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Weekly Candle Intentions/Memorials were offered last week by Tim Martin; Viola Peifer; Melanie Shuster; Lawrence Martin; Olga Radick; Eleanor Sanger; Barbara Kirish; Joanne Nelson; Margaret Rusnak; Theresa Sharpless; Patty Watson; Rich Mirilovich; Cindy Pavilonis.

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

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A REMINDER TO MAKE TIME FOR YOUR NATIVITY FAST CONFESSION: DON'T WAIT

"There is more mercy in God than there are sins in us. Confess your sins at once, whatever they may be."

+St Tikhon of Zadonsk

Fr. Dave will be available for confessions on Saturdays Dec. 8th, 22nd, & Jan. 5th, by appointment, or after ALL services. Let us begin to shine in spirit once again, being made free of the weight and stain of our own faults! *"Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."* (Luke 5:12)

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ACRY Annual / Diocesan Yearbook -

This will be the 1st year that the Annual will be published in COLOR. It will also be provided for the 1st time in a digital format online for worldwide accessibility. Non-ACRY members can purchase an Annual for \$15. Please contact Theresa Sharpless if you are interested.

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Pill Bottle Collection – Our ACRY is starting a new outreach. "Matthew 25: Ministries" accepts donations of clean empty plastic medicine pill bottles for inclusion in shipments of medical supplies and for shredding and recycling. Our pill bottle program fulfills the dual needs of improving medical care in developing countries and caring for our environment. *More information is on the bulletin board in the church hall.*



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Parish Stewardship Opportunities...

As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. (Lk. 6:31)

- Bring in a bag of CALCIUM CHLORIDE
- Pray for our parish and it's future
- Sponsor a Coffee Social
- Offer your time to help with possible snow

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ORTHODOXY AROUND DA 'BURGH



FOCUS Christmas Concert – The 11th Annual Nativity Concert of Orthodox Choirs from the Pittsburgh area to support the work of FOCUS Pittsburgh will be on **TODAY, Sunday, December 16th** at 6:30pm at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Mt. Lebanon across from the Galleria Mall (123 Gilkeson Rd., Pittsburgh, Pa 15228). A free will offering will be taken. A reception will follow the concert at the church hall.

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Christmas Sale – Pirohy, Halushky, nut rolls and more are all offered by St. John's Orthodox Church in Ambridge to brighten your holidays. The church will be offering foods for sale on **Saturday, December 22nd** from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in its Parish Center (722 Fifth Avenue, Ambridge, PA). Potato/cheese pirohy and sauerkraut pirohy will be available for \$8 per dozen, fresh or frozen. Potato dumpling halushky will be \$5 per pint or \$8 a quart. Nut, apricot and poppy seed rolls will be \$12 each and an assortment of cookies will be available on a first come, first served basis. Also available will be stuffed cabbage, sold frozen (4 for \$11). While the sale is open to the public that day, advanced orders are encouraged. Orders can be placed by calling or texting Tim Polas at 724-462-3942.

Our Stewardship Gift To God

Stewardship/Dues:	\$ 130
Candles/Small C./Eternal Lamp/C. box:	\$ 165
Envelopes: Sunday/Feast Day/Special:	\$ 775
Parish House Rental Offering:	\$ 150
Total Collections:	\$ 1220
Relocation Fund:	\$ 300
Capital Improvement Fund:	\$ 95

Give Generously: "For they gave according to their means... and beyond their means, of their own free will." 2 Cor 8:3

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Snowed In? Physically unable to make it to church? – Our diocese is blessed with the opportunity to watch our Cathedral's Divine Liturgy every Sunday at 9am. Of course, the best scenario is to attend the Divine Liturgy and receive the Eucharist. When limitations occur, please consider taking the time Sunday morning to pray with our brothers and sisters via the web. Go to www.acrod.org/organizations/cathedral/live/ to watch the *live broadcast*.

