



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Father Dave Urban, *Pastor*
 Very Reverend Father John Brancho, *Pastor Emeritus*
 Timothy Martin, *Reader*
 Subdeacon Ryan Ferko
 Matthew Peifer, Stephen Brancho, & John Radick, *Cantors*
 Lawrence Martin, *Parish Council President*
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A WARM WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS!

Glory be to Jesus Christ!

*(responded with: **Glory be 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 and we wish God's Blessings to all who visit with us today and hope you stop again soon! **If you have any questions** in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy, please see Fr. Dave.

BULLETIN IS OFFERED:

If you wish to sponsor a bulletin *In Honor of* (anniversary, birthday, etc.) or *In Memory of* someone, please do so by signing up on the sheet in the church hall or by contacting Fr. Dave (*email, text, or call*). An additional stewardship offering to the Church is requested.

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20 #NATIVITY FAST

28th Sunday after Pentecost
 St. Ambrose of Milan
 Godparent / Godchild(ren) Sunday
 Blessing of icons
 9:15 – Nativity Canon & Carols (*Kol'ady*);
 9:30 – Divine Liturgy
 Epistle: Colossians 1:12-18
 Gospel: Luke 17:12-19 (*11th Sunday of Luke*)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22 #NATIVITY FAST

9:30am Akathist Hymn to St. Nicholas
(please enter from the side door)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24 #NATIVITY FAST

9:30 Moleben of the Nativity Fast

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27 #NATIVITY FAST

29th Sunday after Pentecost
 Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, the Patriarchs
 Martyr Callinicus
 9:15 – Nativity Canon & Carols (*Kol'ady*);
 9:30 – Divine Liturgy
 Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11
 Gospel: Luke 14:16-24
 Tone 4; Liturgical Color: **Purple**



BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wed.)

Protecting Veil of the Theotokos of Pittsburgh Icons – A very generous anonymous donation was recently made: an icon of the Protecting Veil of the Theotokos of Pittsburgh for every household of the parish! These beautiful icons are now blessed and ready to be taken home. May God bless the donor of these icons and may He bless all of the homes where the icons are going!

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Live-Broadcast – We are blessed with the opportunity to watch our Diocesan Cathedral's services online (*9:00 am Sunday Divine Liturgy*). The best scenario is to attend the Divine Liturgy and receive the Eucharist, but in the current scenario, please take the time Sunday morning and throughout the week to pray via the *live broadcast* on the web at:

www.acrod.org/organizations/cathedral/live/

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Nativity Commemorations – We offer you the opportunity to sponsor items to be used for Nativity as commemorations: *anonymously, in memory of departed loved ones*, OR *for the health of loved ones*. If you are interested in making any of these commemorations, please sign up on the sheet in the Vestibule or email Fr. Dave and give an *additional free-will stewardship offering* to the Church.

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2021 Wall Calendars have arrived and are on a table in the church hall.

Nativity Fast - *This Fast runs for 40-days until the Eve of the Nativity on Wednesday, January 6. It is often said that the Nativity Fast is so much more difficult because of the nature of society around us, but we can still keep the spirit of the Fast. Everyone should try, at a minimum, to keep Monday, Wednesday & Friday as fast days, no matter what is happening on the 'new calendar.'* *If you have questions, please talk with Father Dave. **Prepare the Manger of your Soul for the coming of the new borne Messiah!***

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Parish Precautions – *If you were curious, here are a few of the precautions that the parish has been taking and will continue to take as we err on the side of caution with Covid:*

- *the open pews, door handles, and light switches are sanitized weekly,*
- *pans on top of the radiators are being filled with water to increase the humidity in the air (denser air falls to the ground faster taking germs with it)*
- *the ceiling fans run on low pushing the heat down (and preventing the air to be stagnant)*
- *4 windows are cracked in the nave of the church (bringing in fresh air)*
- *we also continue to wear our masks and keep safe-distancing*

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Father or a member of the Parish Council. And as always, if you are feeling ill or have a fever, please stay home and let Father know so that we can pray for you!

“We don't understand that happiness is in eternity and not in vanity.” +St. Paisios of Mount Athos

OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship:	\$ 450
Candles/Eternal Lamp Offerings:	\$ 761
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 557
Total Collections:	\$ 1768
Capital Improvement:	\$ 75
Relocation Fund:	\$ 70

We must give in trust that God will use it to produce fruit: “He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your sowing (resources) and increase the harvest of your righteousness (benevolence).” - 2 Cor. 9:10

Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials were offered last week by Joanne Nelson; Shuster Family; Tim Martin; Lawrence Martin; John Radick; Mary Jane Hudak; Eleanor Sanger; Mirilovich Family; Patty Watson; 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

The Eternal Lamp was offered last week in Memory of +Olga (Setar) Radick by: Joe & Lynn Mainolfi, Michael & Melanie Shuster, Eleanor Sanger, Bart & Lee Klemz, Brian & Rhonda Gogal, Tim and Kathy Kovka, Fr. Michael & Pani Eleanor Polanichka, Denise, Robin, & Danyell. May Her Memory Be Eternal! Vičnaya Pamjat!

