

“THE WEEKLY FORERUNNER” *Our Parish Bulletin*

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

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS!

Christ is Baptized! *(responded with: In the Jordan!)*

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 are with us today and hope you come again soon! Please see Fr. Dave if you have any questions in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy.

UPCOMING SERVICES

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19, 2025 vol. X

FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY (BAPTISM) OF OUR LORD
30th Sunday after Pentecost; Tone 5
Youth Sunday

MONDAY, JANUARY 20

FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
Canceled: 9:30 Divine Liturgy
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SUNDAY, JANUARY 26

31st Sunday after Pentecost; Tone 6
9:15 am Theophany Canon
9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 1 Timothy 1:15-17
Gospel: Luke 18:35-43
Epistle: Ephesians 4:7-13 (Sunday After)
Gospel: Matthew 4:12-17 (Sunday After)
Liturgical Color: **Gold**

Honoring our First Confession Students

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29

Canceled: 6:30 pm Parastas for aborted babies
Canceled: 7:00 pm Exploring Orthodox 101
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Mystery of Confession – Father is available to hear Confessions after every service *or* by appointment.
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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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Calendar - Future Services are updated online at:

www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar

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

TODAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, ¹² training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, ¹³ awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

⁴ but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, ⁶ which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

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Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; ¹⁷ and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

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Spiritual Vitamin:

“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

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

BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

**** 2024 Summary** – If you would like a statement of your 2024 SJB Donation Summary, please contact Rich Mirilovich at 412-523-1848 or jrmrsqrd@gmail.com.

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*** Maintenance Person** - Thank you to Nick Sarandou who in his stewardship has graciously accepted the position of maintenance person. His experience with maintaining various properties will be immeasurable to the church. Thank you for giving of your time, talents, and treasures! Many years!

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*** Christmas Caroling** - The St. Nicholas Choir of Homestead has put together four virtual caroling videos of Christmas Carols (Koljady) for all to enjoy! They can be viewed from their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/stnichomestead> (One should be able to watch the videos whether they have a Facebook account or not.) Please feel free to share this with your loved ones near and far!

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OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 140
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 138
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 225
Community Outreach:	\$ 31

Total Collections: \$ 534

Capital Improvement Fund: \$ 101

Participating Souls – Sunday Liturgy: 31

Saturday Vigil: 12

Weekly Candle Intentions or Memorials were offered last week by the Nelson Family; Lawrence Martin; Margie Sanger Petrucci; Tim Martin; Kathy Schrmack; Cindy Pavilonis

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The **Eternal Lamp** was offered last week by Cindy Pavilonis for the health of her brother, Michael. Many Years!

COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS

Please sign up by the kitchen or by contacting Fr. Dave

January 26:	_____?
February 2:	_____?
February 9:	_____?

PRAYER CORNER

For the Health of... Michael, Felix, Bella, Reed, Maria O., Cheryl, Christina, Carol, Daniel, Elizabeth, Robert, Matthew, David, Suzanne, William, Boyd, Millicent, Barbara, Paul, Robert, Kelly, 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...

+Miroslaw Tschakowsky, +Julian Naumenko, +George Lavra (1/11), +Warren Hern, +Michael Miklos, the Priest (1/3) ...*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.

ONLINE BONUSES

Tropar for the Feast of the Theophany

At Your baptism in the Jordan, O Lord, worship of the trinity was revealed, for the Father's voice bore witness to You, calling You His beloved Son, and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of these words. O Christ God, who appeared and enlightened the world, glory to You!

Kondak for the Feast of the Theophany

You have appeared today to the inhabited earth, and Your light, O Lord, has been marked upon us, who with knowledge sing Your praise. You have come, You are made manifest, the Light that no man can approach."