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Snow Removal Team – as temperatures have begun to drop, we are reminded that snow is on it's way. Just a reminder that we will be looking for folks, as in the past, to offer some of their time prior to people getting to church on Sundays to help with snow removal. *Please let Father know if you will be able to come earlier to Church to assist with keeping the sidewalks clear.* Ideally we will have a rotation of people so that the same person is not doing it each snowfall.

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Coffee Social Steward Schedule

December 23: *Available to you*

December 30: *Available to you*

January 6: *Available to you*

The Divine Liturgy concludes at the final blessing, but the liturgy continues downstairs as we gather in love and fellowship with our parish family and visiting neighbors. (Everyone is also encouraged to help clean up after.) Thank you to all those who support and keep this critical ministry alive in our parish!

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Visit Our Diocese On-Line

Diocesan Website: www.acrod.org
Camp Nazareth: www.campnazareth.org
FB: www.facebook.com/acroddiocese
Twitter: twitter.com/acrodnews
You Tube: youtube.com/acroddiocese



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Orthodoxy on Tap - We are starting the new year off trying a couple different things - The Pittsburgh Orthodox Young Adults (POYA) will have the “Orthodoxy on Tap” on a weeknight and in a different location. Plan to be there **Thursday, January 3rd** at 7pm at The Clubhouse Gibsonia (5301 Ranalli Drive, Gibsonia, PA 15044 / 724-449-9090 / www.theclubhousegibsonia.com). Guest speaker will be Fr Stevo Rocknage who will have an interactive discussion on “*The Great Commission Of Our Lord: What Does It Mean For Your Life?*”. All young adults 21-39 are welcome! Come for fellowship and to learn more about your faith!

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LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Source: www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar/orthodox-calendar © 1996-2001 by translator Fr. S. Janos

The Prophet Sophonias (or Zephaniah)

Commemorated on December 16/3

The Prophet Sophonias (or Zephaniah) was a contemporary of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Prophetess Oldama. He was of illustrious lineage [from the tribe of Simeon, and was the 9th of the Twelve Minor Prophets of the Old Testament]. The



prophet lived at the royal court, where he preached repentance and helped king Josiah extirpate idol-worship.

He prophesied about the calamities that were to come for the people of Judea and the surrounding regions: Gaza, Ascalon, Crete, and against the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Ninevites.

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SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

“Of all the afflictions that burden the human race, there is not one, whether spiritual or bodily, that cannot be healed by the Holy Scriptures.” +Saint John Chrysostom

Epistle: 1 Timothy 1:15-17

¹⁵The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the foremost of sinners; ¹⁶but I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience for an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. ¹⁷To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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Gospel: Luke 18:18-27

The Rich Ruler

¹⁸And a ruler asked him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁹And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is

good but God alone. ²⁰You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.’” ²¹And he said, “All these I have observed from my youth.” ²²And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” ²³But when he heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. ²⁴Jesus looking at him said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁶Those who heard it said, “Then who can be saved?” ²⁷But he said, “What is impossible with men is possible with God.”

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LIVING ORTHODOXY

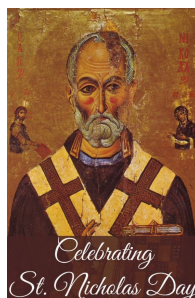
Ways to Celebrate St. Nicholas Day

Source: <http://www.orthodoxmotherhood.com/ways-to-celebrate-st-nicholas-day/>

Santa Claus may just be one of the most recognizable figures in the world. **Far fewer people, however, know the story of the real St. Nicholas.**

Nicholas was born in the third century on the southern coast of Turkey. His wealthy parents, who were very devout Christians, raised their son in the fear of God. They died, however, when he was still very young. St. Nicholas used his inheritance to help the poor and destitute, following Christ’s command to give all that you have to follow him.

Nicholas soon became Bishop over Myra and was a devout defender of the faith, the poor, and the children. He was imprisoned for his faith during the persecutions under the Emperor Diocletian. He was later released and was part



of the Council of Nicea (an early church council which affirmed the doctrine of Christ’s full divinity and full humanity). St. Nicholas died on December 6, 343.

