

“THE WEEKLY FORERUNNER” *Our Parish Bulletin*

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

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

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A WARM WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS! Glory to Jesus Christ! (*responded with: Glory forever!*)
Slava Isusu Christu! (*Slava na viki!*) We are happy that you have joined us today! It is our pleasure to have you in our presence this morning. We pray for 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, FEBRUARY 16, 2025 vol. X
Within the Feast of the Meeting of Our Lord
Synaxis of the Holy and Righteous Symeon the
God-receiver and Anna the Prophetess (1st c.)
Entrance of Ray and Kathy into the Catechumenate
Youth Sunday
Blessing of Candles
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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23
Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare)
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy
Tone 2; Liturgical Color: **Gold**
Pre-Lenten Breakfast
Add’l Offering requested for S. Side Food Pantry

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26
6:00 pm Moleben to the Theotokos with Anointing
6:30 pm Parish Council Meeting (*All are welcome to come and listen to the discussions at the meeting*)

SATURDAY, MARCH 1 * RESCHEDULED *****
ALL-SOULS (1ST OF 5) (Zadušna Subota)
9:30am Divine Liturgy & Panachida
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*** **2025 Great Fast** – The Triodion has begun...
let’s prepare for the opportunity ahead!
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** **Important Upcoming Liturgical Dates:**
The Great Fast Begins: Monday, March 3
Palm Sunday / Holy Week: Sunday, April 13
Pascha: Sunday, April 20

BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

** **Pre-Lenten Breakfast** will be **NEXT Sunday, February 23**. Please sign up in the hall so we have a rough idea of how many will stay for the fellowship. ALSO – The main meal will be prepared for everyone, but who can bring fruit?
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*** **Camp Nazareth Webinars** – This week the staff at Camp Nazareth is offering two Informational Webinars about the 2025 Summer Camping Weeks on **Tuesday 2/18 and Thursday 2/20** at 7 pm. The Informational Webinars will cover lots of different topics and include information about Registration, Programming, Food Service, etc. Both webinars are the same, so you only need to attend one. While they are not mandatory in order to attend the summer weeks, Camp strongly encourages everyone to attend, but especially any first time campers and their families. There will be an opportunity for Q & A. Please contact Fr. Dave for the links.
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*** **IOCC Benefit** – There will be a Happy Hour fundraiser on **Thursday, February 27** from 6 to 9 pm at Allusion Brewing Company (1701 Duncan Ave., suite 2, McCandless, PA 15101) where 20% of the proceeds will benefit IOCC's global humanitarian work. Go and fellowship with other parishioners before Great Lent is upon us and get introduced to IOCC's mission and the chapter here in Pittsburgh. The event page can be found online at the following address: [Pittsburgh Happy Hour to Benefit IOCC](#)

OUR 2025 JOURNEY TO PASCHA

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon

SUNDAYS

THEMES & READINGS

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

Normal Fast Week
FEBRUARY 16th



The Prodigal Son Returns!

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20
Gospel: Luke 15:11-32

Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, “Today I will be humble.”
Use up/freeze meats this week.

Meatfare
FEBRUARY 23rd
FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY



The Last Judgement

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2
Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

Pray facing East this week.
Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him!
Use up/freeze dairy this week.

*** **IOCC Benefit Show** - Lacey Sturm’s Kenotic Metanoia Tour with Special Guest *Young Other* will come to Pittsburgh at Spirit Hall (242 51st St, Pittsburgh, PA 15201) on **Friday, February 28** with the doors opening at 7pm and the show starting at 8pm. Net proceeds will be donated to IOCC.org. To learn more visit www.spiritpgh.com/calendar/2025/2/28/lacey-sturm