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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

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ADDITIONAL BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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*** **Mad Mex Fundraising Dinner** – Join the Saint Constantine School of Pittsburgh on **Tuesday, February 4** at 7:00 pm for a fundraiser dinner at Mad Mex (2 Robinson Plaza, Pittsburgh, PA 15205) to benefit the school. Tickets are \$60 per person, which includes buffet dinner, a drink, and gratuity. (Ask

Father for the menu.) 100% of ticket proceeds go directly to the school so this is an amazing opportunity to relax and have fun, dine with friends, and support the school! Attire and atmosphere is comfy and casual. They would love to see new faces as well, so please feel free to bring along new friends who are interested in supporting the school. Don't wait too long, as seating is limited! Contact Andrew Fournaridis, Director of Development, with any questions at: afournaridis@saintconstantine.org or 412-759-5965. Click this link to purchase tickets:

https://host.nxt.blackbaud.com/registration-form/?formId=610c9d7d-dd86-4d73-bb7b-4b5c3a8f7912&envId=p-E6s1zn-4mE2IKhR_ZPRGFw&zone=usa

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*** **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 when you are sick, use it in your cooking, etc. The new Jordan Water has been blessed. After you finish using what you have, the next time you come to church all are encouraged to refill their Holy Water bottle with the New Jordan Water for your home! (And use it year-round!)

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Spiritual Vitamin:

"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

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*** **Calling all scouts!** For our youth in Scouting and to our Adult Leaders, please send Fr. Dave your Unit Number, location, current rank, and any office or position you hold in your organization **As Soon As You Can** so we can set up our Scout Sunday

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*** **Souper Bowl of Caring** – On **Sunday, February 9th** 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.

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*** **Annual Church Picnic** – "The Cabin" in North Park is booked for **Sunday, September 7, 2025** for our end of summer picnic. **Please Save The Date!**

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*** **A Carpatho-Rusyn Christmas** –

The new book, *Carpatho-Rusyn Christmas*, is a publication of the Diocesan Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage Working Group. It contains Rusyn and American Christmas Carols (Koljady) in English and Rusyn plus the text for the Holy Night Supper (Svjatyj Večer) prayer service (Velija). We now have it in our parish bookstore and a \$10 donation per book is requested.

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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 is in the vestibule for the *Holy Transfiguration Monastery*. Thank you for giving back! *By the way – this collection is taken year round.*

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** **Random Tidbits...** Father Dave 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 (Sacrament) of Holy Anointing (Unction) to be fully prepared.

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Mystery of Confession – Father is available to hear Confessions after every service *or* by appointment.

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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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Calendar - Future Services are updated online at:

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

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"Code" for reading the bulletin:

*** = new news ** = 2nd time in the bulletin

* = at least the 3rd time in the bulletin

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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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LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

[Understanding Theophany: A Key Feast in Orthodoxy](#)

From:

<https://www.orthodoxchristianity101.com/post/understanding-theophany-a-key-feast-in-orthodoxy>

Every January, I find myself swept up in the profound spiritual significance of the Feast of Theophany, a cornerstone in Orthodox Christianity. It's a time when the air buzzes with anticipation, as believers prepare to commemorate a pivotal moment in Christian faith: the baptism of Jesus Christ. But why is this event so crucial, and how does it shape our spiritual journey? In this article, I'll delve into the rich tapestry of Theophany, exploring its deep roots and the reasons behind its observance. From the sacred rituals to the

symbolic meanings, I'm excited to share insights that illuminate why this feast is more than just a tradition — it's a transformative experience for the faithful. So, let's dive into the waters of understanding together and uncover the essence of Theophany in Orthodox Christianity.

The Significance of Theophany in Orthodox Christianity

As I delve deeper into the importance of Theophany, it's essential to understand the profound impact it has on the spiritual lives of Orthodox Christians. This feast is far more than a mere commemoration; it's a celebration of **Jesus Christ's baptism** in the Jordan River. This event marks the **manifestation of God as the Holy Trinity** to the world — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — providing a profound revelation of Divine truth that resonates with believers.

Theophany stands as a pivotal point where heaven meets earth. During the liturgical services, I've witnessed the vivid imagery used to illustrate this junction, especially through the **Great Blessing of the Waters**. This ritual is not only about purification but also signifies the sanctification of the entire creation. Orthodox theology teaches that when the waters are blessed, they become a means of spiritual renewal, symbolizing the washing away of sins.