In the Orthodox Church, we celebrate the feast of St. Nicholas on December 19. When my husband and I first became Orthodox, I was very excited to discover ways that our family could celebrate this holy saint. Here are a few ideas and resources that our family has enjoyed over the past few years.

1. Go to Church

Many Orthodox churches celebrate Divine Liturgy or Vespers on December 19. Take the family to church and worship in the same way that St. Nicholas would have back in the third and fourth centuries. Light a candle and ask the saint to pray for you. You can also pray for the poor that he loved so much.

2. Serve the Poor

Follow the example of St. Nicholas and serve the poor in his honor on December 19. You can volunteer at a homeless shelter, sort food at a pantry, or make kits for refugees.

3. Read Books about St. Nicholas

There are several great children’s books about St. Nicholas that would make excellent additions to your family library.

St. Nicholas and The Nine Gold Coins

by Jim Forest

The Baker’s Dozen: A St. Nicholas Tale

by Aaron Shephard

St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

by Lily Parascheva

The Miracle of St. Nicholas

by Gloria Whelan (Though this technically isn’t about St. Nicholas, it’s a lovely story about a church called St. Nicholas in Russia that was closed under communism and reopened on Christmas Eve.)

4. Fill Your Children’s Shoes

One early tradition for celebrating St. Nicholas Day involves filling children’s shoes with small tokens. One favorite story of St. Nicholas tells of the saint leaving money for three dowry-less girls in their shoes at night. Our family tells our children this story on the night before St. Nicholas Day. Our children then leave out their shoes, and my husband and I fill them with chocolate coins while they sleep. It’s fun for everyone!

5. Use Other Great Resources

There are many fabulous resources online that provide ideas for activities, give coloring sheets, and more. Here are a few of my favorites:

The Saint Nicholas Center This is the most comprehensive website with stories of St. Nicholas, games, activities, and coloring sheets.

Show God’s Love: St. Nicholas of Myra in Lycia The OCA has a great Church School (or homeschool) lesson on St. Nicholas for elementary school students.

St. Nicholas Day on Close to Home Molly Sabourin has a very fun podcast interviewing her young son about his favorite St. Nicholas day traditions.

St. Nicholas Day Traditions Adventures of an Orthodox Mom shares her family’s traditions for St. Nicholas Day. She also includes an excellent fasting sugar cookie recipe.

This St. Nicholas Day will find my family at our church (also named St. Nicholas, and celebrating its feast day!), surrounded by our church family, singing the Hymn of St. Nicholas:

Oh, who loves Nicholas the saintly
Oh, who serves Nicholas the saintly
Him will Nicholas receive
And give help in time of need
Nicholas! Nicholas!

Holy Father Nicholas, pray for us that we may love the Incarnate Christ and serve the poor around us. Amen.

How does your family celebrate St. Nicholas Day? Please share additional ideas with Fr. Dave

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SPIRITUAL VITAMINS FOR THE WEEK

SUNDAY

“Without God’s will or God’s forbearance nothing takes place on earth.” - Metropolitan Gregory (Postnikov) of St. Petersburg

MONDAY

"St. Seraphim tells us: "It is easy to humble yourself before God, while to humble yourself before people is more difficult." Indeed, it is precisely the ability or inability to humble ourselves before our neighbors that shows whether or not there is real repentance within us: whether or not we are walking along the right path of spiritual life. You must work on this.” - Bishop Photii of Traditza

TUESDAY

“It is God’s wish that each day we should be renewed and start up again with a virtuous change of will, and with a renewal of mind.” +St. Isaac the Syrian

WEDNESDAY – FEAST OF ST. NICHOLAS OF MYRA

“A man who is growing cold towards God begins first of all to flee attending church. At first he tries to come to services later, and then he ceases altogether to visit God’s temple...Here in the skete we even make the rounds of the cells on feast days, so that no one evades church services.” - Elder Barsanuphius of Optina

