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**Weekly Candle Intentions/Memorials** were offered last week by Melanie Shuster; Tim Martin; Kathy Schrmack; Viola Peifer; Eleanor Sanger; Joanne Nelson; Theresa Sharpless; Steve Buhonick; Pani Brancho; Cindy Pavidonis; Patty Watson.

***"I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* - Jn 8:12**

**Eternal Lamp** was offered last week by John Gaydos, Jr., In Memory of Mother, Catherine. May her memory be eternal!

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**Cemetery Grave Blessing** – We will bless graves this year on **Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup>**. We will meet at 9:30am at the Uniondale Cemetery and celebrate a Panachida there before blessing the graves. Contact Fr Dave with any questions.

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**Akathist to the "Inexhaustible Cup"** – This is a Prayer Service for Those Who Struggle with Addiction and for their Friends & Family. We offer this service on **Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup>** at 7pm on behalf of those who suffer from alcoholism and other addictions. We also encourage those who have friends or family members who struggle with addiction, as well as those who work in the field of recovery, to come and pray with us!

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**Italian Feast & Basket Raffle**, hosted by our ACRY, will be held in St John's Hall on **Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>** from 4-6:30pm (doors open at 3pm). Over 25 Amazing Gift Baskets to be raffled! Ticket Prices are: Adults - \$20; Youth (6-17) - \$10; and a Family Admission - \$50. Tickets include: Admission, 8 Basket Raffle Tickets, 2 Drink Coupons, and a homemade Italian Pasta Dinner with Appetizer, Salad Bar, and Dessert. *(Extra Raffle tickets may also be purchased.)* Reservations can be made by **May 17<sup>th</sup>** by signing up on the sheet in the church hall or contacting Fr Dave. *Come spend an Italian evening out with friends while supporting a great cause!*

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**\*\* Flag Sale** – A sign up sheet is in the church hall to purchase a Carpatho-Rusyn Flag for \$25. Orders are due by **Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup>**. If you have any questions, please contact Father.

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**Faith Night at PNC Park** – is **Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup>** at 7:05 vs the St Louis Cardinals. Please contact **Wendy Martelotti** (martelotti11@verizon.net) if you are interested in getting a ticket. *More details coming in the near future... and Let's Go Bucs!*

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#### Visit Our Parish & Diocese On-Line

St John's: [www.OrthodoxPittsburgh.com](http://www.OrthodoxPittsburgh.com)

Diocesan Website: [www.acrod.org](http://www.acrod.org)

Camp Nazareth: [www.campnazareth.org](http://www.campnazareth.org)

FB: [www.facebook.com/acroddiocese](https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese)

Twitter: [twitter.com/acrodnews](https://twitter.com/acrodnews)

You Tube: [youtube.com/acroddiocese](https://youtube.com/acroddiocese)

#### Our Stewardship Gift To God

Dues/Stewardship:	\$ 380
Candles/Small C./Eternal Lamp/C. box:	\$ 182
Sunday Envelopes:	\$ 473
Feast Day Envelopes:	\$ 30
Pascha Donation:	\$ 200
Community Outreach:	\$ 95
<u>Loose Money:</u>	<u>\$ 10</u>
<b>Total Donations:</b>	<b>\$ 1370</b>

*Collection for the Saints:*

*"On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper." 1 Cor 16:2*

#### April Financial Report:

**Donation Income = \$ 12,343**

**\*Expenses = \$ 7685.48**

**Net Profit = \$ 4657.52**

*\*details listed on the bulletin board*

Average Monthly Attendance at:

**Sunday Divine Liturgy: 55**

**Holy Week (Lazarus Sat to Bright Tues, excluding Pascha): 13**



#### Family Day (June 11<sup>th</sup>) Raffle

**Tickets** are available from Theresa Sharpless. This is the only diocesan-wide fundraiser for camp and it is a significant source of income for the Camp Nazareth program and our children. Raffle tickets are \$20 each with prizes exceeding \$20,000. Support our camp: buy *(at least)* one by **Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup>**. + + + The Family Day flyer is hanging in the church hall with details for the day!



**83 Days Till Camp!** – Early bird discount rates are available through **May 15<sup>th</sup>**. Information regarding registration is available at: [www.CampNazareth.org](http://www.CampNazareth.org). Please act fast to save 20 bucks! Our ACRY is offering a partial 'Campership' for assistance and other assistance is also available. **Please talk with Fr Dave before registering to get the online code that you will need.** *If you have never been to Camp Nazareth, you do not know what you are missing!* Our Deanery Camping week is **July 23-29**. Please talk to Fr Dave if you have any questions.

