (Covenant) the ritual of circumcision gave way to the sacrament of Baptism, which it pre-figured (Col. 2: 11-12). Accounts about the feastday of the Circumcision of the Lord in the Eastern Church continue right up through the IV Century. The Canon of the feast was written by the Monk Stephen Savvaites (Comm. 28 October and 13 July). Together with the Circumcision, accepted by the Lord as a sign of the Covenant of God with mankind, He received also the Name Jesus (Saviour) as the seal of His service – the deed of the Salvation of the world (Mt. 1: 21; Mk. 9: 38-39, 16: 17; Lk. 10: 17; Acts 3: 6, 16; Phil. 2: 9-10). These two events, the Circumcision and Naming, remind Christians that they have entered into a New Covenant (Testament) with God and "are circumcised with a circumcision not done by hand, in putting off the sinful body of the flesh, by the Circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2: 11). The very name "Christian" witnesses to an entrance of mankind into a New Covenant with God.

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THEOPHANY

Commemorated on January 19/6

Theophany denotes the feast whereby through the Baptism of the Lord the Most Holy Trinity has been revealed to the world (Mt. 3: 13-17; Mk. 1: 9-11; Lk. 3: 21-22). God the Father spoke from Heaven about the Son, the Son was baptised by the holy ForeRunner of the Lord John, and the Holy Spirit descended upon the Son in the form of a Dove. From ancient times this feast was called the Day of Illumination and the Feast of Lights, since that God is Light and has appeared to illumine "those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death" (Mt. 4: 16) and to save through grace the fallen race of mankind.

In the ancient Church it was the custom to baptise catechumens at the vespers of Theophany, such that Baptism also is revealed as a spiritual illumination of mankind. The origin of the feast of Theophany came about in Apostolic times. Mention is made concerning it in the Apostolic Decretals. From the II Century there is preserved the testimony of Sainted Clement of Alexandria concerning the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord and performing the night vigil before this feast.

In the III Century on the feast of Theophany there is known the dialogue concerning Divine-services between the holy martyr Hyppolitus and Saint Gregory the WonderWorker. In the following centuries – from the IV to IX Century – all the great fathers of the Church – Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostomos, Ambrose of Milan, John Damascene, had their own comments about the feast of Theophany. The monks Joseph the Studite, Theophanes and Byzantios composed much liturgical music for this feastday, which even now is sung for Divine-services. The Monk John Damascene said, that the Lord was baptised not because He Himself had need for cleansing, but so that "by water to bury human sin", to fulfill the law, to reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and finally, to sanctify "watery nature" and to proffer it to us in the form and example of Baptism.

On the feastday of the Baptism of Christ, Holy Church asserts our faith in the mystery – most sublime and incomprehensible to human intellect – of the Three Persons of the One God. It teaches us to confess and glorify as equally-honoured the Holy Trinity One-Essence and Undivided. It exposes and collapses the fallacies of the ancient pseudo-teachings, which attempted with reason and by human terms to explain the Creator of the world. The Church shews the necessity of Baptism for believers in Christ, and it inspires for us a sense of deep gratitude for the Illumination and Purification of our sinful nature. The Church teaches that our salvation and cleansing from sin is possible only by the power of the grace of the Holy Spirit, wherefore it is necessary to preserve worthily these gifts of the grace of holy Baptism – keeping clean this priceless garb, about which the feast of the Baptism tells us: "As many as have been

baptised into Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27).
[Translator Note: literally rendered from Greek "Theophany" means "Manifestation of God", whereas "Epiphany" connotes "Manifest upon"; "Theophany" is the more accurate rendering of Slavonic "Bogoyavlenie".]

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Assemblage ("Sobor" Or Synaxis") Of The Forerunner And Baptist Of The Lord, John

Commemorated on January 20/7

In the Orthodox Church it is customary, on the day following the Great Feasts of the Lord and the Mother of God, to remember those saints who participated directly in the sacred event. So, on the day following the Theophany of the Lord, the Church honors the one who participated directly in the Baptism of Christ, placing his own hand upon the head of the Savior.

Saint John, the holy Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, whom the Lord called the greatest of the prophets, concludes the history of the Old Testament and opens the era of the New Testament. The holy Prophet John bore witness to the Only-Begotten Son of God, incarnate in the flesh. Saint John was accounted worthy to baptize Him in the waters of the Jordan, and he was a witness of the Theophany of the Most Holy Trinity on the day of the Savior's Baptism. The holy Prophet John, the son of the Priest Zachariah and Righteous Elizabeth, was related to the Lord on His mother's side. The holy Forerunner, John, was born six months before Christ. The Archangel Gabriel announced his birth in the Temple at Jerusalem, revealing to Zachariah that a son was to be born to him.