Indeed, every aspect of Theophany is imbued with deep symbolism which adherents internalize and reflect upon. The icons depicting the feast portray the voice of God the Father proclaiming Jesus as His beloved Son, the Holy Spirit descending as a dove, and the figures of angels in awe. These are not just static images but invitations for us to contemplate the mystery of God becoming manifest in the world.

Orthodox Christians believe that participating in Theophany services invokes a renewal of their own baptismal vows. The prayers and hymns are designed to draw us closer to the heart of our faith, where I've felt a personal call to embrace the transformative teachings of the gospel. It's during Theophany that we reaffirm our commitment to live a life in accordance with Christ's example.

By observing Theophany, I'm reminded of the unity between the cosmic and the personal elements of my faith. The feast illustrates that salvation history is not confined to the past but is an ongoing narrative that

continues within the life of every believer. Through this understanding, we grasp the scope of God's redemptive work, which is both intimate and universal.

The Roots of Theophany in Christian Tradition

The history of Theophany stretches back to the earliest days of Christianity. In the Christian tradition, the feast commemorates not only Christ's baptism but also His first public manifestation to the world. **Theophany's origins are tightly interwoven with the liturgical traditions** that emerged in the early Church.

Liturgical records from as early as the 4th century detail the observance of the feast, illustrating its **ancient roots and enduring importance**. It was considered a major feast, sometimes even correlated with the celebration of Easter, accentuating its significance in the context of Christian redemptive events.

In the Eastern Orthodox Church, Theophany is often referred to as 'Epiphany,' a term that signifies a divine revelation. The feast is deeply rooted in the scriptural accounts of the Gospels, particularly in the works of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These texts detail the event of Jesus's baptism by John the Baptist at the Jordan River, marking it as an occasion where the **Heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended** like a dove upon Jesus, while a voice from Heaven proclaimed Him as the beloved Son.

Celebrated on January 6th, this feast not only observes the baptism but also **Christ's first miracle** at the wedding of Cana, which occurs shortly thereafter according to the Gospel of John. This dual focus on baptism and miracle underscores the multifaceted nature of divine manifestation and the profound mystery of God's presence.

Orthodox Christians recognize this event as a cornerstone of their faith, as it reveals the Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — to the world, and establishes the foundation for the sacrament of baptism. By looking at the roots of Theophany and its establishment in the early Christian Church, one gains a deeper appreciation for its central place in Orthodox ritual and doctrine. It continues to resonate through centuries as a powerful expression of faith, an acknowledgement of the divine mystery, and a call to

a life transformed by the recognition of Jesus Christ's divinity.

The Baptism of Jesus Christ: A Pivotal Moment

In the rich tapestry of Orthodox Christianity, the Feast of Theophany stands out, particularly for its commemoration of the **baptism of Jesus Christ**. This moment in the Jordan River signifies far more than a mere ritual. It marks the beginning of Christ's public ministry and the divine approval of his mission on Earth. When I reflect upon this event, I'm moved by its profound significance, encapsulated in the voice from heaven declaring Jesus as the beloved Son.

Scripture recounts this pivotal moment with poignant clarity. As Saint John the Baptist lowers Jesus into the waters, the heavens open, and the Holy Spirit descends like a dove — a scene capturing the full revelation of God's triune nature. The baptism thus serves as a direct manifestation of the Trinity, fortifying the relevance of Theophany in today's observances.

Beyond its doctrinal import, the baptism also symbolizes a model for personal transformation. In Orthodox tradition, followers re-commit to spiritual renewal, mirroring the purifying act that Jesus himself underwent. This moment beckons the faithful to embody Christ's virtues and fosters a profound connection to his journey.

Moreover, the baptism induces a **ripple effect throughout the liturgical year**. It's not merely an isolated event but a gateway to the subsequent narratives of Christ's life and teachings. Each year, as I celebrate this feast, I'm reminded of the seasons that follow — each echoing the resonant themes introduced by the baptism.

