



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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SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27 #NATIVITY FAST

29th Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, the Patriarchs
2nd Sunday before the Nativity of our Lord
Martyr Callinicus
9:15 – Nativity Canon & Carols (*Kol'ady*);
9:30 – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11
Gospel: Luke 14:16-24



SUNDAY, JANUARY 3 #NATIVITY FAST

30th Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday before the Nativity of our Lord
Sunday of the Holy Fathers
Virgin-martyr Juliana of Nicomedia (304)
9:15 – Nativity Canon & Carols (*Kol'ady*);
9:30 – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40
Gospel: Matthew 1-25
Tone 4; Liturgical Color: **Purple**
Panachida for +Stelian Popescu (1-year)
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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 on the Commemoration of the Theotokos
- ✘ **Saturday, January 9** – 9:30am Divine Liturgy on the Feast of St. Stephen

BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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Thank You to Fr. Marc Wisnosky for serving our community this morning. May God grant you many years!

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Did you know... On the two days following Christmas, the special Antiphons and Nativity Tropar continue to be sung. Also, on January 8th (*the 2nd day of Christmas*) the Entrance Hymn is repeated. If you are unable (or uncomfortable) to come to church on January 7th, please consider coming on the 8th or 9th.

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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/

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.

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New Sticharion (dalmatic / robe) – We have been blessed to acquire gently used vestments for our Reader, Tim. (*Originally \$350 each, but we received 5 sets at \$150 each.*) We also have on order new Gold, Purple, and Burgundy Altar Boy Sticharion. (*It was less expensive to get these from Russia than in the US.*) The total for everything mentioned is \$3,600. (*Over the past couple years, \$2,000 was previously offered for new robes.*) Any additional stewardship offering toward these is greatly appreciated!

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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 **by January 3.**

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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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Twitter - Our parish now has a Twitter account: @sjb_orthodoxpgh or sjb_orthodox_pittsburgh. Any changes to our service schedule or information about a feast day will be shared through this platform.

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

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Calcium ice melt (salt) for sidewalks – This year, the church *does not* need any ice melt for the sidewalks. (*We still have last year's.*)

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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!

OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship:	\$ 777
Candles/Eternal Lamp Offerings:	\$ 96
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 733
Parish House Offering:	\$ 200

Total Collections: \$ 1806

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

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Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials were offered last week by Joanne Nelson; Shuster Family; Tim Martin; Lawrence Martin; Mary Jane Hudak; 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 by Kathy Schrmack in Memory of +Olga (Setar) Radick. May Her Memory Be Eternal! Vičnaya Pamyat!

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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.

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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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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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A REMINDER TO MAKE TIME FOR YOUR NATIVITY FAST CONFESSION

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

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.

VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE

Diocesan Website: www.acrod.org
Camp Nazareth: www.campnazareth.org
FB: www.facebook.com/acroddiocece
Twitter: twitter.com/acrodnews
YouTube: youtube.com/acroddiocece

SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11

⁴When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷In these you once walked, when you lived in them. ⁸But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. ¹¹Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scyth'ian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

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Gospel: Luke 14:16-24

¹⁶But he said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; ¹⁷and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' ¹⁸But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' ¹⁹And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' ²⁰And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' ²¹So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' ²²And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' ²³And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.' ²⁴For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.'"

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Week of the Holy Forefathers

Commemorated on the 2nd Sunday before

On this Sunday, in preparation of the Nativity of our Lord, we remember the Patriarch Abraham and his lineage, ancestors of Christ. The story of Abraham and his faithfulness should be read in the Book of Genesis.

"Through the connection of the holy Ancestors and Patriarchs, Our Saviour Jesus Christ is Himself also, in a way, the fruit of the faith of Abraham. So, when God makes his voice known to each of us while we are still in the strange land of the passions and worldly vanities, we must like Abraham unhesitatingly leave all that is ours, and follow the divine calling with faith until we reach the Promised Land where, in our turn, we shall be able to give birth spiritually to Christ For, planted in us by faith and Baptism, He has to grow in us through the virtues so as to shine in the light of contemplation. We descendants of Abraham, 'children of the promise' as Isaac was, having become 'sons of God' through the gift of the Holy Spirit, out therefore to see Christ form in us... Let us then for our part become forebears of Christ and continue steadfast in the faith, so that we may keep the feast of his Nativity, saying: It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." (*Synaxarion*)

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"There is no point in losing heart, getting upset, complaining. Close your mouth. Let no one perceive that you are disturbed. Don't fume with anger, as if to work it out of your system, but be calm. Burn the devil through patience and forbearance." +Elder Joseph the Hesychast

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The Holy Martyrs Thyrsos, Leukios and Kallinikos

Commemorated on December 27/14

The Holy Martyrs Thyrsos, Leukios and Kallinikos suffered for Christ under the emperor Decius (249-251) at Bithynian Caesarea. Saint Leukios, having reproached the governor

Qumvricius for his unjust persecution of Christians, after torture was beheaded by the sword. Saint Thyrsos, sentenced to cruel tortures and torments, endured them unharmed and by the will of God he died peacefully. The pagan priest Kallinikos, having seen the bravery and the miracle involving Saint Thyrsos, believed in Christ and boldly confessed the true faith, for which he was beheaded by the sword.

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“Joy is thankfulness, and when we are joyful, that is the best expression of thanks we can offer the Lord, Who delivers us from sorrow and sin.”

+Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica,

PRAYER CORNER

*Our Parish Prayer List for
Special Intentions and Other Needs*

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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.

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For the Health of... Suzanne, Stacy, Allen, Jerry, Allen, Thomas, Jerry, Andrew, Brian, Kristina, Fr. Patrick C., Fr. George L., Brian, Douglas, Dacia, Sean, Julia, 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.*

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For the Special Intentions of... Metropolitan Gregory, Georgia, Eleanora, Mark, Michaleana, Dorell, Elizabeth, 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.*

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Patronal Feast Days (Name's Day): Patrick Wertz - Saint Sturm of Fulda Monastery (12/30) *(contact Fr. Dave with your Patron Saint)*

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Birthday Prayers for...

Caitlin Brozell (12/28), Carol Lorenzi (1/2) *...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...

Dustin, Stephen, Susan, Marilynn, John *...through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, and St. John Maximovitch.*

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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.*

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For those preparing for Marriage...

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

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Anniversary Prayers for...

Faith (Sekerak) Thousands (12/28/19) *...May God fill them with His grace that they may continue to live in unity with Him!*

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

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For the souls of the newly departed...

+Fr. John Baranik (12/20), +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*

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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.

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“Don’t limit the goodness of fasting by abstaining only from foods. For true fasting is the enemy of evil. “Loose the chains of injustice!” Forgive your neighbor’s offense, and forgive his debts. Don’t “fast unto judgment and strife.” You don’t eat meat, but you eat your brother. You abstain from wine, but stubbornly hold on to insolence. You patiently wait until evening to partake, but you spend the day in court.

“Woe to those who are drunk, but not from wine!” Wrath is a drunkenness of the soul, making it senseless, like wine. Grief itself is also drunkenness, sinking down the mind. Fear is another drunkenness, whenever it fears things that don’t need to be feared. For he says, “from fear of my enemy, deliver my soul.” Together, each of these passions, allowing the mind to be taken over and out of control, is rightly termed drunkenness.”

+St Basil the Great

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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.