Through the prayers offered beforehand, the child was filled with the Holy Spirit. Saint John prepared himself in the wilds of the desert for his great service by a strict life, by fasting, prayer and sympathy for the fate of God's people.

At the age of thirty, he came forth preaching repentance. He appeared on the banks of the Jordan, to prepare the people by his preaching to accept the Savior of the world. In church hymnology, Saint John is called a "bright morning star," whose gleaming outshone the brilliance of all the other stars, announcing the coming dawn of the day of grace,

illuminated with the light of the spiritual Sun, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Having baptized the sinless Lamb of God, Saint John soon died a martyr's death, beheaded by the sword on orders of King Herod at the request of his daughter Salome. (On Saint John the Baptist, see Mt.3:1-16, 11:1-19, 14:1-12; Mark 1:2-8, 6:14-29; Luke 1:5-25, 39-80, 3:1-20, 7:18-35, 9:7-9; John 1:19-34, 3:22-26).

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SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Father is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 2:30pm 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 prepared or not of the Orthodox Faith may receive a *blessing* from the chalice.

How to receive - Please remember the following helpful hints aimed at helping to preserve the solemnity and safety of the Holy Mystery. Anyone wearing lipstick should remove it before receiving. Be sure to offer your baptismal name to the priest before receiving. Please take great care that the red cloth held by the acolytes (servers) is fully under your chin (*you should not hold it*), then use the centuries-old practice of receiving: please fully open your mouth, tilt your head back, receive the Holy Gifts, wait until they are securely in your mouth and so that none of the holy and precious Body and Blood of Christ is accidentally spilled. Thank you for your cooperation, and may God have mercy on us all!

Lapsed Members – You are always welcome home and we want you to come back! Generally speaking, sincere and regular participation in the Sunday Divine Liturgy and in the Mysteries of Confession and Communion 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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The Jesus Prayer

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

(Repeat until your heart is calm...)

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ONLINE PRAYER CORNER

*Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions & 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 Special Intentions of... His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. David S., Fr. Myron, Dcn. Dean, Michael L., Laura & family, Carlene, Georgia, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Amee, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin *our diocesan seminarians:* Nicholas, Dylan, Thomas, Samuel, Timothy, Nicholas, Aydin, Subdeacon Seamus, Nicholas, Ignatios, *and our Parish Council and Curators:* Lawrence, Subdeacon Ryan, Timothy, Rich, Elizabeth, Robert, Gina, John, Mary Jane, Katherine, Kenneth *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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January NAMEDAYS:

Juliana Anton – Virgin-martyr Juliana of Nicomedia (1/3)

Stephen Brancho - Holy Protomartyr & Archdeacon Stephen (1/9)

Melanie Shuster - Venerable Melania the Younger (1/13)

John Sharpless - St John the Baptist (1/20)

Ashley Wertz Andrekovich - Venerable Anthony the Great (1/30)

Anthony Winkler - Venerable Anthony the Great (1/30)

...*May God grant them many and blessed years!*

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January Birthdays:

Carol Lorenzi (1/2), Joshua Mainolfi (1/3), Anna Martellotti (1/4), Steven Buhonick (1/7), Elizabeth

Fucsko (1/7), Jason Shelpman (1/9), Pañi Kathy Fester (1/13), Brenda Labas (1/15), Fred G. Anton (1/16), Pañi Fedornock (1/16), *Father's Godson*, Alex Schreiber (1/18), *Father's Goddaughter*, Jenna Schreiber (1/18), Kevynn Christina Anton (1/19), Patricia Watson (1/19), Nicholas Dittmore (1/19), Fr Joseph Fester (1/19), Katherine Schrmack (1/22), *Father's niece*, Abiageal Verbanick (1/22), Thomas Lorenzi (1/23), Mary Ann Brady (1/26), Fr Frank Miloro (1/26), Roberta 'Bobbie' Kruchkevich (1/27), Allison Kretchek (1/29) ...*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 ...*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...*through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.*

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For Pregnant Mothers... Ashley (*due in March*) ...*through the prayers of St. Anna, the mother of the Theotokos, 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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* 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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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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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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