As the story of the baptism unfolds, the multifaceted themes interwoven in the Theophany celebration emerge starkly. Through liturgy and iconography, the Orthodox Church encapsulates the transformative power of water, the inauguration of Christ's ministry, and a life led by example. These threads bind the observance, not only to the past but also to our contemporary journey in faith. The baptism of Jesus Christ remains an enduring call to renew and deepen our spiritual lives in alignment with the core precepts of Orthodoxy.

The Symbolism of Water in Theophany

Water plays a central role in Theophany, symbolizing purity, life, and transformation. It's perceived not only as a physical substance but also as a spiritual one, carrying profound connotations within Orthodox Christianity. During Theophany, **water is blessed** and believed to take on holy properties, becoming a conduit for sanctification and an emblem of divine grace.

As I delve into the scriptures, it's clear that water carries a duality of destruction and regeneration. In the Old Testament, it is seen in the great flood that cleanses the world of sin, and in the New Testament, it appears as the waters of the Jordan River where Jesus was baptized. This baptismal water signifies a **new beginning**, washing away the old self and refreshing the spirit akin to the rebirth of Creation after the deluge.

The practice of blessing bodies of water during Theophany also holds symbolic weight. Orthodox Christians often gather at rivers, lakes, or seas, where the blessing is performed. This ritual signifies the sanctification of nature and is a reminder of the **participation of all creation** in the redeeming act of Christ's baptism.

Moreover, theophany water is used throughout the year for various sanctifying purposes, reinforcing its significance far beyond the feast day:

- Blessing homes
- Healing purposes
- During other sacraments and rituals

In baptism, the symbolism of water reaches its zenith. It represents a tomb and a womb simultaneously — a tomb for dying to sin and a womb for giving birth to new life in Christ. Orthodox faithful view their own baptism as a personal participation in Jesus' baptism. They're reminded that through the waters, they're initiated into the faith, emerging as changed individuals ready to embark on their spiritual journey. In the liturgy, the use of water serves as a material and mystical link between the physical and the divine. The blessing of the waters during Theophany is a vivid enactment of divine **incarnation and sanctification**, encapsulating the essence of God's closeness and the transformative power of His presence in the world.

The Sacred Rituals of Theophany

Theophany isn't just a day for reflection; it's marked by a rich tapestry of sacred rituals that engage the faithful in a profound spiritual journey. Among these, the **Great Blessing of the Waters** stands out as a pivotal moment. This ceremony is performed twice: once on the eve and then on the day of Theophany itself. During this ritual, I watch as priests recite prayers and then proceed to sprinkle holy water, a sign of divine presence, on the congregation, symbolizing the washing away of sins.

In many Orthodox communities, there's a tradition of throwing a cross into a body of water. The bravest among the faithful dive in — regardless of the chilling temperatures — to retrieve it. This act of retrieving the cross signifies Christ's baptism and serves as a public declaration of faith.

I'm also intrigued by **house blessings**, a practice where the sanctified waters from Theophany are used to bless and protect the homes of parishioners. A priest typically visits homes with a container of Theophany water, sprinkling each room while reciting prayers. This custom underlines the belief that God's grace permeates every aspect of our lives.

Great Blessing of the Waters

- Eve of Theophany and the day itself
- Sprinkling of holy water on the congregation

Retrieval of the Cross

- Symbolizes Christ's baptism
- Acts as a declaration of faith

House Blessings

- Theophany water blesses and protects homes
- Priest sprinkles water and recites prayers

These rituals aren't simple ceremonies; they're acts that bind the community together. They root Orthodox Christians in their faith, allowing them to participate physically in the mysteries of Theophany. Each droplet of water becomes a symbol of the Holy Spirit's renewing power — connecting the earthly with the heavenly.

Clearly, Theophany's rich liturgy and communal practices go beyond mere remembrance. They're about engaging with faith at the deepest levels, where holy water isn't just a symbol — it's a living, breathing testament to belief, renewal, and the enduring promise of sanctification.

