



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*
Subdeacon Ryan Ferko
Timothy Martin, *Reader*
Matthew Peifer, Stephen Brancho, & John Radick, *Cantors*
Lawrence Martin, *Parish Council President*
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SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

please wear masks as we follow the CDC guidelines

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

14th Sunday after Pentecost
Forefeast of the Elevation of the Cross
Hieromartyr Cornelius
6:00 pm Feast Day Vespers

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 #STRICT FAST DAY

FEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS
9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

9:30 am Akathist to St. Sophia (*on her Feast Day*)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3

15th Sunday after Pentecost
Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross
Great-martyr Eustathius
9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 2 Cor. 4:6-15; Gospel: Matthew 22:35-46
Sunday after the Cross: Gal. 2:16-20; Mk 8:34-9:1
Panachida Bishop +John R Martin (9/30/84),
+John Urban (40-day)

Tone 6; Liturgical Color: **Red**
12-Noon Pittsburgh Deanery Picnic

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Future Services are listed on our online "Parish Calendar" which is continually updated at:

www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar

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Live-Broadcast – If you are unable to attend church on Sunday morning, please pray along with our Cathedral's services online at **9:00 am**.

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

BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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Strict Fast tomorrow, 9/27 – Why do we Strict Fast (no meat or dairy) on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross? For one, we fast as we reflect on why God allowed His only Son to die on the Cross for our sins. *Fasting is a discipline that strengthens our faith!*

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Gertrude Hawk Christmas Candy Sale - The booklets are in the church hall. Orders will be due by **November 8** and the candy will be delivered the week of **December 6**.

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The 3rd Pittsburgh Deanery Picnic will be held **next week, Sunday, October 3rd** in Schenley Park (10345 Overlook Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15207) at the Vietnam Veterans Shelter from **Noon (after church) to Dusk**. A food sign-up sheet is in the hall for pot-luck items that will be brought to the picnic. Opening prayers will be at **12:30** and live music starts at **2:00**. Plan to come and enjoy a relaxing afternoon with our brothers and sisters from our sister Deanery Parishes. Get together with old friends and family! Make new friends! Come enjoy God's creation in one of the best parks in Pittsburgh! *Here are directions from downtown:*

- from 376 E, take exit 72A onto Forbes Ave
- turn **RIGHT** onto Craft Ave
- turn **LEFT** onto Boulevard of the Allies
- go past St George Antiochian Orthodox Church
- in 0.5 miles, turn **RIGHT** onto Overlook Drive
- in 800 ft., the Vietnam Veterans' Pavilion will be on your **LEFT**

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.

Yearly Meeting Highlights:

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Church School – Our program will start **October 10**. We are still looking for additional teachers to complete the program. Please contact Fr. Dave or a Parish Council Member if you are interested.

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Turkey Bingo – We are still tentatively scheduled to have the Turkey Bingo on Sunday, November 21 at 3pm. A decision will be made in mid-October.

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90th Anniversary - We will have a celebration at the beginning of October 2022 for our 90th Anniversary.

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Relocation – The committee has not gotten together due to Covid and a couple other factors. Our vision is still to grow Orthodoxy in the northern corridor of Pittsburgh. Thoughts on property and community outreach in the northern corridor should be shared with Sharon Peifer, Larry Martin, or Fr. Dave.

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Church Maintenance – To modify the custodial needs around the church, we are going to have quarterly "maintenance days" (rather than only in December and prior to Holy Week). Our **Fall Church Maintenance Day** will be on **Saturday, October 23rd** from 9AM to 12-Noon(ish). Please plan to share the stewardship of your time and talents! Items on our maintenance list include: clearing our lot on Holbrook (*we recently received a citation*), the fence on Woodland (*the suggestion was made to take it down as the fence is not even needed and it is merely aesthetical*), the cabinets in kitchen (not to be worked on at the maintenance day), as well as a couple other items.

Stewardship – The concept was discussed about the importance of treating the church as your home.