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Weekly Offerings to God – During this time, if you are not coming to the church, we request that all weekly donations be mailed to Tim Martin (2225 McAleer Rd., Sewickley, PA 15143) For our parish to continue it's ministries, outreach, and general bill paying, we need your generosity to continue.

Stewardship is due - The end of the civil calendar year is here. Have you made a financial contribution to your parish yet? Please fulfill your stewardship responsibility of *time, talent, and treasure*.

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Reader Sticharion (dalmatic / robe) – We have been blessed to acquire gently used vestments for our Reader, Tim. They were originally \$350 each, but we received 5 sets for \$150 each (\$750 total). Any additional stewardship offerings toward these (or toward additional Altar Server robes) is greatly appreciated! (PS – we are awaiting the new gold and purple Alter boy sticharion sets to arrive...)

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Stewardship Envelopes – The 2021 Stewardship Envelopes are in the church hall to be picked up. If you would like your envelopes mailed to you, please contact Father Dave or Theresa Sharpless.

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Calcium ice melt (salt) for sidewalks – This year, the church *does not* need any ice melt for the sidewalks. (Last year's was lightly used.)

A REMINDER TO MAKE TIME FOR YOUR
NATIVITY FAST CONFESSION
“Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.” (Lk. 5:12)
Fr. Dave will be available for confessions
after ALL services or by appointment.
As we prepare for the Feast of the Nativity, it is
time to prepare the “Manger of our soul” for the
coming of the Messiah.
“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

- LOOKING AHEAD LOCALLY**
✦ **Tuesday, January 5** – 9:30am Prefestive Moleben of the Nativity of our Lord
✦ **Wednesday, January 6** – 9:30am Royal Hours of Nativity
✦ **Thursday, January 7** – 9:30am Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord
✦ **Friday, January 8** – 9:30am Divine Liturgy
✦ **Saturday, January 9** – 9:30am Divine Liturgy

**ORTHODOXY AROUND THE
‘BURGH AND OUR DIOCESE**

Infant clothing and diaper drive - The recently formed Pittsburgh Chapter of Zoe for Life! (www.zoeforlifepgh.org) in conjunction with "Choices Pregnancy Services" (new Pittsburgh Center on the South Side, 2429 East Carson Street, Suite #301, Pittsburgh, PA, 15203), is having a drive for NEW baby clothing (up to size 18 months including "onesies," sleepers, blankets, outfits, etc.), diapers (newborn to size 5), and wipes. They have posted a "wish list" on Amazon: <https://a.co/8e0CKOG>, if donors would like to order online rather than buying in stores. *We respectfully ask that you please inform your parishioners of this drive and that the donated items be collected at the Choices Center on Tuesday, January 5, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.* Please access: <http://zoeforlifepgh.org/infant-clothing-and-diaper-drive> for further info.

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SPF50 (Scripture, Prayer, Family): A Diocese Family Ministry - The 4th Issue of SPF50 is available! Visit the Diocesan SPF50 web page at www.acrod.org/ministries/acrod-family/spf50 to find out more about SPF50.

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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
YouTube: youtube.com/acroddiocese

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SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Colossians 1:12-18
Giving thanks to the Father for having made you worthy to share the lot of the saints in light. He rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of His beloved Son. Through Him we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creatures. In Him everything in heaven and on earth was created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions, principalities or powers; all were created through Him, and for Him. He is before all else that is. In Him everything continues in being. It is He who is head of the body, the church; He who is the beginning, the first-born of the dead, so that primacy may be His in everything.

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Gospel: Luke 17:12-19
¹² And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance ¹³ and lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” ¹⁴ When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; ¹⁶ and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Then said Jesus, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸ Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹ And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (397)
Commemorated on December 20/7
St. Ambrose was the product of a Christian mother and a pagan-believing father. His father was the imperial deputy of Gaul and Spain, and his religious practices were expected from all such officials at the time. Ambrose was known for a measure of piety through his mother, though not yet baptized. When the Bishop of Milan died and there was no one to immediately succeed his position, Ambrose was immediately elected from among the people. Though he did not want the position, he conceded to be baptized and took the position out of service. God worked easily through St. Ambrose. He died peacefully the morning of Pascha (in 397 AD).