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**Altar Boy Retreat** – the Annual Altar Boy Retreat will take place from **Sunday June 25<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday, June 28<sup>th</sup>** at Christ The Saviour Seminary (Johnstown, PA). Registration information will be coming soon.

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**Young Women's Encounter** – the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual YWE will take place from **Sun. June 25<sup>th</sup> to Wed., June 28<sup>th</sup>** at Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Windber, PA. *The YWE is designed specifically for our young women to provide them an opportunity to spend time in fellowship with each other, have fun, and pray together. We learn about our faith and to listen for God's call to each of us to use our unique gifts and abilities.* Young women 12-18 in our Diocese are encouraged to attend. Contact Pani Eleni Stagon, [acrodywe@gmail.com](mailto:acrodywe@gmail.com) for more info.



## ORTHODOXY AROUND DA 'BURGH



**Greek Food Festival** - May 7-13 at St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral (419 S Dithridge St, Pittsburgh, Pa 15213). Voted BEST FOOD FESTIVAL by the City Paper readers. SERVING HOURS: Sun Noon-8pm; Mon-Thurs 11am-9pm; Fri & Sat 11am-10pm (music until midnight). TAKE OUT SERVICE: Available Monday-Saturday; Visit [www.stnickspgh.org](http://www.stnickspgh.org) to place your ORDER ONLINE! Along with great food, there will be: Live Bouzoki Music & Greek Dancing Every Evening and Cathedral Tours. (Credit Cards Accepted)

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**Orthodoxy on Tap** - The Pittsburgh Orthodox Young Adults (POYA) will host their next "Orthodoxy on Tap" on **Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup>** at 6:30 pm at the Sharp Edge Beer Emporium (302 S St Clair St., Pgh., Pa 15206). Guest speaker will be Fr Stephen Loposky, the director of our Camp Nazareth. All young adults ages 21-39 are welcome!

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## ST JOHN'S MONTHLY COMMUNITY OUTREACH



This month, through the efforts of our Sr. ACRY, we will be collecting donations for **Hope Haven Farm Sanctuary**. Located in the North Hills of Pittsburgh, Hope Haven is the home to pot-bellied pigs, alpaca, goats, llama, a mini-horse, peacocks, turkey, hens, roosters, guineas, ducks, and an emu! They do not accept unwanted pet animals but work with local humane agents and animal shelters to rescue farm animals from abusive and neglectful situations.

They run solely on donations from the public. They offer educational farm tours by appointment from May to October. They are always in need of donations (see their wish list below), financial gifts, help with fundraising, and promotion. *Thank you in advance for your prayers and offerings this month!*

### WISH LIST

#### Big Items:

- Run-in shed
- Small stock/horse trailer
- Vinyl stretcher
- Fencing and installation
- Quality hay for feeding
- Bedding quality hay/straw

- Bedding quality sawdust

- Paver stones
- Picnic table(s)
- Bags of sweet feed
- Bags of shelled corn

#### Small Items:

- Postage stamps/envelopes
- Gift cards to local hardware

stores (Home Depot / Lowes / Ace) and/or local feed store

- Paper towels
- Laundry detergent
- Boxes of garbage bags
- Aluminum cans to recycle for scrap metal

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## STEWARDSHIP: A Way Of Life

From: <http://www.acrod.org/ministries/stewardship/stewardship-blog/>

**Gratitude** "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed, perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed; always carrying in the body of the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies" (2 Corinthians 4:5)

We are all intoxicated with opportunities and commitments, usually **self-imposed**, that fill up our life with distractions that keep us from the one true purpose in our life: to know God. We are bombarded daily with advertisements, commercials, newspaper articles and radio spots that tell us we should go here/do this/we owe ourselves/you can't do without this/you must attend this/you must buy this. We become distracted; our attention is focused not on our true purpose but ephemeral desires.