- ✘ After coffee social, clean up the area where you sat
- ✘ If you see coffee spilled elsewhere, wipe it up.
- ✘ When something runs out (*i.e paper towels or toilet paper*), learn where the extras are kept and replace them.
- ✘ If you take the last one of something, bring some in the next time you are at the church.

This communal or shared approach towards general things at the church is healthiest for our parish community.

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Congratulations to our 2021-2022 **Parish Council**: President: Lawrence Martin; Vice-President: Matthew Peifer; Treasurer: Timothy Martin, Reader; Financial Secretary: Rich Mirilovich; Recording Secretary: Theresa Sharpless; Chief Auditor: Robert Fall; Auditors: Gina Fall, Mary Jane Hudak, Kathy Schmack, and the 4th position is vacant at this time.

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Thank You! to those who have previously served on the Church Council! Your time and talents helped in many many ways! Thank you and may our Lord continue to bless you!

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Thank You! to our dedicated **Church Curators**: Theresa Sharpless, Kenneth Dzadovsky, Gina Fall, Robert Fall, Jane Gaydos, Jillian Gaydos, John Gaydos, Wendy Martellotti, Lawrence Martin, John Sharpless, and Patricia Watson. Thank you for your stewardship to our parish! **Additional Curators are needed:** Our curator list has become shorter. If anyone is interested and willing to be "trained" to be "on-the-door", please see Theresa Sharpless.

2021 Home Blessings – Please see Fr. Dave or email him today to schedule your Home Blessing.

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Coat Drive – Do you have a clean coat or two that you have not worn since before our last coat drive but it is still in good condition? We are now collecting clean coats and jackets to donate to the Neighborhood Resilience Project (NRP) [Formerly FOCUS Pittsburgh (who provide Food, Occupation, Clothing, Understanding, and Shelter to those who are in need)]. Please place your clean coat(s) on the coat rack in the hall

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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*

OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship:	\$ 701
Candles/Eternal Lamp Stewardship:	\$ 241
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 1084
Community Outreach:	\$ 50
Total Collections:	\$ 2051
Fundraising Acc't (Garage Sale):	\$ 46
Capital Improvement:	\$ 105
Relocation Fund:	\$ 100

In faith that God provides:

“And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, ‘He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever.’” – 2 Cor. 9:8-9

Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials were offered last week by Nelson Family; Tim Martin; Kathy Schrack; Lawrence Martin; Melanie Shuster; Eleanor Sanger; 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.” -

John 8:12

The Eternal Lamp was offered last week by Tim Martin in memory of his mother, +Anastasia Martin; and Matt Peifer in memory of his parents, +Jack and +Viola Peifer. May Their Memory Be Eternal!

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Weekly Offerings to God – During this time, if you are not yet coming to the church, we request that weekly donations be mailed to Tim Martin (2225 McAleer Rd., Sewickley, PA 15143)



On-Line Giving is now available from our parish website! The best option is to come to church and give your offering to God in His Temple (2nd best is to mail it in). Now you can also donate from your home and set up a recurring donation to the:

- ✘ General Stewardship Fund,
- ✘ Capital Improvement Fund, or
- ✘ Relocation Fund.

If you miss coming to church for a week, this allows you another option to “catch up” on your weekly stewardship. For our parish to continue it’s ministries, outreach, and general bill paying, we need your generosity to continue.

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ORTHODOXY AROUND THE ‘BURGH AND OUR DIOCESE

Ukrainian Food Festival to be held at Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 220 Mansfield Blvd. Carnegie, PA 15106, on **October 1 & 2** from 11am to 7pm. Pyrohy, Holubki (Stuffed Cabbage), Kielbasa, Halushki, Borscht, Outdoor Grill, Ukrainian Pastries, Basket Raffle and more! On Saturday, there will be a Church Talk/Tour with Fr. John Charest at 1:00, 3:00 & 5:00 pm. Eat-in or Take-out. MC/Visa available. Handicap accessible. Phone orders day of event at 412-276-9718. For more info, call 412-527-5359 or visit: www.orthodoxcamegie.org.