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** **All-Soul Saturday (Zadušna Subota)** Liturgies with Panachidas for 2025 will begin on **March 1 (rescheduled from 2/22)**. On these days, we especially pray for the departed loved ones of our families. If you are not working on a Saturday, come to church, pray with us, and light two candles for your living and departed loved ones. **Please inform Fr Dave if there are any additions to be made to your Commemoration Diptychs (Hramoty)**. Envelopes and cards are available in the vestibule. [*** *This is different from the “Monthly Memorial” that we will be having on the 2nd Sunday of each month which is specific to each month.*]
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*** **Pre-Lenten Retreat** – On **Saturday, March 1** at the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral (1600 Guyton Rd., Allison Park) a retreat titled “*The Book of Job: suffering and victory of Christ of Satan*” will be presented by Very Rev. Dr. Victor Gorodenchuk (Dean of St. Stephen Cathedral, Philadelphia, PA) from 10 am to 3 pm. There is a \$20 registration fee. Please RSVP by 2/24 to Fr. David Vernak at frdavidvernak@verizon.net or 201-704-6217.

*** **New Pittsburgh Dean Announced** - Met. Gregory has appointed Very Rev. Nicholas Ferencz, PhD, as Dean of the Pittsburgh Deanery, effective as of February 10, 2025. Axios! Many Years!
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*** **Iconography School** – Fr. George of Aliquippa has started online iconography classes! Please see the flyer for details or contact Fr. Dave.
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* **Food Drive** – For the month of February we will be collecting unexpired food and donations in order to make a delivery to **St. Cyril of White Lake Food Pantry on Pittsburgh’s South Side**. Thank you in advance for your prayers and offerings this month! The list of food items they are looking for is available in the previous Feb. bulletins, in the online bulletin, or stmaryorthodoxchurch.net/stcyrilfoodpantry.html
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*** **Make plans to go to Camp Nazareth in 2025!**
✘ March 14-16 - Young Adult Retreat (ages 18-35)
✘ March 21-23 - Spring Encounter (ages 8-18)
✘ May 2-4 - Sts. Joachim & Anna Seniors Retreat (*age 55 and over*)
✘ May 30 - June 1 - Family Camp
✘ June 1 - Family Day
✘ July 20-26 - Pgh Deanery Camping Week
✘ Aug 10-13 - Science & Nature Camp (ages 8-18)
✘ October 10-12 – CN Alumni Weekend
✘ Oct 31-Nov 2 - Young Adult Retreat (ages 18-35)
✘ November 7-9 - Fall Encounter (ages 8-18)
Please, Save the Dates and head to 339 Pew Road, Mercer, PA 16137

* **Pittsburgh Penguins** – Would you be interested in a parish family outing to a Pittsburgh Penguin hockey game? Please contact Fr Dave ASAP so we can start arranging this! Let's Go Pens!

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*** **Presanctified Liturgies** – The schedule for the Wednesday services will be similar to last year. With the growing Orthodox Christian presence in the area, instead of each week having the service here, we will take two weeks and pray at our sister Orthodox Parishes in the North Hills! In the desire to provide a greater fellowship among our parishes and communities, we will be sharing in three Wednesday Presanctified Liturgies. Our schedule will be thus:

March 5 at 6:00 pm at St. John the Baptist

March 12 at * **7:00** pm at St. Alexander Nevsky OCA Cathedral (1600 Guyton Rd., Allison Park)

March 19 at 6:00 pm at SJB with the other parishes coming to us

March 26 at * **6:30** pm at Holy Trinity GOA Church (985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh)

April 2 & 9 at 6:00 pm at SJB

*** *Please note the different times when we visit*

All our parishioners are invited to attend all the services - *what a wonderful way to build Orthodox fellowship and a stronger connection among our North Hills sister parishes.* Each service will be followed by a Lenten meal.

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OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 248
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 96
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 1655
Community Outreach:	\$ 26
Total Collections:	\$ 2025
Capital Improvement Fund:	\$ 70

Participating Souls – Sunday Liturgy: 28

Friday Feast Day Vespers: 8

Saturday Feast Day: 1

Weekly Candle Intentions or Memorials were offered last week by the Nelson Family; Carol and Tom Lorenzi; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin; Mary Jane Hudak; Rich and Renee Mirilovich; Kathy Schrmack; Cindy Pavilonis

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*** **Easter Candy** – Our spring fundraiser is about to begin. See Tim Martin for details...