Conclusion

The Feast of Theophany holds a profound place in Orthodox Christianity, not just as a historical commemoration but as a living, communal experience. Through the Great Blessing of the Waters and other cherished rituals, I'm reminded of the depth of our faith and the transformative power of God's presence. As the holy water touches our lives, we're renewed and united in the divine mystery. Theophany isn't simply an event to remember — it's an invitation to step into a renewed life, a moment where heaven touches earth and sanctifies our journey.

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STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET



TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES

*** **STEWARD**, translated from the Greek word *oikonomos*, means *a caretaker, a faithful manager of all of God's gifts*. As Stewards, each of us are called upon to respond to God's gifts through offering our gifts of time, talent and treasure. This is our form of supporting our parish and it leaves us with the question, "How will I respond to God's gifts this year?" Our gifts represent who we are and how we care about God and His Church. How can we live with the framework of being a caretaker of the blessings God gives us?

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PARISH STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

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Joining the ACRY – If you would like to become a part of our philanthropic organization of the ACRY (American Carpatho-Russian Youth), which is open to all ages, please contact Subdeacon Ryan Ferko at 484-744-2771 or rferko85@yahoo.com.

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Why Should I Join the Local ACRY?

The ACRY is an Orthodox Christian family fellowship dedicated to the purpose of encouraging spiritual growth through charitable and apostolic

missionary works, prayer and fellowship for the Glory of God and the building up of the Church and our Diocese. The local ACRY focuses on outreach to the community in various forms and fellowship within. This could be a fundraiser or family event at the church grounds to introduce people to our parish, or the volunteering of our time to help support a community event. In addition to these, the ACRY has the opportunity to branch out and meet other members of our diocesan ACRY community through deanery and nation events and partake in outreach at a broader level.

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2024-25 SJB PARISH COUNCIL OFFICERS

- President: Lawrence Martin
- Vice-President: Elizabeth Radomsky
- Treasurer: Timothy Martin, Reader
- Financial Secretary: Rich Mirilovich
- Recording Secretary: Gina Fall
- Chief Auditor: Robert Fall
- Auditors: Subdeacon Ryan Ferko, John Kirish, Kimberly Opsitos, Matthew Opsitos, and Kathy Schmack

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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 prayers 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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CHURCH BUILDING UPDATE

Here is a brief update from the past few weeks:
 ✘ * The building committee and Parish Council continue to discuss our plan of action going forward with work in the church proper. Please be patient with us! Also, remember that for a project like the one that we are undertaking, work goes top down so the ceiling and walls will be done before the floor. As mentioned, please be patient with us!

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Glory to God for All Things!

Through your generosity and dedication, all of this is coming together – one thing at a time!
Thank you! Many stewards keep coming to the church and working very hard to make improvements. May God grant you many years!

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

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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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JAN. COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY



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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FEAST DAY FEATURES OF THE MONTH

KONDAK HYMNS OF THE FEASTS:

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Feast Of The Nativity According To The Flesh Of Our Lord, God And Saviour Jesus Christ.

Commemorated on January 7 / December 25

The Virgin today gives birth to the highest Being: and the earth provides the Inaccessible One with a cave. The angels with the shepherds glorify Him; the Wise Men journey with the star, because for our sake is born a little Child, the Pre-Eternal God.

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Synaxis (Sobor-Assemblage) Of The Most Holy Theotokos, Mother Of God

Commemorated on January 8 / December 26

He Who before the morning star was begotten without mother of the Father, is today without father made flesh of you upon earth. A star announces the good tidings to the Magi, while angels with shepherds sing the praises of your undefiled child-bearing, O you who are full of grace.

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Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Commemorated on January 14 / 1

The Lord of All endures circumcision and His goodness purifies the sins of men and grants salvation to the world today. Therefore, Basil the priest and torchbearer of the Creator, the divine mystic of Christ, rejoices on high.

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Feast of the Holy Theophany of Our Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ (Baptism of the Lord)

Commemorated on January 19 / 6

You have appeared today to the inhabited earth, and Your light, O Lord, has been marked upon us, who with knowledge sing Your praise. You have come, You are made manifest, the Light that no man can approach.