Once our attention is distracted from God, we forget that we are made in His image. We forget about seeking His likeness and turn more to worldly pursuits using our God-given talents and gifts for our self-centered desires. Fr. Barnabas Powell, GOA, once wrote, "**When I forget that my life is a gift, my abilities are gifts, and my world is a gift, I start forgetting my dependence on God for my very breath.**"

Forgetfulness makes us **ungrateful**. When we become ungrateful for the gifts God has given us, we begin to think we can rely on ourselves. We begin to think that we are enough, we need no help. I might ask at this point, "How is that working out for you?" Some may say that it is working just fine, I have new cars, big house, boats, belong to the country club and move in the top social circles. Throughout the ages, people believe that you are in "good graces" if God has bestowed upon you wealth and luxury. I have even heard people say in those situations, "I am blessed". I am happy for you if you enjoy that



circumstance, but what about eternity?

God has given you that wealth and luxury but what have you done to show your gratitude to God for being so gifted? Those talents that God gave you that you might use to accumulate wealth and luxury, how are you using them to help the Church, the needy, the homeless, the naked, the thirsty (Matthew 25: 31-46). Christ destroyed "death by death" so all of our excuses, distractions, forgetfulness are powerless to hold us. They do so only because we allow them to. The choice remains yours!

*Show your gratitude to God for all He has gifted you that you hear Him say, "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the worlds; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me.....Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me."*

**Hristos a înviat! (Adevărat a înviat!) (Romanian)**

### Parish Stewardship Opportunities...

- Take charge of the Flag sale
- Assist with the Dinner & Basket Raffle
- Bring in a lightly used coat for FOCUS
- Join the ACRY
- Attend additional services
- Donate to our parish
- Donate to our Monthly Community Outreach

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## LIVING ORTHODOXY



The **Holy Fire** is a miracle that occurs every year at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem on Holy Saturday, the day preceding Pascha. It is considered by many to be the longest-attested annual miracle in the Christian world, though the event has only been documented consecutively since 1106.

The ceremony begins at noon when the Patriarch of Jerusalem or another Orthodox Archbishop recites a specific prayer. The faithful gathered will then chant "Lord, have mercy" until the Holy Fire descends on a lamp of olive oil held by the patriarch while he is alone in the tomb chamber of Jesus Christ. The patriarch will then emerge from the tomb chamber, recite some prayers, and light either 33 or 12 candles to distribute to the faithful.

The fire is also said to spontaneously light other lamps and candles around the church. Pilgrims say the Holy Fire will not burn hair, faces, etc., in the first 33 minutes after it is ignited. Before entering the Lord's Tomb, the patriarch or presiding archbishop is inspected by Israeli authorities (previously by a Turkish soldier) to prove that he does not carry the technical means to light the fire.

The Holy Fire is first mentioned in the documents dating from the 4th century. A detailed description of the miracle is contained in the travelogue of the Russian Igumen Daniel, who was present at the ceremony in 1106. Daniel mentions a blue incandescence descending from the dome to the edicula where the patriarch awaits the Holy Fire. Some claim to have witnessed this incandescence in modern times.

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**The question of the authenticity of the miracle** from: <http://www.holyfire.org/eng/>



As with any other miracle there are people who believe it is a fraud and nothing but a masterpiece of Orthodox propaganda. They believe the Patriarch has a lighter inside of the tomb. These critics, however, are confronted with a number of problems. Matches and other means of ignition are recent inventions. Only a few hundred years ago lighting a fire was an undertaking that lasted much longer than the few minutes during which the Patriarch is inside the tomb. One then

could perhaps say, he had an oil lamp burning inside, from which he kindled the candles, but the local authorities confirmed that they had checked the tomb and found no light inside it.

The best arguments against a fraud, however, are not the testimonies of the shifting Patriarchs. The biggest challenges confronting the critics are the thousands of independent testimonies by pilgrims whose candles were lit spontaneously in front of their eyes without any possible explanation. It has never been possible to film any of the candles or oil lamps igniting by themselves. However... Mr. Nabdiel has been present at the ceremony of the Holy Fire since his early childhood. In 1996 he was asked to film the ceremony from the balcony of the dome of the Church. Present with him on the balcony were a nun and four other believers. On the video one can see how he films down on the crowds. At a certain point all lights are turned off - it is time for the Patriarch to enter the tomb and receive the Holy Fire. While he is still inside the tomb one suddenly hears a scream of surprise and wonder originating from the nun standing next to Nabdiel. The camera begins to shake, as one hears the excited voices of the other people present on the balcony. The camera now turns to the right, whereby a big candle, held in the hand of the Russian nun, took fire in front of all the people present before the patriarch comes out of the tomb. She holds the candle with shaking hands while making the sign of the Cross over and over again in awe of the miracle she has witnessed. This video appears to be the closest one gets to an actual filming of the miracle.