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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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* **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 2025 Scout Sunday.

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TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Glorify God in Body and Spirit

¹²“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be enslaved by anything. ¹³“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”--and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two shall become one flesh.” ¹⁷But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. ¹⁹Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

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Gospel: Luke 15:11-32

The Parable of the Prodigal and His Brother

¹¹And he said, “There was a man who had two sons; ¹²and the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.’ And he divided his living between them. ¹³Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. ¹⁴And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. ¹⁵So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.’” ²⁰And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²²But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; ²³and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; ²⁴for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to make merry.

²⁵“Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. ²⁷And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.’ ²⁸But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹but he answered his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!’ ³¹And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with

me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.””

PRAYER CORNER

For the Health of... Shawn, John, Valerie, Jon, Joseph, Bella, Reed, Maria O., Cheryl, Christina, Daniel, Elizabeth, Robert, 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 Tschaikowsky, +Julian Naumenko, +George Lavra (1/11) ...*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 WHEN LIGHTING A CANDLE

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Set our hearts on fire with love for You, O Christ our God, so that in its flame we may love You with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, so that by keeping Your commandments we may glorify You, the giver of all good gifts. Amen.

A PRAYER WHEN LEAVING A CHURCH: THE HYMN OF ST. SYMEON

Now let Your servant, depart in peace, O Master, according to Your Word. For my eyes have seen Your Salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people. The Light of revelation for the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel. Amen.

[“By the Waters of Babylon” is the entire Psalm 137, sung to a plaintive melody, during Matins (the morning service). It is only sung in church the three Sundays that precede Great Lent: Sunday of the Prodigal Son, The Last Judgment (Meatfare), and Forgiveness (Cheese-fare).]

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A Prayer in Exile (Psalm 137): Longing for Zion in a Foreign Land

By the waters of Babylon,
there we sat down and wept,
when we remembered Zion.
2 On the willows there
we hung up our harps.
3 For there our captors
required of us songs,
and our tormentors, mirth, saying,
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”
4 How shall we sing the LORD’s song
in a foreign land?
5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!
6 Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joy!
7 Remember, O LORD, against the sons of Edom
the day of Jerusalem,
how they said, “Raze it, raze it!
Down to its foundations!”
8 O daughter of Babylon, you who are devastated!
Happy shall he be who requites you
with what you have done to us!
9 Happy shall he be who takes your little ones
and dashes them against the rock!

ONLINE BONUSES

TRIODION: GETTING READY FOR LENT

The significance of the four Sundays.
The word Triodion is used frequently and it is used to denote the three-odes used during the matins canon that are specifically Lenten. During the time before Lent, the Church in Her wisdom offers us five preparatory Sundays (Russian Tradition) to get us

ready to enter the season of Great Lent. The Lenten Triodion officially begins with the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee.

First Sunday: Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican

To get our attention, the Church's Gospel this week focuses on true and false repentance by comparing actions and words. The Pharisee correctly 'practiced the faith' in regards to Jewish prayer and fasting, but within him the love of God was not present. The publican outwardly lived a sinful life as a tax collector for Rome, but inwardly realized the sin that was dominating him. The Pharisee demanded God's approval while the publican pleaded for God's mercy. The lesson for us is to diligently practice the 'outward' aspects of our Faith while inwardly realizing nothing we can do will earn God's favor and that we need to constantly seek His mercy. The central theme of this Gospel is the need for humility.

Second Sunday: Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Modern dictionaries often translate 'repentance' as 'regret' or 'feeling sorry' for having done something. However, the true meaning of the word metanoia (repent) in the New Testament is to 'change one's mind (nous) or purpose' (*Vines*). Just as the Prodigal son left his father, realized the misery of his 'new' life, and returned to ask forgiveness, we too must realize that we have left our Father for the world and need to 'change' our life and return to Him. This Gospel gives us the assurance that God the Father will joyfully welcome us back if we turn from the sin in our life. This Sunday emphasizes repentance and the loving embrace of the Father.