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Synaxis Of The Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner And Baptist, John

Commemorated on January 20 / 7

Your presence in the flesh terrified the Jordan River, and it reversed its course from fear. John, hesitated in fear, to baptize You even though it was foretold by the prophets. The angels were overtaken with wonder when they saw You being baptized as a Man. All those who were in darkness, enlightened, sang praises to You, O Lord, Who appeared and shed Your Light upon all.

MONTHLY SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2025 #NATIVITYFAST

Sunday before the Nativity of our Lord
Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ
Sunday of the Holy Fathers
9:15 am Nativity Canon & Carols (*Koljady*)
9:30 am Divine Liturgy

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MONDAY, JANUARY 6 #NATIVITYFAST

A Day of Strict Fasting
Canceled: 9:30 Royal Hours of Nativity
7:00 pm Great Compline (Velikij Povečerije)
Vigil of the Nativity of our Lord

TUESDAY, JANUARY 7

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
9:15 am Nativity Canon & Carols (*Koljady*)
9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy
Parish Family Photo
Nativity Pot-Luck Meal

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FAST FREE until the eve of Theophany (Sviatki – "Holy Days")

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8 – 2ND DAY OF CHRISTMAS

FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9 – 3RD DAY OF CHRISTMAS

FEAST OF SAINT STEPHEN

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 12 #NATIVITYFAST

Sunday after Nativity and before Theophany
Sunday of the Holy Ancestors (*Righteous Joseph the Betrothed, Holy Righteous David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord*)
9:15 am Nativity Canon & Carols (*Koljady*)
9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Monthly Memorial (Panachida)
Sr. ACRY Meeting

MONDAY, JANUARY 13

Leavetaking (*Apodosis*) of the Nativity of Christ
No Vespers Scheduled

TUESDAY, 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
FRIDAY, JANUARY 17

9:30 am Royal Hours of Theophany

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18 ## STRICT FAST DAY

5:00 pm 2nd Holy Night Supper
6:30 pm Great Compline (Velikij Povečerije)
Vigil Service with the Great Blessing of Water

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 19

FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

9:20 am Theophany Canon

9:30 Divine Liturgy

Youth Sunday

MONDAY, JANUARY 20

FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Canceled: 9:30 Divine Liturgy

?? WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22 (OR 29TH)

6:30 pm Parastas (Memorial) for aborted babies
7:00 pm Exploring Orthodox 101

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 26

9:20 Theophany Canon

9:30 Divine Liturgy

?? WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29 (OR 22ND)

6:30 pm Parastas (Memorial) for aborted babies
7:00 pm Exploring Orthodox 101

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SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Father is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 3:30pm 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

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.*

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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.

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Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions *

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A Prayer For The Sick: O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly visit Your suffering servant(s) *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. Stephen B., Fr. Thomas B., Protodeacon Gregory B., Stephanie B, Kevin, Michael L., Laura & family, Carlene, Georgia, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Ameer, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin, David, Donna, George, *our diocesan seminarians:* Dcn Peter S, Nicolas W., Seamus M., Samuel L., Nicholas L., Alexander H., *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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***** NAMEDAY, BIRTHDAY, and ANNIVERSARY PRAYER LIST IS BEING RESET** – *Our parish prayer list of key dates and special occasions in our lives will be reset going forward (starting 3/1/24). If one of your special days is missing – please let Fr Dave know ASAP. See Fr. Dave with any questions.*

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January NAMEDAYS:

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

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

Ashley Wertz Andrekovich - 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), Elizabeth Fucsko (1/7), Jason Shelpman (1/9), Pañi Kathy Fester (1/13), 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), Nicholas Ditmore (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), 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...

Raymond, Kathryn, Maxwell, Barbara, Tyler

...through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, & St. John Maximovitch.

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For those preparing for Marriage... Nicholas & Cassie, Allison & Michael *...through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.*

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January Anniversaries:

...through the prayers of St. Nicholas Planas

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For Pregnant Mothers...

Mallory (*due in March*), Lindsay (*April*)

...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.*

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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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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