“The merciful person is he who gives to others what he has himself received from God, whether it be money, or food, or strength, a helpful word, a prayer, or anything else that he has through which he can express his compassion for those in need.” +St. Peter of Damascus

LIVING ORTHODOXY

Giving Up Hope: "Without Me you can do nothing"
"Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise (Hebrews 10:35-36)"
When we find ourselves overly fixated on what we want, or what we think we need, we easily become despondent when things are not going the way we'd hoped. Disappointed, we start to wonder why God has failed to give us that which we've so sought after, that thing, or situation, that became the dominant theme of our prayers. Caught up in trying to reach a goal, and failing, we forget that it may not have been God's will for us from the very beginning. Relying on our own notion of what we need, we end up disappointed, or even disillusioned, and we blame God. Much of what we think we need is born from our own immaturity, for as we've focused on what we think we need, we fail to quietly surrender to the will of God, and fail to trust in the knowledge and reality that God knows what we really need. We fail during such times to trust God, and surrender to His will for us. We forget that God knows what we really need, and fail to consider the long term good. When we quit struggling against the will of God, we find the grace sufficient to prayerfully endure our trials, and get a glimpse of the truth that God gives us that which is salvific. Like a loving earthly father, our God allows us to endure that which will make us strong, and He will lead us to victory over our fallen nature. Prayerfully enduring trials will, in God's time, make us stronger, and we will become more faithful children of the Most High.

This kind of faithful living leads us to know the truth of the words, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).” When we truly trust God, those moments of disappointment make sense, and the bigger picture is clearly set before us. That is the moment when we realize that we must learn to trust God to get us through those dark moments when we are tempted to give up hope, and not actively try to “fix” things in accordance with our own understanding. We learn, instead, to cling to Christ, Who is the Truth, and will truly set us free.

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon

“Would it be difficult for God to constantly help everyone? No, but then man would not be really helped in this way. A spoiled child, whose parents constantly give him chocolates so he wants them always to be giving him, will become lazy, ill-disposed and unfortunate. Man, too, will never mature spiritually if he is constantly assisted by God without struggling himself.”
+Saint Paisios of Mount Athos, *Spiritual Counsels Vol. II Spiritual Awakening*, pg.325

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(s)**. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, deliver **him/her/them** from sickness and bitter pain. Heal **him/her/them** so that **he/she/they** may sing to You and always praise You for You alone love us. Amen.

For the Health of... Thomas, Jerry, Andrew, Brian, Fr. Andrew F. Irene, Kristina, Georgia, Steve, Pañi Kathy D., Fr. Patrick C., Fr. George L., Brian, Douglas, Dacia, Sean, Julia, Theresa, John, Susan, John, Alexandra D., Viola, Juliana,

Fredrick, Kenneth, Michael, Roberta, Lino, June, for all those battling viruses ...*through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer.*

For the Special Intentions of... Metropolitan Eleanora, Mark, Michaleana, Dorell, Elizabeth, Gregory, Donald, Susan, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Nancy, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Amee, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin our seminarians: Daniel, Dylan, Thomas, and Nicholas and our Church Council, Curators, and Relocation Committee: Lawrence, Matthew, Timothy, Theresa, Rich, Gina, Robert, Jane, Anthony, Mary Jane, Steven, Kenneth, Jillian, John, Wendy, John, Margaret, John, John, Todd 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.*

Patronal Feast Days (Name’s Day): (contact Fr. Dave with your Patron Saint)

Birthday Prayers for... Patricia Deluca (12/20), Patricia Donley (12/20), Fr Nik Ferencz (12/20), Mike Puhac (12/21), Jaydon Maruscak (12/23) ...*May God allow them to grow in peace and love all the days of their lives and may He grant them many and blessed years!*

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

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

For those preparing for Marriage... Lexi & Patrick, Lauren & Corey, Ashley & Derek ...*through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.*

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

For Pregnant Mothers... Marilynn (due in April) ...*through the prayers of St. Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, & St. Irene Chrysovalantou.*

For the souls of the newly departed...
+Alexander Salio (11/30), +Mark Bodnar (11/19), +Donald Bodnar, Sr (11/18), and those who have passed from the coronavirus ...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May their Memory in God be Eternal*

* 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.**

“But as every good comes from God, and as the means of obtaining every good from God is prayer, those who pray fervently, sincerely, from the depths of their hearts, obtain from the Lord grace to do good, and, before all, the grace of faith.” +St. John of Kronstadt
My Life in Christ, pg. 130

DEVOTIONAL PRAYER FOR THE NATIVITY FAST

NATIVITY FAST
PRAYER CHALLENGE 2020

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

O Physician of Souls and Bodies: we pray that You continue to come to our aid now during the global spread of the Coronavirus. May the sick regain their strength and health, and as they worry and grieve, defend them from further illness and despair. We offer thanks to You for those who have recovered. Grant rest to those who have reposed. Be with the families of those who are sick and those who have died.

Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbors from helping one another. Remove from us all pride, which can make us claim immunity to a disease that knows no borders.

Give wisdom and strength to our President, our federal government, our state governments, together with the leaders of all nations, and give them foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they serve.

Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process.

Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, we pray that You stay by our side and grant us courage and peace.

AMEN.