Third Sunday: Sunday of the Last Judgment

James 2:17 states "...faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." The corporal (physical) works of mercy, which the Lord uses to pass judgment, are a reflection of the love or lack thereof in the hearts of the 'sheep and goats'. Individual repentance and love of God has been emphasized in the first two Sundays: love of neighbor, 'icons of Christ', is the central focus here. Giving alms and other exterior actions of love are also a vital part of the Lenten journey. This parable does not imply that we can 'work' our way into heaven but rather if our soul

shows no active love for man then we really don't have true love of God.

Fourth Sunday: Forgiveness Sunday

This Sunday summarizes the readings of the previous three weeks and prepares us for Lent. Like the Prodigal we must turn and leave behind the things of the world, of the past. We must forgive others or God will not forgive us. Why? Because we ask God to do that each time we pray the Lord's Prayer! We must not be like the Pharisee and draw attention to our fasting by trying to gain sympathy or praise of men. Finally, we must begin to store spiritual treasure in heaven by using our earthly treasure to help others through alms and other works of mercy. With this attitude we are ready for a successful Lent.

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LIVES OF THE SAINTS

RIGHTEOUS SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER (BOGOPRIIMETS)

Commemorated on February 3

Righteous Simeon the God-Receiver (Bogopriimets) was, according to the testimony of the holy Evangelist Luke, one of the chosen of God in expectation of the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit dwelt upon him (Lk 2:25). It was announced to him from God, that he would not die until that time, when the Promised Messiah – Christ the Lord – would be come into the world.

Ancient historians relate that the Egyptian emperor Ptolemy II Philadelphos (285-247 BC) wished to add to the famous Library at Alexandria with texts of Holy Scripture. He invited scholars from Jerusalem, and the Sanhedrin sent their wise men. Righteous Simeon was also among the 72 scholars in Alexandria for the translation of the Sacred Scriptures

into the Greek language. (The work was accomplished and received the title "Translation of the 72 Interpreters". With this also further on in the future, the New Testament was translated into the Slavonic language for the Bulgarian, Serbian and Russian Orthodox Churches.) Righteous Simeon translated a book of the Prophet Isaiah, having read in the original the words: "Behold, a Virgin shalt conceive and give birth to a Son" (Is 7: 14). He decided, that the word "Virgin" was incorrectly used here in place of the word "Woman", and he wanted to correct the text. At that moment an Angel appeared to him and held back his hand saying: "Have faith in the words written down; thou thyself shalt be persuaded that they will be fulfilled, whereof thou shalt not taste of death until thou behold Christ the Lord, Who shall be born of a Pure and Immaculate Virgin".

From this day righteous Simeon began to await the coming of the Promised Messiah.

Righteous Simeon the God-Receiver (Bogopriimets)

And here one day righteous Simeon, knowing of it by the Holy Spirit, was come to the Jerusalem Temple. It was on that very same day (the fortieth after the Birth of Christ), when the All-Pure Virgin Mary and Her Betrothed Joseph had come there in order to perform the ritual set down by Jewish Law – to present before the Lord His Own Divine First-Born and to offer the established sacrifice.

When righteous Simeon beheld their arrival, the Holy Spirit revealed to him that the God-Infant Whom the All-Pure Virgin Mary held, – was the Promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world. The elder took into his arms the Infant Christ and pronounced his prophetic words: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Lord, with peace according to Thy word, wherefore hath mine eyes beheld Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to the enlightening of gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel". He blessed the All-Pure Virgin and Righteous Joseph and, having turned to the Mother of God he said: "Behold, This One is set for the fall and rising up of many in Israel and for the sign spoken against, and for Thee thyself a sword shalt pierce the soul, so that the thoughts of

many hearts might be revealed" (Lk 2: 22-35).

Anna the Prophetess

The holy Evangelist relates further: "Here also was Anna the Prophetess, daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Aser, having reached extreme old age, having lived with her husband for seven years, she was a widow for eighty-four years, who went not out from the temple, serving God both day and night by fasting and prayer. And she having approached at this time, glorified the Lord and prophesied about Him to all awaiting deliverance at Jerusalem" (Lk 2: 36-38).

