

“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 21, 2024

34th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday after Theophany

Panachida +Kathleen Ferko (40-day)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024

35th Sunday after Pentecost

9:15 am Third Hour; 9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Colossians 3:12-16

Gospel: Luke 18:18-27

Tone 1; Liturgical Color: **Gold**

+++ +++ +++

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

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

+++ +++ +++

Mystery of Confession – Father is available to hear Confessions after every service

+++ +++ +++

***Calendar** - Future Services are updated online at:

www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar

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

+++ +++ +++

BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

+++ +++ +++

* **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.

+++ +++ +++

*** **Holy Water Reminders:** *Do Not Hoard It!*

While Holy Water does not “go bad”, it is best to refresh your water each year. Holy Water from the previous year(s) should be poured outside (*preferably on the corner of your house or in a garden where people are not going to walk on it*). The best scenario is to **use the water**: take a drink every morning, use in your cooking, etc. We will bless the new Jordan Water on Wednesday. All are encouraged to bring their Holy Water bottle the next time you come to church to refill with the New Jordan Water for your home


+++ +++ +++

*** **2023 Summary** - If you would like a copy of your 2023 SJB Donation Summary, please contact Rich Mirilovich at 412-523-1848 or jrmrsqrd@gmail.com.

+++ +++ +++

*** **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.

+++ +++ +++

 *** **Souper Bowl of Caring** – On **Sunday, February 11th** we ask that you bring in unexpired cans of soup for our February Community Outreach collection for Saint Cyril of White Lake Food Pantry at St Mary’s Orthodox Church on the South Side.

+++ +++ +++

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

+++ +++ +++

* **River Blessing** – The Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh will be having the inaugural Holy Water River Blessing **TODAY 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!

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

* **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!

+++ +++ +++

* **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!

OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 170
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 59
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 130
Total Collections:	\$ 359
Capital Improvement Fund:	\$ 105

Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials were offered last week by the Nelson Family; Tim Martin; Kathy Schrmack; Eleanor Sanger; Cindy Pavilonis

+++ +++ +++

SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

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

⁷But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. ⁸Therefore it is said, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.”

⁹(In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) ¹¹And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ

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

Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee

¹²Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee; ¹³and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphthali, ¹⁴that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphthali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—¹⁶the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.”

¹⁷From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

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.*

+++ +++ +++

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!*

A PRAYER BEFORE CONSUMING ANTIDORON AND/OR HOLY WATER
O Lord my God, may Your holy gift and Your holy water be for the remission of my sins, for the enlightenment of my mind, for the increase of my spiritual and bodily strengths, for the health of my soul and body, for the overcoming of my passions and infirmities, through Your boundless mercy, through the prayers of Your Most-holy Mother, and of all Your Saints. Amen.

“Drink holy water as often as possible. It is the best and most effective medicine. I’m saying that not just as a priest but also from my experience as a doctor.”

+St. Luke the Physician of Crimea

+++ +++ +++

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!*

+++ +++ +++

“There is nothing better than peace in Christ, for it brings victory over all the evil spirits on earth and in the air. When peace dwells in a man’s heart it enables him to contemplate the grace of the Holy Spirit from within. He who dwells in peace collects spiritual gifts as it were with a scoop, and he sheds the light of knowledge on others. All our thoughts, all our desires, all our efforts, and all our actions should make us say constantly with the Church: “O Lord, give us peace!” When a man lives in peace, God reveals mysteries to him.”

+ St. Seraphim of Sarov

+++ +++ +++

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

THE PRIESTMARTYR ISIDOR

Commemorated on January 8

The PriestMartyr Isidor was priest of the Nikol'sk church in the city of Yur'ev (Derpto, at present Taru in Estonia). According to the terms of a treaty concluded in 1463 between the Moscow Greatprince Ivan III and the Livonian knights, the latter were obligated to extend to the Orthodox at Derpto every protection. But the Livonian knights broke the treaty and began to try forcing the Orthodox into the Unia. Presbyter Isidor bravely stood forth in defense of Orthodoxy. He preferred to accept a martyr's crown rather than submit to the Catholics. Blessed Isidor together with 72 of his parishioners were drowned in the ice-hole, cut open on the feast of Theophany after the blessing of waters in the River Amovzha (or Emayyga, now Emajogi). In Spring, during a time of flooding, the undecayed bodies of the holy martyrs, and among them the fully-vested body of the PriestMartyr Isidor, were found by Russian merchants journeying along the River bank. They buried the saints around the Nikol'sk church.