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Spiritual Vitamin:

“He was lifted up on the Cross, but it was sin that was nailed to it.”
+St. Gregory of Nazianzus

Pittsburgh Icon Procession and Prayers for Peace - Area clergy and faithful will take up icons from the meeting spot in Station Square and process across the Smithfield Street Bridge to 6th Avenue where a prayer service will be conducted by local clergy at Mellon Square Park. Join them on **Saturday, October 2** at 11:30am at Station Square. The walk will begin at approximately **Noon**. Some of the icons to be used are from the *Wrestling With Angels* museum exhibition. The loan of these icons is made possible by Icons for America, a ministry that provides for the loan, transportation, and insurance of the forty-five icons in the *Wrestling With Angels* permanent collection. **All are welcome** to participate in the procession and attend the prayer service, which will have petitions for the peace of our cities and towns and for all those affected by the pandemic. *A similar procession was held by a couple parishes in March and was very successful.*

For details visit the Wrestling With Angels Icons www.wrestlingwithangels-icons.com/calendar-events Web site. Inquiries or requests for interviews can be directed to Fr. Michael Sochka, Icons for America Secretary (267-736-9454 / msochka@gmail.com) or to Mrs. Lynette Hull, Icons for America President (609-651-0807 / k2togusa@mac.com).

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28th Annual Walk for Missions – will be on **Sunday, October 10** at South Park Children’s Playground Shelter (Corrigan & Brownsville Rd., South Park, PA 15129) sponsored by the *Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh*. Registration is at NOON at South Park. Walk begins at 1pm. *(There may be a walk in Schenley Park as well. Please check with Fr. Dave.)* To offer a donation for this cause, please make checks payable to “*Holy Cross Mission Fund*” (*please note the change). Your donation will be extremely helpful in carrying out this important and necessary work of the Church. For more info, visit www.holycrosspgh.org/events, email emmanuelmaginas@gmail.com, or call 412-251-3207. Proceeds earmarked for an Orthodox Medical Clinic in Guatemala. To follow the blog of this mission, visit www.TheWordFromGuatemala.com

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Diocesan Parenting Workshop Series: “Raising Believing Children”

at St. John’s Church, East Pittsburgh
Saturday, October 16, 2021



The Workshop is designed to help parents learn more about the “craft” of parenting and help them raise their children in the Faith. The Workshops focus on the ways parents can help their children stay faithful to Christ and His Church. The schedule includes presentations by Metropolitan Gregory and Fr. Stephen Loposky, moderated small group discussions, Q&A Sessions, and lunch. The Workshop is specifically for parents (of any age), but all are welcome to attend. In addition, the Workshop has a component for children ages 5-18 which includes its own curriculum and set of activities (focusing on the Story of Noah). To register for the Workshop, please visit the Parenting Workshop page on www.acrod.org. Also, please let Fr Dave know by **October 1st** if you are interested. *The Series of Parenting Workshops began in 2019, continued in online form in 2020, and are now beginning again. The Parenting Workshops are an exciting and important endeavor. We know our parents and children face challenges in their lives of faith. His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory invites you to join him in support of our parents as our Diocese continues this initiative to help them in their parental vocation.*

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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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Spiritual Vitamin:

“Therefore, if you wish to save your soul and win eternal life, arise moment by moment from your dullness, bless yourself with the sign of the Cross and say: Let me, Lord, make a good beginning, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Tito Colliander, *Way of the Ascetics*, p.101

SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle: Galatians 6:11-18

Final Admonitions and Benediction

¹¹ See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. ¹² It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. ¹⁴ But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶ Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God.

¹⁷ Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

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Gospel: John 3:13-17

¹³ No one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven, the Son of man. ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life." ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

THE MONK PETER FROM ATROE

Commemorated on September 26/13

The Monk Peter from Atroe was from childhood dedicated to God and spent his whole life in exploits of fasting and unceasing prayer. He pursued asceticism in the city of Atroe, near Asian Olympos. A distinctive feature of the holy ascetic was his extreme temperance. While still during his lifetime the saint worked many miracles and peacefully reposed during the time or rule of the Patriarch of Constantinople Tarasios (784-806).