About the righteous and holy Simeon the God-Receiver is known that he died in extreme old age. In the VI Century his holy relics were transferred to Constantinople. In the year 1200 his grave was seen by the Russian pilgrim Saint Antonii, future archbishop of Novgorod (1212-1220. +1232, Comm. 8 October).

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FEB. COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Food Drive – This month, through the efforts of our Sr. ACRY, we will be collecting unexpired food and donations in order to make a delivery to **St. Cyril of White Lake Food Pantry** (at Holy Assumption of St. Mary Orthodox Church, 105 S. 19th St., Pgh, PA 15203). Volunteers are needed on Thursdays from 5:15 to 6:45 to assist in the distribution of these goods. (If interested, please contact Fr Patrick first at 412-431-6428) Thank you in advance for your prayers and offerings this month! Here is a list of food items that they are looking for:

- ✓ Ready to eat canned fruit or vegetables
- ✓ Peanut Butter
- ✓ Jelly
- ✓ Canned Soups
- ✓ Canned Chili
- ✓ Macaroni & Cheese
- ✓ Spaghetti Sauce
- ✓ Pasta
- ✓ Noodle/Rice Mixes
- ✓ Small Package of Rice or Noodles
- ✓ Canned Stews
- ✓ Canned or Pouches of Tuna, Salmon or Chicken

- ✓ Boxed Meals ready to be prepared
- ✓ Baked Beans
- ✓ Canned and Boxed 100% Juice
- ✓ Crackers
- ✓ Tuna Helper Box
- ✓ Instant Cereal
- ✓ Boxed Cereal
- ✓ Canned Pastas (Chef Boyardee, Ravioli, etc.)
- ✓ Canned Meats

stmaryorthodoxchurch.net/stcyrilfoodpantry.html

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LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH

The Candle

What does a person first do upon crossing the threshold of a church? In nine out of ten cases, he goes to the candle stand. Our practice of Christianity, our involvement in its ritual, begins with a little beeswax candle. It is impossible to imagine an Orthodox church in which candles are not lit. Blessed Simeon of Thessalonica (15th century), commentator on the Liturgy, states that pure wax symbolizes the purity and chastity of those who offer it. It is offered as a sign of our having repented of stubbornness and self-will. The softness and pliability of wax speaks of our readiness to obey God. The burning of the candle represents man's deification, his becoming a new creature through the fire of God's love.

Moreover, the candle is a witness to faith, of man's belonging to the Divine light. It expresses the flame of our love for the Lord, for the Mother of God, for the angels, or for the saints. One must not light a candle with a cold heart, merely as a formality. The external action must be supplemented by prayer, if only the simplest one, using one's own words.

A lighted candle is present at many church services. It is held by the newly baptized and by those being joined together in the Mystery of Matrimony. The funeral rite is performed amidst a multitude of burning candles. Protecting their burning candles from the wind, the faithful walk in Processions of the Cross.

There are no absolute rules as to where or how many lighted candles must be offered. Their purchase is a little sacrifice to God, voluntary and not burdensome.

A large and expensive candle is no more grace-giving than is a small one.

Those who are meticulous about attending church try to light several candles during each visit: before the festal icon at the center of the church, at the icon of the Savior or of the Mother of God; for the health of their loved ones, and on the rectangular candlestand (kanun) before the Cross; for the repose of the souls of the deceased. If the heart so wishes, one may light candles to any saint or saints.

Sometimes it so happens that all of the spaces on the candlestand are filled, leaving no place to set a lighted candle. One should not extinguish an already-burning candle and replace it with one's own. It is better to ask one of the attendants to light it for you at an appropriate moment. One should not be upset if, at the end of the Service, your candle is extinguished; the sacrifice has already been accepted by God.

There is no reason to believe talk that one should set a candle only with the right hand, that if it should go out, it is a sign misfortune will follow, that to singe the base of the candle to make it fit more firmly into the receptacle is a deadly sin, etc. There are many such superstitions, and they are all meaningless.