+++ +++ +++

Humility is the only virtue that no devil can imitate. If pride made demons out of angels, there is no doubt that humility could make angels out of demons.

St. John Climacus

+++ +++ +++

LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

Sanctity of Life Sunday 2024

Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude

Metropolitan Tikhon

January 21, 2024

To the Clergy, Monastics, and Orthodox Faithful, My Beloved Children in the Lord,

As we mark Sanctity of Life Sunday this year, there will be much discussion of the “right to life.” Of course, we Orthodox Christians believe that certain rights, the right to life among them, should be respected, enshrined in law, and protected by civil authority. But human life is something even more precious than a mere right: it is a divine gift.

“Lo, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward,” as the Psalmist says (Ps. 126:3). We are called to recognize every human life, from conception to natural death, as a gift of the Lord. This means protecting the unborn, but in a broader sense this means helping our broken society and broken world to view our fellow human beings not as mere mouths to feed or potential threats or problems to be solved or subjects to be controlled, but as blessings from above. The unborn are a blessing; children are a blessing; the elderly are a blessing; the difficult people in our lives are a blessing; even our enemies—perhaps especially our enemies—are a blessing.

Moreover, we speak of the sanctity of life for two reasons: because life comes from the Lord, and because it should be offered back to the Lord through service to him and to others, resulting in sanctity. If we understand that we are merely servants, doing as we have been bidden (Lk. 17:10), and if we recognize that the greatest and holiest is the one who became a servant of all through his Incarnation, his ministry, and his Passion and Rising (Mt. 23:11), then we are in the best position of all to treat each human being as a blessing, not in an abstract sense, but in the sense of someone whom we are privileged to serve.

Living in this way, we also better understand our own life as a blessing, a blessing because it is an opportunity to attain to holiness. If we truly live according to our belief in the profound sanctity of life, then we will naturally “commend ourselves and each other and all our life unto Christ our God,” sending up

thanksgiving and blessing his holy Name on account of the incalculably precious gift of human life and for every man who comes into the world (Jn. 1:9).

P.O. Box 31409 Alexandria, Virginia, 22310 516-922-0550 - metropolitan@oca.org - www.oca.org

On this Sanctity of Life Sunday, we pray that all people of North America and throughout the world would come to recognize the good and perfect gift (Jam. 1:17) that is human life and learn to cherish that gift and render glory unto the Giver, the benevolent Creator of all things, one God in Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, unto the never-ending ages.

Yours in Christ,

+TIKHON

Archbishop of Washington Metropolitan of All America and Canada

+++ +++ +++

When God Seems Absent: We Must Avail Ourselves to Him in Silence

When we find it difficult to pray, we should light the lampada before our icons and sit silently before them. Then we should say to God, I am hurting and sad, and am unable to speak to You, so I need You to speak to my heart. Sometimes the most profitable spiritual growth can take place in such periods of brokenness because we see in these moments how very much we need God and depend upon Him.

Be not fearful, dear ones, for God is near, and He will not leave you. The Lord allows these dry moments when we fear He has left us as a way of making us reach out to Him. When we are struggling, or even suffering, we can grow stronger in our faith. Prayer will return as long as we give God moments in our life when we avail ourselves in silence, and listen for His voice.

Love in Christ,

Abbot Tryphon

ONLINE BONUSES

+++ +++ +++

** 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

*** **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.

+++ +++ +++

*** **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

+++ +++ +++

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

+++ +++ +++

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!

+++ +++ +++

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*)

+++ +++ +++

VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE

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

+++ +++ +++

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

+++ +++ +++

STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET

TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES

+++ +++ +++

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.

+++ +++ +++

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.

+++ +++ +++

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.*

+++ +++ +++

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.

+++ +++ +++

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 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>

+++ +++ +++

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.

+++ +++ +++

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".]

+++ +++ +++

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).

+++ +++ +++

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.

+++

“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

+++

The Jesus Prayer

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

(Repeat until your heart is calm...)

+++

ONLINE PRAYER CORNER

*Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions & other needs**

+++

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

+++

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.*

+++

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!

+++

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*, Abigeal 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!*

+++

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

+++

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

+++

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

+++

For those serving in the Armed Forces & Civil Authorities... Thomas R. Dzadoovsky *...through the prayers of St George, the Great-Martyr & Wonderworker.*

+++

* 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.*

+++

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.

+++



+++

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.

+++

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.

+++ +++ +++