FEAST DAY FEATURE

Amvon Prayer for the Feast of The Elevation of the Precious and Life-Creating Cross of the Lord

September 27 / 14

Lord, You dwell in the heights and it is You Who exalt all, for by Your own will You endured being lifted up upon the Cross, so that by Your pure outstretched hands You might draw all to Yourself. You entirely humbled Yourself, going down as far as Hades, so that You might be lifted up and lift up our souls beyond the falsehood of pride and the vanity of conceit. By theology You are lifted up before the nations of the world, as You are glorified by the lifting up of hands on high in sacrifices of praise to the Father. You were denounced by being raised upon the Cross, and by being taken down You destroyed the power of hell, triumphed over death and ransomed Your people from the original fall. We celebrate today Your divine victory and bow before the manifestation of Your sign of victory. Do not ignore our prayers, for we ask You, and have asked You, in Your compassion and mercy, to be a strong help for us against the rational powers threatening to corrupt our souls. Be kind to us as You were to the Israelites of old, who were healed from the bite of serpents by looking up at a bronze serpent raised by the hand of Moses. Humble those who raise up against us in sin, and lift us up in valor against him who would throw obstacles on our path. Lord, quiet the uprisings of barbarous people, crush weapons of hatred and the arrogance of tyrants on behalf of those whose only boast is the Cross. For the hands of Moses lifted up were a type of the Cross and when his hands were lifted up the Israelites turned back the onslaughts of Amalek. Throw down all those who lift their hands against Your Church, destroy all instigations raised against Your wisdom, bar up all mouths opened in blasphemy, but enlighten all those darkened by ignorance, and open our minds to Your thoughts, that strengthened by meditation on Your heavenly and blessed good gifts, we may come to that true exaltation of those of Your flock who enjoy Your pasture and live in the happiness of Your kingdom. For it is You Who raise up and bring low, and we give glory to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Spiritual Vitamin:

“Orthodox Christian life is centered in the local community of believers gathering together in person as the Church. You cannot spend the majority of your time throughout the week online and call that Orthodox life. Whatever happened in the past is ancient history and not an excuse. Gather in person with local believers. You'll be happy you did and you'll avoid the toxicity inherent in online communications. I love our community and nothing compares to being together.”

- Fr Tom Soroka

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... Robert, Anthony, Douglas, Christopher, John, Joanne, Barbara, Brian, Kristina, Sean, Julia, Susan, John, Juliana, Fredrick, Kenneth, Michael, and Roberta ...*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... His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. Photios, Fr. Theodore, Deacon Charles, Laura & family, Carlene, Georgia, Eleanor, Mark, Michaleana, Dorell, Elizabeth, Donald, Susan, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Nancy, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Ameer, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin *our seminarians:* Dylan, Thomas, Nicholas, and Aydin *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):

Sophia Urban - Martyr Sophia (9/30)

(contact Fr. Dave with your Patron Saint)

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Birthday Prayers for... AJ (Matolyak) Ferraz (9/26), Cora Dzadony (9/28), Andrew Mirilovich (9/28), Shane Yakemawiz (9/28), Juliana Anton (9/29), Wendy Martellotti (9/29), Fr Dcn Art Steinstra (9/30) ...*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...

Susan, Marilyn, John

...*through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, & St. John Maximovitch.*

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

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Anniversary Prayers for... Charles & Allison Kretchek (9/26), John & Barbara Kirish (9/28/96), Nicole & Jeff Durmis (9/29), Rich & Renee Mirilovich (10/1), Allen & Anastasia (Martin) Dzambo (10/2) ...*May God fill them with His grace that they may continue to live in unity with Him!*

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For Pregnant Mothers... Meredith (*due in Dec*) ...*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 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 Urban (8/19) ...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in God's Memory.*

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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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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.

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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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SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Father is available to meet Monday thru Friday between 8:30am and 3:00pm or by appointment.

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Online Community: Please email Fr. Dave to receive the weekly bulletin via email.

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 so he can pray with you and you may receive the Anointing 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 Orthodox may receive a *blessing* from the chalice.