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## SPIRITUAL VITAMINS FOR THE WEEK

"If at some time you show mercy to someone, mercy will be shown to you. If you show compassion to one who is suffering (*and of course, this is not a great deed*) you will be numbered among the martyrs. If you forgive one who has insulted you, then not only will all your sins be forgiven, but you will be a child of the Heavenly Father." +*St Moses of Optina*

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"But if these beings (angels) guard you, they do so because they have been summoned by your prayers." +*St. Ambrose of Milan*

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## THINGS TO CONSIDER

**Office Hours** – Monday-Friday from 9am–4pm OR by appointment.

**Mystery of Confession** – Opportunities are available after every service, Saturdays during fasting periods from 11:00am – 1:00 pm, OR by appointment.

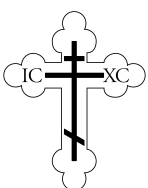
**Holy Communion/Eucharist** – The reception of the Holy Eucharist is encouraged by all Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves, with fasting from midnight on, regular Confession, and forgiveness for all people. Those who are not Orthodox may receive a *blessing* from the chalice.

**Emergency Sick Calls** – Please notify Fr Dave when you or a family member are going into the hospital or having a procedure so he can pray with you & you may receive the anointing so you are properly prepared.

**Baptisms** – Please consult Father for details.

**Marriages** – Please consult Father for details.

**Church Funerals** – are provided for practicing Orthodox Christians who are current in their spiritual and financial obligations; otherwise burial is from the funeral home. The Church does not permit cremation.



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PRAYER CORNER

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

**NO KNEELING IN PRAYER** – We will offer prayers to God in a standing position for the next **50** days. As you pray at home, please remember that you should be praying in a standing position. The reason for standing is that kneeling indicates a kind of *penitential position* and with the Resurrection of Christ we are in a *joyful season* and have no need of having sorrow in our hearts.

Kristo Amefufukka! (Kweli Amefufukka!) (Swahili)



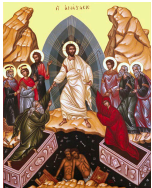
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**A Prayer For The Sick:** O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly visit Your suffering servant *name*. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, deliver *him/her* from sickness and bitter pain. Heal *him/her* so that *he/she* may sing to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

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**For the Health of...** Helen, Jason, Ann, Eleanor D., Julie, Jane, Mildred, Mark, Viola, Juliana, Nathaniel, Katie, Kenneth, Michael, Jayne, Ann, Teresa, David, Larry, Susan, Anna Mae, Roberta, Fr Shuster, Thomas, Lawrence, Fredrick, Donald, Iris, Maria, and Sophia ...*through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Great-Martyr & Healer.*



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**Birthday Prayers for...** Ethan Gogal (5/7), Ella Ann Kovats (5/9), Dr Phillip Labas (5/10) ...*May God allow them to grow in peace & love all the days of their lives & may He grant them many & blessed years! Na Mnohaja I Blahaja L'ita!*

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**Anniversary Prayers for...** Joe & Sarah Lavra (5/7) and Dick & Andrea Babbie (5/7) ...*May God fill them with His grace that they may continue to live in unity with Him!*

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**For the Special Intentions of...** Bishop Gregory, Joshua, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Scott, Sarah, Nancy, Amee, Andrea, Christopher, Ryan, Marianne and our Church Council and Relocation Committee: Matthew, John, Timothy, Patricia, Theresa, Lawrence, Jane, Sharon, Cynthia, Katherine, Eleanor, John, Richard, John, and Margaret ...*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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**For those serving in the Armed Forces & Civil Authorities...** Sgt. Walter Dylan Mushinsky, Maj. Michael Repasky ...*through the prayers of St George, the Great-Martyr & Wonderworker.*

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**For Expectant Mothers...** Nicole, Jessica, Sharon, Roxanne, & Pañi Katie ...*through the prayers of St Anna, the mother of the Theotokos, & St Irene Chrysovalantou.*



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

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**For the souls of the newly departed...** the Priest, +Ronald Hazuda and the Priest, +William George ...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May their memory be eternal! Christ is Risen!*

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\* This is to be used for the special intentions of our brothers and sisters and can be inserted as a prayer itself into our daily prayers. Please let Fr. Dave know if you would 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 and sisters in Christ. Those whom we add to the list do NOT need to be Orthodox Christians.

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DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS OF THE WEEK:

**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.

**A Prayer for Lighting a Candle**

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.