The burning wax candle is pleasing to God, but He prizes the burning of the heart even more. Our spiritual life, our participation in church services, is not limited to the candle. The candle will not free us from sin, will not unite us with God, and will not give us the power to wage the unseen warfare. The candle is filled with symbolic meaning, but we are saved not by symbols, but by the full reality, Divine grace.

From the book Fundamentals of Orthodoxy
Source: <https://stjohndc.org/en/orthodoxy-foundation/orthodox-foundation/candle>

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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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ADDITIONAL BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)

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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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COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS

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

February 23: Pre-Lenten Breakfast

March 2: (meatless) _____?

March 9: (meatless) _____?

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***** Very Rev. Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko, 10th Anniversary of his Falling Asleep: At Transfiguration Monastery** (321 Monastery Ln, Ellwood City, PA 16117)

Join us on Saturday March 22, 2025

9:30am Divine Liturgy followed by Memorial Service

12 noon - Memorial Luncheon

1:30pm Reflections and Remarks (Serge Schmemmann and V.Rev. Alexander Garklavs)

3:30pm Great Vespers with Procession of the Holy Cross

Services and Reflections will be streamed on our YouTube Channel

See flyer in hall for details.

www.orthodoxmonasteryellwoodcity.org/

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Pittsburgh Marathon - Walk or Run with Team IOCC

Saturday, May 3, 2025 at the Pittsburgh Marathon Weekend

Help change lives around the world!

Choose a Race as a Solo Participant or Form Your Own Team!

5K 4-Mile Fitness Challenge

Kids Marathon Pet Walk

Toddler Trot Champions Mile

SIGN UP NOW AT iocc.org/pgh

Questions? Contact Dean Stambolis

at DeanStambolis@verizon.net or 412.874.9572.

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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)

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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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* **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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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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STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET



TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES

*** **STEWARDSHIP**, 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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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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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.

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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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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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MONTHLY SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Zacchaeus Sunday
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 am Divine Liturgy
take down remaining Christmas decorations

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

6:30 pm Akathist to St. Xenia and holy anointing
7:15 pm Exploring Orthodoxy 101

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9 - TRIODION BEGINS

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Monthly Memorial (Panachida)

A FAST FREE WEEK

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12

SYNAXIS OF THE THREE HIERARCHS: ST. BASIL THE GREAT, ST. GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, AND ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14

6:30 pm Feast Day Vespers

Blessing of Candles
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15 (*40 days after Nativity*)
FEAST OF THE MEETING OF OUR LORD
9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy
Blessing of Candles

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Sunday of the Prodigal Son
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Youth Sunday
Blessing of Candles

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare)
9:15 am Third Hour
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy
Pre-Lenten Breakfast

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FEAST DAY FEATURES OF THE MONTH

KONDAK HYMNS OF THE FEASTS:

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Coming Soon...

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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 *

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, Amee, 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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February Namedays:

Timothy Martin, Reader – Apostle Timothy of the 70 (2/4)
Dolores Bowser - Virgin-martyr Dorothea (2/19)

Father’s Godson, Zachariah Kalaluhi – Prophet Zachariah (2/21)

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

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February Birthdays:

Fr. Marc Wisnosky (2/1), Chris Bowser (2/6), Fr. Edward Pehanich (2/4), *Pañi’s mother*, Alexandrina Liana Popescu (2/6), Charles Kretchek (2/8), Richard Gedid (2/9), Harmonie Torchia (2/11), Pañi Kathy Buczak (2/11), Fr. James Gleason (2/12), Matthew Peifer (2/13), Samantha Ditmore (2/14), James Hanchulak (2/17), Barbara Leone (2/19), Carly Jozwiskowski (2/21), Barbara Kirish (2/22), *Father’s nephew*, Brian Verbanick, Jr (2/22), Fr Stephen Krivonak (2/23), Fr William Bennett (2/28), His-All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew I (2/29/40)

...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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February Anniversaries:

Cynthia & Jeffrey Morrison (2/5)
Joanne & Ron Nelson (2/10)
Derek and Ashley (Wertz) Andrekovich (2/18)
Carly & Kyle Jozwiskowski (2/29)
...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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