Lapsed Members – You are always welcome home and we want you back! Generally speaking, sincere participation in the Mysteries of Confession, Communion, and regular attendance at the divine services are all that is required to begin parish life anew! See Fr. Dave for specific details.

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 Father 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. They are not performed during fasting periods and certain Feast Days. Please consult Father ASAP for more details (*before* arrangements are made for the hall).

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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“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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LIVING ORTHODOXY

Why Have Your Home Blessed?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Homes are traditionally blessed with Holy Water each year bringing the blessings of the Waters sanctified on the Feast of Theophany, the celebration of our Lord's baptism. **The priest brings this Holy Water into the home to personally bless each family member by renewing the awareness of God's presence in our homes.** A home can be blessed at any time.

HOW TO PREPARE

The home blessing should be scheduled when the entire family will be present, if at all possible. When coming to the home, the priest brings everything needed for the blessing, but the family

should make the following two arrangements: Have a written list of the names of all living members of the household, along with the names of anyone else to be included in prayer. Also have a list of departed loved ones that you wish to be prayed for.

If the home has an icon corner, the candle(s) may be lit, as well as a censer if available. Otherwise, a clean table with a cloth on it should be prepared (preferably a white cloth). The house should have all radios and televisions off during the Blessing.

The priest will bless all rooms of the house. In homes with children, it is nice for the little ones to carry a candle and “lead” the priest throughout the home. An adult member of the home may also do this. While the home is blessed, the priest will lead the family in singing the Troparion (hymn) of the season repeatedly until the whole home is blessed.

It is a pious custom among some to give the priest a donation at this time but this is in no way expected. In the same way, while many families enjoy hosting the priest to a meal or snack, this too is not expected and often impossible due to other scheduled home blessings [*and is not recommended during Covid*]. The home blessing does, however, provide an opportunity for the priest to spend dedicated time alone with the family, answering any questions anyone may have or addressing any issues for which he may be of some help or support.

[Source: <https://stnicholasgr.com/houseblessing/>]

Weaving Christ into Our Lives

The blessing of homes by Holy Water maintains the spiritual association between the 'family church' and the parish, as well as again providing for the sharing of God's spiritual gifts. ... This annual blessing is not as elaborate as the blessing of the new dwelling, but because of this it should not be overlooked, for it is in this way that the grace of God is extended to individual dwellings." (*Marriage and the Christian Home*, p.25.)

If the priest comes to bless the home when the children are present, they have the opportunity to see the parish priest in a different and personal situation. If the priest permits, they can lead the way through the house, or hold a candle. They can show him their rooms or pets or favorite toys. They receive a blessing

with water. For children, the house blessing shows the connection of the Church to the home.

In Summary

What does it mean to ask God to bless something? All things in the world have been spoiled right along with us [by the Fall of Adam and Eve]. God must bless His world again in order for it to be the way that He wants it to be. For this reason God sent His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit to the world: to bless everyone and everything that He made, to make all things good again. When the priest comes to bless our homes, he asks God to have mercy on the home, to rid it of every evil and to fill it with every blessing.

Source: <http://www1.antiochian.org/why-do-we-have-our-homes-blessed>

PLEASE REACH OUT TO FATHER DAVE TODAY TO SCHEDULE YOUR HOME BLESSING

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The problem of social media by Fr Demetrios Harper

“Modernity has perpetuated a mentality in every human being that we all have an imperative to speak and to correct others. This is rooted in the idea of a post enlightenment notion of moral autonomy, that each of us has the ground of morality in ourselves and that each of us functions as the arbiter of moral truth.”

In essence, what he's saying is that the problem that we're encountering today with social media, where everyone assumes that their opinion is correct and worthy of arguing, has its roots in the Enlightenment, where **we** become the ground of truth because man sees himself as morally autonomous (not accountable to anyone). What Fr Demetrios said is that Christians have to recover the ascetical understanding of obedience, which for a lay person (non-monastic) would be the assumption that **their will** (that is, what they want) is not necessarily correct and should not automatically be followed, but should be balanced by others more learned and experienced in the truth of a particular topic. – Fr. Tom Soroka

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“So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. for the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will never fail you nor abandon you.” Deuteronomy 31:6