THURSDAY

" those who are attached to earthly things, especially to food and drink, to money, become “sensual, having not the Spirit.” And in everything they only see the flesh, not contemplating the spirit, and even rejecting the spiritual side of things.” +St. John Kronstadt

FRIDAY

“The more days of fasting there are, the better the healing is; the longer the period of abstinence, the more abundant the gain of salvation is.” +Blessed Augustine

SATURDAY

“When God recedes in order to educate us, this brings great sadness, humility and even some measure of despair to the soul. The purpose of this is to humble the souls tendency to vanity and self-glory, for the heart at once is filled with fear of God, tears of thankfulness, and great longing for the beauty of silence.” +St. Diadochus of Photiki

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PRAYER CORNER

Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions and Other Needs *

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... Jane, Mildred, Anna Mae, Eleanor D., Viola, Juliana, Fredrick, Kenneth, Michael, Roberta, Gary, Lino, David, Louis, June, Helen, Steven, Doug, Joanne, Lynn, Mary, Kathy N., Danielle, Luca ...*through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; & St. Panteleimon, the Healer.*

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For the Special Intentions of... Metropolitan Gregory, Marianne, Steve, Christopher, Nicholas, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Nancy, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Ameer, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose *our seminarians:* Michael and Daniel, *and our Church Council, Curators, and Relocation Committee:* Matthew, Lawrence, Timothy, Patricia, Theresa, Rich, Gina, Robert, Donald, Jane, Eleanor, Steven, Kenneth, Jillian, John, Wendy, John, Olga, John, Melanie, Michael, John, John, Margaret, Todd *and for those who labor towards our Community Outreach, National ACRY ...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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Patronal Feast Days (Name's Day): Barbara Kirish - Great martyr Barbara (12/17); Nicholas Kubis - Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker (12/19) (*contact Fr Dave with your date*)

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Birthday Prayers for... Madelyn Spirnak (12/17), Donald Gavulich (12/19), Patricia Deluca (12/20), Patricia Donley (12/20), Fr Nik Ferencz (12/20), Mike Puhac (12/21) ...*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! Na Mnohaja I Blahaja L'ita!*

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For our Catechumens & Inquirers... Ashley, Patrick, and Dustin ...*through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, and St. John Maximovitch.*

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

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Anniversary Prayers for... ...*May God fill them with His grace that they may continue to live in unity with Him!*

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For Expectant Mothers... Lindsay, Elyse, Lauren, Pañi Marianna, Faith, Pañi Eleni, Hayley, Carley ...*through the prayers of St Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, and St Irene Chrysovalantou.*

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

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For the souls of the newly departed... +John Smoley, +Julia Potoski ...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. Eternal Memory!*

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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 & sisters in Christ. This prayer list is NOT limited to Orthodox Christians.

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DEVOTIONAL PRAYER FOR THE NATIVITY FAST:



Nativity Fast Prayer Challenge
Praying For Peace


Prayer for Peace - 2018 NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE

Metropolitan Gregory asks each member of our Diocese, either as a family or individually, to pray this **Prayer for Peace** every evening of the Nativity Fast.

O Lord, You told us through the Psalmist David to be still and know that You are God. *(Psalm 46:10)* Yet, in our weakness, that stillness is far from our hearts and minds. We are restless in soul and body. The constant noise of the world drowns out Your still, small voice. *(1 Kings 19:12)* Even as we prepare during this season to remember Your Birth, we are diverted by many cares. We are anxious and troubled, neglecting the one thing needful. *(Luke 10:41- 42)*

Holy Master, keep us away from those things which distract us from knowing Your Presence. Grant us the stillness, silence, peace, and calm that only comes from You. Help us to be diligent in prayer and attentive to the needs of others.

As Your Holy Mother beheld the great mystery of Your Incarnation, she silently pondered it in her most- pure heart. *(Luke 2:19)* Allow us to reach the celebration of Your coming in the flesh so that, silently contemplating it in our own hearts, we too may be filled with every grace and blessing and give glory to You forever. Amen.



Nativity Fast Prayer Challenge
Praying For Peace